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**MISSION MESSAGE**

**The Missionary Identity of the Church in the U.S.**

By **Shannon Kowalski**  
Diocesan Director,  
Pontifical Mission Societies



*comfortable need the poor in order that they may have the blessing of God in their hearts, the charity of Christ in their souls, and the intercession of the poor who are the friends of God."*

As we look to the future, we must ask ourselves: **Who are the Mother Cabrini, the Mother Seton, the Mother Teresa of today?** Who are the silent, often anonymous missionaries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America who are building the Church, brick by brick, life by life? They may not yet be known to us, but they are out there, living out the Gospel in some of the most challenging places in the world. And who but you, missionary advocates in the United States, can help ensure they have the support they need to carry out this vital work?

We are called to continue this legacy, to ensure that the missionaries of today and tomorrow have the support they need. Just as the universal Church once came to the aid of the United States in its early years, so today I ask you to offer the same support to mission territories around the world, but keeping well in mind that we are still mission territory for proclamation: progressive de-Christianization is leading our society to polarization and psychological and existential loneliness, elements that make society unstable and facilitate evil. Therefore, we need to re-evangelize, and through asking others for help, we already have a way to make the Gospel known.

Through our prayers and our generosity, we are invited to walk alongside these modern-day saints. We are called to support them materially and spiritually, just as the early Church once supported the missionary Church in the United States. When each of you contributes to the work of TPMS, you are not just sending funds; you are sending hope. You are empowering those on the frontlines of evangelization, ensuring that the light of Christ continues to shine in every corner of the world.


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The Pontifical Mission Societies USA held its National Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during November 15-18, 2024. The national gathering brings together the 196 Catholic dioceses of the United States and its territories. This year's keynote address was delivered by Archbishop Emilio Nappa, International President of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Below is an excerpt from Archbishop Nappa's speech.

The United States may no longer be considered a mission territory, but it remains deeply missionary at its core. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Catholic missionaries from this country went forth to bring the Gospel to distant lands. Their efforts were part of a larger, global movement of evangelization that continues today.

In addition to being a recipient of aid in its early days, the Church in the United States has become one

of the greatest contributors to the missionary Church, both financially and spiritually. The missionary identity of the U.S. Church is tied to the many men and women who responded to Christ's call and went forth as missionaries themselves.

Take for example, **Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini**, who, after arriving in the United States in the late 1800s, founded schools, hospitals, and orphanages that helped care for waves of immigrants. Similarly, **Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton**, the first American-born saint, helped build the foundation for Catholic education in the United States. She responded to the needs of the growing Church in America with the same zeal that missionaries abroad carry into territories where the Church is young and struggling.

And we cannot speak of the missionary work of the Church in the United States without honoring the legacy of one of its greatest advocates: **Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen**. Archbishop Sheen had a remarkable ability to bring the Church's mission to the forefront of Catholic consciousness.

His message was simple, yet profound: *"The poor missions of the world need the comfortable to supply roofs for their churches, medicine for their hospitals, and clothes for their backs, but the*



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