



**PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS**

JULY 2019 - N. 2

BULLETIN



FOCUS

**SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD
OF THE MISSIONARY ANIMATOR OF CHILDREN
AND ADOLESCENTS OF TODAY**

**LITTLE
MISSIONARIES IN...
HUNGARY**

THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

BULLETIN

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SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS
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N.2 JULY 2019

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PRAYER OCTOBER 2019



We have the joy of showing you the second issue of the Bulletin of the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, a useful tool for a better understanding of the universal reality of the Society, just as Mgr. Charles de Forbin Janson desired. Unlike the Annals, published since the origins of the Society, the Bulletin has a more narrative content and also presents local testimonies and examples of collaboration with the Society itself.

“We were gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children” (1 Thess 2: 7)

Motherhood and spiritual fatherhood do not refer to abstract concepts, but to concrete situations. First of all, they are a gift of God, a grace that invites us to be mothers and fathers according to the will of God, as God wants it, because there is a risk that we may live a too human motherhood and fatherhood, limited to our perspectives and intentions.

Being a donative person

Taking the responsibility of the other and taking care of him/her is the gift of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood that characterize Christianity as faith in the Trinitarian God, which is the mystery of an eternal giving of oneself by generating. The spiritual father and mother testify to the child the relational dimension of faith, widen the existential horizon of the person and gradually lead him/her towards the “measure of Christ”.

The art of educating the heart in faith is very delicate, because faith is a gift of God that can never be manufactured but rather nourished.

Spiritual motherhood and fatherhood have a unique and even universal character. This is evident in the life of Mary who is pointed out by Jesus, her Son, as the mother of John and mother of every man and woman. The singular dimension creates the educational and spiritual relationship between two specific persons, the universal character helps not to make distinctions or preferences among spiritual children, but to take care of each and everyone.

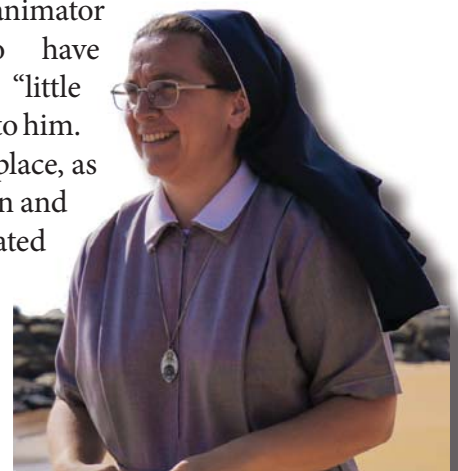
Being announcers is a gift of motherhood and fatherhood

It is a gift that generates and regenerates for life, a gift that fecundates the lives entrusted because faith is not the transmission of data, but an encounter. Who lives in the will of the Father, God, is fecundated and can then announce. Life must be accompanied and preserved after being fecundated, only in this way it promotes the full flowering of the other. Spiritual motherhood and fatherhood are realized in accompaniment on the path of vocation and holiness, and this responsibility also concerns the missionary animator who is called to arouse and promote a complete growth of the person through faith and life integration. The missionary animator of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence in her spiritual motherhood and fatherhood is called to be a disciple, teacher and witness of Christ, only in this way will he/she be able to form missionaries.

This responsibility is not only towards children and adolescents but also towards parents, as Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “An evangelizing community is “supportive”, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance” (n.24).

“Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground” (Ex 3: 5)

This biblical verse describes in a clear and concise way the attitude of respect that every father and mother, spiritual or not, every educator and animator are called to have towards the “little ones” entrusted to him. They are a holy place, as well as every man and woman, as created in the image and likeness of God.



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI
Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood

SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD DEEPLY ROOTED IN CHRIST

FR. MIKAELE TIKOISUVA

St. Joseph the Worker Parish Archdiocese of Suva - Republic of Fiji

Jesus during his lifetime in Palestine, apart from his many disciples and followers who followed him, he chooses twelve men and became a spiritual father, their Lord, Master and a friend to them.

Although He ministered to the multitudes, He spent most of His time with his chosen Apostles, who went on to change and turn the hearts of many that they ministered to, to know Jesus as the one sent by God; and to do far greater things than He did (John 14:12). Likewise Jesus expects us to do the same. And He tells us so in what is known as ‘The Great Commission’.

¹⁹ Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20) (Good News Translation)

Before we can take up the challenge of the Great Commission, let us look at what it is we need to do, or not do, to become authentic Disciples of Christ, before discipling others. For it stands to reason that **to be a Spiritual Father or a Spiritual Mother, we must essentially be a disciple of Christ**, thus leading others to Christ. And for the most part, it will not be so much about what we know, or

can explain about the faith or about Jesus. It will be much about our relationship with Jesus and how closely we follow the teachings of the Master and how we incorporate those teachings into our every thought, every word, and every action that we transform “LOVE” into action. If we ask the question what is LOVE? The answer is;

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 New International Version (NIV))

When we look at our world today, we can see that there is a tremendous need for spiritual parents; for authentic role models who exude authentic agape love; who courageously stand firm against the deluge of all that the modern world offers. Spiritual mentors so to speak. In the Bible we can read how Moses mentored Joshua; how Elijah mentored Elisha; how St. Paul mentored Timothy and also



Titus. Spiritual parenthood signifies relationship; it involves a mentor and a disciple, a teacher and a student.

It is clear from the beginning that Jesus lived in relationship, with his disciples. Paramount was his time alone with His heavenly father, in prayer: *“Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed.”* (Mark 1:35). It is in quiet times of prayer that we are rejuvenated for mission. The Holy Spirit gives us strength for all that we are to accomplish. The Holy Spirit is also our source of inspiration before we take action and our guide once the plan is put into action. And we must continuously seek His guidance as we participate in His mission, and in this case BE SPIRITUAL FATHERS AND MOTHERS to the young generation.

THE FIGURE OF ST. JOSEPH

Jesus lived in relationship with St. Joseph and His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let us turn our attention to St. Joseph, foster-father of Jesus and Patron of the Universal Church. “St. Joseph’s mission is certainly unique and unrepeatable, as Jesus is absolutely unique. However, in protecting Jesus, in teaching him how to grow in age, wisdom and grace, he is a model for every educator, and in particular for every father. With this I remembered the words of His Holiness Pope Francis:

“I ask for you the grace to be ever closer to your children, allow them to grow, but be close, close! They need you, your presence, your closeness, your love. Be, for them, like St. Joseph: protectors of their growth in age, wisdom and grace. Guardians of their path, and educators: walk alongside them. And with this closeness, you will be true educators.”...



Fr. Mikaele Tikoisuva

“How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God’s presence and receptive to God’s plans, and not simply to his own. God does not want a house built by men, but faithfulness to his word, to his plan. It is God himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by his Spirit. Joseph is a “protector” because he is able to hear God’s voice and be guided by His will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God’s call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ!”

We can learn many lessons from St. Joseph but let us look at just a few in relation to BEING AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL FATHERS AND MOTHER FIGURES:

a) St. Joseph was **Obedient** to God’s Will throughout his life. Joseph took Mary to be his wife, after listening to the angel of the Lord explaining the virgin giving birth in a dream (Matthew 1:20-24). He was obedient when he led his family to Egypt to escape Herod’s

infanticide in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-15). Joseph obeyed when he was instructed to return to Israel (Matthew 2:19-20) and settle in Nazareth with Mary and Jesus (Matthew 2:22-23). Are we as obedient as St. Joseph to God's plan for us or does our pride and wilfulness get in the way of our obedience to God?

b) Saint Joseph was **Selfless**. In the limited knowledge we have about Joseph, we see a man who only thought of serving Mary and Jesus, never himself. What many may see as sacrifices on his part, were actually acts of selfless love. His devotion to his family is a model for fathers and mothers today who may be allowing disordered attachments to the things of this world that distort their focus and hinder their vocations, as parents, guardians or spiritual parents.

c) Saint Joseph led by **Example**. None of his words are written in Scripture, but we can clearly see by his actions that he was a just, loving and faithful man. We often think that we primarily influence others by what we say, when so often we are observed for our actions. Every recorded decision and action made by this great saint is the standard for men and women to follow today.

d) Saint Joseph was a **Worker**. He was a simple craftsman who taught his foster son Jesus the value of hard work. It is probable that the humility of Joseph spilled over into the simple approach he took to his work and providing for the Holy Family. We can all learn a great lesson from Saint Joseph, who is also the patron saint of workers, on the value of our daily work and how it should exist to glorify God, support our families and contribute to society.

e) Saint Joseph was a **Leader**. He led as a loving husband when he found a stable for Mary to give birth to Jesus, after being turned away from the inn. He led as a man of faith when he obeyed God in all things, took the pregnant

Mary his wife to Bethlehem and after giving birth took the Holy Family safely to Egypt. He led as the family provider by working in his workshop to make sure they had enough to eat and a roof over their heads. He led as a teacher by teaching Jesus his trade and how to live a simple life and work as a normal man.

f) St. Joseph was a silent **Listener**. When he received his mission from God, he did not argue, he did not try to figure it out in his mind, he did not try to get out of the situation. He remained silent and followed through with what he was instructed to do. He accepted the mission entrusted to him. This are immense lessons to being spiritual fathers and mothers to the young.

Christian men and women, importantly catholic men and women have a responsibility to be strong fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, firm spiritual leaders, good stewards in the community and humble followers of Christ. Let's look to the inspiring example of Saint Joseph, patron saint of fathers, workers and the Universal Church for his obedience, humility, selflessness, courage and the love he showed to Mary and Jesus. If we can imitate St. Joseph just a little each day, we will be that much closer to becoming the person we are called to be. In the scriptures one can unlock the richness of what the Word of God commanded of Christian parents.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS

And what does God Word command of Christian





parents? Christian parents must be;

- i. Available – morning, noon, and night (*Deuteronomy 6:6-7*)
- ii. Involved – interacting, discussing, thinking, and processing life together (*Ephesians 6:4*)
- iii. Teach – the Scriptures and a biblical worldview (*Psalms 78:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:10; Ephesians 6:4*)
- iv. Train – help a child to develop skills and discover his/her strengths (*Proverbs 22:6*) and spiritual gifts (*Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12*)
- v. Discipline – teach the fear of the Lord, drawing the line consistently, lovingly, firmly (*Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:5-11; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15-17*)
- vi. Nurture – provide an environment of constant verbal support, freedom to fail, acceptance, affection, unconditional love (*Titus 2:4; 2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 4:29-32; 5:1-2; Galatians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:8-9*)
- vii. Model with Integrity – live what you say, be a model from which a child can learn by “grasping” the essence of godly living (*Deuteronomy 4:9, 15, 23; Proverbs 10:9; 11:3; Psalm 37:18, 37*).

In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *CHRISTUS VIVIT*, Pope Francis states;

“What can we elderly persons give to the young? We can remind today’s young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life”. What can we tell them? “We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome”. What can we teach them? “We can teach those young people, sometimes so focused on themselves, that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, and that love is not only shown in words, but also in actions” [197]. “We need only to accompany and encourage them, trusting a little more in the genius of the Holy Spirit, who acts as he wills.” [230]

LET US ASK OURSELVES A FEW QUESTIONS:

1. To whom am I being a spiritual parent/mentor?
2. To whom do I look to for spiritual mentoring?
3. Do I want to be lead to Christ through the witness of another?
4. What can I learn from St. Joseph to become good spiritual parents?

So who can children of today look to for spiritual leadership? The answer is ‘EVERY CHRISTIAN’. Why is that? It is because the mission of every Christian is to lead others to Christ even children, biological or spiritual children. *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”*. [Matthew 19:14 NIV]

This mission is not only limited to a select few, It is for us all to undertake. A teenager may mentor another teenager; an older sibling may mentor a younger sibling; a brother may mentor a sister; and grandparents may mentor grandchildren. Not doing so we are like the disciples turning them away from Christ. [cf. Matthew 19:13] .

Let us not shy away from the mission that Jesus entrusted to us. Let us embrace it wholeheartedly so that our everyday actions will be an undeniable witness of unconditional love – God’s love! Infinite love! Abounding love to those who innocently trusted us with their lives, ‘OUR CHILDREN’. That love should be a love that will gush forth from our life in God to refresh others! A love that is always renewed, always refreshed, always rejuvenated...in God’s Presence, in community, and in relationship!

Can Jesus count on you to be a spiritual father and mother to our young generation? ○

SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD and FATHERHOOD of the **MISSIONARY ANIMATOR** of CHILDREN and ADOLESCENTS of today



FR. RICHARD ZANGRE

*Archdiocese of Ouagadougou
Burkina Faso*

This topic could very well make some people smile, especially today, when cases of child abuse are once again being faced even within the Church. *Is the animator of children and adolescents still a credible figure today?*

As Father Zollner (2016), Director of the Center for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, said, “The recent sexual abuses within the Church force us to look things in the face – to finally awaken to this reality. Although places of formation are being organized, some local Churches have yet to understand the extent of this phenomenon.” He is not mistaken. Nevertheless, to respond negatively to the question on the credibility of the animator of children today would be to ignore the testimony given by those who continue to carry out their mission in an

exemplary and often hidden way in the different parishes and Dioceses of the world. In any case, this study presented by the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood is an invitation to an increased awareness and reflection; it is an appeal to give absolute priority to children, by trying to give a serious initial and permanent formation to their mentors. It is also an invitation to pray so that the Lord himself may sustain his missionaries who work with children.

WHO IS THE CHILD?

Reflecting on the spiritual motherhood and fatherhood of the missionary animator (priest, consecrated, or lay person) of children and adolescents is, first of all, to reflect on the figure and personality of the child, because, primarily, the mission of the animator concerns the child. It is therefore important to know who the child is. On the other hand, as popular wisdom explains: “The child teaches the father’s craft to the one who generated him”. The same applies to the animator: it is the child who teaches the role of animator to the one who accompanies him.

The aim of this reflection is to consider the figure of a child in general, starting from the Word of God, though aware that “we distinguish early





childhood (up to 3 years) from the second (from 3 to 7 years) and third childhood (from 7 to 12 years), the latter leading to adolescence (from 12 to 18 years)” (2001.255), and that each child in particular personally relates to the one who accompanies him in each group. At the same time, therefore, I would also like to demonstrate how the animator can learn from the child. I would also like to reflect on Jesus’ attitude towards children and his own way of behaving at the age of 12, an age that today corresponds to the beginning of adolescence. To conclude, evoking the convictions

of the great apostles, I will use the definition “animator of yesterday and today” of children and young people.

Eli, the priest, and Joseph, the carpenter (just to mention two), as well as the children in their charge, have left us beautiful testimonies that can be useful in the pastoral care of children.

THE YOUNG SAMUEL AND ELI, THE PRIEST

(1 Sam 3:1-14)

Like every child, Samuel needs attention in order to grow, and, like every child, he also needs attention to be able to listen to the voice of the Lord. The same applies

to his mentor. In the narration, in fact, the priest Eli teaches the young Samuel to listen to the voice of the Lord: “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears.’ ” In reality, the prophet teaches the child what he himself has come to understand, mainly thanks to the insistence of the child himself, who ran to him saying, “Here I am, for you called me.” “Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel: Go, lie down; and if he calls you,

you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears.’”

The young Samuel is always willing to serve. He “was ministering to the LORD under Eli...” (1 Sam 3: 1). He was also always ready to help: “Here I am, for you called me.” These are necessary dispositions to be able, like Samuel, to get up in a hurry (run) to answer a call (and more than once!) just to be repeatedly told: “I did not call; lie down again.”

Like every child, Samuel needs patience, first of all, from his mentor. In fact, Eli’s patience with Samuel, who wakes him several times from his sleep, is noteworthy – a patience that is put to the test by the inexperience of a child who is tirelessly willing to serve. Indeed, “Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.”

In short, one could say that Eli’s patience is the price to pay for the child to grow in his relationship with the Lord. But Samuel’s attitude also gave Eli the opportunity to personally pay heed to the voice of the Lord, as well as the opportunity to see the young Samuel in a new light. In this sense, children evangelize us all.



JOSEPH BESIDE JESUS

In the narration of the vocation of St. Joseph (Mt 1: 18-25), the Lord guarantees the presence of a father for the child Jesus, who is soon to be born. We could say that Joseph’s only mission is to be present and to watch over the child and his mother. Moreover, the Gospels depict him as a very silent man, though also very present and benevolent. He was present at the birth of Jesus (Lk 2: 1-7),

at his presentation at the Temple (Lk 2: 22-35), during the flight to Egypt (Mt 2: 13-23), when Jesus was found in the Temple (Lk 2: 46-29). Jesus needed this silent, discreet, attentive, benevolent presence. In the same way, the animators are called to participate in a paternity similar to Joseph's, to imitate Joseph's attitude and behavior: humble and discreet, but present.

AT THE SCHOOL OF JESUS HIMSELF

The teachings and some of the actions of Jesus show us his idea of a child.

The child loves to play. The recreational activity of children and, we could also add, their imagination, not to mention their whims, are mentioned in the Bible passage regarding Jesus' opinion regarding his generation: Jesus (talking about his generation) evokes the image of "*children sitting in the market places and calling to their playmates, 'We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn'*" (Mt 11:16-17). The evocation of the capricious behavior of children indicates the equally capricious attitude of "this generation" to the message of John the Baptist and of Jesus himself (Voeltzel, 1973, 70-71). "*For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard...'*" (Lk 7:33-34).

The comparison that Jesus makes shows children's ability to have fun, to invent games, and to play together – even if they don't always agree on what game to play, on the way of playing, on the duration of the game, etc. Nevertheless, a game is not only a moment of recreation, but also a moment of dialogue, of expression, a moment to communicate emotions and feelings, to come to know oneself and others, to learn... even if a child is not always aware of this. A child learns more by playing than by attending class, despite his whims.

A child is welcoming by nature and also wishes

to be welcomed. Jesus is indignant when the disciples show resistance towards those who bring the children for him to bless them, and, before he welcomes and blesses them, he states: "*Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God*" (Lk 18: 15-16) (Ibid.).

Yes, children are noisy, rambunctious, capricious... the younger they are, the more they disturb during meetings or during the Mass! One would prefer to stay away... but Jesus invites us to seek their company, and not to exclude them from our meetings and our liturgical celebrations.

The child is the perfect example of the believer: "*to such belongs the kingdom of God.*" What Jesus admires in a child is his trust, a trust that derives from his simplicity. In one of the rare moments in which the Evangelists describe Jesus overflowing with joy because the Father has revealed the Gospel to simple, "young children" are at the center of this lyrical exaltation (Voeltzel, 1973, 74): "*I praise you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to the little ones!*" (Lk 10,21; Mt 11, 25-26).

A child is innocent and vulnerable. "*It is important to not let him fall into sin*" (73, Idem). Indeed, Jesus' words are very harsh when he defends the innocence of "these little ones who believe in him." "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone





fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt 18:6).

At the pride and the discussion of the apostles who sought to know which of them could be considered the greatest, Jesus declares, “*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all*” (Mk 9: 35). Then, taking a small child and putting him in the midst of them, embracing him, he says, “*Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me*” (Mk 9: 33-37). Thus a child is identified with Jesus and with God himself (Idem, 73). For this reason Voeltzel (1973, 117) maintains that: “*The educator has the opportunity to verify day by day the quality of his faith and the degree of purity of his mission: the child is there to clarify and teach.*”

THE AGE OF ADOLESCENCE

A great animator of street children, Father Guy Gilbert, once said, “*The child does not evangelize us with his words, but with his way of being.*” The same applies to the adolescent, with the only difference that an adolescent has learned to speak well and, therefore, speaks! He knows his duties and does not disregard his rights – rights that he often strongly defends. He values his own freedom and autonomy.

In his narration of Jesus’ finding in the Temple (at the age of 12), Luke the evangelist shows the fatigue and the anguish Jesus caused his parents

by freely choosing to remain in Jerusalem without their knowledge. “*After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. (...) When they saw him (...) his mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.’ And he said to them, ‘How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’*” (Lk 2: 46-49). Obviously, “*this episode does not mean that Jesus was disobedient, but rather shows his total submission and intimate communion with his heavenly Father*” (Voeltzel, 1973, 69). Moreover, the evangelist Luke immediately specifies that he was “obedient” to his parents (Lk 2: 51). However, couldn’t we say that Jesus reacted like all adolescents? “*Why were you looking for me? I am no longer a child; I know what I am doing...*” However, parents at times feel troubled and disoriented by the fact that Jesus remained in Jerusalem without his parents’ knowledge, as well as by his reaction to their observations.

When children grow up, in fact, parents are happy, but they are also afraid. They fear this stage of life considered as a moment of crisis, transgression, disobedience, problems, etc. Adolescence can certainly be a very difficult age, challenging not only for parents, but above all for the youth, who experience “*feelings of vulnerability and omnipotence, of apathy and transgression, of affection and autonomy, of freedom from the family and dependence on a group of friends. But it is also one of the most beautiful pages of life where one can find a renewed interest in the meaning of love and friendship, towards a rediscovery of the meaning of corporeality and sexuality, with a less competitive integration between masculinity and femininity, an openness to the real problems of life, and a need for a warm and welcoming dialogue...*” (Dal Molin N. in Magrin 2016, 11).

To this end, it is essential that “*the adolescent find significant, transparent and true models, not ill with exhibitionism or hypocrisy (Ibid), authoritarianism and laxity*”.

In the narration of the finding of Jesus in the Temple, *“it must not be thought that Jesus was a withdrawn adolescent or a self-absorbed youth. His relationships were those of a young person who shared fully in the life of his family and his people”* (Christus vivit, n° 28).

Attracted by the Father, he grew up taking care of his Father’s things: *“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”* (Lk 2: 49). Besides, in this episode, who was really lost? Was it not rather the parents?

CONVICTIONS OF THE GREAT APOSTLES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The history of the Church is full of great figures who have given priority to the interests of children and young people: St. John Bosco, St. Francis de Sales, St. John Paul II, and, even closer to us, His Holiness Benedict XVI and Pope Francis (who dedicated his post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*, published on April 2, 2019, to young people and to the entire people of God, and also signed a *Motu Proprio* dedicated to the Roman Curia and to the Vatican City on the protection of minors and vulnerable persons). These great figures give us a glimpse of their deep convictions regarding the accompaniment of children:

- **Concrete testimony of life:** because children observe, rather than listen. They understand more what they see than what is said. Very often they

are, especially in adolescence, ruthless judges of their parents and teachers. To give testimony with his life, a mentor must be *“a faithful Christian who engages with the Church and the world; someone who constantly seeks holiness; someone who is a confidant without judging. Similarly, someone who actively listens to the needs of young people and responds in kind; someone deeply loving and self-aware; someone who recognizes his or her limits...”* (Christus vivit, n° 246).

- **Presence:** we communicate with children first of all through our presence. Life in the family and in the oratories of our parishes teaches us this. Undoubtedly, we all remember the presence not only of our parents, but also of the animators of the childhood Movements that have marked our lives. As I write these lines, I am remembering the loving presence of the mentors I met in my parish during my childhood. I don’t remember much of what they told me at the time, but I will never forget their presence and their contagious joy. They were there, at our meetings, and we, impulsed by our naive spontaneity, bombarded them with questions! Through them I came to love the life of a priest even before discovering it ...

- **Paternal and maternal enthusiasm and love:** Saint John Bosco used to say to educators: *“to have success with the youth, strive to make yourself loved rather than feared,”* and he added, *“loving what you do, they will do what you love.”*

- **Collaboration:** Pope Francis reminds us that, *“The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people [and of children]; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them”* (Christus vivit, n° 243). This implies, therefore, that the animators should also know how to cultivate fruitful relations with the communities and families of the children, avoiding favoritism

- **Firmness and sweetness:** Saint Francis de





Sales trusted that the educators or the animators of children would always be able to carry out this noble task if they did so *“with an iron hand and a velvet glove.”*

In short, each age has its own children and pastors! And the animator of today’s children and adolescents is called to respond to the particular needs of today’s children and adolescents. Certainly, he will offer what he himself has received. However, by accepting to be exceeded, that is, to go beyond what he himself has known and lived, is not necessarily synonymous with resignation or incompetence. It is rather a proof of attention, empathy, and presence. The Holy Father affirms that the animator is to regard young people [and children] *“with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years”* (Christus vivit, n° 243). For this reason, a moral and spiritual psychic balance is necessary.

To conclude, I will use the words of Nico Dal Molin, with all the strength of their content: *“He is a poor educator, free from the need to dominate or capture the boys in*



his own emotional orbit, a true and disinterested witness far from the need to create followers, not settled in positions of comfortable neutrality so as not to compromise himself, but above all capable of accompanying with competence and empathy. In the end..education still remains a question of the heart!” (In Magrin 2016, 11-12). ○

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ANNO DOMINI 1847

CORRESPONDENCE FROM EUROPE – FRANCE



onsignor,

Last year in your parish there were only a few members Society of the Holy Childhood and since it was not well organized it could not offer many resources and its activity was uncertain. I've been thinking for a while about how to prepare for its expansion. The admirable zeal

displayed by our wonderful residents regarding the Society for the Propagation of the Faith should have a very positive outcome. But the current circumstances are not favorable, there is too much sadness. Therefore, to think about taking up alms for another end, other than helping poor families at a time in which their desperate cry for help multiplies day by day, makes it impossible for our pious association to be properly understood and could result in its downfall soon after its birth. It was, therefore, necessary to entrust its re-organization to another more favorable time and to receive free-will and isolated offerings.

Now that the times have improved and everything points to a better more prosperous year, there seems to be no obstacles. Furthermore, for the past few weeks I have been involved in making the Society better known and in its considerable development.

. A lot of information and a few of the Annals have been distributed during the year to prepare the way and to make the people more open to its presence. The Lord has given us, in His Divine Providence, a powerful way to propagate the work of the Society by offering us a venerable missionary, who, besides the high evangelical place that he himself has,

enriched our Society by describing in a most touching manner the unhappy state of Chinese children and the means by which one can go to their help. For the moment his words were no more than seeds planted in hearts, but these precious seeds that will hopefully give us an abundant harvest. Indeed, in only a few weeks since the Society began, we have just barely lifted our voice and already we have over thirty dozens of associates. Before three months we will have at least 3 subdivisions. The zeal of some of my collaborators is admirable. They are really dedicated.

The following letter, dated September 17th, demonstrates that the Vicariate was not mistaken in its outlook.

“Propagated in an amazing way by the incredible zeal of the heads of my groups and nurtured by the reading of the Annals that Your Excellency was kind enough to send me, the Society of the Holy Childhood is making rapid progress in our parish. Nothing is impeding its moving forward and its future seems to be assured. At the beginning of August we had 30 groups (?) that took only a few weeks to organize. Today we gather as 600 associates, composing 52 dozens and it will be easy to form others before the end of the year or at least a new subdivision, not to mention the numerous inscriptions that are taking place at the neighboring parishes. And so, as you can see, Monsignor, the Society is extending considerably. It is no longer a small seed, but a large tree standing out and is



obviously growing; beneath its branches many come to rest. It is a fertile field where good seed has been sown and which produces an abundant harvest if we take care to keep it fertile. Yes, this very dear Society, whose success depends on your lively interest will grow notably among us. And this makes me believe that, unlike what one might think, this very happy beginning is not the result of too great and lively enthusiasm that later becomes cold. The preparations were slow without turning to extraordinary means, because of difficult times we did not even have it preached from the pulpit. It was born in hearts full of faith. . Therefore, the structure is not being built on movable sand or on a faulty foundation, but on a solid base that makes it secure even against hurricanes. We will be able to reach the goal and run the course if Your Excellency continues to encourage our work, sharing with us your wise counsel and scrupulously sending us all the things that we need to be attentive to. We cannot doubt, after receiving all of the signs of benevolence and for which we are most grateful. Your pictures, your medals and the interesting news you provide, including the numerous Annals have been welcomed with real enthusiasm and joy. Above all, because from this moment the Society has experienced considerable growth, I am counting highly on reading the Annals in order to make it more widely known supported. This is why I need them to be sent to me regularly. We don't have the right to 52 copies, but I hope that we can receive more copies, a number proportionate to the inscriptions that are increasing every day; 300 of my associates are not able to read the October, January and April issues. If you have any extra copies of these issues we would receive them with incredible joy. But I cannot ask you to agree to their request without seeming inopportune.

Finally, I gave the Society a definitive organizational structure, the most simple possible and completely in conformity with your statutes. There is only one thing that I believe I need to innovate and which has perfectly succeeded. Since all of my associates do not have the means to acquire the

news and the pictures, I gave each one of them a small membership card, which summarizes in a few words the goal of the society, the member's obligations and its benefit, and on which I wrote the name of the person that has to receive the donation and read the Annals. At the same time I have chosen persons full of zeal and dedication as collectors. They are concerned, in a very special way, with the success of the Society and fill their mission with joy. Along with their efforts and with their constant care I am able to work with courage and success, and this without too much distress, for the good of the Society which I have been thinking about for a long time and that I hope to be able to sustain the help of God and the protection of His Holy Mother. I still have a good number of booklets, but the most recent copies have already run out. I need a new shipment – these news pamphlets that contain an explanation of the statutes of the Society are of great use and it seems to me opportune that a copy is distributed freely to each head of a dozen, who often finds him or herself with the need to explain the Society and some of the less clear articles of its rules.

I will pass on the accounts of the Society to Your Excellency on the first day of October: 290 francs, of which 230 are the result of contributions and 60 from the selling of the booklets, the news pamphlets, the pictures and the medals. Mr. Abate Delauny, sub-deacon of the diocese of Sens is the one who will deliver the money. “

Pottier, Vicar

Director of the Society of the Holy Childhood

ANNALES N°6
December 1847

DISCIPLESHIP IN *MISSION*

DIOCESE OF LATINA - TERRACINA - SEZZE - PRIVERNO

M. FLORIANA ROMAGNA



A special year of discipleship was proposed by the catechetical office and shared by the mission office to help form even young children with a missionary dimension, helping them to become protagonists of a Church “going out”, through a journey of development in collaboration with other realities, present within and outside of their immediate areas. The mission that Christ entrusted to the Church does not belong to any particular group of individuals, but it is the prerogative of the whole community, without distinction of age, culture or social status.

Since 1843 the Church has understood that there is a missionary force that must also grow in children and young people because the conscience and identity of every Christian is born from the mission and is gradually consolidated, sustained and cultivated. The mission is that line that reaches and enlightens every group and activity, making the local and Universal Church an expression of the one Faith and Witness. Already from early childhood children need to be educated to mission, that is, to be inhabitants, not

masters of the world; to be to be responsible in sharing spiritual and material goods, above all, with their more disadvantaged peers throughout the world. They need to learn to be fully alive, listening to those in their midst, in order to understand lives that speak to us in thousands of ways and to discover the joy and the sufferings of all of the children, geographically near and far.

After having listened we need to go out and communicate with concrete gestures “pass on the



Word”, ie. Jesus, because only he is the living force that unites us and moves us to do good.

THE PROJECT

An innovative project per the special year of discipleship had the goal of developing greater collaboration between various parish catechists and to promote creativity among children through various activities listed in the booklet, which had been distributed to the various deaneries where the awareness of diverse peoples may become a source of fraternity and sharing. It has to do with reflection on the work of the first missionaries that carried the Faith to this land without being hindered by fear of uncertainty.

This year long project is founded on four pillars: proclamation, prayer, fraternity and sharing. Every pillar had a specific objective and was illuminated by a passage from the Gospel taken from the liturgical year

There were many activities that were suggested and they were able to be accomplished individually or in a group with other parishes. Those engaged in the activity were given a certain creative freedom to best make use of the abilities of each of the children. These activities enriched the awareness and knowledge. The principal goal was to educate in living the mission in our daily life; to enlarge the space of our lives for a missionary enthusiasm, which is the basis of the faith life of every community. The novelty of this proposal, the force to believe in the validity of the year of Discipleship was created some



uncertainty in the preparatory phases, but the enthusiasm was such as to overcome every perplexity. Step by step parishes began to welcome the project and everything became more clear as the energy was fully engaged in preparing for the feast of Missionary children on April 6th in the parish of San Francesco d'Assisi a Borgo Montenero.

THE DIOCESAN FEAST

Fr. Bruno's welcome of hundreds of children and his collaboration in the organizing of a special day was very moving: his "yes", along with the whole community was an instantaneous and joyful "yes" that is not always expressed in such clear terms.

The previous week of the long awaited day, the children of the Discipleship reach a record number of 337, which added to the other children, made the number invited to the feast, 532 and 140 chaperones and catechists that accompanied them. And even if one deanery did not participate the numbers reached were surprising, especially the number of catechists that had believed in this initiative with enthusiasm.

The days before April 6th, it was rainy and cold, which made everyone apprehensive, making some believe in the worst case scenario. However, the morning of the gathering, as if by magic, the weather was spectacular: the sky was blue, no wind and the sun shone brightly.

The activities planned during the day had undergone continuous changes

during the last week due to the inscriptions that, as often happens, overlap in the last days. And while the logistic stages (theater - church - green area) had been planned, it was decided that the green zone would be a large safe fenced-in lawn, which would facilitate the movement of the children and avoid confusion.

The Holy Mass was also celebrated outdoors on a large stage, carefully decorated by the volunteers of the host parish, while others dedicated themselves to preparing the lunch for 700 people.

In the morning, immediately after the reception and the initial prayer, the children were led in groups to “journey” through the 5 areas where the gazebos had been installed, each of which housed a continent. At each continent the children went through two stages: the first observing the work that was accomplished during the journey, the second to know and state the variety of food that characterized each ethnic group.

Before the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration the Bishop telephoned with his greetings. This gave a new impulse to the festivities, emphasizing the importance of a missionary spirit that needs to be cultivated in every Christian from early childhood.

At high noon, both adults and children were invited by Fr. Fabrizio to gather around the stage to participate in Holy Mass presided by Fr. Pietro and seven other concelebrating priests. The homily deepened the concept of mission and the missionary style that every Christian needs to have. Fr. Pietro remembered with emotion and importance the words of Saint John Paul II, “Open wide the doors for Christ”, that is to say: be a missionary every day in the diverse realities that we are living.

Immediately after lunch [...] the games began, as expected,

with groups of children ready to participate. The activities of the workshops were fruitful and animated by a curiosity that never failed.

Around 3.00 pm there was an announcement from the stage that was now prepared for the children who were to perform with songs, dances, poems, and dialogues ... that had been prepared during the year. [...]

The songs and music that pulsed in the atmosphere created sounds and stories of distant lands while the voices of the little actors, not at all intimidated, spread messages of peace and brotherhood, including reading a poem by Martin Luther King entitled “BE THE BEST”. [...]

Everything ended with the construction of a puzzle of an image of a poster that had been previously prepared. Each deanery prepared one part of the puzzle. Once the puzzle was finished, it was used as a background for numerous “souvenir photos” by the various groups present.

April 6th was a happy day, all one had to do was to look at the faces of the children in the photos and videos. There was maximum security and no accidents. Maybe it was because there were two ambulances present, just in case. Perhaps it was due to the beautiful weather? Perhaps it was the immense space that allowed us to move like butterflies and the climate of communion that overwhelmed our hearts?

No... It was the experience of a diocesan Church that goes beyond the territory of the individual parishes and wants to reach out to all people, bearing witness to feelings of peace, solidarity and mercy.

Already words of gratitude have been registered by those who participated, as well as positive expressions and encouragement for the future, along with expressions of hope of being able to repeat this faith experience every year. In fact, letters from children continue to pour in, testifying to their experience of joy and beauty of being together, meeting new friends, finding one's missionary heart that opens up to the whole world. There were even comments from mothers: “We never thought that the Church knew how to organize beautiful and interesting things for our children that were engaging and heartfelt.” These words show their gladness. Yes, it is true, the Church knows how to do beautiful, engaging and heartfelt things, especially when one takes on a missionary spirit.



missio ragazzi



IT'S MY JOY TO MAKE OTHERS HAPPY

DIOCESE OF PARAÑAQUE - PHILIPPINES

Hello! Hi! I am John Michael R. Tamonan, studying at Manresa School – Parañaque. When our teacher was looking for someone who would like to be an emcee for the Holy Childhood Association Gathering at Xavier School, San Juan City, I volunteered. The reason is, I would like to share my talent and I believe it

is both a sacrifice and a mission because it is not an easy thing to do. I was surprised and I could not believe it and at the same time I was so.. so.. happy when my teacher said “Yes”. But...I felt nervous when I saw the script. That is why, with the help of my mom, I practiced very well. She is my inspiration because I also saw her as an Emcee, especially during Christmas party there... in our family business. I feel good if I see others happy and I'm so talkative. I want to see smiles on the faces of people around me. I want to spread the Word of God. That is why one of my dreams is to become a speaker in the future because I want to share.

Because I was still nervous that time but because I wanted to do well so I asked my mom to pray for me, and I sent a message to all my relatives through messenger and facebook to pray for me. Our family is so devoted to God that is why we always pray for one another. So, I want to say thank you, God, for granting my wish. I really thank you because it is good to feel that you help others and see that you make others happy.

Thank you also to Era, my partner. We helped each other and she's good! .

It was a day that I can truly say “We did our best!”

MISSIONARY ZEAL FORWARD!

VENEZUELA

My story begins with the discovery of a precious treasure during a rebirth of a beautiful stage of my life: my adolescence. There I discovered the gift of friendship and, in a special way, the friendship of Christ, who gave his life for my salvation. And even beyond all that I experienced in this friendship there is the gift of service and of being a Missionary that was consolidated in the Pontifical Mission Societies, in the service of missionary animation among young people (SENTIMISION). It is in SENTIMISION that I accepted my missionary vocation, saying “YES” to God. Thus, the adventure with God began, with all of my limits and virtues. It is in service that I gave true value to this great treasure that my heart safeguards. Now, my faith and my love for the Mission of God grows ever more firm knowing that my vocation is strengthened every day seeing the smiles of each of the sentinels that make up this adventure. Looking

at them with the eyes of God, my children and disciples of Christ, Sentinels of Christ always making up and living out the missionary adventure. I was 11 years old when I began to attend the formation, the activities and the experiences that this service was offering. Now I am a diocesan animator of all of the adolescents that have said yes and without wanting it, God has granted me this great gift that I accept with my whole heart. Blessed be God in His divine Providence and will that makes all things possible for the good of His children that are his great Missionaries, the Sentinels that make a difference.

My heart rejoices on the anniversary of SENTIMISION, 15 years of the missionary journey that has produced a story as a sentinel, an animator, a Catholic Christian, child of God and baptized missionary, as a servant. . .

Thank God for His Gifts and I will always pray for Holy Mother Church and the service of the mission (for the Holy Missionary Adolescence).

*Luis Villamizar
Provincial Animator of SENTIMISION*

TOGETHER, LET US ENGAGE IN MISSION



Children represent 42.5% of the population of Senegal.



Traditionally, at the Feast of the Epiphany, the Archdiocese of Dakar celebrates Holy (or

Missionary) Childhood Day with a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Popenguin. Parish animation serves to prepare everyone spiritually and to sensitize and mobilize the children, in anticipation of their participation in the pilgrimage the following Sunday.



man for the Pontifical Society of the Holy (Missionary) Childhood, which allowed 300 children to discover various aspects of diocesan life by visiting 5 deaneries. Departing on June 25th, the caravan was crowned with a Eucharistic Celebration on June 27th at St. Joseph's Minor Seminary in Ngasobil.

The children's missionary caravan was the brain child of Father Raphaël Diop, the diocesan point



The missionary group of the Grand-Dakar Yoff deanery that participated in the caravan was composed of 27 children, 3 priests, a religious sister and 6 animators from 7 parishes.

Monday, June 25th 2018, all of the children gathered around 10 a.m. at the Hyuacinthe Thiandoun Colledge and we departed from Dakar towards Nguenièrè. After a long march we arrived at our destination – an old hostel. There we were welcomed by Fr. Pierre Samba Sène, Apostolic Vicar of St. Bernadette parish. After his greeting and welcome, we settled in and at 2 p.m. we were served a meal: thiepboudien. After a brief rest, we departed toward Mbissel, a small historical village in which Maissa Waly Mane, was buried. She is often called Maissa Valy Ndione because in the Sere language "Ndione"; means "he is not dead, he is alive, he is over there". When he arrived in the 11th century, he met the Queen, named Sigo Badial. Moving on from the historic aspect, let us now move on to the religious one. The village is the home of St. Michael Chapel, blessed by Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoun in 1994 and built thanks to the generosity of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It is part of St. Bernadette parish and is one of 53 chapels present in the parish. The village of Mbissel has 2 full time priests: Fr. Etienne Sène, director of the Minor Seminary of Ngasobil and Brother Francois, a monk of Keur Moussa. After having celebrated Holy Mass, presided by Fr. Jules Dioatta, we had dinner.

After dinner we all got together and, after giving thanks, we gave the report of the day and we met Bernard, one of the parishioners, who told us the story of Nguenièrè and his family. Nguenièrè was founded by a hunter named Ndiochel Waly for Serer and Malaw Ndao according to the wolof. Nguenièrè had only one spring of water and the women went on foot because there were no cars or carts and when they arrived with the jars of water on their heads, they were dripped with fatigue - hence the origin of the name Nguenièrè.

Alle 23 c'è il coprifuoco, e tutti quanti sono andati a dormire per essere in forma il giorno successivo - siamo a martedì. Tutti si sono svegliati verso le 6 per partecipare alla messa presieduta da Padre Pierre.

At 11 pm there is a curfew, and everyone went to sleep to be fit for the next day. Tuesday, everyone woke up around 6 a.m. to attend Mass presided by Father Pierre. At 8 a.m. we had breakfast and at 9 we left Nguenièrè for Foua-Loul, where we met Michel Oiouf, the director of the local school, which was built in 1944 and has 215 students and 7 classrooms. Lessons are held from Monday to Friday and everyone is provided a meal in the canteen. The cost of the school is fixed at 3,500 francs. A goodwill association contributes 1500 francs, leaving the students to pay only 2000 francs.

What did you like and what did you not like so much during the pilgrimage?

The food was great. Preparations for the celebration of Holy Mass and the friendly rapport that was established among the children and their guardians was also very enjoyable.

We do regret having to get up so early in the morning and we didn't appreciate the mosquitos, the long lines to the washrooms, the uncomfortable mattresses. But most of all we regret the brevity of the caravan. Thanks to all of you and a special thanks to Fr. Raphaël P. Diop, the Diocesan director of the Pontifical Mission Societies.



The group from the Plateau-Nédina Deanery chose as a motto the popular song “I have decided to follow Jesus”.

FISSEL (26TH JUNE)

It was 4:33 p.m. when we got off the bus. We are welcomed by the parish priest of St. Joseph's parish, Father Jean Laurent Ndous and his vicar, Father Jean Luc Ndnous. St. Joseph of Fissel is a quasi-parish. The parish priest showed us the tomb of Fr. Hyacinthe Thiandoum who is its founder and who had administered it from the year of its foundation, 2008, until his death. The pastor explained to us the organization of the parish.

In Fissel there are 27 or 28 villages divided into 5 sectors. Every morning at 7.00 am Holy Mass is celebrated, except Tuesdays and Fridays, when it is celebrated in the evening. The surrounding villages do not have Mass during the week. Each sector has its own catechist who transmits the Word in the Serer language. The plot of land covers a total of 8 hectares. The field is divided into 5 parts and each sector has one. The fifth sector has a single Christian, called Michel Séne.

We visited the rectory, which bears the name of Keur Hyacinthe in memory of the founder of the quasi-parish. It is a very beautiful building, well decorated and well furnished. Soon after we went to the church to celebrate Mass. The church is very small, but very warm. A dozen of the faithful accompanied us during the celebration. We hope with all our heart and we would be very happy to be able to come to the aid of this quasi-parish for their project of building a new church.

At 6:40 p.m. we went back to Thiadiaye.



SOME REFLECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Here we are at the end of our stay. The caravan allowed us to discover many things, to establish ties with companions originating in other parishes of the deanery. This caravan taught us many things through our visits to the royal house of Diakhao de, to the home of President Senglor in Djilor.

In the various places that we visited we saw many churches. Despite the unbearable heat in Diakhao and Fissel we somehow survived. We think that the church of St. Anne in Diakhao should be enlarged and that the pews should be redone. As for the chapel of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus, the church is dilapidated and should be rebuilt so that you can pray better. The roof of the San Luigi Gonzaga foundation is compromised and the foundations are often affected by rain. It should be restructured for the safety of the faithful.

A lot should be done in Fissel. First “the clock”, which is nothing more than a circular object in rusty iron, which uses an iron stick to produce sound. The interior of the church is well decorated, but it is very narrow. In fact, the priests are forced to dress behind the altar. Besides that, over 4/5 of the 8 hectares of land is now occupied. Finally, Fissel needs more priest. It now has only two priests for about 3000 faithful.

We should think about sending loans.

There are no Religious Sisters in Fissel. Since Sisters often engage in education, health and social action, we think they can help the population especially with non-schooled children.

The parish priest's office is well decorated and well-ordered, but could be more spacious. He works in very difficult conditions, especially in the hot periods. Because of the absence of permanent electricity, the priest is obliged to finish work by 4 pm at the latest, because there the lights can't be turned on. ○





APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF AGUARICO

Through the program of the Society of the Holy Missionary Childhood, the Apostolic Vicariate of Aguatico takes care of 2,468 children divided into 68 groups. Among the children of the Amazonia Province of Orellana, where the population is predominantly of mixed origin, there is numerous group of indigenous children of the Kichwa, Woarani and Shuar peoples. The parents of these children are subsistent fishers, hunters and farmers, while those of the children of mixed origin work in the petroleum industry and are engaged in subsistence farming and animal rearing. Electricity only reaches the villages close to the major thoroughfares, while the health network is distributed throughout the province. However, there are places like the shores of the rivers where it does not reach. The Vicariate organizes various meetings and gatherings, including the celebration of the Feast of the Society of the Holy Missionary Childhood and the celebration of the Nativity, which engages all of the children belonging to the Society.



MARÍA SONIA

My name is María Sonia, and I am 8 years old. I live with my family in the community of the Chimborazo Union. Together with my sister Estela, for the past two years, we participate in the Society of the Holy Missionary Childhood. This group is made up of 16 children and we gather every Saturday afternoon. We always begin our gathering with the rite of welcoming and a song, which was taught to us by our catechist. After this we move onto our Holy Missionary Childhood books. The story that they recounted to us today speaks of Jesus who heals a young girl that appeared to be dead, but she was not. Her father Jairo was filled with joy, thanking Jesus. Our catechist explained to us that just as Jesus helped people, we should learn to do the same.

During our moment of prayer we prayed for all of the sick children, asking for their healing, like the daughter of Jairo.

We were also told that there are other children in other communities that gather all over the world.

To end our gathering we sang various songs, after which we played games.

The catechist told us that next Saturday we have to be on time at 3 p.m. and that we have to bring colors for an activity that will be taught to us.

LUZ MARIA PAYAGUE

My name is Luz Mari. I am 9 years old and for the past 3 years I am part of the Missionary Childhood. I belong to the La Cayana community. The group is made up of 40 children and we are led by Manuel, a young

man who received the sacrament of confirmation 2 years ago. We gather every Saturday afternoon for catechesis. We begin our gathering with a few songs. Then our coordinator presents a theme taken from the guide book in which there are questions for sharing with others. We also look at our tasks for the upcoming week. This week we have promised to do our homework that we received from school because we have to be good. At the end we prayed and we played some games about how to share with other children. Today, our activity was going to David's house to pay him a visit because he was not well and for the past 2 weeks was not coming to our gatherings.

During the year we also gather with other children from neighboring communities. There were many of us and every group had to prepare different activities and share them during the whole day. The day ended with a supper and games.

On the day of the Missionary Childhood, that we celebrated during Mass in January, we went to Coca to celebrate with all of the members of the Missionary Childhood that belong to the Vicariate. A few parents came with us. We enjoyed a very beautiful day and we met many groups of our peers.



DIOCESE of XAI-XAI



*My name is **Catia da Graça Pedro Guiamba** and I am 15 years old. I live in region 10 of the city of Xai Xai, Gaza province. I am a grade 10 student at Joaquim Chissano high school and I take part in the Holy Missionary Childhood (HMC) of Gaza province in St. John the Baptist parish.*

This group has as its goal to help the needy and one's neighbor without discrimination and without being deceived by appearances and prejudices.

We try to help others understand that we are all equal, no matter what ethnic group we belong to or the color of our skin or the religion we profess or our social status. We seek to demonstrate to all of children that we have the same responsibilities

and rights.

It is a magnificent idea to be part of the HMC group and it is an honor, since the group is unique, because it is within the HMC that I have become sure of the fact that helping others without expecting anything in return has more value than giving expecting to receive something in return.

I joined the HMC in 2018, the year I was able to feel that giving I was giving to others as if I were giving to myself. In that same year, along with other brothers in Christ, who were also members of the HMC, I began to participate in formation sessions and became aware of my responsibilities and of the objectives that make me a member of the HMC.



After having received formation, the group had other meetings where we discussed projects and objectives for 2019. During these encounters the group decided to put into practice that which we had studied, offering spiritual consolation and help to the poor or abandoned. And so we have begun, in the first place, with monthly visits on Sundays to the Gaza province children shelter. The group wrote a letter to Fr. Eugenio to receive his support for this initiative, asking him to send it to the director of the shelter, asking that we receive permission to visit the shelter. The request was fully accepted.

When we arrived at the shelter, the group looked for ways to present itself in a friendly and social manner so that the children living there might understand who we are and why we come to visit. The group always remained calm and aware of its mission.

The group prepared a few letters to children in the shelter describing our daily activities: there were conferences on, among other things, how good and generous God is.

After having shared this information, the little we that we knew, the children in the shelter themselves expressed their point of view, showing that living in the shelter doesn't mean that one cannot participate in the Good News of the Lord. The children showed that they were aware of the life and works of Jesus and His Father.

In 2018 the HMC group met for catechism on Saturdays and we discussed our objectives, our activities our organization and also what would be the perspectives and ends we were aiming for. After our visit the children at the shelter asked for more visits because for them it was marvelous and important to feel really wanted and included as normal members of society, as indeed they were!

Being with these children was and is for me and for the other children something very special; something very important. It was a unique experience that repeated many times. With our friends at the shelter I was able to learn many new songs, dances, prayers and games that I didn't know before. I was able to follow closely what it means to be among many brothers and sisters to share a smile; what it means to have the same joy of tomorrow. I was able to see and follow closely what it means to share the same sadness and negative moments.

For 2019 the group will surely look to increase our efforts, to gather more funds for those in need, to continue visiting other places, jails and hospitals, to visit children that need special medical treatment, hospices for those suffering with AIDS and other places where we can help those in need.

The group is looking to understand today's reality and to respond in the best way possible. It is

looking to gather the means and gifts that will allow it to continue its missionary project, inviting many others because together we might evangelize others, intensifying our motto: "children helping and evangelizing other children"; giving to others and helping, them, starting with the meager means that we have available. ○



THE GOAL OF THE HMC IS TO SAVE, BAPTIZE AND PREPARE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

DIOCESE OF TOCANTINÓPOLIS - BRAZIL

My name is **Kamily Silva Alvers** and I am 14 years old. I belong to Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima parish in Babaçulândia in the diocese of Tocantinópolis TO. I am part of the Holy Missionary Childhood (HMC) association since three years and from the very beginning I participated in its activities and encouraged other children and adolescents to join my community to get to know and participate in the meeting of the Holy Missionary Childhood.

What I like the best about the association are the activities in which we participate, because we evangelize and are real evangelizers.

In fact the HMC is really important for my life. It has reawakened a universal missionary spirit within me and I have come to understand the importance of helping others. It has also developed within me a great sense of the importance of solidarity and evangelization.

My family understands the HMC to be a group of children and adolescents, which is really important in the world because it helps children and adolescents and all people in need in the world.

The activities that take place in our group include walks for the environment, distribution of food to the hungry, evangelizing within and outside of the community, participating in HMC retreats in the diocese, participating in Sunday Mass, and participating in Marian Festivals in our parish. We promote fraternity, the missionary month of October, we visit the elderly, the sick, and children of our community and pray with them.

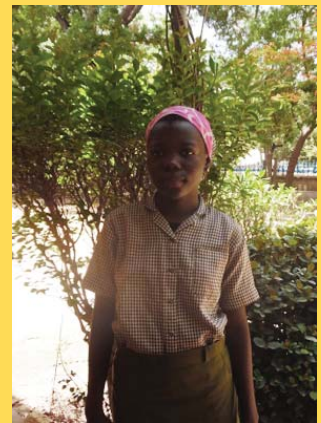


My message to children and to adolescent missionaries that participate is that they place all of their love and missionary zeal for the mission; not to fear evangelization because the goal of the HMC is to save, baptize and prepare children and adolescents. Let the children and adolescents that do not yet participate become part of this mission because to know Jesus and to love Him is wonderful; to speak of the love of God to people who do not yet know Him is even greater. ○

OH CHRISTIAN, WHO ARE YOU?

DIOCESE OF SARH - TCHAD

My name is **Ndigyanouba Marina** and I was baptized on March 31st, 2018 in the Cathedral parish of Sarh. I was very happy at St. Charles Lwanga college high school because when we have days of retreat Fr. Corti teaches us the Word of God and it brings me great joy to listen to this Word. My life changed after I was baptized. "Before baptism I was irritating my friends, insulting them, even hitting them and doing many things that are not pleasing to God. Now that the Holy Spirit has entered my life, I have become aware that all that I was doing before is no longer in me. I am happy to tell you these things."





MY EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

MALAWI

Education is one of the most powerful tools for empowering people to live a more fulfilled life, to escape poverty and avoid exploitation of one's dignity.

In my teaching carrier, I always wanted to act as an instrument of positive change in the lives of those to whom I teach. I believe that every child has a purpose on this earth. I have had a good time in utilizing my God's given talents, working with children in the field of education. It has been the best time for me, because I discover my ability and inability as much as education is concerned. Teaching any human person, at any stage of life, has never been easy for anyone who is a teacher. Teaching children is the most challenging and yet the most rewarding mission in the life of a teacher.

I have worked with the young people, aging 12 to 16, within the African context (Malawi). These young people come to school with a lot of aspirations and expectations. I have seen them and helped them to start the secondary education from the beginning to the end.

The young people have many potentials to develop if opportunity and possibilities are given to them to do so. When they go to secondary schools, they come from different backgrounds of their families and their former primary schools. These backgrounds tend to assist or hinder each child from developing their natural talents.

[...]

Many times, I tried mixing with them in their playing times

recreations, outings, even being with them in their sorrows in order to get to know them. They like variety, that is in teaching, relating and interacting with them one need to create variety of ways in order to facilitate the learning process. My students loved singing, so I tried to use what they like even in my lessons in order to help them get interested and to remember. They tend to loose concentration easily. Young people can easily adapt to changes within a very short period. Such as acquiring and relating with new friends, they are happy to explore new things and learn. They need a lot of motivations in order to help themselves to keep focused on learning. A good number of them tend to drop out school because they lack motivation; they do not see ahead the opportunities that can open up for them in the near future. The challenge of unemployment of those who have finished the secondary education before them tend to discourage them a lot. They are very sensitive to the needs of others especially the disadvantaged, the sick, the old and the poor around them. They are very generous in sharing what they are and what they have with those who are in need around them.



They can form strong bonds among themselves for doing good and bad, that is: they can easily influence each other positively and negatively (peer pressure).

Sometimes not everyone celebrates the success of one among them, unless one has some benefit in it. Unhealthy competitions and jealousy tend to exist highly among them.

Sr. Lucy Laurian, Fd.C.C.

LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN...



HUNGARY

BORN AGAIN AFTER **THE COMMUNIST REGIME**

The Pontifical Mission Societies were very active and deeply rooted in the Catholic Church of Hungary until 1947-48. When communist regime dissolved the church activities and started persecuting the church in Hungary, officially all the spiritual movement were stopped and PMS also was not present in Hungary until 1992-93.

The first director after the communist rule was Fr. Szabo Imre SVD, a Hungarian missionary worked in PNG for 35 years. He started re-organizing, but did not do much as he was old. Then, Fr. Rostas Sandor SVD, a Hungarian missionary who was in Argentina, was appointed for 5 years. He continued the work, but his health did not allow him to do something concret. I reached Hungary at the end of 2003 as a missionary from India. In 2007 April I was appointed national director.

SURVEY

The first work I did after taking over was to write letters to all the parish priests in Hungary. More than 1500 letters I wrote informing them about the change of leadership in the national office and also expressed my wish to visit them in the parish. To my great surprise only one person replied to my letter. It did not disappoint me, rather made me strong and gave me some sign that I am in the





right place as a missionary. This is a mission area, told myself.

NEW BEGINING...

Since I did not get any reply from the priests, the next step was to establish a medium by which I could communicate. Soon an official mission magazine was introduced, followed by a website for the PMS Hungary. Many articles, interviews, talks on different radios, films in the national TV channels were made about PMS and it's mission. Slowly the priests and people came to know about PMS mission.

As I was travelling and giving talks and retreats on the mission of the church in different schools and parishes, I came to know that people do not have much idea about the sending of the church. It is due to the communist rule in Hungary for about 60 long years. The future of the church without a mission spirit can be fatal for the visible church in Hungary. It is this thought that led me to introduce the Holy Childhood, since in children we see the future of the church. 2009 was the year of St. Paul. God made the way for it. For the concluding celebration of the St. Paul's year, we decided to take children to Rome from all european countries. This was a God given chance for me to tell the bishops that we also need to send the children to Rome.

FOUNDING OF HOLY CHILDHOOD

I took 34 children from different parishes to Rome and two of them personally met Pope Benedict XVI. I prepared these children before leaving from Hungary that they will be officially accepted into the Holy Childhood in a Holy Eucharist. So they were given the membership during the Eucharistic celebration in St. Stephen's Basilica in Rome. They became the first members of Holy Childhood in Hungary. It was a wonderful beginning of something beautiful. Many groups were made there after in different schools and parishes around Hungary. I was on the way always organizing them and guiding them. In few years around 1400 children became official members of Holy Childhood. We had 30

groups of children and around 40 animators.

From 2009 every year we have a big mission camp.

We come together for a national meeting once a year in one of the dioceses. The motto of the Holy Childhood in Hungary is „with small prayer and small sacrifice children helping children”. Though the sacrifice (little penny) is very little from the children, we wish to cultivate in them a culture of feeling for the other. So, more impact is given to prayer than money.



FR BENVIN MADASSERY, SVD
National Director PMS Hungary

Every month at least once they come together with the animators and bring there little penny. They are also given a work out sheet form the national office for the gathering. In this work out sheet, we have prayers for the mission, bible passages, songs and games. There are many action plan for the year, initiated by different animators.

Many films were made over the years in the national tv channels and other local tv channels about the work of Holy Childhood. At present many priests know about it, but still long way to go. I do not have diocesan directors except in two dioceses.

This year on the 21st of September, we celebrate 10th year of Holy Childhood in Hungary. Though we completed many projects around the world in last 10 years. We helped as we could the missions in need. But on the 21st of this year we are making bit grand, the anniversary. The president of Hungary is the main patron of the celebration. Cardinal Erdő Peter will be the main celebrant. Morning we start the celebration in the Basilica. At 11 in the morning we have thanksgiving Eucharist and prayers for the mission. And in the afternoon we continue the celebration in the Hungarian parlament. Children will see the Holy crown of St. Stephen and then we have prayer for the leaders of the country. ○



EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF WABAG

Sr. Maddalena Hoang Ngoc

Wabag diocese is situated in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. The livelihood is subsistent farming, there is great need for roads, health, education and social services. The majority of the parishes are situated in the remote mountains and valleys, where the children do not get quality education. In this remote areas, only the dioceses provide education services.

4335 poor children in 41 Elementary Schools will benefit directly through this project. The aim of the

project is to provide quality education, teaching, learning materials, as well as to guide them in the spiritual life and in the different activities such as seminars and retreats.

The transportation of materials is very expensive, since there is no road connection to all the remote villages. People walk 1 or 2 days to reach some places. Due this reason, the teaching and learning materials are sent by air.



AUTO-FINANCING FOR THE FUTURE

Kathleen Mazio

The Church of the Diocese of Dapaong in Togo, is mainly represented by a very young population, as in the most part of the African countries. Through the movement CV – AV (Cœurs Vaillants / Ames vaillantes – Brave hearts / Brave spirits) the children participate actively and enthusiastically in the catechesis.

Unfortunately, given the financial difficulties of this diocese, the formation activities are too expensive to be carried out. Facing this situation arose the idea of turning the children into immediate performers of the pastoral

care, training them towards an auto financing activity that would sponsor the movement and themselves.

The project consists in training about 350 children from the five deaneries of the diocese, to start a micro business processing fruit and vegetable for juice and jam production.

They will realise the entire process, from the purchase of mangos, tomatoes, tamarinds, to the sale, through the processing and packaging of the products.

Thanks to this project, they will be able to finance their pastoral care themselves, providing also education on the risks of prostitution and drugs, scourge among lazy young people. They will learn a job in a social context severely afflicted by unemployment. Further, they will learn the importance of dedication and of becoming active members of the community and of the Church.





CHILDREN AGENTS OF CHANGE

Augustine George Palayil



Among a variety of applications received, it has been quite inspiring to see in some of the dioceses the missionary animation of children, led by the Holy Childhood units, is not simply one among many formation programmes but the nucleus of all the activities, not only those directed to the

children but to the entire community. It is even more significant to see that this is done in extremely adverse situations such as war, natural disasters or absolute poverty. This is the natural role of the Holy Childhood to give off the infinite potentialities of its charism, for the benefit of both the Church and the society.

This is decipherable in a good number of applications received, especially from the countries like Malawi, South Sudan, Zambia, Sri Lanka etc.. The project I present to you comes from Sri Lanka - diocese of Anuradhapura. The title of the project is- "Christian Children helped to be agents of change". The applicant, Sr. Helen Fernando, has presented it with many details that could be summarised as follows: Project is directed to selected group of children, belonging to different ethnic backgrounds from two dioceses. Its aim is to empower the children with self-confidence to accept and respect each other in a true Christian spirit, being-Christian agents of change.

In the context of three decades of civil war, where all the minority communities feel insecurity and unequal status; the children grow up in a fragmented and wounded society; living in isolation, estrangement, fear and suspicion, not having much opportunities to experience the richness of harmonious co-existence in a multicultural society; for them the reconciliation remains a buzz word. The Church in Sri Lanka, among all the four living faiths- Buddhism,

Hinduism, Islam and Christianity- has the resources and the responsibility to be the light in the ministry of reconciliation. It is important to mobilize the children through facilitated exchange programs with a view to move from a divided past to a shared future.

"Let the children come to me; do not prevent them..." (Mark 10:14) - Children helping children - children evangelizing children - children animating children be read as the signs of the times.



TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY...

Matteo Maria Piacentini

Children in the remote areas of the Catholic Diocese of Bo, in Sierra Leone, are facing a number of problems such as poverty, hunger, child abuse, child labor, early marriages, while many are orphans. The situation of children is so crucial that many children find it difficult to go to school, particularly in the remote and hard to reach areas. These problems, unfortunately, overpower the children and that it is why it is often difficult to reach their full potential. In 2017 POSI allotted a Subsidy in favor of the needy children, providing learning materials. The subsidy was used to sponsor over 200 less privileged children living in remote areas and villages. Needy children belonging to humble homes and background were supplied with decent school uniforms, bags, shoes, and assorted school materials. The beneficiaries were happy to receive the materials and have the opportunity to go to school daily. They were regular in school with great difference and better academic performance.



BAPTISED AND SENT LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN THE WORLD



On May 18, 2019 the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood, also known as the Missionary Childhood, was established in Romania.



The day opened with the celebration of Holy Mass in the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Bucharest during which a group of children joined the Society in the presence of Sr. Roberta Tremarelli, Secretary General of the Society. The theme proposed for the festivity was “Baptised and Sent: little missionaries in the world” which was inspired by the theme for the Extraordinary Mission Month 2019, with the goal of renewing the missionary spirit

in the Universal Church. The children received a booklet that illustrated missionary collaboration of the Holy Father, a calendar with prayer intentions, suggested weekly acts of charity for the whole year and a bracelet with a personalized picture of the

Pope, of the founder of the Society Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson and with a missionary cross, symbol of the missions. All of the children present also received a small guide with information on the Society of the Missionary Childhood and a flag as a souvenir of this special day. The special hymn of the IMP was also presented: “Baptized and sent”. After the Mass, there were some artistic presentations by children from various parishes and then all of the children enjoyed



REPUBLIC of MOLDAVIA

On May 17, the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood, also known as the Missionary Childhood, was instituted in the beautiful parish of the Nativity of Our Lady in the Republic of Moldavia. During the Holy Mass, 40 Children of different denominations that prayed with joy for the intentions: above all for the needy children of Moldavia, then, specifically for the children of the Ukraine and Syria, who have suffered war. During the homily the motto for the Extraordinary Mission Month 2019, "Baptized and Sent" was explained. At the end of the celebration the Holy Father's prayer was read. All of the children promised to pray the Our Father at least one time a day for the needy children of Moldavia, Ukraine and Syria and throughout the world.



pizza and fruit juice. The Feast of inauguration of the Holy Missionary Childhood in Romania also marked the 176 anniversary of the Society's foundation in France. ○



*Heavenly Father,
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ
rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers
to “go and make disciples of all nations”
and you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.*

*Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion,
may find new and efficacious expressions
that bring life and light to the world.*

*Help us make it possible for all peoples
to experience the saving love
and mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.*

Amen.

Franciscus



EXTRAORDINARY
MISSION
MONTH | October
2019



**PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS**