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Archdiocese of St. Louis
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MISSION OFFICE

20 Archbishop May Dr. St. Louis, MO 63119
(314) 792-7655 mission@archstl.org

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Matthew 28: 18-20



THE MISSIONARY UNION. A Missionary's Habit: Evangelizing At The Heart Of The Nordic Church

By: Ines San Martin VP of Marketing and Communications, National Office

In the affluent yet spiritually seeking Nordic countries, Sister Anna Mirijam Kaschner, CPS, serves as a testament to the vibrant mission field that thrives beyond traditional borders. Born in Germany to a Protestant family, Sister Anna's journey to the Catholic faith and religious life is a narrative of divine call and unexpected paths.

thoughts," she admits. Instead, it confirmed her vocation.

In Zimbabwe, Sister Anna realized that God's presence was not a European import but an enduring truth. "We were simply following his footprints," she says. Her search for an active congregation led her to the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, marking the beginning of her 22-year commitment to God's work.

"I was certain I wanted a family, to travel the world, but the idea of religious life kept returning, especially when I encountered nuns." Her resolve to dismiss this calling led her to Zimbabwe with a program aimed at providing missionary experience. "I thought it would rid me of these

70 percent are baptized in the Lutheran Church, with a 4 percent attendance. Catholics are less than 1 percent, but we have a 20 percent Church attendance," she notes. Sister Anna's ministry extends beyond the church walls, engaging with a population largely unfamiliar with religious life. "People in Denmark know little about faith," she shares. "They're curious, often asking if I'm married or have children." Her habit often sparks conversations, opening doors to discuss faith.

Her mission took an unexpected turn when she was sent to Denmark, a country rich in resources but a "mission country" in spiritual terms. "Some

Sister Anna firmly believes in the visibility of her vocation.

"Wearing the habit is essential. It's a sign that invites people to approach, to inquire, and often, to seek help," she asserts. Her presence in the community is a beacon of service and a bridge to understanding the Catholic faith. The missionary work in the Nordic countries is as crucial as it is unique. "Consider coming to the Nordic countries," Sister Anna urges. "In Finland, Catholics make up 0.2 percent of the population. The mission field is vast, and the need for the Gospel is palpable." Through Sister Anna Mirijam Kaschner's narrative, we see the diverse faces of missionary work and the profound impact of living one's faith aloud.

Upcoming Event

- **Prayers & Pastries** on May 14. More information and RSVP at www.archstl.org/misionevents

A Peek Inside

- Read the story of a religious sister spreading the Gospel in Denmark
- Learn the Holy Father's message for the upcoming World Mission Sunday
- Discover the history of the Missionary Union

For more mission news, visit www.fides.org



The Missionary Union is widely recognized as the heart and soul of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Its origins trace back to 1916 when Father Paolo Manna, a PIME missionary stationed in Myanmar (then known as Burma), conceived of an organization to extend the spiritual blessings he had encountered while spreading the Gospel of Christ. In this newsletter, we delve into the rich history of the Missionary Union and witness firsthand the tangible impact of this Pontifical Society to embolden all the baptized to mission.

Seeds of Faith: Cultivating Global Discipleship and Hope through Generosity

Your generosity serves as the fertile soil nurturing the growth of budding Churches and missionaries worldwide. Through prayer and sacrifice, you faithfully fulfill Christ's commandment, fostering discipleship in every corner of the earth, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). Your contributions are the seeds that blossom into vibrant gardens of faith, dispersing fragrant hope and love to all.

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World Mission Sunday 2024

Go and invite everyone to the banquet (cf. Mt 22:9)

An Overview by Kim Specht, Director, Mission Office Archdiocese of St. Louis



Message for
World Mission Day
2024

On January 25th, 2024, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Pope Francis released his 2024 Message for World Mission Sunday, which will be held on October 20th.

Leading up to World Mission Sunday, we will begin reflecting on the theme given by our Holy Father: "Go and invite everyone to the banquet (cf. Mt 22:9)"

In this year's message, Pope Francis reminds us that every Christian is called to the universal mission. He says:

"Let us not forget that every Christian is called to take part in this universal mission by offering his or her own witness to the Gospel in every context, so

that the whole Church can continually go forth with her Lord and Master to the "crossroads" of today's world. "Today's drama in the Church is that Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out! Often we end up being an 'imprisoning' Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as 'its own', whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries" (Address to Participants in the Conference organized by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, 18 February 2023). May all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!"

All the faithful, each in our unique way, are called to participate in the missionary work of the Church. This takes shape through the individual way we witness the Gospel in our lives, each according to our particular vocation – married, single, priesthood, and religious life. What a profound opportunity the Lord extends to us!

Yet, this calling may trigger emotions such as fear, a sense of unworthiness, or inadequacy, leading us to keep our relationship with Jesus to ourselves or selected contexts.

To this, Pope Francis encourages us, saying, "The Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries." There's

no need for apprehension, anxiety, or feelings of unworthiness – this is the Lord's mission, and He will provide us with what is necessary. As we look around and see the brokenness of our world, it is evident how desperately our world needs the Gospel.

Once more, let us take in these words and reflect on them leading up to World Mission Sunday and beyond:

"May all of us, the baptized, be ready to set out anew, each according to our state in life, to inaugurate a new missionary movement, as at the dawn of Christianity!"

A Brief History of The Missionary Union

By Nicole Paden, Development Manager, Mission Office Archdiocese of St. Louis

Bl. Paolo Manna was born in 1872 in Avellino, Italy. Despite a challenging upbringing following his mother's early death, Manna pursued priesthood, eventually joining the PIME (The Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions) and was ordained in 1895. His missionary journey began in Eastern Burma but was halted by tuberculosis, prompting his return to Italy in 1905. Despite setbacks, Bl. Manna remained steadfast in his commitment to spreading the Kingdom of God.

In subsequent years, Bl. Manna's fervor for missions led to significant contributions, including founding the Missionary Union of the Clergy (later renamed the Missionary

Union) in 1916 and advocating for a broader involvement of the Church in missionary efforts. As Superior General of the PIME from 1924 to 1934, he traveled extensively, advocating for revolutionary changes in evangelization methods. Until his passing in 1952, Manna continued his missionary work, leaving a legacy that remains relevant today, echoed in the teachings of Saint John Paul II regarding the universal call to holiness and mission.

Following Bl. Manna's death, the Missionary Union was granted the title "Pontifical" by Pius XII in 1956. The PMU, guided by Manna's motto "All the Church for all the world," underwent a transformation in 1966, aligning its focus with Saint Paul VI's Apostolic



Letter "Graves et increscentes" to nurture missionary formation for all baptized believers. Today, the Missionary Union serves as a spiritual apostolate supporting those engaged in catechesis and religious education, striving to deepen all Catholics' understanding of their baptismal responsibility for the Church's missionary work.



Bl. Paolo Manna

Resources for the work of the Pontifical Missionary Union in St. Louis can be found at: www.archstl.org/missionaryunion



Scan me to become a Daily World Missionary or go to: <https://www.archstl.org/dw>

Become a Daily World Missionary Today!

Join us in the transformative journey of becoming a Daily World Missionary! As a Daily World Missionary, you'll have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the global mission of the Church through the power of prayer and sacrifice. Each day, you'll commit to praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, and invoking the intercessions of St. Francis Xavier and St. Therese of Lisieux (patron and patroness of missions) three times for the missions. Additionally, you'll embrace the principle of sacrifice by forgoing a luxury or necessity each day, donating the resources saved to support mission dioceses and vicariates around the world. By participating in this daily practice, you'll not only deepen your spiritual life but also become an active participant in spreading God's love and mercy to those in need. Join us in this noble endeavor and become a beacon of hope for the world!