

# 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

## MSSP FOUNDATION DAY

### MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF SAINT PAUL 2019

Dear brothers and sisters in the MSSP charism,

Beginnings can bring forth both excitement and anxiety. When we face the unknown, we dare to dream but we also wonder if it is too much of a risk. Our life's big decisions fall under this category. We taste something that is good: embracing consecrated life, starting a family, changing house or work, or even committing ourselves in a community; and we want more. However, it would be foolish not to ask ourselves the question whether we have the means to finish the job.

Our founder Joseph DePiro was graced with a charism that burned in his heart. His love for God and for his fellow brothers and sisters made him reach out to all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. The marginalized found favor with him. Because he felt himself a brother to them he sided with their cause, were it material poverty, loss of family, distance from home, and sharing of faith. But since a charism is bigger than one person, from the very start he felt the need to rope others into his dream and form a community.

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For us MSSP, the 30th of June 1910 has always been a special day when our founder was joined by the first two young men. He was excited about it because this had been in his mind for a number of years, and given the difficulties that he encountered to start this venture he had true reason to rejoice. Yet he was also wary, that this was only a start and

what lay in the future was a great unknown. Yet he knew that God was with them as a community and as the Italian proverb goes “se sono rose, fioriranno.”

We know the humble beginnings of the first MSSP community. The founder compares it to Bethlehem. Maybe he was not seeing only the poverty of it but the way the Lord would transform it into salvation in ways that not even he himself could foresee.

These days I found myself driven up into the mountains of the Andes, in Peru. The scenery is breathtakingly lovely and majestic, but likewise intimidating and tough. Somewhere up there is a lake called Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world at an altitude of

4000m. Bordering it on the northern side is our new MSSP prelature of Huancane. On this very day, the 30th of June, 2019 Bishop Giovanni Cefai mssp will be taking charge of the region together with Fr. Pedro Areotype mssp. Excitement is high, since we as MSSP feel that we fit well into this type of mission. However, we are aware also of how much this mission will stretch us and the risk we are taking.

I do feel that we are reliving that moment when Joseph DePiro entered the first MSSP house in Mdina. Yes, Huancanè is our Bethlehem today. It is very much on the periphery, with no frills and hardship written on the faces of people. Yet our hearts read deeper into this austere environment, because imbued by that same charism given to our founder, we also hope and trust that God is already present here and will do great things through his humble servants.

On this day I encourage the MSSP religious to renew our vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and mission. With each one of us expressing his desire to stay committed to his promises we are confirming our founder's hope that the Good News of God's kingdom still has heralds even on the periphery. On this day I ask you lay MSSP to be united with us religious in prayers and brotherhood so as not to falter in our call. And if we can never perfectly fulfill our vocation at least that we be good enough to be called missionaries.

Bethlehem was a silent place where the city noise did not reach. It was here that our Savior Jesus Christ crossed the frontier between heaven and earth to give humanity the greatest gift: that of becoming God's children. On our MSSP foundation day I would like to express my gratitude towards all our missionaries who silently, like our founder, cross many frontiers in their ministry. May you always feel part of one family and encouraged by the ever-growing community of faithful embracing the MSSP charism in all walks of life.

Blessings

Fr. Mark Grima mssp  
*Superior General*

