

# Pontifical Mission Societies

---



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith  
Society of St. Peter the Apostle  
Holy Childhood Association

## ROLE OF THE DIOCESAN DIRECTOR

**Nature and importance of the PMS  
Diocesan Director's role**

## NATURE

The role of the Diocesan Director for the Pontifical Mission societies flows directly from the role of the Church in the world today. Two essential aspects are:

1. The whole church is in Mission to the whole world and every member of the Church is missionary.
2. Each local church is the Universal Church in that particular spot, formed in its image.

To achieve a vision of the universal missionary Church as it comes to life in each local church and in everyone of the faithful, requires a mature faith and knowledge of the experience of the Church as it lives today.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, with the other Pontifical Mission Societies are the “official and principal instrument” of the universal Church and each local church for missionary cooperation (*Statutes 1, 2*).

Their first and principal *aim* is the formation of the universal missionary spirit in the hearts of all people. This should be accomplished by:

- ◆ Awakening and deepening the missionary conscience of the people of God.
- ◆ Informing them about the life and needs of the universal mission.
- ◆ Encouraging the churches to pray for one another.
- ◆ Assisting each other by offering personnel.
- ◆ Supporting each other by supplying material aids.

## **IMPORTANCE:**

Pope John Paul II approved the new Pontifical Missionary Societies Statutes in June 1980. This reflected Vatican II's assertion that it is right that their works should be given first place because:

- ◆ They address themselves to all baptized persons and to all Christian communities
- ◆ They undertake to assist in all the needs of the mission churches
- ◆ The propagate the gospel message, which is the first duty of the Church

## **Purpose of Diocesan Director**

1. To awaken the whole diocese to Christ's call for evangelizing all people.
2. To motivate and enable all to respond concretely to this universal mission call in their local ministries and in their personal lives as Christians.
3. To establish long range vision with emphasis on the cooperation from and with all leaders and offices of his/her diocese.
4. To animate, unite, and activate the whole diocese as world evangelizers.

## **Specific Goals for Local Mission Apostolate**

1. To promote an apostolate of prayer: private, group, public.
2. To invite the sick and aged to offer their own suffering in union with Christ on the Cross.

3. To prepare the diocese for World Mission Day in October.
4. To hold mission education seminars emphasizing the missionary dimension of every Christian vocation.
5. To ensure somehow that mission education, be an important part of the education programs for priests, seminarians, deacons, religious and laity.
6. To enable involvement in and identification with ***world mission*** as a vital part of all activities of the diocese.
7. To awaken and nurture vocations.
8. To promote an awareness of current conditions faced by our sister Churches in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America.

These purposes and goals focus on the church's universal Mission

### **World Mission Day**

This day is a major annual event in the life of the Church, “celebrated in all local churches as the feast of the Catholicity and universal solidarity”. (statutes I.II) This event is an opportune time for us in our efforts to build awareness of the universality and missionary identity of the Church.

Pope John Paul II has called this occasion “*a moment for the entire Church to examine its conscience on its missionary involvement and for presenting to the People of God the Church's doctrine concerning the missions*”.

The Pope spoke of the Pontifical Mission Societies as “*the institution to promote the missionary cooperation of every particular church, of every bishop, of every parish, of every community, of every family, of every person*”.

Our Holy Father has emphasized the importance of observing the official day of World Mission in October and has asked the bishops “*to beg those responsible for Catholic organizations and the faithful to renounce any other collections of a particular nature during this period*”.

### **Working with Other Diocesan Organizations**

Each organization becomes enthusiastic for its own particular area of diocesan life and the local churches’ apostolate. Each of these apostolic charges includes the universal mission dimension dogmatically stated in *Lumen Gentium* and persistently affirmed by popes and bishops before and since Vatican II. Therefore, for purposes of animation, great cooperation is necessary.

World mission becomes a dynamic force in the ministries of the diocese through those commissioned by the bishop and those who respond to the prompting of the Spirit.

The Diocesan Director is the coordinator of the mission efforts of the diocese as a whole and facilitates cooperation among the apostolate of the local church apostolates. These numerous faith expressions of the local church are easily categorized:

1. Seminaries, houses of formation, permanent diaconate programs, other ministry for mission programs within the diocese, and programs for the continuing education of the clergy.

2. Schools and all departments involved in various levels of education within the diocesan framework, as well as Diocesan vocation offices.
3. Diocesan offices and institutions involved in communications, particularly the diocesan newspaper.
4. Diocesan collegial bodies (e.g. Presbyterial senates).
5. Parish councils and other parish structures within the diocese.
6. Various lay associations and organizations that function within the diocesan boundaries.
7. Campus ministry personnel and those involved with young adult ministry.
8. Diocesan programs for evangelization.
9. Religious communities of men and women who reside and serve within the diocese.
10. Diocesan offices of worship and liturgy.
11. Social ministry offices and centers for justice in peace, as well as associations and organizations responsible for ministry to the handicapped.
12. Chaplain of hospitals, Prisons and other public and private institutions

These twelve (12) groups of offices, institutions and programs might serve as a mere checklist for a Diocesan Director.

They are also presented here to suggest the far-reaching implications of Vatican II's insistence that the universal mission is incumbent on all the People of God.

Diocesan Offices, Institutions and Programs, however, local their primary charge from the bishop, must also discern in the Spirit, from the Gospel and Church doctrine, their own roles for world mission. The Diocesan Director assists them in fulfilling their roles.

## **ASPECTS OF ORGANIZATION OUTSIDE THE DIOCESE**

- A. The Holy See has established four (4) Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, which form "one... institution with four branches":
1. THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH, to bring the good news to the poor by funding the needs of the missionary church.
  2. THE SOCIETY OF ST. PETER THE APOSTLE, whose purpose is to promote concern and support for the information of local clergy and religious in mission lands.
  3. THE HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION, which promotes mission awareness and encourages mission participation among school children by offering mission oriented educational and liturgical programs to parishes and primary schools. By a mutual interaction, the children of the world help one another to realize that Christ's mission is truly universal. This association also prepares our young people to take active roles in their adult missionary apostolates.

4. THE MISSIONARY UNION OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS, which is directed to all persons called and committed to ministry in the Church: priests, religious, deacons, candidates to the priestly and religious life, and other persons engaged in the pastoral ministry. It “has for its immediate end the deepening of missionary awareness” among those who undertake the mission formation of the faithful (*Statutes I, 3*).

The three (3) first-named Societies include the collection of funds among the functions.

- B. The **Statutes** promulgated by the Holy See in 1980 for the Pontifical Mission Societies set forth the relationship that is to exist between Diocesan Directors and the National Office of these world mission societies. They also set forth the relationship between National Offices and the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or the Propagation of the Faith. The Holy See, acting through the Sacred Congregation, appoints the National Director for each country. The Holy See makes this appointment with “the recommendation of the local (National) Episcopal Conference, for a five-year term which is renewable normally for one further term. He is the official representative of the Pontifical Mission Societies at the local (National) Bishop’s Conference” (*Statutes II, 5a*).

It is the National Director’s responsibility to present a financial statement and a report on the activities of the different Societies to the National Council, Secretaries General of the Societies, and the local Episcopal Conference (*Statutes II, 5c, e and f*).



The “offerings of the faithful, collected for the world-wide mission” through the efforts of the Diocesan Directors must be “handed over completely to the National Office”

*(Statutes II, 6c).*

The funds collected by the National Office, then, must be “placed entirely at the disposal of the General Secretariats of the Societies, after the necessary expenditures incurred by the National and Diocesan Offices have been deducted”

*(Statutes II, 5g).*

In general, the National Office assists the Diocesan Directors in fulfilling their roles by offering specific programs designed for implementation by the Directors and providing the necessary materials. The National Office conducts those activities that can be done most effectively at the national level, and office guidance and support for the efforts of the Directors functioning separately in each diocese.

- C. The Diocesan Director’s role is a crucial one. Thus, special care is given to the appointment of the Diocesan Director. The Statutes describe the selection process in this way:

“In each diocese, the bishop will appoint a Diocesan Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, preferably only one for all four (4) Societies, and preferably after consultation with the National Director for the four societies. It is desirable that the Director be appointed for a period of five years, this mandate being renewable.

It is likewise desirable that this Diocesan Director be also the Episcopal Delegate for the Missions (*ecclesiae Sanctae III, 4*)” *(Statutes II, 6a).*

In the event that the Episcopal Delegate is someone other than the Diocesan Director, the Statutes note that the Episcopal Delegate “should give fullest support to the Diocesan Director” (Ibid). Further, the Episcopal Delegate “should be a member of the Pastoral Council of the diocese“. (*Ecclesiae Sanctae III, 4*)

- D. A National Council for the Pontifical Mission Societies advises the National Director and is composed of Diocesan Directors or their representatives with other persons interested in the various dimensions of mission animation. (*Statutes II, 5a-b*).

**Their responsibilities are:**

1. “The National Council will examine and approve the balance sheet: receipts and expenditures, with the costs of administration and promotion undertaken by the National and Diocesan Offices according to the established budget. It will draw up the program of activities for the Societies, both in the sphere of pastoral animation and in the organization of collections” (*Statutes II 5b*).
2. “The National Council may draw up more detailed regulations for the proper organization of its work and of the societies activities” (*ibid., h*).
3. “In view of the episcopal character of the Pontifical Mission Societies, the National Council will see to it that their activities are integrated into the overall program of diocesan and inter-diocesan pastoral work, so as to ensure unity and harmonious development.

While keeping their own identity, the Pontifical Mission Societies will avoid functioning on the fringes of the diocesan pastoral life and will avoid creating parallel structures. They will follow guidelines given by the episcopal commission for the missions...“ (*ibid., i*).

## APPENDIX A

### **Specific Programs for Implementation by the Diocesan Offices:**

- A. World Mission Sunday
- B. Mission Education: Promoting Mission Awareness and Missionary Vocations
  - 1. Personal contact
  - 2. Communication media and other promotional methods
  - 3. School programs (promoting prayer and sacrifice)
- C. Membership
  - 1. Membership Sunday (in various forms)
  - 2. Other promotional efforts
- D. Mailing List
  - 1. Supervising office activity
  - 2. Promoting list growth (e.g. through collection envelope returns)
- E. Direct Mail Program
  - 1. Mission Today Magazine
  - 2. Seasonal appeals (Lent, Easter, Summer and Christmas)

- F. Other Fundraising Activities
  - 1. Estate planning services and programs (available through the national office)
  - 2. Special gift programs
  - 3. Monthly donor program
  - 4. Bursary program
  
- G. Communications with the National office
  - 1. Regional and national meetings
  - 2. Phone and mail contact
  - 3. Reports on current programs
  
- H. Other Responsibilities
  - 1. Diocesan Missionary Cooperation Plan
  - 2. Mass Intentions (to be offered by mission priests)
  - 3. Hosting visitors from Mission areas
  - 4. Other mission related activities in and for the diocese

## **APPENDIX B**

### **A HISTORICAL NOTE**

With the promulgation of the new Statutes, the four (4) Pontifical Mission Societies have been fully integrated into the Church's, worldwide missionary effort under the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples.

But it is important to remember that each of these Societies came into being through individual initiative -- one or two people responding to their faith, the missionary nature of the Church and the world's need for Christ. Lay people played a decisive role in their foundation, organization and growth.

- ◆ In 1822, Miss Pauline Jaricot, with a group of helpers, founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The Society begun in Lyon, France, but from the beginning, it was conceived as the international effort and it soon became.
- ◆ Responding to the advice of Pauline Jaricot, Bishop de Forbin-Janson of Nancy, France, wished to create a missionary movement among Catholic children to help poor children in mission countries. Thus, came to life in 1843, the Holy Childhood Association.
- ◆ Again in France, and again by lay people, the Society of St. Peter the Apostle was founded. Responding to a critical need for funds to support the development of local clergy in the missions, Mrs. Stephanie Bigard and her daughter Jeanne formed the society in 1889, Caen.
- ◆ Convinced that the spread of a missionary Spirit at all levels of the Church depended on the missionary awareness of priests, Fr Paolo Manna found the Pontifical Mission Union in Italy in 1916. The Union's scope has since been expanded to include religious brothers and sisters, deacons, candidates to the priestly and religious life, and other persons engaged in the pastoral ministry.

North America along with China, was a primary focal point for the renewal of missionary effort in the Church that took place early in the 19th century. France was a leading force in the surge of missionary activity, and Pauline Jaricot was responding to the increasing appeals for mission support when she founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The new unique aspect of the Society she formed was its universality: from the beginning, Pauline Jaricot's desire was to provide aid to all missions -- to support the Church's missionary activity as a single, worldwide effort.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **NOTE ON THE DISPERSAL OF FUNDS**

All funds raised by each Pontifical Mission Aid Society are channeled through its national office and are put at the disposition of the Superior Council, which meets in Rome under the auspices of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples. The Superior Council (composed of the national directors) receives requests for subsidies from mission areas and after considering the requests and the funds available, assigns the subsidies equitably. Funds gathered in Canada are actually held by the National Office until the office distributes them according to the instructions of the Sacred Congregation, directly to the receiving countries.

Maintaining a general fund for the monies raised throughout the world assures that every local church in the missions can have access to help, and that no church in need goes unattended. The general fund provides assistance in the way that most respects and dignity of the receiving churches.

In giving to the missions through the Pontifical Mission Societies, each donor becomes part of the universal missionary activity of the Church, cooperative effort involving all churches, rich and poor.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW AND THE MISSIONS**

Pope John Paul II promulgated the new Code of Canon Law on 3 February 1983. On that occasion, the Holy Father explicitly referred to the missionary emphasis in the new code, indicating “the function that the law -- also in its external formulation -- has in the life of the ‘societas sui generis’ founded by Christ to continue His salvific work in the Whole World, and throughout the centuries: ‘Go, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them... teaching them to observe what I commanded’.” (*Mt. 28: 29–30*).

A survey of the new Code reviews that Title II of Book III, “De Actione Ecclesiae Missionali” deals with matters relating to evangelization and missionary cooperation.

Other points of importance, such as the missionary orientation given candidates to the priesthood, are developed in Part I of Book II, “*De Christifidelibus*”.

The new Code affirms that the church is by its very nature missionary, and that evangelization is a fundamental obligation of the People of God; it invites collaboration in a spirit of co-responsibility for missionary cooperation (*Canon 781*).

The new Code accords to the Pope and the Episcopal College the direction and coordination of both missionary activity and missionary cooperation (Canon 782); and it applies the adjective “missionary” to everyone, indigenous, or not, including the diocesan priests, members of religious institutes or apostolic societies, and the laity (Canon 784). The process of missionary activity, through the institution and full development of new churches, is also described in the Code (*Canon 786*).

In a pertinent section (Canon 791), the new Code regulates missionary cooperation in the diocese, referring specifically to the promotion of vocations; efforts to promote the instruments of missionary cooperation, especially the Pontifical Mission Societies; and the celebration of World Mission Sunday.

In relation to the rights and obligations of all the faithful (dealt with in Part I of Book II) the new Code reminds all the faithful of the obligation to fulfil the duties towards the universal Church (Canon 209) , their duty to collaborate in bringing the divine a message of Salvation to the whole world (*Canon 121*).



Book II of the Code, also emphasize the necessity of educating seminarians in the missionary spirit (Canon 245), informing them of the needs of the universal Church.

***Abbreviations used in the text:***

|      |   |                       |
|------|---|-----------------------|
| L.G. | - | Lumen Gentium         |
| A.G. | - | Ad Gentes             |
| P.O. | - | Presbyterorum Ordinis |
| E.N. | - | Evangelii Nuntiandi   |

***TEXTS USED IN QUOTATIONS:***

The documents of Vatican II,  
Walter M. Abbot, S.J., General Editor  
Very Reverend Monsignor Joseph Gallagher, Translation  
Editor. American Press, 1966.

On Evangelization in the Modern World,  
Pope Paul VI. Publications Office, U.S.C.C., 1976

*Pontifical Missionary Societies Statutes*  
*Rome: Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples,*  
*1980*

## **PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES**

2219 Kennedy Rd. Toronto ON M1T 3G5

Telephone: 416 - 699 - 7077: Email: [missions@missionsocieties.ca](mailto:missions@missionsocieties.ca)

[Www.missionsocieties.ca](http://www.missionsocieties.ca)