



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

with this brief message I would like to present an important organization dedicated to the mission of the Church, that is little-known: the Pontifical Mission Societies.

Since the beginning, mutual support between local Churches, committed to proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel, has been a feature of the universal Church. Animated by the Spirit of the Risen Lord, its mission widens the horizon of faith and charity unto the ends of the earth.

In the 19th century the Christian proclamation was given new impulse with the founding of the Mission Societies, whose specific aim was to pray and act concretely to support evangelization in new territories. These Societies were given the name 'Pontifical' by [Pope Pius XI](#), who in this way sought to show how the Church's mission to all peoples is very dear to the heart of the Successor of Peter. And it still is! The Pontifical Mission Societies today continue this important service begun almost 200 years ago. They are present in 120 countries with National Directors, coordinated by international Secretariats at the Holy See.

Why are the Pontifical Mission Societies important? They are important because we must pray for all missionaries and for the evangelizing action of the Church. Prayer is the first "missionary work" — the first! — that every Christian can and must do. It is also the most effective, even if this cannot be measured. The principal agent of evangelization is the Holy Spirit, and we are called to collaborate with Him. In the Pope's name, these Societies ensure a fair distribution of aid, so that all the Churches in the world have at least the minimum needed for evangelization, for the sacraments, for their priests, for seminaries, for pastoral work and for catechists. It provides support for missionaries who evangelize — and most importantly support through prayer — so that the Holy Spirit may be present. He is the one who directs evangelization.

So I encourage everyone to collaborate in our shared task of proclaiming the Gospel and supporting the young Churches through the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies. That way, the Church in every people, may continue to open herself to all and to proclaim joyfully the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Thank you all very much!