

Mission TODAY

missio 

Reconciling
Forgiveness
in Rwanda

Empowering
Communities in
the Philippines

Remembering
The lives of
missionaries
in 2016

Spring 2017





The National Director writes

O f course I want to! Be cured!
Jesus replied when the leper asked
whether Jesus wanted to heal him.

Mark 1:41

Jesus' ministry was always focused on healing. Such healings included that of broken human relationships; the crushed spirits of the oppressed; those afflicted by disease, poverty, disability and mental torment; and the victims of social and religious exclusion. Jesus targeted the most vulnerable and the weakest in society, those most open to God's healing love, and said, 'Be cured!'

God's ongoing mission through his Church is to heal and put back together that which is broken in our world. Thanks to the generous support of people across England and Wales, Missio is helping the Church throughout the world to imitate Jesus' own ministry of healing.

In this edition of *Mission Today* we will read of the progress the Church is making in Rwanda, supporting the long and difficult process of reconciliation after the terrible genocide of the 1980s. They ask for our prayerful support.

During my recent mission trip to Sri Lanka, I vividly remember a conversation with one of the seminarians at the National Seminary. He explained how after 30 years of violent conflict in the country between the majority Sinhalese

and the minority Tamils, there is now peace, but that the process of healing has only just begun. 'We – the Church – although small and poor, have a vital role to help heal the painful divisions in this country, and bring people together as one. There are Catholics on both sides of the conflict and we need to forgive each other,' he said, 'and I speak as a Tamil!' Read more about our work in Sri Lanka inside.

Also in this edition we are reminded once again of the dangers of proclaiming and witnessing to Jesus Christ in our troubled world. Over the last year at least 28 missionaries were martyred in 14 countries. Many more, no doubt, have suffered the same fate, and are unrecorded. In many places in the world, being a committed Christian is a dangerous business.

I am constantly amazed and inspired by the Church's courageous ministry of healing across the world, especially in countries where the Church itself is regarded as a threat. When they ask us here whether we want to help them, I know you will join me in saying, 'Yes, of course we want to!'

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Anthony Chantry

Fr Anthony Chantry, National Director



Calendar for this quarter

Please pray for our Universal Church on these feast days:

Wednesday 1 March
Ash Wednesday

Thursday 13 April
Maundy Thursday

Friday 17 March
St Patrick

Friday 15 April
Good Friday

Monday 20 March
St Joseph

Sunday 16 April
Easter Sunday

Saturday 25 March
Annunciation of
the Lord

Sunday 23 April
Divine Mercy Sunday

Sunday 9 April
Palm Sunday

**Explore...donate...reflect
at missio.org.uk**

**Editorial Board: Fr Anthony Chantry,
Michelle Slater, Stephen Davies, Nicky Pisa**

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Cover: A Sister of the Holy Angels, Sr Ranapriya, in Sri Lanka

Missio around the world



Blessed are those who...

As the Year of Mercy drew to a close, Pope Francis challenged us with a version of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) for today. The 'new' Beatitudes both affirm what we try to do as Christians, as well as challenge the way we sometimes treat our sisters and brothers around the world.

They make for a good, regular reflection on how we are living out our baptismal call to be missionaries, whatever our vocation. As Pope Francis often reminds us, 'to be a Christian and to be a missionary are the same thing'.

One of the Beatitudes which Pope Francis shared in his homily for the solemnity of All Saints provides a vision for all missionaries: 'Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover him'. It's the sort of phrase we would do well to live by throughout 2017.

You can find the full list at missio.org.uk

Starting them young!

When six-year-old John was flicking through his mum's copy of *Mission Today*, he was struck by a picture of the iconic Red Box he saw inside. His mum, Máire, explained what it was and that the money collected goes to support the youngest, poorest communities around the world. Having heard how the money is spent, he asked if he could have a Red Box of his own, which Máire dutifully sourced for him.

John's mum and dad even agreed that they would match whatever John managed to collect in his box. When they opened it, John had collected £31.45 – and true to their word, his parents have matched it!

Thank you, John – and your mum and dad – for your support of the Church throughout the world.





A place of refuge

Thank you to everyone who has generously supported the Christmas Appeal in the *Mission Today* 2017 Calendar.

Fr Khalil and the people who have found refuge in his parish in Amman, Jordan, through your help, are incredibly grateful for your support. They are Christians who were forced to flee Mosul in northern Iraq but who have found no support on entering Jordan. In Fr Khalil's parish hall, between sheets strung up to form a makeshift home, they find a place of safety.

Children are even able to attend school, run by volunteers, as Christian refugees cannot attend state school in Jordan.

You can read more about Fr Khalil's parish at missio.org.uk, where we will share updates as we receive them.

A place where God has a home

At the end of last year, Cardinal Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, consecrated the cathedral of the Diocese of Karonga in Malawi. It was a great occasion for the whole community, with people from across the nation gathering together, including the President.

The diocese was formed just six years ago, due to the growth in number of Catholics in the north of Malawi, close to the border with Tanzania.

During his homily, Cardinal Filoni spoke of St Joseph the Worker Cathedral as 'a place where God has a home, near to your own homes, which means that He truly is "Emmanuel, God with us" as He continually guides the growth of this young Church'.

The construction of the cathedral has been supported by the Catholic community around the world.



Reconciliation in Rwanda

Thank you for your support of World Mission Sunday in 2016 which focused on the people of Rwanda

In October each year, every Catholic parish in the world celebrates World Mission Sunday, a day recognising our call to be missionary. We are encouraged to pray for the missionary work of the Church and to share what we can to support our Church family overseas.

The collection enables Missio, the Pope's official charity for overseas mission, to empower local people to form and sustain communities of faith. It helps train and nurture future leaders so the vital work of the Church can continue, and provides practical and spiritual needs of children.

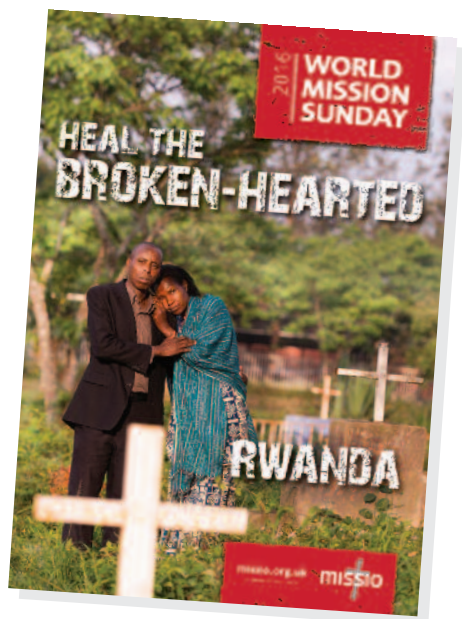
In October, Missio focused on the small African nation of Rwanda and the support the Church is providing to those traumatised by the horrific 1994 genocide when approximately one million people were brutally tortured and killed.

Many perpetrators were brought to trial and imprisoned. Having served their time, some of these prisoners are returning to

the neighbourhoods they attacked. Many priests, sisters and brothers in Rwanda are supporting these communities through counselling and healing workshops which focus on forgiveness and mercy.

Former prisoners and survivors are engaged in a 'Two Ways Healing' programme. The perpetrators are encouraged to truthfully ask for forgiveness from survivors, whom they know and live with daily. The survivors are encouraged to forgive sincerely, helping both in their mutual journey of healing and reconciliation.

This process, supported by Missio, is conducted within an intensive pastoral



care programme. The former prisoners meet every week for six months. After the first three months they begin to connect with the survivors, asking for forgiveness and gradually reconnecting with their communities and with the Church.

Fr Elie Hatangimbabazi, Missio's National Director in Rwanda, visited London in October to share his experience of the work of the Church. He also met and thanked supporters, helping us to celebrate World Mission Sunday.

Fr Elie said: 'God never fails, even after the genocide, we have hope in God. If Missio didn't exist, it would be difficult for the Church in Rwanda to reconstruct. We need the support of Missio for all things – education of future priests, helping vulnerable children, health centres, schools, reconstructing churches, specific programmes for the Church in Rwanda. These things have been possible through the support of Missio.'

'Thank you for your sign of love'

Writing recently from Rwanda, Fr Elie has three things he would like to share with the Catholic community in England and Wales:

'The first thing is thank you. Thank you for the continued support Missio gives to the overseas Church. It is a sign that love has no limit and for us as a country that has suffered from hate through the genocide, we are encouraged by those signs of love.

'Second, after such terrible events, Rwanda needs your support, especially for continuing the process of reconciliation. It's a long process, not one or two years. As Rwandans, we need the support – prayerful and financial.



'Third, what happened to our country should be a lesson for the whole of humanity. Evil exists and we have to pay attention so that what happened will never happen again.'

'We have to be vigilant by praying and supporting all good initiatives which are based on positivity and solidarity between human beings, as the sources of peace and unity. We need to resist any division amongst peoples. We want our brothers and sisters to continue to hope.'



Please join us as we continue to offer our prayerful and financial support to our sisters and brothers in Rwanda

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

Return to Vietnam

Fr Paul Hien MHM escaped from Vietnam and the advancing communist army in the 1980s.



Together with his youngest brother and 133 men, women and children, he was crammed into a fishing boat that could only accommodate 40 people. They set off into the unknown across the South China Sea towards Borneo, over 1000 kilometres away. Fr Hien became a refugee in the Netherlands where he was later ordained a Mill Hill Missionary priest.

As a Mill Hill Missionary, Fr Paul has served in Kenya and India, and is presently involved in training our Mill Hill students in formation at Jinja, Uganda.

Celebrating his silver jubilee in 2016, Fr Paul returned to Vietnam. The first impression that struck Fr Paul was the large number of Catholic churches everywhere. Some churches in Ho Chi Minh were constantly crowded, being frequented by Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

We congratulate him on all that he has achieved!

Mission to the West

Our Mill Hill Society has been used to sharing mission on an international level. Most commonly, there has been a movement of missionaries from 'North' to 'South'. Mission belongs to the whole Society, wherever it is.

The plight of Mary and Joseph in seeking refuge is repeated many times over in our world today as we experience the many migrants and refugees fleeing their homes worldwide. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam our missionaries work with Spanish and Portuguese-speaking migrants. Our Mill Hill Society is also exploring the possibility of working with Hispanic migrants in the Archdiocese of New York.

It is all about being missionaries who are able and happy to serve the real world and involve ourselves with the real life issues that we meet daily in our encounter with others.



Fr Jac Hetsen MHM in the Netherlands, who works with Portuguese migrants



Cameroon formation

On 2 October the Mill Hill Formation community in Bamenda, Cameroon, opened the new formation year for 2016/2017 with a joyful and beautiful celebration of the Eucharist in their newly constructed chapel. I was privileged to officially open the chapel on a visit to Cameroon in January.

The new St Joseph's Chapel, with a capacity of up to 90 people, offers enough space for the 37 students in the new formation year, in addition to the Mill Hill members in Cameroon and the friends of Mill Hill, who on different occasions join the Mill Hill family to celebrate the Eucharist.

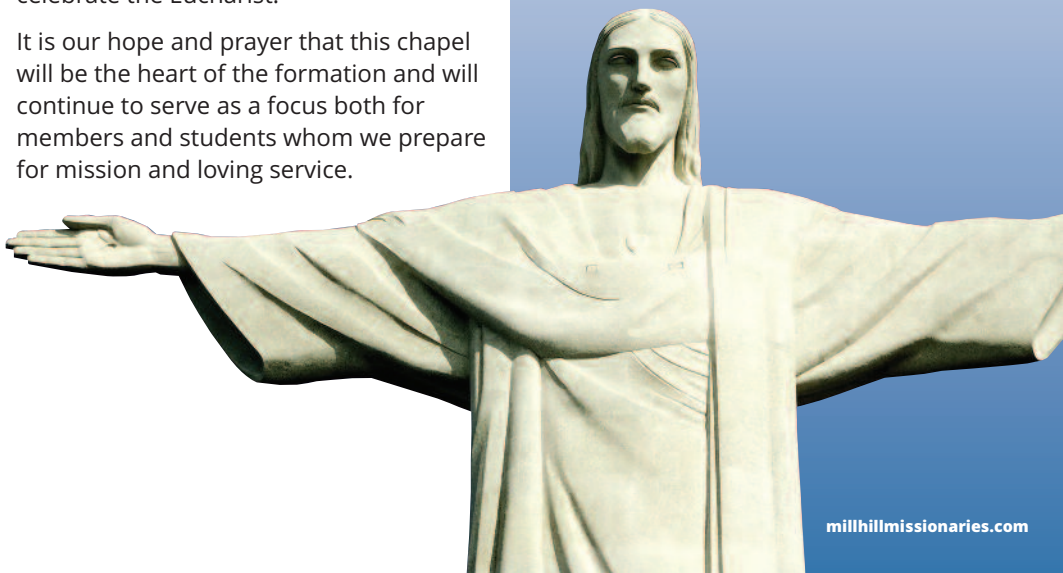
It is our hope and prayer that this chapel will be the heart of the formation and will continue to serve as a focus both for members and students whom we prepare for mission and loving service.

Brazil – Latin America

Years ago, some of our Mill Hill Missionaries who had been expelled from the Malaysian Mission (Sabah) responded to a request for missionaries in the Diocese of Governador Valadares, Brazil, some 600 miles from Rio de Janeiro. Today, 41 years later, there are three missionaries in the Diocese.

Over the years our missionaries have been deeply involved in establishing Small Christian Communities and many welfare projects. In addition to this, there are many environmental challenges in the areas where we work. I visited an institute whose objective is to restore arid land to its previous rainforest state, and thereby trigger a new environmental awareness and similar initiatives elsewhere – *Laudato Si!*

Read about Small Christian Communities in the Philippines on p.10



Power to the people!

Fr Mario Dimapilis MHM is a missionary in the Philippines. He is passionate about working with Base Ecclesial Communities (BEC), also known as Small Christian Communities (SCC). These communities are formed of small groups of people who commit to sharing the love of God with one another



The parish of Santa Teresa de Avila in Casay, Anini-y in the Philippines has many reasons to celebrate. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has designated 2017 as the *'Year of the Parish: Communion of Communities'*. Throughout 2017, the Base Ecclesial Communities (BEC) in all the parishes in the Philippines are being formed to become agents of communion, participation, and mission in the local churches.

For me, having every village organised into BECs is both fulfilling and challenging. Fulfilling, for it is always good to see parishioners united in one cause, and challenging, for not all villagers are willing to cooperate in a BEC programme. Having said this, I have the impression that those who are celebrating the most are the

BEC workers and the BEC coordinators, for their works are being recognised and being given importance. This whole year is for them and they really have every right to celebrate. Furthermore, the dedication that I see from my BEC workers and BEC coordinators makes me thankful to the bishops in the Philippines for giving Base Ecclesial Communities, which are the lifeline of a parish, the recognition they deserve.

Strengthening the local community

In response to this initiative of the *'Year of the Parish'* from the bishops, the parish of Santa Teresa de Avila is strengthening her Small Christian Communities in all her thirteen villages.



Base Ecclesial Communities are a way of bringing together small groups of parishioners in their local community. They meet together to pray, read the Bible, and support one another. They have developed especially where priests are unable to frequently visit the many village communities within their parish. They are particularly popular in Latin America, Africa and Asia



Through the efforts of the parish's BEC workers and BEC coordinators in every village, all the BECs are being visited. Firstly, for sharing of the Word of God among the members, and secondly, for airing concerns and issues affecting the members. This is a favourable time of celebration for all the BECs in the villages, for they are getting the attention they deserve.

For villages that had been BEC-formed, their BEC structures are being revisited for them to be reminded of the duties and responsibilities of the coordinators and their committee heads. Each BEC has someone in charge in the areas of worship, education, public service and youth. Having these people in place makes the running of the parish's

programmes effective, organised and efficient. For villages with no organised BEC, a general assembly in these villages is being held to discuss training sessions and the organisation of their own BEC in future.

Here in the Parish of Santa Teresa de Avila in Casay, Anini-y, we are one with other parishes in the Philippines in celebrating 'The Year of the Parish: Communion of Communities' and in forming BEC as agents of communion, participation, and mission. Kindly join us in celebrating!



Fr. Mario Dimapilis MHM is a missionary in the Philippines

Uplifting the downtrodden

Michelle Slater visited Sri Lanka last year for Missio and has a whole new appreciation for tea

Winding our way through the twists and turns of the Sri Lankan hill country at tremendous heights left me with a feeling of awe. The lush green tea plantations on either side of the road reminded me of the television advertisements for tea I'd seen as a child – layers of never-ending green leaves. Amongst the greenery were tiny, brightly coloured dots, which on closer inspection became tea plantation workers, nimbly picking leaves as quickly as they could.

Arriving at the tea estate in Badulla, we were encouraged to make the trek up the side of the mountain by foot as the van was unable to make the climb. Stepping

carefully through the mud, I was conscious of how easy it would have been to slip and tumble down the incline. With a reassuring arm within my grasp, I eventually made it past some of the ramshackle houses to a clearing. Chickens were strutting their way around the yard and curious youngsters looked out from their doorways.

We were accompanied by Fr Benedict Eugene OMI, a missionary priest who has worked amongst the tea plantation workers for five years. Many in the small, remote community are living in dire poverty.

When asked about his work, he shared, 'I am working for the poor, less fortunate and the marginalised in my attempt to continue Jesus' mission of uplifting the downtrodden.'

In a row of small concrete boxes was the home of Kuppen Rasu. We entered through a low doorway, moving through a tiny room to an adjoining bedroom where an elderly man was sitting on the edge of his mattress. He tried to stand as we entered, but winced with pain and quickly sat back down. Fr Eugene explained that Kuppen Rasu is 74 years old and has worked picking tea for over 30 years. Now unable to walk, Kuppen Rasu has been housebound for the last 10 years.





Kuppen Rasu is suffering from a blood disorder, but could not explain his condition or why it only affected his legs. He is unable to access medical assistance due to the location of his home high on the hill and the almost impassable terrain. He explained that he could not afford to live elsewhere, was unable to afford to travel to a hospital in a three-wheeler or tuk-tuk, could not travel the distance given his unbearable pain and would not be able to pay for medical assistance once there.



Thangamma stood quietly by as her husband of 47 years told the story of their life. They had both picked tea for the estate and, as a condition of their employment, they were given free board and medical checks. Now retired and not earning any income, they are no longer entitled to any medical benefits. With tears rolling down his cheeks and in evident physical pain, Kuppen Rasu shared that they can not afford to eat and are entirely reliant on their neighbours and the generosity of Fr Eugene and the Lunugala parish. As he spoke, his wife also began to silently weep with the hopelessness of their circumstances.

Fr Eugene gently rested his hand on Kuppen Rasu's shoulder and spoke to him softly in Tamil. Although I was unable to understand his words, I watched as Kuppen Rasu sighed deeply while reaching for Fr Eugene's hand.



Sadly, Kuppen Rasu's plight is all too common in the tea and rubber plantations of Sri Lanka. Once unable to work, these elderly people are forgotten; relegated to living in despair and misery. As Fr Eugene says, 'The people living on the estate are under estate management and have to depend on them for everything. However, it is not enough to satisfy even their basic needs. The government presumes that the estate management is looking after these people... Hospitals are far away and pregnant women, children and the elderly face many problems; unnecessary deaths are very common and normal in the plantation sector.'

With Missio's support, the construction of a new diocesan hospital is planned. It will cater to the poor and bereft in the Badulla diocese. Free medical care will be offered to the elderly and orphaned, and affordable healthcare will be provided to all, irrespective of ethnicity or religious belief.

This is the poorest province in Sri Lanka and many choose to spend their meagre earnings on food over healthcare. The

most common issues are eye conditions which are associated with the dust from the tea plants. Also far too common are cases of malnourishment and heart and respiratory conditions, associated to the chemicals being sprayed on the tea plants.

The new hospital will allow for more easily accessible, affordable healthcare for the entire community. Fr Eugene explained: 'Serving the parish of Lunugala is very special as our service is needed not only by the small Catholic communities in the tea estates, but by all of the other people of different religions, too. There are so many people affected by various illnesses that need to be supported.'

There are many ways to support the work of Missio, one of which is by reading and sharing this edition of *Mission Today*!

For more information on how you can help, please visit our website: missio.org.uk and select 'How You Can Help'



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 longstanding 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



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

Thank you!



National Novena to St Joseph 10-18 March 2017

St Joseph's Missionary Society (Mill Hill Missionaries) is Britain's own missionary society, founded by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan in the late 19th century.

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.com

Join us for Mass

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

10 March at 7.30pm

11 March at 10am

12 March at 10.45am

13-16 March at 7.30pm

**17 March at 10am
& 7.30pm**

18 March at 10am



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

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

To donate via card

Please ensure you have filled in the reverse of this form first!

Your details (PLEASE PRINT)

I would like to pay by:

Visa/Mastercard Maestro/Delta/Visa CAF Charity Card *Required fields

Name on card (PLEASE PRINT)* _____

No acknowledgement required (please tick appropriately)

Card No*

Issue No Start date

Expiry date* Security code* Last three numbers on the signature strip on the back of your card

To donate via Direct Debit

I wish to pay Missio the sum of (Please tick):

£30 £50 £100 Other £ _____

Monthly Quarterly Annually on the:

5th 15th 28th day of the month



Instruction to your bank or building society to pay Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
Missio, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

Service user number

2 5 4 5 8 8

Reference (for office use)

Bank/building society account number

Branch sort code

Name of account holder(s)

Instruction to your Bank/building society: Please pay Missio Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Missio and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature of account holder

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.



Mission Together



Part of the Missio network, Mission Together (MT) provides such things as healthcare and education for the world's poorest children, regardless of background or belief. In England and Wales, Mission Together encourages children to pray and fundraise to help vulnerable children – *children helping children*

As Holy Communion and Confirmation preparations gather pace in parishes across the country, we'd like to remind readers of the inspiring gesture made last June by the children of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Gregory the Great, Bolton.

On the occasion of their First Holy Communion, these youngsters chose not to receive gifts but instead asked family and friends to donate to Mission Together. Their act of generosity raised over £350 for children living in impoverished Church communities overseas and provided a moving parallel with the efforts of a similarly open-handed youngster from the Gospel of St John:

"When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"... Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?""

John 6:1-15

We all know how this story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand ends. Please remember Mission Together in your parish celebrations this year, giving witness to mission and communion with the universal body of Christ.



For further information, please contact the Mission Together team at missiontogether@missio.org.uk or speak to a member of the team via Missio's general office 020 7821 9755

Lives of faith

In 2016 there was, sadly, a further increase in the number of pastoral care workers killed worldwide

The majority of deaths occurred during robberies with 14 priests, nine religious sisters, one seminarian and four lay people dying violently during the year. Many lived and worked caring for people living in poverty, helping children and drug addicts and supporting development and faith projects.

One of the people killed was Fr Jacques Hamel, attacked whilst celebrating Mass in Normandy, France, in August. Speaking of him, Pope Francis said, 'He gave his life for us so as not to deny Jesus. He gave his life in the same sacrifice of Jesus in the altar... He is a martyr and martyrs are beatified.'

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

May they rest in peace. **Amen.**



Elias Abiad, 22, a volunteer in Syria, was killed by mortar shells in Aleppo on 13 February. He had been volunteering with a Church agency in Aleppo since 2014.



Sr Marguerite, Sr Reginette (Rwandans), **Sr Anselm** (Indian) and **Sr Judith** (Kenyan) were shot dead on 4 March at a centre in Yemen where these Missionary Sisters of Charity cared for elderly and disabled people. At least three other helpers were killed and patients were injured. A visiting Salesian priest from India, Fr Tom Uzhunnalil, was kidnapped and is still missing.



Br Antonio Moser OFM, 75, was killed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 9 March during an attempted robbery. Pope Francis appointed him as a theologian to the recent Synod of Bishops on the Family.



Fr Vincent Machozi, 51, was killed by soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 20 March. The Assumptionist priest had been a vocal defender of the Nande population of the DRC who suffer due to armed groups illegally exploiting coltan – a mineral used in mobile phones. He had received numerous death threats and survived seven bombings.



An unnamed driver for Caritas Congo was transporting teachers' salaries on behalf of the government when his vehicle was stopped by robbers in the DRC on 25 March. He was forced out of the vehicle and shot in the head.



Fr Darwin Antonio Zambrano Gamez, 38, was found dead in a park in San Cristobal, Venezuela, on 31 March with signs of violence and stab wounds.



Fr Rene Wayne Robert, 71, was found dead in Georgia, USA, on 18 April. He had worked in prison ministry in the area since 1980.



Sr Veronica Rackova SSPS, 58, was shot and seriously wounded in South Sudan on 16 May and died four days later. She was returning from attending to a woman with complications giving birth whom she had taken to hospital.



Fr John Adeyi of Nigeria was kidnapped on 24 April. Despite his family paying the ransom, on 22 June they found his dead body.



Fr Marcelino Biliran of Laboc, Philippines, was found dead in his home on 27 June.



Fr Jacques Hamel, 84, had his throat cut while celebrating Mass in the church of St Etienne du Rouvray, Normandy, France, on 27 July. Members of the congregation were seriously harmed in the attack by two men.



An unnamed accountant with Caritas Congo was killed on 11 August. He was carrying salaries for teachers when he was attacked by two robbers.



Lazarus Nwafor, 26, a seminarian in Nigeria was killed along with other people from the community of Ndiagu Attakwu in Nkanu on 25 August.



Sr Margaret Held SCN and **Sr Paula Merrill SSSF**, both 68, were killed with knives in their home in Mississippi, USA. They were nurses at a free-of-charge health centre for families who cannot afford medical care.



Sr Isa Solá Matas RJM, 51, was killed during a robbery on 2 September in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Originally from Spain, she had been a missionary in Haiti for many years and lived amongst the poorest communities after the devastating earthquake of 2010.



Esra Patatang, 27, a catechist and teacher, was killed on 12 September in Indonesian Papua with a bullet to his head.



Fr Alejo Nabor Jiménez Juárez and **Fr José Alfredo Suárez de la Cruz** of Papantla Diocese, Mexico, were kidnapped on 18 September. Their lifeless bodies were found on 19 September at the side of a road.



Fr José Alfredo Lopez Guillen was kidnapped on 19 September, the same day his fellow Mexican diocesan priests were found dead. His body was found on 25 September.



Fr Francisco Carlos Barbosa Tenorio, 37, was found dead on 9 October in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The car he had been driving has not been found.



Fr João Paulo Nolli, 35, a TV and radio host in Brazil, was killed in a robbery on 8 October. His body was found three days later.



Fr Joseph Mulimbi Nguli, 52, was killed on 21 October in the Upper Katanga Province of the DRC.



Fr José Bedoya Fortunato Franco, 91, was attacked in a robbery on a road in Colombia on 25 October. In the attack he was injected with poison which killed him.



Sr Clara Agano Kahambu, 40, headteacher of Marie Madeleine School in Bukavu, DRC, was stabbed in the neck and killed by a man whilst in her office.

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

Mary and the Kingdom of God

Fr John Hemer MHM explores the role of Mary – Jesus' mother and Queen of Heaven

One of the titles we give Our Lady is 'Queen of Heaven'. Some Christians would contend that this is unscriptural, that it is just Catholic devotional excess. So let us explore this in more depth.

In the first three gospels, the main content of Jesus' message is the kingdom of God. His opening words in Mark are:

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.'

Mark 1:15

Subsequently everything he does brings that kingdom about and almost everything he says explains what that kingdom is. Jesus very deliberately sets the Church up to look like a real kingdom. We all know that Jesus appointed twelve apostles because there were twelve tribes, but maybe there is a little more to it. We read in 1 Kings:

'Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each man had to make provision for one month in the year.'

1Kings 4:7

Perhaps Jesus has twelve apostles because the kingdom of Solomon had twelve officers. And remember that with the death of Judas, the number went down to eleven. The first thing the apostles did after the Ascension was elect someone else to take his place. They felt it essential to have twelve officers.



© Sophie Stanes

All scripture taken from the RSV

Jesus, like any wise king, also appointed a prime minister. I used to find the Pope's title 'Vicar of Christ' a bit pretentious until I saw this. When he appoints Peter as the foundation of the Church, the rock, the words he uses in Chapter 16 of Matthew deliberately echo God's words concerning Eliakim when he was appointed prime minister in Jerusalem at the time of Isaiah.

'And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place, and he will become a throne of honour to his father's house.'

Isaiah 22:22-23

So Jesus in various ways deliberately, consciously models the organisation of his kingdom on the ancient kingdom of Israel. If there is a king and a kingdom, there must be a queen. In Israel the queen was not the king's wife. Many of the kings had many wives, so choosing one would lead to rivalry and jealousy.

It was invariably the king's mother who became queen and in Israel, as in other Near Eastern kingdoms, the king's mother played a hugely influential role in the affairs of state, enjoying the title 'Gebirah' which means something like 'great lady'.

The best example is Bathsheba, David's wife, Solomon's mother. With David she takes a fairly humble role.

'So Bathsheba went to the king into his chamber... Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance to the king, and the king said, "What do you desire?"' 1Kings 1:15-16

But it's a very different story once her son Solomon is on the throne:

'So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right. Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you.''

1Kings 2:19-20

He offers her a seat at his right hand, so making her number two in the kingdom. In the account that follows she then acts as an intercessor on behalf of Adonijah. If in ancient Israel the queen is the King's mother, it follows that in the kingdom which Jesus establishes, his mother will be queen. If we read Luke's annunciation, Mary's royal position becomes clear:

'The angel said to her... "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'' Luke 1:31-33

Any ancient Jew hearing of a woman giving birth to a Davidic king would conclude that she was to be the Queen Mother, that is, the queen. So calling Mary the Queen of Heaven is not Catholic devotional overkill, but a sound biblical conclusion, the logical consequence of what the Old Testament tells us about the Queen of Judah and what the New Testament tells us about Mary. So whenever we invoke her as 'Hail, Holy Queen' we are praying one of the great prayers of the kingdom of God.

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



Dear Editor

I had the privilege as a young person to witness Fr Chris Fox's mission in Uganda. His mission, along with his fellow Mill Hill fathers and brothers, has been an inspiration to me throughout my life.

In more recent years, as I have read his articles, I've been equally inspired by his interpretation of the gospel and his spiritual approach. Indeed he touched upon it in his last article when he referred to the welfare of humanity. That is what I learnt from the Mill Hill Missionaries as they led spiritually and cared deeply for the communities they served by building churches, medical centres and educating the young; setting an example to all they encountered. Their example of selflessness and their living of the Gospel was indeed a privilege to witness.

I will miss Fr Chris' writing, as I am sure many will, but will never forget his example of how to lead one's life to the full and to give thanks for whatever gifts and talents we have. However, I am now also blessed to have already received a copy of his latest book *Our Lady's Apron*

which I will treasure and highly recommend, and suggest as one of the best presents one may ever buy a friend!

And I also pray that Missio and its readers may not have heard the last of Fr Chris' wisdom.

Yours sincerely,

John Hughes – Hertfordshire

Editor: Thank you kindly for your letter and for sharing your appreciation of Fr Chris Fox MHM with us – we couldn't agree with you more!

**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**

A lesson learnt

I drove up behind a 'Learner' driver who had stopped at a roundabout. There was no traffic coming, but the L driver did not move, afraid, perhaps, to enter the roundabout. Feelings of impatience grew in me, 'Get a move on!' I thought. Then I saw on the back of the car the words: 'Be patient, we all have to learn.' I felt the words were speaking to me personally!

Learning is not restricted to school, college or university. Keeping an open mind, we should always be ready to learn. If we do not, then we are dead intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. It's a life-long process, as it was for Jesus' apostles who were slow learners, often misunderstanding his message, his mission and who he was.

It was only after Jesus' death and resurrection that they finally 'got it' and even then, they had to go on learning evermore deeper truths about Jesus and who he was for them and the world. As with the apostles, so it is with us. Let us be patient with ourselves and with others, as we all travel together on that mysterious journey we call life!

Father Peter

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



The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

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.

Join with the Holy Father in praying:

MARCH

That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church

APRIL

That young people may respond generously to their vocational call and may also seriously consider offering themselves to God through the Priesthood or Religious life

MAY

That by imitating the merciful Jesus, Christians in Africa may be prophetic witnesses of reconciliation, justice, and peace

JUNE

That leaders of nations may make a firm commitment to ending the arms trade, which victimizes so many innocent people

All living and deceased members of the APF are remembered at Mass in our chapel. Mill Hill priests each offer Mass for deceased members in November and they are remembered at Mass every Sunday and in their Daily Office

A Maria Carmen (Karmelin) Adams, Claire Addington, Caroline Aherne, Katherine (Kit) Akers, Mary Allan, Mrs J Anastasi, Kazimierz Anders, Kate Anderson, Gerard Anglin, Mary Anthony, Vincent Bernard Atkin, Rev Deacon H Atkinson, Mr P J Attridge, Valerie Yvonne Austin

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Together with family and friends, you are invited to Mass and refreshments to thank you for your support and to provide you with an opportunity to hear how your Red Box donations sustain our work throughout the world.

The celebrations are a wonderful way to meet other APF-Mill Hill supporters and to join in prayer and solidarity for our Church overseas.

Mission Masses 2017

Hexham and Newcastle Diocese

Saturday 3 June at 11am
St Joseph's Church,
High West Street,
Gateshead NE8 1LX

Salford Diocese

Saturday 10 June at 3pm
Salford Cathedral,
3 Ford Street,
Salford M3 6DP

Liverpool Archdiocese

Sunday 18 June at 2pm
Herbert House,
41 Victoria Road, Formby,
Liverpool L37 1LW

Cardiff Archdiocese

Sunday 2 July at 3pm
Llantarnam Abbey,
Cwmbran NP44 3YJ

Southwark Archdiocese

Saturday 8 July at 2pm
St George's Cathedral,
Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7HY

Plymouth Diocese

Sunday 9 July at 3pm
Plymouth Cathedral,
45 Cecil Street,
Plymouth PL1 5HW

Birmingham Archdiocese

Sunday 23 July at 11am
St Chad's Cathedral,
Queensway,
Birmingham B4 6EU

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