

THE MSC Message



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS



**MSCs rebuilding
homes for earthquake
survivors in Haiti**

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Winter 2022

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

www.mscmissions.ie

From the Director



Dear Friends,

How quickly the year passes! Here we are, once again bracing ourselves for the Winter months - and I hope you can embrace them in turn. The warmth of a welcoming fire on a cold night, a hot cup of tea warming chilly hands, the love and goodwill that light up the Christmas season... Simple blessings to remind us that here's a lot to be said for Winter, after all.

It has been another year of learning for us all. We have all had to learn new ways to cope, new ways to navigate life in recent years, and as restrictions have slowly lifted, we are now coping with the current economic crisis that affects us all. In the midst of these most challenging of circumstances, our global outreach continues. In the coming pages, you'll see several snapshots of our ongoing ministry, from rebuilding homes for earthquake survivors in Haiti, to promoting education in Fiji and Guatemala, and working in harmony with our world at the MSC Centre for the Poor in the Philippines.

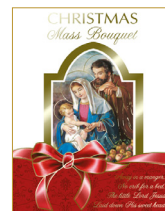
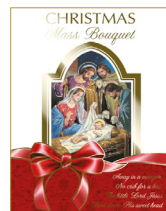
As we look at the year gone by, and all that has been achieved, it is with a grateful heart that I thank you, our mission friends, for walking alongside us on this journey. Rest assured, through your support you can say to yourself that you have helped the world over the past year, and have helped to bring a glimmer of the light of God's love to others on the journey.

With Christmas on the horizon, I wish you and your loved ones the grace and blessings of this special season. Together, we remember all who need our prayers this Winter, especially those who have been displaced by the terrors of war. May we all find peace in our hearts as we embrace the simple and beautiful blessings of the Winter months.

Fr. John Fitzgerald 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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PO Box 23, Western Road, T12 WT72, Cork.

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 26th 2022

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**

Together for progress in the Philippines

Our most recent update from the Philippines comes from Fr Richie Gomez MSC, community leader at the MSC Centre for the Poor, who writes with the highlights of a report on the latest progress of the Centre.

“What has happened at the Centre for the Poor since it was established four years ago, up to this moment, is beyond expectation!” writes Fr Richie. “It has given birth to an agricultural cooperative movement that expresses our concerns, especially regarding the poor and the marginalised in our society. We are dedicated to taking care of the environment and well-being of the people by providing services to the community in terms of spiritual, pastoral, and socio-economic needs.”

“The MSC Centre for the Poor Agricultural Cooperative (MSC-CEPAGCO) is a working arm of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, responding the many difficulties that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, by organising the farmers’ sector to ensure food sustainability and care of our common home,” Fr Richie continues.



The MSC-CEPAGCO has been recognised by the Cooperative Development Authority in the Philippines, and in June received an award from the Department of Agriculture naming them one of the most outstanding Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the country.

“This is a great honour for the Centre,” writes Fr Richie, “reinforcing our unique position as we help and better improve livelihoods and the quality of life of the community.”



The cooperative currently works with 30 young college students, all from disadvantaged backgrounds, on their shared mission to “produce affordable, healthy food for all”. Not only is the cooperative focused on taking care of our earth, and creating sustainable food sources for local communities, it also prioritises development opportunities for young people, or marginalised individuals, who struggle to go beyond backgrounds that may be rooted in severe poverty, hardship, and social issues. “We want to empower the small-scale farmers, youths who are out of school, indigenous cultural communities, those who are working to overcome addiction, and repatriated OFWs (*people from the Philippines who have been living and working abroad*),” Fr Richie explains. Teaching these young or marginalised people invaluable skills, the cooperative allows them to find a place for themselves, playing valuable roles and being an important part of a bigger picture, while also learning useful skills that will help them to find employment opportunities as they move forward in life.



From the construction of brick cooking stoves in several locations, to the implementation of rainwater filtration machines, along with a host of further developments, we congratulate the MSC-CEPAGCO on their tremendous achievements, and wish them every blessing for the future. We are very glad to be part of their ongoing ministry.

OLSH Global Outreach

The latest updates from the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart come from Papua New Guinea and Burkina Faso, West Africa, where the generosity of our mission friends in the Irish Province continues to help transform lives.

A landlocked region of West Africa, Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. This summer, our OLSH Sisters have facilitated the sinking of a well in the Pouléba region, where the Sisters are in the process of founding a community, with plans to open a small dispensary to assist the local people. This well will be an invaluable resource for families in the extended area, where many people have to travel long distances in uncomfortable conditions simply to carry water to their homes.

In addition, a new laundry has been completed in the Hartzler Centre, an aged-care facility in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Work on the laundry has been underway for some time, with progress slowed due to COVID, and it is with great gratitude that Sr Rosaleen O'Brien writes of its completion.

"Please convey our gratitude to all the donors for their great contribution to the laundry project for our aged-care facility," writes Sr Rosaleen. "I do not know what to say, as it is such a help to us here – especially with our infirm patients, who, in this climate, need a lot of care each day. We continue to pray for each person who has donated money for this important project."



A letter from rural Guatemala

The Irish Province of the MSC has long-standing friendship with our MSC brothers at Centro Faustino Villanueva, a vocational institute in rural Guatemala.

A vocational centre dedicated to helping disadvantaged youths, Centro Faustino Villanueva was founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1984, in the rural region of San Agustín, Alta Verapaz.

The Centre was the first of its kind in the region, bringing opportunities for education and progression to poor people with no other hope. The school is situated more than eight hours' drive from Guatemala City, in an extremely remote area. Boarding facilities are available; however, the effect of the coronavirus pandemic has meant that the Centre has suffered greatly in terms of funding and resources, and so the facilities offered have had to be limited as a result.

Fr Jairo Uriel Sevilla Mendoza MSC, Director of Centro Faustino Villanueva, writes in gratitude: "To our benefactors in the Irish Province, who always keep us in mind, in solidarity and support as we

continue on the path to bring dignity to the lives of vulnerable youths. Once again, we send our gratitude for all you have done by supporting us in our ongoing mission. Thanks to you, we are continuing to improve our educational facilities, and accommodating more young people who need our help."

Thanks to the compassion of our mission friends here at home, the Irish Province of the MSC are currently supporting Centro Faustino Villanueva in the development of several different projects, which will help the community at the Centre to continue in the fundamental work that they do in generating positive prospects for the young people of the region.



Current projects at the Centro Faustino Villanueva include:

- Continued development of the school's agricultural programme.
- Utilisation of the rubber and teak plantations located on the property.
- Structural repairs on the property.
- Scholarships for vulnerable students.
- Implementation of new technical courses and workshops.

MSCs building homes in Haiti

This summer, the Irish Province of the MSC have been working with the MSC community in southern Haiti, to support them in the construction of houses in the region of Camp-Perrin, where thousands of local families lost their homes in a devastating earthquake which took place in August 2021.

The people of Haiti have met with many challenges of varying severity in recent years, from natural disasters to political instability and a difficult economic climate. The further issues brought by the COVID-19 pandemic have added another layer of challenge to a society that was already struggling severely.

Currently, the people of southern Haiti are attempting to overcome the fallout of the earthquake that took place on August 14th, 2021.



Camp-Perrin, a mountain settlement, suffered great destruction, with immense damage affecting all aspects of life. The local economy was extremely weak prior to the earthquake, to the point that it could not respond to even 10% of the needs of the local population. This percentage has now fallen further as the economy continues to weaken. The agricultural sector has been almost completely demolished, firstly by the earthquake itself, and now because there is no access to seeds to replant. The landscape was badly damaged by landslides, especially in the mountains, where many people live. The few roads that did exist have been ruined, in many cases irreparably. Rivers have dried up, and the soil is so malnourished that it no longer has the ability to grow produce successfully.

The people too have suffered seriously in a psychological and emotional sense, especially children. Local water and electricity systems have been destroyed, and have not yet been repaired.

**In Camp-Perrin,
3,200 homes were completely destroyed, while
a further 1,100 houses have serious damage.
510 houses have reported minor damage.
Only 290 homes have remained intact in the region.**



In addition to the homes that have been lost, 25 Catholic chapels and churches have been destroyed by the earthquake.

MSCs ministering in the region are doing their best to help those who have lost so much in the wake of this terrible natural disaster. The MSC team there are currently in the completion stages of 14 homes in the region, and are working to raise funds to build 20 more anti-seismic, hurricane-proof houses in rural communities.

The Irish Province of the MSC is proud to support the ministry of our brothers in Haiti who are working to fund the construction of these houses, which are being built with help from local volunteers and the families who will live in them. For people who have suffered so much in so short a time, these homes will be a lifeline, and a promise of hope for years to come. With heartfelt thanks to you, our mission friends, who help to make this work possible.

MSCs together in prayer in South Sudan

Fr Alan Neville writes from South Sudan, where MSC Superior General Fr Abzalón Alvarado spent a week experiencing local ministries in July.

“Soon after arriving in South Sudan in November 2020 for my current appointment, I received a message from Fr Abzalón, the MSC Superior General, wishing me the best with the new mission and saying that he would like to visit one day. Less than two years later, I was finally able to welcome him.

Part of the Superior General’s mission was to see what was happening in Diocese of Rumbek and to explore if there was a need for a greater MSC presence. To that end, we met with the head of religious missionaries in the country, the coordinator of the Jesuit Refugee Service, and Christian Carlassare, the newly ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Rumbek, before travelling to Loreto Rumbek, which served as Fr Abzalón’s base for the week.

Fr Abzalón had the opportunity to explore the Loreto compound, as well as the Catholic University of South Sudan, Rumbek, where I work as principal. We also took part in a 45-km peace walk to the Parish of the Good Shepherd in Thonaduiel, celebrated South Sudan’s Independence Day, spent time in some of the local villages in Maker Kuei, and visited the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Mapourdit.

Having had the opportunity to experience a taste of our current ministry here, Fr Abzalón wrote:

‘The mission ... is a wonderful and prophetic project of education and integral promotion, especially of young women.

The community there struggle day by day to build and transform this challenging and complex, but at the same time, beautiful reality. The Chevalier Family is present in South Sudan.’”



*Sincere thanks for your support
of our missionaries all over the world.
God bless,
Fr Alan*

Forming the future in Fiji

A new term is underway at the Chevalier Training Centre in Fiji, where every year, up to 75 underprivileged boys and young men are given the opportunity to learn new skills and strengthen their prospects for the future.



*Images are from the
Chevalier Training Centre Facebook Page*

Established by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1992, the Chevalier Training Centre is a vocational institute located in Wainadoi, in Namosi, Fiji. The Centre offers a two-year programme in several subjects, including cabinet making, carpentry, automotive studies, farm management, and welding and fabrication.

“We target those youths who are from poor family backgrounds, those who have been neglected by their families, or have been abused, and those who have dropped out of school,” explains the Facebook page for the Chevalier Training Centre. With the Centre running on a residential basis for students to live and study on-site, the educational programme does not simply focus solely on practical teaching, but also incorporates life skills such as time management and the organisation of personal finances.

As the term continues, we keep the community at the Chevalier Training Centre in our prayers, that they may continue to guide disadvantaged or vulnerable youths along the path to a brighter future.

A message from our Vocations team

"What do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

– Mary Oliver

As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, we seek to share with the world our unique "heart spirituality". Who we are and how we engage with the world is deeply enshrined in our Constitutions (our Rules of Life). We say of ourselves that ours is a spirit of family and a spirit of brotherhood, formed in kindness and understanding, by compassion and mutual forgiveness, by gentleness, humility and simplicity, hospitality, and a most importantly a sense of humour! These are important values for us, and this tells you something about who we are, how we work, and the kind of person who is called to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.



Fr Con & Fr Tony
MSC Vocations Directors

"Ordinary men answering an extraordinary call from God"

We are a group of very ordinary men, part of a large and diverse network spread throughout the world. We are ordinary men who have answered an extraordinary call from God, and continue to answer that call every day, to be signs of God's compassion and generosity in a broken and fractured world – a world deeply scarred by war and suffering. We manifest this call by engaging in life through our wide variety of ministries. Those who know us say that Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are open, compassionate, hospitable, and understanding. We are good-humoured men who don't stand on ceremony. They say that we are willing to be there at the most difficult times as a shoulder to lean on, as compassionate support, and at other times to share a joke and celebrate with. In other words, they say we are just very ordinary. This is our great gift: our ordinariness, and our commitment to serve God by our willingness to be present at the most difficult, challenging, and celebratory moments in people's lives. This is a true testament to what we are all about.

So, what do you plan to do with your one precious life? If, like us, you are living an ordinary life, and have a sense of humour and a desire to do something meaningful, yet are struggling to understand what that might be, then perhaps you are being called to celebrate your one precious life as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

If you would like to explore your call, our way of life, charism, or spirituality, our Vocations Team of Fr Con and Fr Tony would be happy to hear from you at vocations@mscmisions.ie

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Fr John Fitzgerald MSC,
MSC Missions Office,
PO Box 23, Western Road,
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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.

Warmest congratulations to our MSCs Fr John Jennings, Fr Charles J. Sweeney, and Fr Diarmuid O'Murchu, who each celebrated their Golden Jubilee this summer.

Fr John is originally from Cork City, and has spent much of his missionary life ministering in Caracas, in Venezuela. Fr Charles, from Ardara in Co. Donegal, is currently based in Galway, where he is dedicated to pastoral ministry in Salthill. Fr Diarmuid, originally from Inchigeela in Co. Cork, is now based in Dublin, and is well renowned as an author and social psychologist.

“These are three MSCs who were ordained on the same day; they have completely different sets of gifts, they have travelled different roads in their ministries, they have each served very different groups of people, and yet, they still share one ambition in life – that the love of God will be known and experienced throughout the world. At the Jubilee Mass, the benefactors and friends who supported the education and subsequent ministries of our three MSCs were remembered and prayed for in a very real way.”

Our prayers and blessings echo Fr John's as he says: "I wish our Jubilarians well, I wish them good health, and I pray that they will continue to serve their call for many years to come." May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved!



Golden Jubilarians Fr John, Fr Charles & Fr Diarmuid



Golden Jubilee celebrations with the MSC community



The old & the new in harmony: MSCs celebrating 50 years with Br Giacomo Gelardi MSC (far right), who is preparing for his ordination in November.

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MSC Missions Office,
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