

THE MSC Message



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS



**Crisis relief aid in
the Philippines**

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2026

Summer 2026

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

www.mscmissions.ie

From the Director



Dear Friends,

Hello and welcome to the Summer 2026 edition of our MSC Message. What a time to be here, especially as we look back over the past 60 years on this very special anniversary year for our MSC Missions Office. We have copies of our MSC Message dating back decades, and it is heartening to see how much – and how little – things change over time. It is clear to see that the work our MSCs have done and continue to do makes a real and great difference in different places of need around the world, transforming lives and indeed saving lives throughout the years. And then we have the loyal and steady support and friendship of our mission family, often passing on throughout generations, an invaluable constant that is a golden thread of hope and faith, weaving through the journey of the past 60 years.

It is like the sunrise – something that we might not always see, especially on stormy days, but something we know is there, day after day. It’s possible to live in quite an artificial world these days – our nights are lit by artificial light, we are exposed to all sorts of artificial news, and we could well believe that a lot of our food is artificial too! The real truth is in the light itself, in the dawn, because no matter what we do, the sun rises and there is light behind the clouds.

This is important to remember during the dark days, whether we face personal challenges, or are overwhelmed by the events of the world around us. It is so important to remember that the light is there – the good is there, faith and hope and love are all there. You see it in the laugh of a child, in the birdsong outside the window, in the sunshine and the raindrops and the flowers that find a way to bloom year after year, no matter what the weather throws at them. We see it in the generosity and compassion of our mission family, and the support and encouragement you offer our MSCs every single day, and with every passing year.

This is the light in action, you are the light in action. We can all be the light, and we should all try to be the light when we can. In this newsletter, you’ll read stories of light from all over the world, from Africa and the Philippines and South Sudan and Ecuador and beyond. What a gift it is to be able to share news of hope and positivity and light, as we continue in this great legacy of the past 60 years. May the Sacred Heart bless you and your family with his love and light, and may your summer be a peaceful and uplifting one.

Fr. John Fitzgerald MSC
 Director of the MSC Missions Office



Join us on an uplifting spiritual journey on our annual pilgrimage to Fatima



Journey with us on a pilgrimage promising reflection, renewal, and peaceful prayer, led by Spiritual Director Fr Joe McGee MSC.



For more information on the trip and fundraising, please call Mary at 021 454 6691 or email mary.morrish@mscmissions.ie www.mscmissions.ie/news-media/fatima-pilgrimage/ Dates: September 22nd - 26th 2026

Do you have a Will to give?

After you have taken care of your loved ones in your Will, it would be a great blessing to us if you would consider leaving a bequest to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

During our time on earth, we all have the power to touch lives and to make a difference. You can continue to be a force for good in the world, even beyond your own lifetime. Your lasting legacy can be one of hope, as your gift will support our MSCs in their life-changing work in regions of real and desperate need around the world.

Please help us to pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

For further information, contact: MSC Missions Office
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 +353 (0) 21 4545704 or email info@mscmissions.ie
 Visit our website: www.mscmissions.ie (RCN) 20006402

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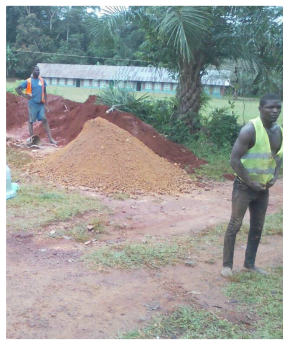
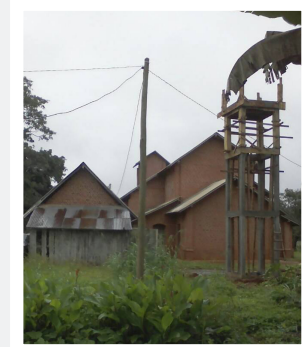
Find us at @MSCMissions

Powering a parish in Cameroon

One of our latest mission projects is funding solar panels for a very poor mission station in the Equatorial forest of Cameroon.

The parish of Our Lady of the Assumption was founded in Bengbis, Cameroon, in 1937. Situated in the heart of the Equatorial forest, it is extremely isolated and populated by four groups: the Yekombo, the Yetchang, the Maka, and the Pygmies in the Dja canton.

In this extremely rural community, the electrical system is powered by a generator that is not sufficient to meet the needs of the entire area. This means that the town constantly struggles with low voltage that is insufficient to reliably power lighting, the community's large appliances, and the operation of the local well, which provides drinking water. Most notably, the parish medical centre is affected dreadfully by these lapses in power, which is highly detrimental to its vital work in serving local regions.



“When the power fails because of a lack of generator fuel or sustainable power, critical services in the clinic suffer,” writes parish priest Fr Gadam Dieudonné Valentin MSC. In addition, the location of the parish means that it is so far from nearby towns, a regular supply of fuel can never be assured, adding to the unreliability of the electricity supply.

“Faced with this critical and urgent situation, it is wise, sustainable, and imperative, to resort to alternative means of electrification, such as solar panels,” writes Fr Gadam. Coming in a cost of just under €10,000, these solar panels will provide a reliable and sustainable supply of electricity to the area. Thanks to the loyal support of our mission friends here at home, we are glad to be able to help our MSC brothers in the Cameroon with funding for the solar panels, which will be hugely benefit the quality of life of communities in the region.

Earth Hour in the Philippines

The community at the Fr Jules Chevalier MSC Mission Centre in Lapu-Lapu City in the Philippines came together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Earth Hour at 8.30pm on Saturday, March 28th. The event encourages people all over the world to switch off their lights for one hour, instead helping the environment for positive impact.

“We turned off all lights, using only candles and a bonfire to create a calm and reflective atmosphere,” said their Facebook page. “The evening began with the Holy Rosary, followed by a sharing on how we can help care for the Earth, and concluded with a joyful praise and worship through song. It was a meaningful reminder of our faith, unity, and responsibility for creation.”

Image via the Facebook page for the Fr Jules Chevalier, MSC Mission Centre

MSCs sharing joy in Ecuador

MSCs have been ministering in Ecuador for almost 30 years, since 1998. Currently, Fr Marcelo Campoverde and Fr Jose Baak are working across two mission areas in the parishes of San Francisco de Asís and San Juan Evangelista, ministering to more than 30,000 people across over 50 communities. These indigenous communities are extremely poor and live in very isolated rural locations, and our MSCs work to support them through many and varied challenges including malnutrition (especially in children), poor educational and employment opportunities, and the difficulties of living in remote areas with harsh desert climate.

In recent years, our mission friends here at home have been greatly compassionate in their support of our mission in Ecuador, raising funds for a new parish kitchen, repairs to the church, pastoral centre, and parish house, and food baskets for hungry families.

Fr Marcelo sent us some wonderful photos of Lenten celebrations at the parish of St John the Evangelist in Palmira. “We started with a large gathering, where more than 600 people participated,” Fr Marcelo wrote. “It was a beautiful experience, a truly beautiful encounter with God.”

“We don’t have a parish kitchen or dining hall here. You’ll see from some of the photos that the women cook in an open space. But the weather was kind to us; if it rained, we wouldn’t have eaten. It was a unique experience. My next dream is to see if we can build a kitchen and dining hall for these events. I’ve placed this dream in God’s hands; we’ll see what happens in the future. In the meantime, with great joy, I want to share our Lenten celebrations with you.”



“No-one left behind” in the Philippines

Fr Edwin Borlasa from the MSC Mission Office in the Philippines sent us some powerful photos documenting relief aid in four regions following natural disasters in 2025. “In response to a series of devastating natural calamities and fires across August and September, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart through the MSC Mission Office mobilized a comprehensive, four-part relief project providing critical aid to communities [in need],” reports the Mission Office.

“In total, 492 families, who had lost their homes and belongings to severe flooding and destructive fires, received essential support.”

“These events included widespread flooding from Typhoon Crising, destructive fires, and a severe flash flood from an overflowing creek,” reports the Philippines Mission Office.

Through emergency fundraising, local support, and assistance from other MSC Provinces, the MSC Mission Office in the Philippines were able to act instantly to support the hundreds of families and individuals who had found themselves devastated by floods and fires, “significantly alleviating their immediate suffering and providing a foundation for recovery”.

“The missions were met with immense gratitude from the beneficiaries and stand as a powerful testament to the impact of collective compassion and swift action in times of crisis,” write the team in the Philippines.

Once again, we see the tremendous power of compassion and togetherness in action – none of this is possible alone, yet together, our MSCs across the world, encouraged by the support of our benefactors, can continue to change lives and save lives in the most critical situations.



Images via Facebook @mscmisionphil.

A walk down Memory Lane

This year, we're celebrating the 60th anniversary of the MSC Missions Office on the Western Road, Cork, and as part of our anniversary commemorations, we're looking back on old issues of our newsletter, the MSC Message, on a walk together down Memory Lane.

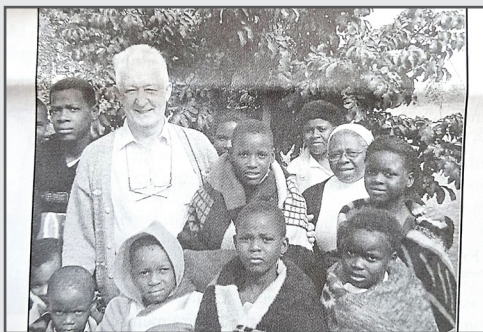
In 2006, a page dedicated to stories from the MSC Mission Fields shared news from MSCs Fr Vinnie Screene and Fr Adrian McHugh, who were ministering in Venezuela and South Africa respectively.

"Fr. Vinnie Screene, msc – a native of Skehanagh, Co. Galway – is seen here with volunteer helpers in one of our Soup Kitchens in Maracaibo, Venezuela."

"Whilst on holiday in Ireland recently Fr. Vinnie told us that one of his big tasks on his return to Maracaibo would be assisting poor families with the cost of school books. MSCs regard education as the foundation to enable poor people to better themselves. Distribution of food parcels to sustain poor families is a regular part of missionary work."



Fr Vincent Screene MSC, Venezuela 2006



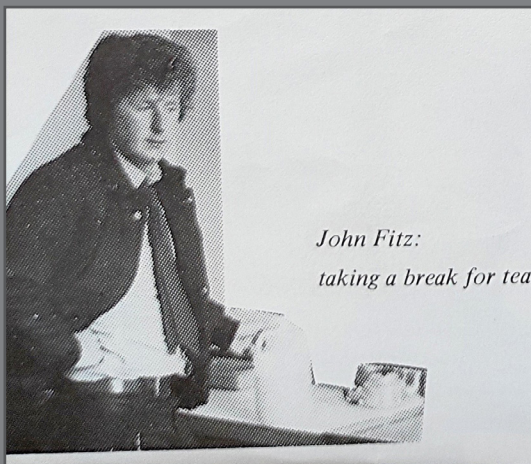
Fr Adrian McHugh, from Swinford, Co. Mayo, was pictured with a group of very vulnerable children receiving warm blankets in Musina, South Africa.

"Whilst South Africa is known for its blistering heat, the temperature can drop well below zero during the winter. The cold added to poor diet and nutrition along with bad housing creates great hardship especially for children and old people. At St. Martin's School vegetables and maize are cooked in large pots in the yard to provide a nutritious meal for children. Fr. Adrian is now planning a Drop-In Centre for AIDS sufferers and their families. AIDS is a huge problem. Africa has 10% of the world's population but 90% of AIDS sufferers."

Fr Adrian McHugh MSC, South Africa 2006

A familiar face pops up in an edition of the MSC Message covering the events of 1982/1983...

Our very own Fr John Fitzgerald, current director of the MSC Missions Office, is pictured taking a break for tea. It's nice to see that some things don't change!



*John Fitz:
taking a break for tea*

We finish with a beautiful poem published in the MSC Message 20 years ago - a reflection on happiness from St Thérèse of Lisieux.

My joy!

"Happiness – people search for it in vain: it's not on earthly ground; With me, it's quite the opposite – it's in my heart that joy is found. This joy – don't think it comes and goes:

Coming to me, it came to stay. Delighting like a fresh spring rose it smiles upon me every day."

~ St Thérèse of Lisieux

Full hands and full hearts in Maker Kuei

Healthy Start Programme for Twin Babies

It's a joy to be able to share the most recent updates we've received from the Mary Ward Primary Health Care Clinic in Maker Kuei, South Sudan, where the Loreto Sisters are running a specialised care programme for twin babies from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the support of our mission friends here in the Irish Province, and Fr Alan MSC in Rumbek.

"At the moment, we have 24 sets of twins and one set of triplets in the programme," writes Sr Helena. "The children are usually brought to us shortly after birth and leave them programme when they reach the age of nine months."

The programme provides medical and nutritional care for young babies at high risk of malnutrition and disease, as families simply cannot afford to care properly for two infants, while breastfeeding mothers are often not able to produce enough milk due to lack of sufficient nutrition for themselves. The Loreto Sisters give these babies the treatment they need for the first nine months of their lives, while also equipping their caregivers with the skills and knowledge they need to sustain these improvements beyond the scope of the programme.



For mothers like Mary Amat, the PHCC's programme have been nothing short of life-changing. "The nutrition programme is a great help to this community and most especially to me with my twin babies," Mary shared, carrying her now lively children. "My children had a lot of health issues because I was not producing enough milk and couldn't afford the powdered milk in the market because it is simply too expensive for us". When Mary first brought her twins to the PHCC, they were ten months old but weighed as much as five-month-old infants due to prolonged undernourishment. "I couldn't believe they became this healthy after the nine months that they have been in the program," she says with a bright smile.

This May, the MSC team are walking St Declan's Way to raise vital funds for the Healthy Start facility in Maker Kuei. Our own Fr Alan Neville MSC has been living and ministering in South Sudan since 2020, and he continues to work closely with the Loreto Sisters in their ongoing work in medical care and education in the Rumbek region.

Thank you from Fr Alan in South Sudan

Fr Alan Neville MSC has been in touch from Rumbek, South Sudan, with a special message for our mission friends and benefactors here in the Irish Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Last summer, our mission friends here helped us to raise funds to support Fr Alan and the team at the Catholic University of South Sudan in Rumbek in their untiring efforts to support education, particularly for young women, in the region. In a country that has suffered so greatly, young people, especially young women, need to work extremely hard for their education, yet the benefits will help to build a brighter and stronger future for the next generation in Rumbek and beyond.

"This is a message of thanks to everybody who has been so generous in supporting the Mission Support Centre appeal last year for the Catholic University here," says Fr Alan. "We are currently digging the foundations for a new teacher education block. Education here has a long way to go, there have been many decades of under-investment during the time of the Sudan government, and now the people are working very hard to build up primary and secondary education, and here we are working too to train secondary school teachers so they can go back to their communities and they can really lift up the young people they have there to help them to build their country."



MSC Vocations in Mozambique

This year sees great promise for our MSC mission in Mozambique, where five young men are beginning their formation journey.



In January, Fr José Eduardo Paixão and Fr Roney Lima visited the young men beginning their missionary journey, at their family homes. A post on the MSC Mozambique Facebook page reads:

“In this formative year, the House will welcome five young people: Cristiano and Naldo, from the district of Gilé, in the Province of Zambezia; Estevão, from the district of Alto Molocué, also from Zambézia; Hélder, from the district of Meconta, in Nampula Province; Áfido, born in Chiúre, residing in the city of Pemba, in Cabo Delgado. They are simple names, linked to concrete places, but loaded with a larger story that begins to take shape in the time of discernment.”

This year, the Fr Júlio Chevalier Formation House will be home to 13 students in total, all “united by the same desire to listen, learn and let oneself be led” in the love of the Sacred Heart.

“A vocation is not imposed, it is proposed. God passes through people’s lives with the delicacy of those who call by name and wait. It is important to emphasize that every vocation is an Easter journey. There are questions that remain open, there are silences that educate the heart, there are falls that purify listening. The essential thing is to remain available, with your heart attentive to the One who calls and does not withdraw your trust. May this formative stage be, for each person in formation, a time of inner rootedness, where life allows itself to be shaped with humility, freedom and fidelity to the call that comes from God and always leads further, deeper and truer.”



MSC Mozambique on Facebook @peduardopaixaomsc

If you feel that you might have a calling to religious life, please contact
Fr Con O’Connell MSC.
Email: vocations@mscmiissions.ie

Please cut here ✂

Burses to help train our student missionaries

Enclosed is my donation of towards Burse

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PO Box 23, Western Road,
Cork, T12 WT72, Ireland.

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

