

ADJ. 8475

THE SOCIETY OF THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

By J. F. N.



No. 57

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR PRESS
Huntington, Indiana



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THE SOCIETY OF THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The purpose of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions is to promote the sowing of the seeds of faith in pagan lands, and to assist newly-received converts in establishing their centers of worship. To this end it seeks to enroll "all followers of the Catholic and Apostolic faith", who will pool their daily prayers that Christ's "Kingdom may come", and become sharers in the merits of the many thousands of missionaries by contributing a mite each year toward their support.

The "greatness of the harvest", or the magnitude of the missionary field, is astonishing. It embraces whole continents and a thousand islands in the seas, housing more than a thousand million "creatures" to each of which the gospel must be preached. In the year 1930 there were 477 mission territories, 130 of which had been erected during the first eight years of the pontificate of the present gloriously reigning Pope.

In these mission fields the "laborers" seem not to be "few", numbering as they did four years ago, 14,886 priests, 5,137 Brothers, 30,939 Sisters, 61,941 Catechists, 43,018 teachers, 20,196 baptizers, 250 physi-

cians, 850 nurses—a grand total of 175,000 men and women—who are “spending themselves and being spent” for the salvation of “other sheep” still bound by the shackles of heathenism and paganism.

Four years ago there were in these mission areas 1,609 orphanages, sheltering 76,528 children; 667 hospitals, in which 24,383 cases were handled; 2,222 dispensaries, in which 15,533,702 sick people were treated.

The total number of Catholics in missions under the Propaganda is about 14,000,000, served from 46,000 churches and chapels—more than twice the number existing in the United States.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, extremely humble in its beginning, had, even before the World War, grown to be the greatest source of inspiration and sustenance to the great army of modern apostles, now representative of all Christian nations, engaged in the work of world evangelization.

Headquarters Moved to Rome

Founded at Lyons, France, in 1882, this Society maintained its headquarters there until 1922, when the general offices were transferred to Rome, where they properly belonged after the Supreme Shepherd of Christ’s entire flock decided to designate it the official and best suited Pontifical agency for the collection of mission funds. In

Rome the Holy Father has that contact with the Society which is needed for judicious counsel and administration.

In a special *Motu Proprio* entitled "ROMANORUM PONTIFICUM", Pius XI, in the first year of his pontificate, announced his purpose to the entire Christian world, and besought all his brethren in the hierarchy, even those in mission territories, to establish branches of the Society in their respective dioceses. He said:

"The Society for the Propagation of the Faith will be the instrument in the hands of the Holy See for the collection everywhere of the alms of the faithful and their distribution among all Catholic Missions.

"So pleasing is this Society to our heart that to all who are enrolled in it we willingly open the heavenly treasures of the Church of which it has pleased the Most High to constitute us the dispensers."

What a consolation to the "Pope of the Missions" to note that conversions in heathen lands have numbered almost 1,000,000 per year during His pontificate! He has seen 3,000 priest-workers added to the teaching apostolate, of whom more than 1,000 are natives; has witnessed the establishment of 150 minor seminaries; has induced some 20 more societies of men, and

some 130 more societies of women to assume foreign mission obligations.

The Sovereign Pontiff's grief over apostasies from the Faith in the countries of Europe, heretofore boastful of their Christianity, is in part assauged by the comforting thought that laborers are actually rushing into the vineyard so long uncultivated in China, Japan, Africa, and India, even though they know they will "not be paid what is just" in this world.

Allocations of the funds accruing from world-wide collections for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions indicate what are regarded as the principal foreign mission fields of the world. Once a year the entire sum in the treasury is distributed. For the year 1933 the aggregate collections from all sources, amounting to \$3,467,264.70, were distributed as follows, according to a report of Rev. John Considine, M. M., writing in CATHOLICS MISSIONS for January, 1934:

Division	Sum Allocated	Percent of Whole
Africa	\$ 842,450.39	24.3%
China	780,923.08	22.5%
India	400,038.46	11.5%
Oceania	294,830.31	8.5%
America	268,692.31	7.8%
Japan	186,692.31	5.4%
Europe	181,360.85	5.2%

Western Asia and		
Russia	169,430.85	4.9%
Indo-China	114,384.61	3.3%
Special allotments to the Holy Father and the Cong. of Propaganda	228,461.53	6.6%
	\$3,467,264.70	100%

It will be noted that Africa received more than any other country. In this continent of 150,000,000 people, there are 15,000 missionaries working in 35 political divisions, under 130 Bishops and Prefects Apostolic. In Africa Catholics number 5,400,000, or about one to every twenty-seven non-Catholics. Converts numbered, in round numbers, 150,000 last year—three times as many as in the United States.

Reverend Peter Coenen, writing in the *HOLY CHILDHOOD ANNALS* for January-February, 1934, declares that he supervises fourteen mission stations, in each of which about 1,000 pagans are converted annually; that each mission station covers an area equal to that of an average diocese in Catholic countries. He declares that 80,000 are under instruction in his territory, and that 1,000,000 more are eager to be received into the Church.

In China, where 440,000,000 live, there are some 9,000 missionary workers who, last year, received into the Church 69,000

members. The latest report shows China to harbor 2,624,000 Catholics, or one to each one hundred seventy non-Catholics—not as bad as in some states in our Union.

China received last year from the Propagation of the Faith fund \$780,923.08, or 22.5% of the total, representing an average allocation of \$87.00 per missionary.

Of India's population—some 325,000,000—Catholics count, in round numbers, 3,500,000, which represents a ratio of one to ninety non-Catholics,—a better ratio than exists in a number of our States.

Only Japan and Korea jointly have a lower proportion of Catholics in relation to the total population than North Carolina and Georgia in our own country. Japan counts 210,000 Catholics among 86,000,000 inhabitants, which represents a ratio of one to four hundred non-Catholics.

The reader may be surprised to learn that there is only one Catholic of the Uniate rite to every three hundred of Greece's population. There the Catholics number 21,000 among 6,000,000, and progress is extremely slow due to the century-old antipathy of the Greek towards the Latin.

In Russia, included among the Near East Missions, there are about 1,550,000, who would practice the Catholic religion if they had the opportunity. This means about one to every hundred of the population.

American Help Invaluable

One can readily surmise how great became the problem of supporting the missions following the World War. The people of the impoverished nations of Europe, themselves objects of charity, could give little. The United States, which played the role of Santa Claus in numerous ways to most of the world during the long reconstruction period, was called on to carry a bigger portion of the burden of the missions. The Holy Father was not disappointed at the response to his plea that in every diocese under the Stars and Stripes the Pontifical Mission Society be organized.

While an analysis will disclose a ridiculously small per capita contribution from American Catholics during the boom years between 1925 and 1930, yet the sum total dispatched to Rome prevented such a treasury deficit as would have spelled catastrophe. Then came the industrial depression, which dealt a harder blow to ours than to any other nation. Our collections became smaller, memberships in the Pontifical Society were not renewed, Mass intentions declined. The result—all missionaries, foreign and native, here, during the past four years, labored under the handicap of inadequate support.

Recalling that the early Church in the United States was one of the first beneficiaries of the Society for the Propagation

of the Faith, that the alms on which the French and Spanish missionaries depended for the spread of the Gospel among our aborigines were European alms contributed to the tune of \$7,000,000.00, and dispensed through this Society, Foreign Missions should have a strong appeal to the Catholics of this country. On the principle "return the favor" American Catholics should catch the mission spirit—even if to assist in bringing the Faith to others were not the best way of showing one's appreciation for having previously received it.

II

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF CATHOLIC MISSIONS

There is probably a greater percentage of paganism in the United States today than there has been at any time in its history. More than 70,000,000 of our total population are unattached to any religious organization. Millions, who claim affiliation with the churches, have never received the Sacrament of Baptism, and are, therefore, in Catholic eyes, pagans. There are some states in our country in which Catholics bear a smaller ratio to non-Catholics than Catholics in China bear to the total population; several more in which the relative proportion is smaller than in India; and many, in which the proportionate strength is far below that of Africa.

The unevenness of Catholic distribution over our forty-eight states is actually remarkable. From the proportion of one Catholic to one non-Catholic in Rhode Island, of two Catholics to five non-Catholics in Massachusetts and Connecticut, of one Catholic to four non-Catholics in Illinois, of one Catholic to six non-Catholics in Ohio, of one Catholic to nine non-Catholics in Indiana, the ratio widens until we find less than one Catholic to one hundred non-Catholics throughout many of the southern and some of the western states, one Catholic to three hundred non-Catholics in Georgia, and one Catholic to three hundred and seventy non-Catholics in North Carolina.

The Diocese of Brooklyn, confined within 1,000 square miles, has more than 1,000,000 Catholics, or 1,000 Catholics to the square mile. Within its 1,100 square mile area the Providence Diocese counts more than 800,000 Catholics. Neither the Archdiocese of Boston, with an area of 2,500 square miles, nor the Archdiocese of Chicago, with 3,600 square miles, is nearly as densely settled by Catholics as Brooklyn or Providence.

Contrast the Catholic strength in these dioceses with that of most episcopal jurisdictions of the west and south and you will better grasp what we mean when we say that the Catholic population of the United States is as unevenly distributed as the Catholic population of foreign mission

lands. Baker City, for instance, counts 9,000 Catholics in an area of 68,000 square miles, or one Catholic to every $7\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Reno has 9,000 Catholics scattered over 111,000 square miles, or one Catholic to every $12\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Boise and Salt Lake City have one Catholic to every $4\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Cheyenne, one Catholic to every 4 square miles; Montana has one Catholic to every 2 square miles; the States of Tennessee and Mississippi have one Catholic to every $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Charleston has one Catholic to every 3 square miles; Raleigh has one Catholic to every $5\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Florida has one Catholic to each square mile.

But think of Alaska, which is territory under the American Board of Catholic Missions, having only 10,000 Catholics in an area of 586,000 square miles,—territory twelve times the size of the State of New York—or one Catholic to every 58 square miles.

With so much foreign mission territory on our own continent, closed to all assistance from the Society for Foreign Missions, we are not at all surprised that, some twelve years ago, several mission-minded Bishops of the United States met and deliberated on a plan for systematic support of missions both at home and abroad by joint effort. They did devise a plan which, after being proposed to the hierarchical body assembled at annual meeting

in Washington in the year 1923, was there formally adopted, and then presented to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide. It was submitted to Rome in a resolution which read as follows:

“The Archbishops and Bishops of the country are urged to organize in their diocese for the support of the Missions. That unless otherwise organized, the Ordinary may establish in every parish one sodality or society to include every adult parishioner as members or subscribers, each to contribute a dollar each year, and the children contributing five cents each month or fifty cents a year. All such members, as we are informed, will gain all indulgences now granted to members of the Confraternity of the Propagation of the Faith.

“In addition to the above a Sunday of the year is to be set aside as Mission Sunday, on which a collection will be taken up to enable those who are not members to contribute nevertheless to the support of the missions and to enable the members to add to the ordinary annual fees for the support of the missions.

“Of the total amount obtained from all these sources, sixty cents of every dollar obtained is to be sent to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide for the Foreign Missions, and the

remaining forty cents is to be sent to the American Board of Catholic Missions for the Home Missions after the expenses of the diocesan director's office have been paid.

“Finally, it is hoped, from information received, that this latter plan in accordance with the Bishops' original ideas, will be approved and proposed by the Holy See for general use, but in the meantime each Bishop has the permission of the Holy See to introduce this plan into his diocese.”

In a Pontifical Audience granted November 7th, 1924, the resolution was laid before His Holiness by His Eminence, the Cardinal Prefect of the S. Congregation de Fide, and His Holiness fully approved the motion of the Hierarchy of the United States.

Commenting on this endorsement by the Holy See of the plan of the American Bishops for the support of both Foreign and Home Missions, Most Rev. P. Fumasoni Biondi, then Apostolic Delegate, wrote to the Bishops of the United States:

“Accordingly, all those who are enrolled in the sodalities or societies established in the various dioceses and parishes, and who contribute a dollar yearly to the Propagation of the Faith (the children half a dollar), will gain all the Indulgences granted to the members of the Pontifical Work of the

Propagation of the Faith, provided they also fulfill the spiritual conditions.

'They, moreover, who contribute at least a dollar to the collection to be taken up on Mission Sunday will be considered as members of the Pontifical Work of the Propagation of the Faith and will gain the indulgences enumerated in the Summary published in the ACTA APOSTOLICAE SEDIS, an. 1924, num. 6, provided they say once a day the OUR FATHER and HAIL MARY, with an invocation: 'St. Francis Xavier, Pray for us.'

"In closing let me express my confidence that the gracious approval given to the proposal of the Hierarchy by Our Holy Father will serve as an incentive to even greater zeal in the United States for the Propagation of the Faith in both its branches—the Home and the Foreign Missions."

Although some countries in South America, notably Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia, draw from the funds of the Society for Foreign Missions; although help is accorded to northwest Canada and even to northwest Europe from the same source, no grants are made to the needy missions in the United States.

The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, the Bureau of American Colored Missions, and the Catholic Church Extension Society

were expected to supply our home needs, but because their own regulations in relation to the distribution of funds prevented sufficient assistance for either the spread or preservation of the Faith in most of the dioceses in the south and west, the arrangement effected with the Holy See whereby American Catholics could have affiliation with a joint Society for the support of missions, both home and foreign, was sorely needed. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, as its name implies, confines its interest to the Indian, and the Bureau of American Colored Missions limits its interest to the colored people. The Catholic Church Extension Society has been of invaluable aid to American Bishops placed over mission territory, especially by its support of many students for the priesthood, by the distribution of Mass intentions, by monthly subsidies to priests, by the erection of numerous small chapels and schools; but it has had to depend too much on haphazard receipts and designated gifts to warrant the promise of regular assistance for the extension of the Catholic cause.

The Organization which provides a joint membership in the society for both Home and Foreign Missions is officially known as The Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Home and Foreign Missions. The Diocesan Director, hitherto appointed to organize and collect for the Foreign Mis-

sions only, is now expected to take an equal interest in both the Home and Foreign Missions. The annual membership dues have been raised from 60c to \$1.00, the Foreign Missions receiving the same amount as formerly. The parish priest, who formerly solicited memberships at 60c the year, now collects \$1.00, and remits all money to the Diocesan Director, who, in turn, forwards sixty cents of each dollar to the National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions, resident in New York, and forty cents of each dollar to the Treasurer of the American Board of Catholic Missions. The annual Mission Collection must be divided in the same ratio; so also bequests to missions when undesignated.

Heretofore Perpetual Memberships in the Society for Foreign Missions cost \$40.00. No division of that amount is permitted. But in some dioceses \$50.00, in other dioceses \$60.00, are charged for a Perpetual Membership, the excess over \$40.00 being assigned to the Home Missions.

Mission Sunday

There are also Special Memberships under the older Society, issued in favor of priests, for which a \$6.00 annual fee is charged. No provision has been made for a division of this money between the two branches of the joint organization.

In addition to the membership dues Pope

Pius requires that an annual collection be arranged for the Missions generally, and has designated the third Sunday of October "Mission Sunday". On this day people, who can well afford to give more than \$1.00 the year to the Missions, and those who do not hold memberships in the Society, have an opportunity to make a helpful contribution. This collection, the same as membership dues, is divided in the ratio of sixty-fourty, and remitted respectively to the National Offices mentioned above. But fifteen per cent of the sixty per cent portion of the Mission Sunday collection, forwarded to the National Director of Foreign Missions, is transferred by him to the National Director of the Near East Association.

The fund resulting from forty per cent of all annual memberships and of the annual church collection is divided once a year among Bishops to whom "Mission territory" in the several countries under the American flag is committed; therefore, not only principally among the Bishops who rule over the dioceses in the south and west and northwest of the United States, but among the Bishops and Prefects Apostolic of Porto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, and the Philippine Islands.

During the four years of the depression many dioceses of the east and middle west of the United States, regarded as outside of mission territory, have been in even greater need of assistance than dioceses

of the west and south—this because of the collapse of industry, on which the bulk of the Catholic population depends for employment and parishes for their maintenance.

A gift of \$10,000.00, or even \$5,000.00 goes a long way in Mission territory, because the sum total of interest obligations on many small churches is not large. On the other hand, a gift of an equal amount to a diocese in an industrial center would not go far; it would not meet, in many cases, the delinquent interest on a single parish plant or diocesan institution.

Since the American Board of Catholic Missions depended in the past on collections and Propagation of the Faith memberships gathered principally in the industrial centers, the allocations to the Mission Dioceses during the past few years were necessarily smaller than in the years preceding the industrial depression.

Some eighty dioceses, all contributors to the General Fund of the American Board of Catholic Missions, began to see new light, and their Bishops to receive new courage because of the certain annual subsidy to which they could confidently look with each recurring November.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is more richly indulged than any other Society or Organization—this as an inducement to stimulate general interest in the Mission movement so close to the heart

of the Supreme Pontiff, and so dear to Christ, Who would have His gospel preached "to every creature" in all nations.

Priests who interest themselves in collecting or gathering alms for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in any parish, convent, community, college, or religious institution of any kind, are regarded as zelatores. When the pastor appoints one of his assistants to direct this work both he and the assistant are regarded as zelatores. Such priests have enjoyed from the year 1914:

(1) The personal favor of the Privileged Altar four times a week;

(2) The faculty of blessing with a single sign of the Cross, outside Rome, and with the consent of the Ordinary at least reasonably presumed, crosses, crucifixes, rosaries, or other beads, holy medals and small statues of metal, and of applying to them the Apostolic Indulgences;

(3) The faculty of blessing everywhere with a single sign of the cross, rosary beads and applying to them the Crosier Indulgences;

(4) The faculty of blessing beads (whether special or of the Rosary) and applying to them the Brigittine Indulgences;

(5) The faculty of blessing, in places where there is no religious house of the

Friars Minor, crucifixes with a single sign of the Cross and applying to them the Indulgences of the Way of the Cross;

(6) The faculty of blessing everywhere the medal of the Immaculate Conception, proper to the Congregation of the Mission, and applying thereto the usual indulgences;

(7) The faculty of blessing with the annexed Indulgences the medal of St. Benedict in places where there are no monasteries or houses of said Saint enjoying these privileges;

(8) The faculty of blessing and imposing even with a single formula, the Scapular of the Holy Trinity, of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, of Our Lady of Dolors, and of enrolling the faithful in these Confraternities under the usual conditions; the Scapular of the Passion of Our Lord, using the red color, which is proper to the Congregation of the Missions; that of the Immaculate Virgin, using the blue color proper to the Theatine Fathers, provided that in the place where this faculty is to be used there are no houses respectively of the Trinitarians, Carmelites, Servites, and Theatines;

(9) The faculty of enrolling the faithful in the Confraternity of Cordigers, and of blessing and imposing the Cord of St. Francis in places where there are no religious houses of the Conventual Fathers;

(10) The faculty of enrolling the faithful in the Third Secular Order of St. Francis in places where there are no canonically erected houses of the said Order, and of blessing the scapular and cincture;

(11) The faculty of enrolling the faithful in the Confraternity of the Angelic Warfare (*Militia Angelica*) in places where there is no religious house of Friars Preachers, and of blessing and imposing the cord and medal of St. Thomas Aquinas;

(12) To those Priests Zelators who, with the permission of their Ordinary, give a series of conferences or sermons in the form of Spiritual Exercises, the faculty of giving the Apostolic Blessing with Plenary Indulgence attached, on the last day of the conferences to be gained by all who have been present at least at five conferences, on condition of confession, communion, and prayers for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff;

(13) The faculty of reciting Matins and Lauds of the following day immediately after mid-day, provided the Office of the day has already been said.

Some months ago the Holy See decided to grant such extraordinary faculties only on individual application, while the faculties were not withdrawn from priests who already enjoy them.

Americans Must Support Their Own Missionaries

Not only have Bishops of the United States received nothing in recent years from the fund so largely contributed by American Catholics for the support of the missions, but **Religious Orders and Communities** operating in foreign fields from the United States receive little or nothing from the fund. It is for this reason that the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll), the Order of Passionists, of Dominicans, the Jesuits, the Congregation of the Holy Cross, the Society of the Divine Word, the St. Columban Fathers, the Marists, the Mariannahill Fathers, the Society of St. Peter Claver must solicit their own funds, principally through magazines having a mission appeal. In a similar manner Religious Orders of men and women working among the Indians and Mexicans of the United States, not direct participants in the Home Mission funds, must themselves raise most of the money needed to sustain their own labors. Working among the Indians are the Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Benedictines, Capuchins, Order of Mary Immaculate, the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Carmelites, Society of the Divine Savior, Priests of the Sacred Heart, the Premonstratensians. Laboring among the negroes are the Josephite Fathers, the Society of African Missions, the Congrega-

tion of the Holy Ghost, the Society of the Divine Word. Some of these are assisted, in large part, by Mother Katherine Drexel, to whose Religious Community, namely, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the Catholics of the United States are very deeply indebted.

It is easy to determine the amount contributed by Catholics of the United States to the organizations which gather funds systematically and issue an annual report, but there is no way of knowing the aggregate amount of money contributed to all mission agencies. The aggregate sum, large in itself, would not represent a large per capita contribution. For instance, the Society of the Propagation of the Faith for both Home and Foreign Missions collected last year in the United States an amount equal to about seven cents per capita of our Catholic population.

Large supplementary assistance is rendered to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions, as well as to the Indian and Negro Missions of the United States, by the Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood, whose headquarters in the United States are in Pittsburgh. The aim of this Association is to interest children in the missions, and offers annual memberships to all youths under twenty-one at the small pittance of one cent per month, or twelve cents per year.

There is such intimate relationship between these, the Association of the Holy Childhood, and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, that after the age of twenty-one youths are expected to transfer their membership from the junior to the senior organization.

It might be said, in passing, that school children and all youths under twenty-one years of age might have membership in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for the payment of one-half the adult fee or for fifty cents the year.

Perpetual membership in the Society for the Holy Childhood calls for a payment of \$25.00, either in a lump sum or in installments.

The deceased may be enrolled as members both of the Association of the Holy Childhood and of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and share in the labors and prayers of workers in the mission fields, as well as in the annual Mass which all priests, to the number of 15,000 are expected to offer for benefactors.

The Association of the Holy Childhood rescues, baptizes and arranges for the rearing in the Catholic faith of thousands of pagan children every year. The payment of \$5.00 entitles one to the credit of such rescue and he or she is permitted to provide the Christian name for the child.

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