PRIMER ON THE NATURE AND ACTIVITY of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States
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What are the Pontifical Mission Societies?

There are four Pontifical Mission Societies:

+ The Society for the Propagation of the Faith
+ The Society of St. Peter Apostle
+ The Missionary Childhood Association
+ The Missionary Union of Priests and Religious

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded in Lyons, France, in 1822 by Pauline Marie Jaricot. The Society helps all the world’s missions through the prayers and sacrifices of the faithful. It seeks to form the People of God and make them aware of their worldwide missionary vocation that was given in Baptism, and encourages spiritual and material assistance from the faithful of every land. According to the Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Article 6), the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, conscious that evangelization is above all the action of the Holy Spirit, encourages the faithful to give first place to prayer and a spirit of sacrifice for mission.

The following are its objectives:

(a) to form the People of God so that it becomes aware of its worldwide missionary vocation;

(b) to inform Christians about the life and needs of the Churches in mission territories, through the exchange of news, sharing of spiritual values, the witness of solidarity in times of trial, and moral and material support in adversity;

(c) to increase spiritual and material assistance between particular Churches, with particular attention to the exchange of apostolic personnel with a view to the evangelization of the whole world;

(d) to promote missionary vocations ad gentes, especially those which are life-long;

(e) to promote education to justice, especially of young people, through information and knowledge of the social doctrine of the Church, to encourage them to help and work towards increasing missionary awareness leading them to offer themselves for mission;

(f) to promote economic solidarity by appealing to the generosity of Christians in the whole world and developing a social justice and assistance program which will satisfy with regularity the fundamental needs of all the Churches in mission territories.

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1 Cf. Redemptoris Missio 78
2 Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Article 6
3 Cf. Ad Gentes 35; Redemptoris Missio 77
4 Cf. Redemptoris Missio 83
5 Cf. Redemptoris Missio 84; Cooperatio Missionalis 4
6 Cf. Redemptoris Missio 79, 83, 84
7 Cf. Redemptoris Missio 80, 83
8 Cf. Christus Dominus 6; Ad Gentes 38
The Society of St. Peter Apostle was founded in Caen, France, in 1889 by a mother and daughter, Stephanie and Jeanne Bigard. The two women answered the plea of a French missionary bishop in Nagasaki, Japan, for help in the training of native priests. Today the Society has the same goal of supporting the education of Catholic priests in the Missions, as well as the formation of men and women for religious life. According to the Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Article 11), the Society of St. Peter Apostle was founded to pursue the following objectives:

(a) to use spiritual means, especially prayer and sacrifice, to beg "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest";9

(b) to make Christians aware of the need for growth in the number of vocations and the importance of formation of local clergy in the Churches in the mission territories, so that subsequently they may be sent to collaborate in other sister Churches;10

(c) to contribute towards the growth of clergy in Churches in mission territories, also using the funds obtained by the establishment of scholarships, payments of pensions, fees and other donations, to enable the building and development of numerous major, propaedeutic and minor seminaries, both on a diocesan and inter-diocesan level;

(d) to assist in the formation of male and female candidates for consecrated life, in the Churches of the mission territories.

The Missionary Childhood Association was the fruit of the desire of French Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson and his friend, Pauline Jaricot, to help children in the Missions. In 1843, the two concluded that children who are rich in faith could play their part in helping other children in the Missions, and could also stir the missionary spirit of adults. The Bishop started appealing to the children of France to help the Missions in the United States and China. Today the children of the world are invited to sacrifice in their schools and religious education programs, and within their families, to support their counterparts in mission countries. According to the Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Article 13), the Missionary Childhood Association provides assistance to particular Churches with the following objectives:

(a) to assist educators to awaken and gradually develop in both children and adolescents a worldwide missionary consciousness, in order to guide them towards a spiritual communion and material sharing of their resources with children of other Churches, especially those in difficulty. Everyone has something to give and to receive and their motto is: children helping children;11

(b) to contribute towards promotion and development of missionary vocations;

(c) to prepare missionary animators who will accompany children in their journey towards a more mature missionary consciousness. This is fulfilled through their direct

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9 Matthew 9:38
10 Cf Cooperatio Missionalis 4
11 Cf Cooperatio Missionalis 4
involvement in ways suitable for each country, so that children become missionaries in their own way. To this end, structures at both local and regional level should be established, and suitable activities for such involvement should be created.

The Pontifical Missionary Union had its origin in 1916 through the vision of a PIME missionary priest in Burma (now Myanmar), Father Paulo Manna. The Missionary Union does not solicit funds, but seeks to stimulate missionary formation and awareness among the world’s priests, religious and pastoral leaders. It seeks to deepen the knowledge of mission among seminarians, and to promote the missionary spirit of all the baptized. Pope Paul VI referred to the Missionary Union as “the soul of the other Pontifical Mission Societies” (Apostolic Letter, Graves et Increscentes, September 1966).

According to the Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Article 20), the objective of the Pontifical Missionary Union is to stimulate missionary formation and awareness among priests, members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and of Societies of Apostolic Life, consecrated laity, candidates to priesthood and religious life in all its forms, as well as all other persons engaged in the pastoral ministry of the Church. The Union ministers to all those who are called to ensure that the People of God are animated both by a missionary spirit and a generous openness to missionary cooperation. The success of the other Societies depends to a large extent on the vitality of the Pontifical Missionary Union which is “the soul of the other Pontifical Mission Societies.”

These Pontifical Mission Societies, given their nature and importance, must be present and operational in each particular Church, both ancient and young. In this way commitment to missionary cooperation will become the missionary consciousness of the Church (Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Article 50).

While dioceses and local parishes may have interest in specific mission programs or territories, and may even have a relationship of “twinning” with mission Churches, Church teaching underscores the primacy of the Pontifical Mission Societies. “Because they are under the auspices of the Pope and of the College of Bishops, these Societies, also within the boundaries of the particular Churches, rightly have ‘the first place... since they are the means by which Catholics from their very infancy are imbued with a genuinely universal and missionary spirit; they are also the means which ensure an effective collection of resources for the good of all the missions, in accordance with the needs of each one’” (Ad Gentes, 38; Redemptoris Missio, 84).

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12 Paul VI Apostolic Letter Graves et Increscentes 5th September 1966
13 Cf. Ad Gentes 38; Cooperator Missionalis 15
14 Cf. Benedict XV, “Maximum Illud” (AAS 1919, 453-454); Pius XI, “Rerum Ecclesiae” (AAS 1926, 71-73); Pius XII, “Evangelii Praecones” (AAS 1951, 525-526); Id. “Fidei Donum” (AAS 1957, 241)
What is the structure of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the world, and in the United States?

The chief missionary and shepherd of the mission Church is the Pope. He exercises his authority over the Pontifical Mission Societies through the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP), headed by its Cardinal Prefect (Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Article 24). The CEP has two main divisions: what they refer to as “the Congregation” which serves as the main administrative arm of the Church for the 1,111 missionary circumscriptions under its jurisdiction, and second, the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) which aid in financial solidarity.

Each country has a National Director of the four Pontifical Mission Societies.

The National Director is a member, together with all National Directors from around the world (approximately 120 in total), of the Superior Council of the PMS. Headed by the PMS President and the Secretaries General (one for each of the Societies) and other key officials of the Roman Curia, the Superior Council is the main ecclesial governing body of the PMS. It is the fundamental task of this body to review and decide upon the funding recommendations made by the Roman General Secretariats twice a year, in May and November. Those decisions of the Superior Council are then submitted to the Board of Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States (PMS-USA) for review and approval in accord with IRS regulations. In light of these approvals, the PMS-USA forward the requested funds to the various dioceses, seminaries, Roman Colleges, Secretariat of State, as indicated by the decision of the Superior Council.

The PMS-USA are obliged to comply with the laws and regulations governing similar Church not-for-profits in the United States. While subject to the ecclesial directives regarding its scope and purpose and found in its Statutes and other documents of the Magisterium, the PMS-USA have a civil Board of Directors that is the ultimate governing authority. In accord with good practice, there are standing committees of the Board that deal with (a) Budget and Finance; (b) Audit, and (c) Investment. Board members are 7 to 9 existing Diocesan Directors who are voted into office by the other members of the Board at the annual meeting, usually in the spring. As the Chief Executive Office, the National Director is a non-voting member of Board. Each year, the PMS-USA hold an annual assembly of all Diocesan Directors and Mission Office staff. During these gatherings, issues of common interest are presented and discussed.

What are the sources of funding for the Pontifical Mission Societies each year?

Annually the major source of funding is the annual World Mission Sunday collection. The penultimate Sunday in October is designated as World Mission Day and is an obligatory celebration in all dioceses, parishes, and Catholic institutions throughout the world. The celebration is to stress the common responsibility of all Catholics for the evangelization of the world, to heighten awareness of the missions, and to collect funds for them, which were the original goals of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Following a convention particular to the United States, 9% of the World Mission Sunday collection is to be provided directly by each (arch) diocese to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) that represents the Latin Rite Church in support of Eastern Rite Churches.

Other sources of income that are counted towards the annual contribution to the PMS General Solidarity Fund are (1) legacies and bequests that are received in the diocese or directly in the National Office, (2) mail appeals, (3) MISSION Magazine, as well as (4) general donations and support. Planned giving takes various forms from providing for the PMS
in a Will, to participating in a CharitableGift Annuity Program or a Trust which designates the PMS as the ultimate beneficiary. These latter giving vehicles have declined significantly in popularity in the last 20 years.

Who decides where U.S. funds are sent?

In short, Rome makes proposals on where U.S. funds available for distribution are to be awarded and sent. The PMS-USA does not “forward” the funds that are collected annually to Rome. Rather, the funds are sent directly to the projects (some of which are in Rome) after requests are made by Rome and approved by the U.S.-based charity (PMS). It is important that the PMS-USA maintain the integrity of its status as a New York-based not-for-profit and its place in The Official Catholic Directory. This latter inclusion makes the PMS-USA a party to the Group Ruling of the USCCB and the benefits contained therein, especially regarding the ability of donors to deduct contributions. It is important that the PMS-USA maintain control and discretion over the donations received so as not to become merely a channel for foreign funding and fall foul of the so-called “conduit issue.” Without due autonomy of the Board of Directors (both domestically and internationally), the PMS-USA would risk being deemed a channel for a non-US-based entity and thereby jeopardize its status and these key benefits.

Every country is required to take up a collection for the General Solidarity Fund. Combined, this amount each year is approximately $130-140 million. As the single largest donor to the General Solidarity Fund, the PMS-USA amount to approximately 30 cents on every dollar made available to the General Solidarity Fund through the PMS. As such the PMS-USA is asked to “cover” several financial obligations requested by Rome for payment (outlined in section, “How are funds gathered in the United States and disbursed?”). So as to ensure that the reality of the World Mission Sunday collection that is taken up in parishes across the United States each year corresponds to the expectations of the donors, the PMS-USA dialogue each year with the PMS-Rome so that the overwhelming majority of donated funds are sent to those mission environments commonly perceived by Catholic donors; i.e., seminaries, chapels, dioceses in mission countries. In short, we seek to balance the direct funding of mission projects with other obligations such as expenses to operate the Roman Curia, costs to operate Roman Colleges, upkeep of Apostolic Nunciatures, and the like.

How are funds gathered in the United States and disbursed?

The National Office provides an online reporting system that all dioceses in the United States use to report on their annual contributions to the three funding societies: The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, The Society of St. Peter Apostle, and Missionary Childhood Association. By the end of February each year, the National Office summarizes and reviews this information from the more than 197 U.S. dioceses before providing the information to Rome. On the basis of this report, Rome finalizes its recommendations on how those funds should be disbursed and presents them to the Superior Council for consideration and approval in May each year.

These recommendations include budget support of 1,111 mission dioceses, operation of seminaries, construction, pastoral gatherings, catechists, support for the upkeep of Apostolic Nunciatures in mission countries, the upkeep of colleges of the Oriental Churches located in Rome, as well as the graduate colleges for priests and Sisters of Latin Rite.

These recommendations are sent to all National Directors for review prior to the meeting of the Superior Council in May each year.
The Superior Council Meeting in May reviews and approves all Ordinary and Extraordinary subsidies. A smaller distribution of remaining funds is made in November of each year by a sub-set of the Superior Council known as the Restricted Council or Restricted Assembly.

In July (and November), the U.S. National Office receives requests from Rome that ask for payment to be forwarded according to certain categories. As the largest contributor to the General Solidarity Fund, the U.S. National Office is able to respond to requests from Rome that deal with the following:

- **Ordinary and Extraordinary requests from mission dependent dioceses** – 69% of 2019 U.S. payments
- **Management Expenses of the General Secretariats** – 7% of 2019 U.S. payments
- **Support for the Congregation of Oriental Churches for the operation of Roman Colleges** – 5% of 2019 U.S. payments
- **Support for the Pontifical Commission for Latin America** – 2% of 2019 U.S. payments
- **Support for the Graduate Roman Colleges of Latin Rite (Domus Missionalis)** – 12% of 2019 U.S. payments
- **Support for the operation of Apostolic Nunciatures in mission countries** – 5% of 2019 U.S. payments.

Ordinary subsidies are a basic form of assistance to a new or young mission diocese. This is intended for support of basic evangelization needs and for basic operation costs of a mission dependent diocese.

Extraordinary subsidies are for projects such as construction or development on a one-time basis. A diocese is able to submit 3 to 5 requests for Extraordinary Subsidies based on its size. At least one Extraordinary Subsidy must have a religious community as its beneficiary.

What funds have the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States provided to the Mission Church for the past five years?

Over the past five years, the total has varied mainly due to the level of bequests and legacies. The World Mission Sunday collection hovers around $18-19 million each year. The Society of St. Peter Apostle is known to receive sporadic boosts because of legacy income, particularly from the estates of priests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Contributions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$37,877,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$34,579,000 (significant reduction in legacy income for 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$37,939,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$36,775,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$37,500,000</td>
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</tbody>
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In March 2019, based on resources received in the National Office and the dioceses, the following was reported by the National Director in the United States:

- The Society for the Propagation of the Faith – $33,131,000
- The Society of St. Peter Apostle – $2,723,000
- Missionary Childhood Association – $2,023,000
Are there financial audits of the Pontifical Mission Societies?

On an annual basis the financial statements of the PMS-USA are audited by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm. Further, the audit firm partner reviews the financial reporting that is submitted to Rome, in addition to the financial aspects of the reporting. Those audited financial reports are sent to Rome and the US-CCB. The National Office maintains an expense ratio of 13-15%.

Does the PMS-USA receive reports on the use of funds?

A full report is prepared annually by Rome on the precise destination of all the funds. Called the “RAPPORTO” because it is made available principally in Italian, it is now posted annually to the PMS-USA Intranet Site for Diocesan Directors, and can be accessed and searched.

For reporting on the use of funds, annually reports are sent by project leaders (bishops, religious, etc.) to the PMS-Rome offices, which include information about the spending from the prior year. Over the past five years, the percentage of projects that are reported on to Rome has increased from 8% to 30%. This means that 70% of projects do not report on the use of funds. This continues to be an ongoing struggle for the Roman offices, aware that reporting on donated funds is a sine qua non for many domestic charity regulatory bodies, not only in the U.S.

Does Latin America receive any funds?

Yes. Even though Latin America is not considered mission territory for purposes of inclusion in the spending priorities of the PMS (and very few of its apostolic vicariates or prelatures fall under the jurisdiction of the CEP), Latin America receives funds from the World Mission Sunday collection. This tradition dates back to the early 1960s. Through a special directive of Saint John XXIII, 5% of all funds collected in the United States on World Mission Sunday are put at the disposal of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (PCAL), a dicastery of the Roman Curia.

Similar to the procedure outlined for the General Solidarity Fund, officials of PCAL submit online requests for payment to the PMS-USA in June of each year, and the PMS-USA forwards the funds directly to the dioceses in which the project is being carried out, via the Apostolic Nunciature in the respective country.

The total amount sent each year varies, but is usually in the range of $800,000.

What is the role of the Diocesan Director?

In each diocese, preferably after consultation with the National Director, the Bishop nominates a Diocesan Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, ideally a single Director for all four Societies (Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Article 60).

The Code of Canon Law (Can. 791) indicates that in each diocese, a Diocesan Director for Mission should be appointed who will have a specific solicitude for the good operation of the Pontifical Mission Societies. The PMS Statutes indicate that this appointment be made usually in consultation with the National Director. Because of the shifting dynamics in Diocesan Chancery life, it is increasingly the case that the Mission Office and the Mission Director are part of a larger cluster of diocesan life.

The specific tasks and responsibilities of each Diocesan Mission Office can vary significantly from diocese to diocese.
What is the history of World Mission Sunday?

This special annual celebration was established by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on April 14, 1926 and set for the penultimate Sunday of October. Every diocese in the world participates in World Mission Sunday, joining Catholics around the world in prayer and action to support the vitality and growth of the Mission Church. The celebration of the Eucharist, programs of animation, and personal sacrifice all contribute to the good of the Church beyond local boundaries. Even mission dioceses offer what they are able for the good of all of the Church’s Missions.

In *Redemptoris Missio*, St. Pope John Paul II writes that World Mission Sunday, “which seeks to heighten awareness of the missions, as well as to collect funds for them, is an important date in the life of the Church, because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, in the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world” (RM 81).

According to the *Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies* (Article 7), the Society for the Propagation of the Faith carries out its activity throughout the whole year, but with greater intensity during the month of October. This month must be regarded in all the countries as the Month of Universal Mission. The penultimate Sunday, proclaimed as World Mission Day is the high point of the month. This day is celebrated in all the particular Churches as the *feast of catholicity and universal solidarity*. On this day Catholics throughout the world become aware of their common responsibility for the evangelization of the world. The offerings collected on World Mission Sunday are to be used exclusively for the objectives of the General Solidarity Fund.

Are there other sources of mission funding that are not part of the Pontifical Mission Societies?

Yes. Diocesan Mission Offices often manage the participation of their Diocese in other forms of charitable mission work. They take several commonly known forms:

+ “Twinning” is a very popular form of mission in which a United States Diocese, Parish or other entity works closely with a project in a mission country. This may take the form of mission trips and financial support. Mission trips are arranged for individuals in a U.S. diocese to visit and work on a project in the mission diocese.

+ The Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP) is very well recognized in the United States since it offers the most direct encounter between a current missionary and U.S. Catholic congregations. Carried out usually during the summer months, the MCP provides financial mission support to mission dioceses all over the world. It is increasingly being used for U.S. mission needs. Established in 1931 in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, to provide additional mission support and encourage mission vocations, the MCP activity has been voluntarily reported to the National Office each year which has no jurisdiction over its operations. It is estimated that the MCP raises (roughly) twice the amount that is donated on World Mission Sunday. The reasons may seem obvious, (most notably, the presence of a missionary during Mass making a personal case for financial support.)

+ Mission Committees exist in many dioceses, a body that raises funds and distributes them independently of the PMS.

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15 Cf Sacred Congregation of Rites Rescritto of 14th April 1926
16 Cf Ad Gentes 36; CIC can 791 n 3; Redemptoris Missio 81
17 Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Article 10
In addition to gathering support for the Missions, what other efforts are the responsibility of the Pontifical Mission Societies?

According to the Statutes of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Article 21): “Missionary cooperation, rooted in the Christian and ecclesial life, and promoted by the Pontifical Mission Societies, concerns not only particular moments in the life of a Christian, but their whole individual and collective life…. The essential basis for such missionary cooperation lies in a profound and intense labor of animation and formation.”

Toward that end, the PMS-USA create materials for this animation and formation, most especially for World Mission Sunday, but also throughout the year. These materials are made available, many in English and Spanish, to Diocesan Directors.

Such resources are also featured on an online resource page, and are presented for:

+ Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) with grade-specific mission lessons in line with the Church’s Liturgical Year
+ catechesis, including the World Mission Rosary (created by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen)
+ parish celebrations of World Mission Sunday parish materials.

Mission animation and formation activities from the PMS-USA include:

+ Christmas Artwork Contest for elementary school age young people from MCA; 24 winners come to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. during the Advent and Christmas Seasons
+ Song Contest, this year for the Extraordinary Missionary Month (see more on this below)

In promoting the goal of the Pontifical Missionary Union, the PMS-USA:

+ have various online blogs, in English and Spanish:
  + “Mission in Scripture” (drawing mission themes from the Scripture readings for Sundays, Saints days and Holy Days)
  + “Preaching Mission” (homily helps for priests and deacons)
  + “How Well Do You Know Your Faith?” (offering reflections on Church teaching and linked to a quiz in our Facebook Messenger BOT [MissioBot])
  + “Hol(l)y Headlines” (directed to those working in ministry with young people)
+ offer daily email messages, in English and Spanish, featuring messages from Pope Francis matched to a mission photo, and including the Psalm for the day; more than 50,000 have signed up for this daily email.

For 2019, Pope Francis has declared October 2019 as an “Extraordinary Missionary Month.” To assist (arch)dioceses in celebrating this special mission moment, the PMS-USA have:

+ prepared additional resources in various categories, including backgrounders, catechesis and formation, prayer and spirituality, missionary charity, and missionary witnesses.
+ produced, in partnership with My Catholic Faith Delivered, a first-of-its-kind online “Introduction to Missiology” course. Composed of seven lessons – (1) Mission History; (2) Mission Communities; (3) Mission Dynamics; (4) Mission Theology; (5) Mission Spirituality; (6) Mission and Inculturation, and (7) Bringing Mission Home – this course uses instructional design techniques to offer an interactive experience of learning suitable for pastoral professionals and others interested in deepening their understanding of mission. The course will be available October 1, 2019.