

Missionary Cooperation Plan

Catholic Diocese of Columbus



2021 Manual

**Administered by the
Diocesan Missions Office
197 East Gay Street
Columbus, OH 43215-3229
www.columbuscatholic.org/missions-office**

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This manual is intended to aid parishes and missionaries in understanding the purpose and procedures of the Missionary Cooperation Plan in the Diocese of Columbus.

LEARNING FROM MISSIONARIES

“We ask that you share with us your experience as well as the faith experience of the people you serve...Our faith is deepened and broadened as we learn from you. You enrich us in our understanding of the problems and the challenges of the universal church.” (US Bishops on World Mission “*To the Ends of the Earth*”)

THE CHURCH IS MISSIONARY

“The Church is missionary. She exists so that every man and woman may encounter Jesus.”
(*Pope Francis*)

The Church is missionary by her very nature. As such, the Church’s missionary task is rooted in the Blessed Trinity. Thus, she continues the mission of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, by proclaiming to the ends of the earth the salvation that Christ offers to those who love and sincerely promote the Church’s missionary activity. (To the Ends of the Earth)

The Church’s mission involves all of us personally in our parishes, and it is our responsibility to share the Good News of Christ’s love with the rest of the world. Indeed, “mission” is the greatest and the holiest duty of the Church. As the Father has sent the Son, Christ has handed on the missionary task to His followers, to “go make disciples of all nations.” (Mt. 28:19)

In the Second Vatican Council, the Church Fathers teach that the universal scope of mission work enjoins all communities to maintain contacts with missionaries who came from its ranks, or with some parish or diocese in the missions. (*Ad Gentes 37*)

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MCP PROGRAM

“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.”
(*Redemptoris Missio 84*)

The Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP) was inaugurated in the late 1930’s by Bishop William A. Griffin, auxiliary bishop for the Newark Archdiocese and then archdiocesan director of the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith*. Conceived as a plan to help mission-sending societies solicit funds for their mission efforts and to give them the opportunity to appeal for vocations to their communities, the Missionary Cooperation Plan takes the burden off pastors who previously received requests from mission organizations from around the world. Today, the program is typically administered by each Diocesan Missions Office under the auspices of the local Bishop.

MCP WITHIN THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE

The Diocese of Columbus Missions Office annually assigns visiting missionaries to designated parishes within the diocese. The director of the Missions Office is the person who, under the Bishop, is responsible for this program. Each year an MCP Committee selects 38 applicants from the online applications received and invites them to participate on the program. Eligibility for participation is every other year.

The Missions Office is also responsible for the collection and disbursement of funds from the MCP appeal. The Missions Office distributes the funds via check to the organization's U.S. contact person. No wire transfers are permitted. The benefit of MCP resides in the opportunity it offers all the faithful to experience a cross-cultural and mutual exchange of faith and friendship and to encounter a new outlook on our rich Catholic tradition.

*****IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER***** This timeline provides more time for parishes and mission organizations to schedule MCP appeals and make arrangements.

- **March – August 15, 2020** Online application opens March 2020 and closes end of day August 15th.
- **August – September 2020:** MCP Selection Committee reviews applications and makes participant selection.
- **Early October 2020:** Notification of assignments will be sent to the 38 mission organizations selected and to the parishes.
- **March 30th 2021:** Deadline for participants to submit scheduled mission appeal dates to the Diocesan Missions Office.
- **April – September 2021:** Appeals are made. **The scheduled appeal dates must not conflict with any other Diocesan Missions Collections during the MCP season.**
- **2021 Black-out weekends** due to Diocesan Collections:
 - Catholic Home Missions – **June 5 and 6**
 - Holy Father (Peter's Pence) – **June 26 and 27**
 - Church in Latin America – **July 31 and August 1**

All monies collected should be forwarded **within 4 weeks** of the appeal to:

Diocese of Columbus Missions Office: 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215-3229

- **No** collection monies should be released to the visiting missionary.
- **No** envelopes/pledge cards are to be distributed at the parishes.

The mission organization is not permitted to handout/distribute or place envelopes or pledge cards anywhere in the parish.

ALL APPLICANTS MUST BE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. A recognized Catholic missionary society in good standing with the United States *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* serving in one or more foreign countries, or
2. A Catholic diocese in the United States designated as missionary by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Home Missions Office.
3. A foreign (non-U.S.A.) Catholic (arch)diocese or eparchy struggling with poverty, persecution, oppression, or war.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION:

Online only applications are accepted. Go to www.columbuscatholic.org/mcp and scroll down to the 2021 MCP application link. Eligibility is every other year.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES:

Applicants should complete the online application by the deadline of August 15th.

The application should state the project or need. All applications must contain information about the organization such as: full name of the organization, authorization/written approval from the Superior General (Affidavit of Suitability), Provincial or Bishop, full contact address. In addition, all applicants are required to appoint a U.S. contact person and provide the name, address, phone number, and email address of the U.S. contact. Collected appeal funds will be distributed via a check to the designated U.S. contact.

Applicants must complete a new application each year. A previous application will not be accepted for a future appeal.

THE ROLE OF THE DIOCESAN MISSIONS DIRECTOR

- Review applications with the MCP Selection Committee and select participants.
- Notify selected mission organizations of their acceptance to the current appeal.
- Assign the mission organization to a parish(es) and provide contact information.
- Provide pastors with contact information for the assigned mission organization.
- Collect and disburse proceeds from the mission appeal to all participants in the appeal year. Ten percent of the offerings collected are retained by the Missions Office for administration of the program and other mission activities.
- Help resolve any concerns of the parish or missionary organization.

CONTACT:

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THE ROLE OF THE SELECTED MISSION ORGANIZATION

It is the responsibility of the selected applicant to contact the assigned parish(es) and mutually agree upon a date for the mission appeal with the pastor or parish administrator. As soon as the date has been agreed upon with the parish, complete and return to the Missions Office the *confirmation form* included with the assignment sheet. The Missions Office should receive scheduled appeal dates no later than March 30th.

At least three weeks before the mission appeal, the missionary should send publicity about the mission organization to the assigned parish(es). The information may be placed in the parish bulletin for introduction purposes of the mission appeal speaker.

It is recommended that the applicant contact the host parish at least two weeks prior to the appeal date(s) to confirm the details of the visit. In the case of multiple parish assignments, interim housing is the responsibility of the speaker.

When a missionary cannot honor a confirmed date, the missionary should notify the host parish(es) and the Missions Office immediately. An alternate date should be scheduled, if possible.

The mission organization is advised to send an effective speaker who speaks fluent English for the appeal. The speaker should prepare to preach at all Masses on the appeal weekend. Mission appeals should be kept to a maximum of 10 minutes. The appeal should focus on helping the faithful learn about the mission world today and the accomplishments of the mission organization.

All missionaries should make their mission appeal after Communion when announcements are made, preceding the Blessing. Visiting missionary clergy may give the homily according to the dictates of the Roman Missal and then speak on their appeal at the end of the Mass.

In cases where the visiting missionary celebrates Mass or performs any other Sacramental activity, appropriate compensation should be offered directly to the missionary per the standard diocesan stipend policy and should not come from the MCP collection.

The gathering of parishioner names and addresses for solicitation purposes is not permitted. The speaker should not seek to establish a branch of the organization or solicit names/addresses for further appeals.

All monies collected on behalf of the mission organization should be gathered by the host parish and forwarded to the Diocese of Columbus Missions Office within 4 weeks after the appeal. It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Missions Office to distribute mission appeal funds to the participating mission organizations.

- No collection monies should be released to the visiting Missionary.
- No envelopes/pledge cards are to be distributed at the parishes.

The mission organization is not permitted to handout/distribute or place envelopes or pledge cards anywhere in the parish.

Speakers should not presume that checks made in their name are meant for them personally. All funds are collected on behalf of the mission organization.

When in the Diocese of Columbus, visiting missionaries are invited to visit the Diocesan Missions Office to help themselves to new and gently used vestments, linens, rosaries and religious items.

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR/PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

“Your promotion can make all the difference in the world. More than any articles or reminders in the bulletin, your testimony and invitation can inspire your parishioners to be missionary through their generous prayers and offering.”
(Pope John Paul II, “Healing a Broken World” World Mission Sunday 2003)

Pastors should be sensitive to the difficulties that missionaries often face with regard to setting mission appeal dates. This could be particularly difficult for those missionaries who may visit from outside the United States.

Pastors/parish administrators should duly consult with the assigned missionary group in trying to set up an appeal weekend between April and September. Please complete and return the *confirmation form* included with the assignment sheet as soon as the date has been agreed upon.

The pastor/parish administrator should discuss housing, meals, transportation and any other issues pertinent to the guest missionary as soon as contact is initiated. Please provide or coordinate with parishioners for the missionary’s needs for the appeal weekend and ensure that people are on hand to help the visiting priest navigate parish protocols and customs.

Three weeks prior to the appeal, the mission organization should provide info for the parish bulletin. Please make an announcement the weekend prior to the appeal. Such publicity provides a good introduction for the missionary and his/her mission organization.

The missionary is to preach at all Masses on the agreed upon weekend. All missionaries should make their mission appeal after Communion when announcements are made. Visiting missionary clergy may give the homily according to the dictates of the Roman Missal and then speak on their appeal at the end of the Mass, if the pastor so directs.

The missionary speaker is to be adequately compensated for any Sacramental activity in the parish during the appeal. The standard diocesan stipend should be considered in this case and should not come from the MCP collection.

The Missions Office requests that the mission organization send an effective speaker. On the occasion this is not the case, please contact the Missions Office Director with any concerns.

- **All monies collected** on behalf of the mission organization should be **gathered by the parish**. **Within 4 weeks after the appeal**, the parish should **remit one check** for the collected funds along with the **MCP Collection Form** to: **Diocese of Columbus Missions Office, 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215-3229**. We will email the MCP collection form to the parish prior to the appeal. This form is also on our MCP webpage. It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Missions Office to distribute mission appeal funds to the participating mission organizations.
- **No collection monies should be released directly to the visiting Missionary.**
- **No envelopes/pledge cards are to be distributed at the parishes.**

The mission organization is not permitted to handout/distribute or place envelopes or pledge cards anywhere in the parish.

We are grateful for the parish’s cooperation in implementing this annual program. We conscientiously work to match mission groups with parishes for mutual benefit.