

# Mission TODAY

missio 



**7**  
*Baby warehouses  
in Tel Aviv*

**13**  
*Remembering  
pastoral workers  
killed in 2017*

**16**  
*The resilience  
of faith*

**SPRING 2018**

## 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

### 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.

## Explore... donate... reflect at [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

**Editorial Board:**  
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*Cover: A mother collecting her young son from a creche supported by Missio internationally, in south Tel Aviv, Israel*

Images: ©Missio\ThomasLouapre

## The National Director writes



**C**hange is the only constant.

The New Year always offers opportunities for change, which is why many of us will have made resolutions we think will make a difference to our lives. Often our best intentions are slowly worn down, frustrated by events beyond our control, not least of them our own limitations and weaknesses! Nevertheless change, one way or another, will come in 2018.

We clearly face many global challenges in this New Year which call us as missionary disciples to work towards a world where people and creation are respected and loved. This will require enormous changes in the way we all view and deal with one another: **to see, to hear and to think as Christ does.**

South Sudan continues to hope for political stability, with an end to ethnic conflict. The Church continues to play a vital role, as an agent of change, by bringing people together and holding their leaders to account. Our World Mission Sunday campaign raised awareness of the challenges facing the

people of South Sudan and offered an opportunity to stand with them in their suffering. Read more about the impact of your support on page 6.

During my recent Missio trip to the Holy Land, I experienced first-hand the plight of Christians caught in the middle of a deeply entrenched conflict between Israel and Palestine. In Amman, I visited a project for Iraqi Christian refugees, driven from their homes by evil men in the name of religion. In Gaza, I was impressed and inspired by the faith of those few hundred Christians who choose to give witness to the love of Christ by their presence. May 2018 bring real peaceful change in the land we name 'holy'.

***At Missio, we look back on 2017 with deep gratitude for the generosity of you, our benefactors and supporters.***

Through the APF-Mill Hill partnership, the SPA and *Mission Together*, we have been able to help many people in great need throughout the world. People's lives have been changed by your solidarity with them, and Jesus Christ is proclaimed in our love and care for those most in need.

Even if our own personal intentions to change do not always work out, we know that God's intentions for us will.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr Anthony Chantry*

**Fr Anthony Chantry, National Director**

## The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions



**Please join Pope Francis and the whole Church in praying for these monthly intentions, particularly for 10 minutes on Fridays at 12.30pm**

### MARCH

#### **Formation in spiritual discernment**

That the Church may appreciate the urgent need for formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and community levels.

### APRIL

#### **For those who have responsibility in economic matters**

That leaders in financial affairs may have the courage to reject economic measures that exclude people, and rather seek new inclusive approaches.

### MAY

#### **The mission of the laity**

That the lay faithful may fulfil their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

### JUNE

#### **Social networks**

That social networks may work towards that inclusiveness which respects others for their differences.



# Missio around the world

## PERU

### Protecting the environment

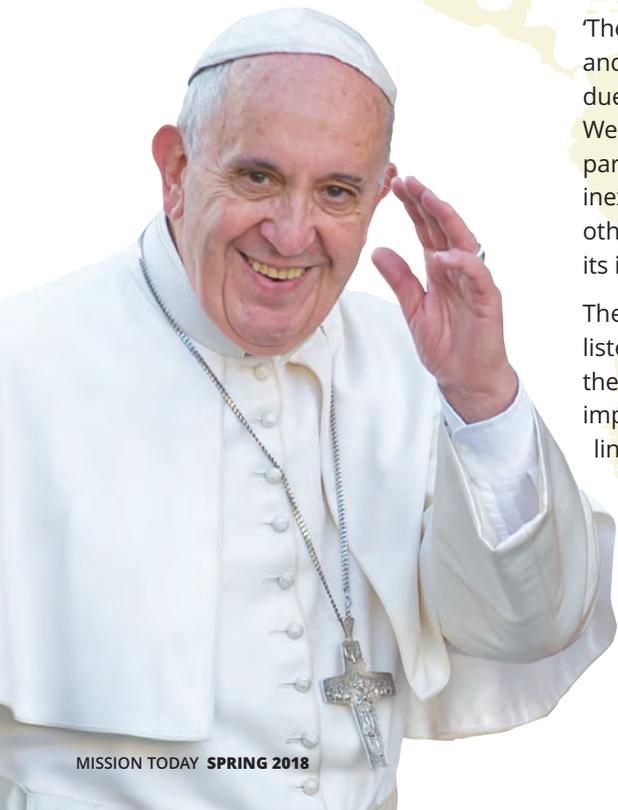
During his visit to Peru, Pope Francis spoke about the Amazon region and 'caring for our common home' (*Laudato Si*). He explained: 'Pressure is being exerted by great business interests seeking petroleum, gas, lumber and gold... while the threat also comes from the perversion of several policies that promote conservation without considering humans.'



'These problems strangle her peoples and provoke the migration of the young due to the lack of local alternatives. We have to break with the historical paradigm that views Amazonia as an inexhaustible source of supplies for other countries without concern for its inhabitants.'

The Holy Father went on to say that listening, recognising and respecting the local Indigenous communities was imperative, as they 'preserve a direct link to the land, they know its times and ways, and so they know the catastrophic effects produced, in the name of development.'

The Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region will be held later next year in Rome.



## ENGLAND AND WALES

### Heeding God's call

Missio worldwide supports thousands of young men in mission dioceses training for the priesthood. In this country, Missio's *Society of St Peter the Apostle* (SPA) runs a special scheme that puts supporters in touch with students so that they can hold one another in prayer.

One seminarian who is receiving support is Hirushan (below), who is studying at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Now in his fourth year, Hirushan says that as a priest he cannot change the world, 'but I will change my life, so that others, seeing how I live, may change theirs'.

For more information about Missio's SPA, or how you can support the training of a future priest, please call 020 7821 9755 or email [spa@missio.org.uk](mailto:spa@missio.org.uk)



## INDONESIA



### Promoting peace and harmony

'The Catholic community has an important role to play in Indonesia for the promotion of peace and harmony and to fight against any political manipulation of religion,' were the words spoken by a communications professor at Atma Jaya Catholic University in Jakarta recently.

The professor explained: 'In some parts of the country, there is religious harmony. In other parts, religious tensions between different communities are a latent condition.' In a country with a Muslim majority, the Catholic community, he continues, 'is an important "religious minority"', and continues to guide the baptised on issues concerning relations between communities, suggesting ways of commitment to peace, social justice and interreligious dialogue: its contribution is precious in the country, at an individual and collective level'.

Source: FIDES

# Bringing peace to South Sudan

**Thank you for your support of World Mission Sunday in 2017, which focused on the people of South Sudan**

**O**n World Mission Sunday in October 2017, Missio appealed to the faithful of England and Wales to 'help bring peace to South Sudan' through their prayers and financial support.

World Mission Sunday is celebrated in every Catholic parish in the world and is our opportunity as a Church to be missionary – praying and sharing what we have to support our sisters and brothers in the developing world.

According to John Ashworth, Missio's contact in South Sudan, since October 2017 and the World Mission Sunday appeal, sadly life has not improved for many South Sudanese. He tells us: 'The conflict continues, despite an attempt by neighbouring African states to revitalise a stalled peace process. All major parties agreed to a ceasefire beginning on

**Please join us in continuing to offer our prayerful and financial support to our brothers and sisters in South Sudan by visiting [missio.org.uk/wms2017](http://missio.org.uk/wms2017)**



Christmas Eve, but it was always doubtful whether the military and political leadership had the will to implement it. Sure enough, fighting soon resumed. Fear and trauma, economic hardship and food insecurity, are still the daily norm.'

***Despite the ongoing struggle, your support of World Mission Sunday has made a difference to many who continue to suffer.***

The *Peace Village* in Kuron is an oasis of peace in a country at war, and received funds from Missio to develop the vocational training programme and expand the reach of Bishop Paride's philosophy of peace through the emerging *Peace Academy*.

While the conflict in South Sudan is likely to continue for some time to come, the local people and the local Church remain hopeful, and with your prayers and support, the Prince of Peace will eventually triumph.



# 'Baby warehouses'

## Tel Aviv's tragic secret

**In the forgotten slums of south Tel Aviv, eight babies in just over a year have died in illegal 'baby warehouses' where one person attempts to care for up to 40 children. They are victims of a system that forces parents to choose between destitution and illegal childcare services. Michelle Slater recently visited the Holy Land on behalf of Missio and saw how the Church is saving young lives**



One of the infants saved from the 'baby warehouses'



Fr David Nehaus

**A**nother small coffin enters the ground. The seventh death of a baby in the parish in just over a year. This little one had been left on her back, holding a bottle of milk for hours and had choked; her tiny arms not strong enough to move the bottle away from her small mouth.

This tragic story of neglect is one told to me recently by Fr David Nehaus whilst visiting the slum area of south Tel Aviv, on behalf of Missio. An Israeli Jesuit, he encouraged me to come and see how the support of the faithful is making a difference to the lives of immigrant families in this neglected part of Israel.

Welcoming me with a smile, Fr David explained that this area of Tel Aviv had held much promise. Once it was going to be a transport hub for the Middle East. A huge abandoned concrete bus terminal still looms over the skyline of this dusty neighbourhood of broken footpaths and littered streets.

Much of the housing is rented to immigrant families, mainly from Asia and Africa, who struggle to earn enough to pay their rent, and work long hours in factories. Others toil in domestic or construction work, scraping together a living.

These desperate parents have no choice but to leave their little ones in overcrowded, poorly supervised 'baby warehouses', praying for their safe return at the end of the working day. Staying at home with their children isn't an option. And what choice do they have? No work means no food and no roof over their head.

With the shocking loss of yet another baby, Fr David investigated and discovered that all of them had been left in 'baby warehouses', despite this practice being illegal because of the high risk to infants.

***He realised that the only solution was to start parish-run day care centres.***

But with few resources and a large population to look after, this was going to be a huge challenge.

Fr David managed to start the first creche in the pastoral centre in 2017 and now, with your support, two creches in the Our Lady Woman of Valour Pastoral Centre and two other family units are up and running. The family units are set up in local apartments, where the creche managers live with their families and pay cheap rent to the parish in exchange for allowing their home to be used for childcare purposes.



Eritrean children playing in a creche in south Tel Aviv



At the moment, 54 infants are cared for, from three months to three years old. As well as safe and monitored childcare – one staff member for six children – the centre provides healthy meals and snacks throughout the day. This provides vital nutrition for the children as buying fresh food is too expensive for some families.

***Any family can apply for a place for their child, not just Christians.***

Parents must pay a contribution, but this is often subsidised by the Church as many migrant workers struggle to pay the full amount.

Fr David works with Sr Dinesha, a Sri Lankan 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help' sister. Having studied Child Education at university, she believes her responsibility to these refugee children is simple: 'To provide love, care and the security they need'.

Although her focus is on caring for the children, Sr Dinesha also trains and encourages the refugee women employed by the preschool programme. 'We want to bring women together to achieve

success,' she explains. 'We run programmes to train and teach them. We want to empower them.'

Years of conflict and trauma have left many refugees with a sense of disconnection from community and church. 'People come to south Tel Aviv from many different countries; when they arrive here many have spent a long time away from the Lord,' Sr Dinesha tells me. Building trust is a slow process, but Sr Dinesha sees providing spiritual support as crucial – she knows that gathering together to share the Sacraments, praying and reading God's word gives a sense of belonging.

There are many heartbreaking challenges in this part of the world, but Sr Dinesha tells me that when she feels lonely or disappointed she draws strength from her faith and the knowledge that there are people in England and Wales that are supporting her and holding her in prayer.



**Fr David and Sr Dinesha's work will be featuring in our Annual Appeal Letter, which is sent to our faithful supporters asking them for help to continue this life-saving work**

Images: ©Missio\ThomasLouapre

# Getting a first whiff of 'the smell of the sheep'

**Vocations are flourishing in many developing countries. Here Fr Fons Eppink MHM shares about his visit to the Mill Hill Formation House in Cameroon**



Patrick, one of the Mill Hill students, with a masked 'juju' or traditional dancer in Cameroon

A total of 37 students are enrolled in a formation programme at the Mill Hill Missionary Formation House in Bamenda, Cameroon. Pastoral work is an essential component of the integrated formation programme, whereby students perform a month's pastoral placement during their holidays and visit local parishes for various duties on weekends.

'You must meet the students to listen to their experience of pastoral work... You'll come away inspired,' I was told when in Bamenda.

Understandably almost everyone speaks of an initial sense of unease and even fear. 'How will I cope in this new and unfamiliar environment?' For most, the pastoral placement means stepping right out of their comfort zone. Cameroon is a multi-coloured quilt of widely differing tribes and assorted languages, cultures and types of food.

Felix shares that he was sent to a village where he was put up with a family whose living conditions were less than basic. He was appalled that the room he was given to stay in was squalid and smelt of urine. The food tasted unfamiliar and was quite unpalatable. He felt totally out of place and was sorely tempted to do a runner. But he persevered. What was it that kept him there? Sheer persistence and the inspiration of the Bible!

In many cases, a sense of gratitude for the warm welcome received soon prevails. People in far-flung villages share whatever they have, sometimes depriving themselves. It instills a sense of gratitude for what seems undeserved.

The instructions they received when sent on their mission echoes the story of the sending out of the 70 disciples in the Gospels: 'Do not suppose that you know everything. Be aware that Christ has gone ahead of you. Discover how Christ operates in the hearts of the people you meet'.

***It is clear that everyone in his own way has passed through a steep learning curve. The shy and timid have been challenged to come out of their shell. All have grown in self-awareness and ability to listen; their hearts have expanded.***

Some tell of particularly challenging experiences. Ronald shares how he was assigned to a school for physically-challenged pupils, mostly orphans. His initial reaction to working with youngsters with hearing and sight impairments was one of considerable unease. He felt totally unprepared and helpless, but gradually he learnt to just be with them and 'walk' with them: 'In the end I did not want to leave,' he says wistfully.

Brian recalls how one day he was called to the bedside of a very sick man. He went accompanied by some catechumens - they prayed over him and soon after they left, the man died. When Brian heard the news, he was overcome by fear. Would he be implicated in this death? The catechumens had told him of a priest who had a similar experience and was subsequently accused of 'having killed'

the person (such accusations are not uncommon within the context of traditional African beliefs).

A few days later the wife of the deceased came looking for Brian. He was so afraid, he hid in his room. Later, he managed to calm his inner panic and went to visit the family. To his utter amazement and grateful relief, rather than blaming him for the death of their beloved, they thanked him for having accompanied him in his final hours!

Others report how they often have to resist being put on a pedestal by villagers who tend to look up to them or attribute to them knowledge they do not possess. Alternatively, some of them are not made to feel welcome when they move around a community to visit people at home.

I find myself inspired and impressed by the joy I sense in these young men and also in their identification with what they perceive as a typical Mill Hill missionary approach: take people where they are and accompany them to where the Gospel invites them to go. To love and to serve.

***Amen to that.***



Patrick with some of the Cameroonian community

## Fr Michael Corcoran MHM, General Superior of St Joseph's Missionary Society, reports on the latest news from Mill Hill Missionaries sharing the Good News around the world



Mill Hill Missionaries from Kenya, Cameroon and India with Fr Michael Corcoran MHM, General Superior

### Changing face

On a recent visit to Karamoja in Uganda, I experienced the changing face of our own missionaries. Our new crop of Mill Hill missionaries are coming from the well-established and flourishing churches in Africa and Asia, once served by Mill Hill Missionaries coming from Europe and North America. These young missionaries from different continents continue the missionary journey to witness across the huge spectrum of human diversity to the beauty and the power of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

To those who are deeply divided, our missionaries offer the hope of reconciliation. To those degraded by grinding poverty, our missionaries are signs of God being present amongst them. To those blinded by their own wealth, we offer the joy of sharing. To those who exploit the weak and plunder the planet, we say 'enough is enough. We will tolerate no more'.

### 65+ Programme, Rome 2017

I attended the last days of the '65+ Programme' in Rome where 15 Mill Hill Members and Associates participated, sharing their personal life stories with a particular focus on important transitions in the general flow of their lives. In taking time out for this programme, the group reflected in different ways as they continue living out their lives as missionaries and how best to do that in today's world.

Our 'genetic code' as Mill Hill missionaries drives us to simply come close to those who suffer: the sick, the young, the abandoned, the elderly, and the poor... all. The participants were encouraged to continue being courageous in the service of Christ and of the Church, responding to the new challenges and to the new mission in our world. The challenge for all our missionaries is to keep the fires of missionary outreach burning.



The 65+ crew in Rome



Celebrating Mass in Palestine

## Send your Mass intention to Missio

The custom of requesting a priest to offer Mass for a specific intention, even when one cannot be present at Mass, is a long-standing tradition in the Church.

The faithful usually make an offering, called a stipend, to the priest in order to apply the Mass to a specific intention, such as an anniversary or birthday. By making this offering and by parting with something that is their own, the faithful associate themselves more intimately with Christ. The offering of a stipend is also a means for Catholics to contribute to the upkeep of the clergy.

Many priests in Africa and Asia depend entirely on Mass stipends for their income. Please help them by sending your Mass intention/s to Missio and we will pass them on to a priest overseas.

Please add your Mass intention/s on the form overleaf or call 020 7821 9755 during office hours



## Help Missio's APF-Mill Hill bring faith and hope to where they are most needed

Your prayers and generosity make possible the essential and life-giving mission of the Church in our world.

Red Box holders and annual members are part of Missio's APF-Mill Hill worldwide family and play a vital role in the mission of the Church, bringing God's love and renewed hope to the poorest and most in need.

### Your support

To offer your support, please complete the form on the next page and return it to the address provided.

You can also call 020 7821 9755, or visit [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

# Thank you!



## National Novena to St Joseph 10-18 March 2018

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 positive way for APF-Mill Hill members 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. You can order a free Novena booklet by ticking the box on the form opposite.

Alternatively, a petition slip is available to download from: [millhillmissionaries.co.uk](http://millhillmissionaries.co.uk) and you can write directly to: [novenamhm@gmail.com](mailto:novenamhm@gmail.com)



### Join us for Mass

St Joseph's Church,  
36 Cookham Road,  
Maidenhead SL6 7EG

**10 March at 10.45am**

**11 March at 10.45am**

**12-16 March at 7.30pm**

**17 March at 10am**

**18 March at 10.45am**



### Leave a legacy of faith – care for the future of our Church

**Please help us show the love of Jesus  
to the children of our world.**

Gifts left to us in our supporters' Wills help us to reach out with God's compassion to those who live in turmoil, poverty and uncertainty throughout the world. By making a gift to Missio's APF and/or Mill Hill in your Will, you are providing the building blocks of our churches, schools, orphanages and clinics and leaving a foundation of faith for the future.

Please ask for our information brochure (see opposite), which will be sent to you in confidence and without any obligation on your part.

If you would prefer to speak to someone, please call Mary Rafat, Legacy Administrator, at Missio's National Office on 020 7821 9755.

Alternatively you can email the National Director, Fr Anthony Chantry, at: [director@missio.org.uk](mailto:director@missio.org.uk)

**Please fill in the form below and return to:**

National Director, Missio, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU

**Your details** (PLEASE PRINT)

Title\* \_\_\_\_\_

First Name\* \_\_\_\_\_ Surname\* \_\_\_\_\_

Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode\* \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me the quarterly Missio **e-newsletter**

**I want Missio to claim Gift Aid on this and any future donations** until I notify you otherwise. 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.

**I enclose a donation of £** \_\_\_\_\_ (please make cheques/postal orders payable to APF-Mill Hill). You can also pay online at **missio.org.uk** or over the phone by calling 020 7821 9755 (office hours) or via card or Direct Debit – see over

I would like to become an **APF member** (offering £30 or more a year)

**I will collect a Red Box** from my parish Local Secretary or Parish Priest (money from Red Boxes is collected by volunteers in your parish)

I would like to become a **volunteer for the APF** in my parish

Please tick if you 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**

I would like \_\_\_\_\_ (please state number) **Mass/es** offered for the following intentions (please use a separate sheet if necessary):

**Intentions:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_ (the usual offering is £5 or more per Mass; please make cheques payable to Missio Mass a/c or see over to pay by card)

Please tick if you require a receipt





# Lives of faith

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**In 2017 there was an increase in the number of pastoral care workers killed worldwide**

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**S**adly, 13 priests, one brother, one religious sister and eight lay people died violently, mostly the victims of theft.

Many lived and worked caring for people living in poverty, helping children and supporting development and faith projects.

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

Amen.



**Fr Joaquín Hernández Sifuentes**, a priest in Mexico, disappeared on 3 January. His lifeless body was found a few days later, along with two other bodies.



**Lino**, a catechist in South Sudan was killed by an armed group on 22 January in a chapel, along with five other people.



**Helena Agnieszka Kmiec**, 26, a Polish volunteer, was murdered on 24 January in Bolivia. She was the victim of an attempted robbery and was stabbed multiple times by her assailants.



**George Omondi**, 47, was killed while attempting to stop thieves in Kenya from entering the home of a Mill Hill Missionary. He was wounded in the head and neck, and later died in hospital as a result of his injuries.



**Fr Felipe Carrillo Altamirano**, an Indigenous priest, was killed on 26 March in Mexico; the victim of an attempted theft. Local media reports indicate he was shot dead whilst driving.



**Friar Diego Bedoya**, 35, was found dead on 10 April in his Venezuelan office. The Franciscan was murdered during a burglary and suffered a fatal knife wound to his neck.



**Fr Lucien Njiva**, 46, a Capuchin Friar, was shot dead on 22 April whilst attempting to defend a young deacon. Thieves had broken into the Madagascan friary and were attempting to steal the friary bell to extract and sell the valuable metals.



**Fr Adolphe Ntahondereye**, died on 11 May, two weeks after being released by his captors. He had been kidnapped in Burundi during an armed ambush and passed away as a result of the ill-treatment inflicted upon him.



**Fr Luis López Villa**, 71, was killed by criminals who broke into his home in Mexico on 5 July. The priest's hands and feet were bound with tape and he suffered two deep, fatal wounds to his chest and neck.



**Fr Diomer Eliver Chavarría Pérez**, was murdered on his 31st birthday – 27 July – in his parish in Antioquia, Colombia. The cause of his death is still to be determined.



**Fr José Miguel Machorro**, 55, died on 3 August in a Mexican hospital. The priest had been stabbed on the altar after celebrating Mass, by a man with a psychotic disorder.



**Domingo Edo**, a lay catechist in the Philippines, was killed on 20 August whilst on his way to leading a Liturgy of the Word.



**Fr Pedro Gomes Bezerra**, 49, was discovered on 24 August in Brazil. He was found wrapped in a sheet and had been stabbed at least 29 times with a knife.



**Ricardo Luna**, 29, was killed by a gunshot to the head on 23 August. He was a layman and guardian of a parish in Argentina. He had received death threats from a group of local teenagers that he had repeatedly prevented from stealing.



**Fr Cyriacus Onunkwo** was kidnapped and his lifeless body found on 2 September in Nigeria. A gang of armed men had hoped to extort ransom money from his family and the Church. He died of suffocation, as his mouth and nose had been taped over.



**Fr Abelardo Antonio Muñoz Sánchez**, 41, was killed on 3 October in an attempted robbery in Colombia. He was shot several times when he refused to give his wallet to two armed men.



**Sr Ruvadiki Plaxedes Kamundiya**, 49, was brutally raped and murdered in Zimbabwe on 22 October. Her attacker confessed to the crime and according to the police, suffers from mental disorders.



**Fr Evans Juma Oduor** was found unconscious on 22 October in Kenya. He did not regain consciousness in hospital and died as a result of his head injuries the following day.



**Fr Marcelito Paez**, 72, was shot by motorcycle-riding gunmen on 4 December in the Philippines, whilst he was driving his car. He died in hospital as a result of his wounds.



**Joseph Naga, John Manye and Patrick**, three catechists in Nigeria, were killed on 11 December. Two female suicide bombers blew themselves up outside a church, killing a dozen people.



**Fr Joseph Simoly**, 54, was killed on 21 December during an apparent robbery. He was shot by three gunmen on motorcycles in Haiti.

All information is supplied by Fides, the Vatican-based information service of Missio

# Jesus and the Canaanite Woman



## Fr John Hemer MHM explores the resilience of faith

**I**n the Gospel of Matthew there is a most puzzling incident where a woman asks Jesus to rid her daughter of a demon. Instead of the immediate compassion we would expect from Jesus, he says: *'It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs'* (Matthew 15:22-28).

The woman obviously has her wits about her and replies: *'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table'*. At this Jesus says: *'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire'*. And her daughter was indeed healed.

Jesus is in pagan territory and has probably deliberately retired from Galilee to have a bit of a breather and let things calm down a bit. He is not initially willing to begin ministry here.

When people know each other well, they can mercilessly take the mickey out of each other and say all sorts of outrageous things knowing that no offence will be taken.

***The ability to mock one another is often the sign of close friendship.***

Sometimes you can also tease complete strangers as a way of getting close to them, as a way of testing the waters. You meet someone, say something shocking and see if they react by coming back with something equally shocking. But it's always a risk, and the person may go off in a huff.

## Perhaps a story is the best illustration here:

An Anglican vicar discovered that his church was riddled with dry rot and was no longer safe for use. It had to be demolished quickly and a new one built. He set up a fund and started raising money energetically. He went to his good friend, the local Catholic priest and asked for a donation. His friend replied that he was sorry, but any money he had in the parish was surely for the furthering of the Catholic faith. He could not in good conscience give money for the building of a non-Catholic church.

The Anglican was disappointed and shocked at such narrow-mindedness. 'However,' continued the Catholic, 'I am giving you a cheque for £400 to be used for the demolition of the old church.' It seems to be something like that going on between Jesus and the woman.

I hope I don't sound as though I'm making excuses for Jesus, because the Gospels never do that. They are never apologies for Jesus. The evangelists are never in the least bit embarrassed about anything Jesus said or did. I hope too we've established that Jesus is not just being bad-tempered or gratuitously rude, and what he says, he says deliberately.

It is also possible that Jesus deliberately intends an offence in order to see if

she has faith. Or perhaps he senses she has faith and he offends her deliberately in order to show the disciples that this pagan woman who could have walked off in a huff was an example of faith to them. He has confronted the Pharisees; they have taken offence and decided to kill him. He confronts the woman but she refuses to take offence.

Jesus has something she needs and she will lay claim to it no matter what. In Chapter 11 of Matthew, Jesus says:

*'Blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'*

This was a lesson about faith for the disciples to witness. Jesus knew this woman's faith. The disciples had just seen how the Pharisees had become offended simply because Jesus disagreed with them. Now, after taking them far off the beaten path, he insults a foreign woman who – instead of becoming offended, as she no doubt had every right to do – persists in trusting that Jesus will heal her daughter. Jesus responds by pointing to this woman's faith.

The evangelists let us have it right between the eyes: Are you like the Pharisees who are put off by the slightest thing, or are you like this woman who will not let anything put her off or keep her from the Lord?

## Dear Editor

**T**hank you for the *Mission Today* magazine! It will be the joy of my parishioners in Casay to share our stories and photos with the readers and supporters of Missio's APF-Mill Hill.

I, for one, have huge gratitude for *Mission Today*, for this small magazine has been helping me to love and serve more as a Mill Hill Missionary.

It has been my companion throughout my missionary life in Mill Hill, Kenya and now here in the Philippines.

God bless you,

**Fr Mario M. Dimapilis,  
MHM**



*Editor: Thank you Fr Mario, for your kind words and support. The work that you do in serving your community is inspirational and a true witness to the love that Jesus has for all of us.*

*Many of us will never have the opportunity to 'go out' on mission overseas, but through you and your work, we truly feel a part of the Universal Church. We will continue to keep you in our prayers.*

### Do write to us!

Please send your thoughts and comments to:

**The Editor, Mission Today,  
23 Eccleston Square,  
London SW1V 1NU**

Or email: [info@missio.org.uk](mailto:info@missio.org.uk)

## Keep calm if complaining!

**A**s I was leaving the hospital chapel after some time in prayer, I looked up and saw the sign 'Go in Peace'. It was as if God was speaking to me personally – it was God's response to what I had been sharing with Him and I did indeed feel an inner peace.

But then, as I walked under the sign, I saw in front of me a door marked 'Complaints Department' and I wondered how much peace there is in the heart of a person complaining. If, unfortunately, we have to complain, then at least we should approach the other in a peaceful or calm manner. But very often we find ourselves taking up an aggressive, self-righteous or judgmental attitude without, sometimes, knowing all the facts!

Jesus says that before we pray or worship, we should go and be reconciled to another if there is any grievance or complaint between us. Let us hope that any complaining or fault-finding will result, ultimately, in reconciliation and that those who phone, write or come in person to the Hospital Complaints Department will, in the end, 'Go in Peace'.

## Father Peter

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

# Join us in supporting tea workers in Sri Lanka



## Could your parish arrange a sponsored cricket match for children living on tea estates in Sri Lanka?

**S**ri Lanka is the world's fourth-largest producer of tea. Many of those who work on the tea estates are Tamil, whose ancestors were brought from India to Sri Lanka by the British in the 1800s as bonded labourers. Today, many Tamils still work on the plantations, with the majority living in poverty.

Missio is helping to break the cycle of poverty by providing education, healthcare and vital pastoral work for Tamil children so that they can have a better future.



Ajay and his family were born on a tea estate in the central highlands. Today there is a school but the living conditions remain basic. Families are crammed into inadequate housing; there is no running

water, so neighbours share an outside water tap and toilet. There is no healthcare on the estate and the nearest hospital is far away in town. Thanks to support from Missio's children's branch, *Mission Together*, Sr Ruby brings nutrition and healthcare packs to the children and arranges for doctors and dentists to run clinics on the estate.



Unlike his parents and grandparents, Ajay is not destined to a life of poverty on the estate. Through the school, the children make friends and play their favourite game together – **cricket!** That is why this year we are asking schools, parishes, and youth groups to arrange a sponsored cricket match to raise money for children like Ajay and his friends, so that missionaries like Sr Ruby can continue to bring hope and health to the children living in poverty on the tea estates of Sri Lanka.

For more information about Missio's work in Sri Lanka please visit [missiontogether.org.uk](http://missiontogether.org.uk) or contact Sheila Isaac: [education@missio.org.uk](mailto:education@missio.org.uk) 020 7821 9755

## 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

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These Mill Hill Missionaries dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel. As part of their ministry, they were appointed to the British region to carry out APF-Mill Hill Red Box appeals. Please remember them in your prayers:

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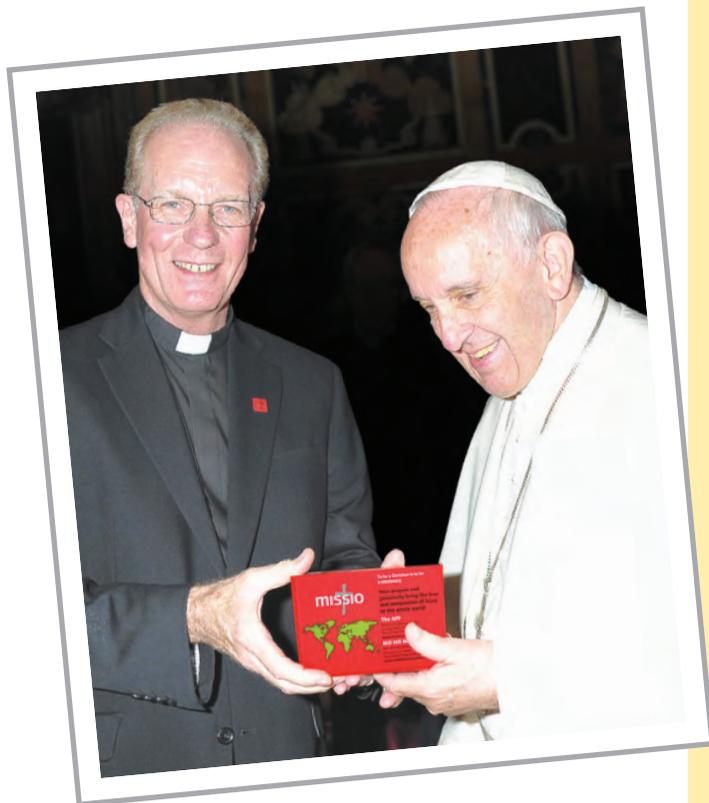


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