MCP 2020 – 070: **Missionaries of Faith: Myanmar, Vietnam & Oceania**

At the outset, let me express our heartfelt gratitude to the Archdiocese of Chicago for allowing us to come to you with cap in hand sharing our mission works and asking for your financial donations. Our gratitude goes to Cardinal Cupich, to the Mission office, to your pastor and especially to you, parishioners of this parish.

We are the Missionaries of Faith. We had our humble beginning in Italy in the year 1982. We are a religious order of men and women whose charism is to serve dioceses, foster priestly and religious vocation, and work in ecumenism, minister to youth and most especially assist priests in difficulties. We are an international mixture from Europe (Italy), Asia (Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, India), Oceania (Samoa and New Zealand) and South America (Columbia and Honduras). We are yet praying for vocations from the US. When we were ordained as priests, some of us opened up communities in our own native country and some were sent to the missions. We are one sent to the missions. We began our priestly ministry in the US in the diocese of Austin, TX in the Jubilee Year 2000, and expanded later to the dioceses of Green Bay, WI, Oakland and Santa Rosa in California and lately in Honolulu, HI. We are also in Newfoundland, Canada.

Due to Covid-19, we are unable to be with you in person but you can hear our appeal and our story. We can relate to the first reading of today where we hear the gratuity of God’s infinite love and God’s boundless desire to share His gifts with us: “All you who are thirsty, come to the water; You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk… Come to me heedfully, that you may have life.” We became priests and nuns due to the immeasurable generosity of the people of God. Our benefactors’ donations sent us to the seminary studies, provided us food to the table and roof over our heads, has clothed us; assisted us cure when we were sick and supplied materials for our religious formation. These generous benefactors were the hand of the Lord who fed us and answered all our needs – as we humbly echoed in the responsorial psalm.

Now it is our turn, as priests, to answer the words of Jesus in today’s gospel: “Give them some food yourselves”. We have 250 seminarians in our congregation that we have to continue to send to the seminary for their academic formation, to sustain them with food and lodging; treat them when they are sick, clothing for their body and offer them provisions for their religious formation. Your support and financial contribution really matter. Big or small it may be, it is like the five loaves and the two fish that Jesus multiplied in the gospel today. And we believe that there will be fragments left over to be picked up, afterwards.

As priests, we serve in the dioceses, mostly in the mission rural areas. We bring to the people of God the sacraments, the Word of God, the teachings of our Mother Catholic Church in different facets of priestly ministry: parish, hospitals, jail, nursing homes, youth etc. We left our native country to be with you and announce that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, due to time constraint, we have been frank and direct in our appeal. Continue to support our congregation, the Missionaries of Faith, so we can go onward and upward to the calling God has called us to be.

Thank you for your financial support and we pledge our community prayers for you and this parish.

God bless you and your loved ones.