



Mission

In the Catholic Church, the term **mission** is used in a variety of ways. In Catholic schools fundraising initiatives are directed towards “raising money for the Missions”. In scripture, St Paul carried out his missionary work throughout the Roman-Greco world. Schools will have a mission statement that names the aims and directives of their educational endeavours.

While the meaning of mission differs in each of these examples, invariably they are all linked to the mission of Jesus. Scripture scholars are in general agreement that the worldly mission of Jesus was to proclaim the reign of God through his person, teachings and actions (SEE: Reign of God). The parables he told, the healings he performed and his wise teachings all centre on, or are a reflection of, this reign in breaking in the world. While evidenced in the here and now, the reign of God will reach its fulfilment in the final resurrection where all of creation will:

“...hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 7:16-17

After his death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned his disciples to continue his work, instructing them to:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” *Matthew 28: 19-20*

Thus the missionary work of the Church began as the disciples preached the “good news” throughout Judea and Galilee, then into neighbouring countries and finally onto Rome. Following the deaths of the original apostles their missionary work continued through the Christian communities scattered throughout the known world and became more formalized over the centuries as the Church became more structured.

Today, the Church continues to be the bearers of Jesus mission. The Church does not exist just for itself but to proclaim the reign of God through its preaching, service and witness. A good way to think of this is the church does not so much have a mission as that the mission has a church. Catholic schools play an important role in this. They are not separate to the Church but a vital ministry of the Church. The Catholic school is a vibrant community where its members respond to their vocational call to go out to others and be the good news, first proclaimed by Jesus and his disciples and continued today in many and varied ways.