

## MISSION MESSAGE

### Answering the Call to Mission: Pack Lightly & Walk Faithfully

By Shannon Kowalski  
Diocesan Director of Pontifical Mission Societies



“Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals...” This is the directive from Luke’s Gospel we heard a few Sundays ago when Jesus commissioned 72 followers to go out two-by-two and evangelize. I don’t know about you, but that *is not* the way I travel... I am a notorious over-packer, cramming as much into my suitcase as the zipper (and airline weight restrictions) allows — always fearful that I won’t have enough clothes or necessities. I follow the “I’d rather have it and not need it, than need it and not have it” rule.

I am certain that I am not alone in my approach to travel. No money, no suitcase, no shoes is not only impractical — it’s downright dangerous in today’s world. Thankfully, the perks of travel efficiency are not what Jesus was trying to convey to His disciples. Rather, He was giving them a blueprint for mission. Missionaries are not tourists. They *must* travel light — not just materially but emotionally and spiritually — to remain fully available to the people and the Holy Spirit.

As I sat in Mass on the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary time, Jesus’ words in Luke’s Gospel came to life for me as I listened to Father Tom Muldowney’s homily. He told the story of his great-aunt, who was a Religious Sister of Mercy who served as a missionary in British Guiana (now Guyana), South America.

Sister M. Consolata Muldowney was born in White Haven in 1903 and entered the Religious Sisters of Mercy in 1924, professing her first vows in 1927. Shortly after professing final vows, she volunteered for an assignment as a teacher at Saint Joseph Mercy High School — an all-girls boarding school in Georgetown, Guiana.



**Sister Consolata  
Muldowney, RSM**

She was allowed to bring just one small suitcase containing only the essentials: a family photo, two spare habits, and a few personal belongings.

As a young nun, Sister Consolata was nervous and unsure of what was ahead of her in British Guiana. But convinced that the Holy Spirit was calling her to serve in a radical way, she went to Guiana for what she thought would be a four-year term, only to return to the United States 27 years later.

During her tenure, she served as principal and oversaw the expansion of Saint Joseph High School, including the institution of a Board of Governors and the groundbreaking of a new school. The construction of the new school opened the way for greater success for its students by allowing for an expanded curriculum and extracurricular activities, such as drama and ballet. Also, through the hard work of Sister Consolata, university boards gave permission for the Oxford and Cambridge examinations to be written at the school.

Her successful tenure is proof that evangelization isn’t self-directed ambition — it’s obedience to a call. Sister Consolata responded

generously to God’s invitation to serve the people in British Guiana and made a difference in the lives of thousands of students. She returned to Dallas, Pennsylvania, in 1964 with the very same suitcase she took with her 27 years earlier.

Like the 72 disciples and like Sister Consolata, we too are called to mission — not always across oceans, but often across the street, into our communities, classrooms, workplaces, and homes. The call to travel light reminds us to let go of what weighs us down: fear, control, pride, or self-interest.

When we loosen our grip on those things, we become freer to follow where Christ leads and more open to the people He places in our path. Evangelization isn’t about what we carry with us — it’s about the presence we bring and the Gospel we embody. May we have the courage to answer the call, pack lightly, and walk faithfully wherever the Spirit sends us.

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