

Eileen Quinn Knight reviews *Challenging Western Christians and Their Neighbours*, December 2021 [Challenging Western Christians and Their Neighbors: Be participants in the mission of Jesus at home \(catholicprofiles.org\)](https://catholicprofiles.org)

The first aim of this booklet is alerting Western Christians, including myself. Soldiers are sometimes sent on mission. A comparison with Christians seems to be obvious, because they are also on mission. But that comparison is faulty. The mission of Christians lasts for the whole of their lives and it begins next door. The status of the Sender of Christians is also different from a military commander. He is Christ. He preceded them, let them participate in His mission, and He is always with them. Unlike the military practice, the working methods of Christians are not offensive or aggressive. As participants in Christ's mission, they serve the people in their context as 'pilgrims and priest'.

Non-Christian readers will also be among the readers. For two reasons. They can use the content to determine the effect Christians would like to have on them. It's always good to know what drives someone. The Book can also help them to check whether the Christians they know correspond to their intended identity, or whether they may appear not to be true Christians. Also good to know, especially when you feel urged to challenge them with questions. At this present time, the whole of humanity is vulnerable and dependent. This challenges the proud Western sentiment that we are able to make or control our own existence. The lesson for Western Christians and their neighbors is to draw nearer to one another and to God. A message similar to Our Holy Father Pope Francis.

Jesus knew that His disciples were weak and limited. They were unable to carry out this great task on their own. For that reason, in the preparatory phase, He had encouraged them to be assured that He was behind them with the omnipotence he had received from His sending Father (Mt.28:18). At the conclusion of the mission assignment, He promised that His omnipotence would remain available to them:" And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age' (Mt. 28:20)

Was it difficult for the disciples to remember 'everything' He had commanded them? Yes indeed. That is the very reason why the Holy Spirit is also involved in the great commission. At an earlier stage, Jesus had promised that the Holy Spirit would 'remind' them of all aspects of His commandments (John 14:26). Shortly after His resurrection, upon His first appearance to ten of the disciples, He had blown on them and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22) Soon the Spirit would fully manifest Himself. For that reason, finally, upon the

conclusion of the great commission and just before His ascension, Jesus said to them: 'But you will receive the power when the Holy Spirit comes on you' (Acts 1:8) With those added promises of His omnipotent support and the power of the Spirit, Jesus sent His disciples into the world. In today's world the priests, minister and pastors, who in theory are the most qualified to share the message because of their training and experience, may often be the least effective in reaching the lost, because people are suspicious of the clergy. They are more likely to trust the people that they know on a personal basis at work or in their neighborhood. If the 'ordinary' Christians of the congregation don't participate in mission, our communities will not be reached. No Christian should be overlooked in the mission of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit strengthens our missionary consciousness by giving confidence in the unlimited scope of Christ's work including the shedding of his atoning blood on the cross at Calvary. The Holy Spirit overcomes evasive attitudes and barriers or hindrances among Christians, which have weakened or paralyzed mission in the West. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the great commission of Jesus to participate in His work continues to address the hearts and the heads of all Christians of all times and places. As a result, by definition the congregation (the Church) is a missionary organism of the Holy Spirit, which has profound consequences for its organization as an institution and for the spiritual attitude of its members.