

SMA Mission Statement

Founded by the Venerable Bishop Melchior de Marion Brésillac on December 8, 1856, at the Chapel of Notre Dame de Fourvière in Lyon, France, the Society of African Missions (SMA) is a Society of Apostolic Life that is governed by *Constitutions and Laws (C & L)* which have been approved by the Holy See.

In accord with the vision and ideals of its Founder and ever attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world (*C&L 6*), the Society understands itself as a community of Christ's disciples, bonded together by a common response to his command to "go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Obedient to this command and with a particular focus on those countries of Africa which are most in need of missionaries, the Society has for its mission the proclamation of the Good News chiefly among Africans and people of African origin (*C&L 1-2 and 17*).

Under the guidance and with the help of the Holy Spirit, the SMA strives to undertake this mission in a large variety of ways, including the following:

- by participating in the work of the particular churches of Africa, fostering missionary vocations, building up truly Christian communities and promoting lay leadership in the Church (*C&L 7, 8, 19 and 22*);
- by cooperating in a spirit of ecumenism with other Christian denominations while demonstrating a special concern for those who are not yet evangelised (*C&L 9 and 16*);
- by manifesting a profound respect for African cultures, collaborating in the process of inculturation and encouraging the promotion of Africa and African cultures (*C&L 17*);
- by supporting initiatives on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation, and caring for refugees and migrants (*C&L 18 and 22*);
- and by demonstrating a particular commitment to the most abandoned, the poor and the oppressed (*C&L 9*), so that the kingdom of justice and peace, love and truth announced by Christ may become a reality in the world (*C&L 15*).

While collaborating in mission with the other units of the Society under the direction of the SMA General Council in Rome, the SMA Irish Province also seeks to realise these missionary ideals in the Irish context. Attentive to 'the signs of the times' and acutely aware of the huge global challenges now impacting both on Africa and on Ireland, it is committed to the process of articulating and communicating an inclusive missionary vision grounded on the founding charism of the Society, so that all who share SMA missionary values may partner the Province in shaping and living that mission today.

The Province regularly evaluates its own structures in order to ensure their effectiveness for developing and delivering this mission more effectively; and it continually challenges and encourages its members to make every effort live this vision by bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its totality.