



A CALL TO PRAYER

3 August 2025

Summary:

This Message focuses on the urgent need for prayer and spiritual breakthrough in the ministry of IMPACTERS. The speaker, Bruce Downes, calls for a nine-day novena prayer, invoking the intercession of Saint Mary MacKillop. He emphasizes the importance of persevering prayer, spiritual formation, and trusting in God's provision to expand their global mission of proclaiming Jesus and forming disciples.

Key Points:

- The ministry needs breakthrough in resources, staff, and facilities
- A nine-day novena prayer is proposed, starting August 14th
- Saint Mary MacKillop is chosen as the spiritual patron for intercession
- The novena aims to align the community with God's will and form them spiritually
- The vision is to build a global, sacramental, and missional family rooted in Jesus
- Prayer is seen as the primary strategy for overcoming obstacles and expanding the ministry
- The community is called to be builders, not just enthusiastic supporters
- Hospitality and incarnational presence are emphasized as crucial for the mission

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 (Paul's desire to visit Thessalonica hindered by Satan)
- Luke 24:48-49 (Jesus instructs disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit)
- Acts 1:3-5 (Jesus appears to disciples and promises the Holy Spirit)

Stories:

- The "seat of disappointment" in a Chicago church, where people waited for invited guests who didn't show up
- Bruce Downes' encounter with the Sisters of St. Joseph and the realization of spiritual connection
- The life and mission of Saint Mary MacKillop, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph
- Personal anecdotes of people reaching out from various countries, showing the global impact of the ministry

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
(For Individual Reflection)

How might the concept of 'holy restlessness' apply to your own spiritual journey, and in what ways could it be calling you to grow or change?

What does it mean to you to be 'the kind of people through whom the world meets Jesus', and how might this shape your daily interactions and choices?

How do you understand the relationship between persevering prayer and spiritual formation, as exemplified in the practice of a novena?

In what ways does Mary MacKillop's life and mission resonate with the challenges and opportunities facing the church today?

How might the idea of 'ecclesial prayer' - prayer for the whole church and world - expand or challenge your current prayer practices?

What does it mean to you to build 'places of divine habitation', and how might this concept apply beyond physical spaces?

How do you balance the tension between trusting in God's provision and taking practical steps to address needs and challenges in ministry?

In what ways might the concept of 'spiritual poverty' be present in your own life or community, and how can it be addressed?

How does the idea of being part of a 'spiritual family' across nations and cultures challenge or inspire your understanding of Christian community?

What might it look like to cultivate 'radical hospitality' in your own life and relationships, making Jesus present through welcome and warmth?

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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Opening Prayer:

Pray the IMPACTERS prayer together as a group. Ask God to open your hearts and minds to His message and to guide your discussion.

Key Takeaways:

1. The ministry is at a point where breakthrough is needed, requiring focused prayer.
2. A novena - nine days of intentional prayer - is being called for, starting August 14th.
3. St. Mary MacKillop is being looked to as a spiritual patron and intercessor.
4. The novena will focus on specific intentions each day, aiming for both spiritual growth and practical provision.
5. The goal is to expand the ministry's impact globally while remaining rooted in God's presence.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you most from the message? Why?
2. Bruce mentioned feeling "restless" and sensing God is asking for more. Have you ever experienced a similar feeling in your spiritual life? How did you respond?
3. What are your thoughts on praying a novena? Have you ever participated in one before?
4. How do you feel about asking saints for intercession? Does this practice resonate with or challenge your understanding of prayer?
5. The message emphasized the need for "builders" not just enthusiastic supporters. What do you think distinguishes a "builder" in ministry?
6. Bruce spoke about hospitality as "incarnation" - making Jesus present. How can we practice this kind of hospitality in our daily lives?
7. What areas in your personal life or in our community do you feel need a "breakthrough"?
8. How does the idea of being part of a global spiritual family impact your view of your faith and role in the church?

Practical Applications:

- Commit to participating in the nine-day novena starting August 14th. Consider forming a small prayer group to do this together.
- Reflect on your own "holy restlessness." What might God be calling you towards?
- Practice intentional hospitality this week, focusing on making Jesus present in your interactions.
- Read more about St. Mary MacKillop and her work. How might her example inspire your own faith journey?
- Identify one area in your life where you need breakthrough. Share it with the group and pray for each other's intentions throughout the week.
- Consider your role in the ministry. Are you called to be more of a "builder"? What steps can you take to grow in this direction?
- Reach out to someone from a different cultural background in your church or community, seeking to build connections that reflect the global nature of the church.

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for His constant presence and love. Ask for His help in living fully in Him and being aware of His work in your life.