



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith • The Missionary Union
The Missionary Childhood Association • The Society of St. Peter the Apostle

Rev. Msgr. Roger Landry, *National Director*

December 30, 2025
Memorial of St. Roger

Dear Diocesan Directors,

Happy sixth day of Christmas! I pray that you have been having a prayerful, joyful and peaceful celebration of the birth of the Lord. I was able to get to Massachusetts to be able to celebrate a white Christmas with my whole family before returning to some snow here in Manhattan.

At the end of 2025 and on the cusp of 2026, I wanted to send you a letter with a few observations from my first year as national director and announcing some things for 2026. I shared some of these with the diocesan directors who were able to be present for the retreat in St. Louis in November, but I want to make sure all diocesan directors have this information. I apologize in advance for the length, but it will read quickly!

FIRST, THANK YOU!

I want to thank you, first, for welcoming me enthusiastically as the new National Director, both in Puerto Rico in November 2024, as well as in the five regional meetings this year, the visits to many dioceses, and on other occasions. There's been a big learning curve as I've learned how things are handled in Rome, in our national office, in various dioceses and in many of the now 1,130 missionary dioceses and territories we seek to help. I've also learned a lot about specific challenges we face with regard to forming people in missionary spirituality and toward a sense of greater financial co-responsibility for the missions. I've been deeply moved by the commitment of so many to the missions — shown through their letters, prayers, and financial sacrifices — not to mention the total dedication of those in the missions to bringing Christ and his Gospel to everyone.

POPE LEO XIV

When I began work at the beginning of this year, if I had been given the privilege that God had granted King Solomon and later King Ahaz to ask for anything whatsoever, I don't think I would have ever dreamed to ask, after a happy and peaceful death for Pope Francis, that God would give us not just a pope from the United States but the first truly missionary pope since St. Peter. But what I never would have dared ask, God in fact bestowed! He showed his missionary commitment from his first words on May 8 and, as we have been seeing in his messages around Christmas, he is emphasizing the Church's mission always and everywhere. Because he knows the importance of World Mission Sunday, he became, as you know, the first Pope ever to record a video for it — a request that originated with us in the USA — so that Catholics everywhere could hear the Holy Father asking them directly, "Please help me help

missionaries everywhere.” His election is a true game-changer for all our work for the missions, provided we take full advantage of the gift God has given us in him.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2025 AND 2026

Pope Leo’s video helped double the digital donations given through the national office for World Mission Sunday. I have received many notifications from pastors who played the video or even just played the audio from their iPhones through the pulpit that their WMS collections doubled or trebled or more. We’re obviously still waiting for the financial reports from the dioceses to know how the overall 2025 WMS collection did, but what seems to be clear already is that those who used what the Holy Father prepared saw dramatic increases.

2026 is, as you know, the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday. At the USCCB meeting in November, Cardinal Dolan, surrounded by the TPMS-USA board, spoke to all the bishops and urged them to help break the all-time WMS Sunday collection this upcoming year. That is a bold challenge. It basically means we would need to increase the World Mission Sunday collections by about 300 percent based on recent years.

The anecdotal information we have from those who used Pope Leo’s one-minute video — and we will request another this year; please pray for similar papal generosity! — suggests that *if we could get every parish to use the video* — to show it before Mass, to put it on their website and in parish digital communications, to use it in the schools and CCD program to promote awareness among the young — *it alone might be enough to help us set a record.*

But if that’s going to happen, we’re going to have to up our game a lot. Candidly, this year, even though *the Holy Father himself prepared a video for our use*, relatively few US parishes used it. In many dioceses, the distribution system simply didn’t work. The Vatican gave us the videos on a Monday and despite advanced notifications it was coming, it just didn’t get to where it could have made an enormous difference. Many priests, and many more faithful, simply never knew that the Pope himself had prepared an unprecedented video speaking to them. If they had, we have every reason to believe they would have responded with characteristic generosity.

I’d like to encourage you to think ahead as to how if Pope Leo records another video this year, it can be distributed best in your diocese toward maximal use. We’re likely not going to be able to change the way the Vatican does things. They didn’t confirm that a video was coming until the day I originally hoped to receive it — October 1 — but the Dicastery for Communications insisted that it not be distributed early lest it distract from other papal news. They likewise said — and they’re right — that strategically it’s best to keep the focus on WMS in the days right before it, and added that, especially in the USA, *we should have the organizational ability* in six days to get something from diocesan offices to the parishes and schools, onto websites, into parish or diocesan emails, etc.

So I’d urge you to be thinking ahead to line things up well ahead of time to be able to act effectively under relatively short notice: keeping everyone informed about the possibility, perhaps requesting a letter from the bishop asking priests to consider playing either the video or the audio before Mass, working with the superintendent and diocesan Religious Education director to make sure it gets to all Catholic schools and religious education programs that week, perhaps calling the parishes to make sure that the parish received the email with the video links and talking with them about how they are planning to use it, etc. We can together overcome the obstacles and challenges that may arise in particular diocesan structures. Let’s go for it, together, in this 100th anniversary year.

LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENT WITH THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL GATHERINGS

The November retreat with Cardinal Sean O'Malley at the Augustine Institute in St. Louis went really well. We received a lot of great feedback both about the structure of the days together as well as the awesome new facility — the old Boeing executive training center — that seems to have been providentially gifted to the Augustine Institute (a more than \$500 million center sold to them for less than \$20 million).

After hearing the opinion of the Diocesan directors on the retreat, I entered into a long-term relationship with the Augustine Institute for our upcoming national gatherings. They will take place: **November 9-13, 2026; November 8-12, 2027; November 6-10, 2028; November 5-9, 2029; November 18-22, 2030.** The dates were selected specifically not to overlap with the USCCB meetings or get too close to Thanksgiving. I'd urge you please to mark your calendars so that you can be present.

We also spoke about **the format** for upcoming meetings, whether to alternate a retreat with a national meeting or to do a hybrid meeting, with one full-day of meetings and workshops and the rest a retreat. The strong consensus of the diocesan directors present was to do a hybrid with a great retreat master each year and have an efficient business part of the program. There was considerable discussion as to whether the business meeting should take place before or after the retreat. A slight majority favored the business meeting first. We're still weighing it against the practice that's done in most religious communities in their chapters, which begins with prayer and then shifts to business in the light of prayer. We'll make that determination later. We might vary it the first two years and get the feedback as to which works better.

The main reason for a hybrid is the difficulty most would have to attending both a national meeting and a national retreat. Lest they compete against each other, we've opted for a hybrid. On the business side, there's still foreseen regional meetings.

STRENGTHENING THE SOCIETY OF ST. PETER THE APOSTLE

I'm delighted to let you know that on January 5, **Father Augustine Dada**, a priest of the Diocese of Ondo, Nigeria, who has been serving in the Archdiocese of New York for a decade, will become the vice-president of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle in the USA (SPA). Like all the priests trained in missionary dioceses, his seminary education wouldn't have happened without scholarships given by SPA, so he is a living witness of its value.

Today SPA underwrites the seminary education of 82,500 of the 201,000 seminarians in the world, basically two of five. It's one of the great stories of The Pontifical Mission Societies, but one that few know. And in the United States today, we are reaping the investments former generations sowed in the amount of priests coming from missionary dioceses now serving in US parishes. Father Dada's first task will be to spread greater knowledge of SPA among American Catholics and to try to help do more to train the seminarians in missionary territories.

TPMS-USA is the world's biggest contributor to SPA, but I believe we can do a lot more because of the love of American Catholics for the priesthood and their awareness of how important priests are for the spread and the living of the faith everywhere.

One concrete request I'd have is that every diocesan director think about inviting Father Dada to come and speak in a parish as part of the Missionary Cooperative cycle. Everything he raises would go to the SPA for the training of future priests. His email is adada@pontificalmissions.org.

I've known Father Dada for ten years. He's a fellow Missionary of Mercy appointed by Pope Francis in 2016. He's studied at Villanova and the University of Mary, from which he received a doctorate in administration. He's zealous and capable and will help us expand the work of the Society of St. Peter. A formal press release announcing his appointment will come out next week.

TPMS MISSIONARY PREACHING ACADEMY

Perhaps the greatest opportunity we have to help form our people in missionary spirituality — even greater than World Mission Sunday — is the annual missionary cooperative appeal, when missionaries themselves visit our parishes to inform them about their missionary labors and ask for prayers and financial support. The problem, however, is that many of the preachers, rather than firing our people up with missionary zeal, actually drive them to other parishes when news that a missionary will be preaching next Sunday's Masses is made! Many simply don't preach effectively: they don't mention any of the readings, don't tell their own story well, don't know how effectively to ask for help, have various verbal ticks, etc. We want to help fix that.

One of the projects that Father Dada will be supervising is a **TPMS Missionary Preaching Academy** that the national office will be offering to dioceses in the hope that dioceses will require it for those coming to preach the missionary cooperative appeal for the first time (or for veterans if they wish). The pilot will take place at the Augustine Institute in St. Louis from **June 29 to July 3, 2026**. In the Academy, we will cover everything from the upcoming Scriptural readings, to various aspects of the Church in the US, to the art of preaching about the missions, to some safe environment basics, even to elocution, phonetics, etc. The goal will be to have them leave on Friday morning with tight, good, effective, practiced, eight-minute homilies integrating the Scripture, the missions, their own work, and perhaps something about the particular Diocese or parish for each weekend they're scheduled to preach. Our hope is that dioceses will "buy in" to the need for a program like this and mandate it for those (at least new) preachers coming to their dioceses that summer.

I ask dioceses that would like to participate in this year's pilot program to email me to let me know of their interest. I would also like diocesan directors would be willing to serve on the advisory board of this "academy" to let me know, too, so that we could make it maximally useful. The National Office will be picking up the costs of the program in St. Louis as a service. With the advice of those who will form the advisory board, we'll work out a Solomonic policy with regard to travel to the US and then to the first diocese in which they'll be preaching. This program will likewise be available to non-priest preachers, conscious that they'll be trained to give effective non-homiletic reflections before or at the end of Mass. There will eventually be the possibility of participating virtually in these trainings thanks to the state of the art facilities at the Augustine Institute, as well as, we hope, of taking the course asynchronously, since not all missionaries come to the US at the same time. Future years of the program will be **June 7-11, 2027** and **June 12-16, 2028**.

MISSIOLOGY COURSE AND PERHAPS DEGREE

One of the areas in which overall we can do a better job in the States is in Missionary Formation (or "animation" as it's called in most other languages. I'm very pleased by how many from the US participate in the programs offered in Rome, the online programs offered by Fr. Anh Nhue from the Missionary Union, the offerings by the USCMA and other things. During my discussions with those at the Augustine Institute, which is one of the foremost Catholic training centers in the country, there was mutual interest, first, in a basic missiology course that could be used to onboard staff in the national and diocesan offices as well as for anyone else interested. We will begin working on that early in 2026. We also began discussions to see if there would be interest in a more expansive Masters in Missiology program (asynchronously, online) to allow those who are working in the Church's mission to do so with clearer

credentials, as well as to try to form others to take up a leadership wrote in the great commission. By a show of hands, many diocesan directors in St. Louis thought that there would be value and interest in such a program. If you have any thoughts on this possibility, please share them with me, to influence my future discussions with the Augustine Institute.

LAUNCH OF THE APOSTOLIC GIVING CIRCLE

In 2026, the national office will be launching a monthly donor initiative, aligned with the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday. It will be called the Apostolic Giving Circle and will be a five-year plan aimed at significantly increasing monthly supporters, thereby strengthening contributions to the Universal Solidarity Fund and ensuring more stable support for mission territories. It is being spearheaded by our new Vice-President of Advancement, Tim Dockery. Monthly givers are one of the most fruitful ways successful Catholic apostolates fund their ministries.

GROWTH OF MCA

When I became National Director, I was surprised that only 43 dioceses had really anything with MCA. I'm happy to report that over the course of the last year, we have been able to increase that to 58. Other dioceses have participated in the MCA Artwork Contest, in the prayer services especially during Catholic Schools Week, and other opportunities. Thanks to all those dioceses that are giving this attention to the missionary formation of our young people. Obviously, the future of our missionary efforts depends on forming the young to carry the torch and MCA has been doing this since 1843! I'm still hoping that every diocese will have some boat in the water about MCA, to show the priority of the formation of young people in missionary spirituality.

IMPACT STORIES

When I first became National Director and looked at the nearly 2,000 pages of proposed subsidies from Rome I was surprised that there was no contact info among the grantees. When I asked about it, I got a series of unsatisfying explanations as to why this information wasn't given. I didn't give up and finally in October, Rome said that they would start providing us in the United States the contact information for all those to whom we send ordinary and extraordinary subsidies (for the Propagation of the Faith, Missionary Childhood, and St. Peter the Apostle). That has made it possible for me to send letters to each of the recipients letting them know that a subsidy is on its way and asking each of them, in the interim, to send write-ups, photos and videos of how they use this support. It's led to a treasure trove of images we can use to thank those whose support ultimately made those subsidies possible. We are already using these on appeals, in Mission Magazine, on our website, in the Gratitude Report, and more, to show churches being built or rebuilt, seminarians and novices receiving grants, and programs run by religious sisters caring for orphans and so much more. This treasure trove will now grow each year. If you would like access to the files (which exists in multiple languages) for your own work, please email me.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

One of the things we've worked very hard on this year is trying to get 'TPMS' name out there. We began the year with the new branding and eventually produced a beautiful new website that has caught the positive attention of those in Rome as well as the envy of many national directors. We've launched on SiriusXM Channel 129 the Catholic Channel our Frontiers of Faith podcast (every Wednesday at 1 pm Eastern; available on demand at Frontiers of Faith). Ines San Martin and I took full advantage of the papal funeral, election, conclave and inaugural Mass to be very present on EWTN, CNN, OSV, the National Catholic Register and various other platforms. After the conclave, I started recording brief mission-oriented homilies to accompany the Journey with the Pope daily emails, and happily those are growing. With things in order and my becoming accustomed to the pace of work here, I've resumed weekly articles for the National Catholic Register mostly on missionary angles, and Fr. Anthony Andreassi

and I are starting to work on a different mission-oriented books. With buzz building about the possible resumption of the beatification process of my predecessor Archbishop Sheen (1950-1966), there may be another big opportunity for all of us to get the word out more effectively. I am also in conversation with EWTN to produce a traveling series on the missions, which they are very interested in.

THANK YOU LETTERS FOR THOSE WHO GIVE UNDER \$500

I want to bring to your attention something we discovered in late November. There was a data issue at our printing partner who manages our donation acknowledgement letters for contributions under \$500. It led to some specified donors of contributions under \$500 across multiple printing runs not receiving a thank you letter from TPMS. To remedy the lack of an immediate thank you, and to make sure that the donors receive a record of their contribution, we will be issuing a new thank you letter, paid for by the vendor, to all donors in this category at the very beginning of 2026. For those dioceses where the Diocesan Director's name and signature are utilized on these letters, donors will receive this follow up letter with the Diocesan Director's name and signature as well as mine. If anyone has any questions, please reach out to Tim Dockery, our VP for Advancement, at 212-563-8719 or tdockery@pontificalmissions.org.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

We have been blessed to have the indefatigable Ines San Martin as the head of our Communications and Marketing efforts since September 2022. She does so much not just for TPMS' ordinary communications, but also runs Mission Magazine, develops the materials for World Mission Sunday and so much more. Upon my arrival, she informed me that she would like to return home to Argentina sometime in 2026. I tried hard — and sadly, unsuccessfully — to persuade her to stay. But she will be returning home at the end of February. I hope — and she's open — to further collaboration in support of the work of TPMS-USA, but this morning we launched the search for her successor. If you would have any recommendations for this important position, please share them with me. The job description is on our website under "Join the TPMS team."

Thanks for finishing this letter! Let's join in prayer that 2026 will be a true "year of our Lord" and a record-shattering one for the missions!

Prayerfully United in Christ's Mission,



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