

WHAT IS THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER?

By Frederick J. Power, S.J., National Secretary, Canada

The Apostleship of Prayer was born out of the apostolic restlessness of a group of seminarians of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) at Vals, France. These young men, destined for the missions of America and India, were impatient with their dull routine of study and eager to get on with their work as missionaries.



Their spiritual director, Fr. Francois Xavier Gautrelet, in a conference to them on Dec. 3, 1844, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, pointed out that the end they desired—the salvation of souls—was a supernatural end and that supernatural means were the best and quickest way to accomplish

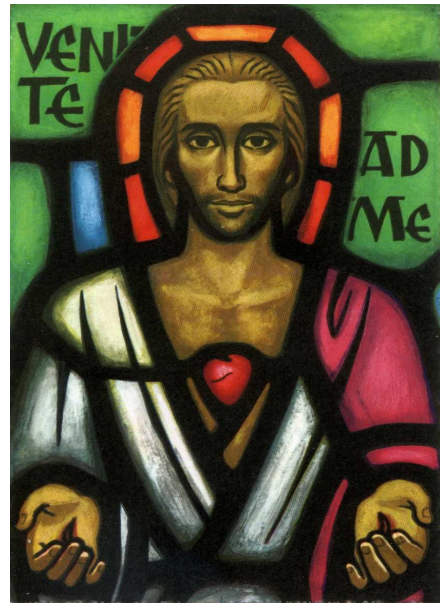
that end. Thus, their prayer, study, work, recreation, headaches, offered in union with Christ's sacrifice as renewed in the Mass, would advance the work of the missions as much as their direct work in the field. The idea quickly caught on and spread to others in the practice that we know as the Morning (or Daily) offering of self.

In only five years by 1849, the new Association was approved by the local Bishop and by Pope Pius IX. More official Papal approbations followed in 1866, 1879, 1896. Pope Leo XIII in the late 1800's proposed a personal papal General Intention and entrusted the direction of the Apostleship to the Society of Jesus. Pope Pius XI, in the early 1900's, added the monthly Mission Intention. Pope Paul VI in 1968 approved the latest Statutes that were re-confirmed by Pope John Paul II. It has been recommended consistently by the Holy Fathers these many years. Pope Benedict XVI on June 1, 2008, praised the "offering of the day" and praying for "the intentions that I have proposed to the whole Church".

With the consistent approval of the highest authority in the Church, the Apostleship of Prayer has continued to grow so that today there are over 50 million members. They strive to be apostles of prayer in everything they do as Jesus did for

30 years before His public ministry. Our motto could be: If it was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for me (and for every member of the Church).

Through their Daily Offering, members offer to the Father, in union with His Son, all that they are, all that they have, and all that they do. Following the example of Mary, the mother of Jesus, they strive to say “yes” to the Lord at every moment. Therefore, they live a day-long apostolic life like those original members (the young seminarians) because each prayer, task, joy and pain becomes precious like the Hidden Life of Jesus that was so highly praised. “Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased” (Lk 3:22).



To become a member, one offers each day to Jesus. This usually is through a Daily Offering prayer that can be as concise as: All for You, O Jesus. No formal enrollment needed. YOU, too, are invited to be a member of the Holy Father’s prayer group and to offer your day for all the causes Christ has at heart, for each other, and for the Monthly Intentions that the Holy Father entrusts to this Apostleship of Prayer . Details below about the official monthly magazine that inspires active membership in this part of the world with its reliable information, instruction and inspiration.