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Mission Today

Spring 2021

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Cover: *Young girls praying at Mass in Mongolia*

The National Director writes



If the last year has taught me anything, it is that we are less in control of our destiny than we think. The pandemic, which is still raging in many parts of the world, has brought untold suffering to many millions of people, with the loss of loved ones, health, livelihoods, opportunities, and dreams.

However, it is equally true that this crisis has brought out the best of humanity in numerous acts of kindness, caring and compassion.

The Church in many countries has experienced suffering and responded with caring compassion in equal measure. In many areas of the world the Church is the only source of hope and healing. I hope that this edition of *Mission Today* will show you just how important your material and prayerful support is for so many of our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

In one of his letters the founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries, Cardinal Vaughan, wrote:



'We are poor sticks, poor instruments, but then we are God's sticks, God's instruments and God's agents; and as long as we can keep our mind on that fact we shall be blessed and happy'.

This is echoed in the Pope's recent letter about St Joseph where he reminds us that, by following St Joseph's humility and example of fatherhood, each of us can play our part in helping humanity come closer together as one family of God.

I hope that you will join me in taking part in the Novena to St Joseph, leading up to his Feast in March (see pages 18 - 19). May it be a source of comfort and grace and a renewed opportunity for us to support one another in prayer.

In Pope Francis' recent message to us at Missio, he encourages us all to remain hopeful and to 'move forward with enthusiasm! With God alongside us, how can we fail?'

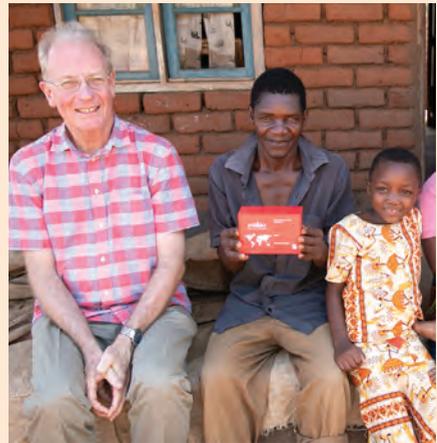
Yours in Christ,

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 2021 on pages 14-15



We are all called to share God's love

For World Mission Sunday in 2020, Missio focused on the work of Sister Nilcéia – a Brazilian missionary working at the Lisanjala Health Clinic in a remote area of Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world.



Sr Nilcéia responded to God's call by devoting her life to the practical care and spiritual nourishment of vulnerable people. With your support through Missio, she developed a programme to help pregnant young mothers and their babies.

She tells us: 'Some of the pregnant teenage girls walk almost six miles from their homes to get help from our clinic. There are around 60 teenagers that are pregnant now and five are waiting to go into labour. I am very happy with you, Missio, together we are saving and protecting life.'

'I am using the money from Missio for milk, sugar, and medicine for the mothers and their babies. I am so happy... God has blessed us. This is His providence! I do not have doubt, I give you my assurance – God is wonderful! What I feel in my heart is joy.'

'I am very happy and thankful for your efforts, for your help and assistance to accompany us in this journey, to be our partner. God shows his hand, his mercy on us. It is a difficult time, but it is something very special. Thank you'.





When we ask Sr Nilcéia about her current challenges, she explains: 'In our place, where we are, this year will be very hard. There will be a lot of hunger. People do not have money to buy fertiliser and the rains have not been helpful – sometimes it wasn't enough, sometimes it was too much. And now, people are trying to buy staple foods and it is very expensive.'

'Also, we desperately need help to repair our clinic. Strong winds have damaged our roof and now rain enters the clinic.'

The work of Sr Nilcéia is truly inspirational. And her love for God shines through her work: 'The centre of all of this is love. And when you do good, then good remains with you... When we give ourselves for others, we will be satisfied in what we are doing, in what we are.'



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

Encounter on the peripheries



The painting in the sanctuary depicts 'life in the Kibera slums'

Fr Bonaventure is the National Director for Missio in Kenya. He recently visited the largest urban settlement in Kenya – Kibera – in the capital of Nairobi. Faith is truly alive and flourishing in the community there.

On 24 September 2020, I met up with Fr José at the parish of Christ the King in Kibera – the largest slum in Nairobi. He shared with me: ‘The Kibera slum used to be part of three parishes which stood at the edges of the slum. Each parish used to take a portion of the slum area. Priests used to visit to do pastoral work, visit the sick, celebrate the sacraments in the Small

Christian Communities and afterwards, in the evening, they would go back to their parish’.

This arrangement did not sit well with the people: Priests never connected with the situation in the slum, nor did the people connect with the Priests.

This feeling of being regarded as strangers among the people they served challenged the Priests to take action. So, they came to live closer to the people and stayed with them in their situation.

This action of being with the flock, and pasturing the flock from within, bore much fruit. The Priests came to be accepted and embraced by the community, by both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. They were able to learn the language of the slum and so speak to them in a language that

endears to the heart. They experienced the challenges of accommodation, hardships of water and sanitation, the risk of crime and addiction. They became alive to the intricacies of slum life.

In responding to the need, the Priests denied themselves comfort and opted to go to the uncomfortable zone. They opened themselves to God and allowed God to challenge them in the adventure of mission work among the urban poor.

With the help of the elders and members of the community, a Church – a House of Prayer – was built and now stands at the centre of the slum. It is a source of joy for the people as it is a project showing the work of their hands. It is a beacon of hope.

Fount of love

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many of the slum dwellers lost their incomes and could not afford a square meal per day. At the parish door, there were always queues of people begging for food. This also depleted Fr José's store of food and soon there was nothing left in the parish store. He had shared everything, leaving the store empty. While wondering what he would do with the hungry mouths at his door, Fr José sought assistance from well-wishers.

Soon after, one of the young people from the parish offered Fr José two packets of milk and one loaf of bread. He said: 'Father, take these gifts and whenever someone knocks at your door for help, please give them this'. Fr José was struck by the generosity of the young man. He called the elders of the community together and they decided that despite the restrictions, they wanted to offer what they could. So, Fr José made a round-shaped hollow vessel which he called the '*pot of love*', where people put their offerings for those in need.

From that day, this pot has never been empty, regardless of the huge numbers of people who come to fetch from the pot.

'People from the slums, even in their poverty, are extremely generous. The culture of sharing is deeply embedded in them,' explains Fr José. 'Each one of them will have depended on someone for help at the beginning when they arrived in Nairobi with nothing and found themselves in Kibera because it is cheap. But without money or a source of income, people suffer. So, a Good Samaritan will have offered a shoulder to lean on. When people find a source of livelihood, they in turn assist those struggling; that is their source of generosity. Above all, they know that God provides'.

This reminded me of the Bible story of the child who offered the five loaves and two fish to Jesus, who used that to feed five thousand people. I was able to conclude that from a generous heart one never lacks. **From one pot the entire community was fed; from the fount of love, no one lacks.** Indeed, as St John Paul II said, there is no one who is too rich that he has nothing he can receive, and, there is no one too poor that can have nothing to give. We all have something to give or receive from the other. This is what builds the bonds of communion and solidarity.



Your generous heart of charity

In 2020, the Holy Father instructed Missio to coordinate a COVID-19 Emergency Appeal to support the Church in mission parishes around the world. A portion of the funds raised in England and Wales were sent to the Mill Hill Missionaries, our partners through the Red Box.

Mill Hill Missionaries go 'where the need is greatest' and though some of the funds were used to sustain the lives of the missionaries themselves and their spiritual outreach, the majority was distributed among the communities they serve. Here are some reports from three parishes in India, on how the finances were used:

Baswar Mission

The allocation of the COVID-19 relief fund was granted to Baswar Mission for the survival of poor people during the wide-spread pandemic. We distributed food stuffs for the vulnerable – the weak, poor, widows, old, and sick people who were unable to work for their survival – in the villages of Kudarbaswar, Dhanudand, Darridand, Bhakurma, Beldand, Khudrad and Jujdand.

Roughly 250 families benefited from this relief fund. They really feel grateful to us for providing them with dry food stuff for their survival.

We, in turn, express our profound gratitude to you on behalf of all these beneficiaries for your great contributions in difficult times. May God bless you abundantly for your generous heart of charity.

Fr Robin Rainu Ram MHM





Pargi Mission

Poor people who live on daily wages and who work outside their homes are truly suffering. It has been difficult for them to sustain their family and educate their children since they are not able to go out looking for work. Unpredicted rain also has disturbed their daily lives by destroying crops like cotton, maize and rice.

We would like to express our gratitude to those who came forward once more to assist us in Pargi parish, which consists of 13 villages. We have been able to help around 200 families by giving them necessities like daal, wheat flour, salt, tea, sugar, bathing soap and washing soap.

We have been able to help people who are Hindus, Muslims and Christians from other churches. They include especially elderly people, widows and those who are sick.

We are very much grateful to God and the benefactors for thinking about us during this time of great need. Thank you so much for helping us – it has enabled us to reach out to people and help them. May God bless us all.

Fr Simon Thankappan MHM

Nellikuduru Mission

Essential food items such as rice, cooking oil, potatoes, onions and tomatoes, were delivered to around 380 poorer families. The beneficiaries of the project belong to many different religious and social groups. They were truly appreciative of the efforts and the contributions, and it made them realise that we truly care for others' wellbeing.

I am also personally very thankful for the noble contribution which has helped us, as a mission, to be in solidarity with the suffering. It has made our relationship with people more friendly and constructive.

I would like to sincerely express my gratitude; it has truly given us an opportunity to express our solidarity with others irrespective of which community or creed we belong to.

Fr Lulu Nayak MHM



Building a vibrant Church

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

Here are some updates from our partners overseas:



Christ the King Major Seminary, Kenya

Our Seminary is the largest in Kenya with a population of 320 students. This past year has been tough. Our semester was cut short in 2020 in accordance with the government order that all learning institutions be closed. When it is safe, we plan to bring the students back in three phases to ensure social distancing and begin a fresh new academic year in August for 2021-2022.

Sadly, we have been unable to reach some of our students online with educational and formative programmes, due to poor networks in some parts of our country.

Also, due the long stay at home, we have lost some seminarians who have decided not to come back when we resume because they have decided to embrace another kind of life.

However, in 2020 we have been blessed with five ordinations to the priesthood and two to the diaconate.

It is our hope that 2021 will be better. Faith is still alive in our people despite the challenges experienced last year. We are hopeful that vocations to priesthood will increase, although we do not have enough rooms to accommodate them. We have faith that The One who calls them, will give us the means to sustain them.

We are grateful to Missio for your immense support that you accord to us as we strive to nurture the priestly vocations that our heavenly Father blesses His Church with. Please pass our regards to all our donors and assure them of our prayers.

Fr Peter, Rector

St John's Regional Seminary, India

The seminarians were sitting examinations in March 2020 when the Indian government suddenly imposed lockdown. No one was allowed to go out of their places; all educational institutions were closed. Getting essential commodities became difficult. Many people were without work, some without food. There was fear everywhere.

We moved to online classes, conferences, and exams. It was really challenging as students needed to get smart phones with internet facility to attend online classes. Most of them were at their homes in rural and remote areas, making this difficult due to poor connectivity.

The Churches were closed, homes became churches. Families spent more time praying together. The Church invited the faithful to trust in God and help others in need, expressing solidarity with others.

The Church used technology in many parishes and centres offering online worship, prayer, Masses, and adoration. This gave great help to people, especially those isolated at home. Faith has given people a lot of strength, courage and hope.

In June, when the government issued new rules which allowed 15 people at religious gatherings, 16 Deacons were ordained Priests in their respective Dioceses. Only family members were allowed to attend.



As government restrictions are being lifted, we have also started calling back the seminarians in a phased manner. We hope that the pandemic ends, with the intercession of our Mother Mary. We also hope that human society will be able to learn constructive lessons from the pandemic and build solidarity, justice and love.

Assuring you of my prayers for God's abundant blessings for you and all the collaborators for the kind services to our seminary in the formation of Priests.

Fr Mareddy, Rector

St Peter's Major Seminary, Malawi

Greetings from St Peter's Major Seminary! Please extend our regards to all the benefactors who are helping us.

COVID-19 has been a challenge in Malawi. Life was very tough in both towns and villages. Our people were unable to support the Church very well and as a result, parishes and seminaries greatly suffered.

St Peter's Major Seminary was not spared. We have eight teaching Priests, but when the seminary suffered financially during the crisis, six Priests and all students were sent back to their dioceses. Only the Rector and the Bursar remained. Under normal circumstances, Priests serving in the seminaries are never sent back to their dioceses. The seminary could not manage to take care of its Priests during the crisis.

When we resumed normal classes, we were not stable financially and the only relief came from Missio in England and Wales. The money you sent has helped us to finish the academic year. Thanks a lot for your support. Keep it up!



Priests serving in the seminaries have been helped greatly with the Mass Stipends that you gave us. The Mass Stipends help us because we do not have a reliable source of income. Please continue supporting us with the Mass Stipends as Priests. It makes our life bearable.

This year we have been blessed with 14 Deacons and 12 new Priests. They are promising to offer their prayers for all the people from England and Wales who have been supporting them.

2021 is a year which is giving us great hope, the number of students interested in priesthood is continuing to rise. At the same time, we are a little bit worried because in October, the seminary will have around 150 major seminarians and yet it only has the capacity of accommodating 120. We only have 12 hostels (or dormitories), and each accommodates 10 students. We are busy working out how best to tackle this problem. If we can be supported in the construction of one hostel, then we might be on the safer side.

It is always very painful for Bishops and Priests to see that some students cannot be admitted in the seminary at their rightful stage, due to the challenge of accommodation. A year's delay is always a challenge to the students, and at times we lose some good seminarians in the process.

When they stay at home for one year, waiting for the space to be created, some lose hope and look for a job to earn a living. They abandon their priestly vocation. This is honestly giving us a headache. A contractor has already been identified and as soon as we get some money, we will begin the project of constructing one hostel.

We cherish our relationship with you and we greatly appreciate all the support you give us. Please, keep it up!! Without your support, life would be very unbearable.

Fr Anthony, Rector

Our Lady of Lanka National Seminary, Sri Lanka

The year of 2020 has been a year of unique and extraordinary situations of life and challenges due to the COVID-19 nightmare. Just halfway through the Academic Year 2019/2020, the seminarians returned home because of the Coronavirus outbreak.

During the second wave in November and December 2020, the Seminary once again had to close abruptly and the seminarians returned to their dioceses. The involuntary isolation and seclusion have caused considerable distress and triggered numerous reflections about the meaning of life and death.



Despite these challenges, in 2020, by the bountiful grace of God, 30 ordinations were celebrated in seven Dioceses.

In our own local context, we hope and pray these experiences would evoke in all of us courage, hope and compassion. The theme for 2021 for the Seminarians is *'We walk by Faith, not by Sight'*. This is inspired by the Year of St Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, declared by the Holy Father.

Our regards and blessing to all our friends, valued benefactors, who are remembered with a lot of love and affection, with every best prayerful sentiments and thankfulness from the recesses of our hearts.

Fr Expeditus, Rector

Bigard Memorial Seminary, Nigeria

The lockdown policy brought untold hardship to the people of Nigeria. Borders were closed and prices of staple food tripled in many cases. Unlike other countries, the government had no meaningful provision for assistance to those hardest hit by the economic downturn.

In March 2020, the Seminary had to close. Churches in Nigeria were also shut down and the faithful advised to pray at home.

We successfully launched an Online Distant Learning Programme which enabled lecturers to interact with our 855 seminarians. However, the lack of or the poor availability of internet facilities in Nigeria made the programme cumbersome.

The #EndSARS protest organised by Nigerian youths against police brutality brought more hardship. The financial impact has been felt in all facets of life in Nigeria. Today, the prices of basic food stuffs like



rice, beans, yam, tomatoes and onions have in many cases doubled or tripled.

The seminary has had to pay workers, feed the formators, pay the electricity and pay for goods and services which the government has increased. This has placed financial strain on our lean budget.

In 2020, we had a total number of 54 candidates ordained Deacons and 50 candidates ordained Priests. We are grateful to God, and to our benefactors, that we were able to have ordinations of some of our candidates.

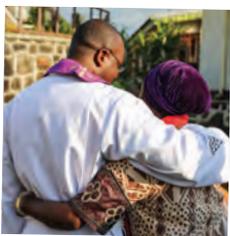
The seminary community will continue to follow the COVID-19 protocols and maintain our steadfastness in prayers for an end to the pandemic. The development of a COVID-19 vaccine is welcome news. It is hoped that the new vaccine would be made available to all, so as to help shore up confidence and restore hope for humanity.

Fr Albert, Rector

You can sponsor a seminarian individually or as a family, a community or a parish project. To find out how you can sponsor the training of a future Priest, please turn to page 24.

The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions 2021

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



JANUARY

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another and open to all.

JULY

We pray that in situations of social, economic or political conflict we may be courageous and passionate in seeking to build bridges of dialogue and friendship.

FEBRUARY

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that their voices may be heeded and acted upon by society.

AUGUST

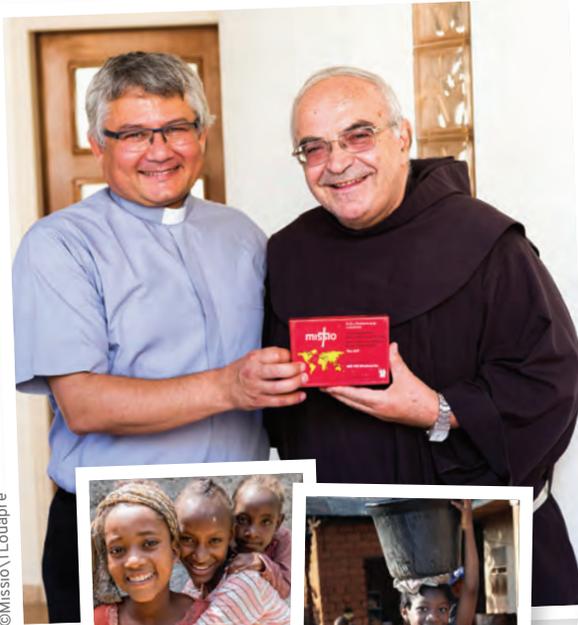
Let us pray that we, as Church, may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to be reformed in the light of the Gospel.

MARCH

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with respect and reverence, as an experience of the infinite mercy of God.

SEPTEMBER

We pray that we may make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in those young people who are resolutely committed to protecting God's Creation.



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



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APRIL

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting to uphold fundamental rights under authoritarian regimes and in democracies in crisis.

MAY

Let us pray for those responsible for financial services, that they may work together with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers.

JUNE

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of the Christian community: may they grow in love, generosity, faithfulness and patience.

OCTOBER

We pray that every baptised person will respond to the call to follow Jesus Christ in their lives and witness to others the transforming power of his Gospel.

NOVEMBER

We pray that people who struggle with depression and all forms of mental illness may find support in us all and allow a healing light to enter their lives.

DECEMBER

We pray that catechists, who are called to proclaim God's Word, may be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be its courageous and creative witnesses.

Missionaries killed in 2020

Last year, 20 missionaries were killed worldwide: eight Priests, one Religious man, three Religious women, two seminarians and six lay people. Many lived and worked caring for people living in poverty, helping children, and supporting development and faith projects.

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.

Fr Jozef Hollanders, 83, a Belgian Oblate of Mary Immaculate (OMI), was killed in a robbery in South Africa on 12 January.

Augustine Avertse, the lay leader of the local Catholic community, was shot and killed on 20 January by a group of herdsmen in Nigeria.



Michael Nnadi, 18, a seminarian at the Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Nigeria, was found dead on 1 February. He had been

kidnapped with four other seminarians, who were later released. The kidnappers claimed the seminarian possessed 'exceptional courage' and 'continued to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ'.

Philippe Yarga, a lay catechist, was killed along with a group of people of different faiths during a jihadist attack on 16 February in Burkina Faso.



Sr Henrietta Alokha, from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, was killed due to an explosion at the Bethlehem Girls College in Nigeria on 15 March. Holy Mass was being celebrated in the school when a strong explosion occurred, and a violent fire broke out. Sr Henrietta rescued all the children under her care from the explosion, however, could not make it out herself.



Sr Lydie Oyanem Nzoughe, a Sister of the Congregation of the Religieuses de Sainte Marie, was attacked and murdered on 19 March in Gabon. She had dedicated her life to caring for the poor and homeless elderly people.

Fr Oscar Juárez, 67, was found by a cleaner in the church of San Martín de Porres in Argentina on 15 July. Authorities believe he was killed in a robbery.

Fr Ricardo Antonio Cortéz, the Rector of Santiago de María of Zacatecoluca Major Seminary in El Salvador, was shot dead on 7 August.

Fr Nomer de Lumen, 32, was found dead due to gunshot wounds on 9 September in the Philippines.



Fr Roberto Malgesini, 51, was stabbed to death by a mentally unwell homeless man on 15 September in Italy. The Priest was known for his care for homeless people and migrants.

Lilliam Yunielka, 12, and **Blanca Marlene González**, 10, were brutally killed on 15 September in Nicaragua. The sisters were members of the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood, known as *Missio's Mission Together* programme in England and Wales.

Bryan José Coronado Zeledon, 17, a Church musician, was discovered dead on the bank of a river on 19 September in Nicaragua.



Fr Adriano da Silva Barros, 36, disappeared on 13 October and was found dead on 14 October in Brazil. He was stabbed and his body was set on fire. Authorities believe he was the victim of an armed robbery.

Fr José Manuel de Jesus Ferreira, 40, was brutally murdered on 20 October in Venezuela. The Priest had celebrated Mass in the presence of a few people, due to the pandemic, and was greeting them outside the church. He saw a woman who had just been robbed, went to her aid, and was shot.

'Martyrdom is the air of the life of a Christian, of a Christian community. There will always be martyrs among us: this is the sign that we are on the path of Jesus'.
Pope Francis

Rufinus Tigau, 28, a lay catechist, was shot dead by members of a joint operation between the Indonesian army and police on 26 October in Indonesia. He had approached the security forces during a raid when he was killed.

Fr Jorge Vaudagna, 58, was found dead on 27 October in Argentina. Authorities believe he was shot and killed in a robbery.

Sr Matilda Mulengachonzi, 60, of the Congregation of the Little Servants of Mary Immaculate (LSMI), suffered fatal injuries during an armed robbery in Zambia. She surprised her attacker when he was trying to break into her apartment and died from her wounds on 25 October.

Br Leonardo Grasso, 78, a Minister of the Sick (Camillians MI), was found dead on 5 December in Italy. Authorities believe he was killed in a building which was then set on fire. He had been working in a rehabilitation community for drug addicts and HIV/AIDS patients.



Zhage Sil, a seminarian, was found dead in a ditch in Indonesia on 24 December. According to the local police, the perpetrators of the crime are still unknown.

Special mention must also be made of the countless number of Catholics who died due to COVID-19. Many of these faithful people dedicated their lives to the care of others.

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

National Novena to St Joseph



Wednesday 10 March – Thursday 18 March 2021

A reflection by Fr Anthony Chantry MHM

What will I do now? I will go to Joseph and ask for his help'. These words must have been said on a daily basis by the founder of the Mill Hill Missionaries.

In 1866 Fr Vaughan, later to become Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, began the creative and courageous venture of founding a missionary college in Mill Hill, north London. The intention was to train and send missionary Priests out into the world to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

He faced enormous challenges. He had no money, no property, no seminary staff, no students; and faced opposition, scepticism, and ridicule from all quarters. Like St Joseph, he was a man on a mission, and nothing was going to stop him, and he trusted in the power of his prayers.

St Joseph did not let him down, for from those challenging early days, the Mill Hill Missionaries have flourished into an international fellowship of missionaries working in many countries across the world.

In his recent Apostolic Letter about St Joseph, Pope Francis describes him as a 'creatively courageous father' in the ways he protected and cared for Jesus and Mary. He did not run from difficulties but engaged with them and found ways through them.



So it is that, in these times, we turn to St Joseph for inspiration and help through his intercession, that we too will have the courage to find creative ways through life's trials and tribulations.

Blessed Joseph, show yourself as a father and guide us on the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. **Amen.**

Join us in prayer

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

Each year the Mill Hill community prepares for the feast day of St Joseph, their 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 way for you, our supporters, to pray for each other and build links of prayer across the world for missionaries and the people they serve.

In this year dedicated to St Joseph, the Mill Hill Missionaries are preparing for the Feast of St Joseph with a special Novena of Masses and prayers to ask for God's blessing on their Society's missionary outreach, and for the intentions of all those who support their work.

The National Novena to St Joseph will take place from 10 - 18 March 2021 at St Joseph's Church in Maidenhead.

If you are able, and if it is possible to attend, Masses will be celebrated on:

10 - 12 March at 7.30pm

13 March at 10am

14 March at 11am

15 - 18 March at 7.30pm

This year you can also join the daily Novena Mass online, and find more information and reflections: millhillmissionaries.com/novena

If you would like to receive a Novena Booklet by post please write to the address below, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope if possible. You can join in at home by praying the daily Novena and prayer and/or by sending your petitions to:

Novena Director

41 Victoria Road
Freshfield L37 1LW

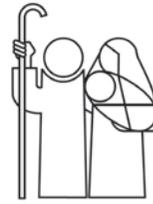
For more information, please email novenamhm@gmail.com

Prayer to St Joseph

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us on the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy
and courage,
and defend us from every evil.
Amen

From the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis,
Patris Corde – With a Father's Heart

If you would like to receive a daily email with a Reflection and Prayer for the nine days of the Novena, please complete the form at the back of the magazine or email: info@missio.org.uk



The best in us

Fr Michael Corcoran MHM, General Superior of the Mill Hill Missionaries, reports on their latest news:



Our next generation of 'Cultivators of Hope' – Mill Hill Missionaries working in Pakistan

In a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, I wrote to all our missionaries throughout the world to encourage them and remind them that as missionaries, the capacity for being bearers of hope is part and parcel of our ministry today. Indeed, we were caught off guard by this unexpected and turbulent storm.

As missionaries we are 'sent' in a special way to be alongside those who suffer, this is all the more important with the impact of the global crisis. We continue to do what we do best – mission.

In communication with our missionaries worldwide and in collaboration with Missio, our partners in mission, we as a Mill Hill Society were able to reach out in a very practical way to people in need of help and assistance.

Alongside this practical help, our missionaries found themselves in situations of significant spiritual and pastoral challenge, not immune to the difficulties, hardships, and pain of this time.

I have expressed my gratitude to all our missionaries on the 'frontline' for the

significant dedication and sacrifice they are making as the crisis continues to impact on how we relate to each other, how we work and pray together.

Notwithstanding fear, tiredness and grief, they have endeavoured to stand with those bereaved and suffering, even amid many restrictions and limitations imposed by governments to curtail the spread of the virus.

We are blessed with their generosity of spirit and that of the people of England and Wales who, through Missio, collaborate in this mission.

We are the cultivators of hope amongst the people we live and work with every day. This Good News continues to be 'cultivated' in different parts of the world.



Bishop Kiké with our young Mill Hill Missionaries: Fr Jacob and Fr Glenn in Cambodia

In Cambodia, our young missionaries participated in a unique Khmer – Christian Festival as one means of reaching out to the people.

In a joining of Christian and Khmer traditions, village blessings for the end of the harvest season are warmly accepted by the villagers. The idea originates from the Cambodian tradition of thanksgiving after harvest season.



Village blessing dance in Cambodia

Hope grows in new missionary apostolates begun recently, especially in Douala, Cameroon and Busaana, Uganda. Pioneering evangelisation work amongst the Maasai begun by our earlier missionaries is now being re-invigorated with the opening of a new base in Kenya by our young crop of Mill Hill Missionaries. They are 're-tracing God's walking stick amongst the Maasai', in harmony with our missionary character.

Last December we renewed our cherished links with the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle as we took on a mission appointment in Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Sunderland.

In all of this we move forward with enthusiasm, as there is much to do on the journey that awaits us.

For more Mill Hill news, please visit millhillmissionaries.com or follow them on Facebook: [@MillHillMissionaries](https://www.facebook.com/MillHillMissionaries)

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.

You can now find the names from our Book of Remembrance on our website: missio.org.uk/book-of-remembrance

Included in our online Book of Remembrance are the names of people who have supported Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries. 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



Backwards never: forwards ever!

I think the words of St Paul are especially relevant today in this time of pandemic. He says that 'up to the present the whole of Creation is groaning as if in the pangs of childbirth' (Romans 8:22). We are indeed a people and a world, at the moment, which is groaning with the pangs of the pandemic.

But we never lose hope or faith because, as God in the Book of Revelation (21) assures us 'a new heaven and a new earth is being born for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away'. All of us, at one time or another (and that time may be now!) have, in our personal lives, been through our own journey of groaning and pain only to find new birth, transformation and new life opening up for us.

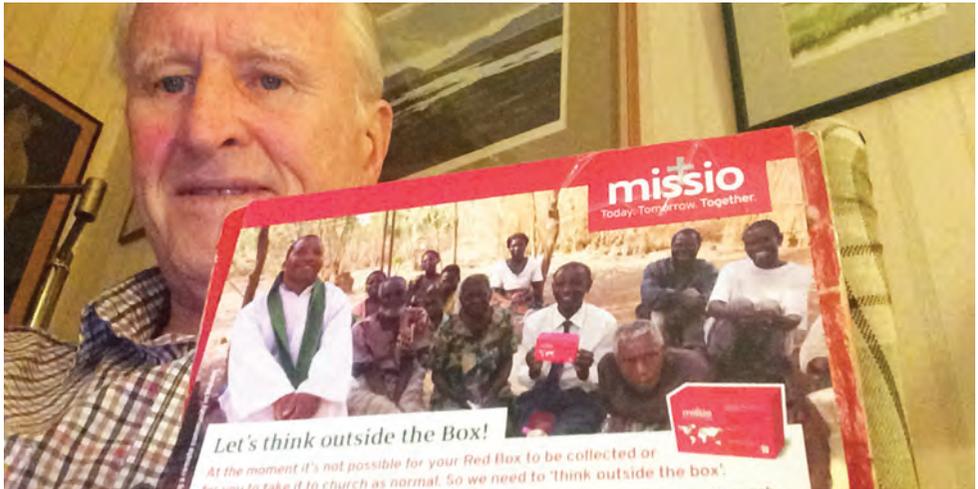
We pray that humankind also will come through this pandemic into a new birth; into a humbler and wiser way of living with more respect and reverence for God's gift of Creation, which it has greatly abused.

About the pandemic someone wisely said, 'We can't go back to normal because the normal was precisely the problem!' Let us hope that we do not 'go back' but 'go forward' into a brighter future!

Father Peter

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

Red Box revamp



Patrick recently gave his inherited wooden Red Box a new front cover!

My family and I grew up in Belfast where we belonged to a Passionist parish that had a connection to the missions in Botswana (formerly known as Bechuanaland). From an early age I remember 'lining up the pennies to go to the missions'.

A generous spirit was encouraged in my family; we grew up with an ethos of sharing. During the California Gold Rush (1848 – 1855), one of my relatives struck gold and created a ring that contained enough gold to make many rings. It was passed down through my mother's side of the family, until my mother gave it to the Passionists to make a chalice.

I am a lay chaplain with a degree from St Mary's University. I work in a hospital chaplaincy as a volunteer chaplain with HIV/AIDS patients. And through working with the Legion of Mary, and visiting the elderly, I inherited a wooden Red Box.

For me, the Red Box is a little tangible way of thinking of others. It is a reminder that there is poverty of many different descriptions. It sits in my sitting room and to be honest, it is a bit of nostalgia.

Giving is a part of my life. Once I have read *Mission Today*, I leave it quietly in Church in the hope someone else might read it.

Patrick, London

Editor: Thank you for sharing with us, Patrick. We love what you have done to give the Red Box a 'new look'! Please do continue to pray for our work; we will keep you and your loved ones in our prayers also.

We love to hear your news and receive your comments, so please continue to get in touch:

**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.



Anselm in Cameroon

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 simply is not enough.

Could you give £1.37 a day to help them?

If you can commit £42 a month (£500 per year) for four years, you 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.

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 spa@missio.org.uk, visit missio.org.uk or complete the form on the back page and return it to us.

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 that are poor or in need around the world.

In 2019, legacies left to Missio funded the construction of a new community hall and presbytery in the Diocese of Jammu-Srinagar in northern India.

Bishop Ivan Pereira shared: 'Thanks to your support through Missio, the Church continues to play a leading role in education, healthcare and social services in our diocese, reaching out to the poorest in our society'.



'Our work with children, youth, men and women is bearing fruit and your support is making this possible. By your prayers and assistance, you are active participants in the work of the Church in this mission diocese'.

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, and to share the love of God with those in greatest need.

Please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Missio. For more information, please complete the form on the back 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)

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First Name*

Surname*

Address*

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Tel

Parish

Email

- Please send me the monthly **Missio eNewsletter** (provide email address above)
- Please send me the emails for the **Novena to St Joseph – March 2021** (provide email address above)

To donate via card

I would like to pay by: Visa/Mastercard Maestro/Delta/Visa CAF Charity Card

Name on card (PLEASE PRINT)*

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Issue No Start date / Expiry date* /

Please tick if you do not require a receipt

Please complete the Gift Aid section overleaf, if possible

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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 also give online at missio.org.uk or call us on **020 7821 9755** (office hours) or donate via Credit Card (please call to set up a Direct Debit)

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

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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 above 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**

Please complete your details overleaf
and return the entire page to Missio in the
freepost envelope attached

Build a vibrant Catholic Church for the future

Tick here to receive your guide to making a Will
and our free Will writing service

Sponsor the training of a future Priest

Tick here to receive information about sponsoring
the training of a future Priest

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Date _____

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Let's think outside the Box!

At the moment it may not be possible for your Red Box to be collected or for you to take it to church as normal. So we need to 'think outside the Box'.

Below you will find how you can send us your Red Box money today, so that together we can reach missionaries and communities who need our help as soon as possible.

How you can make a donation:



Send a cheque: Make it payable to **Missio-Mill Hill** and post it to Red Box, 23 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1NU



Give online: Go to missio.org.uk/redbox



Give via text: Text **REDBOX 5** (to donate £5) or **REDBOX 10** (to donate £10) to **70085**

This costs £5 or £10 plus your standard rate message



Give via phone: Call us on **020 7821 9755** during office hours to donate with your credit or debit card



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Reference: RB + your postcode



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Thank you!

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