

About Fr. Mark Wheelan, S.O.L.T.

Our Speakers



Fr. Mark Wheelan, S.O.L.T.

MISSIONARY OF MERCY

On February 10, 2016, Fr. Mark Wheelan, S.O.L.T., was one of the priests selected and commissioned by Pope Francis to be a special "Missionary of Mercy." The following is an interview with Fr. Mark which explains the process and the significance of this important mission!

Who are the Missionaries of Mercy?

In Misericordiae Vultus, a papal bull, Pope Francis explains that he intends to send out Missionaries of Mercy who will be, "a sign of the Church's maternal solicitude for the people of God, enabling them to enter the profound richness of this mystery so fundamental to the faith. There will be priests to whom I will grant the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, so that the breath of their mandate as confessors will be even clearer. They will be, above all, living signs of the father's readiness to welcome those in search of his pardon."

How did you become a Missionary of Mercy?

I was over in Hawaii giving a retreat, when a good friend of mine came and asked me if I was going to be a Missionary of Mercy Priest. I questioned her about it, and then commented to Our Lady, "If you would like me to do this, I will". As my travels continued, I met others asking me also if I was going to be a Missionary of Mercy Priest. At that time, I was unaware of how Pope Francis was going to implement this undertaking. I then read an article asking for priests to apply to be a Missionary of Mercy for Pope Francis for the Year of Mercy. I filled out my application along with a letter from my Superiors and off it went.

I never thought I would ever be chosen. But we are constantly reminded in Sacred Scripture, ask, seek and you will find. After submitting the requirements I was asked, and then gave it to Our Lady.

What will be your role?

At our commissioning on February 10, 2016 we were instructed that our mandate is to preach mercy but most of all to hear confessions.

Pope Francis said he will be granting these Missionaries, "the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See." Who does this affect?

- 1. A person who throws away the consecrated species or takes or retains them for sacrilegious purpose (i.e. desecration of the Eucharist; Canon 1367 of the code of Canon Law, 1983).*
- 2. A priest who is in the act, on the occasion, or under the pretext of confession solicits a penitent to sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue (c. 1387).*
- 3. A confessor who violates the sacramental seal (c. 1388).*
- 4. A person who uses physical force against the Roman pontiff (c. 1370).*

How are these things different than the sins people usually confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

These actions are in a profound way against justice in the church, calling for a different kind of accountability so that the offender may be reformed and the scandal caused be healed. Their very existence in law provides a warning, acting as a preventative measure. The particular acts listed above involves an automatic (latae sententiae) excommunication which is a censure of medicinal penalty beckoning the person to correct the harmful behavior and through these means return to full and fruitful communion.

The Papal Bull says also that this authority will be conferred upon you by Pope Francis through the mandate. Does this mean you went to Rome?

Yes! Years ago I was blessed to go there to study at the Angelicum. What a very blessed time. And after all these years, I was invited back to meet Pope Francis which was awesome. On Tuesday, February 9, 2016 during the meeting, the Holy Father personally welcomed all of the Missionaries of Mercy and spoke about the sensitive nature of our service.

The next day, Ash Wednesday, we joined the Holy Father to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, and he conferred upon us the mandate. The relics of St. Padre Pio and St. Leopoldo Mandic, special patrons of confessors and of the confessional, were brought to Rome for this unique occasion.

Any final comments?

I wish to give thanks to Bishop Mulvey, Fr. Peter Marsalek, GPS, and Fr. Jerry Drolshagen, RPS, for time and thoughtful consideration. And special thanks to Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

Please pray for me!

The commissioning included a walk through the Holy Doors. As I walked through the Holy Doors, I was praying for all the people I have encountered in my life. Gifts are given not for ourselves but for the building up of the Church. So as we processed through the Holy Doors, I offered it for our community, families and friends.

This service is being offered by our Holy Mother Church, for people everywhere and all walks of life for a deeper understanding of God's Mercy. With the Missionary of Mercy Priests that Pope Francis has commissioned, our Church is in a unique and important way extending the arms of Mercy to all in a deeper way.

We must remember, the only sin that God will not forgive, is the one that's not confessed!

We must show Mercy to others, as the Father shows Mercy to us!

[- Back to Speakers Page -](#)

Damien & Marianne
Catholic Conference
Hawaii

P.O. Box 30625
Honolulu, HI 96820
Phone: 808-625-3622
Fax: 808-625-5680

Email: info@dmcchawaii.org



Write Us

Name *

Email *

Message

Send Us