News



Dr. Tom Catena, a Catholic lay missionary from the United States, examines a patient during rounds at the Mother of Mercy Hospital in Gidel, a village in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. Pope Francis established an emergency fund to help communities in the Catholic Church's mission territories affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. (CNS/Paul Jeffrey)

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Pope Francis established an emergency fund to help communities in the Catholic Church's mission territories affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The pope has given an initial contribution of $750,000 and asked church organizations to contribute to the fund, which will be managed by the pontifical mission societies, according to a statement published April 6 by Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

"In her task of evangelization, the church is often on the front lines of major threats to human well-being," said Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect of the congregation. "The Holy Father is calling upon the church's entire vast network to face the challenges ahead."

The pontifical mission societies, which are under the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, include the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Missionary Childhood Association, the Society of St. Peter Apostle and the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.

The societies support more than 9,000 health clinics, 10,000 orphanages, 1,200 schools, 80,000 seminarians and 9,000 religious sisters and brothers in more than 1,150 mission dioceses — mostly in Africa and Asia.

Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal Toso, president of the pontifical mission societies, said the church's charitable institutions will play a key role in supporting mission territories that are suffering due to the pandemic.

"Through the church's activity of preaching the Gospel and of practical aid through our vast network, we can show that no one is alone in this crisis," Dal Toso said.

"This is the Holy Father's intention in establishing this fund," he said. "While so many are suffering, we remember and reach out to those who may have no one to care for them, thus showing forth the love of God the Father."

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