



INTERNATIONAL SISTER PARISH RELATIONSHIPS

Every local Church is both mission-sending and mission-receiving. All are enriched by the many ways the gospel is incarnate in other lands, peoples and cultures. Our local Church can benefit in ministry and faith formation through meaningful relationships with Churches in other countries. The experience we have with them gives us the opportunity to hear with our home Church fresh insights into the gospel and renewed understanding of our role in a global society. We, in turn, share our insights and ministry through an on-going relationship characterized by solidarity and mutuality.

- Solidarity can take the form of prayer, addressing justice issues, moral and financial help.
- Mutuality guides our relationship with the world beyond ourselves, offering our strengths in assistance while at the same time acknowledging our need of others' gifts.

All of us can deepen our understanding of how the mission to the peoples of all nations involves us personally in our parishes and at the diocesan and universal levels of the Church. "The Church, by its very nature, is missionary" and we as Christian people are intended to be open to each other's gifts and available to each other's needs.

Key Elements in a Twinning Relationship:

1) Communications

Both communities share information regarding their concerns, joys, faith and social life through letters, tapes, pictures, and even videos. Mutual listening and sharing are most important if the relationship is to grow into long lasting friendship.

2) Prayer

Loving support is expressed through liturgies, prayers of the faithful, prayer network, and prayer groups. Retreats or times of reflection can focus on the relationship, sometimes even being directed by someone from the twinning ministry. This relationship flourishes when celebrated in faith.

3) Learning Experience

All ages can be involved: elders, youth and children. An attitude and desire to learn from the faith, culture, and experience of each other enriches everyone.

4) Justice

As lives are shared and the injustices are seen, promotion of human dignity and justice follows. Letter writing for social change or other acts of solidarity may be responses to this friendship. Financial and cultural gifts can be exchanged.



TWINNING PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

1. Inquiry Submission

The process for establishing a new international parish twinning relationship begins with an inquiry from the interested parish. The inquiry should provide background on the intended partner and the goals for the twinning relationship.

2. Initial Meeting

Once the inquiry is received, a meeting is arranged with the parish contact (either the pastor, administrator, or designated representative) to further discuss the proposed partnership. During this meeting, the following will be addressed:

- The goals and intentions for the twinning relationship.
- Guidelines for forming and supporting an effective twinning relationship.
- The establishment of a Twinning Committee within the parish to manage and support the partnership.

3. Covenant Agreement

A key element of the twinning relationship is the Covenant Agreement, which outlines the mutual expectations, goals, and commitments of both the twinned parishes.

- This agreement should be collaboratively developed by both the U.S. parish and the international partner.
- Once all parties have signed the agreement, a copy will be retained by the Mission Office for record-keeping.
- The agreement will guide the partnership's activities and serve as a reference for the ongoing relationship.

4. Ongoing Evaluation and Assessment

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the partnership, the Mission Office provides an Assessment Tool.

- This tool helps evaluate the twinning relationship's progress and impact, and it is recommended that the partnership be evaluated every 2-3 years.
- The evaluation process should include feedback from both parishes to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for growth.

5. Financial Transactions

If the twinning relationship involves the exchange of funds, the Mission Office can assist in facilitating wire transfers between the two entities.

- Both parishes are required to provide the name and contact information of their respective financial representatives.
- The only cost associated with this service is the wire transfer fee, which typically ranges from \$30 to \$40 per transaction.

In cases where one of the parishes is administered by a religious order, the funds may be sent to the order's financial treasurer instead of the parish.



6. Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP) Option

Parishes with twinning relationships have the option to:

- Welcome a mission group in the summer, or
- Elect to use their twinning parish as their Missionary Cooperation Plan (MCP) assignment.

For parishes choosing to use their twin parish for the MCP:

- We recommend setting a single appeal for the purpose of the MCP, where 90% of the funds are retained for the mission and 10% is sent to the Mission Office.
- If the Mission Office is facilitating the transfer of MCP appeal funds, there is no charge for the wire transfer.

7. Ongoing Support

The Mission Office remains available as a resource for both parishes throughout the twinning relationship. Parishes are encouraged to reach out for assistance or guidance at any time during the partnership.