



OUR MISSION



PONTIFICAL
MISSION
SOCIETIES
South Africa, Botswana & eSwatini

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Dear fellow Missionary Disciples,

I am back from Rome after a fruitful and intense **General Assembly** of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS). This annual meeting is always uplifting in that one gets to observe in the participants the universality of the Church and the commitment and many amazing initiatives that are being realised in order to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all peoples (*missio ad gentes*). This Newsletter is jam-packed with the reports from: the Cardinal Prefect of CEP, the President of the PMS and the General Secretaries of the 4 PMS Societies. Apart from the information relating to the activities realised and the distribution of funds there are also important insights, suggestions and questions raised with regard to the future vision of the PMS and the *missio ad gentes* drive of the Church. The meeting with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on behalf of whom we carry out this work, is always a special moment for us, he is truly a person who leads by example and his humility and fatherly care inspire us in our work.

The **Message of Pope Francis** for this Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 (EMMOCT2019) is on pages 7 to 8. We are all invited to read and reflect on it in our homes, parishes and Small Christian Communities. **The liturgical texts and readings for Mission Sunday are on page 8.**

I remind you all of www.october2019.va the special **website created for EMMOCT2019** with an abundance of news, missionary animation material and useful information, all related to the celebration of this Missionary Month. *The Guide* is also available for downloading and is a treasure of reflections, insights and life-witnesses on Mission.

By now all Catholics, in response to the call by the Holy Father with regard to **EMMOCT2019**, should have begun the preparation and even celebration of activities at all levels in our dioceses. I eagerly await short reports with photos from dioceses, congregations, parishes, movements, sodalities and groups highlighting exactly what you are doing. These will be sent to the international website and



**General Assembly of the Superior Council of the Pontifical Mission Societies
Rome 2019**

Last Sunday we completed the Liturgical time of Easter with the celebration of Pentecost; the Risen Christ having entrusted to us the *Great Commission* (Mt 28:19-20) and returned to the Father, sends the Holy Spirit and the Church is born, a Church which exists in order to evangelise. The final instruction of Jesus to his Disciples before returning to the Father is to **proclaim to all nations the Good News of salvation** (cf Mk16:14-16 / Mt28:16-20/ Lk24:36-49 / Jn 20: 19-23). All the Baptised share in this commitment to be Missionary Disciples and the **Extraordinary Missionary Month called by Pope Francis** is an occasion to remind and motivate us in renewing our commitment to the **Mission to All Nations**. We must look beyond our families, parishes, dioceses, countries and continents and see the majority of humanity who have still not come to know the salvific and liberating message of Jesus Christ.

placed there to inform and encourage the Church at large. With regard to the "Singing the Mission" Video Song Competition for Children and Youth, I have received no entries to date from any diocese. All entries must reach me by 1 August 2019 in order to be taken into consideration.

Congratulations to our newly appointed Bishops: Abel Gabuza (Durban), Dabula Mpako (Pretoria), Frank Nubuasah (Gaborone) and Sylvester David (Auxiliary Cape Town), abundant blessings for your new ministries.

Our condolences and prayers accompany Witbank Diocese on the death of Bsp Joe Sandri - RIP.

Kind regards and blessings,

Gordon Rees

**Fr. Gordon Rees mccj - National Director
MISSIO SACBC / PMS -South Africa, Botswana & eSwatini**



**POPE'S MESSAGE TO THE PMS ASSEMBLY:
A renewed commitment
to the Church's missionary activity.**

The Holy Father Francis sent a message to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), underway in Rome. Below is the full text of the message.

"To dear Brother Mgr. Giampietro Dal Toso, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

On the occasion of the General Assembly of the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, I would like to address a cordial greeting, hoping that the work carried out these days may arouse a renewed commitment to the missionary action of the Church, called to proclaim the Gospel to every creature, awakening the awareness of the *missio ad gentes*. In this perspective, the celebration of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, next October, represents a propitious time to involve all the baptised in taking on, with greater responsibility and creative courage, the challenge that today's mission puts us: to become the paradigm and the form of the ordinary life of the Church and of all its pastoral activity (EG15).

I renew my gratitude to all those who belong to the Pontifical Mission Societies: you are the worldwide network of prayer and missionary charity of the Successor of Peter. Continue your fervent activity, which realises the indispensable universal duty of the Church to proclaim Jesus Christ to all and to bear witness to it, with apostolic zeal, to the ends of the earth. May the Holy Spirit support you. For my part, I accompany you with affection and my Blessing.
Francis. From the Vatican, 29 May 2019".

(Agenzia Fides 31/5/2019)



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**Cardinal Filoni at the PMS Assembly:
Extraordinary Missionary Month,
Catechist formation & Renewal**

The celebration of the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019, the formation of catechists in mission territories and the need to identify new forms of prayer, mission animation and fundraising for the *missio ad gentes*: these are the three themes addressed by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for

the Evangelization of Peoples and President of the Supreme Committee of the Pontifical Mission Societies, in his speech to the Annual General Assembly of the PMS, held at Fraterna Domus in Sacrofano (Rome) until 1 June.

The Cardinal, stressed first of all the importance of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV, which gave life to the "fruitful evangelical renewal of the ecclesial mission", whose centenary Pope Francis wanted to celebrate with an Extraordinary Missionary Month.

With his letter Pope Benedict XV wanted to achieve essentially three objectives, recalled Cardinal Filoni: "First of all he invited the whole Church and the local Churches, to take charge of the mission by not delegating it only to particular religious institutions and congregations. Secondly, to evangelically redevelop the mission meant for him to recall that the Church's mission has the sole and exclusive object of proclaiming the Gospel, faith and the witness of charity. The third aspect consisted in the explicit will of the Pope to break any undue union of faith and mission with colonial interests, with Eurocentric nationalist ideologies, which were very strong at that time".

For the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and even Pope Francis, by celebrating the centenary of this Apostolic Letter, the desire is basically to achieve three things: "firstly, an invitation to renew the mission as a baptismal commitment of all the faithful without leaving or delegating to missionary institutes only this fundamental dimension of the faith of the whole People of God; secondly, the mission must become the paradigm of ordinary life and of every action of the Church, finally, all Christians in their dioceses, parishes, movements and ecclesial groups, are asked to put themselves in a permanent state of mission".

The Cardinal then underlined the fundamental importance of Catechists in the life of the young Churches of mission territories, defining them "the key figure in the effort of evangelisation, especially in rural environments and communities". "They are responsible for many missionary communities entrusted to them by the Parish Priests and Bishops, they carry out the Sunday Liturgy of the Word very often with the distribution of the Eucharist, they are responsible for prayer and charity, they live with their family with their fellow Christians and non-Christians, members of the same village and civil community, preparing children and adults for the sacraments". When the catechists are "seriously committed, well valued and well formed, they are true Animators and Formators of the entire Christian community together with the Bishops, Priests and Permanent Deacons".



In the context of the social and ecclesial changes that also affect this ministry, "it is necessary to always discover new ways of being a Catechist" said Cardinal Filoni, who indicated the opportunity to entrust catechesis not only to a man or to a woman who is particularly available and prepared, but also to teams composed of men, women, families, young people, a permanent deacon, a religious man or a religious woman and even children. However, it is necessary to form these small teams of four or five so that "they can bring a true witness of Faith and of Church in the world".

To achieve this goal, local Churches must ensure adequate initial and ongoing formation of Catechists, chosen after careful discernment, must take care of formative structures and choose prepared formators. "The local Bishops with presbyters and Religious - he recommended - must seriously take care of these important and fundamental collaborators in the work of the mission of the Church in the territories entrusted to them". Cardinal Filoni then proposed a closer collaboration with the Bishops and the local Churches: "Respecting the different local needs and realities of each country, the National Directions of the particular Churches entrusted to CEP, in collaboration with the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Missionary Union, they could ordinarily interact with the formation process of the Catechists and thus regularly carry out our duty of missionary animation of the People of God. In this way their missionary formation service would reach the ordinary pastoral care of their Churches, would not develop in parallel, but would interact with the local needs of ecclesial formation for the mission. Catechists would receive adequate missionary formation in their preparation".

The last theme touched by the Cardinal in his speech concerned the need to "rethink the methods of prayer, mission animation and fundraising for the Pope's *missio ad gentes* together with the Particular Churches", in the context of "an authentic and radical reform of the PMS in the spirit indicated to us by the Holy Father in *Evangelii Gaudium*". In this regard he proposed to develop new forms of the presence of the PMS both at Marian shrines and other places dear to popular devotion as well as in the world of social media that are at the service of prayer and Faith formation. He then asked the International Secretariats of the four PMS to "begin a unitary process of discernment on their own methods for a central fundraising commitment": "The worrying decrease in funds, which the PMS receive and can distribute, therefore requires a new look on fundraising", he concluded.

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 28/5/2019) - changed slightly

Archbishop Dal Toso inaugurates the General Assembly of the PMS

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "Ours is a charism that the Church will always need. In fact the Church will always be missionary and therefore there will always be the need for all the People of God to support the mission of the Church. But times change and we must identify new forms of presence, according to the needs that arise". This is what Archbishop Giampietro Dal Toso, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) said this morning, opening the Annual General Assembly of the PMS, held at Fraterna Domus of Sacrofano (Rome), from today to 1 June 2019.

Summarizing the activity of the past year, Mgr. Dal Toso said that for him "it was first of all a year of knowledge, both of the Directors, and of the activity carried out. I must say that I am truly amazed and happy about the enormous work that is carried out by the National

Directions, especially in the field of animation. I admire the commitment of many Directors and by their zeal". Taking care of the formation of the National Directors and the staff of the National Directions was one of the priorities indicated by the General Assembly last year, the Archbishop recalled, who cited in this regard the three Seminars held, which integrate the three days of formation for the new Directors, "so that a change of the director does not compromise the work of the direction", and the drafting of brief guidelines for the new National Directors. Another important request was to nurture the relationship with the Bishops, "so in recent months I tried to meet the Bishops on several occasions", said Mgr. Dal Toso, citing the *ad limina* visits, when the various Bishops' Conferences come to Rome, and those in their national headquarters, in addition to meetings with a hundred Bishops present at the American Missionary Congress (CAM 5).

"Awareness raising efforts were made easier because of the celebration of the Extraordinary Missionary Month in October of this year - he continued. The preparation of this celebration required a lot of energy, but it was worth it, because the response overwhelming and very positive. It means that we can still count on the missionary sensitivity of a significant part of the Church".

The President of the PMS defined CAM as "a beautiful sign of missionary impulse for the whole American continent, with the participation of more than 2,500 delegates from all over America", the next CAM, which will be held in Puerto Rico, proposes to take into account the anniversaries of 2022: 400 years of the Congregation, 200 years of the PMS, 100 years of Pontifical recognition, to give the Missionary Congress a true imprint of *missio ad gentes*. "This is due to at least three reasons: it is important to distinguish - not separate - the ordinary pastoral care, from the *missio ad gentes*; there are vast areas of the Americas where *missio ad gentes* is still necessary; the *missio ad gentes* opens the particular Churches to a universal view".

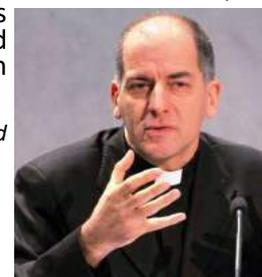
Thereafter Mgr. Dal Toso shared some of his concerns with the Assembly: the need to give a solid theological foundation to the missionary activity of the PMS and the negative trend of financial availability, which requires new methods of collection and financing to be able to continue to guarantee the PMS service.

Looking to the future, the Archbishop said, among other things: "We are moving towards a period of greater missionary intensity and missionary need, both in the classically *ad gentes* territories and in the territories of more ancient Christian tradition. The role of the PMS will therefore not diminish, but will grow, in order to keep the missionary spirit alive, of which the Church will always have the greatest need".

The continental meetings of the PMS were held on this topic, the results of which will be analysed and taken into consideration for future activities.

Moving on to introducing the work of the General Assembly, the Archbishop stressed the importance of mission theology, chosen as a "pastoral theme" because, he explained, "in my meetings with the missionary world I soon realized that more in-depth reflection on crucial issues is needed. Without a true reasoned motivation, even our animation activity remains limited".

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 27/5/2019) - changed slightly



PMS Assembly: Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith (PSPF)

"The task of the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Propagation of the Faith (PSPF) is to coordinate the efforts of the Society in its support for the spread of the Good News of the Risen Lord, encouraging Missionary Promotion at a local level and the prayer for the mission of the Church, as well as ensuring the equitable and responsible distribution of the funds collected each year by the People of God throughout the world and which are allocated for the Pope's Universal Solidarity Fund". This is what Fr. Tadeusz J. Nowak, OMI, Secretary General of POPF said in his report to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies, presented yesterday, May 30 2019.

Father Nowak, appointed Secretary in July last year for a five-year term, highlighted the harmony of a "missionary spirituality" constantly promoted by Pope Francis to arouse in the heart of all the baptised a deeper sense of Missionary Discipleship, with the charisma of the PSPF according to the intuition of its founder Pauline Jaricot: "Our work strongly encourages the participation of all the faithful in the evangelising mission of the Church, especially through prayer and charity". He then thanked the National Directors for their constant commitment to Missionary Promotion and formation of the local Churches through "many interesting and laudable initiatives" especially in view of the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019.

Moving on to the economic aspect, Fr. Nowak recalled that the Universal Solidarity Fund is set up with World Mission Sunday collections and other offerings collected especially by the National Directions. "In 2018 - he explained - significant decreases were recorded in certain parts of the world, while in other parts increases were recorded compared to the amounts recorded in 2017. In fact, this year the amount made available for the distribution of subsidies is about US \$ 7,000,000.00 less than last year's amount. For this reason, responding to the needs expressed by the Ordinaries for extraordinary projects and subsidies for catechists was truly a great challenge".

The most significant drop, of €5,013,443.20, was recorded in Europe. On the positive side there was an increase in funds raised in North America, with the United States of America registering a significant increase of US \$ 2,131,000.00 compared to last year, as well as in French-speaking Canada, with a increase of US \$ 85,915.36. The rest of the Americas recorded a decline of approximately US \$ 685,989.08 but four National Directions collections must still be added. Asia also registered a decrease in offers of US \$ 479,007.17, while Africa recorded an increase of US \$11,697.34.

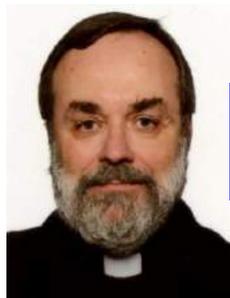
After focusing on various aspects related to the 2019 Budget, the General Secretary of the PSPF reported that the total sum of the ordinary and extraordinary subsidies proposed in the 2019 Assembly amounting to US\$64.463.745,37, will be distributed as follows: AFRICA US\$38.051.255.37 (59.03%), AMERICA US\$3.700.000,00 (5.74%), ASIA US\$20.138.050,00 (31.24%), EUROPE US\$ 228.540,00 (0,35%), OCEANIA US\$2,345,900.00 (3.64%).

Given the importance of greater transparency and financial responsibility, the Secretary General invited the National Directors of the countries that receive extraordinary subsidies "to organize pastoral visits to some places where these projects are being carried out. First of all, these visits would serve to encourage the beneficiaries to grow in Missionary Discipleship, in prayer and in charity for missions. Secondly, it would be an opportunity to observe the progress of the projects and be able to offer a brief reflection in this regard to the Secretary General. It would be very appropriate for such visits to be made at random,

always having the pastoral objective as a priority".

"Despite the significant decrease in the donations registered last year in Europe and in some parts of America and Asia - concluded Fr. Nowak - we are comforted and full of hope that the celebration of the Extraordinary Missionary Month will bring about a fruitful reversal of trend".

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 31/5/2019) - changed slightly



Fr. Tadeusz J. Nowak—PSPF



Fr Guy Bognan—PSSPA

PMS Assembly: Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle (PSSPA)

Faithful to its objectives of providing "quality formation" for future priests, the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle (PSSPA) continued its ordinary work on many levels, said Fr. Guy Bognon, P.S.S., appointed Secretary General of the Society in July last year, in the report presented on May 30 2019 to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

"With the aim of having an active part in the quality of formation in seminaries, PSSPA continues to consider the formation of Formators to be important", said Fr. Bognon, through in-depth meetings and scholarships. Formation sessions were organized for Formators from Portuguese-speaking Countries in Rome, as well as in Asia and Africa. In some Countries, annual meetings have been scheduled, while "in many other countries the will to organize this kind of formation clashes with the lack of financial resources. However, these sessions prove to be very important, even necessary if we want to continue to form good quality priests for the Church of today and tomorrow".

With regard to support for formation through scholarships, PSSPA supports some students at Catholic universities or institutes in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Belgium. Most are preparing to be Formators in seminaries or religious houses. This year their number is 302 priests and Religious, for a provisional total of US\$307,135.68. For two years, PSSPA has begun an experimental program for the benefit of future Formators (men and women Religious) belonging to diocesan congregations or religious institutes. For this academic year 2018-2019, scholarships were granted to 21 men and women religious (of Ghana, DR Congo, Malawi, Nigeria), as well as support for some special cases. For the year 2019-2020, 21 requests have already been received, not counting those of last year that will have to be renewed (21). "The formation programs of Formators are of paramount importance if we are to help the Church overcome the challenges of the quality and credibility of the consecrated people that it needs for its evangelising mission", commented Fr. Bognon.

PSSPA also continues its collaboration with the Centre of Child Protection (CCP) in financing the formation of priests and nuns chosen and presented by the Bishops' Conference of the Countries who fall under the responsibility of the *Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*. Each year, PSSPA finances the participation of 6 candidates for the diploma course organized at the Faculty of Psychology at the *Gregoriana University* of Rome, in order to prepare competent people in the field of Child Protection.

Fr. Bognon then reported that in 2018 PSSPA sent ordinary subsidies to a total of 737 seminaries (minor, preparatory and major). A total of US\$3,622,877.20 was sent to 383 minor seminaries — 47,556 seminarians. The number of preparatory seminarians supported was 4,703, in 125 Preparatory Seminaries receiving US\$1,360,115.77. A total amount of US\$11,215,321.59 in ordinary subsidiaries was sent to 229 major seminaries, for 24,500 major seminarians.

Also last year, PSSPA contributed with a total amount of US\$1,404,642.00 for the formation of novices in 1,200 novitiates: 2,882 male novices and 5,212 female novices for a total of 8,094 novices assisted.

For the realisation of the projects received and approved, concerning above all the construction of new seminaries or the restructuring and adaptation works of existing ones, in 2018 PSSPA distributed a total of US\$3,198,357.77 of in extraordinary subsidies.

"As one can easily see, priestly and religious vocations blossom in the so-called Mission Countries as a sign and fruit of the vitality of Faith and these regions are already turning into missionary countries - the General Secretary emphasised. The formation of the young people called, whose number increases every year, requires structures and infrastructure to which PSSPA assists with extraordinary subsidies". As for the expenditure forecast, the total budget foreseen for ordinary subsidies is US\$15,000,000.00. For extraordinary subsidies, a sum of almost US\$4,000,000.00 (US\$3,952,543.00) is expected, of which a part (US\$530,376.48) has already been paid for 19 projects.

Fr. Bognon concluded by recalling that in the year 2019, in which the Universal Church will celebrate the Extraordinary Missionary Month, there are some significant dates linked to the Society of St. Peter the Apostle : June 1: recalls the creation of the Society in 1889, 130 years ago. December 2, 2019 is the anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Society, 160 years ago. "Even if these dates do not constitute a jubilee - he said - we would like to suggest the National Directors to take the opportunity to celebrate PSSPA in various ways. In fact, in many countries the Society is still little known, even in the Seminaries".

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 31/5/2019)- changed slightly

PMS Assembly:

Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood (POSI)

"The Society of the Holy Childhood or Missionary Childhood promotes a human and Christian education; helps children develop a missionary spirit, urges them to share faith and material means, especially with the most needy children; promotes, encourages and supports missionary vocations. It is an instrument of growth in faith, also in a vocational perspective". This is what Sister Roberta Tremarelli, AMSS, Secretary General of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood (POSI) said in the report on the Society presented on May 30 2019 at the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

There are several challenges that the Society is facing today, and among these Sister Tremarelli mentioned: to educate children and adolescents in Values; to educate in sharing; to promote educational itineraries that propose different vocations, including missionary ones; to involve families in animation and formation; to give continuity to the journey lived in Holy Childhood through the formation of adolescents; to integrate the missionary dimension in the pastoral program of Christian education and formation.

Sister Roberta Tremarelli recalled the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Society, where "in different countries, almost everyone tried to emphasize this anniversary by proposing it as a common theme and

involving children, young people, teachers, catechists, dioceses, spreading the news also through the media". With regard to the Extraordinary Missionary Month, the Secretariat proposed each national Direction to promote the competition "Baptized and sent: singing the mission", in order to involve children and young people in this extraordinary celebration. "Often the great ecclesial events - she explained - concern adults, and children are not considered as direct recipients or as protagonists and so each institution must put into practice the creativity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to find a place in the Church for these children".

The General Secretary then highlighted her participation in some events: in Switzerland from 19 to 21 January for the 30th anniversary of the Star Singers, in the German canton; in Rwanda from February 23 to March 5 for the continental meeting of the National Directors and collaborators of the PMS; during her return back home she stayed in Brussels, and visited the PMS headquarters in Belgium; May 18 in Romania for the first celebration of Missionary Childhood Day. "After the General Assembly and the course for the new National Directors - she continued - I will leave for DRC Congo for three formation sessions with diocesan directors and animators of Holy Childhood in three ecclesiastical provinces of the country". Regarding the celebration of Missionary Childhood Day and the collection, Sister Roberta pointed out that despite the proposal of Pope Pius XII, this Day "is unfortunately not celebrated in some countries, because Bishops do not give it the right attention or because the National Direction does not propose it", and there are difficulties of various kinds with the collection, even if "some parishes and some dioceses, spontaneously, carry it out because they recognise its missionary foundation".

From the reports received, it appears that each PMS National Direction organizes assemblies and formation meetings for animators and coordinators of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence during the year, in this regard the Secretary General has invited "to persevere in formation" and to send the Secretariat the text files of the formation school for animators and the one for children, in order to be able to analyse and update them, so as to make them available for everyone.

After some clarifications regarding the presentation of the projects and the distribution of the subsidies, Sr. Roberta invited all to use, for the initiatives of animation and missionary promotion of POSI, "photos of children in groups, smiling, and to avoid photos in which children appear dirty and hungry, in tears or naked. Our aim - she underlined - is not to play on the emotions of those who see or read and thus get them to donate, but to involve the baptised in the *missio ad gentes* through prayer and cooperation, promoting support for particular churches because they are members of a single Body which is that of the Church".

Finally, the International Secretariat of POSI proposes "holiness" as a common annual theme for 2020, "a path to implement the gift received in Baptism to follow Jesus". "Age is not an obstacle to the achievement of sanctity - concluded Sister Roberta - and children can highlight it with their testimony of piety, fidelity and love for God".

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 1/6 /2019) - changed slightly



Sr Roberta Tremarelli — POSI >

PMS Assembly:

Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU)

"After three years of meetings, visits, listening, study and research of ecclesial elements that could help us in an attempt to formulate proposals for reform concerning the Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) and the International Centre for Missionary Animation (CIAM), I believe the time has come to face a first round of discussion and discernment": this is how Fr. Fabrizio Meroni, PIME, Secretary General of the Pontifical Missionary Union, Director of CIAM and Director of Agenzia FIDES, began his report presented May 30 2019 at the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies (see Fides 24/5/2019). The original charismatic intuition of PMU (31 October 1916) and the motivations that led to the creation of CIAM (31 May 1974), that is, the formation for the mission of the Church (*missio ad gentes*) and the missionary animation of the entire People of God, "Continue to remain the reason for their existence and the nature of their commitment", pointed out Fr. Meroni, who continued: "It is a question of finding new operating methods that express their renewed missionary and formative identity in the light of the teachings of the Vatican II and the post-conciliar Popes, in an ecclesial communion where the Successor of Peter and the organisms at his service can animate and sustain a fruitful relationship between the Universal Church and the Particular Churches".

The General Secretary then pointed out that "the educational commitments to the mission are called to overcome any reductive unilateral movement from the North to the South" and therefore "a reasonable formation for the mission (*missio ad gentes*) and a fruitful missionary animation must serve the needs of ongoing formation that the local Churches have. Our formative initiatives cannot be presented as a parallel activity, or of secondary importance, or of exotic and exclusive interest for missionaries only. By ongoing formation we mean everything that can interest growth, development, purification, solidity, the growth of Christian faith understood as a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, an affective and intelligent relationship with him in the Church, a communion of brothers and sisters". In this perspective, PMU and CIAM are therefore called "to propose a missionary formation together with the particular Churches, which stimulate them to the need to assume their missionary responsibility towards their own peoples and lands, towards distant peoples and distant cultures. A formative service which, while showing itself to be useful to local needs, continues to stimulate, provoke and induce reflections, actions and commitments that seriously take the relationship of mission that exists between faith and the world, between the Church and peoples with their cultures and religions. PMU and the CIAM are placed not only at the service of the local Churches, but together with the latter, they serve the only *missio ad gentes* of the Church towards the whole world". Fr. Meroni therefore highlighted some areas to be favoured in this journey of rethinking of the PMU and CIAM. First of all the Catechists, who in the local Churches "are the main actors in the work of evangelization". PMU could start collaborating with the local Churches in the initial and ongoing formation process of the catechists, who are "baptised faithful who live the ordinary dimension of the Church's mission in their ministry". In this way PMU "could animate missionaries and open horizons on the *missio ad gentes* of catechists and their formators. In this way missionary animation would not be a parallel and marginal activity in ecclesial life, but fully inserted within the real needs and concrete demands of the local community".

Young people, families, the world of work, as well as the media, traditional and social networks, represent many fields of attention, formation and missionary animation.

"Re-focusing Christian formation on a renewed Catholic theology of mission, together with interreligious dialogue open to the encounter with cultures, is part of the concerns of ongoing missionary formation", said Fr. Meroni.

"Being part of the ongoing formation of the clergy, especially diocesan, in agreement with the local Churches, presents itself as another great challenge and opportunity for missionary formation to which the PMU can contribute: serving an urgent local need under the direction of local priests and collaborate in the requalification of priestly life, opening it to the Catholic and missionary dimensions of the Christian faith and the priestly ministry".

For those who live in consecrated life, the PMU local formation activity should be particularly dedicated to the religious communities of consecrated men and women, locally founded and still of diocesan right: "PMU could collaborate with local Ordinaries and religious leaders for ongoing formation which, in the light of the Church's mission, helps to discern the authenticity of the charism, the fruitfulness of the apostolate and personal sanctification thanks to the charism".

(SL) (Agenzia Fides, 1/6/2019) - changed slightly



< Fr Fabrizio Meroni – PMU

The Church of Christ on Mission in the World

- Sibhabhadiwe begodu sithunyiwe
- NgeMbabhatiso sifunyiwe
- Kolobetso le thomo
- Ochrzczeni i postani
- Gedoop en gestuur
- Baptisés et envoys

- Olovhedzwa a rumiwa
- Batizados e enviados
- Getauft und gesandt
- Battezzati e inviati
- Ka Tlhatso re barumuwa
- Sibhabhadiwe futhi sithunyiwe
- Hi khuvuriwile kutani hi rhumiwile
- Bautizados y enviados
- Siphehlelewe kwaye sithunyelwe
- Re kolobeditšwe me re romilwe



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Message of the Holy Father for World Mission Month

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For the month of October 2019, I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV (30 November 1919). Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

The title of the present Message is the same as that of October's Missionary Month: **Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World**. Celebrating this month will help us first to **rediscover the missionary dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ**, a faith graciously bestowed on us in baptism. Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life. This divine life is not a product for sale – **we do not practise proselytism – but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission**. We received this gift freely and we share it freely (cf. Mt 10:8), without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation (cf. 1 Tim 2:4; *Lumen Gentium*, 48).

The Church is on mission in the world. Faith in Jesus Christ enables us to see all things in their proper perspective, as we view the world with God's own eyes and heart. Hope opens us up to the eternal horizons of the divine life that we share. Charity, of which we have a foretaste in the Sacraments and in fraternal love, impels us to go forth to the ends of the earth (cf. Mic 5:4; Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:18). **A Church that presses forward to the farthest frontiers requires a constant and ongoing missionary conversion**. How many saints, how many men and women of faith, witness to the fact that this unlimited openness, this going forth in mercy, is indeed possible and realistic, for it is driven by love and its deepest meaning as gift, sacrifice and gratuitousness (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-21)! **The man who preaches God must be a man of God** (cf. *Maximum Illud*).

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptised man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God's love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God's love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, **God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life** (cf. Eph 1:3-6).

This life is bestowed on us in baptism, which grants us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, the conqueror of sin and death. **Baptism gives us rebirth in God's own image and likeness, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church**. In this sense, baptism is truly necessary for salvation for it ensures that we are always and everywhere sons and daughters in the house of the Father, and never orphans, strangers or slaves. What in the Christian is a sacramental reality – whose fulfilment is found in the Eucharist – remains the vocation and destiny of every man and woman in search of conversion and salvation. For

baptism fulfils the promise of the gift of God that makes everyone a son or daughter in the Son. We are children of our natural parents, but in baptism we receive the origin of all fatherhood and true motherhood: no one can have God for a Father who does not have the Church for a mother (cf. *Saint Cyprian, De Cath. Eccl.*, 6).

Our mission, then, is rooted in the fatherhood of God and the motherhood of the Church. The mandate given by the Risen Jesus at Easter is inherent in Baptism: as the Father has sent me, so I send you, filled with the Holy Spirit, for the reconciliation of the world (cf. Jn 20:19-23; Mt 28:16-20). **This mission is part of our identity as Christians**; it makes us responsible for enabling all men and women to realise their vocation to be adoptive children of the Father, to recognise their personal dignity and to appreciate the intrinsic worth of every human life, from conception until natural death. Today's rampant secularism, when it becomes an aggressive cultural rejection of God's active fatherhood in our history, is an obstacle to authentic human fraternity, which finds expression in reciprocal respect for the life of each person. Without the God of Jesus Christ, every difference is reduced to a baneful threat, making impossible any real fraternal acceptance and fruitful unity within the human race.

The universality of the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ led Benedict XV to call for an end to all forms of nationalism and ethnocentrism, or the merging of the preaching of the Gospel with the economic and military interests of the colonial powers. In his Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, the Pope noted that **the Church's universal mission requires setting aside exclusivist ideas of membership in one's own country and ethnic group**. The opening of the culture and the community to the salvific newness of Jesus Christ requires leaving behind every kind of undue ethnic and ecclesial introversion. Today too, **the Church needs men and women who, by virtue of their baptism, respond generously to the call to leave behind home, family, country, language and local Church, and to be sent forth to the nations, to a world not yet transformed by the sacraments of Jesus Christ and his holy Church**. By proclaiming God's word, bearing witness to the Gospel and celebrating the life of the Spirit, they summon to conversion, baptise and offer Christian salvation, with respect for the freedom of each person and in dialogue with the cultures and religions of the peoples to whom they are sent.

The *missio ad gentes*, which is always necessary for the Church, thus contributes in a fundamental way to the process of ongoing conversion in all Christians. Faith in the Easter event of Jesus; the ecclesial mission received in baptism; the geographic and cultural detachment from oneself and one's own home; the need for salvation from sin and liberation from personal and social evil: all these demand the mission that reaches to the very ends of the earth.



October
2019

**The CHURCH of CHRIST
on MISSION in the WORLD**

The providential coincidence of this centenary year with the celebration of the Special Synod on the Churches in the Amazon allows me to emphasise how the mission entrusted to us by Jesus with the gift of his Spirit is also timely and necessary for those lands and their peoples. **A renewed Pentecost opens wide the doors of the Church, in order that no culture remain closed in on itself and no people cut off from the universal communion of the faith.** No one ought to remain closed in self-absorption, in the self-referentiality of his or her own ethnic and religious affiliation. The Easter event of Jesus breaks through the narrow limits of worlds, religions and cultures, calling them to grow in respect for the dignity of men and women, and towards a deeper conversion to the truth of the Risen Lord who gives authentic life to all.

Here I am reminded of the words of Pope Benedict XVI at the beginning of the meeting of Latin American Bishops at *Aparecida*, Brazil, in 2007. I would like to repeat these words and make them my own: "Yet what did the acceptance of the Christian faith mean for the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean? For them, it meant knowing and welcoming Christ, the unknown God whom their ancestors were seeking, without realizing it, in their rich religious traditions. Christ is the Saviour for whom they were silently longing. It also meant that they received, in the waters of Baptism, the divine life that made them children of God by adoption; moreover, **they received the Holy Spirit who came to make their cultures fruitful, purifying them and developing the numerous seeds that the incarnate Word had planted in them**, thereby guiding them along the paths of the Gospel... The Word of God, in becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, also became history and culture. The utopia of going back to breathe life into the pre-Columbian religions, separating them from Christ and from the universal Church, would not be a step forward: indeed, it would be a step back. In reality, it would be a retreat towards a stage in history anchored in the past" (*Address at the Inaugural Session, 13 May 2007: Insegnamenti III, 1 [2007], 855-856*).

We entrust the Church's mission to **Mary our Mother**. In union with her Son, from the moment of the Incarnation the Blessed Virgin set out on her pilgrim way. She was **fully involved in the mission of Jesus**, a mission that became her own at the foot of the Cross: the mission of cooperating, as Mother of the Church, in bringing new sons and daughters of God to birth in the Spirit and in faith.

I would like to conclude with **a brief word about the Pontifical Mission Societies**, already proposed in *Maximum Illud* as a missionary resource. The Pontifical Mission Societies **serve the Church's universality as a global network of support for the Pope in his missionary commitment by prayer, the soul of mission, and charitable offerings from Christians throughout the world.** Their donations assist the Pope in the evangelization efforts of particular Churches (the Pontifical **Society for the Propagation of the Faith**), in the formation of local clergy (the Pontifical **Society of Saint Peter the Apostle**), in raising missionary awareness in children (Pontifical **Society of Missionary Childhood**) and in encouraging the missionary dimension of Christian faith (**Pontifical Missionary Union**). In renewing my support for these Societies, **I trust that the extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 will contribute to the renewal of their missionary service to my ministry.**

To men and women missionaries, and to all those who, by virtue of their baptism, share in any way in the mission of the Church, I send my heartfelt blessing.

Vatican, 9 June 2019, the Solemnity of Pentecost. -
FRANCIS

LITURGICAL PRAYERS & READINGS FOR MISSION SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER 2019:

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: 19:2-5

"All the earth proclaims the glory of God."

2nd Reading: Revelation 1:3-8

Gospel Acclamation: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that he who believes in him will have eternal life.

Gospel: John 17:11. 17-23

Opening Prayer

God our Father, you desire all men and women to be saved and come to the knowledge of your truth. Send workers to your harvest that the Gospel may be preached to every creature. May your people, gathered together by the word of life and strengthened by the power of the sacraments, advance in the way of salvation and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Universal Prayer

Celebrant: Jesus calls us to go to all nations, to proclaim His Gospel and to build His Church. On this World Mission Sunday, as all local churches unite in prayer and sacrifice at the Table of the Lord, we ask God's blessing that, through our prayers and offerings, the "Good News" of Jesus may be proclaimed to all the world.

For our Holy Father, Pope Francis and for all missionaries who give their lives to tell the glory of the Lord to the world, that they may be loving, wise and holy witnesses of Christ, our Saviour, Lord hear us.

For the leaders of nations, that they may be committed to justice for all peoples and dedicated to building a world at peace, Lord hear us.

For those who are ill or who live in spiritual loneliness, that they may unite their sufferings with the Crucified Christ for the redemption of the world, Lord hear us.

For an increase in our own missionary spirit, so that, nourished by the Eucharist, we may help the message and love of our Lord be made known in every corner of the world, Lord hear us.

[Parish intentions for the sick and for those who have died, and others as appropriate]

Celebrant: God our Father, You bless us with the gift of faith. Increase our faith as we answer the call to take part in the worldwide mission of Your Son, building Your Church and loving our neighbour and living our call as Missionary Disciples. We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world. Amen.

Prayer Over the Gifts

Lord, the suffering and death of Christ your Son won salvation for the world. May the prayers and gifts of your Church come before you and be pleasing in your sight. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Communion Antiphon

Go and tell the people all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.

Prayer After Communion

Lord, make us holy by the Eucharist we share at your table. Through the sacrament of your Church may all peoples receive the salvation your Son brought us through his suffering and death, for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Solemn Blessing *Bow your heads for God's blessing.*

P. May the Lord protect you always and free you from every evil.

R. Amen.

P. May he inspire you to proclaim and witness the Good News.

R. Amen.

P. May he bless your endeavours for the spread of the Gospel.

R. Amen.

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, † and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.