

MOZAMBIQUE REGION

Official Language: **Portuguese**

Vision Statement

To live the values of the Reign of God and to form communities inspired by the charism and spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen that give witness to the faith of the Gospel and the universality of the Church.

Mission Statement

We serve in the socio-political, economic, cultural and ecclesial context of Mozambique through prophetic dialogue and characteristic dimensions. We are committed to assume the following responsibilities: Our engagement in the parishes, with family and youth, and in education.

1. Societal Setting

Mozambique's population of 26 million has a median age of 17 years. Life expectancy is 54.5 years, with high infant and maternal mortality rates, deaths due to malaria and tuberculosis, and HIV prevalence. The country's Human Development Index (HDI) is ranked 180th among the 188 countries reporting.

The political situation is an uneasy calm. The opposition party continues to put pressure on the ruling party to share in the government of the provinces that it won in the last elec-



tions. This sometimes spills over into violence, highways are blocked and transportation is accompanied by military convoys. Dialogue has been going on and gives some hope. The economic situation is getting worse, especially for the poor. An illegal debt of over two billion USD was discovered recently that benefited a few people. The value of the local currency went down about 100% and the buying power of the working class and poor has decreased dramatically as prices have risen. Multinational companies have been laying off workers. The

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expected economic boom from gas, coal and precious minerals deposits has not taken place. On the religious front, many sects have been appearing that attract large crowds, especially of the young. They present a kind of apocalyptic hope for a better life, when the practical means are not available.

The social challenges are from the youth who seek jobs or a chance to study to get out of their poverty. Many people are finding solace in alcohol. Health care is precarious where many people are given minimal care. New schools are being built in some areas, but the quality of education is struggling from the lack of teaching resources. Corruption is normal at all levels. Government officials are on the lookout for a chance to ask for "a coffee". Salaries do not seem to satisfy those who have jobs. The cultural challenge is from the mass media and information technology that draws everyone, especially the young, into the virtual world. Marriage is threatened from the introduction of "gender theory" in the schools and government. Natural disasters are almost annual, from drought in one area of the country to flooding in another. Homes, crops and lives are lost.

In terms of religious affiliation, 28.4% of the population is Roman Catholic; 17.9% Muslim; 12.2% other Christian (Pentecostal 10.9% and Anglican 1.3%); 15.5% Zionism (a syncretic faith that combines Christian and traditional African religion); 18.7% maintain-

ing cultural bonds with animism or tribal religions; and 7.3% of other or unspecified beliefs.

2. Ecclesial Setting

The options that were taken in the 1st National Pastoral Assembly of the Church in Mozambique in 1977 continue to be exercised in the Diocesan Pastoral Directories. These include the strengthening of small Christian communities, the co-responsibility of all Christians in the non-ordained pastoral ministries and the integral formation of the laity. The orientations of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops in 1994 are also part of pastoral planning: the urgency of evangelization, the need for baptism, the deepening of faith and the power of testimony. The Rites for Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the backbone of the catechumenate programs. After the Second Special Assembly for Africa in 2009, the challenges of reconciliation and justice and peace have been taken up in the face of corruption, human trafficking, domestic violence, and the devastation of natural resources.

Since the arrival of Catholic missionaries in 1498, evangelization in Mozambique has been neither massive nor continuous. The patronage system made the Church dependent on colonial leadership for its activities that integrated preaching the Gospel with building and running schools, hospitals and farms. Several times when Masonic governors gained politi-

cal power, missionaries were expelled. In 1940, Portugal signed a Concordat with the Catholic Church that restored relations with the Church. Many missionary congregations arrived to evangelize, establishing schools and hospitals. Political independence from Portugal in 1975 led to the massive departure - often forced - of Catholic missionaries, most of whom were Portuguese.

During the 16 years of civil war (1976-1992), the Church was notably present through its network of Caritas outreach, which provided social assistance to many people. Small Christian communities flourished in the remotest areas and a ministerial Church was promoted through the formation of lay leadership. Many Christians gave their lives as witness to their faith during the violence.

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The Church played a major role in the process of dialogue that brought the two warring sides together to sign a peace agreement in 1992. Until today the Church in Mozambique is striving to reach out through its commitment to education and health care. Among the faithful, however, a distance between faith and life-commitment can be seen in the multitude of those baptized who soon disappear from the ecclesial horizon; from one Church to another in search of social support; expressions of faith mix with ancestral beliefs and ritual, incoherent with the spirit of the Gospel; marital and familial ties that are disintegrating in urban zones. This makes it clear

that the Church needs to revitalize its identity through the proclamation of the Word of God as Good News, the celebration of the sacraments as life-giving and unifying, and the service of the basic needs of all people.

Divine Word Missionaries arrived in Mozambique for the first time in 1911 to help replace Jesuits expelled by the Portuguese colonial regime. But our missionary presence did not manage to plant roots in a political situation hostile to religious activity. Our confreres, too, were deported back to Portugal in 1917-1918 and were repeatedly denied re-entry to the colony. Only in 1997, five years after the peace accords were signed, did four members of our Society return to the country. At present the missionary commitment of our Society in Mozambique unfolds mainly in parishes. We live in five communities: two in the Diocese of Nacala which serve four vast rural parishes and a quasi-parish; one in the Archdiocese of Beira which serves a newly created urban parish; and two in the Archdiocese of Maputo which serve a large urban parish, the English-speaking community, the formation house and the central house. The initial formation program began in 2012, with five candidates. Today there are eleven candidates in the formation house, seven studying in the four-year philosophy program of ISMMA (Instituto Superior Maria Mae de Africa) and four in the propedeutic year of Cristo Rei Seminary. One candidate has finished philosophy and is preparing to enter novitiate.

3. Intercultural Mission – *Ad Extra*

Those in Final Vows

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	12	57.1	56.1	34.6
Education	2	9.5	6.3	0
Schools	2	-		
Universities	0	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	2	9.5	6.3	3.8
Administration/ Support	1	4.8	6.3	7.7
Other Apostolates	0	0	0	0
JPIC	0	-		
Bible	0	-		
Communication	0	-		
Mission Animation	0	-		
Others	0	-		

Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/ Orientation	4	19.0	25.0	30.8
Retired/Sick	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0

In the parishes that we serve, the priority is on the catechumenate program. In the rural parishes this is carried out in the small Christian communities. We pay special attention to the formation of the catechists. Other ministries are liturgy, family, youth, Holy Childhood Association, women, justice and peace and charity. We promote the lay leadership of the communities and their organization in parish and zonal councils. Some confreres are active in education ministry through administration and teaching.

Characteristic Dimensions

Biblical Apostolate: The study of the Bible is part of the formation programs for all of the ministries. Some of the confreres teach Bible classes and are responsible for Bible ministry.

Mission Animation: Our presence in mission animation is mostly through the Holy Childhood Association which we promote in our parishes.

JPIC: As with the Bible apostolate, the Characteristic Dimension of justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC) is part of the formation programs in all the ministries.

Communication: Keeping in view the importance of mass media in spreading the word of God, we transmit the word of God every week-end through a local radio station in two of the local languages.

Priorities among Congregational Directions

The region chose as priorities *Family and Youth* and *Education*, and was able to elaborate a mission statement with an action plan for these priorities. In our parish ministries we give special attention to the family and the formation of youth. Several confreres have pursued higher studies to become more involved in education. Our parish in Maputo has a community school for students between classes 8-10 and a preschool for children between the ages of 2 to 5 years. In other parishes we try to improve the quality of education by providing housing and library facilities. Other confreres are teaching and involved in administration.

Collaboration with SSpS and Others

In our parishes we work on pastoral teams with the SSpS and other religious congregations. We meet to plan the pastoral activities and carry them out together. We celebrate our common feasts with the SSpS and every three years we have had a seminar and retreat facilitated by someone from the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center, Steyl.

SVD Lay Partners

In our parish in Maputo, a number of lay people have shown interest in our congregation. They participate with us in some of our SVD celebrations.

4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012	2005
Clerics	17	14	11
Brothers (final vows)	4	3	2
Scholastics	1	2	4
Total	22	19	17

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012	2005
Average age	38.1	37.1	37.7
Nationalities	11	10	11

Spirituality: Christ is the center of our life, "his life is our life, his mission is our mission". For this reason we follow the orientations of the Constitutions, especially weekly Bible sharing in our communities and district meetings, and zeal for daily community prayer. We maintain our commitment to having a common SVD retreat every other year. Last year, the region dedicated itself to our Lady of the Annunciation.

Community Life: We promote and encourage the confreres to participate in seminars and encounters organized by the SVD or other institutions. We held an intercultural communication workshop in which all members of the region participated. It was directed by an SVD confrere who had participated in the workshops of the generalate.

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Leadership: We organized a seminar for local superiors and the treasurers.

Finance: We seek the means for the region and the communities to advance little by little in gaining self-sustenance. We are formalizing the documentation of our houses and properties with the dioceses.

Formation: Initial formation functions as the lungs of the congregation and the region, and for this reason we strive to provide integral formation of the candidates. We are working to have a formation house and one confrere prepared for formation by doing higher studies. We continue to follow the program for new missionaries by yearly encounters.