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WELCOME to the latest edition of *We Are Mission*, which will be issued four times per year. Hopefully, this publication will let you know what Missio Scotland is all about and what happens with the money you give to us on Mission Sunday and throughout the year.

The name 'Missio' is a short form of our official title—'The Pontifical Mission Societies'—and we are the Pope's official charity for the missions. Essentially Missio is where the Church in one part of the world shares what it has with the Church in another part of the world. Through Missio, the Holy Father funds parishes, schools, hospitals and clinics run by Catholic nuns, priests, brothers and lay people in those countries where the Church is poor or small. Many of these missionaries work in dangerous situations and some unfortunately, lose their lives while in service of the Faith.

The origins of Missio—the Pontifical Mission Societies—date back to 1822 when Frenchwoman, Pauline Jaricot, sought to help her brother who was a missionary priest in China. She brought people together to pray for the missions and to donate a small amount of money each week. That sense of praying and sharing spread and developed and has continued for 200 years.

Every year, on the third Sunday of October, World Mission Sunday is celebrated throughout the whole Church, in every parish and in every country. Catholic children also have their own way to share with poorer children and they pray and collect funds in our Catholic primary schools. Older Catholics will remember paying a penny every day for the 'Holy Childhood' and it was marked on a card which had a photo of a child in Africa or Asia. That was Missio.

The impact of that generosity has been enormous in two ways. Firstly, the lives of our brothers and sisters in poorer countries has been improved over the years and, secondly, we have learned that caring, praying and sharing what we have is part of what it means to 'be' Church.

I hope you enjoy this little magazine and find it informative. God bless.

MISSIONARIES both religious and lay, have had a particularly difficult time over the past two years, with their work severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, in 2021 a number of missionaries worldwide, were also killed in the service of the Faith.

According to a report produced by Agenzia Fides—The Vatican News Agency—22 missionaries were killed in the past year, which included: 13 priests, one religious man, two religious women and six lay persons. The highest number of the missionaries killed was registered in Africa where 11 missionaries—seven priests, two religious women and two lay persons. The Americas registered seven deaths—four priests, one religious man and two lay persons. Three missionaries were killed in Asia in 2021—one priest and two lay persons—and one priest was killed in Europe. The total number is up from 2020's figure of 20, with the countries recording the most deaths being Nigeria and Mexico.

The list compiled by Fides seeks to record all the Baptised engaged in the life of the Church who died in a violent way, not simply in terms of 'hatred of the faith,' which is important given that by virtue of our Baptism we are all missionary disciples as Pope Francis re-emphasised in *Evangelii Gaudium* when he wrote: "All the Baptised, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the Faith, are agents of evangelisation." (120)

'They could not help but testify'

These men and women died while simply giving witness to their Faith, often in challenging and impoverished social contexts, where violence is a way of life, corruption is widespread and where there is a distinct lack of respect for life and human rights.

Despite these many issues, the slain missionaries were undaunted in their service of the Faith, working amid risks and fears, sharing their daily lives with their brothers and sisters and bringing in small, but not insignificant gestures, Christian witness as a seed of hope. The Holy Father summed up their witness succinctly when he spoke on the subject during his September visit to Budapest. "When everything pointed to remaining silent, taking cover and not professing the faith, they could not—could not—help but testify."

Losses in Africa

Fr Manuel Ubaldo Jáuregui Vega, a Colombian from the Institute for Foreign Missions in Yarumal, was assassinated in Zango, municipality of Viana, Luanda in Angola on March 7, 2021, during an assault following

Stories of missionary sacrifice



Fr Andre Sylvestre

a minor road accident.

In Nigeria, Fr John Gbakaani Yaji, a parish priest in Gulu, in the Diocese of Minna, was killed on January 15, 2021 along the Lambata-Lapai road, by armed men who attacked the car in which he was travelling. His body was found near the road, tied to a tree. Fr Ferdinand Fanen Ngugban was killed by armed men on the morning of March 30, 2021, in St Paul of Ayetwar's Parish, diocese of Katsina-Ala, Benue State, during a raid in the area. Fr Alphonsus Bello was killed on the night of May 20, 2021, when a group of armed men attacked the parish of St Vincent Ferrer in Malunfashi—Katsina State—and kidnapped him along with another priest. His lifeless body was found the next morning. Fr Luke Adeleke was killed in an attempted kidnapping on his way home after celebrating Christmas Eve Mass on the evening of December 24, hit by bullets by a gang of gunmen in Ogunmakin Obafemi Owode.

Fr Rodrigue Sanon, parish priest in the Diocese of Banfora in Burkina Faso, who had disappeared on January 19, 2021 while on his way to a meeting of priests with the Bishop, was found on January 21, in the forest of Toumousseni, about 20km from Banfora.

In the Central African Republic, 20-year-old Omer Dalyom Dallet was killed by the explosion of a mine that hit the car driven by a missionary of the Catholic Mission of Niem, on May 5, 2021, in which Omer was travelling to visit his sister who was in hospital.

Sr Mary Daniel Abut and Sr Regina Roba, of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, were killed cold-bloodedly during an ambush along the Juba-Nimule highway in South Sudan on August 16, 2021. They fled after the attack by bandits on the bus

they were travelling on and were caught and killed. Peter Bata, Head Catechist, was killed along with other people on October 26, 2021 during the assault by an armed group on the Catholic parish of Mupoi.

In Uganda, Fr Joshephat Kasambula, a former parish priest of Lwamata in the Diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana, was murdered cold-bloodedly on the evening of August 18, 2021, by a person known to be a drug addict.

Worldwide sacrifice

Br Luigi Manganiello, a Lasallian religious, was violently hit by the thieves he had caught while they were stealing from the premises of the Barquisimeto School in Venezuela on the night between January 5 and 6, 2021.

In Mexico, Fr Gumersindo Cortés González, parish priest of Cristo Rey parish, in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, disappeared on March 27, 2021. The following day his body was found near his car, with signs of violence and gunshots. Friar Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado OFM, was the victim—along with other people—of a clash between armed gangs in the territory, on June 12, 2021, while he was about to celebrate Mass in the community of Tepehuana de Pajaritos, in Zacatecas State, Jalisco. Simón Pedro Pérez López, indigenous tzozil, a Catechist in the Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas and human rights activist, was killed on the morning of July 5, 2021 by a stranger on a motorcycle who shot him in the head. The lifeless body of Fr José Guadalupe Popoca was found on the morning of August 31, 2021 in his parish, in Galeana, municipality of Za-

catepec, in Morelos State. He was killed in the night by gunshots to the head.

Nadia de Munari, an Italian lay missionary of Operation Mato Grosso (OMG) living and working in Peru died on Saturday April 24, 2021 after being brutally attacked with a machete in her sleep, a few days earlier, during a theft.

In Haiti, on September 6, 2021, Fr André Sylvestre was attacked by two young people on a motorcycle in Cap Haitien, as he was leaving a bank carrying a wallet. Riddled by gunshots, he died in the operating room.

On the evening of January 24, 2021, gunmen killed Fr Rene Bayang Regalado, as he was returning to the St John XXIII Seminary in the village of Patpat, province of Bukidnon, on the island of Mindanao, in the Philippines. Several of the shots hit him in the head.

In Myanmar, two young 18-year-old Catholics, Alfred Ludo and Patrick Bo Reh, who were working to bring food and humanitarian aid to displaced people fleeing the conflict between the Burmese regular army and the popular defense forces, were killed by snipers on May 27, 2021.

Fr Olivier Maire, Provincial Superior of the Company of Mary (Monfortan), was assassinated on August 9, 2021, in the provincial house of Saint Laurent sur Sèvre, in France, by a Rwandan citizen who had been in the community for some time.

The missionaries killed who are mentioned in the report are just the tip of the iceberg. While the list compiled annually by Fides is important, we must also realise that there is a longer list of the people who, in every corner of the world suffer and even pay with their lives for their faith in Christ, but whose stories do not make news headlines.

Gerard Gough



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