

History of the Texas Mission Council

by Mary Wisniewski

Friday 2-23-24

Early Days

- The Texas Mission Council had its origin in friendship.
- San Antonio Archbishop Patricio Flores introduced his good friend, Maryknoll Fr. Rafael Davila to his new Mission Awareness Office Director, Mary Wisniewski.
- Fr. Davila invited Mary to visit the Maryknoll Mission Education House in Houston and to meet Houston's Pontifical Mission Director, Fr. Mario Arroyo and his assistant at that time, Hilda Ochoa.
- Together, they discussed ideas of how to work together for **Mission Education, Mission Sending** and **Mission Financial Support**.

More Connections

- Austin-
Bishop John McCarthy
- Dallas-
Columban Fr. Bill Morton, SSC

First Meeting

When: October, 1993

Where: Oblate St. Joseph Retreat Center- San Antonio, Texas

Participants: Directors of Texas Diocesan Pontifical Mission Societies

Missionary Congregations in Texas and Abroad

Lay Persons involved in Catholic Missionary Activity

Speakers: National Office of the Pontifical Mission Societies

United States Catholic Mission Association

Purpose

To bring together those involved in Catholic mission education, sending and funding for an annual meeting offering.

- **Mission Education**
- **Networking Opportunities**
- **Inspiration and Support**

Key Members

- Maryknoll Fathers and Mission Educators, Basilians, Columbans, Missionhurst
- Sacred Heart Fathers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Oblates of Mary Immaculate
- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Salesian Sisters and VIDES, Incarnate Word Sisters/ Lay Missionaries
- Missionaries of St. Paul, Vietnamese Dominicans
- Parish Mission Groups from Ft. Worth, Galveston-Houston, Austin, San Antonio
- Pontifical Mission Office Directors from San Antonio, Galveston-Houston, Victoria, San Angelo, Amarillo

Bishop Liaisons and Speakers

- Bishop Liaisons to Texas Catholic Conference
- Austin Bishop John McCarthy
- Ft. Worth Bishop Vann
- Houston Bishop Rizotto
- San Antonio Bishop Gary Janak
- Speakers: Bishop Zurek, Laredo Bishop James Tamayo, Brownsville Bishop Jose Flores, San Angelo Bishop Michael Pfeiffer, Mexico Bishop Raul Vera

Highlights

- Talks from notable speakers- Missiologists- Tony Bellagamba, Cardinal Rodriguez
- Creation of guides for Parish/Lay Group Mission Service
- Visit to Laredo/Nuevo Laredo- Border prayer service and visit to Mexican shelter
- Continued connections to National Mission Offices-Pontifical Mission Societies, United States Catholic Mission Association, Maryknoll, and Columbans
- Official organization of the Texas Catholic Conference, link with TX/MX Bishops
 - Input from African, Asian, and Latin Americans and young adults

Present Status

Board members representing:

- Pontifical Mission Societies (Austin- San Antonio)
- Religious Congregations in TX and international- Spiritans, Sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus
- Lay Members in Mission Organizations (Ft. Worth Mission Council, Houston Medical Mission outreach)
- Partners- Benedictine Sisters, Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate, Salesians, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Franciscans, St. Matthew Mission Group (SA), Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Mt. Sacred Heart School and Cabrini Center

Looking Ahead

Continued networking for:

- Mission Education-Magazine, podcasts, stories- Pontifical Mission Societies, Maryknoll, Shalom Media
- Mission Sending- Mission Trips, Maryknoll Lay Mission in El Paso, Salesian VIDES in San Antonio
- Mission Structures Parish mission groups, diocesan mission Councils
- Links to the Texas/Mexican bishops with Bishop Seitz and Bishop Janak
- Links to the National Office of Pontifical Mission Societies-strengthening Texas offices
- Links to TX Religious Congregations, Seminaries, Schools, Young Adults, Catholic organizations- ACTS Missions, Bishop Sheen groups, Knights, Guadalupanas, International priests, sisters and laity

Inspiration

Today, more than ever, our human family, wounded by so many situations of injustice, so many divisions and ways, is in need of the good news of peace and salvation in Christ...Everyone has the right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the responsibility to announce it, without excluding anyone, not as one who imposes a new obligation, but as one who shares a joy, signals a new horizon, offers a desirable banquet....”Evangelii Gaudium, 14