

FEBRUARY 6, 2020  
Memorial of St. Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs  
Mark 6: 35-41

TO DO THE WORKS OF JESUS

Our gospel for today speaks about the missionary role of each of us and the Church as a whole. Jesus Christ gave His disciples, apostles and us who are His followers to speak and act in His name, and continue to do the works He did, that is, to heal the sick, to cast evil spirits, and to speak the good news of the Gospel. Whatever Jesus has share with the apostles must be shared with other people.

We can also see in our gospel, the urgency of His call and challenge. They should not even carry anything even luggage or money to their journey, a clear sign of the priorities, main concern and significance He would like to see among his followers. He wants his disciples and each one of us to rely and have faith in Him and not on ourselves. He likes us to be of service on Him every day and through out our lives.

My sisters and brothers, He needs us most especially today as we face a lot of challenges in our faith, in the Church and in the world. He is asking us to be His eyes, His ears, His hands, and His voice. As members of the Church, we are essential and has a vital role to play. "The church can only be fully alive when everyone plays the role they are called to play in passing on the legacy of Jesus. There are no second-class citizens in the church. Each is a vital member, with a mission in the world."<sup>1</sup>

This is what St. Paul Miki and companions did for Christ. In 1593, Franciscan missionaries came to Japan from the Philippines by order of Spain's King Philip II. Three of the best-known martyrs of Nagaki are Saints Paul Miki, John of Goto, and James Kisai. Though none were priests, all were associated with the Jesuits: Miki was training for the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie](http://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie)

priesthood, while Kisai was a lay brother and John of Goto was a catechist preparing to enter the order.”<sup>2</sup> Together with them “26 martyrs of Japan were crucified on a hill, now known as the Holy Mountain, overlooking Nagasaki. They were priests, brothers, and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of the Secular Franciscan Order; there were catechists, doctors, simple artisans, and servants, old men and innocent children—all united in a common faith and love for Jesus and his Church. Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit and a native of Japan, has become the best known among the martyrs of Japan. While hanging upon a cross, Paul Miki preached to the people gathered for the execution: “The sentence of judgment says these men came to Japan from the Philippines, but I did not come from any other country. I am a true Japanese. The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die. I believe that I am telling only the truth before I die. I know you believe me, and I want to say to you all once again: Ask Christ to help you to become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ’s example I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain.” When missionaries returned to Japan in the 1860s, at first, they found no trace of Christianity. But after establishing themselves they found that thousands of Christians lived around Nagasaki and that they had secretly preserved the faith. Beatified in 1627, the martyrs of Japan were finally canonized by Pope Pius IX in 1862.<sup>3</sup>

So, are we ready and eager to place ourselves at His service, to do whatever He offers us, and to witness His truth and saving power to whomever He sends us? Let us all be a vibrant, enthusiastic, joyful and faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.catholicnewsagency.com](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com)

<sup>3</sup> [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org)