



MISSIONS TODAY

Vol. 83, no. 4

Fall 2025

**Missionaries of hope
among all peoples**

World Mission Sunday

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's message

Missions Today fall issue 2025



Greetings brothers and sisters in mission. The time for World Mission Sunday is upon us and what a blessing it is for the Church that this year our World Mission Day efforts are being guided by two Popes!

Inspired by the Jubilee Year theme Pilgrims of Hope, Pope Francis chose the motto

“Missionaries of Hope Among All Peoples.” As baptized followers of the risen Lord, Pope Francis invited us to embrace our mission to revive hope in our broken world. The more we focus on our common mission, the greater will be our prayer, our witness and our connection with our sisters and brothers in the faith.

And now, this message of hope is further illuminated by the example of our first missionary Pope since Peter. As a priest in Peru, Pope Leo physically built churches, and as a bishop he depended upon the support and donations of the Pontifical Mission Societies to serve his diocese. From his heart and his experience, the Holy Father sees our efforts as

the “primary means,” that is, the first way, to awaken a missionary responsibility among all the baptized and to support parishes and dioceses in areas where the Church is young.

All of this struck me deeply as I listened to the Holy Father’s words at a gathering of national directors in Rome this May. Your support directly provides the resources for the Holy Father so that he can express his care for the churches in missionary territories. What an honour it is that we can participate in this gift, that we can live out our call to fulfil the Great Commission alongside the Holy Father.

This year, blessed by the vision and encouragement of two Popes, we must be emboldened in our commitment to the missions. Please be generous and please keep praying for the missionaries. Be assured of our prayers for you.

Bishop John A. Boissonneau
National Director
The Pontifical Mission Societies for English Canada

The Pope’s monthly prayer intentions

Each month, Pope Francis invited us to pray with him for a challenge in our world, linked to the Church's mission. He has taught us to learn compassion, closeness and listening to others from the Heart of Jesus. Today, it's our turn to say thank you!

October: For collaboration between different religious traditions

Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice and human fraternity.

November: For the prevention of suicide

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

December: For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

To view The Pope Video visit thepopevideo.org or scan the QR code.

Courtesy of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network



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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.



We are a “springtime people”, brimming with hope to be shared with all.

From Pope Francis’ message for World Mission Sunday 2025

Join us in proclaiming the Gospel, inviting everyone to be pilgrims of Hope.

Learn more about the **Society of the Propagation of the Faith**, and become a missionary through your prayer and support.

SCAN AND CLICK TO DONATE



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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

Papal missionary message



"With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made "restless" by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity."

-Pope Leo XIV

Pope Leo spoke these words at the Mass celebrating the beginning of his pontificate. He repeated them in part just weeks after his election at his meeting with the national directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies. In both his homily and his address at the meeting, Pope Leo expressed that the peace which our world needs and desires and lacks is found in Jesus. When we are missionaries of Christ, therefore, we also become missionaries of peace. He encouraged the national directors to, "bring to all peoples, indeed to all creatures, the Gospel promise of true and lasting peace."

Pope Leo has made the subject of mission a focal point in his early homilies and messages. In fact, in his very first homily – the morning after he was elected pope – the Holy Father encouraged us to share the Gospel even, "where believers are mocked, opposed, despised," saying that, "they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed."

At his meeting with the national directors, the Holy Father expounded on the special role of the Pontifical Mission

Societies in this work, saying, "the Pontifical Mission Societies are effectively the "primary means" of awakening missionary responsibility among all the baptized and supporting ecclesial communities in areas where the Church is young."

In his message to the national directors, Pope Leo also reflected on communion and universality as two key components of the identity of

the societies. Pope Leo describes how one leads to the other. Through the Holy Spirit, we draw close to the Blessed Trinity. This naturally draws us also close to each other, establishing a unity among believers. The Holy Father explains how this communion built among the faithful ultimately reveals the Church's missionary nature, saying, "the appreciation of our communion as members of the Body of Christ naturally opens us to the universal dimension of the Church's mission of evangelization, and inspires us to transcend the confines of our individual parishes, dioceses and nations, in order to share with every nation and people the surpassing richness of the knowledge of Jesus Christ."

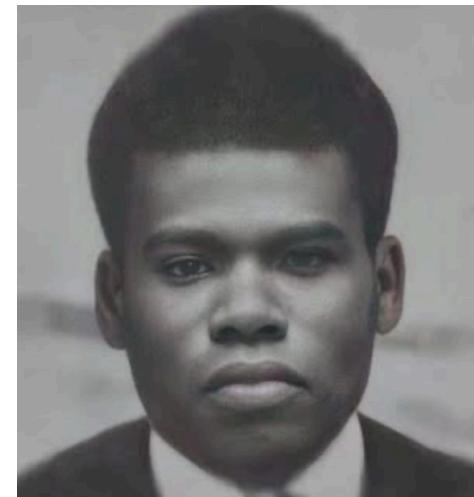
Pope Leo commented that these two aspects – communion and universality – are borne out in a particular way through the charism of the Pontifical Mission Societies. He expressed his hope that a renewed focus on communion and universality would inspire our members to live out their vocation, "to be a leaven of missionary zeal within the People of God."

Pope Leo concluded his words to the national directors with a short reflection on our theme for the Holy Year, "pilgrims of hope," and encouraged us to continue to be "missionaries of hope among all peoples."

*To read the Holy Father's full remarks to the Pontifical Mission Societies, visit missionsocieties.ca, article *Leaven of missionary zeal within the People of God*.*

Spiritual reflection

Blessed Peter To Rot: A missionary martyr for the sacrament of marriage



In October, Pope Leo will canonise the first saint from Papua New Guinea. Soon-to-be Saint Peter To Rot was born to Christian parents in 1912 on the Melanesian island of New Britain. Peter To Rot's parents, leaders on

the island, had been evangelised by Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and were baptized Catholic along with a large group of other tribal leaders in 1898.

Young Peter witnessed a flourishing of the Catholic faith in his community. His parish priest encouraged him to help the faith grow even more by becoming a catechist, so Peter enrolled in the St Paul's Mission School for training. Peter worked diligently to serve his community and there are many witnesses who testify to his effectiveness and virtue. In 1936, Peter married in a Catholic ceremony.

But life in Papua New Guinea was disrupted by the invasion of Japanese forces in 1942. The Japanese shut down missionary work and missionaries were imprisoned in a concentration camp. Despite the danger, Peter continued his work. He organised prayer services, catechetical instruction and Baptisms. He arranged for the distribution of the Eucharist to the sick and the dying and assistance to the poor. When the Japanese destroyed a local church, he rebuilt a structure out of branches – the only material available.

But persecution of the Catholic faith intensified as World War II went on. The Japanese eventually banned Christian worship completely. In an effort to build up good will with local chieftains and further separate the people of Papua New Guinea from their Catholic faith, the Japanese sought to reintroduce pagan traditions that had died out. Specifically, they reintroduced polygamy.

Blessed Peter To Rot spoke out clearly against polygamy. He publicly condemned the practice, creating animosity between

him and some of the most powerful people in his community, not to mention the occupying Japanese forces. He even stood up to his own brother on the issue. Finally, Peter was jailed for his defence of marriage. Of his imprisonment, Peter said, "I am here because of those who broke their marriage vows and because of those who do not want the growth of God's kingdom."

After several months, Peter was poisoned to death. In the announcement of his death, authorities derisively called him the "mission boy." But a huge crowd gathered for his burial, and the Catholic community in Papua New Guinea almost immediately considered him a martyr.

Pope John Paul II beatified Blessed Peter To Rot on his second visit to Papua New Guinea in 1995. In that homily, the Holy Father said of soon-to-be Saint Peter To Rot, "Because the Spirit of God dwelt in him, he fearlessly proclaimed the truth about the sanctity of marriage. He refused to take the "easy way" of moral compromise. 'I have to fulfil my duty as a Church witness to Jesus Christ', he explained. Fear of suffering and death did not deter him. During his final imprisonment Peter To Rot was serene, even joyful. He told people that he was ready to die for the faith and for his people."

Saint Peter To Rot, pray for us.

Photo by Unknown author, Public Domain, commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=167653062

In remembrance

Our deceased donors

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

William H. Karner	Mississauga, ON
Joseph L. Chow	Burnaby, BC
Carol Megyes	Taber, AB

World Mission Sunday 2025: October 19

For 97 years, the Pontifical Mission Societies have taken up a collection on World Mission Sunday to assist the work of the missions and missionaries in countries across the globe. Through our support, we show love and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world.

On this 2025 World Mission Sunday, please join us as we continue to be witnesses to the joy and hope that we have found in Jesus Christ!

2024 World Mission Sunday collections in Canada

The dioceses of Canada brought in nearly \$1.5 million in the World Mission Sunday 2024 collection. These funds go directly from Canada to the bishops in mission territories – our local Church helping other local Churches in need – to provide these dioceses with the essential support they need.

2024 World Mission Sunday collections in Canada

DIOCESE OF ANTIGONISH	\$6,590	DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH.....	\$22,011
DIOCESE OF CALGARY	\$100,851	DIOCESE OF PRINCE GEORGE	\$10,259
DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTETOWN	\$11,021	ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA.....	\$28,028
ARCHDIOCESE OF EDMONTON	\$74,067	DIOCESE OF ST CATHARINES	\$22,560
DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS.....	\$5,023	DIOCESE OF CORNER BROOK & LABRADOR	\$4,882
ARCHDIOCESE OF HALIFAX-YARMOUTH.....	\$7,000	DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN.....	\$5,156
DIOCESE OF HAMILTON.....	\$101,829	ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S.....	\$15,928
DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS.....	\$10,605	DIOCESE OF SASKATOON.....	\$18,114
ARCHDIOCESE OF KEEWATIN-LE PAS	\$813	DIOCESE OF SAULT STE. MARIE.....	\$10,757
ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON	\$33,108	DIOCESE OF THUNDER BAY.....	\$5,000
DIOCESE OF PRINCE ALBERT.....	\$1,990	ARCHDIOCESE OF TORONTO	\$464,254
DIOCESE OF LONDON.....	\$58,562	ARCHDIOCESE OF VANCOUVER.....	\$285,366
DIOCESE OF MCKENZIE-FORT SMITH	\$1,499	DIOCESE OF VICTORIA.....	\$11,653
DIOCESE OF CHURCHILL.....	\$2,500	DIOCESE OF WHITEHORSE	\$945
DIOCESE OF NELSON.....	\$20,201	ARCHDIOCESE OF WINNIPEG.....	\$39,378
ARCHDIOCESE OF OTTAWA-CORNWALL	\$58,400	DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE.....	\$1,868
DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE	\$12,980	OTHER.....	\$325
		TOTAL	\$1,453,523 CAD

TOTAL CANADIAN DONATIONS COLLECTED: \$1,453,523 CAD

2024 Contributions to the missions

Thanks to your participation in World Mission Sunday and other Pontifical Mission Societies' fundraising efforts and programs, we were able to send out more than \$1.5 million (more than \$2 million CAD) in subsidies in 2025.

PONTIFICAL SOCIETY OF ST. PETER THE APOSTLE

Congo	\$18,300
Liberia	\$68,400
Nigeria	\$250,254.18
Tanzania	\$17,100
Zambia	\$208,217.40
Total	\$562,271.58

PONTIFICAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

Ghana	\$425,246.43
Bangladesh	\$309,043.81
Total	\$734,290.24

PONTIFICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD

Egypt	\$38,700
Eswatini	\$26,000
Ghana	\$48,000
India	\$82,675.18
Sri Lanka	\$39,000
Total	\$234,375.18

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: \$1,530,937 USD

Pope Leo reminds us that World Mission Sunday is an "immense help" for young and growing churches around the world.

Join us in this universal mission!

Participate in World Mission Sunday 2025.

Pray

Spread the word

Donate in your parish on Sunday, October 19, or online at missionsocieties.ca/ways-to-give



MISSIONARIES OF

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among all peoples

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Our missionary pope

Pope Leo XIV is a missionary pope for our missionary Church



election. To him, it is an invitation for us to walk side-by-side with him towards our heavenly home. It is also a phrase that encapsulates the Augustinian style of mission.

As an Augustinian, Pope Leo XIV was formed in the missionary spirit. The Augustinian Order, where he found his own vocation, first came to the Americas from Ireland in 1796 with a mission to evangelize. In 1963, in response to a request from Pope John XXIII, the Order began work in Northern Peru. The Augustinians provide sacraments, education and assistance to the people of their communities, many of whom are facing extreme poverty.

Augustinian missionary Bishop John McNabb, who spent many years founding the Diocese of Chulucanas said, "Our best investment would be in the people, not in buildings. We arrived in Peru to promote the Peruvians, not to replace them." So, although the Augustinian Order has built up many churches and schools over the years, it is perhaps more notable that the Order is seeing a surge in Peruvian vocations. Today, the majority of the Augustinians in solemn vows in northern Peru are native Peruvians. And the missionary spirit is alive in them, as they also have been sent to evangelize in Cuba and Algeria.

Pope Leo XIV himself was formed in this missionary spirit. He began his own missionary work in the 1980's in Peru. He was sent by his Augustinian Order to build up a young church where he served as an educator and formator. He served as vocation and missions director for his Augustinian Province and was then sent back to Peru to Trujillo where he worked for a decade.

In 1999, he was called away for a leadership role within the Augustinian Order. Eventually, he served as Prior General of the Augustinian Order for two terms.

In 2014, he returned once more to mission work in Peru. He was appointed bishop of Chiclayo. As a missionary bishop, he had to navigate the unique challenges of his young diocese. Political unrest in Venezuela brought a wave of refugees to the area. He led his diocese through the pandemic, coordinating support for hospitals and reopening soup kitchens for the many who depended upon it. When floods devastated a town in his diocese, he went there in person, ready to help. In fact, his rain boots and poncho became a symbol of his Augustinian approach to mission. His dedication to his people was so apparent, they began calling him by an affectionate nickname – "Saint of the North."

For the first time since Saint Peter, the Church has been given the gift of a missionary pope. For nearly two decades, Robert Francis Prevost poured himself into his work for the people of Peru. He lived a humbled life of service, walking alongside the people and sharing the Gospel. And now his first messages to us attest that he will bring that focus on mission to his teaching and example as the Bishop of Rome.

"With you I am a Christian and for you a bishop."

Pope Leo XIV often repeats this phrase from St. Augustine. In fact, he used the phrase in his first remarks on the day of his

"I still consider myself a missionary. My vocation, like that of every Christian, is to be a missionary, to proclaim the Gospel wherever one is."

In 2023, then-Archbishop Prevost said that he still considered himself a missionary. By then, he was living and working in Rome. Though his role had changed, his focus on sharing the Gospel remained. He was made a Cardinal later that year. As head of the Vatican Dicastery for Bishops, he helped Pope Francis choose new bishops to appoint, focusing on men who would be good pastors to their flocks. While advising the Pope in Rome may not have required boots or a poncho, it is clear that he brought his missionary spirit with him to the Vatican. He said that when he was called upon to serve Pope Francis in Rome, he responded with the same "yes" that had led him to missionary service so many years before.

"We must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges, dialogue, always open to receiving, like this square with open arms."

In Pope Leo XIV's very first remarks after his election, he called upon us to be a missionary Church. If we want to know what this might look like, we need only look to his own example. As a young man, he said "yes" to a challenging position in a foreign land – fearlessly embracing the work before him. Then he said "yes" to assuming leadership roles within his Order – taking on the responsibility to grow his own community. He said "yes" to a life fully lived with the most impoverished of Peru. And he said "yes" to leaving everything behind again to serve the Church in Rome, as a Cardinal and now as Pope, focusing always on sharing the Gospel anywhere and everywhere.

Founded in 1843, The Holy Childhood Association reminds Catholic children of their baptismal call to mission and, more than that, invites them to play their part. Each one of us has surely witnessed the great concern that children have towards others in need. As mature Catholics, we have a responsibility to teach our young brothers and sisters about the universal call to mission and provide them with exciting opportunities to live out this noble call. This is what The Holy Childhood Association does: We give Canadian children the opportunity to help children in need and explain to them the "why" behind this important work.



Because Christ so loved the world

Thank you for your prayers and financial support.

Holy Childhood Association

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What our donors are saying...

"We continually remind ourselves and our children that we are missionaries in our daily work, struggles and encounters. By supporting the Holy Childhood Association, we have been able to add a broader dimension to our family's missionary work. We feel a deeper connection to the Church's missionary nature – going beyond space and physical limitations to help people we may never meet, but whom we are nevertheless called to pray, love and care for." - Anonymous donors/supporters since 2016

No greater love

The journey toward healing in the Democratic Republic of Congo



Burial of the victims of the attack on a Catholic Church in Komanda. Photo courtesy of Fides / Fr. Justin Zanamuzi

"I forgive you for you know not what you are doing."

These were the last words of Congolese Blessed Marie-Clémentine Anuarite Nengapeta as she died a martyr's death at the age of 25. Blessed Anuarite joined the Holy Family Sisters in 1959 and became a primary school teacher. She was kidnaped along with 45 other nuns by rebel forces during the violent Simba rebellion in 1964. Blessed Anuarite was beaten, stabbed and shot for refusing to capitulate to the demands of a colonel. Pope John Paul II celebrated her beatification during a visit to the region in 1985, and Congolese Catholics turn to for her example of peace and forgiveness and for her intercession against violence.

Today, violence still plagues the Congolese people. In July, at least 43 people were killed in an attack on a church named for Blessed Anuarite. Dozens were gathered for a youth retreat at Blessed Marie-Clémentine Anuarite Nengapeta Catholic Church in Komanda when militants descended upon the community with guns and machetes. The militants abducted, maimed and killed their victims including children; they looted nearby homes and set them on fire.

The attack was claimed by an Islamist jihadist group called the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The ADF is also suspected in the

deaths of 70 Protestant Christians who were found beheaded in the neighbouring province of North Kivu in February.

Just last year, Catholic journalist Edmond Bahati Monja was shot and killed near his home in North Kivu. Bahati had been investigating the growing impact of violent militia groups in the region.

There have been multiple recent attacks on Catholic worship sites. In July, an armed group desecrated the Catholic Church of Saint John of Capistrano in Lopa, throwing hosts to the ground, looting the Marian shrine, and destroying chasubles, vestments, and liturgical objects. And in August, armed men similarly attacked an oratory in Burnia.

The suffering of the Congolese Church is close to the heart of the Holy Father. In his message after the July attack in Komanda, Pope Leo wrote, "may the blood of these martyrs become a seed of peace, reconciliation, fraternity, and love for the Congolese people."

Despite the danger and instability, missionary work in the Democratic Republic of Congo continues. Just days after the attack in Komanda, young people of the region gathered for a Catholic youth event where Bishop Sosthène Ayikuli Udjuwa delivered a message of prayer and peace.

Earlier this year, representatives from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Congo joined representatives from Protestant churches to open a dialogue for peace with members of a pro-Rwandan rebel movement.

The Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle is particularly active in the DRC. There is a growing number of vocations to the priesthood in the country, and many of the Catholic seminaries receive support from the Pontifical Mission Societies to help with the formation of new priests.

To read more about the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the missionary efforts to serve the Congolese people, visit fides.org.

Online home for the missions!

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.

Project report

Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood

Inauguration of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood in the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia



Courtesy of Pontifical Mission Societies international secretariat

On March 28, 2025, the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia (AVONA) marked a historic step with the inauguration of the Holy Childhood Society in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Arabia, Awali, Bahrain. Bishop Aldo Berardi, O.S.S.T., described as the "visionary" behind this initiative, welcomed the first 46 child volunteers, reminding them of their mission to pray, help, and share the Gospel. The celebration also honored winners of an essay and drawing competition held

earlier in January on the theme Children are the Missionaries of Hope.

The Mass, concelebrated with the cathedral's rector and coordinators, included prayers for the victims of the earthquake in Myanmar. Before the final blessing, the Apostolic Vicar asked the children, 'What do you ask from the Church?' The children recited the pledge and expressed their desire to become child missionaries to become friends of Jesus and serve others as child missionaries. The day concluded with a joyful feast with

families. With this foundation, the Pontifical Mission Societies in AVONA look to the future with renewed hope and missionary zeal, confident that the seeds planted will continue to grow across the Vicariate's four countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Make His hope shine forth in every corner of the earth!

From Pope Francis' message for World Mission Sunday 2025

Join us in supporting tomorrow's priests and religious.

Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle

Support the men and women whose vocations bring the missions to life.



SCAN AND CLICK TO DONATE



COURTESY OF PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES AUSTRALIA

Giving from the heart today builds hope for tomorrow

Pre-authorized donations

Support the missions through a pre-authorized monthly donation plan.

Legacy gifting

Legacy gifts (through a will, for example) can be made to any or all registered charities:

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith – Provide funding for the needs of the missionary Church

The Society of St. Peter the Apostle – Educate priests, sisters, and brothers in mission countries

Holy Childhood Association – Help children in mission countries and raise the missionary awareness of Canadian children

Gift annuity

Make a gift to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and receive a guaranteed payment for life in return.

Other ways of giving

You can also help in other ways: **Donate securities or mutual funds, offer Mass stipends, make a pledge to support seminarians and religious through our Burse Program, or participate in our Chalice Program.**

Take a moment to explore these ways of giving on our website:

missionsocieties.ca/ways-to-give



Or call us to help you make the best choice:

416 699 7077, 1 800 897 8865

We want to hear from you

Missions Today is interested in hearing 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