Missio National Council

*20-22 June 2022, High Leigh Conference Centre*

*Lord Street, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 8SG*

Attendees:

Special Guest: Father Dinh Anh Nhue Nguyen OFM Conv. (Secretary General of the Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU), Director of the International Centre for Missionary Animation (CIAM), and Director of Agenzia Fides - Monday & Tuesday evening)

Diocesan Directors:

Fr Philip Baptiste (Mission Together, Westminster), Fr Gary Brassington (Clifton, Trustee), Deacon Anthony Callaghan (Liverpool), Fr Wayne Coughlin (Northampton, not Tuesday), Fr Patrick Daly (Brentwood), Mary Dearden (Shrewsbury, Mission Together), Fr Tony Grace (Shrewsbury, Monday & Tuesday), Fr Jonathan Hart (Leeds), Deacon Tom Kavanagh (Southwark), Fr Innaiah Maddenini (Portsmouth), Fr Clement Orango (Nottingham, Tuesday & Wednesday), Fr Greg Price (Hexham and Newcastle, Trustee), Fr Carlos Quito (Westminster), Deacon Michael Tosh (Plymouth)

Trustees: Bishop Paul Swarbrick (Chair of Trustees, Tuesday evening & Wednesday), Neil Twist (also Fr Gary Brassington and Fr Greg Price, Diocesan Directors)

Mill Hill Missionaries:

Fr Dermot Byrne MHM (British Regional), Fr Michael Corcoran MHM (General Superior), Fr Gerry Hastie MHM (Vicar General, Appealer – Red Box Strategy Day), Fr Kevin Hughes MHM (Appealer – Red Box Strategy Day)

Missio: Cedric Burke (Finance Director), Fr Anthony Chantry MHM (Missio National Director), Theresa Codd (Regional Community Fundraiser, North), Claire Colleran (Mission Together Coordinator), Stephen Davies (Red Box Director, jointly appointed by Missio and MHM), Michelle Slater (Communications Manager), Dave Wheat (Regional Community Fundraiser, South)

Apologies: Fr Michael Glover (Birmingham), Fr Robert Hayes (Salford), Canon Michael Loughlin (Middlesbrough); Helena McGouran (Mission Together, Middlesbrough), Nicky Pisa (Missio, Fundraising and Communications Director), Canon Paul Watson (Menevia)

Monday, 20 June

*Opening session*

We began by reflecting on the Church in our local context and the work of Missio in our dioceses.

*Some themes included:* how few people currently know about Blessed Pauline Jaricot, and the opportunity to share her story more widely; in many dioceses, clergy morale is currently quite low; many dioceses and parishes are currently quite inward-focussed, especially thinking about church clusters/closures; issues with banking for Local Secretaries; difficulty in being able to get into schools at the moment for assemblies; the UCM as a group who often support/help, especially at events.

*Fr Anh Nhue: Nurturing a Missionary Spirit, A Fraternal Sharing on Missio Spirituality*

Please see Fr Anh Nhue’s paper.

*Reflections on the Beatification of Pauline Jaricot*

Fr Philip Baptiste, Fr Tony Chantry, and Fr Anh Nhue shared their experience of being in Lyon for the beatification.

You can watch Fr Philip’s vlogs from the day here: <https://missio.org.uk/podcasts-and-media/from-our-correspondent-fr-philip-vlogs/>

Tuesday, 21 June: *Red Box Strategy Day*

All of Tuesday was dedicated to the Red Box. The group was joined by Fr Gerry Hastie MHM and Fr Kevin Hughes MHM, Mill Hill Missionaries and Appealers. Please see separate papers:

* Red Box Strategy Day Information Paper
* Red Box Strategy Day 2022: Notes

Wednesday, 22 June: *Missio National Council AGM 2022*

Today (22 June 2022) is the 400th anniversary of the foundation of *Propaganda Fide* by Pope Gregory XV. Now part of the Dicastery of Evangelisation.

1. National Director’s Report

*Update on personnel*

Diocesan Directors who have stepped down:

* Deacon Duncan Brown (Arundel & Brighton)
* Father Paul Haines (Birmingham)
* Deacon John Bell (Hallam)
* Christopher Bleasdale (Plymouth)

Newly appointed Diocesan Directors:

* Father Michael Glover (Birmingham)
* Deacon Anthony Callaghan (Liverpool)
* Deacon Michael Tosh (Plymouth)
* Father Bob Hayes (Salford)

5 dioceses awaiting appointment. Over half DDs are present at this year’s National Council.

Fr Christy Fox MHM died during the year. His reflections frequently appeared in *Mission Today.*

*Direction of travel and expression of gratitude*

Fr Anh Nhue’s presentation on Monday pointed us in the right direction: towards the mystery of vocation; God leading us in ways we don’t understand. We should allow the Spirit to transform and lead us, which requires courage and trust.

Fr Tony expressed his thanks to all Diocesan Directors for all that they do, alongside so many other responsibilities. He also expressed his thanks to the Missio Team, who have worked so hard, especially during the last few years.

*Pontifical Mission Societies’ General Assembly in Lyon, May 2022*

Income to PMS from across the world is down, largely due to the pandemic. It is an especially marked decline from the United States who provide the large part of the income for the Universal Solidarity Fund.

The renewal of PMS, called for by Pope Francis three years ago, is ongoing. It will include a rediscovery of the four charisms which formed the four Pontifical Mission Societies, then develop a common vision from which the Statutes will flow.

There is also an awareness of the imbalance between those National Directions who *give* and those who *receive*.

*Funding requests*

Some Missios (including Germany and Australia) raise money which cannot be sent via the Universal Solidarity Fund because of their own country-laws, and so they fund more projects directly. This gives rise to many requests from various countries coming to Fr Tony directly from bishops in missionary dioceses, as they would do to Missio in Germany/Australia.

Many bishops in England and Wales also receive applications for money from bishops around the world. Fr Tony has asked that these are passed to him so that he can respond, especially as some people send the same request to multiple bishops. **If any bishops ask you about these requests, please ask them to forward them to Fr Tony.**

*Mission trips*

Previously we would have one trip per year, gathering stories, images and resources. We have not been able to have one for the last two years.

Fr Tony is visiting Pakistan in November, to give input to National Directors in the area as part of a Mission Animation, and he will then visit Missio and Mill Hill Missionary projects in the country.

Fr Tony and Michelle are recently back from a visit to Romania, Moldova and Transnistria at the invitation of Fr Eugene, their National Director. They were looking in particular at how the Church is supporting Ukrainian refugees in those countries. Michelle shared her experience. It will feature in the Autumn/World Mission Sunday edition of *Mission Today*.

*National Council: Resolution*

Following a discussion at the Red Box Strategy Day, it was noted that we are increasingly emphasising all of Missio’s work, rather than focussing on an individual society’s work. As such, the Missio share of the Red Box income should not be restricted solely to supporting the work of the APF. As such, the following resolution from the National Council was proposed, which allows Missio to earmark its share of Red Box income to all the Pontifical Mission Societies, as it sees fit.

Resolution: The Missio National Council encourages the Missio share of Red Box income to be used to support all of the Pontifical Mission Societies (Association for the Propagation of the Faith, Society of St Peter the Apostle, Holy Childhood (Mission Together), and Pontifical Missionary Union), as appropriate.

Resolution carried unanimously.

1. Mill Hill Missionaries Update: Fr Michael Corcoran MHM

The Mill Hill Missionaries’ General Chapter has just finished, postponed from 2020. Fr Michael was reappointed as General Superior, with a new General Council. Fr Philip Adede (Kenya, African Region), Fr Bernie Luna (Asia), Fr Gerry Hastie (Vicar General, Europe). The international makeup reflects the growing number of Mill Hill Missionaries from Africa and Asia.

At the General Chapter there was a unanimous affirmation of the partnership between the Mill Hill Missionaries and Missio.

Appealers: two Appealers are about to take on the role: Fr Noah (from Uganda), and Fr Joseph (from India) as full-time Red Box workers. Many of the Appealers are ‘part-time’ as they have more than one role.

Missio Overview 2021-22

*Income*

2021 saw an improvement on donated income compared to 2020. It is not back to pre-COVID levels. Also very aware of the cost of living crisis, with high inflation rates and fuel costs, all of which are likely to impact on our supporters and their ability to give, as well as having an impact on staff.

Whilst keeping costs to a minimum, there is a rise in expenditure in 2022 which will continue into 2023, including the increase in marketing costs and staff transport costs, particularly when visiting supporters and putting on events (compared to during the pandemic).

*Staffing*

There are now 16 members of staff for Missio, a reduction from 20. The staff team have done a truly wonderful job in pulling together and keeping the show on the road during the lockdown restrictions and as activity levels started to pick up. Remote working has been extremely successfully. The admin and finance teams are back working from the office, whilst those staff with an outreach role are mainly based from their homes.

Nicky Pisa is still on extended leave, following her operation for breast cancer. She continues to improve and will hopefully be back fulltime during the Summer. We have all felt her absence.

*Cyber Security*

There is an ongoing threat of cyber attack and data breaches, and the Missio Risk Register reflects this. We are ensuring we do all that we can to mitigate against an attack and to ensure we can be back up and running if (or more likely when) an attack takes place.

*Strategic priorities*

*Blessed Pauline Jaricot* – although the beatification has taken place, we will work to continue to share the founding story of a major part of who we are to inspire and invigorate current and potential supporters.

*Streamlining internal processes and systems* – building on the shared database for Missio and Mill Hill, working to link together online donations with the database and making it easier for volunteers to access and update the contact details they have for supporters.

*Outreach work encompassing all of Missio ­*– ensuring all of Missio is promoted in our materials and face-to-face work, rather than focussing on one society at the expense of others. This goes hand-in-hand with the outreach members of our team working evermore closely together.

*Face-to-face supporter engagement to complement online engagement ­–* we know that both forms of communication go hand-in-hand, encouraging the other, and we will be promoting and developing both.

*Developing our digital presence, including cashless giving* – we have increased our digital presence with good results and want to build on this. Any developments with online giving will require investment in technology to make the process as simple for the supporter, and involve as little administration as possible from the office.

*Increase our direct mailing, looking to World Mission Sunday 2023* – whilst wanting to maintain the face-to-face link of Local Secretaries to Red Box holders distributing *Mission Today*, we know from trials that sending *Mission Today* directly to people has increased the number of people giving and re-engaged some people who had not donated for a while. We are looking towards sending the World Mission Sunday edition of *Mission Today* directly to supporters in 2023, with a smaller-scale trial in 2022.

*Mission Together*

Our resources now have a strong catechetical element to them, which is welcomed by teachers and RE coordinators in schools. They have had a significant level of downloads online.

We have a group of 5 ‘Materials Developers’ helping create our resources. They are current practitioners in primary schools – teachers and RE coordinators – who bring their understanding of the school context and curriculum to the materials they produce. They are paid an hourly rate per resource.

We also have 6 members of a new ‘Consultative Board’, including Head and Deputy Head Teachers and RE Coordinators who meet for an hour three times a year to share their reflections on our resources and make suggestions on how we can improve the materials we produce.

Tomorrow (23 June) we are holding a revised version of our event for the Archdiocese of Southwark primary school children at Aylesford Priory. This year it is much more of a collaboration with the diocesan Education Commission. There will be c. 900 children and 100 staff at the event, celebrating ‘children helping children’.

**Please do look at the Mission Together website and the resources is contains, and especially the new interactive world map:** [**https://missiontogether.org.uk/world/**](https://missiontogether.org.uk/world/)

*Regional Community Fundraisers*

*Diocesan Mission Teams*, formed of the DD, their assistant if there is one, the Regional Community Fundraiser, an Appealer, an Appeals Coordinator, and a few Local Secretaries, are working very well in several dioceses. Local Secretaries have felt particularly pleased to have the opportunity to take on the role and often encourage their fellow Local Secretaries with ring-arounds in the diocese. **If you are interested in developing a mission team in your diocese, please contact Dave or Theresa.**

*Reaching out to Local Secretaries: online and face-to-face* – online sessions continue, including training, World Mission Sunday briefings, and ‘coffee and chat’ on the first Friday of the month. They are a chance for a wider group of LSes to come together from more remote parts of England and Wales. Also important for face-to-face contact, which has restarted, with several Mission Masses celebrating the beatification of Pauline Jaricot.

*Red Box parish communities: bringing people together* – similarly, encouraging Local Secretaries to gather their Red Box community is important, to share time together, and show how valued they are. We continue to encourage this and are looking to provide resources and guidance in how to do this, and to raise people’s awareness of the missionary spirit we are all called to embody.

*Local Secretaries: cashless giving pilot* currently beginning in Swindon, with several parishes sharing a contactless device. Further pilots to take place and learning shared.

*Diocesan Communications Officers* – these key roles in a diocese are often a good vehicle to spread the message of Missio in a diocese. Local links are key, so **please do keep them informed of what is going on with Missio in your diocese.**

*Questions and comments*

* People like to have a focus country/project for which to raise money so that it feels tangible. How to do this, especially when most of Missio’s income is spent retrospectively.
* Ethnic chaplaincies and communities should be more involved with Missio. Can we develop further links with them?

Trustees

Neil Twist, on behalf of the Trustees of Missio, thanked everyone for their work and support.

Currently, Missio has seven out of ten potential Trustees. In November 2021, Michael Kelly and Caroline Mayhew resigned as Trustees. Fr Tony is leading a skills audit of the Trustee Board to help in recruitment, ensuring we recruit the right, diverse candidates to complement the Board.

Any other business

People agreed that the meeting had gone well. There was appreciation for the spiritual input by Fr Anh Nhue to begin the time together, and this would be appreciated again next year.

Agreed to hold the conference at the same time of year and at the same place in 2023. Dates to be confirmed.

The conference ended with a short reflection and blessing from Bishop Paul Swarbrick, Chair of Trustees and Bishop of Lancaster.