

For immediate release

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Pope Leo XIV Calls for Missionary Renewal as World Mission Sunday Marks 100 Years

On Monday, 1 June, Pope Leo XIV welcomed the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, known in Australia as Catholic Mission, to Rome for the General Assembly. This annual gathering enables representatives to discuss upcoming priorities for the year ahead, align missionary efforts worldwide, and reflect on their role in creating a brighter future for many, particularly as momentum builds towards World Mission Sunday, which will be celebrated on 18 October this year and mark its 100 years anniversary.

"On World Mission Sunday, every Catholic community is invited to pray and offer spiritual and material sacrifices for the missionary efforts in areas of first evangelisation and the support of young Churches," reminded Pope Leo XIV in his welcoming address.

The Holy Father then recalled that this year's World Mission Sunday theme, *"One in Christ, united in mission"*, highlights the unity of believers and marks the 100th anniversary of this global celebration.

The theme, he stated, *"invites all of the members of the Church to a deeper communion in Christ and to a fuller unity in his divine mission of love"* and *"reflects the profound desire of the Lord expressed in his prayer to the Father before his Passion."*

Noting that these aspects expressed in this year's theme *"call for a missionary renewal in the Church in the years ahead,"* Pope Leo XIV encouraged those gathered to *"keep this teaching in mind, to live an authentic spirituality of missionary unity and communion centred on Christ, and to promote it through your activities among the faithful."*

The gathering marked one of Pope Leo XIV's first major addresses to the worldwide leadership of the Pontifical Mission Societies since the beginning of his pontificate.

As National Director of Catholic Mission, Peter Gates joined fellow leaders from around the world to discuss the future direction of missionary outreach and the role Australian Catholics can play in supporting communities in need through prayer, formation and financial support.

"Meeting His Holiness for the first time and listening to his reflection on the centenary of World Mission Sunday was a great privilege. Pope Leo XIV witnesses a deep understanding of mission, shaped by his experience of walking alongside people and sharing the daily realities of their lives. His words reminded us that mission is rooted in communion, accompaniment and hope, and that together we are called to share the love of Christ with everyone," shared Peter.

Pope Leo XIV concluded by entrusting all those before him, and all who share in the "*vital missionary work*," to the maternal intercession of the Mother of God, Mary, Queen of Missions, and that of all the missionary saints.

As entrusted by the Holy Father to support the work of mission globally and locally, Catholic Mission will continue to share resources and opportunities for Australian Catholics, parishes, schools and communities to participate in this year's World Mission Sunday celebrations.

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About Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission is the Australian agency of the Pontifical Mission Societies – the Catholic Church's global organisation dedicated to continuing Jesus Christ's mission in the world: that all may have life to the full. Catholic Mission contributes funding and project support to critical church-run initiatives in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America. These include spiritual formation, pastoral care, education, health, sanitation, and agricultural programs. Here in Australia, we form people to go out and be missionary in their professional and personal lives; to pray, advocate and act for those on the margins. Catholic Mission has offices in 27 Australian dioceses.