

Pontifical Missionary Societies A Brief Philippine History (1932-2007)

JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.*

“To be the Church of the divine mission, the Church *in statu missionis*” is a felicitous phrase used by Pope John Paul II in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (20). The pope was giving expression to the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council which described the pilgrim Church as “missionary by her very nature” (AG 2). After the successful completion of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines in 1991, the local hierarchy formulated a national pastoral plan, entitled *In the State of Mission*. This same perspective is echoed in the theme chosen for the diamond anniversary of the Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) in the Philippines (1932-2007): “Renewing the Philippine Local Church in Mission.” Being Church is, at heart, being a “community-in-mission,” an evangelizing Church, the Body of Christ who is the missionary of the Father.

This mission panorama seeks to show how the local Church through the PMS has been responding to its missionary identity over the past seventy-five years. The presentation focuses on the PMS and its role in the Philippines; it does not purport to be a complete history

* James H. Kroeger, M.M., professor of Systematic Theology, Mission Studies and Islamic at Loyola School of Theology in Manila, holds licentiate and doctorate degrees in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is President of the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists and Consultant to the Asian Bishops' (FABC) Office of Evangelization.

of missionary evangelization in the Philippines. The highlights of this PMS history will be unfolded in twelve periods, each coterminous with the term of office of the PMS national directors. Some terms are as short as one year; others exceed a decade. The pioneer PMS director worked nearly twenty years, yet faced the disruption of World War II; another individual served the office during two distinct periods. All labored with dedication and generosity.

This historical panorama is presented in a popular fashion, employing narratives, quotations, and statistics. Its focus, while primarily centered on the PMS, necessarily includes elements of the missionary activity of the wider Philippine Church. Various archival sources were consulted in the Philippines; the *Propaganda Fide* Archives in Rome also yielded helpful materials. However, the early PMS history unfortunately remains truncated due to a tragic fire on July 28, 1967 which destroyed the PMS building on Don Quijote Street in Manila; much historical documentation was irretrievably lost.

Historically, it was in 1922 that various mission animation initiatives were gathered together into one body and received the official title of “pontifical” works; this organizational structure aimed at better coordination and apostolic efficiency. The four societies that now form the PMS are: [1] Society for the Propagation of the Faith (promotes mission consciousness among the laity and raises mission subsidies); [2] Society of the Holy Childhood (awakens mission awareness in children); [3] Society of Saint Peter the Apostle (fosters the development of local clergy, especially in mission territories); and [4] Society of Missionary Union (stimulates mission among Church personnel, especially priests).

The Philippine PMS National Directors and their terms of office are:

1. Father José Ma. Siguión, SJ [1932-1950, with a 1942-1946 interruption due to war];
2. Father Anselmo Bustos, SVD [1950-1959];
3. Father Simeon O. Valerio, SVD [1959-1964];
4. Father Federico G. Limon, SVD [1964-1970];
5. Father Gregorio I. Pizarro, SVD [1970-1975];
6. Bishop Gaudencio B. Rosales, DD [1975-1982];
7. Bishop Leoncio L. Lat, DD [1982-1983];
8. Father Gregorio I. Pizarro, SVD [1983-1993];

9. Father José Antonio S. Galvez [1993-1998];
10. Father Pedro M. Mesiona, MSP [1998-2001];
11. Father Cipriano B. Mallari [2001-2002]; and,
12. Monsignor Gilbert A. Garcera [2003-present].

It is noteworthy that five PMS directors were or became bishops (Valerio, Limon, Rosales, Lat, and Garcera); one became cardinal (Rosales).

Reviewing the PMS history while celebrating a diamond jubilee (1932-2007) is an opportunity to give thanks for God's countless blessings and to appreciate how, over the decades, the missionary hearts of so many people were truly ablaze to make Christ known, loved, and served. It is also a golden moment to ponder how the plethora of activities extending over the jubilee year set people on fire to continue their evangelizing activities. Finally, this is a time for looking to the future with deep hope, praying the Lord of the Harvest that many workers will fan the flame of missionary evangelization in the hearts of young, vibrant Filipino Christians during the first decades of the third millennium.

1. Siguión Period (1932-1950).

Father José Ma. Siguión, SJ (1881-1960) was appointed in 1932 by Manila Archbishop Michael J. O'Doherty as the first national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Philippines (PMS) [Society for the Propagation of the Faith]. Various pontifical works had been organized in some dioceses as early as 1929; they were now to receive better guidance and coordination. For example, it was in 1933 that the Holy Childhood (promoting the missionary spirit among the young) and Saint Peter the Apostle (promoting the native clergy in mission areas) were integrated into the PMS.

In addition to his fervent mission commitment, Father Siguión had been appointed in 1921 the editor of the scholarly magazine *Cultura Social* (founded in 1913); he continued to edit it for twenty years until the Pacific war suspended its publication in late 1941. In addition to his various responsibilities, Father Siguión served as vice-superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines during World War II (the American superior, Father John F. Hurley, SJ was in the internment camp).

For an entire decade (1932-1941) Father Siguión was concomitantly both PMS National Director and editor of *Cultura Social*; this proved to be a great boon for mission. The pages of *Cultura Social* (CS) often contained reports, usually in Spanish, of various mission activities. For example, the May 1932 issue of CS printed the article "Las Obras Misionales en Filipinas" (244-247); the March 1934 issue reported on "Obras Pontificias Misionales en la Archidiócesis de Manila" (99-101).

The first General Assembly of the Directors of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith was held in 1938. An extant photograph can be found in the CS; it accompanied a four-page report of the "Primera Asamblea Misional de Filipinas" held on February 9-11, 1938 (CS, March 1938: 118-121). Undoubtedly, it was most fortuitous that the PMS activities had a propaganda vehicle in the CS magazine. This partnership verified the maxim: "every important movement needs a literature"; PMS had CS!

To appreciate the impetus that the 1938 assembly gave to missionary activity, one may review some decisions that were made: the PMS diocesan director has the task of animating parish priests for mission; the missionary union of the clergy is to be established in all dioceses; financial support for the missions is to be encouraged; the diocesan director should frequently visit the parishes; mission education is important; eight annual "mission days" would be entered into the Philippine Liturgical *Ordo*, upon approval of the local hierarchy (e.g. Holy Childhood Day to be celebrated on Holy Family Sunday in January; Day for the Works of Propagation of the Faith to be observed on the second-to-last Sunday of October, etc.).

The first International Eucharistic Congress held in Asia was celebrated in Manila on February 3-7, 1937. In the Joint Pastoral Letter of the Philippine Hierarchy issued on February 11, 1935, the bishops highlighted its importance for the spiritual growth of the people. The bishops also wrote of the congress: "It is, in reality, our desire that it be a *Mission Congress*." They reminded the people that they should never forget the fact that "much of the light of the Gospel as shines upon our neighboring peoples, was originally shed by missionaries from the Philippines" (*Souvenir Album of Thirty-third International Eucharistic Congress*, 117). The congress was an important event for faith renewal and mission animation in the Philippines.

The PMS activities that had begun so well and saw considerable progress under the capable leadership of Father Siguión came to an abrupt end when the tragedy of war erupted in the Philippines in late 1941. Urgent matters of survival, refugee and prisoner assistance, necessarily dominated Church concerns; formal PMS work ceased. On February 15, 1945, even as the war continued, the Apostolic Delegate, Bishop Guglielmo Piani created the Catholic Welfare Organization (CWO); Father John F. Hurley, SJ was later placed in charge of the relief work.

As the war ended and in the immediate post-war years, there was the pressing concern to assist the country to rise from the ashes of destruction. The CWO did have an episcopal commission on mission, composed of Bishop Alejandro Olalia as chairman and Bishops Luis del Rosario and William Duschak as members. However, realistically, the mission efforts gave way to the more pressing needs of basic survival immediately after the war. Full PMS operations had to wait the appointment of a new national director.

2. Bustos Period (1950-1959).

Father Anselmo G. Bustos, SVD (1911-1983) served as the second national director of the Pontifical Missionary Societies. Father Bustos was the first in a long line of SVD personnel (Society of the Divine Word) who directed the PMS; the SVD generous service extended from 1950-1975 and 1983-1993, a total of thirty-five years. One can validly assert that the PMS had to basically start all over again in the post-war period. In addition, historical documentation from the Bustos era is notably sparse.

Having received his appointment in August 1950, Father Bustos set about his tasks. He rented an office on the fourth floor of a building in Estrada Street near Taft Avenue in Manila. For nine years, he carefully laid the foundations of a mission animation program, including the revival of the national mission assemblies, the establishment of a small publication entitled *Catholic Missions*, and the use of mission promotion posters.

In a 1958 document sent to Rome in which Father Bustos presented an overview of the activities of 1957, he noted: "The Pontifical Work Societies have not gained the proper recognition due them in

the Philippines. However, in the short span of seven years that I have been National Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the other Pontifical Work Societies, we can say that each year has been marked with progress—slow and gradual perhaps—nevertheless, improving with time.... Much can still be done by way of promoting its ideals and objectives and we are doing everything we can along this field.” Existing records point to Father Bustos’ emphasis on the support and growth of the native clergy during his term.

As this period was drawing to a close, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines issued a statement declaring 1959 to be a “Mission Year.” Father Bustos mentions the mission year in his report to Rome; he notes how he and his successor plan to collaborate closely to promote the project of the bishops. In their statement the bishops emphasized “how noble is the vocation of the missionary and how necessary is the work of the missions.”

Noting that the Philippine Church was ready “to undertake mission work of our own” and “to send out our own Filipino missionaries,” the bishops concluded their message: “Let the observance of this Mission Year make us all mission-minded, and let it be said of the Filipino nation in after-years that they gave freely what they freely received, and that they took their full share in the work of bringing the joy and peace, the justice and mercy of Christ to the peoples of Asia” (CBCP. *Pastoral Letters 1945-1995*, 218-221).

3. Valerio Period (1959-1964).

Father Simeon O. Valerio, SVD (1918-2003) was named National Director of the Propagation of the Faith on July 14, 1959 by the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*. As Father Valerio (bishop in 1974) began his service the country was in the midst of the celebration of the Mission Year of 1959. The outgoing director, Father Bustos, and the new director, Father Valerio, worked hand-in-hand for the success of the Mission Year.

Some special activities included: creative, informative mission exhibits displayed publicly along the spacious corridors of the Sto. Domingo Convent in Quezon City, a seminar on missionary activity where formal papers were presented, special vocation promotion for both home and foreign missions, mission rallies on the parochial, deanery, and diocesan

levels, and a National Mission Congress held in Manila December 3-6, 1959. The Mission Year had a very positive impact on the faithful, awakening in them interest for the universal mission of the Church.

For the first time in 1960, the Philippines sent the PMS National Director, Father Valerio, then only forty-two years old, to Rome for the annual meeting held by *Propaganda Fide* for national directors from throughout the world. Since the Philippines now had its first cardinal in the person of Rufino J. Santos (elevated as cardinal on March 28, 1960), the country enjoyed a new prominence in Church affairs; it was felt that this new status demanded that the PMS national director attend this pivotal mission gathering in Rome.

The PMS historical records for the *ante incendium* period (before the July 28, 1967 fire) remain woefully incomplete. Though documentation is limited, some additional activities during the five-year directorship of Father Valerio can be reported. It was in December 1960 that the Catholic Mission Crusade of the Philippines (CMCP) was organized with the purpose of attracting youth to the imperative of sharing their Christian faith; the movement built upon the vision of the successful Catholic Students Mission Crusade in the United States.

In 1962, the PMS commemorated the centenary of the death of Pauline Marie Jaricot, foundress of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith and the Association of the Living Rosary; a mission drama, entitled "The Flame on the Hill," portrayed Jaricot's life, inspired all viewers—and netted the sizeable sum of 64,000.00 pesos!

The annual Mission Assembly of the Diocesan Directors of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Missionary Union of the Clergy is always a special event for the exchange of mission ideas and methods. The 1963 gathering, held in August at Saint Scholastica's College in Manila, can be identified as the eleventh such national assembly. Fortunately, a complete list of the assemblies and their themes since 1963 remains available (see *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 36-39). The Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Salvatore Siino, attended the assembly and distributed awards for outstanding contributions to the Church's missionary efforts. One important decision of the assembly was to always have the basic text of the Mission Sunday materials which is in English translated into six local dialects by regional representatives; materials would appear in Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilongo, Waray, Ilocano, and Bicolano for greater effectivity.

The 1964 Mission Assembly was held in Cebu in consonance with the Bishops' Annual Conference. The Bishops' theme was "the Philippines for Christ," while the PMS theme was "the mission of Catholic Philippines to the pagan Far East." Father Valerio simplified everything, shortening it into the catchy phrase: "The Far East for Christ." One highlight of the gathering was the presentation by Bishop Epifanio B. Surban of Dumaguete regarding the Philippines' desire to share the precious gift of faith with its Asian neighbors; the bishop spoke about the "establishment, maintenance, and expansion of the Philippine Foreign Mission Society"; the proposal raised many questions, but more importantly, stirred much enthusiasm. One year later in 1965, through the Lord's graciousness, the proposal became reality.

Mission consciousness in the Philippines continued to grow, fostered by several factors, including the dedicated PMS contributions. It is noteworthy that the Philippine bishops promulgated two joint pastoral letters on evangelization in 1964. In February they issued "On the Fourth Centenary of the Evangelization of the Philippines," and in December they penned "The Philippines for Christ: Time to Launch a New Evangelization" (CBCP. *Pastoral Letters 1945-1995*, 236-248). A genuine commitment to missionary evangelization was taking root; the ongoing Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was also most certainly a contributing factor in this deepening mission commitment.

4. Limon Period (1964-1970).

Father Federico G. Limon, SVD (1915-1996) became the PMS National Director in September 1964, assuming the ordinary duties of the director: mission education, fund-raising, administration, mission animation, publications and the preparation of reports. Father (bishop in 1972) Limon also began some innovations in the PMS. The PMS publication, *The Catholic Missions*, was reformatted and renamed *The Missions*, with a bi-monthly printing of 60,000 copies. The two million Mission Sunday envelopes no longer carried the picture of the suffering Jesus; it was replaced by action pictures depicting scenes of mission life. The annual mission assembly sought to invite speakers with actual mission experience, especially in the Asian context.

An important event for the Philippine Church was the formal establishment of an indigenous mission society. In their January 29, 1965 pastoral statement the Philippine bishops declared: "Desirous to

fulfill our divine commission 'to preach the Gospel to every creature,' we, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines, herewith declare our firm intention to share the light of faith.... It is our conviction that we as a Christian Nation have reached a mature stage in our four centuries of development and that we are prepared to assume the responsibility of such maturity. We, therefore, proclaim officially our intention to undertake a national effort to orient our people to the Missions. To achieve this and to express in the concrete our gratitude to God for the gift of the Faith we will organize the Foreign Mission Society of the Philippines" (CBCP. *Pastoral Letters 1945-1995*, 249).

A convoluted saga of the PMS offices began in early 1966 when the PMS acquired a private residence situated at 824 Don Quijote, Sampaloc, Manila. Renovations of the old family house began on August 17, 1966; 80,000 pesos later, it had become the new PMS home. The PMS national offices transferred to the facility on December 15, 1966. No longer did visitors have to climb the stairs to the rented fourth floor office on Estrada Street. The solemn blessing of the edifice by Rufino J. Cardinal Santos, with numerous dignitaries as guests, took place on February 22, 1967.

However, less than six months later, on July 28, 1967, a fire which started from a nearby residence gutted the area; the building was a total loss; all records were burned and the editorial offices of *The Missions* and *Holy Child* were reduced to ashes. With great determination and generosity, Father Limon dedicated himself to the reconstruction project. Fourteen months later, after having conducted its operations at the SVD Christ the King Seminary, the PMS once again moved to the same street and same address. The solemn blessing of the new, better designed and protected structure took place on Saturday, January 25, 1969. Today that same structure (with some remodeling along the way) serves the needs of the PMS—nearly four decades later.

Some informative statistics about Filipinos serving in foreign mission overseas in 1967 are available. The 230 Filipino missionaries include 23 priests and 197 sisters. Simple statistics which list the religious group and the number of missionaries are presented here. Priests include: SVD (10), SJ (6), CICM (2), OP (2), and Bacolod secular priests (3). Women religious are the following: OP (37), DSP (35), FMM (31), SPC (16), SSps (16), RGS (12), DC (8), SSpPA (8), MM (6), SCMM

(6), FS (5), RVM (5), OP-Molo (4), OSB (3), ICM (4), and Columban (1). *Mission World* (8:8, 12-18) provides more detailed information on these Filipino missionaries, including photographs and commentary.

The ordinary tasks and activities that occupy the precious time of the PMS director and his staff all continued under the direction of Father Limon. However, in the humdrum of activities, bits of special news, important facts, and interesting insights emerge. For example, the 1968 PMS Director's report to Rome noted that the mission collections were actually higher for the year despite the fact that many people gave assistance to victims of the August 2, 1968 earthquake; in addition, the newly established Mission Society of the Philippines now conducted its own fund-raising. The two PMS publications, *The Missions* (52,000) and *Holy Child* (30,000), were able to resume their activity after the tragic 1967 fire destroyed their production operation.

The year 1969 saw the rise of student and worker unrest, and this continued well into the 1970s. Attempting to appease the students, the government passed a law, prohibiting all contributions, even voluntary, in any school, whether private or government-operated. Obviously, this ordinance would adversely affect mission-promotion activities. The Catholic Bishops' Conference challenged the constitutionality of the law, claiming it interfered with the charitable work of the Church. Mission collections also suffered due to the *de facto* devaluation of the peso and the government "floating rate" policy.

The annual gathering of the diocesan directors (August 26-28, 1969) was held for the first time in the spacious hall of the new PMS building. A significant new initiative was launched in October 1969 when a group of sisters from different congregations met at Maryknoll College and decided to form the Mission Education Committee (MEC). This inter-congregational effort, endorsed by the PMS National Director and Rufino Cardinal Santos of Manila, had as its main objective the promotion of missionary awareness among Filipino Catholics. Over the decades, this movement proved to be an effective vehicle for mission animation; a complete and inspiring MEC history, authored by N. Dael, is available in the *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book* (51-54).

In early 1970 the PMS Director was elected provincial of the Society of the Divine Word in the Philippines, the first Filipino to serve in this position. He was requested by the Bishops' Conference to submit the names of three SVD priests who could replace him. Less than two

years later, Father Limon was ordained bishop on February 13, 1972 for the Archdiocese of Lingayan-Dagupan.

5. First Pizarro Period (1970-1975).

Father Gregorio I. Pizarro, SVD (1923-2005) became national director in 1970, continuing the long and much appreciated tradition of SVD service of the PMS. As expected, he promoted the ongoing programs of the office: preparing for Mission Sunday by distributing 2.5 million mission envelopes and the posters; encouraging the apostolate of the sick and suffering; utilizing radio programs and television facilities; fostering the very effective activities of the religious sisters with the Mission Education Committee (MEC); producing *The Missions* and *Holy Child* (50,000 and 32,000 copies respectively); coordinating the eighteenth national mission assembly with the theme: "The Missionary Church in the Modern World"; and, promoting Pope Paul VI's Philippine visit (November 27-29, 1970) as a missionary event.

There was one operation that Father Pizarro had to terminate. The bottom floor of the new PMS building on Don Quijote Street was being used as a mission store in conjunction with Catholic Trade, Manila. However, it was observed that the location was not really optimum for business; thus, due to financial considerations, the mission store was closed. The available space on the ground floor was designated exclusively for mission exhibits.

"Youth, Vocation, and Mission" is a thematic expression which captures much of the PMS emphasis in 1971. For example, a half-hour Sunday afternoon program (entitled: "Reach Out!") was broadcast over Radio Veritas (DZRV) and featured various religious congregations and their missionary activities both in the Philippines and abroad. The PMS published two booklets on the various congregations for women and men in the Philippines: *What You Have Always Wanted to Know about Sisters* and *Here I Am* (about men's groups). There was an effort to revive the Catholic Mission Crusade of the Philippines. The Mission Education Committee worked to complete a series of lesson plans for religion classes in the schools.

The National Mission Assembly held in late June had for its theme: "The Involvement of the Youth in the Missionary Activity of the Church." Thirty-four ecclesiastical jurisdictions were represented,

along with members of the Episcopal Commission on Missions and 21 congregations of sisters. Father Edicio de la Torre, SVD missionary and seminary professor, and Miss Maria Cristina Astorga, Student Catholic Action lay moderator, both spoke on engaging the youth for mission. These various PMS efforts were timely, particularly since the mood of the times saw rather widespread student activism.

Collaboration between the Episcopal Commission on Missions and the PMS continued. The 1971 report of the PMS Director to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome noted: "for the second time the National Director has been appointed secretary of the Episcopal Commission on Missions. Sister Thelma Peña, DC, editor of *The Missions*, and an active coordinator of the Mission Education Committee, was appointed assistant secretary." This arrangement served the cause of mission well.

The year 1972 was a time of three special commemorations: the 350th anniversary of the establishment of *Propaganda Fide* in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV (now named: Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples), the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1822, based on the vision of Pauline Marie Jaricot, and the 50th anniversary of the Pontifical Mission Societies (the four societies received the official title of "pontifical" works in 1922). PMS-Philippines sponsored various events to raise the "mission consciousness" of Catholics: special issues of *The Missions* to educate Catholics about PMS history and significance; lectures to Manila-area seminarians by Father Kurt Piskaty, an SVD missiologist; the National Pauline Jaricot essay and poster contests; reprinting and distribution of Pauline Jaricot's biography (*Flame on the Hill* by James B. Reuter, SJ), with adaptations for a thirty-minute radio play. The twentieth PMS National Mission Assembly in 1972 took as its theme: "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Filipino People."

In 1972 the PMS National Office gathered statistical data on the number of Filipino missionaries serving abroad. Succinctly expressed, there were a total of 419 missionaries, of which 392 were women religious from 21 congregations and 27 priests from 5 groups (*The Missions* 10:4 [1973], 12-13); an earlier document, the September-October 1972 issue of *The Missions*, had listed most Filipino missionaries by name and country of service (18-19).

Although Martial Law had been declared in the Philippines on September 21, 1972, its deleterious effects are not specifically noted in any of the extant PMS literature. Mission animation efforts by the PMS continued in the subsequent years, but much of the attention of the Church's pastoral agents became focused on social-political-economic-religious issues in the context of Church and Society vis-à-vis Martial Law. In addition to its existing programs, the PMS sought to promote national, diocesan, and parochial mission councils; little successful action was forthcoming in this area over the succeeding years.

In 1973 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued a lengthy pastoral letter, entitled "Evangelization and Development." The letter mentioned the 1972 key PMS anniversaries (noted above), affirmed that the Church "is necessarily an active missionary organism," and spoke of the Philippine reality, "especially under the rule of martial law" (CBCP. *Pastoral Letters 1945-1995*, 370-395). In short, the Church was attempting to chart a course for her missionary involvement in the "changed context" of the Philippines under Martial Law, a reality that continued for several subsequent years.

6. Rosales Period (1975-1982).

Bishop Gaudencio B. Rosales (1932-), Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, became PMS National Director on September 18, 1975. Mission promotion activities during 1975, a Holy Year, continued in their usual patterns. The twenty-third PMS general assembly focused on mission and *Alay Kapwa*, with Bishop Jose T. Sanchez of Lucena and Father Louie G. Hechanova, CSsR as speakers. The business matters of the assembly included clarifications on mission subsidies and the creative resolution to sponsor mission lectures for diocesan seminarians throughout the year. There were meetings with the Episcopal Commission on Mission [Bishops Limon, Querexeta, Regan, and Espiga], with student leaders from Metro Manila area schools, and with the dynamic Mission Education Committee composed of 30-40 religious sisters.

Perhaps the most far-reaching decision made in 1975 was the action to change from a regular magazine publication to a newsletter format. Several reasons were considered, but the most compelling centered on finances. Due to rather sharp increases in printing and mailing costs, a revised form of print media was envisioned. The chosen format would consist of one printed sheet that would be folded twice

across its width to make it resemble a giant book mark; *The Missions Newsletter* had come to birth.

The PMS office continued to arrange activities whereby the youth in Catholic schools could be reached more effectively. These included an annual seminar for teachers (mostly sisters) on mission awareness. For example, the 1975 seminar saw Archbishop Jaime Sin and Sister Bridgette Chapman, MM speak on the missionary commitment of sisters; Father Catalino Arévalo, SJ presented highlights of the 1974 Bishops' Synod on Evangelization in Rome. The PMS also sponsored the development of audio-visual aids, the use of simple mission films, and an annual "mission play" contest. The winning 1978 mission play was made into a reflective documentary composed of 90 slide illustrations with an accompanying 30-minute cassette tape, intended for wide distribution.

Bishop Rosales capitalized on his travels to visit Filipino missionaries in Southeast Asia. Returning from the PMS meeting in Rome in May 1979, he visited members of the Philippine Mission Society (MSP) in Northern Thailand [at this juncture Bishop Rosales was serving as the MSP Director]. He visited some Filipina sisters in Thailand, before proceeding to Indonesia to visit MSP priests serving there. Bishop Rosales was also appointed to head the Commission on Missionary Responsibility for the Synod of the Archdiocese of Manila that opened on October 21, 1979; the Synod ultimately approved eleven mission proposals.

Undoubtedly, the highlight of the seven-year Rosales period at the PMS was the International Mission Congress (IMC) held in Manila on December 2-7, 1979 to mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Manila. The congress was jointly sponsored by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies; its theme was: "The Good News of God's Kingdom to the Peoples of Asia." Over two hundred delegates, participants, and observers were in attendance. Two key IMC figures were Bishop Rosales (Convenor) and Father Catalino Arévalo, SJ (Executive Secretary); countless other volunteers served the IMC initiative.

The stated purpose of the IMC was: to discuss contemporary orientations in the Church's Theology of Mission and to clarify and deepen the theological foundations of the work of the PMS; to renew the motivation for the Church's primary task of evangelization; and, to provide renewed guidelines for policies and planning for the Church's

missionary effort. *The Missions Newsletter* (17:4 [June, 1979], 6) noted: "It is the hope of those who are sponsoring the Congress that a fresh and powerful impetus may emerge from this Congress for dedication to the task of mission, especially in Asia today." The IMC concluded with the conferral of mission crosses on sixty-seven Filipino priests, religious sisters, and lay persons about to leave for foreign lands. For a brief IMC overview with photographs, see *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 44-47.

Several high-quality publications were produced in this period: *The Good News of God's Kingdom to the Peoples of Asia* (1980) and *Toward a New Age in Mission: International Congress on Mission* [three books in two volumes] (1981). The PMS also published: "*To Give Shining Witness*" (1981) [a series of five conferences to promote the fruits of the IMC] and "*Mission and the Philippines—Past, Present, Future*" by Francis X. Clark, SJ (1981). The positive impact of the IMC was far-reaching and long-lasting—a fitting tribute to the faith that had grown and deepened in the 400 hundred years of the Archdiocese of Manila.

Bishop Rosales carried on with his PMS duties; some representative activities are presented here. In early 1980 he was in Davao to officiate at the missioning ceremony of the Philippine Lay Missionary Program. A special issue of 100,000 copies of *The Missions Newsletter*, featuring the life of Pope John Paul II, was freely distributed in advance of the Pope's visit in 1981; Lorenzo Ruiz was beatified during the papal visit. The PMS director welcomed to the country Miss Sabine Lambert of the Missionary Childhood Association and Monsignor Fernand Franck, Secretary General of *Propaganda Fide* in Rome.

In early 1981 the PMS helped facilitate the Northern Luzon Regional Mission Congress, featuring such resource persons as C. Arévalo, A. Lambino, and T. Bacani. The 1981 PMS General Assembly included a series of mission reflections by prominent speakers. There was a Mission Theological Symposium organized in Naga City in October for the Southern Luzon area. A mission-sending ceremony for thirty Filipino missionaries was held in San Agustin Church in Manila. The year 1981 marked the first time that an RVM sister began working at the PMS. The creative and fruitful "Rosales Period" came to an end when Gaudencio B. Rosales was appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Malaybalay, Bukidnon on June 9, 1982. This loyal PMS servant became a cardinal on March 24, 2006.

7. Lat Period (1982-1983).

Bishop Leoncio L. Lat (1917-2002) assumed the office of PMS National Director when it was vacated by Bishop Gaudencio B. Rosales who took up his new responsibilities as auxiliary bishop of Malaybalay, Bukidnon. Bishop Lat was one of the auxiliary bishops of Manila as well as the General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. He directed the PMS activities from August 1982 until April 1983.

In his PMS report to Rome in early 1983, Bishop Lat noted significant activities of the preceding twelve months. The 1982 National Mission Assembly focused on mission spirituality. Acceding to the request of the National Director, Cardinal Jaime Sin gave permission for Sister Therese J. Patrick, OCD to leave the cloister and address the Mission Assembly; her two-hour presentation emphasized that the true spirit of mission is contemplation rather than mere action. SVD Father Edgar Javier spoke on contemporary mission concepts.

It is noteworthy that during this period there were a number of regional mission gatherings. In September a mission seminar was held at the Holy Rosary Regional Seminary in Naga City on the topic of "Mary and Mission." In October a short mission congress in Legaspi City focused on "Mission in the Context of our Diocesan Vision." In November there was a series of mission animation seminars throughout all the dioceses of Northern Luzon. The year 1982 also saw the release of the CBCP Pastoral Letter "A Church Sent" which recalled the missionary challenges of Pope John Paul II during his 1981 visit to the Philippines (CBCP. *Pastoral Letters 1945-1995*, 558-561).

The religious sisters of the PMS Mission Education Committee (MEC), headed by Sister Maria Teresita Dacio, RVM, continued their efforts to reach public and private non-sectarian schools with short presentations in as many classes as possible per school. They also sponsored mission awareness activities on the theme: *Misyon Mo, Misyon Ko* (Your Mission, My Mission).

Bishop Lat served the PMS as was envisioned; he had been appointed as an *ad interim* officer-in-charge. He supervised well the normal PMS operations (e.g. Mission Sunday activities, publications, correspondence). As a bishop he was also able to foster good communications with the Pontifical Offices in Rome.

8. Second Pizarro Period (1983-1993).

In the 75-year history of the PMS, Father Gregorio I. Pizarro, SVD (1923-2005) holds the unique distinction of being PMS National Director two times—and for two consecutive terms during his second period of service. His appointment letter was dated February 11, 1983, feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Not being “new to the job,” Father Pizarro confidently set about his tasks. He confirmed plans for the National Mission Assembly in August with a strong focus on missionary spirituality. During the actual gathering, buffeted by a strong typhoon, Bishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP presented a special, timely conference on “The Mission in the New Code” (released in 1983). The assembly participants recommended that the bishops consider establishing a national mission institute. During the year, the director promoted the creative use of the talents of MEC members, especially for Mission Sunday activities. Evangelization through media continued with occasional programs on Radio Veritas and the bi-monthly publication of 40,000 copies of *The Missions Newsletter*.

Two highlights of the 1984 PMS mission assembly were: discussions on how to deepen the impact of the International Mission Congress five years after its celebration in 1979; and, the personal witnessing of two returning Filipino missionaries (Sister Digna R. Magtibay, MIC from Madagascar and Father Briccio Tamoro, SVD from Argentina). As was the case with several previous assemblies, the Apostolic Nuncio, Bruno Torpigliani, was graciously present.

Major PMS-sponsored activities for 1985 included the national assembly with three prominent speakers: the Apostolic Nuncio spoke on youth and mission; Father Catalino Arévalo, SJ reflected on Mary and Evangelization; and, Father Leo Drona, SDB presented Marian Devotion and Youth’s Involvement for Peace [1984-1985 was a Philippine Marian Year]. In September fourteen youth leaders from Manila organized the Junior Mission Education Committee; they were ably guided by Sister N. Dael, RVM, the current MEC coordinator. In 1986 the PMS office did a national survey by mail to determine the effectivity of the annual national mission assembly and its resolutions; survey returns were rather minimal (postal problems were suspected) and any results were inconclusive.

Inspired by the Mission Sending Ceremony of the 1979 Mission Congress, Jaime Cardinal Sin continued to promote such an annual national ceremony. On February 20, 1987 at the Holy Apostles Senior Seminary 63 religious (27 men and 36 women) received their mission cross. In 1987 the MEC membership included lay persons for the first time; this seemed fitting as 1987 had been declared the "Year of the Laity." There was discussion about reviving the PMS National Council, but this was not implemented immediately; Father Pizarro reported that a serious difficulty he faced was that many diocesan directors were new and were frequently changed. The PMS National Council was finally reconstituted in January of 1989.

The eighth mission-sending ceremony was celebrated at Cardinal Sin's residence on February 24, 1989. Calling upon the Holy Spirit, the cardinal presented the mission cross to 79 missionaries (45 men from 8 congregations and 34 women from 10 congregations); PMS records contain the names of the individual missionaries, their place of origin, and their mission assignment.

As manifested in archival documents, Father Pizarro dutifully kept meticulous records of all PMS financial transactions; on several occasions Church authorities in Rome commended him for his conscientious labors. He also tried to make periodic visits to dioceses for mission animation activities, especially in those places where there was an active diocesan director. Archbishop Jose T. Sanchez, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and President of the PMS, came to the Philippines in 1990; he lectured widely in several national and regional mission gatherings. In 1990 Father Pizarro also reported that the PMS publication *The Missions Newsletter* (its current name) had reached its twenty-seventh year of publication.

The 1991 month-long Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) was a pivotal event for the local Church in the last decade of the second millennium. In his homily at the opening Eucharist, Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi spoke on the topic "The Council: A Journey towards Renewal and Unity," and he addressed the four directional foci which the Council was to keep in mind throughout its deliberations: Christ as the focus, a pastoral orientation, evangelization as the driving spirit, and, all done within the Filipino context.

The final PCP-II document summarized its thrust: "The four week Council we are now concluding must in God's grace be another Pentecost:

Christ's Spirit descending on us His people; and we, His people, going forth in-spirited to renew the face of the world—our little world first, the Philippines; and through this little world of ours, the wider world of Asia and beyond..." (*Introduction*).

During the 1991 PMS National Assembly in August, Monsignor Rey M. Monsanto, a PCP-II participant, reflected on the question: Did PCP-II have a missionary dimension? His dynamic presentation (*The Missions Newsletter* 30:2, 1-4) concluded that the spirit of missionary evangelization permeated PCP-II. The Church is defined in PCP-II as "a communion in a state of mission" (#103). She "exists for the world"; she is "sent on mission to proclaim the good news of Christ and to be the instrument of his grace" (#104). "While it is true that the Church has a mission towards Philippine society, it has also a very definite mission to the other peoples of Asia" (#106). Monsignor Monsanto concluded by saying: "we can very easily and confidently say that the Council is a call to evangelization, a call to mission." Indeed, the PCP-II had rekindled the missionary fire in the hearts of numerous Filipinos.

Redemptoris Missio (RM), the mission encyclical of John Paul II, though dated December 7, 1990 (twenty-fifth anniversary of Vatican II's *Ad Gentes*), was finally released on January 22, 1991—when PCP-II was already in session. An examination of PMS sources and activities reveals that these two documents (PCP-II and RM) served to positively influence the PMS vision in the Philippines. In the final years of his decade of dedicated service, Father Pizarro frequently spoke about the fact that Christ's mission "is still very far from completion" and that since "this mission is still only beginning," all PMS members "must commit ourselves whole-heartedly to its service" (RM 1). Another passage frequently cited by Father Pizarro asserts that "missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and *visa versa*" (RM 34).

9. Galvez Period (1993-1998).

On October 4, 1993 Father Gregorio I. Pizarro, SVD officially handed over the PMS responsibilities to Father José Antonio Santos Galvez (1959-). In spite of being only a youthful thirty-four years old, Father Galvez possessed several qualities that prepared him for the national directorship; in particular, he had completed in 1992 his doctoral studies in Missiology at the Gregorian University in Rome. His

doctoral work was eventually published in 1998 with the popular title: *The Pioneers: Filipino Lay Missionaries*.

Father Galvez stated that, collaborating with diocesan mission directors throughout the country and the hierarchy (CBCP), he would dedicate himself to fostering a universal missionary spirit among the People of God. He enumerated his aims as "forming mission consciousness, fostering spiritual and missionary cooperation, promoting vocations for the missions, and bringing about the efficient collection of funds." Concretely, these goals were implemented through his strong support of the Mission Education Committee (MEC), his visits to the provinces (e.g. Marbel, Davao, Dipolog, Kalibo, etc.), and the promotion of the mission-sending ceremony and the mission rosary. He served as editor of *The Missions Newsletter*, and attended Asia-wide PMS activities (e.g. Asian Regional Meeting of the Holy Childhood in Seoul, Korea in 1994).

Manila was the scene of a confluence of religious and missionary activities in January of 1995. Pope John Paul II visited the Philippines for the second time (January 12-16); the Tenth World Youth Day ("The Manila Phenomenon") was celebrated (January 10-15); the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) held its Sixth Plenary Assembly (January 10-19), celebrating its silver jubilee of foundation in Manila (1970-1995).

Pope John Paul II used this opportunity to exhort everyone to engage in missionary evangelization. At the Welcome Ceremony on January 12, he stated: "The Church in the Philippines knows that it has a special vocation to bear witness to the Gospel in the heart of Asia." He told the bishops (CBCP) on January 14: "Asia needs your help if it is to hear the Good News of Christ crucified and risen." Remarkably, the Pope's words echoed his message during his earlier visit in 1981: "There is no doubt about it: the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News, to carry the light of Christ to the nations.... Paul VI confirmed this missionary vocation of yours during his visit here, and repeatedly thereafter. From many points of view, dear Brothers, you are truly called to be a missionary Church" (1981 Address to Bishops, 6).

In light of this papal exhortation, the PMS prepared for its forty-third national mission assembly (August 21-24, 1995); the chosen theme was: "Youth in Evangelization: Holy Childhood Association." Bishop

Malcolm Ranjith, auxiliary bishop of Colombo, Sri Lanka, was the keynote speaker, presenting four full talks on various dimensions of the theme, pointing out both challenges and pathways for evangelization in Asia. Earlier in the year, Father Galvez, Sister Dael, RVM and Sister Cazar, CM had participated in the Holy Childhood Association Seminar-Exposure (February 12-24) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Following another papal impetus, the PMS chose the new millennium as its assembly theme for 1996: "In the Spirit of Joyful Hope, the PMS-Philippines in the Advent of the Third Millennium." Among the presentations was a dynamic talk by Father Luis Antonio Tagle on "*Tertio Millennio Adveniente: An Overview*." This thrust flowed over to the annual mission convocation for the youth (1996); forty-three schools sent delegates to the Malate Catholic School. The activities took this focus: *Kabataan: Tugon sa Misyon Tungo sa Ikatlong Milenyo* (Youth: Response to Mission in the Coming Third Millennium). Activities for Mission Sunday 1996 capitalized on the same mission thrust.

Several annual activities usually formed part of the normal rhythm of the PMS program. The Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Missions (ECM) was always invited and attended PMS major events such as the mission assembly; during this period, the ECM Chairman was the active Bishop Vicente C. Manuel, SVD (he ultimately served in the ECM position for ten years). The Holy Childhood Association "Big Day" was usually held on *Santo Niño* Sunday in January. The Mission-Sending Ceremony, promoted by Cardinal Jaime Sin, was often celebrated early in the year; in 1997 there were 62 missionaries who joined the annual event (12 lay, 20 female and 30 male religious). Noteworthy also is that Philippine mission statistics (1997 *Catholic Directory of the Philippines*, 655-666) list 439 men and 1,284 women serving in foreign mission.

Father Galvez completed his term as PMS National Director in 1998; soon he was tapped to serve the PMS in Rome. On April 4, 2000 Galvez received his appointment as Secretary General of the Pontifical Society of Saint Peter the Apostle; he served in that position until 2005.

10. Mesiona Period (1998-2001).

Father Pedro M. Mesiona, MSP (1946-), the first priest of the Mission Society of the Philippines to become PMS National Director, was serving as Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission on

Missions prior to his appointment to the PMS office. Father "Pete," who had been missioned for seven years in the Archdiocese of Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, began by centering his attention on two major events for 1998: the annual Mission Assembly and the second training session of the School of Missionary Animators.

The forty-sixth National Mission Assembly, held in Cagayan de Oro City, focused on the theme: "Changes for a More Effective Mission Animation Work in the Philippines in View of the Third Millennium." A very significant change was the implementation of a decision announced in the November 20, 1997 letter of Josef Cardinal Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, to Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz, CBCP President. The document approved the establishment of a single service of missionary cooperation in the Philippines, between the Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS) and the Episcopal Commission on Missions (ECM). In the new structure, the PMS serves as the National Secretariat of the ECM, and the PMS National Director becomes the Executive Secretary of the ECM. The revised structure, patterned after the model in France and some South American countries, had been proposed to Cardinal Tomko in Rome by the ECM Chairman, Bishop Vicente C. Manuel, SVD. Actually, it was during the national assembly that Father Mesionna received from Bishop Manuel his letter of appointment as EMC Executive Secretary. The national assembly was used to explain this new structure to the participants, facilitating its smooth implementation throughout the country and at the national office in Manila.

Another major task of the PMS director in 1998 was the hosting of the Second Assembly of the School of Missionary Animators (SOMA II). Held in Tagaytay City at the RVM Betania Retreat House from September 20-26, 1998, SOMA II was a direct sequel of SOMA I held in Bangkok in September 1997. The SOMA is a formation program of missionary catechetics aimed at the children of the Holy Childhood Association; it is sponsored by the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood. Participants of SOMA II came from India (9), Bangladesh (9), Pakistan (6), Sri Lanka (11), Thailand (7), Indonesia (7), Korea (3), Rome (3), and Philippines (21). Of the Philippine delegation, thirteen were diocesan directors of mission; the others were Sisters who had attended SOMA I in Bangkok.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) approved in its January 1999 Plenary Assembly the plan of the Episcopal

Commission on Missions to hold a National Mission Congress (NMC) in the year 2000. As concrete plans were formulated, it was decided the NMC would be held in Cebu, the cradle of Christianity in the Philippines on September 27 to October 1, 2000; two mission feast days fall within this period: San Lorenzo Ruiz (September 28) and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (October 1). Key objectives of the congress were to enhance the awareness of the local Church as a missionary community and to highlight the missionary dimension of Christian faith. The lead agencies of the NMC were the Episcopal Commission on Missions and the Pontifical Missionary Societies.

Three decades after its foundation and continued effective mission animation service (1969-1999) the Mission Education Committee (MEC) changed its formal name to the Association of School-based Animators for Missions (ASAM). This decision, reached in its June 6, 1999 meeting, was based on a proposal by the PMS National Director; he noted that the MEC is school-based and quite large; it is more than a simple committee. Metro-Manila, the locus of most MEC initiatives, was divided into four geographical sections with a leader in each area; these four persons were to serve as assistants to the PMS National Director in matters of mission activities in the various schools. Further details are recorded in the *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 51-54.

The annual PMS Mission Assembly, held in Cebu City in June, explored the theme: Understanding Mission Concepts / Issues for Effective Mission Animation Works. The sixty-seven participants heard lectures on Evangelization (P. Mesiona), Theology of Mission and Religions (T. Senno), Megatrends affecting the Church and Ecumenism (F. Ferrer), Missionary Spirituality (C. Mallari), and the Asian Synod of Bishops (R. Villena). Bishop Vicente C. Manuel, ECM Chairman, oriented the assembly to the National Mission Congress and the National Mission Council. In its final statement the assembly confirmed its enthusiastic commitment "to support the ECM-PMS programs, particularly the National Mission Congress."

Most mission initiatives now became focused on the preparation and celebration of the National Mission Congress (NMC). A wide variety of activities were undertaken: committees for visioning and implementation were established; various catechetical materials were readied, including *Tell the World . . . Catechetical Modules for Mission Animation* (Cebuano Translation: *Suginli ang Kalibutan*); fund-raising

was promoted; a NMC song was composed (*We Are Gifts*); in January 2000 the CBCP sponsored a three-day workshop, given by Fathers L. Tagle, D. Huang, and J. Kroeger, on mission in *Ecclesia in Asia*. Of special significance was the CBCP pastoral letter on mission and evangelization within the local Church: *"Missions" and the Church in the Philippines: A Pastoral Letter on the Church's Mission in the New Millennium* (July 5, 2000).

The five-day mission congress, with its 2,300 delegates, proved to be a truly unique event for Asia's largest local Church. During its opening session, Bishop Manuel recounted the many initiatives, people, and activities that coalesced to shape the congress. Several dignitaries graced the occasion, including Archbishop Charles A. Schleck, CSC, representative of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and Hong Kong John Baptist Cardinal Wu, the Papal Legate to the Congress. Present also were Archbishop Antonio Franco, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, as well as Philippine cardinals, Ricardo J. Vidal of Cebu and Jaime L. Sin of Manila. Two books document the entire event: *Acta: The First National Mission Congress* (V. Manuel, editor) and *Telling God's Story: National Mission Congress 2000* (J. Kroeger, editor). The "Message of the First National Mission Congress" expressed the enthusiastic commitment of the congress delegates to become a local "Church-in-Mission."

The PMS National Director participated in a variety of post-NMC initiatives: there were several echo-congresses throughout the country; the NMC recommendations began to be implemented on various levels; a National Mission Plan was formulated; the PMS held its forty-ninth mission assembly in Davao City. The first "post-NMC" orientation course for departing Filipino missionaries held in 2001 saw a total of seventy-nine participants preparing to depart for thirty-four countries world-wide; the large number was believed to be due to the impact of the mission congress. Further inspiring mission data is available in "Millennium Missionary Milestones: The Philippine Local Church Journey" in *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* 81 (2005), 90-104.

11. Mallari Period (2001-2002).

Father Cipriano B. Mallari (1946-) brought much mission experience with him when he was appointed National PMS Director on April 6, 2001. He had studied missiology in Rome and written his thesis

on mission awareness and animation in major seminary formation. In addition, he had been missioned in 1996 as a MSP associate priest in the Solomon Islands, and he had served as diocesan PMS director in the Archdiocese of Caceres (Naga City) from 1998-2001.

As expected, Father Mallari accomplished the traditional works of the PMS director. For example, he facilitated the annual Mission Convocation in November 2001 (Siena College, Quezon City) as well as the Holy Childhood Association Convocation in January of 2002 (St. Mary's College, Quezon City). One major activity under his leadership was the celebration of the Seventieth Foundation Anniversary of PMS-Philippines. Working closely with Sister M. Nicetas P. Dael, RVM, Father Mallari and the PMS Office were able to produce the handsome and informative volume: *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book*. In addition, the PMS Office organized, as part of the anniversary commemorations, an Assisi-Rome pilgrimage tour for interested diocesan mission directors. Thus, through the commemorative book and the pilgrimage, the PMS celebrated its seventieth foundation anniversary and the fiftieth year of the annual national mission assembly.

Personal health issues precluded the completion of Father Mallari's five-year appointment as PMS National Director. His reflections on his call to mission are invitingly presented in the publication *PMS Seventieth Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 56-61.

An important addendum that can be inserted at this point is to note the extraordinarily effective work of the PMS Mission Education Committee (MEC) over the years, since its origin in 1969. School-based, creative mission animation was the hallmark of this dedicated group, mostly composed of mission-minded religious sisters and teachers. The MEC coordinators and their years of service are the following: Sister Thelma Peña, DC (1969-1974); Sister Luz Jael, DC (1974-1975); Sister Priscilla Andaya, DC (1976-1978); Sister Thelma Peña, DC (1978-1981); Sister Ma. Teresita Dacio, RVM (1981-1983); Sister Ma. Concepta C. Sanchez, RVM (1983-1984); Sister Ma. Nicetas P. Dael, RVM (1984-1996); and, Sister Ma. Lupeciña Amamio, RVM (1996-1999). From 1999 onward the coordinating function fell directly under the PMS National Director and various modes of operation were employed.

12. Garcera Period (2003-2008).

Monsignor Gilbert A. Garcera (1959-), member of the diocesan clergy of the Archdiocese of Caceres, received his official five-year appointment as the PMS National Director on October 1, 2003 from Crescenzo Cardinal Sepe, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. However, due to special needs, Monsignor Garcera had actually begun his PMS services several months earlier. In addition, he was for some years the CBCP Assistant Secretary General (2001-2003), giving him a wide knowledge and experience of the entire Philippine local Church—and a good working relationship with members of the national hierarchy.

Monsignor Garcera (bishop on June 29, 2007) brought great dynamism and creativity to his PMS assignment. He began by widely consulting with various groups (e.g. Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists [PACM] and the Philippine Catholic Mission Council [PCMC]) as well as with pivotal persons in Church leadership (e.g. Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI, CBCP President, Bishops Vicente C. Manuel, SVD and Edwin A. de la Peña, MSP, outgoing and incoming chairmen of the Episcopal Commission on Missions). He drew extensively on the years of experience of the PMS staff and personnel serving in the National Office in Manila. The insights of several long-term diocesan directors of missions also proved most valuable.

To effectively chronicle the many and diverse activities of the Garcera period, a thematic approach, rather than a chronological presentation, will be employed. Thus, for example, the annual mission assemblies or the activities of the Holy Childhood Association will be gathered together in one paragraph. This approach will facilitate a clearer presentation of the very large number of mission activities that were initiated.

Within the period covered by this brief PMS history, Monsignor Garcera, his competent staff, and several resource persons facilitated five national mission assemblies: 50th Assembly (Tagaytay City; June 9-11, 2003) with theme: “Revitalizing Mission Animation Works in the Philippines”; 51st Assembly (Roxas City; June 1-3, 2004) with theme: “Starting Afresh from Christ: Mission for the Third Millennium”; 52nd Assembly (Baguio City; June 6-10, 2005) with theme: “Celebrating the Eucharist as the Principle and Plan of Mission”; 53rd Assembly (Puerto Princesa; June 2-7, 2006) with theme: “Launching the PMS

75th Anniversary: Renewing the Philippine Local Church in Mission"; 54th Assembly (Manila; July 9-12, 2007) with theme: "Culminating the PMS 75th Anniversary: Renewing the Philippine Local Church in Mission." Three regional assemblies (Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao) are planned for 2008.

The theme of the fiftieth assembly in 2003, the first of the Garcera period, expresses succinctly the approach employed by the PMS leadership: "Revitalizing Mission Animation Works in the Philippines." In hindsight, it can be validly asserted that this perspective subsequently guided the PMS—both in its vision and praxis. In addition, Monsignor Garcera enunciated his "directional shift" at the PMS. He said he would initiate four moves: from "solely collecting Pontifical remittances" to "spirituality of the missions through ... formation and training of mission animators and cooperators"; from "the usual yearly activities" to "more dynamic and innovative missionary initiatives"; from "limited office personnel" to "more collaborative networking of resources"; and, from "October mission consciousness" to "year-round mission awareness programs" (Director's Annual Report [2003-2004], 3). These perspectives brought renewed vitality to the PMS.

Actualizing this program demanded getting into the field—and out of the office in Manila. Over a five-year period, the PMS director and staff members personally visited a large percentage of the ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the country, participated in several local mission congresses, and conducted one-day animation sessions in schools and parishes with religious and diocesan personnel. These personal visits enabled better supervision of various projects funded from Rome through the PMS; they also established personal contact with many mission animators—a key factor in mission promotion activities.

Several national congresses and consultations formed an essential part of the PMS program of "revitalizing mission animation works in the Philippines." Two National Congresses on the Holy Childhood were held (Cagayan de Oro City on September 3-5, 2004 and Metro Manila on July 11-14, 2007). The First National Assembly of Filipino Lay Missioners, a truly unique endeavor, unfolded in Cebu City on November 30 to December 4, 2005 and concluded with a mission-sending ceremony presided by Cardinal Ricardo J. Vidal, DD. The National Mission Youth Camp in Antipolo City extended from September 30 to October 2, 2006. There was a General Assembly of the Propagation of

the Faith in Baguio City on December 2-3, 2006. The First National Congress on Saint Peter the Apostle was celebrated in Naga City from January 17-21, 2007. This simple catalogue of national gatherings does not do justice to the hundreds of hours of meeting, planning, animating, and fund-raising that went into each endeavor—by a virtual army of generous local personnel, all on fire for mission.

The Garcera period is marked by a significant number of mission publications. In addition to the attractively produced annual PMS reports, submitted to Rome and distributed locally, there are special souvenir books from the 2004 Holy Childhood Congress and the 2005 Lay Missioners Assembly. Each year from 2003 until 2007 Mission Sunday Homily Guides were published and distributed throughout the country. Video materials were released for both national congresses on the Holy Childhood. A printed *PMS Directory 06-07*, complete with photographs and contact information, was prepared. A compact disk (CD) of mission songs was distributed in conjunction with the PMS seventy-fifth anniversary. *The Missions Newsletter* continued in production; yet, it also evolved from a newsprint format in 2003 to a full-color publication in 2005 and into two special issues in 2007, highlighting the Asian Mission Congress and the PMS Seventy-fifth Anniversary celebration. PMS-Philippines established its own web-site in 2005.

The PMS story in these first years of the third millennium would be incomplete if brief mention were not made of the Philippine contribution to the wider Church, both universally and in Asia. Monsignor Garcera faithfully attended the annual Superior Council Meeting of the PMS held at *Propaganda Fide* headquarters in Rome; beginning in 2005 he was also elected as a member of the Supreme Committee of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. On several occasions he welcomed PMS dignitaries from Rome and other countries to the Philippines. He facilitated the Philippine preparations for the First Asian Mission Congress held in Chiang Mai, Thailand on October 18-22, 2006; in addition, he competently served as the program coordinator for the entire congress.

Monsignor Garcera assisted the Philippine bishops in developing their National Mission Plan as well as the Philippine National Mission Council. The ground floor of the PMS offices on Don Quijoti Street was renovated in 2007, and a colorful “historical mission mural” in etched glass was installed in the main stairwell. PMS-Philippines, in

accordance with directives from the Philippine Bishops (CBCP) and authorization from Rome, began in late 2007 the process of acquiring its own juridical status independent of the CBCP.

John Paul II stated in his mission encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* (67), that “All priests must have the mind and heart of missionaries—open to the needs of the Church and the world.” Humbly yet boldly, Monsignor Gilbert A. Garcera strove to live the vision that all priests, and indeed all Christians, must have missionary minds and hearts; this insight appears to be well reflected in this period of PMS history. Dynamic programs of missionary animation seemed to flourish; the Spirit-given flame of mission spread among numerous Filipino Catholics; the missionary goals of the PMS became reality through the sincere efforts by dedicated Christians with hearts inflamed by Christ’s love. May that same Pentecostal fire burn brightly in the PMS and in the entire local Church of the Philippines—as the PMS moves on from its diamond jubilee of seventy-five years in 2007 to its first centennial celebration in 2032! □