

THE MSC Message



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS



**Br Giacomo Gelardi
makes his Perpetual
Profession to the MSC**

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Winter 2021

MSC Missions Office,
PO Box 23, Western Road,
Cork, T12 WT72, Ireland.

www.mscmissions.ie

From the Director



Dear Friends,

Once again, the wheel of time has turned, and we find ourselves looking to the end of another year - a year that we could never have imagined or planned for.

The pandemic left our world reeling, and yet, we have all carried on. Our MSCs all over the world, together with our OLSH Sisters, have continued to forge ahead in our shared mission of spreading the Lord's love where it is needed most, from ministering in regions ravaged by COVID, to pastoral care in Ecuador and South Sudan. We commemorated the beatification of three MSC priests, we marked the birth of a new MSC province in the Pacific Islands, and we celebrated the Perpetual Profession of Br Giacomo, who is a wonderful addition to our community here in the Irish Province. While we have all faced individual and collective challenges, we are here, we are united, and we welcome every blessing that the year has brought amidst the turmoil.

Pope Francis reminds us that "charity is the beating heart of the Christian," and it is true that you, our dear mission friends, are the beating heart at the centre of all that we do. Your generosity, your support, and your friendship is the life blood of our missions, and as I reflect and give thanks this winter season, you are in my prayers and the prayers of our MSCs everywhere.

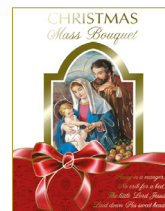
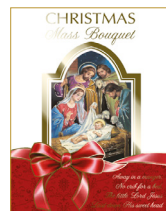
Christmas is approaching, the second Christmas since our world changed. Despite these changes, may we find peace and hope in this beautiful season. I pray that the Lord's grace will bless your home this Christmas and throughout the year ahead, and I thank you, as ever, for blessing our MSC missions with the gift of your friendship this year.

Wishing you a peaceful and prayerful winter season,

Fr Michael O'Connell MSC

Director of the MSC Missions Office

MSC Christmas Mass Remembrance Cards



Remind loved ones they're always in your thoughts this Christmas season with a set of beautifully designed Christmas cards. Each card contains a thoughtful blessing and includes a special remembrance in our Christmas Masses.

How to Order

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Telephone: +353 21 454 5704

Fax: +353 21 434 3587

Email: info@mscmissions.ie

Web: www.mscmissions.ie

Suggested Donation €25 or £20 per pack of 5

Light Up a Memory Mass

Saturday, November 27th 2021

A special candlelight Mass for the Holy Souls will take place in the Sacred Heart Church, Western Road, Cork, at 6.30pm.

All are welcome to join us live on our website

www.mscmissions.ie



Join us on Facebook and Twitter for daily news and updates!



Find us at **@MSCMissions**

A new MSC Province in the Pacific Islands

On May 10th 2021, a new MSC province was born: The Province of the Pacific Islands.

It is with great joy and optimism that we congratulate Provincial Superior Fr Tamati Sefo MSC and the missionary community there.

In a celebratory message, Fr Tamati thanked all those who contributed to the success of the province, from the first missionaries in the region, who began ministry there in 1888, to the “contributions of our benefactors, lay MSC members, staff, and parishioners over the years”.

“Today is a celebration of their hard work over the years, preparing us to become a province,” notes Fr Tamati, giving thanks to all “who made it possible for us to continue the mission that has been entrusted to us.”



Fr Tamati casts us back to the origins of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, founded by Fr Jules Chevalier in 1854, during the French Revolution – a time of great conflict, fear, and upheaval. “It was then that our founder Jules Chevalier saw in the heart of Christ the remedy for our trouble,” recalls Fr Tamati. “Likewise, today, amidst the fear, suffering, and horror of the pandemic that is ravaging the world, our new province is emerging. We want to be a sign of hope and love to everyone.”

Standing in “solidarity and prayer”, Fr Tamati reminds us that “it is in the compassionate heart of Jesus that we can find peace and comfort in this challenging time.”

May God bless all in the new MSC Province of the Pacific Islands, as they begin a new chapter in our shared journey of spreading God's light and the love of the Sacred Heart across the world.

Behind the logo for the Pacific Islands Province



THE OCEAN is one of the most common symbols of the Pacific Islands, as all of the islands are connected by the sea. Each wave symbolises life's challenges, as well as determination, courage, faith, trust, and hope.

THE CANOE represents the members of the province. It is a symbol of community life, where MSCs sail together to proclaim God's love to the world, and each one plays an important role in helping the others on the mission.

THE SAIL represents the love of God, which drives the province. The cross attaching the sail to the canoe symbolises Jesus, journeying together with the province – the driving force, always present, even in times of difficulty and uncertainty.

THE GLOBE represents the fact that the mission is not just in the Pacific Islands; MSCs are called to spread the love of the Sacred Heart to the whole world.

MSCs respond to COVID-19 in Vietnam

August 15th 2021 marked the 18th anniversary of the foundation of our MSC community in Vietnam. Today, our missionaries are responding “with an inspiring MSC spirit” to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

With one of our MSCs in Vietnam referring to the virus as “a roaring lion”, the MSC Australia website reports that “many people in Vietnam are poor, homeless, and hungry”. The hospitals are full beyond capacity, with temporary hospitals being built as quickly as possible to accommodate the overflow of patients in need.

MSC communities in Vietnam are doing all they can for those who need their help. As well as sourcing food from wherever they can, they are also sharing their own rations with the poor and hungry, obtaining travel permits so that they can move around their local regions distributing food and necessities.

While the final professions of several MSCs waiting to take their vows in Vietnam had to be postponed due to restrictions, MSC Fr Chung writes that the ministry of MSC communities in the region “keeps our heart burning for our mission of spreading love of God for others”.

We join our voices with our Australian MSC brothers as they say: “Thank you to all our Vietnamese MSC brothers in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Australia, for spreading the compassionate love of God by how you live your lives, wherever you are.”



COVID Crisis: A letter from Fiji

Bro Warren Perrotto MSC ministers with the MSC community in Fiji. He shares his thoughts on the most recent wave of COVID-19 in the region.

“In March, the COVID-19 virus landed on Viti Levu, Fiji, via a repatriation flight. One passenger was contaminated. Different from the first wave, the 2021 invasion began to sweep at a rapid speed throughout the isle.

The government and police sanctioned restrictions, such as lockdowns and quarantines, including wearing masks when going outdoors. The island was also given a curfew, and all schools were closed.



However, the rapid pace of the virus throughout the island is primarily due to the lack of cooperation of persons not following the government’s restrictions, including not wearing a mask, not keeping social distance, such as social gatherings, drunkenness, and not following curfew hours (6.00pm to 4.00am). The arrest of these people does not seem to have much of an impact.

All of these things have a devastating effect on the Fijian economy. There is unemployment, lack of food and water supplies, marital violence, and violence among the youth, accompanied by psychological stress.

Australia and New Zealand generously gave aid to Fiji. They have donated thousands of needles, food supplies, and necessary medical equipment. These have been a significant contribution to contain the virus from spreading.

The real heroes and heroines in this pandemic are the nurses, doctors, volunteers, and police. Each day they risk their lives to assist and protect the people from this sickness. We thank them for their unwavering dedication.”

Our MSCs in Vietnam and Fiji are among the many MSC communities around the world who are working together to combat the spread of COVID-19 in the poorest and most vulnerable regions. Please keep them in your prayers.

OLSH COVID Ministry in the Philippines

Sr Ruth S. Yburan FDNsc, Regional Leader of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the Philippines, recently wrote from Manila in gratitude for funding provided by the Irish Province of the MSC to our OLSH Sisters in the Philippines, in support of their ongoing COVID-19 relief ministry.

In regions where many families are already living a hand-to-mouth existence, the coronavirus pandemic has made simple survival a priority, and OLSH Sisters in the Philippines are working to provide even the most basic necessities to as many vulnerable communities as possible.

Some of the ways in which the OLSH Sisters have helped local communities thus far are:

- Running a community pantry in Surigao, where families are encouraged to take only what they need. In this way, more families can have access to the food they need.
- The distribution of rice to construction workers in Manila.
- A livelihood programme for families in Lapu Lapu. This programme caters especially to women whose husbands lost their jobs because of lockdowns, teaching them the practical skills they need to earn money to contribute to their family living expenses.
- The provision of care packages to *trisikad* (Philippine pedicab) drivers, who would have earned approximately 150 – 300 Philippine pesos (the equivalent of €2- €5) per day prior to the pandemic.
- A six-day training course took place at the end of July for an indigenous Filipino group called the Badjao, who can no longer use fishing as their main source of income. The skills taught included measuring, cutting, and machine work/sewing, providing those in attendance with useful practical skills that may bring in a much-needed wage.



“This pandemic has opened the minds and hearts of our people to work together as a community and help each other in whatever way we can.

Your generous support has made a big impact in the lives of our poor people whose lives are becoming even more helpless with on-going lockdowns brought about by the detection of new COVID variants. Thank you very much, dear Fr Michael, and the generous donors who enabled you to help us reach out to those most in need. You are helping us reach more people whose daily lives can be made a bit easier with your generosity.

Rest assured of our prayers that God will continue to bless you and protect you from all harm so that you can continue to help others in need.”

*Much gratitude,
Sr Ruth FDNsc*



A new MSC journey in South Sudan

In November 2020, Fr Alan Neville MSC bid farewell to his role as Vocations Director for the Irish Province of the MSC. Travelling to South Sudan, he is now ministering with the Loreto Rumbek community in Maker Kuei.

"Settling into life at Loreto Rumbek has been a special privilege. It originally began as a school in 2008 under a tree in a scrub field 5km outside of the town, that was gifted to the sisters by a local chief. Its purpose was to educate young girls, a challenge in an environment where schooling was almost exclusively restricted to boys. South Sudan is still ranked as the world's most difficult nation in the world for girls to receive an education, with only three out of 100 having the opportunity to go to secondary school. Just over half of all girls are married before they turn 18, and almost one in five are married before they are 15.

Over the last 12 years the project has grown from a few chairs under a tree and now includes a primary school with 1,200 children, a secondary with 300 girls, an agricultural project, and the newly opened primary health care clinic. It hasn't always been plain sailing and 2020 was especially difficult. The pandemic has caused widespread disruption around the world and South Sudan is no exception.

The girls have made real sacrifices to be here, going against societal expectations and cultural pressures. It is still an unfortunate reality that teenage girls here are more likely to die in childbirth than they are to graduate secondary school. Let that sink in for a second. It sounds unbelievable, but it is true. It gives you an idea of what these girls are fighting for – a better future for themselves and for future generations of young women in South Sudan."



*God bless,
or, as they say here,
Bi Nhialic arrer kek yin,
Fr Alan*

A place for prayer in Ecuador del Futuro

MSCs in Ecuador del Sur send their thanks for funding for the construction of a new multi-purpose church and community room for the parish.

"The work has come a long way with your help," writes Fr Moacir Goulart de Figueredo MSC, parish priest in the community of San Francisco de Asís (St Francis of Assisi). "Thanks to the resources sent by the Irish Province, we have managed to finish the walls, install windows, put in doors outside and in the bathrooms, begin construction leading to the second floor, complete work in the kitchen, finish the living room floor, and set up electricity, gas, and drinking water."

"We are already using the space for Masses, catechesis, parent and child meetings, youth groups, altar server training, and music courses," writes Fr Moacir. "Already, we hear people saying, 'This is a miracle of St Francis of Assisi!', 'We are no longer on the street!', 'It is already our special space!', and 'Thank God, you always remember the poor!'"

"The place is beautiful and the people are happy," concludes Fr Moacir. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity. Blessed be God who has given you this generous heart."



Congratulations, Br Giacomo MSC!

On September 8th, Br Giacomo Gelardi MSC made his Perpetual Profession to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Killinarden, Dublin.

"Heartfelt congratulations to Giacomo on the occasion of his Final Profession. We had a really lovely celebration, warmly hosted by the parish and local community. Giacomo's mother, Francesca, his sister, Maria and his brother Luca, had been able to travel from Italy for the celebration. Twelve MSCs also joined Giacomo for the occasion.

Thank you for your 'yes', Giacomo; to the call of the Lord on your heart, and to this little Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and its mission. We are proud to count you as a brother among brothers and continue to hold you in our prayers for the next step of your journey."

- Fr Carl Tranter MSC, Irish Provincial Leader

"It was with great joy that the Chevalier Family celebrated the final vows of Br Giacomo Gelardi MSC. He is now a full member of the Irish Province of the MSC.

Originally from Urbino in north-eastern Italy, Giacomo worked for many years in the pharmaceutical industry. It was in his mid-thirties, while living and working in England, that he felt called to religious life and priesthood.

Giacomo has completed most of his training in our formation house in Dundrum, except for his novitiate year, which he did in Myross Wood in West Cork. Over the last few years, Giacomo has spent a lot of time in our parish of Killinarden in Dublin, so it was appropriate that it was in Sacred Heart Church Killinarden that he made his final profession of vows.

Br Giacomo's journey continues as he moves on to our community in Western Road, Cork. Do keep Giacomo in your prayers as he prepares for Diaconate and then Priesthood. Thank God for his generosity in devoting himself to religious life within the MSCs."

- Fr Con O'Connell MSC, Vocations Director



If you feel that you might have a calling to religious life, please contact our MSC Vocations Team, Fr Con & Fr Tony, at vocations@mscmissions.ie

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A Burse is a sum of money which is set up in honour of God, His Blessed Mother, or one of His servants. We have several Burses from which people can choose – a full list is available on request. The most popular Burses in recent years have been the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and St Padre Pio.

The money donated is invested, and the interest goes towards the education of our students to the priesthood.

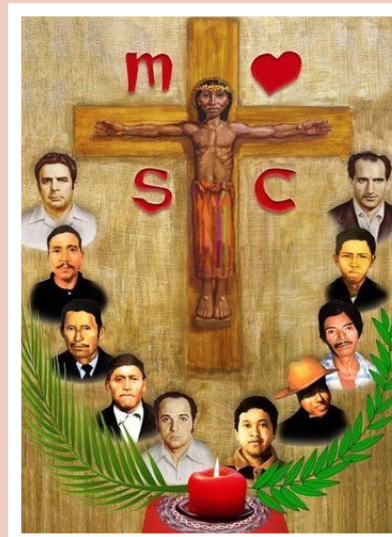
Any donation, large or small, is very much appreciated and is of great help in ensuring that our students are well prepared for the work that lies ahead on the mission fields. You are part of the great work they will do, in future years, in many lands. May God reward you for your kindness.

On April 23rd 2021, three Spanish-born MSC priests and seven lay catechists of the indigenous Maya people became “blessed” and were beatified in the Cathedral of Santa Cruz del Quiché, in El Quiché, Guatemala.

It is estimated that 200,000 people, including Catholic missionaries, priests, and nuns, were killed in Guatemala between 1960 and 1996, when the country was ravaged by conflict between its government military regime and a number of leftist groups. In the 1980s, a

During this time, to stand for what was right in the name of peace was to stand against the military regime. The 10 martyrs were unashamed and unafraid in their faith, assisting those in need in every way they could. From spiritual guidance and visiting the sick, to serving their communities and attempting to right the wrongs of an unjust regime on a local level, both the MSC priests and the lay people maintained the use of the Bible and the rosary despite the very real danger this posed. They eventually sacrificed their lives for their beliefs, and were killed by those in power who considered the teachings of the faith a threat to the system as it stood.

MSC Superior General, Fr Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar, spoke at the



beatification Mass, saying “We are encouraging our MSC brothers to be convinced that the best way to honour the memory of those who gave their life is to remain committed to eradicating the causes that led these three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and seven laity and so many others to shed their blood.”

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