

missio
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Mission Today

Spring 2023



Prayers in Pakistan

Our vibrant Church

Lives of faith

Featured highlights

4

Prayers in Pakistan
Fr Anthony reports

8

Building a vibrant Church
News from our partners overseas

14

The Holy Father
Monthly prayer intentions

20

Lives of faith
Missionaries killed in 2022

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Cover: *Studying for the Priesthood in Malawi*

The National Director writes



In this edition of *Mission Today*, we focus on the work of Missio in supporting the training of tomorrow's Priests and Sisters. On pages 8-11 you can read how you are helping to shape the future of our Church.

Our Lenten journey towards Easter has begun. During Holy Week we will relive, once again, the suffering and death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, culminating in the celebration of his Resurrection. His sacrifice for our sake is made meaningful by his Resurrection – God's indelible stamp of affirmation upon the life and teachings of his Son, Jesus.

The first Apostles, including Peter, were profoundly changed by the Resurrection. From heartbroken and fearful disciples, the Resurrection of Jesus turned them into heroes and martyrs. It encouraged them to rethink their whole lives – their values and relationships – and radically altered their

understanding of who God is. And the world would never be the same again.

My recent trip to Pakistan has given me cause to give thanks to God, not just for the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, but for the freedom I enjoy in being able to profess and share it. In a growing number of countries, this is not the case.

To be a Christian in Pakistan is not easy, yet the light of Christ shines through the lives of men, women and children who remain faithful to him. On occasion this has led to the ultimate sacrifice, as you will read in my article on page 4 and in the account of Missionaries killed in 2022 on page 20.

More often, expressing our faith leads to exclusion, marginalisation, and injustice. However, when I visited the seminaries in Pakistan, I was met by young men who were obviously brimming with joyful enthusiasm and courageous resolve in their vocation of becoming Priests to serve their local people.

To be a Christian anywhere is never easy. As Jesus said, 'In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world' (John 16:33).

Thank you for your many sacrifices in supporting the mission God has given us, his Church.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Father Tony

Fr Anthony Chantry,
Missio National Director



Be a missionary through prayer

Whoever and wherever we are, we can all be missionary: joining together in prayer with the wider Church, volunteering for Missio or giving generously through the Red Box. These are all valuable ways to further the work of mission.

Morning Offering

Eternal Father, I offer you everything I do this day – my thoughts, works, joys and sufferings. Grant that, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and united to Jesus in the Eucharist, my life this day may be of service to you and to others. And with Mary and the whole Church I pray especially for the Pope's prayer intention this month.
Amen.

See the Holy Father's monthly Prayer Intentions for 2023 on pages 14-15



'I will die, but I will not let you go in!'

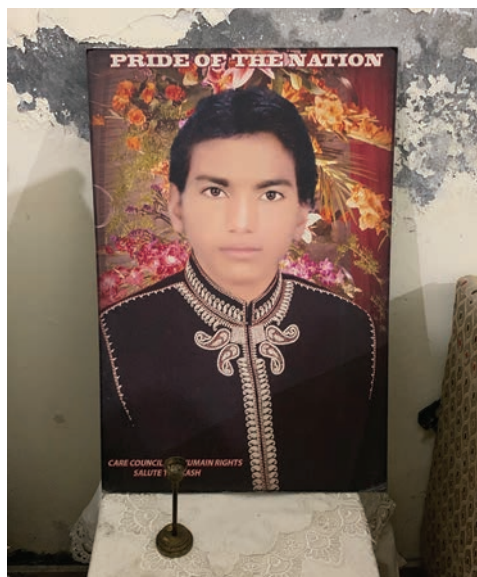
Fr Anthony Chantry, the National Director of Missio, travelled to Pakistan in late 2022 to visit mission projects. The purpose of his visit was to express solidarity and support to our sisters and brothers who have faced ongoing challenges throughout the pandemic, followed by devastating floods and political turmoil. Here is a personal reflection of his time whilst there:

It was ten years ago that I first visited Pakistan to meet with my fellow Mill Hill Missionaries working in Sindh and Rawalpindi. As I remember, I came away from that visit feeling full of admiration for those missionaries – men and women, clerical, Religious and lay – who, literally, laboured in the heat of the day to proclaim the redeeming love of Jesus Christ to those in great need.

My recent return to Pakistan took me to Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, and Hyderabad where I visited some of the many projects that Missio is supporting. I also met many Christians in a country which is overwhelmingly Muslim in law, culture, and religious practice.

As a small minority (under 2%), Christians are often pushed to the margins of society, where they are discriminated against and sometimes face real physical danger. Going to Sunday Mass provides Catholics with a weekly opportunity to respond to God's call to follow Jesus.

On 15 March 2015, Akash Bashir, a 20-year-old Catholic of St John's Parish, Lahore stopped a suicide bomber from entering the church where more than 1,000 Christians were celebrating Mass.



He had volunteered to serve on the security team – checking people as they entered the church. He did not recognise the suicide bomber as someone from the parish and realising what was about to happen, he put his arms around the bomber and told him, 'I will die, but I will not let you go in!'

The explosion that followed caused devastation, death, and injury, but hundreds in the church were saved by this brave young man. A simultaneous attack on a nearby Anglican church also caused terrible suffering.

Last year, Pope Francis named Akash a 'Servant of God', which will hopefully lead to his beatification and sainthood.

I was privileged to meet his parents as they related all that had happened, and how much they continue to miss their son. His father, Emmanuel, with tears in his eyes spoke with pride about how Akash was ready to sacrifice his life to protect his fellow Christians.



His mother, Naz Bano, shared that one of her sons – Arsalan – has chosen to replace his brother as part of the security team guarding the church. 'And' his father added, 'I now go to Mass every Sunday without fail, something I was not doing before.'

They made a deep impression on me, for in all that they shared I did not detect even a hint of anger, bitterness, or recrimination.

Before I left the house, we prayed together for peace and courage, and that God may forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us. I asked Akash Bashir, Servant of God, to pray for us.



As I visited parish communities across Pakistan, I recognised a pattern – churches brimming over with Catholics celebrating their faith with enthusiasm and optimism. I experienced a strength of commitment and resilience that challenged me to reflect on how important the Catholic faith is to me, as I journey through life with the Risen Christ.

I heard the word 'sacrifice' a few times during my visit, which came as no surprise, and I come away with a real sense that the Church in Pakistan is more than willing to follow in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, who laid down his life for his friends, made the supreme sacrifice that echoes down through the centuries and into our lives. This sacrifice is made meaningful by God raising Jesus from death to life, for nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Thus it is for us all who choose to follow Jesus. Whatever we may come to endure, whatever challenge or distraction or violent opposition we may meet upon the way, nothing can replace the supreme joy of knowing Him who risked and gave all for us, that we might have life, and life in abundance.

Blessed Pauline Jaricot and the Red Box

An inspiration to us all

Living a life of faith,
Margaret Clark, with the
Blessed Pauline Jaricot
prayer card



Margaret Clark is the President of the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) in England and Wales. She and her husband are also committed, faithful volunteers who continue to support Missio and the Red Boxes. Here she describes some of her experiences of Missio:

I have never known life without the Red Box. As children we were brought up putting pennies into the wooden Mission Box and it is still part of the furniture! We always felt that missionaries around the world and the communities they served were part of our family.

When we were married and moved to a new area, the 'house-to-house collections' were a good way of getting to know our neighbours and fellow parishioners. My husband and I have collected for over 40 years, counting the contents of the Red Boxes on kitchen tables, and chatting. Now our conversations include Direct Debits, giving online and Gift Aiding donations, when possible.

It is always exciting to see what is happening throughout the world in the *Mission Today* magazine, through stories, updates and reflections. It is so important to reach out to all, especially to those who are housebound and are still devoted to Missio and its work. Keeping them in touch is a sheer delight.

Mill Hill Missionary, Fr Frank Graham, has always been a welcome visitor when coming to give a parish appeal or talk, either in our own parish or others in the area, relating tales of his life, work and travels and motivating us all. We miss him since his retirement.

It's an honour to continue the legacy of Blessed Pauline Jaricot: this incredible



Margaret Clark's brother, Peter, reading *Mission Today* shortly before he passed away: 'He was reading it so intently when nothing much else interested him.' May he rest in peace.

woman with remarkable faith who, at such an early age devoted herself to mission, and with female passion created the foundation of Missio which continues today. A great example to us all and especially as she is a woman whose, 'light has been hidden under a bushel' for so long.

It was a great joy to hear about Blessed Pauline's Beatification at the Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Mission Mass with National Director, Fr Anthony, and Diocesan Director, Fr Greg Price, in Darlington. How had we missed Pauline Jaricot for so long?

Her Feast Day, 9 January, is a date we will always keep in the diary now as she inspires us to keep on giving to the Red Box and spreading the word with faith and hope. 'She lit the match that lit the fire'.

Building a vibrant Church

Missio England and Wales has a long-standing relationship with five seminaries in Kenya, India, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. These seminaries offer the opportunity to sponsor the training of a future Priest. When you sponsor a seminarian, you are building the Church of tomorrow, today.

Your support was even more important throughout 2022 as our seminary partners continued to suffer through economic insecurity and turmoil, resulting from political instability and the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Here are their updates on the challenges and joys they experienced:

Christ the King Major Seminary, Kenya



We are happy to share that the number of seminarians increased from 306 in 2021, to 329 in 2022. And in 2023, we have a total of 329 seminarians from 23 dioceses doing their Philosophy and Theology training.

In early November 2022, we had the installation ceremony of lectors (31 seminarians) and acolytes (35 seminarians).

Another cause for celebration was in late November 2022, when we hosted the

Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya and Southern Sudan – His Excellency Humbertus van Megen – in the presence of Archbishop Anthony Muheria and more than 6,000 members of the Catholic Women's Association.

We continue to pray that the Catholic faith will be more vibrant, lived and witnessed in more concrete ways, especially through charitable actions. It is also our hope that many more young people will generously respond to the vocation to Priesthood, so that more Priests spread the faith; especially in dioceses which have few agents of evangelisation, and where Christ's faithful wait for too long for Eucharistic celebrations.

Fr Peter, Rector

Message from a student: The idea of a stranger helping me achieve my desire to serve as a Catholic Priest is not only humbling, but also encouraging. This gives me the impetus to work even harder in my journey of discernment and cultivate a heart of charity to God and to others. I heartily appreciate the efforts of Missio and continue to pray to God that he may bless all your endeavours. Thank you.

Br Mathew



St John's Regional Seminary, India



Our seminary is currently giving holistic formation to 88 seminarians from the 12 dioceses of the region. This past year, 20 seminarians were ordained Deacons in late October.

India is a multi-religious and multi-cultural country. Only 2.5% of the population are Christians. Many seminarians come from rural villages and their parents cannot contribute very much. Many thanks to the Missio sponsors and supporters for their prayerful and tremendous financial support in providing for the formation of future Priests.

The seminary building, which was built in 1965, is growing old and in the rainy season, there is water seepage from the roof of the building. We have to undertake repairs to the roof, so the prayerful support and monetary help from Missio towards maintenance of the seminary is indispensable.

Today, the Church needs dedicated missionaries, who are willing to render their services anywhere in the world, remembering the purpose of the coming of Christ – as a servant to serve, but not to be served.

Fr Marreddy, Rector

Message from a student: I pray for my sponsor who is supporting me, spiritually and financially, in my daily prayers and at the Eucharist. I am so glad that someone is praying for me to reach the altar of God to serve Him and His people.

You are taking initiative and supporting the needy, which is a great responsibility. I feel that God is working through you.

Through your kind sacrifice, the seminarians receive basic things like books, food, and healthcare. May God bless you.

Br Kodiganti



St Peter's Major Seminary, Malawi



The past year was very challenging; healing from the wounds of COVID-19 has not been easy.

Despite many drawbacks, we joyfully witnessed 22 seminarians getting ordained Priests in May 2022, additionally 7 students were ordained Deacons. And in October 2022, we opened the Academic Year with a total of 110 seminarians.

In an effort to build self-sufficiency, seminarians are engaged in various kinds of services within the seminary community such as animal husbandry, fish farming, chicken-rearing, and vegetable growing.

OUR FUTURE

This is to encourage them to appreciate manual work and self-reliance. This helps seminarians to make their own home habitable, and also helps to provide seminary necessities with their own hands.

We predict that 2023 will be more challenging. The economy of Malawi has nearly collapsed. The local currency is not stable and keeps on fluctuating. The cost of goods on the market keeps on skyrocketing. Despite such a gloomy economic front, we are joyful for the continued growth of faith and vocations.

Fr Daniel, Rector

Message from a student: A simple 'thank you' does not justify how deeply I appreciate your generous support to me financially and spiritually. Your prayers and selfless nature are very much evident as a result of your thoughtfulness in sponsoring me. This is what keeps me going – knowing that I have a sponsor who prays for me. May Almighty God bless us all.

Br Gervazio



Our Lady of Lanka National Seminary, Sri Lanka



In addition to the devastating pandemic, in 2022 our nation sadly experienced severe instability in governance and a hideous

economic crisis. These circumstances propelled a skyrocketing of prices of essential commodities, shortages of fuel, gas, medicine etc. of an unprecedented nature, which forced people to the streets, depriving them of their ability to sustain their lives.

It is our Christian duty to be ignited with a sense of solidarity with the thousands of our own people, sharing their common lot and being tangible signs of the Kingdom through our Christian lives and witness.

At the moment, our challenges are huge. But it is not totally bleak and depressing for a person who is rooted in faith and hope. We have a total of 190 seminarians who are studying for the Priesthood – 108 Diocesan seminarians and 82 Religious seminarians.

It is with deep gratitude to God that 25 Diocesan Priests and 9 Religious Priests were ordained in 2022. We believe in a God who reveals all in good time; He comes with a specific message and with purpose.

Fr Expeditus, Rector

Message from a student: My grandmother taught me to pray and the prayerful atmosphere at home influenced me greatly.

I am profoundly touched by your incredible generosity in supporting us spiritually through your unceasing prayers, and by going an extra mile in making us happy and comfortable through the financial assistance rendered joyously.

Do continue to pray for all the seminarians, that we may become holy Priests in the vineyard of the Lord. I entrust you and your family to the providential care of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Br Hashan



Bigard Memorial Seminary, Nigeria



We currently have 837 seminarians studying in our seminary.

One of challenges that has deeply impacted us has been the activities of terrorists and bandits, which have compelled us to increase security for the seminary at a great cost. The economic situation has also made it extremely difficult – prices of basic goods and services have skyrocketed.

On the political scene, the atmosphere is charged with ongoing presidential campaigns. Cases of kidnapping, killings and destruction of properties are reported daily.

Despite the turbulent situation in our country, we were pleased to have Priestly and Diaconate ordinations: 48 students were ordained Deacons, and 77 students were ordained Priests.

In spite of the crises Nigeria is facing, our churches are full, new parishes are being created, and vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life bloom.

We continue to hope that the current hostility will be resolved and that a

government will be chosen that will work to reduce religious tension.

We thank our benefactors for their kindness and continue to appeal for financial assistance, sincerely hoping we will be able to afford the basic amenities which will help promote the smooth running of our seminary.

Fr Albert, Rector

Message from a student: The economic condition of my country is deteriorating. However, your financial support, which we receive through Missio, has helped in providing for some of my basic needs. You not only support me with your financial contribution to the seminary, but also spiritually.

I am comforted and encouraged whenever I remember that I have a sponsor who prays for me and shares my worries. I feel that I am not left alone in this journey to the Priesthood. This helps me understand what it truly means to be a neighbour and confirms my belief that we are agents through whom God writes straight with crooked lines.

Br Peter



Read the full messages from the Rectors and seminarians at missio.org.uk

To find out how you can sponsor the training of a future Priest as an individual, or as a family, a community or a parish project, please turn to pages 23 and 24.

When you sponsor a seminarian, you build the Church of tomorrow, today.

Building the future – brick by brick!

Throughout the Christmas period in 2021, we shared news of Mill Hill Missionary Fr Noah and the Fundong Mission Station in Cameroon, which needed new classrooms to accommodate children fleeing Cameroon's internal conflict. Thanks to you, the community's vision has come to life.

When Fr Noah asked Missio for help, Fundong Parish had already begun building four new classrooms. Community volunteers had crafted handmade bricks for the walls and Fr Noah had sourced other building materials from local donors. But time was running out. Fr Noah explained:

'Despite the community's efforts, we did not have sufficient funds to complete construction. I was worried the approaching rainy season would undo a lot of the good work... Heavy rains risked collapsing the half-completed sun-brick classrooms.'

Thankfully, your support meant Missio could help. Fr Noah shared:



'Missio supported us at the right time; we are now in the rainy season, and it is very cold. We have put the ceilings in for all four classrooms. We have designed the windows to protect the children from the cold. We have also put in the doors, so no intruder can destroy our classrooms.'

It was wonderful to see the new classrooms built, roofed and secured. But more work was needed. Fr Noah explained:

'Our children are still in a dusty environment without the floor, and the walls inside and out have not yet been plastered. They can easily get jiggers (fleas which thrive in dusty environments) and their eyes are affected by the dust.'

A group of Missio supporters were touched by Fr Noah's appeal. They raised money to plaster and paint the classrooms, inside and out, and much more. Fr Noah shared:

'We were able to do the flooring for all four classrooms. We put up the gutters. We put chalkboards in each classroom. The school has greatly changed. No more dust, no more jiggers!'

St Francis Xavier School is truly a work of love and teamwork between the local



community and Missio supporters here in England and Wales. Fr Noah continued:

'The school is now one of the best in the entire community. The local community went the extra mile; they even borrowed money to raise their contribution which they are now paying back. This shows the love.'

'At our Golden Jubilee, the Archbishop conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on 204 children from our school. We thank God for the gift of faith. We remain grateful to Missio England and Wales for providing this beautiful school.'

Fr Noah has since taken up a new post in England and Wales, promoting the Red Box and sharing his experiences as a Mill Hill

Missionary. Please join us in praying for his ministry and his new role.

Meanwhile, his successor, Fr Leon MHM, has brought his own gifts to Fundong. He recently shared that he has started a youth choir!

The choir continues the vital work the new classrooms began – it brings young people into the parish community, helping them to avoid being recruited by local militant groups. In effect, it empowers them to turn away from violence, and towards God. Fr Leon shares:

'The choir has helped our apostolate with young people. Missio's support has enabled the purchase of local instruments, recording equipment and uniforms for the members.'

'We launched the children's choir at Mass. The people were so happy to see the children leading the singing. They celebrated! I am grateful to Missio for supporting my ministry in Cameroon.'

We are inspired by the amazing local community's faith and determination. And as ever, we are so grateful for your support. You are building the kingdom of God on earth – brick by handmade brick!



The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions 2023



Please join Pope Francis and the whole Church in praying these monthly intentions, particularly on Fridays at 12:30pm



JANUARY

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses who help the youngest and most vulnerable. May they teach fraternity rather than competition.

JULY

We pray for Catholics to place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, which profoundly transforms human relationships and enables us to come closer to God and our sisters and brothers.

FEBRUARY

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

AUGUST

We pray that the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.

MARCH

We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church itself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

SEPTEMBER

We pray for people living on the margins of society, in inhumane conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and may they never be considered of lesser importance.

APRIL

We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, through a decreasing use of weapons by both states and citizens.

OCTOBER

We pray that listening and dialogue will permeate every level of the Church, and that she will let herself be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.

MAY

We pray that each day, Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelisation, placing their own charisms at the service of the world's needs.

NOVEMBER

We pray that the Holy Father, in fulfilling his mission, may continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him with the help of the Holy Spirit.

JUNE

We pray that the international community commits itself to the abolition of torture and guarantees support to victims and their families.

DECEMBER

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of society's attention, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.



Prayer is central to everything we do. Stay connected with us online for more prayers and reflections: missio.org.uk/pray

And follow us on social media:



Sharing hope in Ethiopia

For World Mission Sunday in 2022, Missio shared the work of Maria, a lay missionary in Meki, Ethiopia who is Director of the Kidist Mariam Centre. The Centre helps vulnerable women lift themselves and their families out of poverty through education and training, and spiritual and emotional support.

Maria recently got in touch to thank you for your support, which has made a tangible difference in Meki. She explained:

‘People in the area are suffering and cannot get the basic products they need. We have been trying our best to cover all the expenses for our courses, so we appreciate very much the funds received from Missio England and Wales. It was a real blessing for us.

‘Thanks to you, we bought materials for the dressmaking courses. Second level students use them to make school uniforms for children of vulnerable women, and washable sanitary pads for young girls in rural schools, so they can continue attending school when they have their period.’

With your help, the Centre currently supports 312 young women, through food preparation, dressmaking, and hairdressing courses. When they graduate, they have a



better chance of getting decent jobs close to home or setting up their own businesses.

Unable to find employment locally, Beth* had travelled overseas as a domestic worker, to help support her family living in Meki. Sadly, her employers abused and exploited her. Beth returned home, ill and depressed.

With help from the Centre, Beth is improving day by day. She is thriving in her studies and is now able to help other students who have had similar experiences.

Beth says: ‘I have only words of gratitude to God and to all of you, for supporting young women like me to get new opportunities. You are part of our mission. God bless you all, Missio England and Wales!’



Ethiopia currently faces many challenges, but Maria and her team find much to rejoice in. She shares:

‘Our best joy is to welcome and give hope to so many women. It’s a privilege for us. Last year, 134 young women graduated. All of them got jobs afterwards. They’re now working as the real professionals they are. We’re so proud of them! To be there with them, sharing their joys and their problems was an honour.

‘During 2022, the conflict affected many vulnerable women. We wish to start new projects so that the women can be self-confident, active members of their community and become self-sufficient.’ Maria and her team hope 2023 is a year of peace ‘in our country, in our communities, and in our hearts’. She adds:

‘We want to continue being witnesses of God’s love in our community and in all the projects we do in Meki. We will continue our training courses for young women, but we would like to do other activities in the local community.’



Thank you so much for being part of the amazing work missionaries do around the world! We could not do what we do without you!

To support the work of missionaries in Ethiopia and around the world, please share what you can: missio.org.uk/donate

With thanks to our sister agency in Australia – Catholic Mission.

**Beth’s name has been changed to protect her identity.*

The Mill Hill Missionary angle



Fr Michael Corcoran MHM, General Superior of St Joseph's Missionary Society, reports on the latest news from the Mill Hill Missionaries:

I was able to travel to Cameroon in November 2022 to visit our Mill Hill Missionaries 'on the ground'. They have been living in a conflict zone for the past six years. In true Mill Hill Missionary fashion, they have remained at their posts at a very difficult time, at one with the people entrusted to their pastoral care.

My visit to Cameroon also involved the celebration of our Mill Hill Missionaries' arrival there in 1922. The centenary was truly a success, recalling the great work begun over 100 years ago and now witnessing a vibrant Church with a very strong laity.



A traditional welcome

What a wonderful legacy now carried on by generations of clergy, Religious and laity coming from these lands, assisted with our own enthusiastic crop of young Mill Hill Missionaries. The grace of God has accomplished great things in foreseeing the future development of the Church in the years, centuries, and millennia to come in this part of the vineyard.

An important milestone for our Mill Hill Society in the course of 2022 was the celebration of our Chapter.

We come as leaders with a fresh view, with renewed vigour and enthusiasm as



Centenary Cake: 1922-2022



The 'Friends of Mill Hill' in Cameroon

we guide the Society over the next five years. We recognise with gratitude the unique way our Members, Associates and Students give human form to the light of the Gospel wherever they live, work and study around the world.

We look to the future with hope as news reaching us from our Formation Programmes tells us that 13 young men nearing the end of their formation are applying for full membership in our Mill Hill Society. This is truly a blessing as we continue the great adventure that is mission.

I take the opportunity to thank the team at Missio, and all Diocesan Directors, Appealers, and Parish Volunteers.

We cherish the support and encouragement which we receive from all our friends and supporters as it enables us to make a difference in people's lives. Together we are bringing hope and help to many people around the world. Let us continue to reach out in our love and support for mission.

For more Mill Hill news, please visit millhillmissionaries.com or follow them on Facebook: /MillHillMissionaries

National Novena to St Joseph

11-19 March 2023



St Joseph's Missionary Society (Mill Hill Missionaries) is Britain's own missionary society, founded by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan in 1866.

Each year the Mill Hill community prepares for the feast day of St Joseph, our patron, with a special Novena of Masses and prayers. Prayer is the foundation of all mission work, both in this country and abroad. The Novena is a wonderful way for Red Box supporters to pray for each other and build links of prayer across the world for missionaries and the people they serve.

You can join in at home by praying the daily Novena and prayer and/or by sending your petitions to us at 6 Colby Gardens, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 7GZ. You can also join us online – Masses from St Joseph's in Maidenhead will be live-streamed: 7:30pm on weekdays, 10:00am Saturdays 11 and 18 March, and 11:00am Sundays 12 and 19 March 2023. Simply visit the Mill Hill Missionaries website to access the link:

millhillmissionaries.com/novena

For more information or to request a petition slip, prayer booklet or newsletter, please email novenamhm@gmail.com

During office hours, you can also call: 020 7821 9755

Missionaries killed in 2022

Last year, 18 missionaries were killed worldwide: 12 Priests, one Religious Brother, three Sisters, one Seminarian and one lay person. They served communities living in poverty, and children in need, through faith and development projects.

These missionaries are witnesses who, as Pope Francis says, 'show us Jesus, who conquered evil with mercy' and embody 'the essence of mission, to bear witness to Christ, that is, to his life, passion, death and resurrection for the love of the Father and of humanity.'

It was undoubtedly 'for the love of the Father and of humanity' that Sr Maria de Coppi spent almost sixty years of her life in Mozambique, and Sr Luisa Dell'Orto worked in Haiti for twenty years, where she arrived after having lived out her vocation in Cameroon and Madagascar.

These missionaries are accompanied by the sacrifice of other men and women, who shared the same spirit and same commitment to proclaiming the Gospel through everyday gestures and actions.

We are all called to witness to Jesus Christ by our words and actions, and in standing up for the truth we may face suffering, even death. This is our Baptismal calling, and the voices of these martyrs call us forward in faith and support us with their prayers.

Pablo Isabel Hernández, lay pastoral worker and leader of the Lenca Indigenous group in western Honduras, was killed on 9 January by unknown men who shot him in the back.

Fr Joseph Tran Ngoc Thanh, 41, a Vietnamese Dominican, was killed on 29 January while listening to confessions in the parish of Dak Môt, a diocese of Kon Tum.

Fr Richard Masivi Kasereka, 34, a Congolese Religious was assassinated on 2 February by armed men as he was returning to his parish, having celebrated the World Day of Consecrated Life in Kanyaboyonga.



Fr Enrique Vasquez, 48, was killed in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on 2 March. He had gone to visit his parents but did not arrive at his destination. He is remembered for his kindness and for his friendship. In his diocese he held the post of Diocesan Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio).

Friar Wilberth Daza Rodas OFM, 42, working in San Antonio, Bolivia, was murdered on 16 April by thieves who entered the church after the Easter vigil.

Fr Joseph Aketeh Bako, 48, Parish Priest in Kaduna, Nigeria, was kidnapped by armed men who attacked the Rectory on the night of 8 March. He died at the hands of his captors, between 18 and 20 April.

Fr Jose Guadalupe Rivas, 58, of the Archdiocese of Tijuana, Mexico, was killed and his body was found on a ranch in Tecate on 16 May.

Fr Michael Mawelera Samson, 62, a Missionary of Africa from Malawi, disappeared on 10 June from the youth centre of the church where he worked in Mbeya, Tanzania. His body was found on the riverbed of the Meta in Sabasaba on the morning of 11 June.

Fr Javier Campos, 79 and **Fr Joaquín Mora**, 80, both Jesuit Priests, were killed by an armed gang on 20 June in the Church of San Francis Xavier in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Sr Luisa Dell'Orto was killed on 25 June in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, most likely the victim of an attempted robbery. For 20 years she had been totally committed to the care of children living on the streets.

Fr Vitus Borogo, 50, was killed on 25 June at the Prison Farm in Kaduna, Nigeria, during a raid by armed men.



Fr Christopher Odia Ogedebbe, 41, was kidnapped and killed on 26 June while on his way to celebrate Mass at St Michael's Catholic Church, Edo State, Nigeria, where he was Parish Priest.

Fr John Mark Cheitnum was kidnapped on 15 July from the Rectory of Christ the King Church in Kaduna, Nigeria, and was brutally killed on the same day of the kidnapping.

Fr Godefroid Pembele Mandon was shot and killed by armed bandits on the night of 6 August in the parish of St Joseph Mukasa, in Kikwit, located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Sr Maria De Coppi, 84, an Italian Comboni missionary, was killed during an attack on the Chipene mission in northern Mozambique, on the night of 6 September. The attackers destroyed the church, the hospital, and the primary and secondary schools. Sr Maria was shot in the head as she tried to reach the dormitory where the few remaining students were.



Sr Marie-Sylvie Kavuke Vakatsuraki, a doctor, was killed as she was preparing to perform surgery. The assault took place during the night between 19 and 20 October in the village of Maboya, located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Br José Dorian Piña Hernández, 25, a Seminarian of the diocese of Zacatecas, Mexico, was killed on 27 December during an attempted armed robbery.

'... by looking to the martyrs of yesterday and today, we can learn to live a full life, welcoming the martyrdom of everyday faithfulness to the Gospel and conforming to Christ' – Pope Francis

Please join us giving thanks for the work and witness of these, our sisters and brothers. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

All information is supplied by Fides, the Vatican-based news agency of Missio, and by Vatican News.

'When all else fails, read the instructions!'

Recently in my reading, I came across the quote above and it's not just a piece of humorous advice for frustrated furniture assemblers! When we apply the quote to our Christian lives, there's a lot of wisdom in it.

In our daily lives, we often try to go it alone. We rely on our human wisdom and pride ourselves on our self-sufficiency until it all goes wrong, and we feel like failures. Or we get stressed out with all the jobs and chores we have to do, and we get angry and annoyed with other people. So, when life seems to be failing us in any way, let us 'read the instructions'.

We find our instructions (or User Manual!) in the Hebrew Scriptures and especially in the Gospels of the life and teachings, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When all else fails, we can turn to the spiritual wisdom of the Word of God, find those passages which, with silent reflection and meditation, can transform our lives and ease our burdens. For example: Deuteronomy 32:1-3 and 10-11, 'The Lord's my Shepherd...' (Psalm 23), the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), 'Come to me all you who labour...' (Matthew 11:28-30), and many more God-given instructions!

Father Peter

You can write to Fr Peter at:
41 Victoria Road, Formby,
Liverpool L37 1LW

In Remembrance

Our online Book of Remembrance includes the names of people who have supported Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries in the past. You can find the Book of Remembrance on our website: missio.org.uk/book-of-remembrance

All living and deceased supporters of Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries are remembered at Mass in our chapel. Mill Hill Priests offer Mass for deceased members in November, and they are remembered at Mass every Sunday and in their Daily Office. The actual Books of Remembrance are held in the Missio chapel in London.

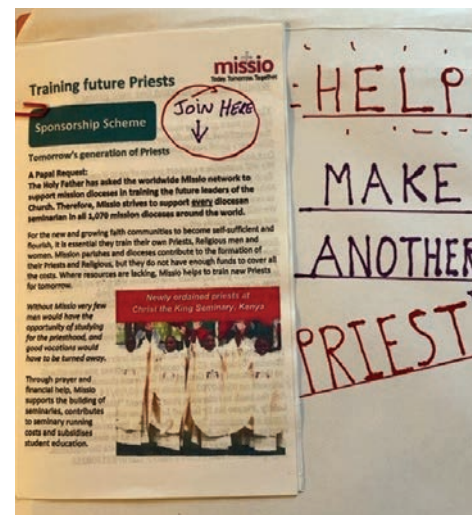
If you would like to give in remembrance of a relative or loved one, you can do so by visiting missio.org.uk/donate

You can opt to pass on their name by ticking the 'gift in memory of a loved one' option, which will then be recorded in our online Book of Remembrance.

'Whoever lives and believes in me will never die'
John 11:26



An uplifting cause



Missio offers supporters the opportunity to connect with students studying for the Priesthood in seminaries overseas. Here is a message from Leo Hughes, who encouraged his fellow parishioners to contribute financially and spiritually to the future of our Church:

In May 2021, I was looking for new ways to promote Missio in my parish, so I asked for information about sponsoring the training of a future Priest overseas. I felt that only a few parishioners might be able to commit to £40 per month, but knew that if the need was clear, many might be able to afford £1 per week for an uplifting cause. Once I received the photo of the first student, I thought that if I could get a few people to share, we could help even more.

It caught on quickly and with publicity in the parish newsletter and a makeshift poster

with photo of the trainee Priest, by the end of 2021 we were well on our way with supporting two students.

I send a single card at Easter and Christmas to each student from their sponsors, mentioning each by name. Some sponsors have recruited others, so we now sponsor four trainee Priests. Everybody feels they have a clear purpose both to 'pay and pray' for the success of their future Priest.

Each sponsor feels that this is 'their' trainee Priest and that they have a divine and specific purpose. It is uplifting to know that we are doing something that is pleasing to God. Maybe other parishes would like to try this, too?

Leo Hughes

St George and St Theresa of the Child Jesus, Birmingham

Editor: Thank you for sending this to us, Leo. We think it's a fantastic way to connect, in faith, to seminarians studying for the Priesthood overseas! Well done to you and your fellow parishioners.

You can hear from some seminarians about how much this support means to them on pages 8-11.

We love to hear your news and receive your comments on *Mission Today* and related topics, so please continue to fill our postbag by sending your thoughts and comments to:

The Editor, *Mission Today*,
23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU
or email: info@missio.org.uk

Tomorrow's generation of Priests and Sisters

Missio ignites God's love by helping missionaries to work alongside communities globally that are poor or in need, regardless of their background or belief. Together with our supporters, we play a vital part in creating a vibrant Catholic Church for the future.

In many mission dioceses, there are increasing numbers of students for the Priesthood and Religious life. Because their communities are poor, they must undertake their training with very basic facilities and scarce resources.

Missio is the only funding organisation in the Church which guarantees a place for all who are accepted for formation in mission dioceses. This is a unique role the Pope has given to Missio.

Through Missio you can continue to share the gift of faith with others and ensure that no one who has a religious vocation to serve the Church is turned away through lack of money.

In mission dioceses, it costs at least £700 a year to train a student for the priesthood.

The local bishops, parishes and families manage to collectively raise £200 annually for each student, but it is simply not enough.

Could you give £1.37 a day to help them?

If you, or your parish group, can commit £42 a month (£500 per year) for four years, you



Mathew, a seminarian in Kenya

can ensure that board and lodging, building maintenance, support staff and library books for one seminarian are paid. If you wish, you will be told the name of your student so that you can hold him in prayer, as he will you. Read more on pages 8 and 23.

Any gift you can make to Missio for the training of future Priests will make a real difference to our Church family overseas.

For more information about how you can support the training of a future Priest, please call 020 7821 9755, email info@missio.org.uk, visit missio.org.uk or complete the form on the next page and return it to us.

Please fill in the form below and return it in the freepost envelope attached
(Missio, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU)

Your details (PLEASE PRINT)

*Required fields

Title*

First Name*

Surname*

Address*

Postcode*

Tel

Parish

Email

- ☐ Please send me the monthly **Missio eNewsletter** (provide email address above)
- ☐ I want Missio to treat all donations I have made for this tax year and all donations I make in the future as Gift Aid donations until I notify Missio otherwise. I confirm that I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I will notify Missio if I want to cancel this declaration, change my name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on my Income and/or Capital Gains tax.

Date

N.B. Please ensure the box is ticked.

SUPPORT

- ☐ I enclose a donation of £_____ (please make cheques/postal orders payable to Missio-Mill Hill)
- ☐ I enclose a donation of £_____ towards the training of future Priests and Sisters (please make cheques/postal orders payable to Missio)
- You can set up a Direct Debit or give by Card overleaf, or online at missio.org.uk or call us on 020 7821 9755 (office hours).
- ☐ I would like to become a volunteer for Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries in my parish
- ☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

- ☐ Please send me information on how to leave a gift in my Will

- ☐ Please send me a free booklet for the Feast of St Joseph Novena

MASS

- ☐ I would like _____ (please state number) Mass/es offered for the following intentions (please use a separate sheet if necessary):

Intentions:

- ☐ I enclose £_____ (the recommended offering is £10 or more per Mass; please make cheques payable to Missio Mass a/c or see over to pay by card)
- ☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

If you would like to receive a Mass Card, please contact us on 020 7821 9755



See how you can
**build a vibrant
Catholic Church
for the future**



Build a vibrant Catholic Church for the future

Remember Missio in your Will

For generations, people like you have been sharing their blessings by helping missionaries serve in communities overseas that are struggling through conflict, poverty, and crises.

As the Pope's charity for world mission, Missio follows Christ's example by enabling the Church to reach out to those in greatest need, regardless of background or belief.

When you choose to remember Missio in your Will, you support Churches that are too new, young or poor to flourish and grow. Your gift will transform lives by listening to local needs.

Small and large gifts add up to:

- build chapels, schools and orphanages, and help run health clinics
- build more classrooms or dormitories so that more young men can train for the priesthood
- help Sisters share God's love with the poorest children, by educating them, keeping them healthy and giving them a safe home

Now, more than ever, we depend on the support and care of Catholics like you: to pass on the gift of faith to future generations.



This Sister supports children at the Mua School for the Deaf, Malawi

Will you consider leaving a gift in your Will to Missio? To receive simple information on how to remember Missio in your Will or to speak to someone (in confidence and with no obligation) please call Angelica on 020 7821 9755 or email: legacy@missio.org.uk

You can also visit missio.org.uk/legacies or complete the form (see left), ticking the box overleaf.