



# UNITED STATES CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

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## Executive Director's Report to the Membership

### Introduction

I am so grateful to the members, the Board of Directors, and the staff for their warm welcome. I am especially grateful to Fr. Jack Nuelle, MS, former Executive Director for introducing me to the workings of the association and the national office. I am particularly grateful that the office move from the Hecker Center at the Paulists to Theological College took place before I came on board.

In this report, I want to update you on my efforts over the past 8 months, share the work that is being done on the strategic plan, outline some of our strategic initiatives, comment on the Membership, Finance, and Program Reports.

### Orientation

My orientation to the association began through my application process when I learned as much as I could about USCMA and mission. My sense of mission was formed by my years in higher education and seeing mission as the essential purpose of an organization. Reading as much as I could get my hands on, I developed a series of questions about mission, the state of Missiology today, the landscape of mission, the key players in mission, and the work of the association.

My orientation began full-time as I transitioned into the Executive Director role in December 2015. I began by meeting as many people as I could as I tried to understand the various groups that make up our membership, network with the other mission related groups through the Catholic Mission Forum, and pondering the mission, vision, and values that govern the association.

The orientation period continues as I try to meet as many people as possible, get to know the organizations (the religious orders of women and men, lay mission organizations, dioceses, campus ministries, medical missions, parishes, and even high schools) that sponsor people in mission or service trips. I have:

- 1) Attended the Pontifical Mission Societies Symposium in New York City.
- 2) The Texas Mission Council Conference in San Antonio
- 3) Visited the mission faculty at the Chicago Theological Union in Chicago.
- 4) Attended the American Society of Missiology conference in St. Paul, MN.
- 5) Visited a number of the mission communities in Cincinnati, OH.
- 6) Exhibited at the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in Columbus, OH.
- 7) Exhibited at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Atlanta, GA.

I believe that each organizational member, and each individual member, has a unique God given gift to offer mission, the Church, and the world. We need to know, illuminate, and build on these gifts. In a similar way, everyone in mission has discerned, in some way, a call, a direction, a priority. For some, it is advancing peace in the South Sudan, for others it is rebuilding missions destroyed by an earthquake in Ecuador, and for still others,

it is establishing the Church in rural Appalachia. We need to affirm and support these initiatives. We need to help each other grow as missionaries.

## Strategic Plan

The Board of Directors had to set aside the development of the strategic plan in order to conduct a national search for an Executive Director.

At the April 2016 meeting, the Board of Directors entered into a crucial conversation to articulate the purpose of the association and set a strategic direction. There are five major goals for the association:

- 1) Animation - to inform, engage, and form U.S. Catholic in mission so they will personally support, collaborate with, and improve the mission efforts of the U.S. Catholic Church.
- 2) Education - to develop, implement, and assess educational resources and programs so those who are serving in mission are well prepared to serve as missionaries, are sustained in mission, and can lead mission.
- 3) Research - to identify, describe, and report on the organizations and individuals in mission in order to identify and promote the best practices for mission.
- 4) Networking - to identify, engage, and form partnerships for the growth and development of the U.S. Catholic Church as a Church of and in mission.
- 5) Stewardship - to develop, sustain, and grow the necessary financial resources, governance, and internal operations USCMA needs to accomplish its mission.

The mission, vision, values, and strategic goals of the association are being fleshed out into a strategic plan. The Board of Directors will consider the plan at its October meeting.

## Initiatives

Sometimes, you have to build the train, and lay the track, while you journey to your destination. There are several initiatives underway that embody, and advances, the strategic directions established by the Board. These initiatives include:

- 1) The development of an online community forum for the membership to share and build resources, and exchange ideas and best practices, to advance mission.
- 2) A National Study on Short-Term Mission Trips that will identify the organizations (religious communities, dioceses, campus ministries, and parishes) that sponsor these trips.
- 3) The Young Adult Initiative that will engage young adults in the assessment and development of mission animation, education, and networking.

## Membership

We have enjoyed modest growth in membership this year. Barbara Gonzalez streamlined the membership renewal process. The goal is to build a robust description of each organizational member to highlight their charism, mission, and missionary activities.

USCMA aspires to be a national coalition of all Catholic organizations that sponsor missionaries. We want to stay close to the lived experience of missionaries - as they discern and prepare for mission, while they are in mission, and as they "return" from mission. We want to convene and connect leaders in mission - those who do the recruitment, formation, logistics, fund-raising, mission education and communication.

In the coming days, we will review how membership is structured. We want to provide user friendly, and meaningful, opportunities for members to support and encourage one another.

## Membership Services

Stephen Scott, our Associate Director, has provided a report on our programs. The association has taken on the responsibility to convene and manage the Mission Congress every five years. The speakers at last year's congress were well received. Attendance was good given all the activities around the historic papal visit.

The 2016 Conference promises to be an excellent opportunity for the association to convene and connect. The Church in mission takes the mercy of God to every corner of human tragedy and need - human trafficking, peace-making, the human rights of indigenous peoples. We want to hold together all in mission - the short-term with the life time, domestic and foreign, old and young, women and men, religious and lay.

To facilitate the representation and encourage of young adult participation, we established the associate program. Members can bring young adults with them for half the regular registration fee. Every member is scour aged to bring 1-2 young adults with them.

There are other programs emerging for the animation and education of mission - the Third Wave of Mission videos to help groups prepare for mission is a cooperative effort among several organizations. Vision and Voice is a new USCMA program designed to help dioceses identify, engage, and involve those experienced in mission within their diocese discern and develop a mission strategy for the diocese.

Other member services include mission consultation, mission assessment, our monthly electronic newsletter, and our quarterly journal.

## Development

Mary Nguyen provided an overview of our finances. The Board of Directors approved a deficit budget to see the association through the move of the national office and the Executive Director search. When I compare out operating deficit (\$29,243) to our total expenses, I see an 11% loss. How can we either increase revenue or decrease expenses by 11%.

First, we have tried to improve member retention and reacquisition. Second, we have reached out to potential new members. Third, we are developing grant proposals that will improve our capacity and strengthen our membership services. Fourth, we are reaching out to new organizations for sponsorship of our conference and other programs.

Of course, the old adage is in place - it takes money to make money. Consequently, we need to balance new efforts with results. The other consideration is sensitivity to members, and other mission organizations, that are also trying to raise money for the good of mission. We want to minimize the "competition" for funds and maximize cooperation.

Members can be particularly helpful here by connecting us with foundations and other donors interested in Catholic activities. Could USCMA be a collaborator with you in one of your initiatives? Perhaps there is a research aspect of your project. Could USCMA do that research with and for you? Finally, we need experienced friend and fund raisers to work with our Finance Committee.

Finally, members could consider increasing their annual support to USCMA to offset the 11% operating deficit. An organization at the \$1,000 level could give \$1,110; \$5,000 level could raise their annual contribution to \$5,550.

## Stewardship

USCMA operates on a shoe string budget and does a good job of stretching every dollar. It enjoys a nice, and modest, suite of offices in Theological College. We have a staff of 3.5 positions - an Executive Director, an Associate Director in charge of membership services, a Membership and Development Coordinator, and a half-time account position. USCMA has also been blessed with interns over the years.

Members could compliment the office staff by accepting volunteer responsibilities for the association. So much of the work that needs to be done can be done through computers anywhere in the world. Just reach out to me, and we can explore your interests and gifts and the association's need.

## Conclusion

USCMA is a great organization because it has a noble purpose and a rich history of contributing to the well-being of the Church. It is in a transition period - working to bridge all the changing aspects of mission - foreign and domestic, short-term and long term, religious and lay. Financially, it is facing some turbulence; we are doing okay but unless we can fix the deficit spending, a little problem will become a big problem over the next several years.

Jesus has entrusted his mission to his Church. We are the missionaries that have emerged in and through the American Church. For the most part, we are richly blessed and privileged. All the Lord has provided is his gift to us. What we do with it, is our gift to God in service to God's vision for humanity. USCMA is a vehicle for mission. Let's see what good we can do - together.



Donald R. McCrabb, D. Min.

Executive Director

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