



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

**TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS (P.I.M.E.),
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE JOURNAL "MONDO E MISSIONE"**

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 13 October 2022

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

I thank the Superior General of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, who introduced our meeting; and I greet you all, who in various ways work and collaborate on the magazine *Mondo e Missione*, founded 150 years ago. At the time it was called *Le Missioni Cattoliche* ["The Catholic Missions"]. Its "cradle" was the Lombard Seminary for Foreign Missions, and its model *Les Missions Catholiques*, which the Pontifical Mission Societies had started to publish four years earlier, in Lyon. We are struck by the topicality, the modernity, the perspective of that initiative, that from the very beginning expresses and promotes a Church "that goes forth". Yes, when you are outgoing, you stay young. If you stay sitting there, without moving, you age quickly!

It should be emphasized that the magazine was launched in response to *a need of the people of God*: many wanted to read the stories of missionaries — heroic! — to feel close to them and their work, accompanying them with prayer. And they also wanted to know the countries and cultures in a different way from the common view, at that time steeped in the colonial mentality: with a Christian outlook, respectful and attentive to the "seeds" of truth and good scattered around the world. We render homage to the memory of Fr. Giacomo Scurati, the first editor, and to his collaborators. They understood the *value of communication* in the mission, first and foremost for the Church herself, to be outward-looking, and fully involved in evangelization, entirely missionary, entirely evangelizing. These pioneers from 150 years ago understood the importance of making known the countries to which they were destined and the way in which, in those distant lands, the

encounter between the Gospel and the local communities took place. From the very beginning, therefore, the magazine was the bearer of a broad outlook, open to the riches of each people and each local Church. And this still remains the vocation of *Mondo e Missione*, as it was renamed in 1969, to take on the spirit and teachings of the Second Vatican Council regarding the mission *ad gentes*.

For many years, the letters and chronicles of the missionaries have accurately portrayed the contexts and the life of the populations with which they came into contact. And even today, reportages and direct testimonies represent the magazine's most characteristic feature, thanks to stories from places or situations that few others talk about: *geographical and existential peripheries*, which, in a world where communication has seemingly shortened distances, continue to remain relegated to the margins. The distances have been shortened, it is true, but the ideological "boundaries" have multiplied. And so, the challenge still becomes to go precisely there to make known the beauty and richness of differences, but also the many distortions and injustices of societies that are increasingly interconnected and at the same time marked by serious inequalities.

Being a *voice of the voiceless* is a primary task of the magazine, as of other initiatives the PIME has promoted in the field of communication: the agency *AsiaNews*, multimedia content, presence on social networks, the cultural and animation activities. These are all ways of narrating the world by placing oneself beside those who do not have the right to speak or who are not listened to, the poorest, oppressed minorities, victims of forgotten wars. I want to emphasize this: forgotten wars. Today we are all worried, and it is right that we should be, about a war here in Europe, at the door of Europe and in Europe, but there have been wars for years: for more than ten years in Syria, think of Yemen, think of Myanmar, think of Africa. These don't come to mind, they are not part of cultured Europe... Forgotten wars, it is sinful to forget them like that.

And also remembering those who work silently and tenaciously at the "grass roots" to build a different world, tracing paths of solidarity and reconciliation in contexts marked by crises or violence.

As a missionary magazine, *Mondo e Missione* also has, however, another specific task that characterizes it: that of helping to recognize that *the mission is at the centre*. To recognize that the mission is at the centre. To remind Christian communities that if they look only at themselves, losing the courage to go out and take the word of Jesus to everyone, they end up extinguishing themselves. To show how the Gospel, by meeting diverse peoples and cultures, is given back to us every day in its newness and freshness. And it creates dialogue and friendship also with those who profess other religions, recognizing them as children of the one Father. Because reality is seen better from the peripheries. For this, I thank you in a special way.

In those that continue to be considered "peripheries", it has often happened to the missionaries to

discover that the Holy Spirit had arrived before them. Those who departed in order to evangelize, more often than not found themselves receiving Good News. Just like the disciples of Jesus, sent two by two to preach among the poor and the little ones, so missionaries of yesterday and today often encounter the joy and new life that the Gospel is capable of generating. And it is not possible to keep an experience like that to oneself. In this sense, it becomes increasingly important to give a voice to young growing Churches, to communities — at times founded by the PIME — which today express new and promising dynamics, docile to the Spirit.

In a world unfortunately disfigured by many wounds, this — in the end — is the reason that after 150 years we are still driven to publish a magazine such as *Mondo e Missione* : to give a voice to the hope that the encounter with Christ sows in the life of people and populations. To say to everyone that a better world is possible when, by following Jesus, we learn to reach out to every brother and sister.

Dear friends, thank you for letting me get to know better your history and your work. Keep going! Faithful to your roots, attentive to the signs of the times and open to the future of God. I bless you from my heart, and I also bless the readers and supporters of *Mondo e Missione*. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!

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