

sionary Union (PMU) – have the common purpose of fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God» (*Redemptoris Missio* 84).

PSPF, founded by the venerable Pauline Marie Jaricot in Lyon, France, in 1822, continues to promote prayer and self-sacrifice among the faithful, encouraging the offering of material aid for the mission, asking the Lord to call men and women who would consecrate their lives for the *missio ad gentes*.

MCA was officially founded in Paris in 1843 by Most Rev. Charles Auguste de Forbin-Janson, the then Bishop of Nancy (France), and engages children throughout the world in helping their peers in faith and charity through prayer and sharing according to its motto: children helping children.

PSSPA, founded by Jeanne and Stéphanie Bigard in 1889 in Caen (France), animates and coordinates missionary collaboration through the offering of prayer and material aid for the formation of future priests, aspirants to consecrated life, and for their formators in young Churches in missionary lands.

PMU, inspired by Blessed Paolo Manna, a missionary priest of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, was approved by Pope Benedict XV in 1916. Considered to be the soul of the other three Mission Societies its aim is to provoke a passion for mission in the Church, to contribute to the formation of missionaries, and to stimulate missionary cooperation within Christian communities. It also aims at being the praying and tangible part of the activity of evangelization.

YEAR 2022: ANNIVERSARIES OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

A number of significant anniversaries will be celebrated in 2022: **400 years** since the foundation of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, **200 years** since the creation of the Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and **100 years** since the first three Mission Societies (PSPF, MCA, PSSPA) received their pontifical and universal designation. These anniversaries may be providential in offering the whole Church one more opportunity to keep its missionary baptismal awareness alive and effective. If the crisis of the mission is a crisis of faith, the maturity of the Church's faith is courageously expressed in her mission to attract everyone and everything to Christ. The upcoming Extraordinary Missionary Month might, in fact, promise to be the beginning of an adventure of faith, prayer, reflection, and charity that doesn't end in October 2019, but may culminate in suitable forms of enthusiastic and renewed commitment for the *missio ad gentes* as the motor and paradigm for Church's entire life and missionary nature.

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Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
Pontifical Mission Societies



THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
ON MISSION IN THE WORLD

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH
October 2019

OCTOBER 2019: AN EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY MONTH

During the *Angelus* Prayer on World Mission Sunday, October 22, 2017, Pope Francis publicly announced to the whole Church his intention to designate an Extraordinary Missionary Month for October 2019 (**EMM OCT 2019**) to celebrate the 100th anniversary Pope Benedict XV's Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*. On the same day, the Holy Father sent a letter to Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP) and President of the Supreme Council of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS). He entrusted him with «the work of preparing for this event, especially by raising awareness among the particular Churches, the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and among associations, movements, communities, and other ecclesial bodies».

In order to reignite the baptismal awareness of the People of God in relation to the mission of the Church, Pope Francis provided the following theme for the Extraordinary Missionary Month: **“Baptized and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world”**. In fact, reawakening an awareness of the *missio ad gentes*, and reinvigorating the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel with new enthusiasm, are themes that combine the pastoral concern of Pope Benedict XV in *Maximum Illud* with the missionary vitality expressed by Pope Francis in

Evangelii Gaudium: «missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity» (EG 15).

It is about placing «the mission of Jesus at the heart of the Church, making it the criterion for measuring the effectiveness of her structures, the results of her labours, the fruitfulness of her ministers, and the joy they awaken. For without joy, we attract no one». (Meeting with CELAM Executive Committee, Bogotá, 7 September 2017).

The commitment to personal and communal conversion to Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and alive in his Church, will renew the ardour and passion for witnessing to the world the Gospel of life and Paschal joy (cf. Lk 24:46-49) through proclamation and Christian living.

There are four dimensions, specified by the Pope, to live more intensely the journey of preparation for and implementation of the Extraordinary Missionary Month - October 2019:

1. A personal encounter with Jesus Christ living in his Church: in the Eucharist, in the Word of God, and in personal and communal prayer.
2. Testimony: missionary saints, martyrs, and confessors of the faith as an expression of the Church scattered throughout the world.
3. Missionary formation: biblical, catechetical, spiritual, and theological.
4. Missionary charity.

PROPAGANDA FIDE AND THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

The Missionary Dicastery of the Holy See, once known as *Propaganda Fide* (Propagation of the Faith) was founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV for promoting, coordinating, and directing the work of evangelization and missionary cooperation in the Church. In 1967, the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, reaffirming the validity of its apostolic service, renamed the Dicastery the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (CEP). The concrete effectiveness of Christian faith expressed through active charity makes all of the baptized responsible for supporting and helping the Pope in his mission as Universal Shepherd. Prayer, self-sacrifice, missionary vocations, and material help continue the age-old commitment of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), which were born in the 19th and 20th centuries out of a deep concern for the missions of both laity and clergy alike. Together, the CEP and the PMS are revitalizing their «efforts to collect and distribute material aid in the light of our mission and the formation that it requires, so that missionary integrity, awareness, and responsibility can once again be part of the ordinary life of the entire holy and faithful People of God». (Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, 1 June 2018). «The four Societies – Propagation of the Faith (PSPF), St. Peter the Apostle (PSSPA), Missionary Childhood (MCA), and the Mis-