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World Mission Sunday was established by pope Pius XI in 1926 in response to a request from the APF to establish 'a day of prayer and propaganda for the missions to be celebrated on the same day in every Catholic diocese, parish and institute in the world'.

World Mission Sunday, organized by the APF, is a day set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the Church's missionary activity through prayer and sacrifice. Celebrated on the next-to-last Sunday in October, it is "an important day in the life of the Church because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, in the Eucharistic celebration and for all the missions of the world" (see Redemptoris Missio 81).

Pope John Paul II spoke of the collections for World Mission Sunday as a 'central fund of solidarity', destined to be distributed, in the Pope's name, by the APF among the missions and missionaries of the entire world.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for World Mission Sunday 2010, wrote: 'The month of October, with the celebration of World Mission Sunday, offers to... the entire People of God an opportunity to renew the commitment to proclaim the Gospel and to give pastoral activities greater missionary perspective.'

Offerings from Catholics in England and Wales, on World Mission Sunday and throughout the year, are combined with offerings to the APF from Catholics worldwide. Mission dioceses - about 1,069 at this time - receive regular annual assistance from the funds collected.

In addition, these mission dioceses submit requests to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples for assistance, among other needs, for catechetical programs, seminaries, the work of Religious Communities, for communication and transportation needs, and for the building of chapels and churches. These needs are met with the funds gathered in each year. The world's APF National Directors vote on these requests, matching the funds available with the greatest needs. These funds are then distributed to Mission Dioceses throughout the world. This General Fund of support is then distributed in its entirety each year.

