

AMRI Autumn Conference: Mission today in our Common Home: Thurs 3rd Oct 2019, Emmaus

Words of Welcome: (Kathleen McGarvey OLA- President of AMRI)

Good morning and welcome to you all to this our AMRI Autumn conference. It is great to see such a full house and know there is such interest and support in AMRI's activities and in this topic which we are here to look at more closely together today: Mission today in our common home. A very special welcome to our Papal Nuncio, Jude Thaddeus Okolo and to Cardinal Peter Turkson, once archbishop of Cape Coast, and presently since it was instituted in January 2017, President of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. With this Dicastery, Cardinal Turkson has quite a large portfolio and I have no doubt he will open our minds to the many challenges we are called to in sharing the love of God and the joy of the Gospel with so many of the poor and marginalized in our world today.

As we know one of the goals of AMRI is to be a centre for mission and dialogue. In a spirit and practice of collaboration among religious and missionary institutes, including religious and lay, we want AMRI to help us all better engage with the emerging realities in our Church and society today. We want to be open and receptive to evolving understandings of mission at home and abroad. We know that mission is always to share the Good News of Christ - that God is Love and is always present among us and calling us to Communion with God, one another and with all creation. Mission per se doesn't change but it is the way we understand and live our mission that changes, in response to the changing face of the world and of the Church.

In all or at least most of our institutes, we are struggling with the realities and responsibilities of declining numbers and a rising age profile and we are laden with many concerns and responsibilities of governance and gospel leadership in Ireland today. Despite that, it is important to acknowledge that we as religious and lay missionaries are still doing so much to proclaim the Good News both in this country and from this country through our prayer, witness, and diverse activities.

This is the Extraordinary Month of Mission, a time when we are all invited to do that something extra in living our baptismal call to share the faith. It is therefore right and fitting that our Autumn Conference should be an opportunity for us to look at our missionary call more closely, hopefully be strengthened in our missionary zeal and also identify ways in which we can live this mission with renewed fire and effectiveness today.

We looked at the topic of Mission today during our AGM in May with the help of Tim Norton. We are happy that today Cardinal Turkson is with us to share his insights and experience and we pray we will be inspired and enlightened.