



Vol. 82, no. 3

MISSIONS TODAY

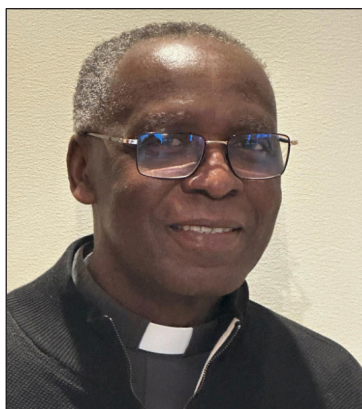
Summer 2024

**Go and invite
everyone**

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's message

Missions Today summer issue 2024



"May all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!"

With these words from Pope Francis's message for World Mission Day 2024, the Holy Father exhorts

each of us to prepare for our own missionary calling. His words are an encouragement to continue to pray and thank God for all missionary vocations – whether they be set for the task of evangelization to the ends of the earth or for offering Christian witness close to home. In this way, we are all asked to model ourselves on the apostles and set out to share the Good News.

Life is full of new beginnings, and we are about to embark on one. This issue marks the conclusion of my period of service with Pontifical Mission Societies. What an experience it has been! I have had the privilege of working in close collaboration with the Church on missions around the world. I have an immense respect and affection for our missionaries who give themselves so generously to promote the reign of God even in the world's farthest corners.

I am grateful to the thousands of faithful here in Canada who year after year

continue to respond to the needs of the young Churches around the globe. Our staff here has been gracious, helpful, and industrious. We can all do wonderful things for God. For the staff members who have passed on, may the Lord grant them eternal rest. Let us pray for each other.

Of course, we continue to pray and thank God for the new and numerous missionary vocations, which give us great confidence in the Church's task of evangelization to the ends of the earth!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Alex Osei, C.S.Sp.

National Director Pontifical Mission Societies -
Canadian English Sector.

"Every baptized person has a mission."

- Pope Francis

Join us in support of new and young dioceses around the world.

Invite your friends and family to learn more about the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and support the Church's mission today.



COURTESY OF PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES AUSTRALIA.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith supports new Catholic communities as well as those lacking essential resources. Present in more than 120 countries, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith is one of four **Pontifical Mission Societies** that collectively encourages Catholics in their baptismal call to mission, inviting each one of us to contribute through prayer and financial support. Other Pontifical Mission Societies include the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle and Pontifical Missionary Union.

In this issue...

Vol. 82, no. 3 summer 2024

Across the globe	4
Papal missionary message	6
Spiritual reflection	8
Missionary martyrs	9
A view from the pew	10
Maria's faith	11
No greater love	12
Project updates	13
Today's missionaries	13

Father Emmanuel (far left) leads a walk with local youth from Nyamata, Rwanda two decades after the town was ripped apart during the Rwandan genocide. As many as one million Rwandans were killed between April 7 and July 19, 1994. Father Emmanuel, who lost his brother in the killings, is leading efforts to reconcile survivors with perpetrators and help heal national wounds.



Missions Today is published four times a year by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 2219 Kennedy Road Toronto, Ontario M1T 3G5

International Standard Serial Number ISSN 0843-1515

Design: Marcucci Studios Printed: Timeline Printing Inc. Toronto, ON

Propagation of the Faith & St. Peter the Apostle
Income Tax Number: BN 12888 2883 RR0001

Holy Childhood Association Income Tax
Number: BN 11909 5818 RR0001

Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product
Agreement No. 0040008362

Cover photo: Courtesy Of Pontifical Mission
Societies Australia

Back cover: Alicja: Pixabay.

Editor: Aline Bedros

Senior contributor: Jamie Lynn Black

Comments on this issue or other topics are

always welcome. Contact us at
editor@missionsocieties.ca

or at Editor - Missions Today Magazine
2219 Kennedy Road
Toronto, Ontario M1T 3G5

Telephone: (416) 699 7077

Toll Free: 1 800 897 8865

Fax: (416) 699 9019

Office Email: missions@missionsocieties.ca

Visit our web site at missionsocieties.ca

Across the globe

With support from the Pontifical Mission Societies, missionary projects are making an impact in every corner of the world.



Sister Mary, coordinator of the scholarship support and economic empowerment program in the Diocese of Kasana – Luweero, Uganda. The project trains local people in agricultural skills so they can make the most of the fertile land on which they live.

COURTESY OF PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES AUSTRALIA

ASIA/INDONESIA - Visiting Catholic families: bearing witness to the beauty of consecrated life

Semarang (Agenzia Fides) - They want to proclaim the Gospel and bear witness to the beauty of a life entirely consecrated to the Lord: in this spirit, in some areas of Indonesia, members of the local clergy and religious men and women live a period of "live in ", i.e. they stay for a few days as guests at home in Catholic families and share a time there in which they show, especially to young people, the joy of their vocational choice of consecration.

Priests, religious and seminarians experience a more intense and profound dialogue with the laity, meet and make friends with local Catholics, says Francis Xavier Juli Pramana, a catechist and vocational school teacher in Solo, in the province of Central Java. The initiative aims to counteract the decline in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, which have traditionally flourished in Indonesia but have declined there in recent years. Sister Rustika of the Sisters of St. Francis says: "Our presence among local Catholics serves to introduce young people to consecrated life and to show them how consecrated people live their daily lives. The religious vocation is a special grace, that God grants, and this

grace must be shared with children and young people and brought to them". In Solo, the families with the children, adolescents and young people also visited the local religious's residential homes as part of the initiative and thus also recognized their educational work in schools and orphanages. In anticipation of Pope Francis' visit next September, the Church in Indonesia is also addressing developments in the area of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. (PA/MH) (Agenzia Fides, 6/5/2024)

Continue reading at fides.org/en/news/74960

AMERICA/HAITI - "The Church is suffering but there are lights of hope"

Port-au-Prince (Agenzia Fides) - "Difficult" is how Sister Marcella Catozza of the Franciscan Sisters of Busto Arsizio describes the situation of the Church in the Caribbean country ravaged by violence. "The situation of the Church is just as difficult as the general reality in Haiti. The Church reflects the reality of the country," says Sister Marcella. "Difficult because connections are difficult, because it is difficult to meet and work together. Everyone is a little

isolated. Everyone is on their own and tries to build ties where they can", explains the nun, who works in one of the slums of Port-au-Prince.

Sister Marcella reminds us that the Church has been suffering for a long time.

"Recently, Bishop Dumas Anse-à-Veau Miragoâne was the victim of an explosive attack, but before that it was the earthquake that severely affected the Church with the deaths of the archbishop, the vicar, the chancellor and the secretary of the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince. Seminaries were destroyed and entire communities lost their seminarians. So the Church in Haiti has suffered and continues to suffer." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides, 20/3/2024)

Continue reading at fides.org/en/news/74840

AFRICA/NIGER - Pay, convert or flee: the dilemma of Christian communities

Niamey (Agenzia Fides) - It happens about a hundred kilometers from the capital Niamey. They come with some motorcycles, armed, and offer to choose between the following options: either pay a tax of 50,000 CFA (76 E) per male person aged 15 or over or convert to Islam. If both are rejected, the only thing left is to give the village and everything you own into their hands. They are described by locals as "bandits" and by observers as armed terrorist groups from the nebulous "jihadist" universe, which operate primarily in the 'Three Borders' area.

These are Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. All three countries are currently ruled by military regimes and have decided to merge into a new entity called the 'Alliance of Sahel States' (AES). Since the kidnapping of Father Pierluigi Maccalli in 2018, the lives of farmers in the border region with Burkina Faso have continued to deteriorate. Threats, kidnappings, targeted killings, abandoned and closed schools, intimidation and a climate of fear characterize the everyday life of the residents. The presence of the Nigerien military does nothing to stop these practices that have become established in the area. Complaints and cries for help seem to fall on deaf ears, or at least the rhetoric of the much-touted abolition of foreign military presence on Nigerien soil (apart from the Russians). All this does not deter the "bandits" or armed groups who, in the meantime, are occupying the country and, thanks to a scorched earth policy, are recruiting young people who are being driven into

poverty with the promise of an easy income and a new social identity.

Since March last year, the demands have been the same from the village of Tiboandi to the villages of Kiloubiga, Torsé and Koutougou. Sometimes Christians are willing to pay and are often forced to flee to more sheltered places such as Makalondi and Torodi. The "bandits" give them a week to give an answer. It seems clear that if the "conversion" is refused, the only option left is to flee, since paying the requested sum this year means that it will be doubled next year. (MA) (Agenzia Fides, 3/5/2024)

Continue reading at fides.org/en/news/74954

EUROPE/ROMANIA - Blessing of the chapel of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Romania, dedicated to Blessed Pauline Jaricot

Bucharest (Agenzia Fides) - Father Tadeusz Nowak, Secretary General of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith (POPF), describes as a "historic moment" the inauguration of the chapel of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Romania on Saturday, April 20 in Bucharest. This is the first place of worship in Romania named after Blessed Pauline Jaricot, foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The inauguration ceremony took place after a mass in the parish church near the headquarters of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Romania, presided over by the Archbishop of Bucharest, Aurel Perca. The Archbishop Emeritus of Bucharest, Ioan Robu, the Council of the Apostolic Nunciature in Romania, Prelate Tuomo T. Vimpari, the Secretary General of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Father Nowak, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Romania, Father Eugene Blaj, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic priests from Bucharest, children of the Pontifical Children's Mission Society in Romania together with director Matilda Stefan Andrici and the American artist of Mexican origin Lalo Garcia as well as numerous faithful also took part in the celebration. (Agenzia Fides, 22/4/2024)

Continue reading at fides.org/en/news/74929

Fides News Agency is the information news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Since 1927, Fides has been raising awareness of missions to the people of God. To read more news from the missions, visit fides.org.

Papal missionary message

Pope Francis's message for World Mission Day 2024

"Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find" (Mt 22:9)

The Holy Father's message for World Mission Day 2024 is a reflection on the parable of the wedding banquet in light of the motto for the Church's current synodal journey. Through the Gospel story, he illustrates how we are called to take up our own missionary calling.

"Communion, Participation, Mission"

The motto of the synod, "Communion, Participation, Mission," is clearly at the forefront of the Holy Father's mind as he writes his guidance to us. Our synodal journey, which began in 2021, is set to conclude this year. After several years of conversation and discernment, and in the midst of this Year of Prayer, the Church is preparing together to act on the last element of the synod – mission. Pope Francis notes that a reflection on mission is timely for those missionary disciples who seek "to refocus the Church on her primary task, which is the preaching of the Gospel in today's world."

A plan of action

Pope Francis's message is not just a call to action but a plan of action for all the faithful as we embark on the Great Commission in our own lives. He begins with a reflection on the verbs of the king's command to his servants: "to go out" and "to invite."

He begins his message with a note of thanksgiving to the "new and numerous missionary vocations" who leave behind their homelands to bring the Good News to the ends of the earth. For those of us who support the Pontifical Mission Societies, we join the Holy Father in particular gratitude. We know well the dangers that missionaries face – the impoverished conditions of city slums, the isolation of work in lands where few other Christians are to be found, the dangers of serving in countries oppressed by military regimes



– we renew our commitment to supporting the men and women who have dedicated their lives to "going out" in the name of Christ.

But the call to action to "go" is for us as well. Pope Francis asks that "all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!" He wants us to be prepared to offer our own witness at every crossroad, lest we "imprison" Christ in a Church that is turned inward on herself.

For those of us who may be intimidated by this call, the Holy Father offers us some guidance in his reflection on the next call to action – to invite. Perhaps the most memorable passage of his message describes the style of our invitation. Here we reflect back on the king's servants. They surely extended the king's invitation with urgency – it was a mandate from the king after all! But as representatives of the



This tirelessness marks the way in which the Church carries out her mission. “The Church, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles.”

“The mission for all requires the commitment of all.”

king they must have also gone out with kindness and respect. We should also offer our invitation in a way that reflects Our Lord Himself, “not by pressuring, coercing or proselytizing, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness.”

“Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him.”

This reflection on how we are to “go out” and “to invite” is a stirring inspiration for us to act on our missionary calling. But the Holy Father adds another element to guide us. When we are sent to fulfill the servants’ mission for the Church, we are to be tireless.

How many other instances in the Gospel show us of this tirelessness? In the parable of the marriage banquet, the servants are at first ignored, mistreated and even killed. In the parable of the Good Shepherd, the shepherd goes out to find just one lost sheep.

So just like the king’s servants, we’ve received our mandate to go out and invite tirelessly. Now we turn our attention to the wedding guests themselves. For those of us who’ve followed the Church on her synodal journey, it will be no surprise that the guest list includes everyone! Our mission is to include all of our brothers and sisters. The king’s servants gathered “all whom they found, both good and bad,” and, “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.” Pope Francis is clear, “everyone, every man and every woman, is invited by God to partake of his grace, which transforms and saves.”

And for the enormous task of going out and inviting everyone, the Holy Father recommends the work of our Pontifical Mission Societies. As he notes, the Universal Solidarity Fund for which we collect on Mission Sunday is the Church’s way to ensure that resources are distributed to even the most isolated and needy Church communities. Through the Pontifical Mission Societies, the king’s invitation will truly go to the ends of the earth.±

**GO AND INVITE
EVERYONE**
to the banquet

To read the full text of the Pope's message, go to the Vatican website vatican.va- World Mission Day.

Spiritual reflection

A growing Church

For many, the baptisms of the Easter Vigil are a highlight of the Easter season. As we welcome new brothers and sisters in Christ into our Church family, we must remember to pray for the newly baptized Christians in the missions. This year, we have particular cause for joy across Asia, where many thousands of men and women were initiated into the Church.



China

470 people were baptized in the Archdiocese of Shanghai this Easter. In Beijing, 142 people entered the Church at the Easter Vigil liturgy at the cathedral. And in the Diocese of Taizhou, thirty people received the sacrament of Confirmation during the consecration liturgy of a new church dedicated to St. Francis Xavier.

fides.org/en/news/74887



Cambodia

There are just 20,000 Catholics living in Cambodia, a nation of more than 17 million. But 187 young adults were added to that number at the Easter Vigil in the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh. They join the 397 young people who were baptized in the Cambodian Church in 2023.

fides.org/en/news/74860



Malaysia

More than 1,700 Malaysian catechumens were baptized at the Easter Vigil this year. During preparations at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in the Archdiocese of Kota Kinabalu, Archbishop John Wong reminded the faithful that, "Baptism is only the beginning of following Jesus," and that the catechumens' choice to receive Baptism, "is a decision for life, not a passing fad." Just 9% of Malaysians are Christian.

fides.org/en/news/74817



Pakistan

And in Lahore, Pakistan, more than 800 baptisms are celebrated each year at St. John's Church, the site of the sacrifice of Akash Bashir. On March 15, 2015, Bashir stopped a terrorist who attempted to attack the church. "I will die, but I won't let you into the church," were Bashir's last words as he hugged the bomber who was wearing explosives. The cause for Bashir's beatification is moving forward.

fides.org/en/news/74833

Missionary martyrs

A beatification for missionary martyrs

Pope Francis has authorized the promulgation of decrees of martyrdom for four missionaries of the Congo, clearing the way for their beatification.

Fr. Luigi Carrara and Fr. Giovanni Didonè were professed priests of the Pious Society of St Francis Xavier for the Foreign Missions (Xaverians). They worked alongside Br. Vittorio Faccin, a professed Xaverian religious, and diocesan priest Fr. Albert Joubert.

The four men served the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo in the 1960s, a time of great turmoil for the region. A militant rebel group calling themselves the Simba had taken hold of the country. Motivated by anti-Christian Maoist ideology, the Simba violently oppressed Christianity, looting churches and desecrating tabernacles and sacred images. Even after most other missionaries left the dangerous region, the Xaverian missionaries chose to stay to administer the sacraments, give compassion to the sick and suffering, and provide education and spiritual guidance.

On November 28, 1964, Br. Faccin was shot by rebel militants in front of the church in Baraka. Upon hearing the gunshots, Fr. Carrara, who had been hearing confessions inside the church, ran out to his religious brother where he was also shot. The militants went on to the church in Fizi where they killed Fr. Didonè and Fr. Joubert.

Their beatification is scheduled for August 18 in the Diocese of Uvira. Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu will represent Pope Francis at the celebration.



The Pope's monthly prayer intentions

Each month, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention. You are invited to join the whole Church as we pray:

July: For the pastoral care of the sick

We pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick confer to those who receive it and their loved ones the power of the Lord and become ever more a visible sign of compassion and hope for all.

August: For political leaders

We pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and for the common good, especially caring for the poor and those who have lost their jobs.

September: For the cry of the Earth

We pray that each one of us will hear and take to heart the cry of the Earth and of victims of natural disasters and climactic change, and that all will undertake to personally care for the world in which we live.

In remembrance

Our deceased donors

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

Mr. Richard Styvers	London, ON
Mr. Charles Laporte,	London, ON
Mr. Joseph L.	Chowburnaby, BC
Ms. Andrea Deleeuw	Tees, AB
Mr. Franz X. Englberger	Ranfurly, AB
Miss Renate Schimmelmman	Burnaby, BC

A view from the pew...

Embracing the mission: Living the Gospel with joy and compassion



As we prepare for World Mission Day 2024, to be held on Sunday, October 20th, we focus our attention on the theme “Go and invite everyone to the banquet.”

By Lori Lisi

Having chosen this theme, Pope Francis reminds us that, *“...every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the “crossroads” of today’s world.”*

To fulfil this mission, we can answer our call by doing so in ‘synodality’ – by ‘journeying together’ with our brothers and sisters in the ecumenical mission of sharing the Gospel and helping others to encounter God and enter into communion with Him.

Furthermore, we need to examine and discern the how: *“How can we do this within the context of our busy lives and the complex world in which we live?” “How do we choose to ‘show up’ when the world seems to be swallowing us up in the pursuit of consumerism, selfish comfort, individualism and accumulation of wealth?”* We must stay true to our faith, as unwavering disciples of Jesus, in all that we do and say, so that we remain faithful examples of God in the world.

I vividly remember the day I was hired as a teacher by the school board for which I taught my entire teaching career. I was elated to share this with my family and friends. I took every chance I could to tell people that I worked for the York Catholic District School Board. I believed in the vision and mission statement of the board and I was eager to begin my journey together with others who had chosen the same vocation as I. I woke up every morning and knew that I was exactly where I was meant to be. I took great joy in knowing that I was making a difference in the lives of my students. I designed lessons and taught them with great conviction, for I believed in what I was doing and the people with whom I

was working. Our goal was clear and our love for our students never wavered. We came to our tasks tirelessly and met every new challenge not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity. We found ways to engage ALL students, without limiting the invitation to only those who came without challenges. Each day, we invited every child to be part of the learning journey. No one was excluded. Some days we feared that we couldn’t deliver, but with courage and perseverance we stayed true to our mission and didn’t give up or abandon our goals in exchange for an easier day. We did the work because we knew we had a responsibility to the students who depended on us. Our tenacity was driven by doing good, for the greater good. As Catholic educators, and disciples of Jesus, we had a mission beyond the curriculum expectations. We had been tasked at Baptism to be missionaries of the Gospel and that meant doing good for others, with ‘joy, magnanimity and benevolence,’ no matter the context. We did this work for the glory of God, in ways that reflected God’s own way of being and acting, not by ‘pressuring, coercing, or proselytizing,’ but with closeness, compassion and tenderness.

My work may not have taken me across the ocean or to remote areas of the world as it does for so many other faithful and loyal disciples of Jesus, but the missionary spirit was alive and well in my classroom and it continues to be so in all my encounters with the people in my sphere of influence as a woman, wife, mother, grandmother, relative and friend. So, on World Mission Day, and every day, continuing to be witness to the Gospel and remaining true to our mission, let us proclaim Jesus as our Lord and “Go and invite everyone to the banquet.”

Maria's faith

Mission of compassion: Preparing for World Mission Day 2024



By Maria Fornasier

Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him . . . with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in

this way reflecting God's own way of being and acting.
(Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for World Mission Day 2024)

In preparation for World Mission Day in October, Pope Francis encourages us to consciously prepare, through prayer and sincere, honest reflection, to open our hearts and minds to the central importance of mission. He urges us to approach this important responsibility by welcoming and nurturing others with gentle kindness. Inviting others to listen with an open heart and consider Jesus' teachings must be done with "closeness, compassion and tenderness." Our kind, generous actions inspired by the fruits of the Holy Spirit within us,

together with listening openly and humbly, draw others most freely and effectively to the Gospel's message. By doing so, we are striving to mirror Jesus as our role model and setting an inspirational example of the Gospel teachings as a blueprint for our lives and our attitude towards others.

Pope Francis frames the responsibility of mission as a journey to be undertaken "without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles." The responsibility must be shared among us and undertaken together. This approach to missionary work can be applied to all aspects of our lives. For my sister and me, our mother's primary caregivers, it has meant prioritizing clear, supportive communication among family members, especially our siblings, and building and sustaining a caregiving team. I consciously keep in mind that the PSWs who come into my mother's home to help care for her are doing difficult, complex, necessary work. Overall, they set an inspiring, positive example of kindness and understanding in how they interact with our mother. They are a reminder of the importance of "closeness, compassion and tenderness," of trying, without losing hope, to copy Jesus's manner.

Carrying out "the mission entrusted [to us] by God" entails not only having a deep knowledge of our faith, but also profoundly absorbing the teachings so that our approach to life and others reflects "God's own way of being and acting." In other words, we must first reflect honestly, but compassionately and prayerfully on how we think of ourselves and behave towards those closest to us. With self-knowledge, prayer and reflection, we can "invite" others to the table to share and learn from Jesus' example and teachings.

We want to hear from you

If you have any comments on the content or structure of the magazine, or if there is anything you would like to see us explore in future issues, please get in touch.

Contact the editor via email at:
editor@missionsocieties.ca

Or write to us at:

Editor - Missions Today Magazine
2219 Kennedy Road
Toronto, Ontario M1T 3G5

Visit missionsocieties.ca

Missionsocieties.ca offers access to updated feature stories and news from the missions, the digital version of Missions Today Magazine, and a simple and secure way to donate. Visit us today and help us to spread the word.

No greater love

Haiti: Missionaries under attack

In the midst of tragedy, the faithful of Haiti are answering God's call to serve. The country was thrown into turmoil at the end of February when gangs carried out a series of coordinated attacks, including a mass prison break that freed thousands of violent criminals. The situation is particularly dire for missionaries who remain in Port au Prince. More than 100,000 people have already fled the city and missionaries are in danger, but the work continues.

The Camillian Ministers of the Sick have barricaded themselves in a hospital, hoping to protect their patients from the armed gangs. They are unable to leave to procure food and supplies. They were able to pay some 'protection money' to leave briefly in the ambulance to buy oxygen cylinders.

Six members of the **Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart** and a lay teacher were kidnapped on their way to the Jean XXIII School where they worked as missionaries. A ransom demand was made and at least four of the missionaries have been returned.

Armed bandits broke into the Petit Séminaire Collège Saint Martial, a school of the **Congregation of the Holy Spirit** (the Spiritans). Four Spiritans were present at the time of the attack, along with some school faculty and staff. The bandits climbed over a wall and overpowered two guards. While there were no physical casualties, the attack resulted in considerable damage: four cars were burned, the school administration building was set on fire, the other buildings were looted of refrigerators, solar panels, batteries, a water purification system, mattresses, computers, electronic equipment and more.

Please join us in prayer for the people of Haiti and the courageous missionaries working there.

DID YOU KNOW?

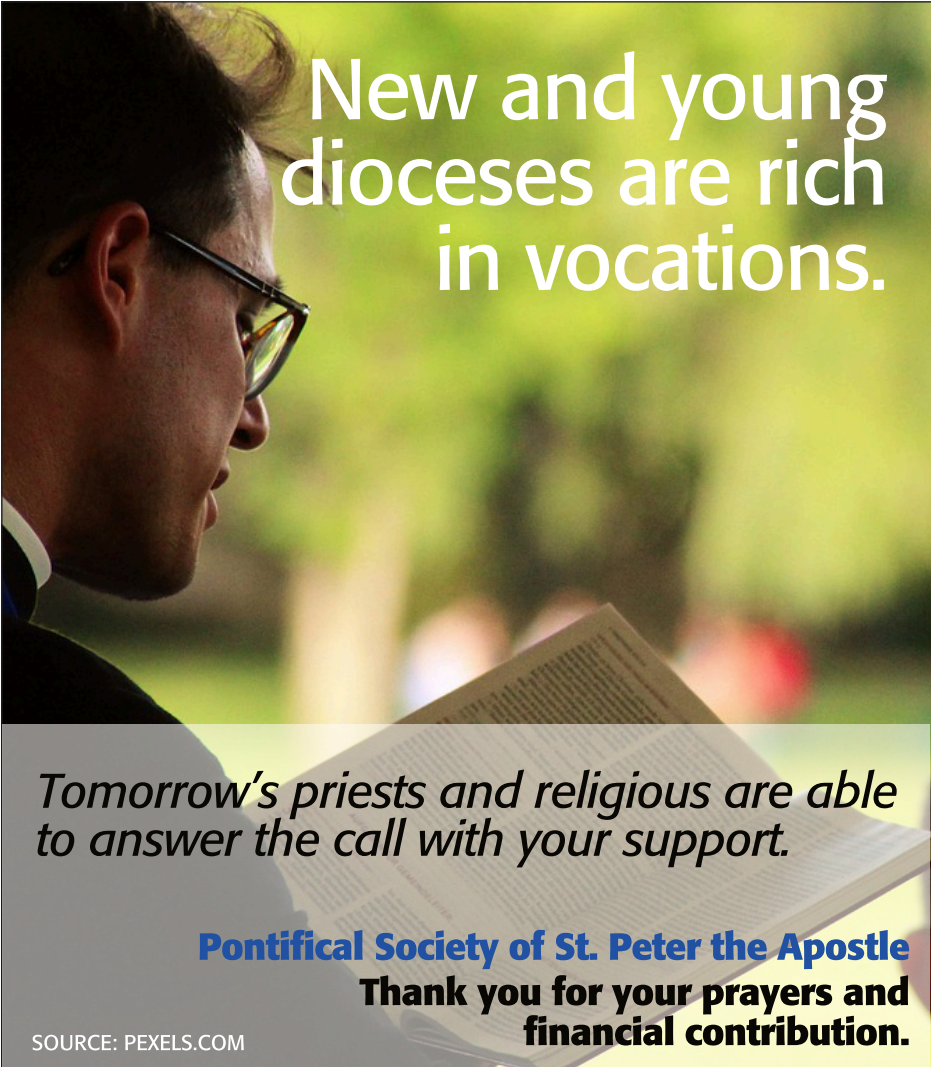
The situation in Haiti remains dire for missionaries, the Church and the whole population.

5.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance – more than 3 million of them are children

362,000 people are internally displaced

Half of the population lives in poverty

The life expectancy is just 64 years



New and young
dioceses are rich
in vocations.

*Tomorrow's priests and religious are able
to answer the call with your support.*

Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle
**Thank you for your prayers and
financial contribution.**

SOURCE: PEXELS.COM

Project updates

Society for the Propagation of the Faith

India - The Society for the Propagation of the Faith has helped to construct a new multipurpose hall for the community in Kurnool. More than 3,000 parishioners benefit from the space, which is used for catechism and youth activities, as well as sacramental celebrations.

Carnatic Jesuit missionaries first served in this part of India in the 1700s. The faithful of Kurnool are proud that their city is the cradle of Catholicism in Andhra Pradesh state. In addition to evangelization and pastoral activity, the church also coordinates initiatives in education, healthcare and social development.

Today's missionaries

Our team: Fr. Luigi Filippini

Fr. Luigi Filippini from St. Anthony Church in Thunder Bay serves as the representative of the Pontifical Mission Societies in his diocese. In the years that Fr. Filippini has worked to bring our mission to life within his community, some of the most fruitful and joyful moments have come through the enthusiasm of young people – and especially children.

Each year, St. Martin School celebrates the enrollment of new children in its Children Helping Children ministry. Approximately 450 students from grades 1 to 6, along with teachers, come together for the event. Fr. Filippini leads them in prayer, songs, and discussions about the importance of generosity and sharing. The children sell popcorn, with the proceeds going to the Holy Childhood Association – Children Helping Children.

The Parish of St. Anthony is actively involved in supporting children in developing countries. For St. Valentine's Day, the children and youth group organize a chocolate sale, spreading joy and love while fundraising for this cause.

Fr. Filippini tries to raise awareness among parishioners about the significance of missionary activities. He emphasizes the mandate from Christ to spread His teachings

and encourages parishioners to embrace their role as missionaries, using their baptismal gifts to make disciples. (Mt. 28:19-20)

Looking forward, Fr. Filippini hopes for greater engagement with young people in his community, believing it will lead to more positive outcomes for their mission church, guided by the spirit of love and compassion.



COURTESY OF FR. LUIGI FILIPPINI.

The Children Helping Children group of St. Anthony's parish in Thunder Bay gather to help children in mission countries through a fundraising event.

In the field: Brother Diego Joseph, CFR

Brother Diego Joseph, CFR, serves in Honduras. He shared a bit about his missionary work with Missions Today.

Can you tell us about yourself and the community that you serve?

I'm Brother Diego Joseph, CFR. I am a religious brother with the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal living in Comayagua, Honduras. I am the director of an apostolic centre and retreat house called Casa Guadalupe. At this facility, we hold retreats, evangelization missions, action service to the poor, discipleship formation and training, among others.

Can you share one meaningful experience of something that you lived during your mission?

A young woman who had been away from the faith attended



COURTESY OF BR. DIEGO JOSEPH

one of our retreats. Bad experiences with some people in the Church combined with some deeply painful family experiences led her to run away from God. She was invited and reluctantly came to the retreat. On the retreat, we presented the Gospel message simply and clearly. In other words, we presented the person of Jesus Christ in an explicit and tangible way. She encountered Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, went to confession and received Communion all in one weekend. She is now a full-time lay missionary working with us.

Are there any challenges that you encounter in the work that you do? cultural, social, other.

The extreme poverty and other socio-political problems sometimes make for a harsh environment for the seeds of the Gospel. For example, because of desperate need of money or work, people often find themselves in moral dilemmas and precarious living conditions, sometimes stunting the growth and development of faith in people. The Church must strive and persevere in developing infrastructure in order to facilitate the proclamation of the Gospel and the spiritual nourishment of the people by mitigating and alleviating the harsh socio-political conditions in the country.

Visit missionsocieties.ca to read the full interview with Brother Diego Joseph.



COURTESY OF BR. DIEGO JOSEPH

What our donors are saying...

"My mother is 102 years old. She goes to Mass several times a week, prays the Rosary daily and donates to Catholic charities... Mom still lives in her own house, cooks for herself and dresses herself. The Lord is looking after her. She sometimes wonders why she is still alive at this age. Her 7 siblings, some older, some younger have all predeceased her.

Mom feels strongly that there is a need for more priests and this is why she regularly donates money for the education of priests. Many small communities no longer have a priest living in their community. Priests come from larger centres and often service three or four small parishes."

Editor's reflection



Jesus' directive in the parable of the Great Banquet, 'Go and invite everyone to the banquet' (Mt 22:9), symbolizes the inclusive nature of salvation, offered not only to a select few but to all humanity. Christ's earthly mission centered

on extending this invitation, and this work is carried on by the Pontifical Mission Societies through its global outreach efforts. With a fervent commitment to spreading the Good News to all corners of the world, our offices strive to introduce individuals to Jesus, guiding them to discover His teachings and find the many great pearls that they yield. Echoing this sentiment, the Pope emphasizes the vital role of tirelessly preaching the Gospel and encouraging participation in the Eucharist.

We are grateful that our mission family includes many beautiful witnesses to this tireless work. Across the globe, missionaries

like Brother Diego Joseph from the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal continue to spread the Gospel among people in Honduras, especially the young people.

The Church points us to the courageous example of the Xaverian missionaries in the Congo who exemplified unwavering dedication despite adversity, their sacrifices echoing the universal call to serve. Their beatification by the Church in August serves as a testament to their extraordinary dedication and sacrifice.

And in Haiti, amidst ongoing turmoil, missionaries in Port au Prince, including the Camillian Ministers of the Sick, persevere in answering God's call to serve, exemplifying resilience and unwavering commitment despite significant risks.

Thanks be to God for His faithfulness to our mission family.

Aline Bedros
Editor



Charitable Gift Annuities

**A Gift to the Missions
that also benefits You!**

How?

- Provides guaranteed income for life
- Provides immediate and long term tax benefits
- Supports the missions

ANNUITY RATES CURRENTLY OFFERED

Age	Male	Female
65	5.20%	4.86%
70	5.78%	5.39%
75	6.64%	6.22%
80	7.45%	7.12%
85	8.51%	8.27%
90	9.77%	9.81%
93+	10.00%	10.00%

Rates posted as of March 1, 2024. Please note that rates are subject to change. Updated rates can be found by visiting our website. www.missionsocieties.ca

**For a personal consultation, brochure or further
information please call:**

416 699 7077

-or-

1 800 897 8865



**Society for the Propagation
of the Faith**

(A Pontifical Mission Society)
2219 Kennedy Road Toronto,
Ontario M1T 3G5
www.missionsocieties.ca