



# MISSIONS TODAY

Vol. 74, No. 2

Spring 2016

**Timor Leste – Most Catholic  
Country in the World?**

**Project Reports from Zambia  
and Nigeria**

**Venerable Pauline Jaricot  
– A Catholic for Our Time**

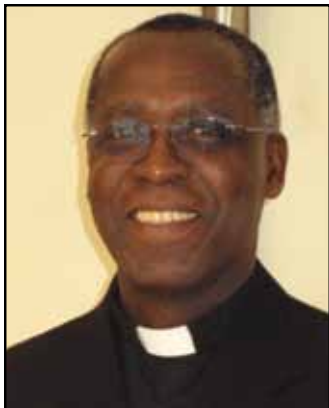
**Girls' Education returns to  
the Swat Valley in Pakistan**

IGREJA PAROQUIAL  
de Sta. TERESINHA  
do MENINO JESUS

*The Society for the Propagation of the Faith*

# National Director's Message

Mission Today Message Spring 2016



**"Faith in God... is a gift from God to be shared; it is a talent, which must bear fruit; it is a light that should not be hidden."**  
**Pope Benedict XVI**

The year 2016 promises to be a reflective one for the Universal Church. Life, Family, and Mercy are prominent themes this year as seen with the decree allowing women to participate

in the washing of feet ritual.

In the course of the Church's life, the family has assumed special significance: "So great was his love that God began to walk with mankind, he began to walk alongside his people, until the right time came and then he gave the greatest demonstration of Love: His Son. And where did he send his Son? To a city, to a palace, to an office building? He sent him to a family. The church is celebrating the Holy Year of Mercy, a time of Grace, Peace, Conversion and Joy. We are reminded that there is no distance or wall which can prevent the father's mercy from reaching and embracing us. The Holy door was opened in Rome and all the dioceses of the world. In June, the Church will celebrate the Jubilee for priests which will be held in Rome from Wednesday, June 1 to Friday June 3 2016, ending on the 160th Anniversary of the institution of the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This year the Church calls us to be missionaries like Jesus. The interior principle of a missionary vocation of the Gospel is the awareness of being called and sent by the Lord. From Christ Jesus, the missionary of the father, we learn the style of life and mission. The first task that Jesus assigns to those who have been called is that of "Being", staying with him. Jesus then becomes the cen-

ter of attraction so that everything revolves around him. As Pope Paul VI expressed: "let us preserve the fervour of the Spirit. Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is necessary to sow in tears..." (Evangelii Nuntiandi 80).

In this spring issue, we want to share with you the story of Pauline Jaricort, a young lady who thought of a Society, who conceived it and made it an organized reality – The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Pauline's vision for the Society was that all missions be treated equally, with no one area taking precedence over another. To this day her vision continues to be the guiding principle for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In addition, this edition shares with you, our supporters and friends, the statistical review of the missionary church in the world, along with the 500th anniversary of the introduction of Roman Catholicism in East Timor (Timor Leste). We also share with you some project reports we received from the Archdiocese of Kaduna – Nigeria and the Episcopal conference of Zambia. The story of the repaired catechist house, the construction of additional classrooms for a local primary school, reconstruction of a burnt presbytery and Catholic Media Services in Zambia tell it all. Thank you so much.

Along with this popular section you will find Holy Childhood project reports made possible in India and South Sudan because of your tremendous generosity. This year over 150,000 children are being assisted. You are the HOPE of these children! As you set goals for yourself, consider how you might share the "good news" with others. How will you help create a missionary awareness of the needs of the missionary church in your community? Know that we are here to support your missionary work in the spread of the Gospel.

Wishing You God's continued blessings.

**Rev. Fr. Alexander Osei, C.S.Sp**  
National Director.

## Missionary Prayer Intentions

**MARCH – Persecuted Christians:** That Christians, who are discriminated or persecuted because of their faith, may remain strong and faithful to the Gospel, thanks to the incessant prayer of the Church.

**APRIL – African Christians:** That Christians in Africa may bear witness of love and faith in Jesus Christ amid political and religious conflicts.

**MAY – Holy Rosary:** That the custom of praying the Holy Rosary for evangelization and peace may be passed on to families, communities, and groups

## Remembering the Missions in your Will

Help the missionaries of the future through

- a specific bequest **amount**
- **securities** bequest
- all or part of the **residue** of your estate
- **real property** (e.g. a building) bequest

**In your Will use our legal name:**

**The Society for the Propagation of the  
Faith for Canada, English Sector**

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*Crab apple blossoms – Photo by Pippalou, morguefile.com*



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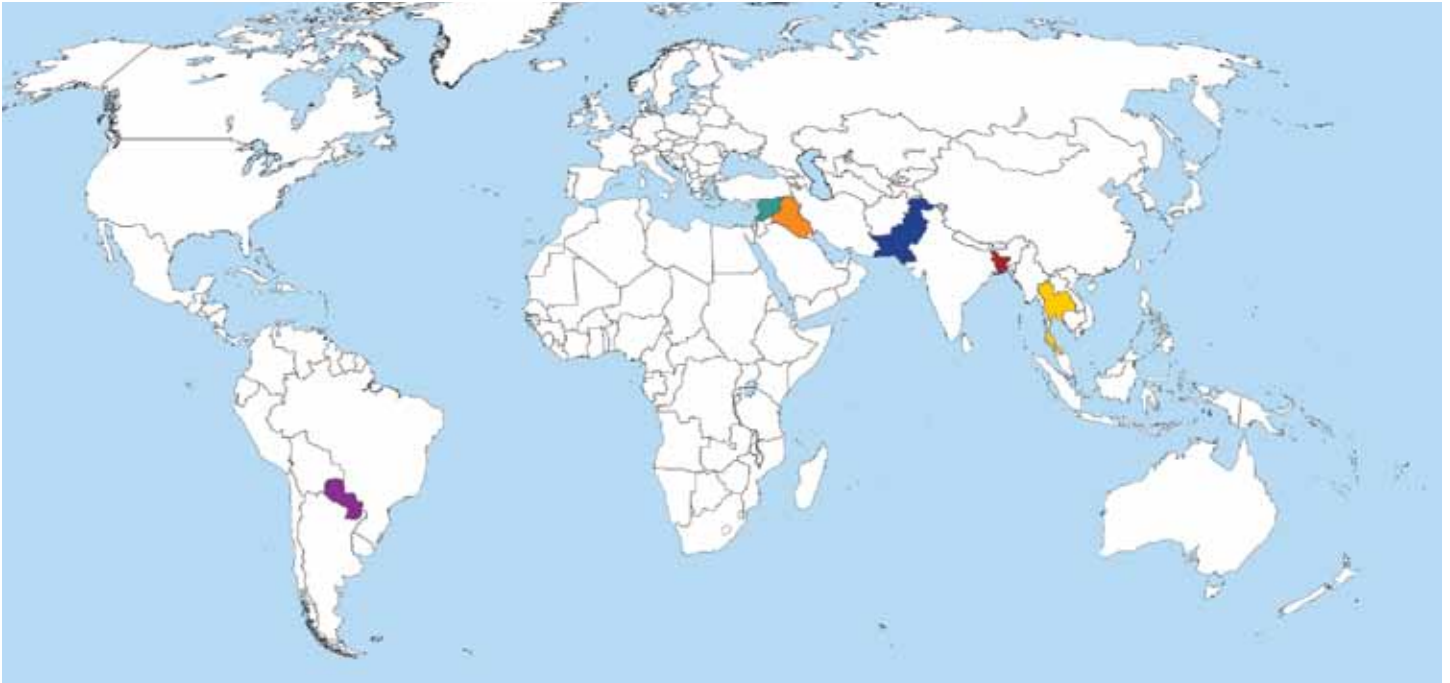
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# Across the Globe



## ■ SYRIA - New church among the ruins in Damascus: "a Christmas of Resurrection"

Damascus - In the midst of the ruins and destruction and after three years of war, a new Maronite church will rise in Damascus. It will be inaugurated on January 8, in the district of Kachkoul, on the east outskirts of Damascus, and will be dedicated to the Blessed Massabki Brothers, martyrs of Damascus, killed in 1860.

Mgr. Samir Nassar, Maronite Archbishop of Damascus, calls the event "a true gift of Christmas: it will be an oasis of prayer and a sign of joy and hope in the midst of a world of violence, intolerance and fear".

"In the midst of the ruins, this new chapel looks like the star of the Magi, which leads to the Divine Child", he remarks.

"Despite the war, despite the serious social and economic problems, our priests and faithful have launched projects to develop chapels in three districts in Damascus. This is the first. These places are needed to strengthen the community of the faithful, to organize meetings and catechesis on the Bible and evenings of prayer and fraternity. "

"Building a church in times of war and desolation", the Archbishop concludes, "expresses the desire to win death and the courage to live faith. Our brave faithful have chosen to remain in the city, to go against the tide and put their trust in Jesus Christ, in this dark night. This year Christmas in Damascus will also be a celebration of Resurrection". *This is an edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 12/22/2015.*

## ■ PARAGUAY - Two million faithful on the occasion of the feast of the patroness Saint of Paraguay

Caacupé - Nearly two million faithful, according to police estimates, gathered between Monday 7 and Tuesday, 8 December, around the Basilica of Our Lady of Miracles in Caacupé, ( about 50 kilometers east of Asuncion) to celebrate the feast of the Patroness of Paraguay. The Mass's main celebration was presided by the Bishop of Caacupé, His Exc. Mgr. Claudio Gimenez Medina Catalino

The pilgrims arrived on foot, knees, carrying crosses, or on horseback or on carts with oxen, showing their devotion to the Virgin.

This year for the first time the association of cyclists participated, with several hundred members, and even a group from Hernandarias, on the border with Brazil, that carried out a two-day trip to travel 300 km. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 12/09/2015.*

## **BANGLADESH - Missionaries escorted, but social work continues**

Dinajpur - "After the attack against PIME missionary Father Piero Parolari, the police patrol the missions in Dinajpur, and we can go out only with an escort. It is a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, and we hope it does not last long", reports Father Franco Cagnasso, PIME missionary in Bangladesh.

"This episode is added to others which are similar, perhaps caused by the intention of destabilizing the government affecting foreigners living in Bangladesh. It is part of a tense and deteriorated situation".

"Then, gradually, violence calmed down, which allowed to return to a normal life" also for missionaries and religious.

Father Cagnasso goes on to outline the social work carried out by PIME that is now returning to some sense of normalcy. "At the Assistance Center in Rajshahi, the sick have started to come again, while in Snehanir, in the 'House of tenderness', there are about 30 boys and girls with limb problems and now 15 children with hearing and sight problems have been added".

Furthermore, "the school in the slums of Dhaka has made great progress: by using old computers donated by schools for foreigners, computer courses are organized for fifth grade girls, with excellent academic results", he notes.

"The hostel for boys and girls 'Hill Child Home', in the south of the country – he continues – has inaugurated two dormitories, female and male. Unfortunately tension remains among the aborigines, such as the young people present, and Bangladeshis, due to land disputes. The tense situation offers the authorities an excuse to deny foreigners (access to) those areas".

Father Cagnasso has concluded his four year term as Superior of PIME missionaries in Bangladesh, and returns to carrying out pastoral service in a parish in Dhaka, where they he will deal with the formation of a group of college students who show interest in becoming missionaries. *This is an edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 9/12/2014.*

## **IRAQ – The Faith Endures: 400 young Christians take part in Kirkuk Youth Day**

Kirkuk– Some 400 Christian boys and girls belonging to different confessions took part in a Youth Day organized in Kirkuk by the local Chaldean Catholic archdiocese. The event, held on 17 October, was held in the Chaldean Catholic Cathedral dedicated to Saint Joseph. From morning to late in the evening the kermis included Bible reflections, shared prayers, theatre plays, team games, conferences with questions and answers, as well as free time, to conclude with a torchlight procession and a display of fireworks. Spiritual reflection was offered by preachers and theologians of several different Christian churches. Kirkuk has been the focus of intense fighting between Islamic State jihadist fighters and its Peshmerga defenders. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 10/23/2015.*

## **THAILAND - The parishioners of San Marco reach out to the abandoned, the poor, the elderly**

Bangkok - Father Adriano Pelosin, PIME missionary engaged for many years in Thailand, shares with Agenzia Fides some of his experiences. "I would like to give you some news regarding San Marco parish where I have been a pastor for two and a half years. After many difficulties the Holy Spirit created a small community of about twenty parishioners who every Sunday at three in the afternoon gather to read (and comment) on the Gospel of the day, and then about four o'clock until six they go to those neighborhoods in the city of Pathumthani where the most abandoned live: the elderly, orphans, alcoholics, drug addicts, people who are paralyzed etc.... They go with joy and they come back with even more joy. Those who we go to visit are all Buddhists. In December, every Saturday and Sunday evening, we visit all the Catholic families in the parish: about 50. We bring the statue of the Child Jesus, we read the biblical readings of Advent, we pray together, and we exchange Christmas wishes. This is a tradition which is deeply felt in all the parishes in Thailand. This year there are 16 adults who are preparing to be baptized at Easter 2016. Five parishioners follow the catechumens throughout the process of preparation. Activities for children and the elderly continue in Wat Sake, Lat Lum Keo, Soi Som Prasong and Ko Ping and we also continue to visit the prisoners of our communities", says the missionary.

Although there have been difficulties, these in particular "have taught me humility and trust in God", concluded Father Pelosin, while the moments of joy "made me open my heart to gratitude and surprise". *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 12/10/2015.*

## **PAKISTAN - Five new Franciscan monks to bring the Gospel in the "land of the Taliban"**

Lahore - In an area marked by violence and intolerance and by those groups of "Pakistani Taliban" known for terrorist acts that target religious minorities, five new followers of St. Francis of Assisi will bring the proclamation of the Gospel.

The five Capuchins made their solemn profession on September 18 in the Church of St. Francis in Lahore. The ceremony was attended by priests, nuns and 200 lay people.

The Franciscans in Pakistan are about 600 men and women, religious and laity. They live "the spirit of Assisi", synonym for meeting and reception towards every man, in a land where life for Christians is marked by discrimination and suffering. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 09/24/2015.*



# “to truly help others is to bring them to God”

## Venerable Pauline Jaricot – a Catholic Leader for Our Times

By P. Coady

In 1962, St. John XXIII conferred upon Pauline Jaricot the honour, “Venerable”, recognizing both her virtuous life and her passion for bringing the Good News to not only those in mission lands but also to her own country of France. John XXIII said of Pauline Jaricot that, “it was she who thought of the society, who conceived it, and made it an organized reality”. The society of which he spoke is The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Pauline Jaricot was born in the city of Lyons, France, in 1799 into a well to do family, the youngest of seven children. In her early years, thanks to the thriving silk business of her father, she lacked for nothing. However, the world around her was a scene of great

Pauline was greatly influenced by visiting missionaries who related accounts of the great faith expressed by the newly converted in mission lands. She searched for a way to bring the same level of zeal and ardour to her home country and came up with a simple plan which involved small groups of people donating one sou (a penny) to support missionary work and education both at home and abroad. This was to be the start of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Pauline later wrote of her idea, “. . . it astonished me that no one had thought of such a simple scheme before. Then I wrote to my brother (a priest, ed.) to tell him of the scheme.”



*Image of Pauline Jaricot 1799-1862  
courtesy of catholictradition.org.*

**“Oh! I’d love to have a well of gold to give some to all the unfortunate, so that there would not be any more poor people at all and that no one would cry anymore.”**

**-Pauline Jaricot**

*Sources: catholictradition.org and onefamilyinmission.org*

social and religious upheaval. The terrible scars of the French Revolution and the subsequent attacks on Roman Catholicism were felt across France. Napoleon Bonaparte had involved the country in a series of wars that involved most of Europe and which eventually led to the defeat of France in 1814. In the same year, Pauline Jaricot suffered a serious fall, the results of which were to afflict her for many years after. Then, in 1816, as a result of the influence of her spiritual advisor, Abbé Wurtz, Pauline experienced a “St. Francis of Assisi moment”. At the age of 17, she gave up her fine clothes and lifestyle and devoted herself to serving the poor and sickly, spending much time in the Hospital for the Incurables.

Interestingly enough, her first sponsors were poor factory girls in her father’s business who could barely afford the donation, but did so nonetheless. Pauline organized them into what became known as “circles of 10”, with the idea being that each circle would reach out to others to inform them of mission work and to ask them for support. Once numbers were sufficient, they in turn would form their own circle of 10. In a few years, she had over 1,000 sponsors for her project. Two of the major mission countries that received support were China and the United States.

Pauline’s vision for the society was that all missions were to be treated equally, with no one area taking precedence over another. To this day, her vision continues, under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.



*The family chapel inside the Jaricot home.*

*Photo by Rartat, Wikimedia.org*



*Entrance to the Jaricot house in Lyon.*

*Photo by Rartat, Wikimedia.org*

# The Missionary Church in the World:

## A Statistical Review

### The Editor

Last October, as part of the World Mission Sunday, the Vatican released statistics on the state of the global missionary Church. These statistics are taken from the *Church's Book of Statistics* which was released in December 2013, and they represent the latest and most up-to-date information available. *Missions Today* presents them in an abridged form in hopes of stimulating reflection and discussion.

### Catholics as a percentage of world population

There are 1.3 billion Catholics world-wide making up 17.7% of the world's population. The continents that saw the greatest growth were The Americas (North, Central and South are combined) and Africa.



*Guayaquil Cathedral, Ecuador.*  
Photo by Alfred Molina [CC-SA-BY-3.0],  
Wikimedia.org

### Mission Stations

A mission station is the residence of a missionary. Given the situation, a diocesan priest could be considered missionary in nature, particularly if he services more than one church or parish due to a local shortage of priests. Such situations occur worldwide, including

first-world countries like Canada. The number of mission stations with a resident priest increased slightly, while the number of mission stations lacking a resident priest increased substantially. The areas of greatest need were in Africa and the Americas.

**Priests** - The total number of priests in the world increased for a worldwide total of 415,348. Europe once again saw the greatest decline in the number of priests with Africa showing the greatest increase.

**Permanent Deacons** - Interestingly, the greatest increases in Permanent Deacons were seen in the Americas and Europe. The same two areas also accounted for the greatest increases in Permanent Diocesan Deacons.

**Men and Women Religious** - Overall, the numbers show a decline. Drastic reductions in women religious in Europe and the Americas offset the modest gains seen in Africa and Asia.

**Lay Missionaries and Catechists** - The number of lay missionaries showed an increase on every continent, with particular good growth in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Catechist numbers showed significant increases in Africa and Asia but these numbers were offset by dramatic declines in Europe.

**Major Seminarians** - The number of major seminarians declined everywhere but in Africa.

### Catholic Schools and Education

The Missionary Church worldwide is educating almost 40 million primary students; 22 million secondary and high school students; 3 million university students.

**Catholic Charity and Health Care Centres** - Charity and healthcare centres run in the world by the Church include: 5.034 hospitals, most of them in America (1.495) and Africa (1.167); 16.627 dispensaries, mainly in Africa (5.252); America (4.751) and Asia (3.558); 611 Care Homes for people with Leprosy, mainly in Asia (328) and Africa (201); 15.518 Homes for the elderly, or the chronically ill or people with a disability, mainly in Europe (8.158) and America (3.679); 9.770 orphanages, mainly in Asia (3.944); 12.082 crèches, mainly in Asia (3.498) and America (3.412); 14.391 marriage counselling centres, mainly in America (5.747) and Europe (5.715); 3.896 social rehabilitation centres and 38.256 other kinds of institutions.



*Family in prayer, Madagascar.* Photo courtesy catholic mission Australia

### In Summary

The drastic need for more priests and priest candidates is an obvious conclusion from a cursory reading of these statistics. How to attract more candidates continues to be the greatest challenge facing the Missionary Church, particularly the Church in Europe and the Americas. In Canada, the closing of parishes is a direct consequence of this shortage.

Another observation, taken from the statistics, is the increasingly important role being played by deacons and lay people in maintaining the Church. Propagation of the faith, traditionally the role of the priests, along with men and women religious, is now being handed to lay missionaries. The Missionary Church continues to evolve and the fact that so many lay people are willing to participate in spreading the Good News is good news indeed.



# The Most Densely Catholic Country in the World? Try, Timor-Leste

Back in August 2015, a story came to my attention regarding Timor-Leste (formerly known as East Timor). It focussed on the celebrations planned to mark the 500th anniversary of the introduction of Roman Catholicism to the area. What really caught my eye was the fact that it is an Asian nation that exists side by side with Indonesia, the country with the largest concentration of Muslims in the world. Yet, there it is: a country with an overwhelming majority of its population Roman Catholics. How does that happen? What follows is a country profile that hopefully will provide our readers with some context and background along with the original story that I mentioned earlier.

“The Editor”

Timor-Leste is found on the island of Timor, part of the large Sunda Island archipelago that stretches from Malaysia in the west to Papua-New Guinea in the east. “Timor”, in the Malay language of the Timorese people means “east”. When Portuguese explorers arrived in 1515, they founded a colony and named it “Leste”, which in Portuguese means, “east”. So, technically, this country is “East-East”.

Accompanying the explorers were Dominican missionaries, who soon set up a number of missions throughout the island.



Competing with the Portuguese were the Dutch, who had set up trading centres on the western part of the island of Timor. Soon, both groups were competing with each other, leading to armed skirmishes and raids on each other's settlements. In 1859, both parties agreed to divide the island, with the eastern part remaining Portuguese and the western area ceded to the Dutch. Portugal continued to control east Timor until 1975, when East Timor declared itself an independent nation. Days later, Indonesia, which by now controlled the western areas, invaded East Timor, making it a province. Over the next twenty years, close to 250,000 people died in a series of the counter-revolutionary guerrilla wars waged against Indonesia.

Throughout this time, the Catholic Church provided leadership and support for the Timorese people, with many churches serving as havens for those escaping persecution and war. Priests and nuns provided food, water, medicine, clothing and shelter regardless of the personal risks. After the Indonesians were forced out, the Catholic Church led the people in the rebuilding of homes, wells, schools and hospitals. Thus, it is no surprise that when the country finally gained its independence in 2002, it immediately reached out to the Vatican to establish diplomatic relations.

Although the country continues to experience hardships of all types, it continues to be staunchly Catholic. “Of its 1.3 million people, 97% are Catholic with 60% of them under the age of 25. The Timorese church has three dioceses, 116 priests serving 58 parishes and some 600 women and men religious. With 574 seminarians, it is rich in vocations to the priesthood. An estimated 400 young men are turned away from the minor seminary annually because of lack of space to accommodate them.” (Source: America, the National Catholic Review, Aug. 31-Sept. 7, 2015 Issue article by Gerard O’Connell)



**Church of St. Matthew in Maubisse.**

*Photo by yeowhatzup [CC-SA-BY-2.0], Wikimedia.org*





*Another view of St. Matthew. The large building to the rear of the church is the hospital.*

*Photo by David Stanley [CC-SA-BY-2.0], wikimedia.org*

Timor-Leste is a mountainous, tropical country with distinct rainy and dry seasons. 25% of the land has been made available for agriculture, but the slash and burn techniques used to clear the rain forests to make room for crops has led to severe deforestation and soil erosion. Floods and landslides are common. (Source: The World Factbook) Like Madagascar, Timor-Leste also suffers from a serious lack of potable water. This newest of independent countries has many challenges to face in the years ahead.

## **Timor-Leste commemorates 500 years of Church presence**

**By Siktus Harson and Ryan Dagur**

*This is an edited version of the original story which appeared on ucanews.com*

Dili, Timor-Leste, 08/17/2015: Some 8,000 Catholics packed an open coastal area on the west side of Dili, Timor-Leste's capital, to mark 500 years of the Church's presence on the island nation.

The Aug. 15 Mass was held at Tasitolu, the site of a 1989 Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II, when Timorese youth unfurled banners protesting Indonesian rule. The incident, one of the few times during the occupation that the East Timorese had an international audience, was considered a seminal moment of the resistance.

Catholics came from all over the island for the Mass, wearing traditional dress and displaying banners representing their dioceses, communities, schools and parishes.

Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the highest-ranking Church official to visit Timor-Leste since St. John Paul, was the Mass' main celebrant, which took place on the feast of the Assumption of Mary.

Cardinal Parolin told the congregation that the Church closely

followed the country's struggle for independence and would continue to assist the fledgling nation.

"The Catholic Church ... is committed to continuing to walk with you, as you strive to achieve your highest aspirations as a nation, one built on justice, solidarity and peace," the cardinal said.

"We are in an era of globalization. Cooperation between the Church and government is important in dealing with issues that affect the people of Timor-Leste," Bishop Nascimento, president of the Timor-Leste bishops' conference said.



**Mountain village in Aileu**

*Photo by Nick Hobgood, [CC-SA-BY-2.0], wikimedia.org*



# Project Report: NIGERIA

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith plays an integral role in funding the building of new churches, presbyteries, convents and catechetical centres for the emerging Church. However, we also need to support the rebuilding and restoring of old buildings that have suffered the ravages of fire, weather, or neglect. One such initiative is our support for the Archdiocese of Kaduna in north-eastern Nigeria:

In 2015, The Society for the Propagation of the Faith Canada provided the Archdiocese of Kaduna, Nigeria, with funding to support three projects:

1. The reconstruction of the Catechist's residence in Badarawa that was badly damaged in a fire.
2. The construction of additional classroom space in an overcrowded local primary school
3. The reconstruction of the presbytery in St. Augustine's Parish, Kaduna that also suffered from severe fire damage.

The Most Reverend Matthew Man-Oso Ndago-so, Archbishop of Kaduna, expressed his gratefulness for our involvement by stating, "Thanking you for your kind support and solidarity and, with the assurances of my continued cooperation and spiritual closeness, I remain yours, most sincerely in Christ".



*Before and After Views of the Re-built Presbytery in St. Augustine's Parish, Kaduna*



*Before and After Views of the Ongoing Repairs on the Catechist's Centre in Badarawa.*





*Foundation Walls Recently Erected for the New Classroom Extension in Kaduna*



*Here they are!*



*Watching their classrooms being built.*

## Please Remember in Your Prayers Father Aidan Devine

Father Aidan Devine passed away peacefully on Thursday, January 21, at the age of 72 years. Father Devine was ordained on May 25, 1969 at Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, NS. He served in the role of Curate, Associate Pastor, Administrator, or Pastor in a number of parishes throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Father Aidan was an advocate for the Pontifical Mission Societies for many years. His insights into how best to promote our faith were greatly appreciated. Our AGM meetings will not be the same without his presence. At the time of his death, Father Devine was Chancellor of the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador, as well as Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In addition to his Bachelor Degree in Theology, Father Devine, in 1992, received a Master in Canon Law, conferred jointly by the University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University. Bishop Peter Hundt, his brother priests and parishioners throughout Newfoundland and Labrador mourn his passing.





# Schools Return to Pakistan's Restive Swat Valley

## Undeterred by Taliban militants, nuns rebuild destroyed school for girls

*This is an edited version of the story which appeared in ucanews.com on November 17, 2015 and written by Kamran Chaudhry*

In 2008, the Catholic Public High School in the city of Sangota, located in northern Pakistan's Swat Valley, was destroyed with explosives set off by Taliban militants. Whatever remained following the explosions was set ablaze. It was among 400 educational institutes destroyed by Taliban militants during a reign of terror that ended when government forces moved in to drive away the oppressors.

Yet the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary that ran the school thought nothing of starting again just so their students could still be assured of an education. It took four years to get the school up and running again.

It was a jungle with charred ruins when they started. The boundary wall had completely disappeared and the area was covered by thick undergrowth, said Sister Gretta Gill, principal of the Sangota girls' school, the only church-run educational institution in the Swat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

"The watchman had put his cattle in our chapel, thinking nobody would return. He had brought in his family and was living in classrooms," Sister Gill said.

Memories of the school's destruction in 2008 still haunt the nuns. The attack on the school followed a series of threatening letters in which Jan Nisaran e Islam, an Islamic militant group, accused the nuns of trying to convert young Muslim girls to

Christianity.

The Taliban, who had taken over the Swat area, had introduced their own version of strict Sharia law and strictly opposed women's education and girls attending school.

It was they who shot Malala Yousafzai in the head in 2012. The schoolgirl from Swat Valley was shot for campaigning for girls' education and criticizing Taliban rule. She recovered to become a prominent activist and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

Things began to change when the Pakistani government finally regained control of the area following a military offensive launched in 2009.

Four years after the school was destroyed, the Presentation sisters returned to Swat in 2012. The nuns kept visiting the school grounds, registering students to re-establish the school.

"Although one local family warned us of potential threats, many people reached out to us with food," Sister Gill told ucanews.

"We spent the winter days [keeping warm] burning wood in a steel bin, watching the snow-capped peaks from the school compound. There was no electricity, no water. One of our former pupils rented us a building and we restarted the school (up to) grade five with 167 students enrolled in four months," she said.

The school building was rebuilt with the help of U.S. development aid and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. Many people reached out to us while the project was being completed, Sister Gill said.



*The front entrance of the freshly rebuilt school.*

*Photo by Adilswati, Wikimedia.org [Cc-Sa-BY-4.0]*

Today, about 800 students are studying at the school. The school's orange gate is guarded by seven policemen deployed by the Swat administration.

The school now has 26 teachers and 10 workers assisting four Pakistani nuns. Sister Gill feels there is now a lot of hope and opportunity to conduct dialogue with Muslim brothers and sisters.

"Still it is hard to believe that this is the same convent which was used by militants and then by the army during the troubles," she said.

"Our district is safe now from extremist forces. Girls are freely going to schools and we are trying our best to keep things that way," Ashfaq Khan Aramzai, the assistant commissioner in Swat district, told ucanews.com.

"It [the Sangota school] is a great educational institute for people living in far-flung mountainous areas. Historically, it has produced brilliant students and we are all happy it's back," he said.



**Primary school students on parade.**

*Photo by Adilswati, Wikimedia.org. [CC-SA-BY-4.0]*

*Editor's Note: "The Catholic Public High School was founded in 1962 by the Union of Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This order was founded by Nano Nagle, a lay person who advocated for girls' education in 18th century Ireland. It was originally a co-ed school until the 1990's when Excelsior College for boys was founded."*



**Photo of Presentation Sisters Pakistan taken on 17 February 2013 at Presentation Convent in the city of Rawalpindi.**

*Photo courtesy presentationsisters.org*

"Today, we have 27 Pakistani Sisters Finally Professed, 11 Irish Sisters, 7 Juniors, 9 Novices and 4 candidates. These are the hope of the future. The Pakistani Presentation Sister is Nano Nagle to the children of Pakistan."

*If you would like more information on the work being done by the Presentation Sisters, please visit their website at: [www.presentationisters.org](http://www.presentationisters.org)*



# Project Report: ZAMBIA

## Catholic Media Services TV – Zambia Episcopal Conference



Introduction: The Pontifical Mission Societies of Canada provide support to our mission churches in a variety of ways, all with the purpose of increasing awareness of our faith. We not only provide funds for the construction and maintenance of churches, rectories, catechism centres, schools etc. but also funds for a variety of media start-ups that help spread the Good News. All projects that receive our funding must provide a detailed report that outlines how the money was spent. Fr. Winfield Kunda, CMSTV Executive Director, outlines the various ways our financial support was used to improve the production studios of Catholic Media Services TV in Zambia. The information below is taken directly from the report.

Catholic Media Services TV is part of the Communications Department under the Secretariat of the Zambia Episcopal Conference. Formally called Yatsani Studios, CMSTV was set up in 1992 by the Bishops to enhance the cause for Evangelization through the use of the electronic media namely, radio and television/video productions.

The studio documents major events of the Church in Zambia. It also produces videos of a pastoral and catechetical nature. These videos are sold to parishes through a studio project called the Pastoral Outreach Programme.

CMSTV is a self-sustaining production studio. Although CMSTV is not a profit driven entity, its survival depends on some business contracts for video productions.

Over the years some of the video equipment became outdated and slow by modern standards. In 2012, a lightning storm caused an electrical overload which destroyed valuable studio equipment. Since the insurance company considered the damage an 'act of God', it refused to pay for replacement of this equipment. Consequently, in 2013, we applied to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Rome) for support.

Propagation of the Faith (Canada) generously funded 82% of the replacement costs and upgrades to our studio equipment. We at Catholic Media Services Television are grateful to PMS Canada for the support they have given us. The studio now has three editing suites, two of which are new and one older suite that has been repaired thanks to the financial support of PMS Canada.





# Holy Childhood Association Project Report: India

St. Joseph's High School is located in a remote village in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This remote village in the northern part of the country is the grateful recipient of our Association's help. We provided \$4,000.00(USD) to the school for much needed improvements. Below is an edited transcript of the letter we received from its headmaster, Father Joseph Anto, outlining where the funds were directed. We thank Father Joseph for providing this update along with the accompanying photographs.

Dear Rev. Alex Osei C.S.S.p.



First and foremost I whole heartedly express my deep sentiments of gratitude to you for the financial assistance rendered to our school situated in one of the remotest villages of the area. This financial assistance was indeed helpful to meet various basic needs of the school, which were lacking in the school earlier. As was mentioned to you in the request for financial assistance, the school had no separate toilets for boys and girls, and as a result the boys had to go to the open field for their need. Now, two separate toilet blocks are constructed for the boys.

The school did not have adequate bench (sic) and desks in the



class rooms so many children had to sit on the floor when attending classes. After the school received financial assistance from you a good number of bench desks were made and now are put into use by the students.

More than 1,100 students are benefiting from your valuable financial assistance that you rendered to the school, which is working for the development of the marginalized and poor children of the vicinity. Once again on behalf of the students in the school I whole heartedly thank you for your valuable assistance. I assure you of my prayers for your good health and ministry.

Thanking you,  
Your brother in Christ  
Fr. Joseph Anto.Sr.Thangapushpam





# Holy Childhood Association Project Report: South Sudan



Our Holy Childhood Association receives many requests for project support from all over the world. The natures of these projects are as varied as can be imagined. One recent project we supported was brought to our attention by the Diocese of Rum-



“We are the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, coordinating the Pontifical Missionary Childhood in the Diocese of Rumbek since 2012. We are grateful for the funds given for the uniforms for our committed **Young Stars and Alleluia Dancers** of the Diocese. This has awakened the moral (spirit) of the children in actively participating in the liturgy through their dances and songs. The uniforms were made by the St. Monica Women’s Group in Rumbek, which strengthens and promotes South Sudanese Women through capacity building and income generating activities such as sewing.



bat in the newly created country of South Sudan. It was a request from Sister Anna Wamalwa ESM and Sister Coleta Nanjala ESM, who are the co-ordinators for not only the Holy Childhood Association in their Diocese, but also the originators for liturgical dance being incorporated into the various celebrations of the Church. They are members of the Missionary Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary\*, and provide the following explanatory letter and photographs as part of their report.

We have now distributed the uniforms to various parishes. The children are very happy to have uniforms as a sign of identification. This has encouraged many others to join liturgical dance in those parishes which have received the uniforms. Also the animators of the children’s groups are much more motivated.”

Yours Sincerely,  
Sr. Anna Wamalwa ESM and Sr. Coleta Nanjala ESM

*\*For further information on this missionary order, please visit their website at <http://mcesm.org/>*



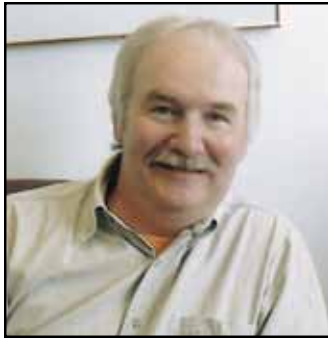






# Mission Conversations with the Editor

## No One is Saved by Themselves



*“For some reason, the most vocal Christians among us never mention the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). But, often with tears in their eyes, they demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And of course, that’s Moses, not Jesus. I haven’t heard one*

*of them demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere.*

*“Blessed are the merciful” in a courtroom? “Blessed are the peacemakers” in the Pentagon? Give me a break!”*

– Kurt Vonnegut

Kurt Vonnegut, the noted American writer was once quoted as saying, “I am an atheist (or at best a Unitarian who winds up in churches quite a lot).” While he remained a religious skeptic throughout his life, he kept a special interest in Jesus Christ. He described himself as a “Christ-worshipping agnostic”. Vonnegut was attracted to the message of love that is at the core of everything Jesus Christ did in his time on earth. We Catholics see Christ as representing the new way to God, with his message of peace, love, and

hope. The Beatitudes are among his greatest teachings because of their radical reinterpretation of the old set of laws incorporated in the Ten Commandments. Rather than another list of things not to do, Christ offers a route to salvation through a series of examples presenting what to do. This reimagining of how to live one’s life turns the message of the Old Testament on its head. The Beatitudes are also consistent with the lack of interest Jesus felt for the rigid rules of the Pharisees and temple priests. A quick review of the Gospel stories associated with Christ’s “field work” brings examples of where he challenged the old ways of worship and practice with his new way of approaching God through those around us.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” -Mthw 5:3-10

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Christ is the template for evangelization, period. The missionary of today does not go into the field expecting to lead others to God. Rather, the missionary enters the world around them looking for God in those they encounter. It is in these encounters that Christ is present.

We do our best work when we look for God in those around us, knowing that God is surely present in them. It is at these times that we, in turn, are at our best, fully alive, and present to whatever God proposes we do. Kurt Vonnegut may not have been a ‘Catholic’, but God was definitely part of his journey in life. Keep looking for the Christ figure in places you least expect it and you will continue to be amazed by the presence of God in our world.

# In Remembrance

## Our Deceased Donors

Please remember in your prayers the recently deceased members of the Pontifical Mission Societies

Bissonnette Dominic ..... Maidstone ON  
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It is God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' that has  
shone into our hearts to enlighten them

2 Cor.4,6

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