

Instruction of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples  
on Missionary Cooperation

## Cooperatio Missionalis

### Introduction

In order to respond ever more adequately to the mandate of the Supreme Pontiff to direct and coordinate the work of evangelization and missionary cooperation throughout the world, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples makes every effort “to ensure that the People of God, filled with the missionary spirit and aware of its responsibility, cooperates effectively with missionary activity through prayer, through witness of life, through activity, and through financial support”. [1]

Seeing that the Second Vatican Council so strongly emphasized the responsibility of the Roman Pontiff, of the College of Bishops, and of individual Bishops to proclaim the Gospel, [2] the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples considered it necessary to make a study of the doctrinal reasons and above all the apostolic application of the great theme of missionary cooperation, as the common responsibility and commitment of the Holy See and of the particular Churches. This was carried out in the Plenary Congregation of 25-28 June 1968, the fruit of which was the Instruction *Quo Aptius*, approved by Pope Paul VI. [3]

Following the new thrust given by the Code of Canon Law [4] and Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, [5] the Congregation addressed the same theme in its 1995 Plenary Congregation, from 25 to 28 April, and from it emerged some valuable and concrete “Conclusive Proposals”.

Then again the theme was re-examined, under the profile of common responsibility, in a special meeting held in Rome from 29 April to 1 May 1996, with the participation of a number of Bishop Presidents of the “Episcopal Commissions for Missions” and National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), chosen according to the criterion of representation of the whole Church.

The contributions of both the Plenary Congregation of 1995 and the Meeting of 1996 were a starting point for the revision of the Instruction *Quo Aptius*, still substantially valid, but in need of a global revision.

Hence, with the present Instruction, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples has this threefold objective:

1. To reaffirm the doctrinal principles that are at the basis of missionary cooperation.
2. To provide guidelines on missionary cooperation, with special reference to the PMS, and in particular on relations between the Congregation for the Evangelization of

Peoples and the Episcopal Conferences.

3. To encourage and specify ways of carrying out certain initiatives in missionary cooperation in dioceses of territories of common right for the benefit of young Churches.

A number of Bishop members of the “Episcopal Commissions for Missions” and various National Directors of the PMS helped to draft this present Instruction which contains the completely revised material of the Instruction *Quo Aptius*.

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples hopes that the fruits of this common work of revision may contribute towards giving a new thrust to missionary cooperation; this is indispensable so that the mission *ad gentes* of the Church can promote a “new Springtime of the Gospel”, [6] as desired by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II.

## **Doctrinal Principles**

### *1. The foundation and ongoing development of mission 'ad gentes'*

*“The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature”. [7] She received the mandate to carry on the universal Plan of salvation which springs, from all eternity, from the “source of love”, that is from the charity of God the Father. She presents herself to the world as the continuation of the mystery and mission of Christ, sole Redeemer and first Missionary of the Father, and she is a “universal sacrament of salvation”. [8] She is gathered in unity throughout the world by the Holy Spirit, the principal Agent of mission, from whom she receives light and energy to proclaim the truth about Christ and the Father whom he revealed. The mission of the Church, therefore, has an essentially “trinitarian” character.*

The Church is profoundly convinced of her own identity and mission, and she lives this experience through the commitment of her sons and daughters.

*The command given by the Risen Lord to the Apostles: “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them” (Mt 28:19) resounds today with all its vigour and worth. The Church cannot, and will not neglect this responsibility, convinced as she is that all men and women have the right to encounter Christ the Redeemer through her ministry. The mission *ad gentes*, which is characterized as the work of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel, the building up of the local Church, and the promotion of Kingdom values, [9] is therefore valid, vital and up-to-date. Indeed, looking at the demographic and socio-religious reality of the world, it can be considered to be only at the beginning. [10] On the threshold of the third millennium, the Church's missionary task, by no means in extinction, has ever-vaster horizons. [11]*

The universal Church, all the particular Churches, every ecclesial institution and association, and every individual member of the Church has the duty of spreading the Lord's message to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8) so that the Mystical Body may reach the fulness of maturity in Christ (cf. Eph 4:13). Always timely are the words of

the Apostles, which the Church continues to repeat with conviction: “We cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard”. (Acts 4:20).[12]

## *2. Missionary cooperation involves all Christians*

“As the Father sent me so I too send you” (Jn 20:21). This announcement of Jesus is binding and expresses in the best possible manner the unity and continuity of mission. In fact, the “*missio ecclesiae*” has its origin in “*missio Dei*”.

The whole Church is called to commitment in missionary activity through active cooperation. Every Christian, by virtue of baptism and confirmation, enters the flow of supernatural activity, in an eternal plan for universal salvation; this is God's own plan, which is being fulfilled day after day for the benefit of the successive generations that come to form the great human family.

The participation of ecclesial communities and individual believers in the fulfilment of this divine plan is called “missionary cooperation” and can be carried out in different forms: prayer, witness, sacrifice, offering of one's work and help. Cooperation is the first fruit of missionary animation, understood as a spirit and vitality which opens individual believers, institutions and communities to a universal responsibility, forming missionary awareness and mindset directed *ad gentes*. Every initiative of missionary animation, therefore, is always directed towards its goal: to form the People of God for the “specific” universal mission, to foster numerous, genuine missionary vocations, and encourage all forms of cooperation in the work of evangelization.[13]

Cooperation, which is indispensable for the evangelization of the world, is a duty and a right of all baptized Christians.[14] It is rooted in their very identity as members of the Mystical Body and concretized in different forms and at different levels of responsibility and working involvement. “Missionary cooperation is rooted and lived, above all, in personal union with Christ... Through holiness of life every Christian can become a fruitful part of the Church's mission”.[15]

Missionary cooperation requires adequate coordination for it to be carried out in a spirit of ecclesial communion and in an ordered manner, and thus effectively attain its goal. As participation in the very communion of God, One in Three, there exists a relationship of interior unity and communication among the particular Churches, between each of these and the universal Church, and among all the members of the People of God. This communion is lived in a mutual way and, concretely, in relation to specific missionary activity. No one must be prevented from carrying out this interchange of ecclesial charity and missionary dynamism. The essential quality of ecclesial communion is in fact its concreteness, so that it involves everyone and reaches the concrete person in his or her real-life context.

Today too, we should be able to say of Christian communities, committed to the universal mission, that they act “with one heart and with one mind” (Acts 4:32).

## *3. Bodies of missionary cooperation*

*From spiritual communion in the Church, there springs the need for visible and organic communion, so that the various responsibilities and functions may be united and connected with each other.[16] Drawing from long and positive experience, the Supreme Authority of the Church has established that there should be only one central body to “direct and coordinate” initiatives and activities of missionary cooperation everywhere, namely the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.[17]*

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which is the central body for directing and coordinating evangelization and missionary cooperation, since it acts by mandate of the Roman Pontiff and in a universal sphere, promotes unity between those responsible for missionary cooperation at various levels, and ensures that their activity is carried out in an ordered manner, so that all “may in harmony spend their energies for the building up of the Church”.[18]

*The local Churches, both at the national level with their own missionary Commissions of the Episcopal Conference, and at the diocesan level, have a similar role in their own sphere.*

Many ecclesial bodies operate under the coordination and direction of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, with missionary cooperation as their specific objective, either total or in part. These bodies are the expression of the multi-form presence of the Spirit who strengthens the Church from within, in order to carry out the evangelization of the whole of humanity. Among these bodies we should mention the various institutes of consecrated life, societies of apostolic life, lay associations, Christian movements, volunteer groups and others. On the basis of their own constitutions or statutes, they work effectively in the vast and varied field of missionary cooperation, using particular means and methods, having their own autonomous structures and organization.

*The role of support and coordination on the part of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples at the universal level, and by the Bishops' Conferences and individual Bishops at the local level, greatly contributes to the unity of spirit and action of the bodies engaged in missionary cooperation.*

To increase animation and cooperation, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples relies in a particular way on the four Pontifical Mission Societies.[19]

## **PRACTICAL GUIDELINES**

### **I. The Role of the PMS in Missionary Cooperation**

#### *4. Missionary cooperation and the four PMS*

*Within the sphere of missionary cooperation are the PMS which have a primary and proper role. These Societies originated from charismatic initiatives begun by lay people and priests, with the intent of supporting the activity of missionaries, animating and directly involving priests, consecrated persons and lay people in prayer, in offering of sacrifice, in promoting vocations, in charitable and concrete activities.*

While it should be underlined that the PMS are of charismatic origin, it is also necessary to point out that the Church has guaranteed their authenticity, recognized them and adopted them as her own, through the direct intervention of the Petrine Office.

There are four Pontifical Mission Societies:

*The Pontifical Mission Society for the Propagation of the Faith*, to foster interest in universal evangelization among all sectors of the People of God, and to promote spiritual and material aid among local Churches, as well as the exchange of apostolic personnel.

*The Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood*, to help teachers to progressively awaken missionary awareness among children; to encourage children to share their faith and material goods with children of the more needy regions and Churches; and to foster missionary vocations from an early age.

*The Pontifical Mission Society of St Peter the Apostle*, to increase awareness among Christians of the importance of local clergy in mission territories and invite them to collaborate by spiritual and material means in the formation of candidates to the priesthood and the consecrated life.

*The Pontifical Missionary Union*, to foster missionary consciousness and formation of priests, seminarians, members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life and their candidates, as well as lay missionaries directly involved in universal missionary activity. It is like the soul of the other Societies, since its members are specially geared to fostering a missionary spirit in Christian communities and to fostering greater cooperation.

These four Societies are known as Pontifical, because they developed with the support of the Holy See, which, having made them its own, granted them a universal character. "Although they are the Societies of the Pope, they belong to all the Bishops and to the entire People of God".[20]

##### 5. *The priority character of the PMS*

To bring about and increase this missionary cooperation in the Church, the Pope, both in person and through the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, encourages all initiatives born from the impulse of the Holy Spirit and the generosity of Christians.

Nevertheless, he relies in a special way on the PMS which "have in common the

purpose of fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God”,[21] and to which falls the primary task of giving impulse to cooperation, harmonizing missionary efforts and guaranteeing a fair distribution of aid. “Because they are under the auspices of the Pope and of the College of Bishops, these Societies, also within the boundaries of the particular Churches, rightly have first place...”.[22]

The nature, aim, and task of each individual Society were confirmed or defined by special Statutes, approved definitively by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, on 26 June 1980, and valid for the whole Church. These, in the present circumstances, constitute a practical tool for increasing missionary cooperation in the specific areas of the four Societies.

Given their nature and value, the PMS should be present and operative in every particular Church whether of ancient or new foundation. In this way commitment to missionary cooperation will become the “conscience of the Church”.

#### *6. The dependency of the PMS on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and on the Bishops Conferences*

The overall direction of the PMS is entrusted by the Holy Father to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which is called “to direct and coordinate the work of evangelizing peoples and of missionary cooperation throughout the world, except for the competency of the Congregation for Oriental Churches”.[23] The PMS, therefore, are subject to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, which must guide them with care, fostering their development and diffusion in every Diocese.[24]

Regarding their activity in the various territories, the guidance of the Societies is entrusted also to the Bishops' Conferences and to the Bishops of the individual Dioceses, in conformity with the Statutes of the Societies.[25]

The simultaneous dependency on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, on the Bishops' Conferences, and on individual Bishops requires an organized plan at a working level. This should be carried out in a spirit of concrete collaboration at different levels of responsibility, sharing the same means, in view of reaching a common objective.

*Notwithstanding the principle of the PMS' dependency on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and on the Bishops, they have their own right to a certain autonomy that is recognized by the competent authority and indicated in the Statutes. This autonomy is expressed dynamically in the search for suitable ways of cooperation, to meet the demands of a missionary reality constantly changing and requiring new forms of intervention.*

#### *7. The National Director of the PMS*

In every country there should normally be only one National Director for all four

Mission Societies, if they exist, or for all four of the goals to which they tend. In some cases one Director may be responsible for several nations.

*The appointment of a National Director falls to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, preferably after the presentation of a terna of candidates by the Bishops' Conference, through the Papal Representative.*

*The appointment is for a five year term, renewable normally for only a second successive term.*

### *8. The duties of the National Director of the PMS*

The basic duty of the National Director is to promote and direct the PMS in the country and coordinate their functioning in the individual Dioceses.

In all duties connected with his office, the Director must faithfully observe the Statutes, other possible norms issued by the Apostolic See, and special directions from the Bishops' Conference.

All National Directors will take active part in assemblies which, as laid down in the Statutes, are convoked for them, for the purpose of examining common problems and planning the distribution of funds, giving due attention to the necessities of every mission Church, following criteria of equity, and safeguarding priorities. They will present to the respective General Secretaries financial and informative reports on the activities of the Societies, according to given indications.

On no account may National Directors use, for particular purposes or works, offerings of the faithful collected for the mission *ad gentes*, either on Mission Sunday or on other special occasions. This is binding in conscience and indispensable for safeguarding the fair and universal distribution of aid that is guaranteed by the PMS on behalf of the Pope and the College of Bishops.

### *9. The Diocesan Director of the PMS*

In each Diocese the Bishop normally entrusts to the one person the position of Episcopal Delegate for the missions and Diocesan Director of the PMS. This person should be a member of the Council of Priests or Pastoral Council. If, for serious reasons, the Bishop should choose two distinct persons, the Episcopal Delegate will offer all possible support to the Diocesan Director, so that the PMS may truly be the privileged means of missionary animation and cooperation in the Diocese.[26]

## **II. The structures of Episcopal Conferences for missionary cooperation**

### *10. The institution of the Episcopal Commission for Missions[27]*

Given the common missionary responsibility of Bishops, a special “Episcopal Commission for Missions” should be set up within each Bishops’ Conference.[28] Its duty will be to foster evangelization *ad gentes*, missionary animation and cooperation in their various forms, and to maintain relations with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and with the Bishops’ Conference, in order to guarantee unity of action. The dynamism and coordinating capacity of this Commission greatly helps missionary cooperation in each country.

### 11. The duties of the Episcopal Commission for Missions

The principal duties of the Episcopal Commission for Missions are:

- a. To suggest and encourage suitable initiatives for the missionary formation of the clergy, for supporting Missionary Institutes, and for the development of missionary awareness in particular Churches, so that the faithful may be personally involved in activity *ad gentes* and be committed to cooperation.
- b. To promote the PMS in every Diocese, assuring the specific nature and effective influence of each one according to their Statutes.
- c. To see that the total sum of offerings collected is made available to the common fund for the missions managed by the Secretariats General of the PMS, to ensure a fair and proportionate distribution of aid to all the young Churches and to all activities connected with the universal mission “*ad gentes*”.[29]
- d. To propose to the Bishops’ Conference the amount which each Diocese, in proportion to its income, is obliged to give each year for missionary activity, sending it to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. This contribution is necessary, given that the demands for the development of missionary activity are constantly increasing, and the spontaneous offerings of the faithful are not sufficient.[30]
- e. To see that all initiatives of missionary cooperation are promoted and harmoniously integrated, so that none operates to the detriment of the other, and always safeguarding the universal and primary character of the PMS.
- f. To foster and organize collaboration on the part of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, with exclusively or even partially missionary objectives. This could include both the missionary formation and animation of the faithful, and the work of cooperation, in close union with the PMS. These institutes and societies should also be given the possibility of cooperating for the benefit of their own works, within the limits of a proper order and with respect for the general demands of the mission *ad gentes*. Recognition must be given not only to their proven involvement and valid experience on the missionary plane[31] but also, in accordance with their specific spirit, to their suitability of proposing to young people a missionary vocation “*ad vitam*”, which is rightly considered the paradigm of missionary commitment of the whole Church.[32]

## 12. *The National Missionary Council*

In order to attain greater unity and working efficiency in animation and cooperation and to avoid competition and repetition, the Bishops' Conference should set up a "National Missionary Council", for planning, directing, and reviewing the main activities of missionary cooperation at the national level. *Together with the President of the Episcopal Commission for Missions, who will chair it, the Council should be made up of the following members:*

*the National Director of the PMS; the National Secretaries of the PMS and their delegates; Diocesan priests chosen by the Episcopal Commission; delegates of missionary institutes and other institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life working in mission territories, presented by the National Conference of Major Superiors; delegates of lay missionary associations, indicated by those responsible. The number and proportion of the members of the National Missionary Council are established by the Bishops' Conference or by the Episcopal Commission for Missions.[33]*

The PMS may put before this Council matters of national interest which they consider important and which should be examined and dealt with, in a context of unity, by all those involved in missionary cooperation. It falls to the Council to put these same matters to the Bishops' Conference, so that appropriate decisions may be taken.

Where there are also Regional Councils, their structure and functioning will be similar to those of the National Council.

*Besides the National Missionary Council set up by the Bishops' Conference, the PMS should have their own National Council, in conformity with their Statutes.*

## **III. Coordination of Bodies of missionary cooperation in the various countries**

### 13. *Indications for the coordination of national bodies*

*In order to guarantee good coordination between the activities of the Holy See and the Bishops' Conferences in the area of missionary cooperation, the Episcopal Commissions for Missions will take into account the following indications:*

- a. Firstly, we recall the invitation made by the Supreme Pontiffs to Bishops and bodies involved in missionary activity *ad gentes*, to cooperate actively and faithfully with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. This cooperation has its juridical foundation in the authority conferred by the Supreme Pontiff on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples,[34] and it is also a consequence of that necessary apostolic communion for which the Lord prayed during the Last Supper: "Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jn 17, 21). On the practical level, the PMS should refer to the Bishops' Conferences and to the Bishops who are responsible for local

missionary cooperation, just as the Conferences and Bishops should refer to the PMS.

- b. The programmes of the PMS must be integrated into the country's pastoral plans. This integration will be assured by joint proposals made by the Episcopal Commission and by the Conference's National PMS Office. The objective to be reached is for missionary cooperation to be truly integrated into the pastoral context, and not remain an element apart.[35]

What has been said for missionary promotion throughout the country is also true for individual Dioceses, where the PMS Diocesan Director will be a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

- c. The PMS' role as official instrument of the universal Church must be recognized and assured, coming as it does by constitution in the countries and Dioceses. In this instrument of cooperation, the responsibilities of the Supreme Pontiff who acts especially through the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples , of the Bishops' Conference, and of each individual Bishop, are united and carried out in hierarchical harmony.[36]
- d. With regard to financial aid that comes from Mission Sunday or other collections or income of a missionary character, one must ensure that each Diocese send to the respective General Secretariats, through the National Offices, all spontaneous offerings of the faithful for the PMS; likewise each Diocese should send to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples the contribution proportionate to its own income, in conformity with indications given to the Bishops' Conference. "The principle should always be observed that "offerings given by the faithful for a specified purpose may be used only for that purpose".[37]
- e. The National Director of the PMS should find support from the Episcopal Commission for carrying out this service, which must be integrated and never in competition with that of others responsible for, or involved in, missionary cooperation.
- f. It would be helpful if the President of the Episcopal Commission were invited to the annual national PMS meetings. This would enable him to follow their activities more closely at the stages of planning and review.
- g. The National Director should be informed of deliberations and missionary initiatives of the Episcopal Commission. This would help him to carry out his duty in unity of spirit and intent with the directives and chosen options of the Bishops and the local Church. The National Director should be associated with the Episcopal Commission in the most efficient manner possible.

#### *14. Guidelines for associating the National Director of the PMS with the Episcopal Commission for Missions*

The need for association between the National Director and the Episcopal Commission may find a positive solution, not only through an attitude of communion, but also through the way in which national bodies are structured.

In this regard the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples encourages full understanding between those responsible and those engaged in national missionary cooperation, leaving to the Episcopal Commissions and National Directors the ways of implementing this. In any event it should be remembered that:

- a. a precise structure to regulate relations between the Episcopal Commission for Missions and the National PMS Office cannot be determined “a priori” in the same way for all countries, but must be worked out through mutual dialogue;
- b. one concrete form is to appoint the National Director as Secretary of the Episcopal Commission for Missions;
- c. other ways may be freely chosen provided that the objective of unity of spirit and action is followed, and that confusion between the various responsibilities is avoided.

#### **IV. Relations between the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Episcopal Conferences for Missionary Cooperation**

##### *15. Suggestions for improving relations*

In order to promote missionary cooperation, mutual relations between the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Bishops' Conferences must be intense, creative, and dynamic. Consequently, any initiative in contact between them is to be lauded and encouraged, since it is in itself a sure incentive for missionary activity.

Therefore to all Bishops' Conferences and to the individual Bishops we offer, on the occasion of *ad limina* visits, the possibility of meeting with those responsible for the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who make themselves available for an exchange of information and for working out programmes. These meetings will give priority to the area of missionary cooperation in its various aspects, as well as that of communion and exchange of charity among the Churches.

Moreover, the Presidents of the Episcopal Commissions are invited, not only to make individual visits to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, but also to attend meetings on missionary cooperation organized by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on a regular or occasional basis, either in Rome or in other central places. Likewise the representatives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples should take part in national or continental meetings on missionary cooperation organized by the Bishops' Conferences. Mutual participation in missionary meetings, with exchange of experiences and initiatives, will be to the advantage of the Church's work of universal evangelization and will strengthen the bonds of communion and cooperation between the Holy See and the particular Churches, as well as among the ecclesial communities themselves, thus fostering missionary cooperation.

#### **V. Special and new forms of missionary cooperation**

## *16. Sending personnel to mission territories*

In missionary institutes, special vocations “ad vitam” are proving significant and valid. The particular form of missionary cooperation among the Churches, by which a certain number of Diocesan priests, called “*Fidei donum*”, and some men and women Religious, as well as lay people, are sent to a missionary circumscription to collaborate in apostolic activity, even on a temporary basis, is recognized as valid and should be more and more developed.[38] For implementation of this form of ecclesial communion and missionary cooperation, besides the observance of canonical norms,[39] consultation with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and with one's own Bishops' Conference is also recommended.

## *17. Criteria for guaranteeing the validity of sending personnel*

To stabilize the sending of personnel to a mission territory, besides complying with the above-mentioned conditions, the following criteria should also be observed:

- a. *Fidei donum* priests, who are a unique sign of the bond of communion between the Churches, should be selected from among the most suitable candidates and should be duly prepared for the particular work that awaits them.[40] Moreover, on their definitive return, they should be welcomed and adequately reintegrated into the presbyterate and the Diocesan pastoral scene. The Diocese should take advantage of their experience to foster the missionary formation of the ecclesial community.
- b. Members of Institutes of Consecrated Life, both contemplative and active, are involved in missionary activity, in conformity with their specific charism; through their consecration to God, they give witness in a special way to evangelical values, of which the Church is the bearer; this way of life, following the example of Christ, gives glory to God and is at the service of humankind.[41]
- c. Lay people, men and women, who have the roots of their missionary responsibility in baptism, should find their place in missionary activity, particularly in those circumstances in which only through them are people able to know Christ, in conformity with their specific secular nature which enables them to search for the Kingdom of God in dealing with temporal matters, and orienting them according to Christian principles.[42]

## *18. 'Twinning' for missionary cooperation*

Forms of direct cooperation between Churches, which come under the term of “twinning”, also have their own validity. Nevertheless, care should be taken not to limit one's range of action to one objective or isolate oneself with regard to other general initiatives of missionary cooperation, in particular those of the PMS, so as to safeguard the principle of universal equity in the distribution of funds. In bringing about this

particular type of collaboration one should not neglect, moreover, to give attention to the ecclesial context, to the style of life, and to dialogue between Diocesan authorities. The PMS National Office should be informed about initiatives of twinning undertaken by Dioceses and parishes.

### *19. New situations requiring special intervention*

New social worlds and phenomena, particularly situations connected with widespread human mobility, require updated responses, that are transformed into new forms of missionary cooperation. These must be studied and planned with great care, especially at the local level. Things should be specified, and the following indications, endorsed by the Supreme Authority,[43] should be carefully followed:

- a. International tourism, which is a mass phenomenon, together with the growing reality of migration, demands that Christians commit themselves to bearing witness to faith and evangelical charity, as well as showing an attitude of respect for cultural inter-exchange.
- b. If visits to mission territories, including those for undertaking work, with youth groups in particular, are to attain their goal of direct experience of missionary reality, they must be motivated in an evangelical sense, prepared and accompanied on the spiritual and pastoral level, and expressly connected with a missionary mandate from the Bishop. For missionary formation, the value of a direct experience for priests and even for Bishops themselves should not be underestimated.
- c. For reasons of study or work Christians are led from young Churches to territories of ancient Christianity, and Christians of both young and ancient Churches go to settle in territories where Christianity is a minority, or little known, or even harassed. In these cases, the Bishops' Conference should give special care to ensure that the faithful are not abandoned to themselves or deprived of religious assistance.[44] It is helpful, when this phenomenon involves considerable numbers, that the Churches of origin also intervene, contacting those receiving their members.
- d. In countries of ancient Christian tradition, very often non-Christian groups are formed which are not easily visible or quantifiable, for whom it will be necessary to provide, besides a welcome and social assistance, also first evangelization. The missionary responsibility here falls, in various ways, to the Bishops, to the parish priests, and to their co-workers and the whole Christian community. The Episcopal Commission for Missions, in contact with the PMS, should feel the duty of taking an interest in these immigrants, availing of the cooperation of returned missionaries from their countries, as well as other people belonging to those same countries. Besides these non Christian immigrants in Churches of ancient Christian tradition, there are also local adults who are not baptized; these too must be included in the work of first evangelization. These situations are complex, they represent a new challenge for many Churches, and modify the boundaries both of mission *ad gentes* and of missionary cooperation.

## *20. Missionary cooperation as an exchange of gifts between Churches*

Everyone should come to realize that “cooperating in missionary activity means not just giving but also receiving. All the particular Churches, both young and old, are called to give and to receive in the context of the universal mission, and none should be closed to the needs of others”.[45] We must stress the need to be “open to the Church's universality and to avoid every form of provincialism or exclusiveness, or feelings of self-sufficiency”.[46]

Furthermore all particular Churches must be encouraged to maintain “an effective sense of the universality of the faith, giving and receiving spiritual gifts, experiences of pastoral work in evangelization and initial proclamation, as well as personnel for the apostolate and material resources”.[47]

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, for its part, encourages this inter-Church exchange, the concrete fruit of that universal communion that Christ guarantees in the Church through his living and active presence. Nevertheless, the Congregation sees fit to call attention to a new phenomenon. A scarcity of vocations in certain Churches of ancient foundation leads these to seek personnel, particularly priests and women religious, from mission territories, in exchange for other assistance, particularly financial. It follows that, even with the best of intentions, the young Churches are thus deprived of sizable apostolic forces that are indispensable for their Christian life and for progress in evangelization among the population for the most part not yet baptized. Considering that ecclesial communion must increase and not hinder mission *ad gentes* and the growth of the young Churches, this way of acting must be limited and re-ordered.

## **Conclusion**

### *21. Mission ad gentes continues without interruption*

*“Since the apostolic age, the Church's mission has continued without interruption within the whole human family.... In the future too the Church must continue to be missionary: indeed missionary outreach is part of her very nature”.[48] Comforted by these unequivocal statements of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples affirms its full appreciation and total confidence in those who, with a divine vocation and the mandate of the Church, devote themselves generously to missionary activity ad gentes, which is still not only valid, but ever more urgent. Thus it encourages all those involved in the many forms of missionary cooperation, being well aware of the spirit of faith, generosity and sacrifice that this entails.*

The norms and guidelines contained in this Instruction are limited to certain practical aspects, aimed at fostering improved coordination among the various forces operating at the level of missionary cooperation, particularly between the Bishops' Conferences

and the PMS. They highlight the positive experience of recent years while remaining attentive and open to challenges from present-day situations, encouraging new undertakings and initiatives.

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples feels it has thus offered a valid contribution to the renewal and re-launching of missionary cooperation, which is always an irreplaceable means of support for missionary activity *ad gentes*. With confidence then, it entrusts to the maternal protection of Mary, Star of Evangelization, all those in the Church who are working so that the proclamation of Christ may reach the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8).

This Instruction has been referred to by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect in the Audience of 10 September this year with the Holy Father, who has approved it and ordered that it be published.

Rome, Office of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on the Feast of St Therese of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, 1 October 1998.

**Cardinal Jozef Tomko**

*Prefect of the Congregation for  
the Evangelization of Peoples*

**Archbishop Marcello Zago, O.M.I.**

*Titular Archbishop of Roselle Secretary  
of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples*

## ENDNOTES

1. John Paul II, Apost. Const. *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988) art 87: AAS 80 (1998) p. 882; cf. Code of Canon Law (CIC), c. 781,791.
2. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 23; Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 38; Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 6.
3. Cf. S. Cong. De Propaganda Fide, Instr. *Quo aptius* (24 February 1969): AAS 61 (1969), pages 276-281.
4. Cf. CIC cs. 781, 782, 791.
5. Cf. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990) nn. 77-86: AAS 83 (1991) pages 324-333.
6. Ibid., n. 86: AAS 83 (1991), p. 333.
7. Vatican II Decree *Ad gentes* n. 2.
8. Cf. Vatican II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 1, 45; Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 5. Cf. Paul VI, Apost. Exort. *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), n. 15: AAS 68 (1976), pp. 13-15; cf. John Paul II, Encycl. Lett. *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), nn. 9-10: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 257-259.
9. Cf. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 6; John Paul II, Encycl. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 34: AAS 83 (1991) p. 279-280; cf. also: *ibid*, n. 20: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 267-268.
10. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 1: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 249-250.
11. Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 31-35; AAS 83 (1991), pp. 276-281
12. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 11: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 259-260; CIC, c. 791, 1.
13. Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 77-86: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 324-333; CIC, can. 781.
14. Cf. CIC, cc. 781.
15. Cf. John Paul II, Enc. letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 77: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 324-325; cf. also: *ibid*, n. 90: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 336-337.
16. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 75: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 322-323.
17. Cf. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 29; John Paul II, Ap. Const. *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), art. 85: AAS 80 (1988), p. 881.
18. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 28; John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 75: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 322-323.
19. John Paul II, Ap. Const. *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), art. 91: AAS 80 (1988), p. 883.
20. Paul VI, *Message for World Mission Sunday* 1968 (2 June 1968): AAS 60 (1968), p. 401; cf. also Paul VI *Message for World Mission Sunday* 1976 (14 April 1976): *Enchiridion della Chiesa Missionaria*, II, p. 240.
21. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 84: AAS 83

- (1991), pp. 330-331.
22. Ibid.; cf. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 38.
  23. John Paul II, Ap. Const. *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), art. 85: AAS 80 (1988), p. 881.
  24. Ibid., art. 91: AAS 80 (1988), p. 883.
  25. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 84: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 330-331.
  26. Cf. CIC, c. 791 2.
  27. Cf. ibid., c. 782.
  28. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 38; Paul VI, Apost. Letter *Ecclesiae sanctae* (6 August 1966), III, art. 9: AAS 58 (1966), p. 784.
  29. Cf. Pius XI, Motu Proprio *Romanorum Pontificum* (3 May 1922) n. IX: AAS 14 (1922), p. 327; Paul VI Letter Ap. *Ecclesiae sanctae* (6 August 1966), III, art. 7: AAS 58 (1966), p. 784.
  30. Cf. CIC, c. 791 4; PAUL VI Apost. Letter *Ecclesiae sanctae* (6 August 1966), III, art. 8: AAS 58 (1966), p. 784; Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 38.
  31. Cf. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 27.
  32. Cf. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 66: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 314-315.
  33. Paul VI Letter Ap. *Ecclesiae sanctae* (6 August 1966), III, art. 11: AAS 58 (1966), p. 784.
  34. Cf. John Paul II, Ap. Const. *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), art. 85-92: AAS 80 (1988), p. 881-883.
  35. Cf. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 83: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 329-330.
  36. Cf. CIC, cc. 782, 791.
  37. Cf. ibid., canon 1267 § 3; cf. c. 791 §4.
  38. Cf. Vatican II, Decree *Ad gentes*, n. 38 and 41; Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 6; John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 68 and 85: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 316,331-332.
  39. Cf. CIC, cc. 271, 790.
  40. Cf. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 68: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 316.
  41. Cf. CIC, cc. 574 § 2, 676, 783; John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 69: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 317-318.
  42. Cf. CIC, c. 225.
  43. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), nn. 37, 82: AAS 83 (1991), pp. 282-286, 328-329.

44. Cf. CIC, c. 792.

45. John Paul II, Enc. Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), n. 85: *AAS* 83 (1991), pp. 331-332.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. John Paul II, Apost. Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente* (10 November 1994), n. 57; *AAS* 87 (1995), p. 39-40.