

**Rooted in tradition and empathically open to all people
Pope Francis' paradigm of mission**

Roberto Catalano

The paper wishes to attempt a critical approach to Pope Francis' perspective on mission by reading four main events which took place in the course of 2019.

First of all, the centenary celebration for *Maximum Illud*, offered pope Francis an opportunity to express his views on mission. Secondly, the trips to Abu Dhabi and Morocco, in the first half of the year, and the one to Thailand and Japan, in the second semester, were the contexts where Bergoglio opened new perspectives to the Catholic understanding of mission in the context of countries with a large Muslim majority and towards a part of the world with an ancient Buddhist heritage, where Christianity, apparently, made no headway. Thirdly, the Abu Dhabi *Declaration of Universal Brotherhood* offers a unique example on how religious leaders can cooperate in order to animate faithful of their respective religions to live accordingly to the Scriptures spirit. For the first time a pope signed a common document with a religious leader of another religion in order to work together for the spiritual and human upliftment of humanity. Finally, the special focus dedicated to the missionary month of October.

Drawing from these four events, the paper will try to understand the evolving model of mission in Pope Francis who appears to be committed to move from *missio ad gentes* towards a *missio cum gentibus*, passing through *missio inter gentes*, where his theology of people plays a key-role.