



# " HERMANAS MENORES ENVIADAS COMO PEREGRINAS DE ESPERANZA Y DE RECONCILIACIÓN "

Herramientas de animación y oración para el  
Mes misionero 2025

## MISSIONARY VIGIL FOR RELIGIOUS 1 OCTOBER 2025

*by the Missio Foundation*

### INTRODUCTION

**leader:** In the Jubilee we are living, the memory of Saint Teresa of Lisieux, patron saint of the missions, officially opens the missionary month (which will culminate this year with the celebration on Sunday, October 19). Accepting the invitation expressed in the title of the next World Mission Day, "Missionaries of hope among peoples", we are invited to live community prayer, the first commitment of every true evangelizer. We are grateful to God for the existence of Thérèse de Lisieux, a consecrated young woman who in the Carmelite family was extraordinarily open to the world and generously devoted to prayer, to sustain the effort of anyone who dedicated himself to spreading the Gospel. Saint Teresa allowed herself to be converted by the Word of God and thus discovered the greatest call, that



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is, the vocation to love, which all of us are invited to offer  
to the Church and to the world!

### OPENING SONG

**Who leads the celebration: In the name of the  
Father... We always praise the Lord!**

**All: His mercy is eternal!**

### PFIRST part: MISSIONARIES

**Reader 1:** At the next World Mission Day, the first indigenous saint of Papua New Guinea will be canonized: Peter To Rot, born in 1912 in Rakunai, a tiny village in the province of East New Britain, in the northern region of the Papua Islands. Who was Peter To Rot?



Peter was the son of the village chief, destined to become the future leader of his clan once his father



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died. Peter will really become a great leader for his people, but not in the traditional sense of luluai (chief of the people), but in a truly innovative sense, a strong spiritual reference point. The Catholic faith had come "just" to New Britain, not yet Papua New Guinea, not yet independent, but considered a protectorate. Peter's father was one of the first natives to receive the sacrament of baptism, through the great, tireless and sometimes truly heroic work of the first European missionaries who at the end of the nineteenth century had brought the faith to these almost totally unknown lands. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, one of the most important missionary congregations in Papua and pioneers of its evangelization, were present in Rakunai, and Father Laufer had seen "something" in that child always present at catechism classes, peaceful but awake. As was very common in those years, he had proposed to Peter's father the priesthood for his son. But that father, surprisingly, had refused saying that "it was still too early for his people to have a local priest, better catechist". And so it was. The figure of the catechist in



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Papua New Guinea was widespread and important. We must not think with our modern European mentality: being a catechist meant giving oneself totally to the service of evangelization, walking from village to village, bringing the Eucharist guarded with great respect to the most remote areas and talking about God. In a culture where no one knew how to read and write, where the oral tradition is an integral part of culture, the Word was (and still is) announced: with words, with the coherence of life and example, sharing moments of prayer and charity.

Do we too today know how to kindle in our communities enthusiasm for the proclamation of the Gospel? Is the professed faith with lips really growing among us? Let us also learn from this young witness in the difficult years of dictatorship in Papua New Guinea.

**Brief time of silence, then the leader introduces the second part**



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### **Part Two: OF HOPE...**

**Reader 2:** The first missionaries had understood well the power of the laity in the process of evangelization, local laity, able to experience the love of God and express it as best as possible to their people, of a nature tendentially very reluctant to the new, to welcome the foreigner, suspect by nature, given the great rivalry and competition between peoples.

Peter To Rot begins collaborating with local missionaries to prepare his people for receiving the sacraments, he marries Paula, from whom six children are born (but two will die at an early age), "son of the chief", but above all in the perseverance and care it shows for the parishioners who are initiated to the faith, for the sick who receive their visits and the Eucharist, for young families.

**Brief time of silence, then we get up**



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### *Let us listen to today's Word: from the Gospel according to Saint Luke (9,57-62)*

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

### *Brief moment of recollection*

### **Third part: AMONG THE PEOPLE**

**Reader 3:** In its simplicity, as is the Gospel, Peter had understood that the sacredness and fidelity of marriage was not 'one more' debatable and negotiable of the Christian faith, but a reason to grow in the faith and to



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strengthen the couples who wavered, custodians of that wonderful and fruitful mystery which is God's love for his Church. Peter has done it with dialogue, with listening, with self-sacrifice, with the sacraments. Many times, faced with the difficulties of young couples, it is so simple to start judging, to dictate moralistic homilies that make it difficult to enter into the heart of the listener. Also as religious, although it is repeated that consecration does not put us on a higher plane than couples, too often in Papua the priesthood and consecrated life are seen, and lived, as special vocations, which give the "right" to know what God "thinks", wants and advises, in such a way that it allows too often to criticize, advise, judge. During the pilgrimage to Rakunai, the esplanade where Peter met with couples in secret to talk to them, listen to them and strengthen them in love was very impressive. He knew he was taking risks. but he did not back down. That esplanade is a meeting place, availability and acceptance, also self-sacrifice, not out of pride or vanity, but out of love. Because Peter understood well that when he loved, he was already



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living eternal life. The Japanese killed Peter, but he already lived in God.

Peter continued his apostolate in secret with extreme prudence, so as not to endanger the lives of the faithful, fully aware that this choice could cost him his life. A firm advocate of the sacramental bond of Christian marriage, he opposed the polygamy that the Japanese had allowed to ingratiate themselves with local tribes. He also challenged his older brother who chose the polygamous route, and he reported Peter's opposition to the police. For these reasons in 1945 he was arrested and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. During this time in prison he was only able to receive the visits of his mother and wife along with their two children. Treated more severely than the other prisoners, he died in prison in July 1945, killed by poisoning.

In Papua New Guinea where, due to the primitive and tribal culture, there is not much capacity for abstraction and logic, is a great message that of Peter To Rot: when you love and live in relation with God, the message of Christ passes directly through you and your gestures to



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those around you! We praise God for the lives that have borne witness to the gospel and that today encourage all of us, missionaries and consecrated women, to spend ourselves with fullness. Intercede for all of us Saint Peter!

As Jesus Christ has shown us with his liberating presence, with all his message and with the gift of his life offered by Love, we dare to say... Our Father.

**Leader to the celebration:** Let us bless the Lord!

**All:** Let us thank God

**FINAL SONG**