

PREAMBLE

The Second Vatican Council tells us: "Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God, this sacred Synod summons all to a deep interior renewal. Thus, from a vivid awareness of their own responsibility for spreading the gospel, they will do their share in missionary work among the nations." (Ad Gentes, #35) The Council Fathers continue: "Provided the universal scope of mission work is not thereby neglected, it will be very useful for a community to maintain contact with missionaries who came from its ranks, or with a parish or diocese in the missions. In this way the bond between communities will be made visible, and will provide mutual edification." (Ad Gentes, #37C)

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the Mission Circle is a practical way for Catholic men and women to stimulate, spiritualize, and systematize mission aid in a personal and concrete manner. If you wish to discuss forming a Mission Circle, share a copy of these bylaws with your pastor or parish council or contact our office for more information.

BYLAWS

The following bylaws and directions of organization shall constitute the approved manner of beginning and conducting a Mission Circle.

I. NATURE OF THE MISSION CIRCLE:

The Mission Circles are organized groups of men and women, who as missionaries in their own parishes, or within the framework of an existing society or organization of which the members, band together and follow a program of spiritual and material assistance either in foreign missions or among our American home missions.

Every member of the Mission Circles shall enroll as a member of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Annual membership is one dollar. The offering may be made in your parish church on Mission Sunday. Perpetual, Family and Annual Group memberships are also available. It may be possible for some of the Circles to sponsor the education of Native Seminarians through The Society of St. Peter the Apostle. Information regarding these Pontifical Societies may be obtained from the Archdiocesan Office.

II. ORGANIZATION:

Ordinarily Mission Circles shall be parochial. If the pastor is not the immediate instigator of the Circle, the chairperson or organizers of the Circle shall discuss its formation with the pastor.

The pastor should be advised of the meetings of the Circle and invited to attend the gatherings of the membership. Any problems or difficulties, should they arise, should be referred to the pastor, the District Chairperson or the Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 3424 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90010 (213) 637-7223.

Some Circles are formed within existing organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, Holy Name Society, Altar and Rosary Society, Catholic Daughters of America, Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, Study Clubs, Guilds, etc. In this instance, the Chaplain shall be advised of the Circle and its activities.

Each Circle may select its own name. However, each Circle will be identified by the number allotted to it at the time of its organization.

III. NUMBER OF MEMBERS:

This matter is entirely elastic and depends upon the circumstances of the members, their ages, parochial conditions, etc. There may be other members who cannot attend meetings regularly nor actively engage in the program. They are considered supporting members. The number of such supporting members need not be limited.

If the active membership of a Circle increases beyond eighteen or twenty, another Circle might be formed; and it may adopt another missionary. If the original Circle prefers not to split its membership, it may adopt a second missionary. However, the matter is left entirely to the discretion and wishes of the majority of the Circle. In each instance of such dividing and adopting of a new missionary, the advice of the Archdiocesan Director of the Mission Aid Societies must be sought.

IV. PURPOSES AND REGULATIONS:

The extent of the assistance rendered by the members to their adopted missionary shall depend upon the age, circumstances of life, abilities and tastes of the members. In this matter, there must exist great elasticity and adaptation on the part of the members.

However, to maintain some uniformity of program throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the following shall be the norm. In every instance the program is to be agreed upon by a majority of the members and followed in accord with the desires and means of the members of the Circle.

A. Each Circle shall elect a chairperson, whose duty it will be to call meetings, direct activities of the Circle and coordinate the

plans and actions of the members, with consent of the members.

B. The Chairperson is urged to keep the pastor or chaplain informed of the Circle's activities, to cooperate with the District Chairperson and to supply an annual report each Spring to the Archdiocesan Office.

C. It is recommended that a Co-Chairperson be elected at the same time as the Chairperson to exercise the office only in the absence of the Chairperson. If desired, the immediate past Chairperson can automatically assume this office. This will promote the regularity of the Mission Circle meetings, which otherwise might be disrupted by the absence of the Chairperson.

D. Each Circle, if it wishes or finds necessary, may elect a Secretary, whose duty it will be to carry on correspondence with the adopted missionary and to keep records of funds, mailings, minutes, etc. If desired, a separate Treasurer may be elected, whose function will be to register dues and funds, expenditures, etc.

E. The names, addresses and phone numbers of all officers of the individual Circles upon their election should be forwarded by the newly elected Chairperson to the District Chairperson and to the Archdiocesan Office.

F. A General Chairperson and General Secretary for all the Circles of the Archdiocese (The Mission Circle Board) shall be elected or reelected annually, not to exceed a maximum of two terms, during the month of March. They shall take office on the day of the Annual Archdiocesan Mission Circles' Luncheon. A District Chairperson shall hold office for a period of one year and can be re-elected two consecutive times. Voting procedure for the offices of General Chairperson and Secretary will be the casting of one vote by each Circle. The General Chairperson, General Secretary and District Chairpersons shall contact the Mission Director of the Archdiocese to collaborate with him to make more fruitful and efficient the individual work of each separate Circle.

G. Individual Mission Circle meetings, at a place and hour agreed upon by the members, should ideally be held once a month. Some of the Circles meet more often for packing goods, etc. This is a matter for the Circle to decide. Meetings should be held often enough to sustain interest and action in the Circle's program. Most Circles find that holding meetings in the homes of the members is satisfactory. The homes of the members are to be preferred to parish halls or rooms, lest the meetings interfere with the usual activities of a parish. However, the advice and direction of the parish priest should be sought in this regard.

The meeting might consist of the following:

- 1) Calling to order and checking informally the presence or absence of the members.
- 2) Offering of prayers for the Missions. Some Circles recite the Rosary as part of the meeting. Invocations to St. Francis Xavier and St. Therese, Patrons of the Missions, may be said. The use of scriptural readings is highly encouraged.
- 3) Reading of the minutes of the last meeting, if considered helpful.
- 4) At each meeting a short time can be spent in the reading of scripture, a small chapter of a suitable book on the missions, the biography of a missionary, articles taken from Mission or excerpts from the Mission Circle Bulletin.
- 5) The meeting will include discussion, proposals, reports on activities, new and old plans, decisions and new projects taken by the Circle to help their adopted missionary. All decisions and plans will be agreed upon by majority vote or general consent.
- 6) A social period may follow, with refreshments, in accord with the wishes of the members.
- 7) Each Circle is encouraged to charge its members some agreed-upon dues regularly; this being necessary to have a small fund for defraying costs of mailing, packaging, etc.
- 8) In order to insure credit to each Mission Circle and for safety in transmittal, the following procedure is to be used in sending funds to your missionary adoptee. Mail your check or money order to the Office, made out to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, with your Mission Circle number on the check. Indicate on the form provided by the Office to whom you want the exchange check made out. The Office will then immediately mail you an exchange check made out to your adoptee in the exact amount sent in. You then forward the check to your missionary.
- 9) Regularly during the year, the Mission Circle Bulletin will be sent to each Circle Chairpersons, The Chairperson is asked to send the Archdiocesan Director news of the activities of the Circle. Some of it may be included in the Bulletin.

V. MEANS OF ASSISTANCE:

Each Circle shall engage its members in suitable means of helping and supplying the adopted missionary. Before any article or materials are sent to the missionary, he or she should be asked in writing if such will be useful, adequate, etc. Also, information should be obtained from the Missionary regarding the best manner of shipping and avoiding import duties and best mailing routes.