100 YEARS OF
WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

ONE IN CHRIST
UNITED IN
Mission

110 YEARS OF PONTIFICAL MISSIONARY UNION









ANNUAL REVIEW 2026

MISSIO
IRELAND



Prayer to Jesus Missionary of Hope

Oh Jesus, Divine Missionary of Hope,
Your heart speaks to us of love.
Your life offers us life in abundance,
Your resurrection, an eternal future!

Through Your missionary disciples,
Come and embrace the entire world.
Look upon our sisters and brothers;
The billions who are poor and afflicted.

May Your Church take up
Humanity's cry among all peoples.
May she extend Your mission of love,
Of salvation and peace, to comfort us.

Help us respond to this urgent call,
As courageous messengers and builders,
Firmly anchored in Hope,
With our eyes fixed upon You, Lord.

Blessed Pauline Jaricot, pray for us.
Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.
Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and Saint Francis Xavier,
Patrons of missions, pray for us.
Mary, Queen of missions, pray for us.

Fr Yoland Ouellet OMI, National Director,
Francophone Canada.

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From the National Director

Greetings from Missio Ireland. My sincere thanks for your continued support of Missio Ireland, which is greatly appreciated. Missio Ireland received over €2m in 2025 and funded projects for €2.6m in 2026.



1st June 2026

During an audience with participants of the annual General Assembly, Pope Leo highlighted two major milestone anniversaries for the missionary movement in 2026. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of World Mission Sunday, which takes place on the penultimate Sunday of October each year. For 100 years, this day has been set apart for prayer, reflection as well as contributing to the Church's mission of evangelisation, especially in areas where the proclamation of the Gospel is only just beginning and where the Church is still young.

World Mission Sunday plays a pivotal role in helping Catholics worldwide. Each year, Missio Ireland also contributes to priests and nuns taking post graduate studies in Rome. These will return to their home dioceses as resource people, teaching in seminaries and leading lay leadership formation. World Mission Sunday supports 1,130 mission dioceses around the worldwide. Funds are used for the basic costs that keep missionary work going. It also supports seminarians who are studying for the priesthood; diocesan centres where lay formation takes place and churches where Masses can be celebrated. It also makes large contributions to children's projects. **The total amount contributed on Mission Sunday is sent abroad for mission projects.**

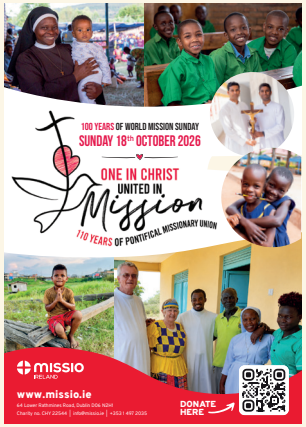
The Pope also pointed to another anniversary being celebrated this year: the 110th anniversary of the Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU). The purpose of PMU is to educate and inform all on how to inspire others to share their faith and be better missionaries themselves. Each year at Missio Ireland, a little booklet entitled *Prayers and Reflections* is produced to highlight the spiritual aspect of Pontifical Missionary Union. This booklet, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, is printed to coincide with World Day of the Sick, 11th February.

This year also, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, National Director in the United States of America for 16 years, will be beatified on 24th September 2026.

Again, thank you for your continued support. Each day, you are remembered in our daily prayers and Mass.

Fr. Michael Kelly

The Story of the Image on the Front Cover



World Mission Sunday is the Holy Father's annual worldwide celebration of prayer, solidarity and support for the Church's missionary life. It invites Catholics everywhere to participate in the Church's global mission, through prayer and financial support for mission dioceses most in need. The day reminds Catholics that the Church is missionary by nature. Mission is not limited to priests, religious, sisters, or missionaries serving abroad. Every baptised person shares responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel and supporting the growth of the Church throughout the world.

The theme for World Mission Sunday is chosen by the Holy Father. This year, 2026, we are celebrating the centenary of this special day of prayer, solidarity and missionary awareness. Pope Leo XIV is the first pontiff in modern history to have served most of his priestly ministry as a missionary before becoming a successor to St Peter. When he served as a missionary priest and bishop in Peru, he saw firsthand how the faith, prayer and generosity shown on World Mission Sunday can transform entire communities.

World Mission Sunday is celebrated every year on the second last Sunday of October. In 2026, World Mission Sunday will be observed on 18th October, marking the 100th anniversary of this worldwide missionary collection and day of prayer. The observance was established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 after recognising the importance of creating a universal effort to support the missions.

The annual collection is important because 1,130 dioceses in mission territories cannot sustain themselves financially. Yet the day is fundamentally spiritual before it is financial. Recent popes have repeatedly emphasised that mission begins with prayer, witness and communion. There are many vocations in mission dioceses. But when they are ordained, many mission bishops really struggle to support their priests.

Organisational Structure

MISSIO IRELAND

STAFF

National Director **Fr Michael Kelly SPS**
PA & Office Manager **Fiona Walsh**
Finance Officer **Regina Daly**

DIOCESAN DIRECTORS

Achonry	Fr Peter Gallagher
Ardagh & Clonmacnois	Fr P J Hughes
Armagh	Mgr Colum Curry
Cashel & Emly	Fr Celsus Tierney
Clogher	Fr Brian Early
Clonfert	Fr Declan Lohan
Cloyne	Fr Mícheál Leader
Cork & Ross	Fr Pat Fogarty
Derry	Fr Kevin Mulhern
Down & Connor	*Appointment pending*
Dromore	*Appointment pending*
Dublin	Fr John Greene
Elphin	Mr Wando Araujo
Ferns	Fr Paddy Cushen
Galway	Fr Declan Lohan
Kerry	Fr Ger Godley
Kildare & Leighlin	Fr George Augustine
Killala	*Appointment pending*
Killaloe	Fr John Molloy
Kilmore	Fr John McMahon
Limerick	Fr Derek Leonard
Meath	*Appointment pending*
Ossory	Fr Seán O'Connor
Raphoe	Fr Damien Nejad
Tuam	Fr Chris Brennan
Waterford & Lismore	Mr Robert Duggan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly (Chair)
Mr Niall Kennedy
Bishop Donal Roche
Mr Seamus McDonald
Sr Liz Murphy
Ms Shauna Rose Pickering
Fr Joe McGee

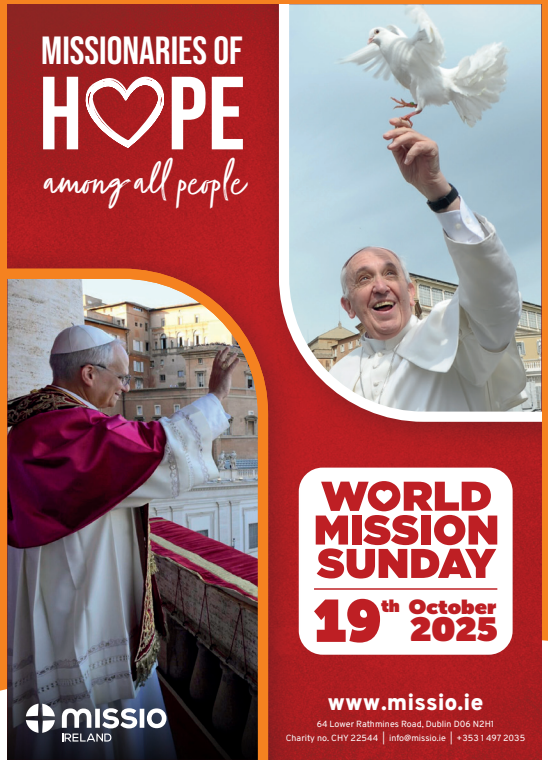
On behalf of Missio Ireland,

Thank You

for your support on Mission Sunday, The Mission Sunday Collection in 2025 amounted to €1,360,971.

Thank you for your great generosity in difficult financial times.

Missionaries of Hope among all people was the theme for Mission Month 2025.



Your support for missionaries and the communities they serve, through your prayers and generosity, is deeply appreciated.

Mission Sunday Collections

Comparing 2024 and 2025

Diocese	2024	2025
Achonry	€22,266	€20,241
Ardagh & Clonmacnois	€33,015	€26,000
Armagh	€133,348	€44,975
Cashel & Emly	€34,880	€37,918
Clogher	€61,809	€49,250
Clonfert	€18,225	€19,856
Cloyne	€43,524	€40,048
Cork & Ross	€70,504	€64,082
Derry	€107,148	€99,577
Down & Connor	€93,654	€81,185
Dromore	€9,629	€21,196
Dublin	€227,268	€201,581
Elphin	€34,786	€37,134
Ferns	€26,735	€35,281

Diocese	2024	2025
Galway	€13,500	€25,000
Kerry	€41,104	€46,202
Kildare & Leighlin	€55,515	€69,499
Killala	€30,000	€47,456
Killaloe	€41,490	€36,259
Kilmore	€36,123	€43,359
Limerick	€33,269	€22,608
Meath	€56,505	€50,229
Ossory	€29,222	€33,064
Raphoe	€15,059	€28,000
Tuam	€76,050	€90,877
Waterford & Lismore	€46,023	€45,076
Individuals	€32,803	€24,685
TOTAL	**€1,423,453**	**€1,360,971**

Growing and Building



During an audience with National Directors in June 2026, Pope Leo XIV praised Venerable Archbishop Fulton J Sheen as a model for missionaries worldwide, ahead of his beatification on the 24th September this year. His praise of Archbishop Sheen came as Pope Leo, the first pope born in the United States and the first to have spent most of his priesthood as a missionary, addressed National Directors from more than 120 countries, at the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

The Pope highlighted Archbishop Sheen's evangelising legacy, his commitment to the missions and the enduring importance of World Mission Sunday as the Church celebrates its centenary in 2026. The Pope praised the American archbishop, who served as National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, for using communication skills and tools of the time to proclaim the Gospel and support the Church's missionary work. "Archbishop Sheen was a light of faith, hope and love that shone through the radio and television media for decades," the Pope said. "His broadcasts touched millions with the hope of the Gospel and his initiatives and efforts resulted in enormous spiritual and material aid to the churches of first evangelisation."

For 20 years, Archbishop Sheen hosted a night time radio programme, *The Catholic Hour* on NBC (1930-1950), before moving to television to present *Life is Worth Living* (1952-1957). Archbishop Sheen's final presenting role was *The Fulton Sheen Program* (1961-1968). His media legacy lives on to this day as his shows were re-broadcast on EWTN from 2009.

The miracle approved for Fulton Sheen's beatification is the recovery of James Fulton Engstrom, a boy born stillborn in September 2010 near Peoria, Illinois. He had no detectable pulse for 61 minutes. His parents, Bonnie and Travis Engstrom, prayed for the intercession of Fulton Sheen. James is now a healthy 16 year old teenager. In July 2019, Pope Francis approved the recovery as a miracle through Fulton Sheen's intercession.

Further information about Archbishop Fulton Sheen is available in Missio Ireland's summer newsletter.

Training and Educating



Pope Leo has expressed his joy in being able to pray together with all the People of God for vocations, especially to the priesthood and consecrated life. He said the Church has “great need for them” as it does all of us who support them on their vocational journey so they can “find acceptance, listening and encouragement in their communities” and to be “credible models of generous dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters.”

Recalling Pope Francis’ message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations, he encouraged everyone to “welcome and accompany young people” while we ask God to help us all live “in service to one another … capable of helping one another to walk in love and truth.”

Missio Ireland is part of a global network, the head office of which is the Pontifical Mission Societies, based in Rome. In 2025, the Pontifical Mission Societies were able to support the following:

- **26 million** children assisted world wide
- **258,540** religious sisters in their formation courses
- **82,498** minor and major seminarians
- **844,000** catechists supported worldwide
- **12,000** health centres funded

Your part in this support is very much appreciated. I thank you once again for your support.

Children Helping Children



The Catholic Church in Malawi made history from 31st July to 4th August 2025 with the successful celebration of The First National Children's Congress, held at Don Bosco Parish in the Archdiocese of Lilongwe. Organised by the National Office of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Malawi, the Congress brought together more than 2,500 children from all the dioceses of the country under the inspiring theme: "Children are Missionaries of Hope."

The theme, "Children are Missionaries of Hope," resonated strongly throughout the Congress. In a world often affected by conflict, poverty, injustice, and discouragement, the children were reminded that they have an important role in bringing hope to others. Through simple acts of kindness, honesty, service, forgiveness, and prayer, they can become witnesses of Christ's love and instruments of peace in society.

The formation sessions focused on helping the children understand their missionary vocation. Through presentations, discussions, catechesis, and group activities, participants learned about the missionary nature of the Church and the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies throughout the world. They were encouraged to support other children through prayer and solidarity, especially those living in difficult circumstances.

This landmark gathering was the first event of its kind in Malawi and represented a significant step in the Church's commitment to missionary formation among children. It provided a unique opportunity for young Catholics to deepen their faith, strengthen their missionary identity, and experience the beauty of belonging to the universal Church.

The Congress was inspired by the mission of the Holy Childhood Association, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, whose objective is to help children become active participants in the Church's missionary work through prayer, sacrifice, sharing, and witness. The event emphasised that children are not merely the future of the Church but missionaries in the present, called to proclaim Christ through their words and actions.

As the Congress came to an end, participants returned to their dioceses carrying with them unforgettable memories, new friendships, renewed faith, and a stronger commitment to missionary service. The seeds planted during those five days are expected to bear fruit in parishes and communities throughout Malawi for many years to come.

Extract of an article by Fr Peter Ephraim Madeya, National Director, Pontifical Mission Societies, Malawi

Prayer & Mission

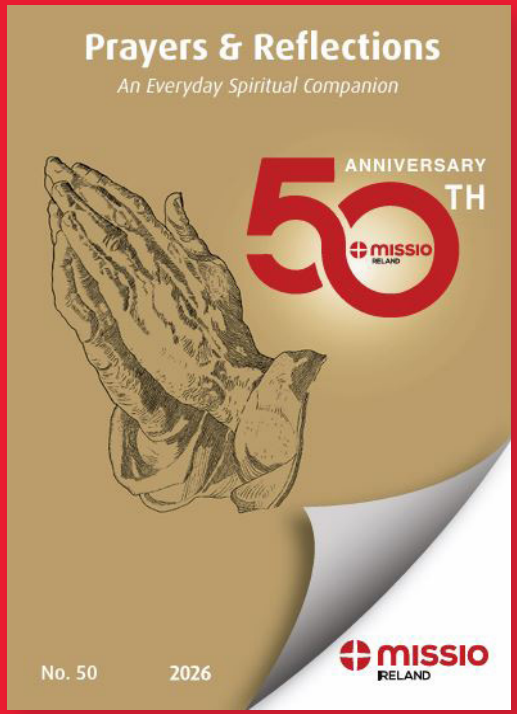


Prayer is at the centre of our work. For many struggling communities overseas, and the missionaries working there, knowing that people in Ireland are praying for them, brings them hope.

The *Fides News Agency*, the Vatican based news agency, presents the stories of missionaries and pastoral workers who have been murdered around the world. The 2025 report highlights the tragic deaths of 17 Catholic missionaries, 10 of them in Africa. Details of missionaries killed in 2024 were circulated last year. They did not include a priest who was killed in Nigeria on the 26th December 2024.

The term "missionary" includes all Catholics involved in pastoral work who were killed while living their faith. It also notes that the two most dangerous continents for missionary work are Africa and South America. Further information on these deaths is available in Missio Ireland's Summer 2026 newsletter. Copies of this newsletter are available from the office.

We have a supply of Rosary Beads and *Prayers & Reflections* booklets about the Rosary. If you would like a supply of either booklets or Rosary Beads, please contact the Missio Ireland office.



Prayers & Reflections

Each year in February, we publish our Prayers & Reflections booklet. The date coincides with the annual World Day of the Sick, which is celebrated on the 11th February, feast day of our Lady of Lourdes. This year, 2026, marks 50 years since the booklet was first published!

Prayers & Reflections encourages prayer and spiritual reflection, whilst also providing comfort to the sick and the housebound. These booklets are also used by priests, brothers, sisters and Eucharistic ministers in parish visitation of the sick and elderly. We also encourage users of the booklet to pray for missionaries.

This prayer booklet is distributed to individuals as well as to hospitals and nursing homes. If you would like to order a copy of the 50th edition of *Prayers & Reflections*, please contact our office directly and we will be happy to send you a supply.

Missio Ireland in Numbers - 2025



Over **€630,000** sent to support bishops in the running of their dioceses.



8 buildings renovated or built: churches, chapels, presbyteries, convents and parish offices.



22 child related projects assisted in Cameroun, Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Togo and Senegal.



Over **€200,000** sent to support catechists. Catechists assist priests in handing on the faith. In the absence of priests, catechists keep the faith alive.



Over **€1.3 million** collected on Mission Sunday last year.



12 seminaries assisted in Kenya, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

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Where donations were sent



Young people shared hope and solidarity with the world's poorest children. **€177,366** was distributed to child related projects abroad. The projects assisted were located in Cameroun, Maurtania, Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Togo.

€1,671,618 was distributed to support missionaries and fund church projects abroad. The projects funded were located in Bangladesh, Antilles, Bolivia, Panama, Peru, Cameroun, Senegal, Maurtania, Kenya, Nigeria and Sri Lanka.

Through your generosity, the next generation of priests, sisters, brothers and lay catechists are supported in their formation. **€386,301** was sent to assist projects in Bangladesh, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

€178,290 was sent for the administration of colleges in Rome that accommodate women religious and priests from mission countries for their ongoing formation. These will return to their home dioceses as resource people, teaching in seminaries and leading lay leadership formation.

€285,000 will be distributed to supplementary projects in November.

Masses were sent in 2025 to: Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The priests who received Masses really appreciated them. For many, that is all they have to live on.

Please continue to send Mass Stipends to Missio Ireland.

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CRA no. 20205153
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