

THE MSC Message



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS



**Irish Provincial
Fr Joe McGee MSC
visits South Sudan**

Read more on Page 5

In this issue:

- 2.** From the Director
- 3.** MSC News from the Irish Province
- 4.** With thanks from the OLSH
- 5.** MSCs visit South Sudan
- 6.** MSC Missions in Venezuela
- 7.** MSC Vocations
- 8.** News from the Philippines

Winter 2025

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

www.mscmissions.ie

From the Director



Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again... I'm writing with the turning of the seasons, and I pray that the winter months ahead will bring quiet comfort and time for repair and restoration. Our hands might be cold at this time of year, but I hope our hearts will be warm!

What a year it has been. None of us have gone untouched by the atrocities of war and violence that we are seeing appear with increasing regularity, day by day. Our world is in a state of turmoil that is overwhelming to contemplate in its entirety, and it is very easy to be almost overcome by the sheer relentlessness of it all. We must, however, remember to hope. Because in spite of it all, there is hope, there is love, there is faith, and all in great and blessed abundance. You only have to glance at the pages of this newsletter to see this hope in action, to see the generosity of spirit and living compassion that our MSCs witness every single day.

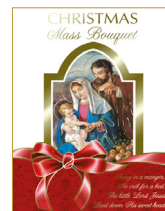
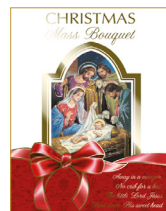
You, our mission friends, give so much - your time, your prayers, your donations, and your friendship. You give it gladly, and the difference it makes, to people who you have never met and will never see face-to-face, is astounding. From South Sudan to Venezuela, from South Africa to South America, encompassing Asia and beyond - the stories you will read here are real and inspiring proof of how one small, simple act of kindness can help to change lives. You are the hope and the light we need in today's world, and on behalf of our MSCs everywhere, I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for continuing to accompany us on our journey.

I leave you today with a prayer for peace and for hope, for you, for your loved ones, and for all who need our prayers. May God bless you and your family with health, peace, and contentment as we bring 2025 to a close and look ahead to a new year, with everlasting hope.

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

MSC Missions Office,

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Telephone: +353 21 454 5704

Fax: +353 21 434 3587

Email: info@mscmisions.ie

Web: www.mscmissions.ie

Suggested Donation €25 or £20 per pack of 5

Light Up a Memory Mass

Saturday, November 1st 2025

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 X for daily news and updates!



Find us at **@MSCMissions**

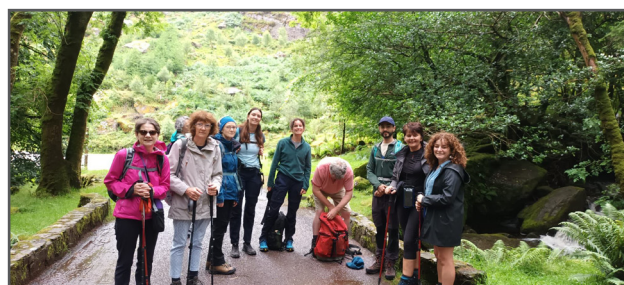
Team MSC hike through Gougane Barra

Our first official 2025 MSC fundraising hike took place in Gougane Barra on Sunday, July 20th, and despite a weather warning falling on the day, it was a resounding success.

A team of 12 hikers, led by Sid from Cork Backpackers and Fiona from the MSC Missions Office, took on an 11.6km hike around beautiful Gougane Barra – and even the rain couldn't dampen their spirits!

The group took the hike at a lovely pace, stopping for breaks and taking in the magnificent landscape over the ancient woodlands of Gougane Barra. The history of the area takes us back as far as the sixth century, when St Finbarr founded his monastery on the island – and according to legend, banished the serpent Lú from the lake, creating the River Lee in its wake!

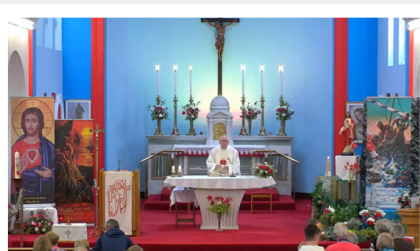
Heartfelt thanks to all who took part on the day, helping to raise over €500 for our ongoing mission projects around the world.



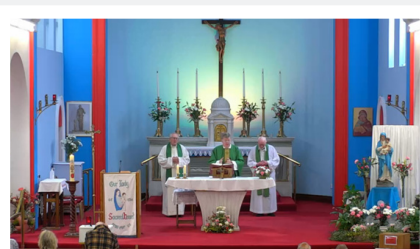
If you would like to take part in future fundraising hikes, please contact us at info@mscmissions.ie to register your interest, and keep an eye on our Facebook page @mscmissions for up-to-date information!

Novenas at the Sacred Heart Church, Cork

Our 2025 Novena to the Sacred Heart took place in June, followed by the Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in August/September, and it is with truly grateful hearts that we thank everybody who helped to make these occasions so special for all involved.



Fr Joe McGee MSC prays during our 2025 Novena to the Sacred Heart (above), while Fr John Fitzgerald MSC celebrates Mass during this year's Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (below).



It was a real blessing to welcome friends and parishioners to the Sacred Heart Church on the Western Road, Cork, for this year's SH & OLSH Novenas, while over 20,000 people joined us in prayer via the live stream on our website, reminding us of our special place in this great family of faith, at home and across the world. This year, mission friends joined us online close to home, from Ireland, the UK, and Europe, while we also welcomed virtual visitors from as far afield as Malaysia, Australia, India, South Africa, Canada – and many more!

A diverse group of MSCs and guest speakers led us in prayer through the Novena to the Sacred Heart, including Fr Con Doherty, Fr Des Farren, Fr Terry O'Brien, Fr Joe McGee, Deacon Thady, Cathy O'Sullivan, and Julianna Crowley. Two Redemptorist friends, Fr Dan Baragry and Fr Brendan O'Rourke, joined Fr John Fitzgerald MSC in praying our 2025 OLSH Novena.

Each of our speakers provided us with pause for thought in their daily reflections, helping us to look ever deeper in our spiritual growth and healing. We are truly grateful to all who contributed to making both Novenas such a resounding success, as we take with us, as Fr Joe McGee said, "the wonderful message to be the heart of God in our world, in whatever little part of the world we inhabit."

To all who joined us in prayer, be it in person or online, your presence has been a blessing and a gift. God bless you all.

Thank you from our OLSH Sisters

Last year, our World Projects Appeal here in the Irish Province raised funds to help the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) on their mission projects across the world, specifically in South America and Africa.

Aiding the elderly in Brazil

One appeal saw €16,000 raised to help senior citizens in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The OLSH Sisters run a centre for senior parishioners there, with classes incorporating everything from choir sessions to computer and technology programmes, and a host of other activities in between, including yoga and crafts for the aged. These workshops are free and are held twice a week, and it is a wonderful place for elderly parishioners to meet and enjoy the company of others, while developing new skills.

"Some years ago, you funded computers for the centre, and they are still much appreciated!," wrote Sr Jenny Christie, International Development Officer for the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in a recent update.

"Now, we have raised funds to renovate the senior centre, including a new roof and the repair of the floors." The newly renovated roof will also capture rain water, which can then be used sustainably in the toilets and gardens. "The Sisters and parishioners are most grateful for the kindness of the generous donors and to all at the MSC Missions Office," says Sr Jenny.



Making music in South America



Thanks to our benefactors, we were also able to help Sr Marie Jose to provide musical instruments for a youth group she runs in Sao Paulo, Brazil. These new instruments will enable local youths to learn new skills individually and as a group, and to develop their musical talents.

"The instruments are very much appreciated," says Sr Jenny "As ever, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are most appreciative of your generosity. We remember you in our prayers, with gratitude."



Feeding the future in West Africa

Finally, funds were raised for an OLSH school in Zagatouli, Burkina Faso. Located in West Africa, Burkina Faso is one of the least developed countries in the world, and the people there suffer greatly with high levels of poverty and crime.

The OLSH Sisters run a nursery school and a primary school in Zagatouli, where they provide two snacks and a meal each day for the pupils. In this way, they guarantee that vulnerable young children receive much-needed nourishment. The children have been eating in their classrooms, or outdoors, and the Sisters have been raising funds to build a dining room so that students can eat in comfort. Thanks to the generosity of our mission friends here in the Irish Province, the dining room project is now underway.

"The materials have arrived and all is ready to go!," wrote Sr Jenny. "We are very grateful for your help with this project."



Irish MSCs in South Sudan

This summer, Irish Provincial Leader Fr Joe McGee MSC travelled to South Sudan, accompanied by Fr Charles Sweeney MSC. There, they visited Fr Alan Neville, an Irish MSC who has been living and working in Rumbek, South Sudan, for the past five years.

Fr Alan has joined forces with the Loreto Sisters in Rumbek, who run both a primary and secondary school, and who champion education for vulnerable young women in particular. Fr Alan works as chaplain at the Loreto Schools, while he is also principal at the Catholic University in Rumbek, where young women are afforded the chance to achieve a third-level education against the odds. Student grants, after-hours study programmes, and the option to bring babies and young children to classes are just some of the ways in which this is made possible.



Over half of young South Sudanese girls are married before the age of 18, and it is reported that a young girl in South Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth than she is to complete secondary school. Fr Alan, the Loreto Sisters, and the communities at both the schools and universities are doing all that they can to give these young women the chance of a bright and fulfilling future, for themselves, for their families, and for their society.



Fr Joe and Fr Charles also visited a hospital in Mapourdit which is run by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Here, the Sisters do all they can to provide vital healthcare to the local population, with extremely basic and limited facilities.



"Education is key," said Fr Joe, following his trip to Rumbek.

"In this society, everything centres around men, and young women are often forced into arranged marriages. While it will take generations, education is gradually changing the mindset of young women and of society. These girls have great ambition, they want to make a difference and their motivation is very impressive – they will be the future leaders of their country."

Food and medical care in Venezuela

MSCs in Venezuela are continuing in their ministry in the *barrios* of Maracaibo and Caracas, helping families and communities in these urban neighbourhoods where the populations are very poor and families live in extremely overcrowded conditions. Poverty is rife here, with many resorting to desperate measures in order to feed their children.

Bro Deiby Fuenmayor sent us a recent update with photographs from the current MSC ministry in Maracaibo and Caracas.

In Maracaibo, "solidarity pots" are distributed every Wednesday and Saturday, providing nutritious food for the communities of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Virgen del Carmen, Mary Help of Christians and St Joseph, and Our Lady of Hope. This food reaches up to 300 people in each of these communities, providing vital nutrition to hungry families.



Bro Deiby also sent photos from Caracas, where essential medical care is provided on Wednesdays and Sundays at the La Inmaculada Medical Center.



Irish MSCs Fr Tom O'Brien, Fr John Jennings, and Fr Tom Jordan minister across Maracaibo and Caracas, working with local communities to provide spiritual support to those in need, and bring food to nourish the sick and housebound.

In a society where people are struggling daily with hunger, hardship, poverty, fear, and unrest, our MSCs are doing everything in their power to ensure that as many people as possible are provided with the food and medical aid they so desperately need. We keep our MSC brothers, and the communities they serve across Venezuela, in our prayers.



Summer prayer in Mozambique

Summer 2025 brought wonderful celebrations to the MSC mission in Mozambique, with a beautiful ceremony honouring Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in May, and a special Pentecost Vigil in June, attended by the current group of MSC students on the Mozambique mission.

The parish of Santa Marta hosted both events, with all its customary enthusiasm and joy! Fr José Eduardo presided over a celebration of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at the end of May, the Month of Mary, and the ceremony was one of "great joy and faith", "enriched by songs, prayers, and expressions of deep spirituality". The community gathered to pray together to Our Lady, "who welcomes us with tenderness and leads us to the Heart of her Son Jesus". "This was a time of renewal of faith, trust and surrender," writes the Facebook page for MSC Mozambique.



On Saturday, June 7th, the Pentecost Vigil Mass "brought together youth from the parishes of Vigararia East in the Diocese of Pemba". Participants were joined by the MSC students on the mission, for an evening of "prayer, reflection, and brotherly sharing, in a true breath of the Spirit that renewed hearts and strengthened the fellowship and missionary fervor of the participants". The following morning, a Pentecost Mass brought an end to the celebrations, "where everyone gathered as a living Church invoked the Holy Spirit to illuminate and guide the path of youth and mission".

These pictures truly embody the wonderful spirit of community and faith in the parish of Santa Marta and beyond, as we continue to keep our MSC brothers, students, and the communities they serve in the Diocese of Pemba in our prayers.

Images via the Facebook page for MSC Mozambique ~ @peduardopaixaomsc

**If you feel that you might have a calling to religious life, please contact Fr Con O'Connell MSC
by email at vocations@mscmissions.ie**

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Burses to help train our student missionaries

Enclosed is my donation of towards Burse

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*Please subscribe to the
Burse of your choice for
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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. You are part of the great work they will do, in future years, in many lands. May God reward you for your kindness.

- ☐ Sacred Heart
☐ Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
☐ St Anthony
☐ St Padre Pio
☐ St Jude

This summer saw great activity across our MSC community in the Philippines, as the students at the MSC Centre for the Poor in Butuan City took on the Green Stewardship initiative, and an outreach programme in Libis Baesa provided vulnerable children with school supplies.

The Facebook page for the MSC Centre for the Poor reported on the Green Stewardship programme, sharing photos of the students working on “an enriching planting activity that reflects our dedication to sustainability and our roles as stewards of creation”, promoting the centre’s “commitment to environmental care and community involvement”.

"By becoming green stewards, our scholars showed that leadership isn't just about academic excellence—it's also about caring for the Earth and inspiring change through action."



Libis Baesa is a highly populated region in the city of Calcoen, and the children here struggle greatly with the effects of poverty and hardship. The MSC Mission Office in the Philippines, in conjunction with the MSC Centre for the Poor, have run successful feeding programmes for the children in the past, and this summer, have provided essential educational supplies to a grateful school community.

"On June 12, 2025, our joyful scholars from Libis Baesa received school supplies, joined by Fr Samuel Patriarca, Manila District Superior, and our chapel leaders," reported the Facebook page for the MSC Mission Office in the Philippines, as they shared pictures of the children receiving their new learning materials.



Images via Facebook ~ @CenterFTPoorMSC and @mscmmissionphil

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