



POPE FRANCIS ON NEED TO RE-ENERGIZE THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES' APOSTOLATE

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VATICAN CITY -

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has emphasized the need to reenergize the spiritual aspect of the apostolate of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) so as to reduce the emphasis of seeing the body as a an organization that collects and distributes economic aid to the neediest churches in the world; on behalf of the Pope.

Pope Francis made this remark while receiving in audience, participants at the 2017 Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies, held recently in Rome. Expressing his passion for the spiritual aspect of the apostolate of the PMS, Pope Francis declared: "I know you are looking for new ways, more appropriate, more ecclesial ways to carry out your service regarding the universal mission of the Church".

He continued: "To renew the ardor and passion, the spiritual engine of the apostolic activity of innumerable saints and missionary martyrs, I very much welcome your proposal, realized with the congregation for the Evangelization of peoples, to announce an extraordinary time of prayer and reflection on the *Ad gentes* mission. "

He added: "I will ask the whole Church to dedicate the month of October 2019 to this end, because it also coincides with the centenary of *Maximum Illud*, the Apostolic Letter issued by Benedict XV on 30 November 1919 on the missionary activity of the Church."

According to the Holy Father holiness of life is most essential to the efficacy of the apostolate of PMS. He however noted that: "This renewal requires a personal conversion, living the mission as a permanent opportunity to announce Christ, meeting him and helping others to have personal encounter with him too."

The Pope continued: " I hope your material and spiritual assistance to churches around the world will make the churches more and more based on the Gospel and on the baptismal involvement of all the faithful, laymen and clerics in the Church's only mission: to make God's love close to every man, especially to those most in need of his mercy."

"The Extraordinary Month of Prayer and reflection on mission as first evangelization will serve this renewal of ecclesial faith so that the Easter of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, Lord and Spouse of his Church, will always and ever work," Pope Francis added.

