



<http://www.missionsocieties.org.uk>

**Hymn:** 296 Come Holy Ghost Creator Come

**Opening Reading:** Acts of the Apostles 1:1 - 11

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and I taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then **you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth**'.

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The [Pontifical Mission Societies \(PMS\)](#) comprise the following:

- Association for the Propagation of the Faith (APF)
- Society of St Peter the Apostle (SPA)
- Holy Childhood – Mission Together (MT)
- The Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU)

Since 1922, the PMS have been the **Catholic Church's official instruments for the spreading of the Gospel in the world**, especially in countries where the Church is new, young or poor.

The societies aim to foster the growth of missionary awareness, **prayer and cooperation in the whole Church** – to bring 'Christ to the Nations.'

They **guarantee an effective collection of funds** and support to every mission diocese in the world according to its specific needs. The funds collected in each diocese of England and Wales are sent directly to local bishops in the mission territories.

The PMS is established in 159 (out of 194) countries and the offices work in close cooperation to provide equitable and fair financial support for each of the Church's 1,069 mission dioceses.

**The Association for the Propagation of the Faith (APF)** assists each and every one of the Catholic Church's 1,062 mission dioceses and territories to provide pastoral care and preach the Gospel effectively.

It was founded in Lyons, France, in 1822 by a young French woman, Pauline Jaricot. She began by persuading local working people to support the missions by giving a farthing a week. A century later, when the organisation was established in almost every country of the world, Pope Pius XI made it the official mission-funding society for the Catholic Church.

The APF works in England and Wales with the Mill Hill Missionary Society, the only major missionary society to have been formed in England. Mill Hill was one of the first societies to introduce lay missionaries, and its priests, lay brothers and associates work in 27 countries and every continent.

In England and Wales funds for the Missions are collected through the famous red collection Boxes. These can be found in 200,000 homes and they have helped raise millions of pounds for the missions.

The Association publishes a quarterly magazine *Mission Today*.

The APF enables its supporters to live out their own missionary vocation and to take an active part in the universal mission of the Church of Christ

**The Pontifical Society of St Peter the Apostle (SPA)** is the Church's official fundraising body for the training of clergy and religious in mission countries.

Through prayer and finance SPA supporters provide these younger churches with the essential help they need to train their own priests, sisters and brothers.

In 1922, Pope Pius XI placed the Society under papal patronage and gave it the task of supporting each and every seminary in the missionary world.

How it began: 'Might I interest you a little in my seminary?' wrote a French missionary Bishop, Mgr Cousin, of Nagasaki in Japan in 1888 to Stephanie Bigard and her daughter Jeanne.

Due to lack of funds, the Bishop was turning away many young men, who were answering God's call and eager to join the seminary.

The first seminary built by the SPA was Our Lady of Lanka in Kandy, Sri Lanka, in 1893, which today is one of the five seminaries sponsored by the SPA in England and Wales.

The Society of St Peter the Apostle publishes a yearly magazine *Mission Tomorrow*.

Under its original name of Holy Childhood, [Mission Together \(MT\)](#) has been active in Catholic schools for over a hundred and sixty years.

### [Mission Together](#)

- encourages children worldwide to pray and share, and become missionaries themselves;
- supports both the spiritual and physical wellbeing of children. It does so through prayer and pastoral care. Through the financial contributions of children it carries out educational, medical and welfare projects in the poorest areas of the world;
- benefits from the extensive network of the Church. Over generations it has helped to build the family of God and it continues to do so;
- is universal in character and attends to the needs of all without favouritism. It exemplifies the all-embracing nature of the Catholic Church.

### [Mission Together in England & Wales](#)

Catholic primary school children in England and Wales last year sent £91,580 to projects in Ghana, South Africa and India.

However, in 2005, they also gave more than £400, 000 to the Tsunami-affected areas of India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

### [Mission Together worldwide](#)

Collected £11 million last year which supported 3,500 projects throughout the whole world and helped make a real difference to the lives of 4 million children.

**The Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU)** aims to promote an awareness of mission and a spirit of unity, prayer and generous sacrifice among priests, religious and laity.

In 1916, **Father Paolo Manna**, a PIME missionary serving in Myanmar (then called Burma), envisioned an organisation that would help him to share the spiritual graces he had received through his work in bringing the Good News of Christ to others.

He wanted to encourage those already engaged in the work of the Church to support the work of the Missions — and perhaps to become missionaries themselves. He founded the Missionary Union of the Clergy to raise enthusiasm among priests for the Opera Maxima – **the evangelization of the world** - and to promote knowledge of the Missions and encourage prayer for them.

The Association publishes a quarterly review of World Mission *Mission Outlook* which aims to inspire a serious interest and debate in mission among priests, religious and other animators in the Catholic Church. Through mutual support and solidarity, those in ministry become more aware of the needs, sacrifices, challenges and sufferings of co-workers in mission around the world.

Quotes from The Sower pgs. 28-29, January – March 2007.

#### **Parish Groups:**

- Co-Workers of Mother Teresa
- Knights of St. Columba
- Catenians
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- The Cafod Group
- The Union of Catholic Mothers

**Closing Prayer:** No. 295