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# Mission Today

Spring 2025



Refugees in Thailand

| Our vibrant Church

| Lives of faith

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### Editorial Board:

Fr Anthony Chantry  
Michelle Slater  
Nicky Pisa  
Stephen Davies

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Cover: Cambodian children with the Red Box at Our Lady's grotto at St Augustine's church, Teopeang Rung, Kampot Province

## The National Director writes



Those of us of a certain age will remember the song 'What the world needs now is love, sweet love', sung by Dionne Warwick in the mid-1960s.

These words are true for all times and in all places and are the very reason why God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world as his Word made flesh – his love in action. However, what the world needs now is not just love, but hope.

By opening the Jubilee Year on Christmas Eve, the Holy Father has responded to the pressing issues in our world with the tonic we all need: an opportunity to receive God's grace in special ways through prayer and action, in order to rediscover God's gift of hope.

During this special year, our God of mercy and compassion invites us to

recall the promise of his Son, Jesus, that the kingdom of God is coming by God's actions through us. We are to be 'Pilgrims of Hope', on a sacred journey together, leading to the source of our hope – hope for a world healed of division, conflict, and self-destruction. Our hope is rooted in this promise of God and, as St Paul says, this 'hope does not disappoint'.

You will find this edition of *Mission Today* full of hope. In the seminaries that you support in Africa and Asia, young men, filled with hope and facing many challenges, are preparing to lead, teach, and sanctify God's people so that the Church may radiate all hopefulness to the world (see pages 8-11).

My recent visit to the refugee camp in Thailand, on the border with Myanmar, also shows how you have helped to restore hope, in the midst of a seemingly hopeless situation (see pages 4-5).

Let us join Pope Francis in praying that 2025 brings us 'peace, fellowship, and gratitude'.

What the world needs now is hope, sweet hope. No, not just for some, but for everyone.

May God bless you on your pilgrimage through this Jubilee Year.

*Fr Anthony*

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.

See the Holy Father's monthly Prayer Intentions for 2025 on pages 14-15



## 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.**



# 'God is here with us'

**The political turmoil in Myanmar continues to cause people to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Ongoing conflict between ethnic armed groups and the military junta has escalated into a full-blown civil war. Over two million people have been displaced internally, with widespread destruction of homes, religious sites, and essential infrastructure like education and healthcare facilities.**

**M**any people have fled to neighbouring Thailand, with thousands taking refuge in the Mae Hong Song camp. Fr Anthony Chantry was invited to visit this refugee camp recently, where he witnessed how your support through Missio is providing help and solace to our sisters and brothers who have lost everything, yet find strength in their shared faith:

'Life in the camp is simple. The people have to build their own temporary houses using materials found in the forest. There is clean water, but no permanent sanitation. There are some international agencies working in the camp and there are opportunities for children to attend a school. Above all, it is safe: no soldiers are going to chase them away from their homes, burn down their houses, or terrorise and kill them.

**Fr Dominic, a Burmese priest on mission in Thailand, travels to the camp every day. He told me that one of the greatest burdens that the people carry is the sense that they have no future. They cannot return to their homes in Myanmar because they have been destroyed.**



As more than one person told me, "It is like living in a prison. We are safe but cannot go anywhere and find work or further education. We just manage to live our life day-by-day".

But when they come together for Mass, the joy that comes from their faith is both impressive and humbling. I thought there would be little to rejoice about, but the contrary is true. They trust in God and praise him for his goodness to them. Over the years, I have witnessed that the Lord makes himself known in a special way in situations of suffering. His presence strengthens and gives hope, in seemingly hopeless situations.

**With support from Missio, a new church has been completed. Their previous church, which they built themselves, was a fragile wooden structure holding two to three hundred people. There was clearly a need to build something safer, and although no permanent buildings are allowed in the camp, the new church is waterproof and secure.**

**The community provided much of the labour and a Buddhist carpenter in the local town also offered his services, free of charge.**

It was clear from the beginning that the people really wanted a church building that would offer them more than shelter; it would offer them hope for the future. Their joy at having a place to come together in faith for Mass and all the other activities is incredible. They don't say, "God has abandoned us", but "God is here with us and offers us hope of good things to come".

It is difficult for us to appreciate just how much they are encouraged by knowing that, in their seemingly hopeless situation, people are thinking about them, praying for them, and offering concrete help. They know that they are not forgotten. Through Missio, you – our supporters – are reaching out across the continents, to say, "We are with you. We care for you. We will not forget you because you are our brothers and sisters".



Fr Anthony with former Missio National Director of Thailand, Bishop Paul Multree

At the end of the Mass which Fr Anthony celebrated with the Catholic community of St Mary's, one of the church leaders, Josephine, made a speech. Here is some of what she said:

*I would like to praise God for all the good things he gives us.*

*We, the Karenni refugee community, depend on your generosity and kindness. You have helped us in times of hopelessness, in times of despair, in times of illness. You have been giving us your generous support and given us hope.*

*This church is our holy space where we express our faith in communion with others and it is the most important place for us.*

*Today, I give my special thanks to God with praise and ask God to bless our benefactors who have good and generous hearts.*

*May the blessing of God be upon you for good health and happiness.*

**Thank You.**



# Mission in Pakistan

Mill Hill Missionary, Fr Elvost, first featured in *Mission Today* in 2023 when the General Superior, Fr Michael Corcoran, wrote about Fr Elvost's formation in Kenya and his ordination in Malaysia. We then brought you an update in *Mission Today* in 2024, about his first placement as a missionary Priest in Pakistan. We are delighted to share the latest news from him about his first year working with the Kutchi Kohli people, in the province of Sindh:

I was born and raised in Sabah, "The Land Below the Wind", in Malaysia. I found my vocation with the Mill Hill Missionaries whilst seeking God in life and the meaning of life itself, through the question: "What does God want from me in this life?" Eventually, after completing my theology studies in Kenya, I was ordained at the age of 40 years old, at the Holy Rosary Limbahau Church in Papar, Sabah, Malaysia, on 22 July 2023.

To be a missionary Priest is to become a living witness of God in the midst of suffering and joy. Becoming this living witness involves proclaiming the Good News and responding to the needs of people. It is impossible to preach while ignoring the suffering of those around you.

My first year in Pakistan has been a very challenging year, yet a fruitful one for me. I arrived in Pakistan in November 2023 and, after three months, I took over the mission in Kotri from Fr Brendan MHM, who is now retired. It was not an easy endeavour, but God's grace was sufficient to make everything possible.



The village school

I am currently working with the Kutchi Kohli people. They are an Indigenous and landless minority community in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. They depend on small-scale agriculture or working as laborers, as tenant farmers. They are often exploited and bear the brunt of injustices while facing extreme poverty.

The mission in Kotri involves a lot of time spent visiting the villages, due to the settlements of the people being scattered all over the place. This travel includes the celebration of Masses, catechesis, pastoral observation and engagement, and giving basic medical assistance to the impoverished Kutchi Kohli people. We also have two village schools for the local community, in our attempt to provide basic education to the vulnerable children.

As a newly ordained Priest, as a pastor and a leader, it takes a lot of courage and patience in caring for the poor and the sick. Due to poverty, many do not have enough money to put food on the table or to receive medical attention. Sometimes, it hurts when people suffering come asking for food and there is not much to give them. This experience helps me to grow as a person of

faith. I realise that my presence and my prayers give much consolation when there is no material aid available. This experience humbles me, and I learn to rely and trust more in God's providence.

There is still so much that can be offered for the mission and the people here in Kotri. The aspect of religious and human empowerment is essential in building up the Kutchi Kohli community here. The scarcity of resources does not discourage our mission work. Yes, creativity and effort go a long way! However, what really binds us here to move forward, despite all suffering, is the faith and love that we have for Jesus Christ and for one another. Amen.'



# Faith throughout the world

Through the global Missio network, you can support the training of future Priests and Sisters in mission dioceses worldwide. Missio has a long-standing relationship with five seminaries in Africa and Asia, whereby groups and individuals can sponsor the training of a future Priest. By sponsoring a seminarian, you can help God's compassion, mercy, and love transform our world.

**T**hese updates from seminary rectors and students highlight common challenges, including climate change, unstable politics, economic difficulties, and conflict. Despite these struggles, the seminaries share a common goal of becoming self-sufficient. With God's help and yours, that day will come. Until then, your prayerful and financial support is making a huge difference to their lives and faith journeys as they strive to respond to God's call.

## Christ the King Major Seminary, Kenya

In 2024, nine of our seminarians were ordained to the Priesthood. We currently have 385 seminarians but had to turn away 49 good and faithful young men who desired to join the seminary due to a lack of accommodation.

We continue to navigate economic challenges, such as high taxation causing sky-rocketing prices of food and other commodities, by rearing beef cattle and growing greens and maize for our consumption.

To our benefactors from Missio, we thank you most sincerely for the enormous



support that we have received from you all these years. May our good Lord bless your generosity.

*Fr Daniel*, Rector

**Message from Br Onyango, a sponsored student:** As I approach the altar of the Lord, I am profoundly aware of the role you have played in this journey. Your faith and kindness have not only supported me materially, but have also uplifted my spirit and fortified my resolve. Thank you for walking this path with me, for your steadfast prayers, and for your belief in my calling. I am eternally grateful for your presence in my life and for the countless ways you have helped me to grow closer to the Lord.



## St John's Regional Seminary, India

There are currently 86 seminarians studying in our seminary, with 17 Deacons ordained as Priests in 2024.

To provide food, medicine, education and other needs to the seminarians is a big challenge. The seminarians are involved in manual labour to grow vegetables and raise chickens, which supply the seminary. However, the locally generated amount is not sufficient to meet our needs.

The prayerful support and monetary help from Missio supporters are indispensable and of great help in running the day-to-day life and activities in the seminary. The staff and seminarians thank Missio and pray for all the collaborators for God's abundant blessings.

*Fr Marreddy*, Rector

## Message from Br Konathi, a sponsored student:

I truly appreciate your self-sacrificing spirit, hard work, simplicity, prayers, and best wishes for my formation to the Priesthood. The sponsorship is helping me to take care of my spiritual and financial needs along with the basic requirements, such as priestly studies, food, and medical needs. I am able to study well and concentrate on my formation.

As I approach becoming a Priest for God and his people, I assure you of my prayers for you and for your family. May God's choicest blessings be upon you now and forever.



## St Peter's Major Seminary, Malawi

Last year, 19 Deacons received Priestly Ordination. We currently have 130 seminarians studying for the Priesthood.

This past year has been yet another very challenging year. Our country was hit with untold hunger due to poor rains in the last growing season; most people are struggling to eat. Added to this, the economy of Malawi has nearly collapsed – the local currency continues to suffer devaluation, meaning the cost of goods has almost tripled. As such, the panic in our camp continues, since we cannot fully support our budget.

The seminarians are engaged in pig and chicken rearing, fish farming, and vegetable growing. This is to encourage them to appreciate manual work and self-reliance. It is also to help make their own home habitable, and help in a concrete way to provide seminary necessities with their own hands.

*Fr Daniel*, Rector



## Message from Br Paul, a sponsored student:

I am deeply moved by your generosity and commitment to my formation. Your prayers and support mean more to me than words can express. As I journey towards the Priesthood, I am reminded that prayer is essential in connecting me with God and enabling me to communicate his message to his people. Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity.





### Bigard Memorial Seminary, Nigeria

Last year was momentous, as Bigard Memorial Seminary celebrated its centenary (1924-2024). We had many celebrations throughout the year, including centenary Masses in different locations throughout Nigeria, and the commissioning of the New Centenary Hostel. We also had football matches, cultural displays and lectures, a music festival featuring seventeen choirs, drama presentations, the planting of a Centenary tree by the Nuncio, plus film, art, and photo exhibitions.

We currently have 729 students at our seminary, and last year 79 seminarians were ordained as Priests.

The impact of some of the policies of the current administration in Nigeria, especially the sudden removal of the fuel subsidy, caused terrible hardship. The high cost of diesel and fuel almost crippled the seminary economically, as it affected the cost of goods and services – in many cases, prices of commodities doubled or tripled. The security situation in Nigeria also continued to degenerate with news of kidnappings and banditry almost a daily occurrence.

The seminary does not fold her arms in the face of these challenges, but continues to take adequate measures to prudently manage seminary finances and embark on numerous self-sustaining projects, in order to achieve self-sufficiency. These include a piggery, a poultry farm, the Bigard Press (to aid in the printing and production of our works), the Bishop Ezeanya Cybercafe (which aids our neighbours in accessing the internet at a very affordable rate), a vegetable farm, and a fish farm.

Students are involved in the management of these projects and in so doing they learn useful managerial skills. We continue to look for and attract more local benefactors,



who, through their donations, help reduce financial pressure on the seminary.

In the midst of continued economic, security, and crisis of faith challenges, the presence of the Church is felt even in the remotest villages in Nigeria; through Parish Priests and other consecrated Religious men and women, dedicated to preaching the Gospel of love, hope, and charity.

**We sincerely use this opportunity to thank our sponsors and friends for their support through the years. We pray God almighty to reward them abundantly, as they continue to help us tackle many financial challenges and make progress in our bid to realise self-reliance.**

*Fr Albert, Rector*

**Message from Br Diamond, a sponsored student:** Knowing that you do not only support us financially, but also spiritually through your prayers, fills my heart with eternal joy. Reflecting on this double-barrelled support from your programme gives me reasons to daily pursue, with vigour, my formation. I pray that I may justify the enormous sacrifices of you, my distant and unknown friends.



### Our Lady of Lanka National Seminary, Sri Lanka

We currently have 218 seminarians studying in the seminary, and last year 32 received Priestly ordination.

**In 2024, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of our Seminary, which has provided 1,700 Priests for the mission of the Church – including 21 Bishops and one Cardinal.**

Last year was important for Sri Lanka, as there were two major elections. The Catholic Church raised its voice against the traditional corrupt political parties that ruled the country since its independence in 1948 and brought the nation to bankruptcy. The Catholic Church played a vital role in supporting people to bring in a new set of politicians who are committed to the people.



We continue to experience an ongoing economic crisis with high inflation rates, especially food items. Added to this, our crops were completely destroyed due to excessive rain, and part of our poultry farm was destroyed due to a landslide. Sadly, the national spread of swine flu affected our piggery and most of our pigs died due to the disease.

We would like to expand and upgrade our 75-year-old dairy farm which attempts to provide the seminary with dairy products, such as yoghurt, cheese, and bottled milk. It also brings in additional income with the sale of excess products at a very concessional rate to the poor families in the surroundings of the seminary. At least 50 children in the village were fed with the milk of our farm. However, recently, production is not sufficient.

*Fr Quintus, Rector*

**Message from Br Jude, a sponsored student:** As I continue on this sacred journey of discernment and growth, I am reminded of how blessed I am to have benefactors who not only support us with material aid, but also enrich our spirits with their prayers. Your dedication to my formation is something I do not take for granted, and I am continually inspired by your example of selfless giving and unwavering faith. Thank you again for your unwavering support. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers, and I will continue to pray for you and your dear family.



**Read the full messages from the Rectors and seminarians at [missio.org.uk](https://missio.org.uk)**

**To find out how you can sponsor the training of a future Priest – as an individual, a family, a community or through a parish project – please turn to page 24.**

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

# From Red Box to Real Change



SCAN ME  
missio.org.uk/MEP2024

**Olly, Hugo, and Makir are currently training for the priesthood in England. As part of their studies, their dioceses gave them the chance to spend some time with Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries in Kenya.**

All three students witnessed how the Red Box is helping missionaries positively transform the communities they live alongside. 'The mere fact that the churches are within the slums themselves... that was mission in action,' observed Olly. He highlighted vital services that are run by the Church in Kenya, including HIV medication for 2,000 people, support for children's education, and rehabilitation clinics for those with drug and alcohol addictions.

In rural Luanda, Hugo and Makir saw Mill Hill Sisters running centres for street children, rehabilitation facilities, and a school for deaf children. 'It just goes to show the breadth of the work... It was not only the Sacramental and spiritual needs of the people, but some very specific kinds of aid,' Hugo explained.

**The impact of donations from supporters in England and Wales resonated strongly with Makir: 'Having seen the Red Boxes at home all my life, it was amazing to see how that one pound or whatever you put in the Red Box... has now contributed here in Kenya... it was remarkable.'**

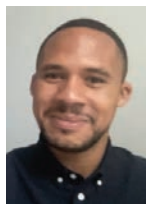
Now they have seen missionaries in action in Kenya, all three seminarians struggled to



Olly



Hugo



Makir

imagine what life would be like for our sisters and brothers in Kenya without them. 'Some of the places we went to would be so cut off from the Sacraments,' said Makir. Olly found it difficult to contemplate: 'Two thousand people rely on the Urban Apostolate for their HIV medication... and there'd be a lot of kids who essentially wouldn't be going to school.'

The missionaries you support through Missio and the Red Box serve as beacons of constant hope.

Whether providing grain or seeds, administering the Sacraments to satellite parishes, or offering rehabilitation services or a safe place to stay, missionaries bring essential hope to their communities; made possible by your donations and prayers.

**Thank you!**

## The hope you bring



In this sacred Year of Jubilee, we are living out our Pontifical mission by celebrating those precious bridges of faith built between communities around the world. Join us to journey as 'Pilgrims of Hope': learning from, sharing with, and supporting each other as a global family!

### You are building bridges

In a world marked by division, Missio supporters are beacons of hope; reaching across the globe to share Jesus' message. Through your prayers and donations, you transform spiritual solidarity into concrete action, embodying Christ's message of love. This transforms us and gives us the strength and power to change the world.

Missionaries travel worldwide to bring Jesus' love, mercy, and hope to all who need it. There is no stronger bridge than one built by hearts that recognise each person as God's beloved child. For over two centuries, supporters like you have helped missionaries provide spiritual and material support in mission countries; building sustainable church families that become beacons of hope – overcoming divisions of religion, politics, poverty, and conflict.

### Be the transformation

Pope Francis urges us to search for daily signs of hope and to be signs of hope for others:

'A smile from someone unexpected, an act of selflessness, a kind act encountered, a gesture of help. Hope is indeed a "childlike virtue"... We need to go back to being like



children, with their sense of wonder, to encounter the world... We will then be able to marvel at how much good exists in the world. And our hearts will light up with hope. We will then be able to be beacons of hope for those around us' (*Hope is a light in the night*, 2024).

### Look for signs of hope

Throughout this Jubilee Year, we invite you to join us in recognising hope in our daily lives, schools, workplaces, and communities. Simply visit [missio.org.uk/jubilee](https://missio.org.uk/jubilee)

Share our work and resources with others, join our online community, and participate in our prayers – including the weekly Mission Rosary and the Holy Father's monthly prayer intentions.

**Thank you, always, for everything you do as a part of the Missio family. You are beacons of hope!**





# The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions 2025

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



## JANUARY

Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, will always be respected.

## JULY

Let us pray that we learn how to discern, how to choose the right paths in life, and how to reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel.

## FEBRUARY

Let us pray that the Church will always welcome the hopes and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission through the Priesthood and Religious life.

## AUGUST

Let us pray that those societies where coexistence seems more difficult do not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious, or ideological reasons.

## MARCH

Let us pray that, through forgiveness, broken families may find healing for their wounds, and rediscover each other's gifts, despite their differences.

## SEPTEMBER

Let us pray that, inspired by Saint Francis, we may experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.



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

And follow us on social media:



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## APRIL

Let us pray that new technologies will not replace human relationships, but will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the challenges of our times.

## OCTOBER

Let us pray that believers of different religious traditions will work together to defend and promote peace, justice, and human fraternity.

## MAY

Let us pray that through work, each person may find fulfilment, that families will be sustained in dignity, and that society becomes more human.

## NOVEMBER

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts will find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

## JUNE

Let us pray for each one of us to find consolation in a personal relationship with Jesus, and that from his Heart, we may learn to have compassion for the world.

## DECEMBER

Let us pray for Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, to be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.



# Everyone deserves to experience God's love!

Bordering with both Syria and Israel, Lebanon is sadly no stranger to violence and instability. For World Mission Sunday in 2024, we featured the work of Sister Jovanna and her community of Sisters of the Forsaken Jesus. Through this special celebration, we encouraged the Catholic community to pray for peace and offer their financial support.



The Sisters in Lebanon have remained strong in their commitment to support families grappling with the conflict. This is in addition to the pre-existing poverty, lack of infrastructure, and poor sanitation – which is only worsened by the fighting. They continue to offer compassion and practical assistance to the community, regardless of background or belief. They are committed to letting everyone know that they are not alone.

**Here is a recent update from Sr Jovanna:**

'The blows were really heavy and they broke our homes, our churches, and our schools.

Indeed, we would not be able to help, support, and stand by our parishioners in need, and the displaced families, without your prayers and the financial support that we have received.

**Our parishioners have faced many challenges, yet they still opened their homes to the displaced families! They are living with more than 30 to 40 people in houses of three rooms. The stock of winter provisions has run out.**

Most of the people have lost their jobs, while in some places the market is still closed. People have not only lost their homes and income, but also their memories, their past, and now they are living day-by-day, wondering how they can face their tomorrow.

It was more than hard to find alternative solutions for all these challenges we have faced. But, thanks to your contributions, we, Sisters of the Forsaken Jesus, have managed to resolve some of the obstacles: we have been able to provide medicines and health support, and have assured



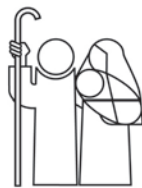
some provisions for the coming months. We have been allocating space for kids to be used as an afternoon school.

Above all, we were sure and reassured that prayers can work miracles, and, thanks be to God and to your prayers, our hearts rejoiced in peace when we heard about the ceasefire! It was an incredible moment when the kids, youths, and older people breathed peace and hope!

Despite our limited capabilities, we promise to stay keen to our mission. We thank you for supporting us with your prayers that we trust, and your financial contributions. In this Jubilee Year, that Pope Francis has launched, we trust that hope does not disappoint.

**We assure all our parishioners that the Lord's graces are plenty and enough to regain strength, rebuild memories, and repair the wounds of broken hearts for a prosperous future, full of faith, peace, and hope.'**

**To support the work of missionaries around the world, please visit: [missio.org.uk/donate](https://missio.org.uk/donate)**



# Pilgrims of Hope

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

**T**he Jubilee Year of 2025, announced by Pope Francis, emphasises the journey of faith in challenging times. It will provide a platform for advancing environmental and social justice initiatives, while offering a sacred space to address global challenges with hope and faith. The Jubilee offers a moment to pause, reflect, and reconnect with our spiritual roots, while looking forward with hope. The theme 'Pilgrims of Hope' reminds us that renewal is always possible, forgiveness is always available, and God's mercy is endless.

Looking back over the past decade to my many messages to our Mill Hill Missionaries and those who collaborate with us as missionaries, I have always placed emphasis on being 'cultivators of hope'. All of us can feel vulnerable or fragile, and wonder and worry about what the future has in store. As missionaries, the capacity for hope is very much part and parcel of our ministry today. Without hope, we could easily succumb to a form of self-preoccupation, which will not yield energy, courage, nor freedom.

A great danger facing our world is the sense of powerlessness; the idea that the world is spinning out of control, and that the problems are too great to solve. Yet the God in whom we believe is a God who enables us to express hope, just when hopelessness seems to have the upper hand. Not



surprisingly, God does this through us, especially in times of need, when we are entangled in life's knots.

**This Jubilee presents us with a time for stretching our imagination and intelligence; to learn new ways and prepare for a new world. It is a time to continue realising how we depend on one another and to learn to work collectively and cooperatively, sharing responsibilities and appreciating solidarity.**

Recently, my responsibilities as General Superior took me to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where I spent three weeks with our Mill Hill Missionaries. Our cherished links with the DRC continue

with international teams of our missionaries being involved in pastoral ministry, which is growing from strength to strength.

Responding to the needs of the peoples, particularly in the rainforest, our missionaries have initiated a project to provide river transport – especially in emergencies. This is what mission is about: reaching out and opening our hearts, becoming instruments of hope in our communities.

**The highlight of my visit was the ordination to the priesthood of three young Mill Hill Missionaries from the local Diocese of Basankusu. These young men from the Church in DRC will minister to our sisters and brothers in Pakistan, Uganda, and Malaysia.**

As pilgrims, the Good News offers trust, hope, life, love, and truth. In our relationship with God and with each other, and through prayer, we continue to welcome each new day with newness. Let us move forward with enthusiasm, as there is much to do on the journey that awaits us.



Three new Mill Hill Missionaries in DRC!

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

## National Novena to St Joseph

**10-18 March 2025**



**E**ach year the Mill Hill community prepares for the feast day of St Joseph, our patron, with a special Novena of Masses and prayers. The Novena is a wonderful way for Red Box supporters to pray for each other and build links of prayer across the world for missionaries and the people they serve.

You can join in at home by praying the daily Novena and prayer and/or by sending your petitions to us at 6 Colby Gardens, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7GZ. You can also join us online – Masses from St Joseph's in Maidenhead will be held via the YouTube channel of St Joseph's Parish in Maidenhead: 10:00am on weekdays and Saturday 15 March, and 11:00am on Sunday 16 March 2025. Simply visit the Mill Hill Missionaries website to access the link:

**[millhillmissionaries.com/novena](http://millhillmissionaries.com/novena)**

You are welcome to attend both Evening Prayer, together with the daily Novena Prayer, at 7:00 pm each evening during the Novena in the sanctuary of St Joseph's Church, Maidenhead. This, however, will not be livestreamed.

As well as the Novena prayer leaflet of daily reflections and the Novena Prayer, a Prayer Booklet with additional prayers and reflections is also available on request for a nominal donation of £1.00 per booklet to cover production costs.

**For more information, or to request a petition slip, prayer booklet or newsletter, please email: [novenamhm@gmail.com](mailto:novenamhm@gmail.com)**

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



# Missionaries killed in 2024

**Last year, 14 Catholic missionaries met violent deaths worldwide: nine priests and five lay people were killed. These missionaries and pastoral workers were not in the spotlight, but worked to bear witness to their faith in everyday life.**

In the mystery which unites them to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, these witnesses of faith also share in the pain of Christ for all the innocent who suffer unjustly. The gift of their lives reflects Christ's salvation offered to all humanity, and manifests God's love for all.

During the Angelus on 22 September 2024, when speaking of the murder of Juan Antonio López, Pope Francis stressed the importance of protecting those who work for justice, saying: 'I join in the grief of the local Church and in the condemnation of all forms of violence. I am close to all those who see their basic rights trampled upon, as well as to those who work for the common good and in this way respond to the cry of the poor and the earth.'

**François Kabore**, 55, was a volunteer in a Catholic community in Burkina Faso. He was leading a prayer session for around 30 Catholics on 25 February in Essakane when he fell victim to a brutal jihadist attack, along with 15 others who also died.



**Fr William Banda**, 37, a Zambian Missionary (Kiltegan Fathers), was shot and killed by an unknown person on 13 March whilst he was preparing to celebrate Mass in Tzaneen Cathedral, South Africa. (Image: Diocese of Polokwane/CAN)

**Edouard Zoetyenga Yougbare**, 60, a devoted family man and catechist in Burkina Faso, was kidnapped by an armed group whilst looking for his lost mule. He was tortured and killed on 18 April and found seven kilometres away the next day.



**Fr Paul Tatu Mothobi**, 45, a Stigmatine Missionary from Lesotho, was found in his car with a gunshot wound to the head on 27 April in South Africa. According to statements, he had accidentally witnessed a woman being murdered and was shot to suppress his testimony. (Image: SACBC)

**Fr Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado**, 45, was murdered in a robbery on 4 June in a car park in Colombia. Local police have said that the perpetrators from Venezuela have been caught.

**Juan Antonio López**, 46, founder of the National Commission for Integral Ecology in Honduras, had received death threats due to his work to protect the environment and fight local corruption and organised crime. Armed men on motorcycles shot and killed him in his car on the evening of 14 September, after he attended a Eucharistic celebration.

**Edmond Bahati Monja**, 36, coordinator of Radio Maria in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was killed by gunmen on 27 September. It is suspected his demise was linked to his investigations into the violence perpetrated against the population by armed groups in the region.



**Fr Christophe Komla Badjoukou**, 46, was a *Fidei Donum* Priest in Cameroon, originally from Togo. He was shot and killed by armed robbers outside the house of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Yaoundé, on the evening of 7 October. (Image: Diocese of Yaoundé)



**Fr Marcelo Pérez Pérez**, 50, an Indigenous Jesuit Priest in Mexico, was shot and killed by two murderers on 20 October whilst returning from celebrating Mass in the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in San Cristobal de las Casas. He was known for his commitment to the respect of human rights and democracy. (Image: Kairos)

**Fr Fabián Enrique Arcos Sevilla**, 53, disappeared on 30 October in Ecuador following a robbery at his house. Four days later his body was found, with obvious signs of torture, in a landfill north of Ambato. Police have confirmed that the perpetrators have been found.



**Fr Lech Lachowicz**, 72, was attacked late in the evening of 3 November in Poland by a man who, according to police, intended to rob him by breaking into the presbytery armed with an axe. He died six days later in hospital as a result of his injuries.

(Image: FB-CivitasChristianaOlsztyn)

**Fr Juan Antonio Llorente Espín**, 76, a Franciscan Priest, was attacked by a man with a stick and glass bottle at the Santo Espíritu del Monte monastery in Spain on 9 November. The perpetrator, who suffers with a mental health disorder, broke into the monastery and attacked the friars. Those injured were taken to hospital where, sadly, Fr Juan Antonio died two days later due to his severe head injuries.



**Steve Maguerith Chaves do Nascimento**, 43, a husband, father of a six-year-old girl, and a committed parishioner, was killed on 8 December in Brazil as he was parking his car before Mass. Security footage showed two men on a motorcycle approaching his car before shooting him in the head.

(Image: Reproduction-Contigo)

**Fr Tobias Chukwujekwu Okonkwo**, 26, was shot multiple times and killed by a group of unidentified people on 26 December while driving on an expressway in Nigeria. Fr Tobias was also a pharmacist and ran various health facilities, such as the nursing and midwifery schools, and the medical laboratory of the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in southern Nigeria.

**Please join us in giving thanks for the work and witness of these people. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.**

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

# Play your part in a love that lasts forever

God's infinite love has the power to make all things new. And through God's Spirit, which is always at work, we can transform the world for good – now and into the future.

**N**ow, 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 our sisters and brothers in greatest need. **Why? Because everyone deserves to hear the Gospel, and the Good News that God loves them.**

Through Missio, you can continue to help future generations of missionaries as they enable the faith communities they serve to find long-term solutions to help people live lives of dignity, with hope for the future. The need to work together as one family is greater than ever. When natural disasters, violence, and political turmoil wreak havoc in our world, more and more people turn to the Church for the moral and spiritual support they need in order to help them survive the chaos, and rebuild for the good of all in their communities.



**Did you know that one in four of the communities and projects Missio supports is made possible by the legacies of our supporters?**

The following are just three examples of how gifts left in Wills have made a huge difference to the lives of our sisters and brothers overseas: local communities have been helped to build multi-purpose halls in Myanmar, which have provided families with shelter and safety; new classrooms have been built in war-torn Cameroon for children who had not been to school for over three years; and transport has been provided to help Sisters in Kenya safely reach marginalised communities. Please watch our video here: [missio.org.uk/legacies](https://missio.org.uk/legacies)



We asked some of our supporters to share with us why they were considering leaving a gift to Missio in their Will. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we thought you might like to read some of their responses. Which of these resonate with you?

*I have been a Red Box supporter all my life, as my mum was before me and my gran before that, so I want to continue supporting the good work into the future.*

*I am adding Missio to my Will because I want to help parishes in other parts of the world offer those who are suffering the chance to experience the comfort and strength that my faith has brought me and my family.*

*I like that Missio wants to help everyone know that God loves them, whoever they are and wherever they are in the world.*

*I am so impressed by the missionary Priests and Sisters that I have met. They live with the people and share their joys and sorrows, and in the midst of all that, they bring the hope of the Resurrection.*

*I am sponsoring a student in Malawi who is training for the Priesthood, and I want my legacy to help train Priests and Sisters, as well as lay Catechists, who will share the Gospel with the generations that will come after me.*

Can you think of other reasons why people might wish to leave a gift to Missio in their Will? If you would like to share your reasons and encourage others to consider these wonderful gifts of faith, please email us at [communications@missio.org.uk](mailto:communications@missio.org.uk)

Legacy gifts – however large or small – will help bring about God's kingdom of mercy, peace, and justice.

To receive some useful information about how to remember Missio and/or the Mill Hill Missionaries in your Will, or to speak to someone in confidence and with no obligation, please call Angelica on 020 7821 9755 or email: [legacy@missio.org.uk](mailto:legacy@missio.org.uk)

You can also visit [missio.org.uk/legacies](https://missio.org.uk/legacies) or complete the form on page 25 and tick the yellow box.



# 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.**



Jude, a seminarian in Sri Lanka

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 collectively to raise £200 annually for each student, but it is simply not enough.

## Could you give £1.37 a day to help them?

If you, or your parish group, can commit £42 a month (£500 per year) for four years, you can ensure that board and lodging, building maintenance, support staff, and library books for one seminarian are paid. If you wish, you will be told the name of your student so that you can hold him in prayer, as he will you. Read more on pages 8-11.

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

**For more information about how you can support the training of a future Priest, please call 020 7821 9755, email [info@missio.org.uk](mailto:info@missio.org.uk), visit [missio.org.uk/sponsor](http://missio.org.uk/sponsor) or complete the form on the next page and return it to us.**

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

Your details (PLEASE PRINT)

\*Required fields

Spring 2025

Title\*

First Name\*

Surname\*

Address\*

Postcode\*

Tel

Parish

Email

- ☐ Please send me the monthly **Missio eNewsletter** (provide email address above)
- ☐ I want Missio to treat all donations I have made for this tax year and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years as **Gift Aid** donations until I notify Missio otherwise. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer 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.

Date

**N.B. Please ensure the box is ticked.**

SUPPORT

- ☐ I enclose a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ (please make cheques/postal orders payable to Missio-Mill Hill)
- ☐ I enclose a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ towards the training of future Priests and Sisters (please make cheques/postal orders payable to Missio)
- You can set up a Direct Debit or give by Card overleaf, or online at [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) or call us on 020 7821 9755 (office hours).
- ☐ Please send me information on how to sponsor a future Priest
- ☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

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

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

MASS

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

Intentions:

☐ I enclose £\_\_\_\_\_ (the recommended offering is £10 or more per Mass; please make cheques payable to Missio Mass a/c or see over to pay by card)

☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

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

You can find the names in our  
Books of Remembrance at  
**[missio.org.uk/book-of-remembrance](http://missio.org.uk/book-of-remembrance)**





# Mission Today

## Mission Today

23 Eccleston Square,  
London SW1V 1NU

Tel: 020 7821 9755 (office hours)

Email: [redbox@missio.org.uk](mailto:redbox@missio.org.uk)

## Missio

Web: [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

Reg. Charity No. 1056651

## Mill Hill Missionaries

Web: [millhillmissionaries.com](http://millhillmissionaries.com)

Reg. Charity No. 220690

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## Let's think outside the Box!

**If it is not possible for your Red Box to be collected or for you to take it to church, here are ways 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](http://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



### Bank transfer:

**Account Name:** Missio

**Sort Code:** 16-00-16

**Account Number:** 10824230

**Reference:** RB + your postcode

Thank you!

[missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

**missio**  
Today. Tomorrow. Together.

