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FOCUS

**MY MISSIONARY VOCATION -
ROOTED IN BAPTISM**

**LITTLE
MISSIONARIES IN...MALI**

THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN



**MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER
N.4 - FEBRUARY 2020**

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PRAYER FOR MISSIONARY VOCATION



“Your vocation inspires you to bring out the best in yourself” (Pope Francis)

Every man, every woman, every child has a vocation from birth.

The starting point is always a personal encounter with Christ, because one can grow in the desire to choose and respond to a vocation only after personally getting to know him.

Every Christian is a missionary. In other words, every Christian is called to proclaim the Gospel, to bear witness to the Gospel in his daily life, and to cherish the missionaries and their work, sustaining them with their prayers, sacrifices, and donations. This is what St. Therese of the Child Jesus intended when she spoke about her missionary vocation, and this is what the Society of the Holy Childhood promotes even today in every country.

In the book *Without Him, We Can Do Nothing*, when talking about the Missionary Childhood, Pope Francis affirms that “it is beautiful when children are shown from an early age that the proclamation of the Gospel, the proclamation of Jesus’s story, is dynamic, and that they too can share Jesus’ story with their friends. And it is also beautiful that they can learn from an early age to think of individuals, peoples, and distant worlds that they too can pray for or learn to make some small offering”.

The objectives of the Society of the Holy Childhood at the service of the local Churches are indicated in the Statute of the PMS (1, art. 13):

- help educators awaken and foster a universal missionary awareness in children and adolescents
- help promote and foster missionary vocations.

The priority is missionary animation and the formation of a universal missionary awareness in children, so that children themselves may experience the missionary nature of the Church and of their Baptism, and so be motivated to the *missio ad gentes* and open to the possibility of a future missionary commitment *ad vitam*.

Msgr. Brice Meuleman (1862-1924), Archbishop of Calcutta from 1902 to 1924, ordained the first Indian priest, Auguste Lakra, son of the Society of the Holy Childhood.

In the same way, the first native priests in Uganda, ordained in 1913, were also children aided by the same Society.

Today, as then, the Holy Childhood offers tools for growth in the faith, also from a vocational perspective. Each person has the responsibility of cultivating his own vocation, but this requires the presence of a community and/or group that supports him in this journey and of someone that can help him in this work of discovery and growth, in order to reach the fullness of life that comes from God.

The experiences lived by young people in the activities of the Missionary Childhood and Adolescence can arouse in their hearts the willingness to commit their whole life to the service of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. In order to help them in such a decision, the animators, priests, and religious who accompany them will have to live out their commitment to missionary animation, formation, and cooperation joyfully and coherently, in order to continue the work started by Christ and to announce the Gospel.

What do the many groups and activities of the Missionary Childhood and Adolescence offer today to help awaken the missionary vocation?



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI

Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood

MISSIONARY VOCATION AND ITS BIBLICAL ROOTS



FR. ANDRÉ MARIE DJON LIMAY
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Vocation, understood as the call of God to an individual, is always tied to a mission. In other words, God always calls the human being to a specific mission. Seen in this respect, vocation is closely linked to the mission. Therefore, there is no vocation without mission and vice versa. Furthermore, the intrinsic link between the two expressions authorizes us to say that vocation is, by its very nature, missionary.

This thesis is supported by multiple examples in the Holy Scriptures. Not being able to examine them all here, we will limit ourselves to presenting some of them both from the Old and New Testaments. Clearly, these examples will allow us to identify some missiological implications on vocational discernment and on the formation of missionary awareness in children and young people.

SOME EXAMPLES OF VOCATION - MISSION IN THE BIBLE

The Holy Scriptures present not only a variety of appeals from God to individuals, but also the different missions that He assigns to them.

Vocation-mission in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament stories relating to vocation, the assignment of a mission generally follows the call of God. The one who has been called is sent to people so that he can carry out the mission entrusted to him by God. By way of illustration, Isaiah is sent to the people of Israel to communicate the message of salvation (cf. Is 6, 9-10); Jeremiah is sent to the kings, princes, priests and people of Judea, with the mission of arousing conversion (cf. Gr 1:18); Moses is sent to Pharaoh to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (cf. Ex 3: 10-11); the young Samuel, credited as prophet of the Lord (cf. 1 Sam 3, 20), is sent to Eli and to all Israel to reveal them the message of



Yahveh (cf. 1 Sam 3, 15-4, 1).

These examples clearly highlight the intrinsic link between vocation and mission. This bond is further illuminated and confirmed by the texts of the New Testament which refer to vocation.

Vocation-mission in the New Testament

The New Testament presents various cases of individuals called by the Lord to precise missions: Saul of Tarsus (who became the apostle Paul after the conversion) is called to bring the name of the Lord before pagan nations, kings and Israelites (cf. Acts 9, 15); Ananias (a disciple of the Lord in Damascus) is called to lay hands on Saul of Tarsus so that he may regain sight (cf. Acts 9, 12); the first four disciples (Simon, Andrew, James and John) are, however, called to become fishers of men (cf. Lk 5, 10-11; Mt 4, 19). Likewise, we cannot avoid mentioning that the Virgin Mary is chosen and called to be the Mother of the Savior (cf. Lk 1, 30-34). His Son Jesus Christ is called and sent into the world to do the will of the Father who sent him (cf. Jn 6:38) and to reveal to men the fullness of Trinitarian love.

From these cases it is clear that God always calls to a mission. Through His calls, He allows men to participate in His plan of love for the world (cf. Is 6, 8; Hebrews 10, 7). Unfortunately, sometimes he who is called does not clearly understand this appeal, for lack of discernment, or simply refuses to carry out the mission entrusted to him. Think of the case of young Samuel, unable to recognize the voice of the Lord (cf. 1 Sam 3, 1-9), or of the rich young man who did not follow Jesus and went away sad (cf. Mk 10:22), of Jonah who fled far to avoid going to preach in Nineveh (cf. Jonah 1, 3). These examples allow us to realize the complexity of vocation and the difficulty of keeping the intrinsic link between vocation and mission intact. Therefore, the need to give particular importance to the vocational discernment and to the education of the missionary conscience of groups of

children and young people by educators and animators appears evident. This arduous task undoubtedly passes through an accompaniment of the vocational process and a path of Christian maturity that integrates important elements, which we will discover later.

VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT AND FORMATION OF THE MISSIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS OF CHILDREN

Vocational discernment of children: some basic elements

Helping children or young people to recognize the call of God and accept His will in their life requires a vocational accompaniment path characterized by the following fundamental elements:

- a) **The proximity of the accompanying person/guide:** the accompanying person must be very close to the person he/she accompanies, in order to get to know them



well. This element is, moreover, highlighted by Eli's attitude towards the young Samuel who, alone, cannot recognize the call of the Lord (cf. 1 Sam 3, 1-21).

b) **Attentive listening towards who is being accompanied:** the guide must listen carefully to the one who he/she is accompanying, so as to have elements that allow to give him correct and clear indications that can favor authentic vocational recognition. In fact, attentive listening of the person allows the guide to provide answers based on assumptions or to replace him during the vocational journey. Moreover, Pope Francis declares it when he writes: «When we are called upon to help others discern their path in life, what is uppermost is the ability to listen». (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*, n. 291). Old Eli's attitude in the first Book of Samuel confirms this statement: he listens to Samuel carefully for the first time (cf. 1 Sam 3, 5), a second (cf. 1 Sam 3, 6), and then, a third (cf. 1 Sam 3, 8a). Only the third time he understands that it is the Lord who is calling the boy (cf. 1 Sam 3, 8b). At that point he can give you an answer that is not predetermined, but an exact, clear and precise indication (orientation) derived from his listening «... he said to Samuel: Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening' » (1 Sam 3, 9).

c) **Familiarity of the guide/accompanying person with the Lord:** it is certainly thanks to his familiarity and his profound personal experience with the Lord that Eli knows how to help Samuel recognize his voice. This means that the accompanying person (the educator, the formator etc.) must be a person of solid experience of God, a man (a woman) who daily lives the personal experience of God through prayer, meditation on the word of God, of the sacraments and of Christian charity. It is undoubtedly this experience that

allows him to daily discern the voice of God in his life and make it known to those he guides.

d) **Trust in the one who he accompanies:** the accompanying person must not only trust the person, but must in turn inspire trust, to allow the other to express himself freely and without fear. We also learn this teaching from old Eli: with his attitude he puts young Samuel at ease, who, at the beginning, is afraid to tell him about the divine vision that concerns him (cf. 1 Sam 3:15), but then confides everything (cf. 1 Sam 3, 18).

TO FORM THE MISSIONARY AWARENESS OF CHILDREN TOWARDS MISSIONARY VOCATIONS IN THE CHURCH

Just as the Church is « missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father » (*Ad gentes*, n. 2), therefore, vocation of all the baptized is missionary. Baptized children must therefore not only be formed in this missionary awareness, but also, and above all, learn, from an early age, to be missionaries of the Gospel to other children who do not yet know Jesus. Through organized pastoral and educational activities in ecclesiastical groups or movements, they must clearly realize that their baptism commits them to proclaim the Gospel to all creation (cf. Mk 16:15) and to testify Jesus Christ through their words and deeds wherever they are. Educators or animators therefore have the responsibility to guide them and make them grow in this missionary awareness, convinced that the “missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*” (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 2).

This does not concern only children but all the baptized in the Church. In a particular way,



it concerns missionaries marked by a special vocation and belong to “certain institutes which take as their own special task the duty of preaching the Gospel, a duty belonging to the whole Church” (*Ad gentes*, n. 23). These (priests, men and women religious, lay people) “sent by legitimate authority, they go out in faith and obedience to those who are far from Christ. They are set apart for the work for which they have been taken up as ministers of the Gospel, “that the offering up of the Gentiles may become acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:16)” (*Ad gentes*, n. 23).

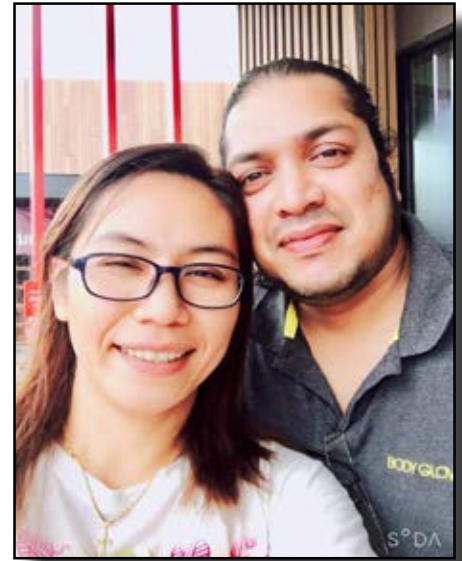
Animators (priests and lay people) of groups

are called to make children and young people discover the missionary work of these emblematic figures in order to arouse the missionary vocation in their hearts.

The animators are also responsible for creating missionary vocational groups within which the children are involved in a vocational process until the maturation of their missionary vocation. Children will thus be able to grow with the conscience and ardent desire to go to preach to the nations (cf. Mk 3:13ff) in the context of the *missio ad gentes*.



MY MISSIONARY VOCATION ROOTED IN BAPTISM



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God created man and women in His own image and likeness and breathing directly into the nostrils of man gave him the soul and life (cf. *Gen 1: 27; 2: 7*). He entrusted the first man with the task of participating in the harmony of God’s mission of creation. However, the first man fell short of His glory through the transgression of sin and thus severing this intimate divine communion with God. “God is love...” (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*) and in His infinite mercy sent His only son Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind and through the power of the resurrection of Christ breathes new life into the world and at “*every time and in every place, God draws close to man*” (cf. *Jn 3: 16*).

This Paschal mystery seals a New Covenant for man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the mystical body of Christ which is the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son Jesus Christ and through Him, He invites men to become one in the Holy Spirit the giver of life to be His adopted children and thus heirs of His blessed life.¹ The apostles professed this “Kerygma” to bring the Kingdom of God to the far ends of the planet. They bolstered by the Holy Spirit and surrendering to the commandment of Christ to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them (cf. Mt. 28:19) and continuing the legacy of the mission of Christ to proclaim the “Logos of Hope.” (cf. *Verbum Domini* n.91)

THE SEED OF VOCATION

God freely sows the seed of vocation in the hearts of man and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and coupled with man’s response (discernment) in cultivating it effectively through love, faith, and charity blossoms to bear rich fruits in the ecclesial life of the Church. With the anointment of the Holy Spirit, everyone becomes the living spiritual temple (cf. CL 14)² Thus, “we are all missionary disciples,” this is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the call of becoming zealous “Spirit-filled evangelizers.” The thrust for sharing with God’s faithful people is to “strive to light a fire in the heart of the world” (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*).³ It is by participating in the “threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King equip the pastoral activities with a greater



missionary perspective. (cf. CL 14)

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES THROUGH THE LIVING VIRTUE OF BAPTISM

Every person born in this secular world seeks to pursue an intrinsic vocation in life which is chiefly influenced and conditioned by psychologies, parents, society, education, peers, religion, norms, anthropological surroundings and so on. Each person strives to discover this human vocation through a metaphysical quest to find the true meaning, answers, and fulfillment of the purpose of his/her life or existence and realities.

However, as Christians, the People of God become missionary disciples through the living virtue of baptism (cf. Mt 28:19). As baptized Christians, having a filial rapport with the Trinitarian God (the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit), operative through the Holy Catholic Church, and by virtue of the living power in the Gospel propels and transforms vocation of mission in all holistic dimensions. It remodels our identity and personality rooted in Scripture and the perception of looking into pragmatic dimensions of faith. It finds a true conversion, meaning, and reasons for living an ecclesial life in the Church and “being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”⁴ In the words of St. Paul, “The love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14) and this impels our duty into these primary symbiotic dimensions of evangelization with a vision of bringing fulfillment to

Christ’s mission of love by announcing the *Kerygma* (Good News). This further leads to building a *Koinonia*-communion (communion through, with and in Christ, an ecclesial communion with the mystical body of Christ the Church and the people of God); and our faith is incomplete without dedication of selflessness *Diakonia* (service/charity); above all fortified with the grace of *Liturgia* (Sacraments, Eucharist and the liturgy). “The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church’s mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, the witness of the life of Christians must authenticate it. “The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and, God.”⁵ In the given circumstances, it is pertinently important today “to discover ever anew the urgency and the beauty of the proclamation of the word for the coming of the Kingdom of God.”⁶

To be a missionary is to embrace the core element of our faith, the center of our existence in Jesus Christ our redeemer. Moreover “woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (cf. 1 Cor. 9: 16), this whole aspect is witnessed through the external active signs of participation in the sacraments, liturgy, charity, and catechesis of evangelizing being witness to Christ. The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, through which divine life has dispensed to us bridging living- encounter with Jesus Christ. Sacraments are powers that come forth from the Body of Christ (Cf. Lk.5:17; 6:19; 8:46.), which quench the eternal thirst, nourish, and strengthen us on our journey of the mission of proclaiming Christ the guiding light to the world. (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 1)

MISSION AND SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

The synod fathers defined, “The pilgrim Church is a missionary by her very nature since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.”⁷ The council emphasized. “...all sons of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility



to the world; they should foster in themselves a truly catholic spirit; they should spend their forces in the work of evangelization. And yet, let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the Faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life. For their fervor in the service of God and their charity toward others will cause a new spiritual wind to blow for the whole Church...⁸

The word Mission has the Latin root “to send,” but in a truly Christian sense, the term has a broader, rich profound meaning and is at the heart of the Gospel. It is through deep profound communication with God that we can understand the components of our mission. This calls for spiritual “Discernment.” It is an interior dialogue with oneself to search for the wisdom of God. It calls for personal renewal in rediscovering, reflecting, thinking, discern, judge, to choose and act in the spirit of Jesus Christ to understand the will of God to undertake the task of mission. It is to take the true light Christ himself to others to proclaim the salvation of Christ to have life in abundance (cf. Jn. 1:9-10). In *Ad gentes*, “Missions” are those “particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ...The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization.”⁹

ADULT FAITH AND MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

“The People of God believes that it is led by the Lord’s Spirit, Who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose in the happenings, needs, and desires in which this People has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.”¹⁰

The letters of Saint Paul echoes this missionary zeal, his indispensable action, and call for discerning to the will of God, to distinguish from good and evil. (cf. Heb 5, 14) A Christian is called to be in a spiritual communion “called by grace to a covenant with his Creator,”¹¹ to offer him a response of faith. Jesus promised us “The Advocate—the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.” (Jn 14:26)

In our walk of life, it becomes imperative at times on the frontiers of our common individual decisions of precise choice, delicate and difficult, we need the help of others the spiritual guidance on our spiritual journey. It is incumbent to a communitarian ecclesial event to discern together to read the signs of the time (cf. Mt 16.3).

Hence, “an adult faith, capable of entrusting itself totally to God with a filial attitude fostered by prayer, meditation on the word of God and study of the truth of the faith, is a prerequisite for furthering a new humanism founded on the Gospel of Jesus.”¹² The ecclesial community empowered through the spirit of discernment through prayer and solidarity of faith in action. Pope Francis places discernment as an essential element of living a true

Christian vocation to live out an exemplary witness to Christ and a way of life in the Church and the secular world. The word discernment has been a recurring pragmatic key theme for pastoral guidance in Pope Francis’s apostolic exhortations in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*.

“The Spirit of God, who, with wondrous providence, directs the course of time and renews the face of the earth, assists at this development.”¹³ (*Gaudium et Spes*, 26)

“We are all missionary disciples” Pope Francis exhorts, “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization;





indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples".¹⁴

Since ages, the Church has been instrumental over the centuries to explore, purify, and journey with this missionary mandate handed by the founder Jesus Christ. The early apostles carried forward with passion to the point of being martyred the teachings of Jesus and building discipleship and apostolic Christian communities. Handing down the apostolic traditions, the successors of Peter, the Fathers of the Church, monastic communities, religious men and women missionaries, catechists and lay consecrated pursued to date in the modern era engaged in promoting the works of the new evangelization. Thousands have suffered prosecution and crowned in the glory of martyrdom. St. Leo: "the religion established by the sacrament of the Cross of Christ cannot be destroyed by any kind of cruelty." Their heroism to defend the Church by proclaiming the Gospel inspires them to continue their steadfast vocation of carrying forward the mission of the Catholic Church. "Let us learn from the saints who have gone before us, who confronted the difficulties of their own day".¹⁵

Exemplary saints, religious congregations and institutions are supporting the works of mission and the new evangelization which is also reflected by commendable efforts by the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples and its organs supporting the missionary vocations from children to adults (priest, religious, consecrated and the laity formation), especially in the mission territories to empower missionary disciples. Every baptized molded by faith in fidelity to the growth of vocation of mission *Ad gentes* participate in stimulating a missionary conscience, a true spiritual renewal and the purification of the growing challenges affecting the Church fostering the missionary zeal in communion with the Church. The scope of catechesis widens and plays a relatively important role and fundamental in announcing the Good News systematically and organically in the midst



of the People of God.

Pope Francis announced the theme of the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019 recalling the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximun Illud* (That momentous) given by Pope Benedict XV on November 30, 1919. Pope Benedict XV laid his prophetic foresighted vision to revitalize the Church during a difficult period post World War I and placed emphasis on the need for renewing the Church's missionary dimension to the local grassroots without polarization but with a proclamation of the Gospel. Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* highlighted that "Missionary action is the paradigm of every work of the Church."¹⁶

Tertullian's affirmation of "one is not born a Christian but one becomes" is particularly actual today in the changing contest of globalized socio-cultural, political. There is the need for the continued path of mystagogy being closer to the renewal of the first announcement of faith and the missionary zeal. The hope of the Gospel of resurrection, the salvation through Christ radiates the faith and love that we have for Christ. However, "It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows."¹⁷ It is not to force or exploit the situation by proselytism of the poor people or to fall trap into cultural challenges of doctrinal relativism and syncretism but rather to be a holistic witness among the people and bring fruitfulness to the mission *Ad-gentes*. It significantly calls us to play a greater role of transmission of faith through the inculturation of the Gospel among the questions of wider areas of culture



that has reflected in the recent Synod of Amazonia. It requires courage and joy of proclaiming Christ to be the center of our faith received freely from God and to share it freely with His people.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND COMMITMENT

I am grateful to God for receiving the gift of the Catholic faith in my family. Growing up actively involved in the parish and dedicating to be a fulltime Catechist involved in the diocesan office, the idea of a missionary vision did not fully capture my heart and mind. In my early year, my perceptions aligned with the common general notion of the term “missionary” meaning literally destined for religious and foreigners who were actively engaged in the apostolate of the Church. Being up in a small Buddhist country in a cultural way of life with limited Christian exposure where the Catholics constitute about 0.58% of the roughly 69 million of the total population predominantly Buddhists, where the concepts of pain,

sadness, poverty, sufferings are being subjectively perceived and taken for granted as a Karmic part of life. Offspring of this grand cultural society the responsibility of my catechetical apostolate was rather routine, formal and to follow as guided to me by the local Church. The diocesan catechetical office through the support of the Congregation for Evangelization of the Peoples chose me to undergo specialization in Catechesis at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome to which I am ever grateful. Upon receiving a catechetical missionary mandate, my conscious vision of the reality of mission opened the doors of knowledge to missiology where our oriental world experience and expressions bridged the academic realities of the Universal Church’s myriad profoundness into the theological, doctrinal, pastoral, anthropological, socio-cultural courses. The practical seminars, spiritual experience, and the Roman Catholic Church’s historical patrimony has left an indelible mark and shaped my dimensions of looking beyond the horizon for applying it to my local Thai context. An encounter of studying in a multi-cultural environment with various religious congregations of priests, religious and the laity provided insights in history and the world of active mission. It inspires me to comprehend and discover the true meaning and sense to discern my baptismal role and my missionary goals in the world of the new evangelization in the context of my local Thai ecclesial communities.

Upon my return from Rome, armored with the academic experience it was a time to put into practice. I realized the call of my lay mission in the catechetical apostolate and it is imperative to widen the scope of a systematic catechesis in parishes (families), schools (teachers and students) of being a missionary disciple and especially among the catechumens offering them the regular formation and to be the active ecclesial members and communities of the Catholic Church. Accompanying the catechumens and spending weekends in their homes with an itinerary of faith formation spiritual journey of discernment is an enriching reciprocal living experience of pastoral conversion to participate in evangelical life and mission of the Church.

A part of our daily responsibilities the educative pastoral catechetical activity projects, provide opportunities to touch every sector in the renewal of faith formation



action at the frontiers to answer the call of the new evangelization and to become missionary disciples of Christ.

The Holy See established the Apostolic Vicariate in Thailand known as Siam and today we are commemorating its 350th anniversary of Mission Siam (1669-2019). We thank

and remember the contributions of all brave missionaries who fought the challenges and brought the light of Christ to our land. The pioneer missionaries brought the educational system, liturgy, spirituality, Christian art, and sacred music, acts of mercy and charity, and above all the Gospel, the apostolate of Word of God and built the systematic foundation for the growth of the indigenous Church in the remote Southeast. Their art of living the Gospel, celebrating the liturgy, proclaiming the Good News and their testimony of sacrificing their life gives us inspiration and hope. It is the effort and support of the Congregation of the Evangelization for the Peoples and its arms that prompts to give the evangelical impulse of proclaiming and bringing the salvific mission of Christ-*Ad Gentes* into the remote mission areas.

We are journeying on this commemorative spirit and the call for a renewal of holistic missionary spirit of Pope Francis's appeal to the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment. "Today too, the Church needs men and women who, by virtue of their baptism, respond generously to the call to leave behind home, family, country, language and local Church, and to be sent forth to the nations, to a world not yet transformed by the sacraments of Jesus Christ and his holy Church."¹⁸

Who shall I send? Who will go? – Here I am, Send me (cf. Is.8:6), United with the vision of the Church and the missionary mandate, I am further encouraged and committed to walking the path with the courage to be

a renewed active missionary disciple to strengthen our ecclesial communities around us.

NOTES

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1992 (CCC) n. 1
2. *Christifideles Laici* n. 14.
3. Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation, "Evangelii Gaudium"* (November 24, 2013) n. 119, 259, 271
4. Benedict XVI, *Encyclical letter, "Deus Caritas est,"* (December 25, 2005), n. 1.
5. Pope Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, (18 novembre 1965), n. 6.
6. Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*
7. *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church "Ad gentes"* n.2.
8. "Ad gentes" n.36.
9. "Ad gentes" n.6.
10. *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution, "Gaudium et spes"*, n 11.
11. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n.357.
12. Pope Benedict XVI- *Message for World Mission Sunday*, 2010.
13. "Gaudium et Spes" n.26.
14. Pope Francis- *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*, n.118.
15. *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 263.
16. *Evangelii Gaudium* n.15.
17. *Evangelii Gaudium* n.14.
18. Pope Francis- *Message for World Missions Day 2019 (Baptized and Sent- The Church of Christ on Mission in the World)*.



ANNO DOMINI 1845

Yûn-Nân, 4 June 1845

J.M.J.

To Monsignor President
of the Holy Childhood Society



Monsignor,

It is with deepest gratitude that we have received the 1,500 francs that the admirable Holy Childhood Society has assigned to our mission of Yûn-Nân in China. Such a holy, angelic Society can only please God and attract ample blessings on its pious founders. It is a worthy companion of the divine Society of the Propagation of the Faith and I do not doubt at all, Monsignor, that they will speed up the conversion from China. Emperor Tao-Kouang is already said to be much more favorable to the Christian religion than in past years.

What a joy for the associates of this Holy Society to think that their alms open the doors of heaven every day to a multitude of innocent souls! Thanks to the help you have sent us, we could provide baptism to several thousand small idolaters and, indirectly, to a good number of adults. Our

baptizers are predominantly preachers: already numerous families, obedient to their teachings, have renounced idols to worship the true God. These baptizers very often have the opportunity to speak to pagans about the Christian religion. In 1843 we had 1,900 baptisms of infidels at the point of death in the province of Yûn-Nân alone; in 1844, 2,000 and this year 3,150. With the help of prayers and alms of the Holy Childhood Society, we will be able to greatly increase its number. With sufficient means, the grace of holy baptism could easily be obtained every year for 10,000 idolatrous children. It will not be surprising if you think that the province of Yûn-Nân alone includes 14 first-class cities, Fou; 31 second class, Tcheou, and 39 third class, Hien, with a prodigious multitude of large villages. The population of the whole province reaches about 10,000,000 inhabitants. The Chinese are much more numerous than all the different indigenous tribes. Most Chinese and indigenous families are very poor and are not at all opposed to the possibility of finding a solution for some of their children; our faithful welcome them easily, with the support of a small sum of money.

Our baptizers know the diseases of children, the dangers of death. They are always supplied with pills and other necessary medicines, which they distribute for free. When they arrive in a city or a village, Chinese curiosity is soon informed of the



reason for their arrival and when they learn that they also treat sick children without paying, they quickly show up. Both in the countryside and in the city, they are invited to visit sick children; poor families are happy to have such an opportunity. This regards itinerant baptizers. We also have, in every station of the faithful, educated, pious Christians, wise women who baptize pagan children close to them, when they are in danger of death. It is often the pagans themselves who bring their sick children to them. We provide these faithful with all the medicines they may need for this purpose. Furthermore, since we carry out a general visit of the districts each year, they make us aware of the number of baptized and those who died immediately after receiving baptism. I believe that contagious diseases are even more frequent in this country than in Europe and children are treated much worse. Above all, the poor cannot provide them with any relief and, therefore, a large number of them die every year. In addition, in these mountain villages, there is often a passage from excessive heat to great cold. Or, most [children] are dressed very poorly, or wear very light clothing, which causes them fever and terrible colds.

Male and female schools also do good: they are necessary for the education of the faithful, as well as for solidly planting faith in this empire. I have already managed to found 7 male and 8 female schools, and if Divine Providence gives me the means, I intend to found them in every station of my vicariate. But in this case, before you can start



up a school, you need to start by building a decent house - most of our Christians' homes are nothing but miserable huts. Or, to build a house suitable for a school, you need five, six hundred francs. We also need to feed the poor, dress the naked, buy books, support the teachers and school teachers. It is not easy to found a stable school in China for a missionary's purse.

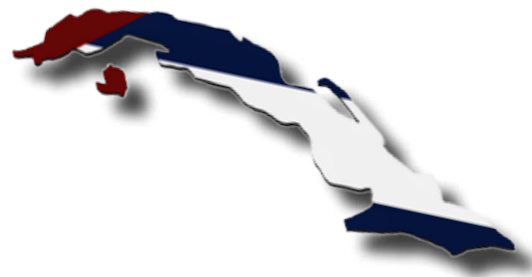
It is with deep sorrow that we learned of the death of Monsignor de Forbin-Janson, bishop of Nancy

and Toul, president of the Society: without a shadow of a doubt the good Lord wanted to reward him promptly for establishing such a beautiful Society, *nemo tam pater*. My missionaries and I thought that the best way to testify our gratitude to him was to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass to the good Lord for the rest of his soul. I had just read, with deep pleasure, the two letters that His Grace wrote me, when I learned the sad news.

Monsignor, the missionaries of the province of Yün-Nân in China, full of esteem and gratitude to the Holy Childhood Society, recommend themselves to his prayers and humbly beg your Grace to want to accept the homage of their deepest veneration.

†JOSEPH, *Bishop of Philomélie, Apost. Vic.*

THE VOICE OF GOD CALLS THROUGH SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT PEOPLE AND MEANS



I thank God for calling me to life and becoming a priest in Cuba. For the last 10 years I have lived my priesthood in a happy way with a flock that while small is a dedicated and generous Church. In it I discover the miracle of the small and lacking every day, the novelty of the Gospel and that every cross makes sense when one hopes only in God. Every day I feel accompanied by the divine providence that never fails and from someone who accompanies me from heaven, my sister Natalys.

My entry in the Church and later my call to the priesthood is closely linked to the life of Natalys Vidal Menéndez. When I was 9 years old, she took me to Church for the first time on December 24, a completely missionary girl who, at just 12 years old, tried to get her brother and friends from school to meet Jesus. After that Christmas I began my catechism and participation in Mass, but very inconstantly and without commitment. At the end of 1993 when her illness was discovered was when we all learned thanks to her witness of embracing the cross, carrying it with joy and offering it. This is the closest example I have had of what Jesus does for us at Easter. In her two years of hospitalization my life as a Christian grew, and it was when I discovered the great treasure of the Faith. It was at that time that she told me one afternoon returning from her Godmother's and our catechist house: how beautiful I nun

and you a priest. Her words were etched in my mind and heart, I remember the day and time, it was the voice of God calling through seemingly insignificant people and means. Her attachment to the Missionary Childhood Association and her desire to take the Gospel to the whole world, especially that the all children in Cuba know Jesus, gave her great strength to live her illness. So much so that she offered her pains so that the Missionary





Childhood who by that time has been started in Camagüey would reach all of Cuba and it was. Her testimony marked the lives of many people even today they remember her with love and as someone very special. The doctor who operated on her and many of the hospital's medical staff, her catechist, her family, her friends, the citizens of my small town, the children of the Missionary Childhood, we are so many people grateful for the gift God gave us in the person of Natalys.

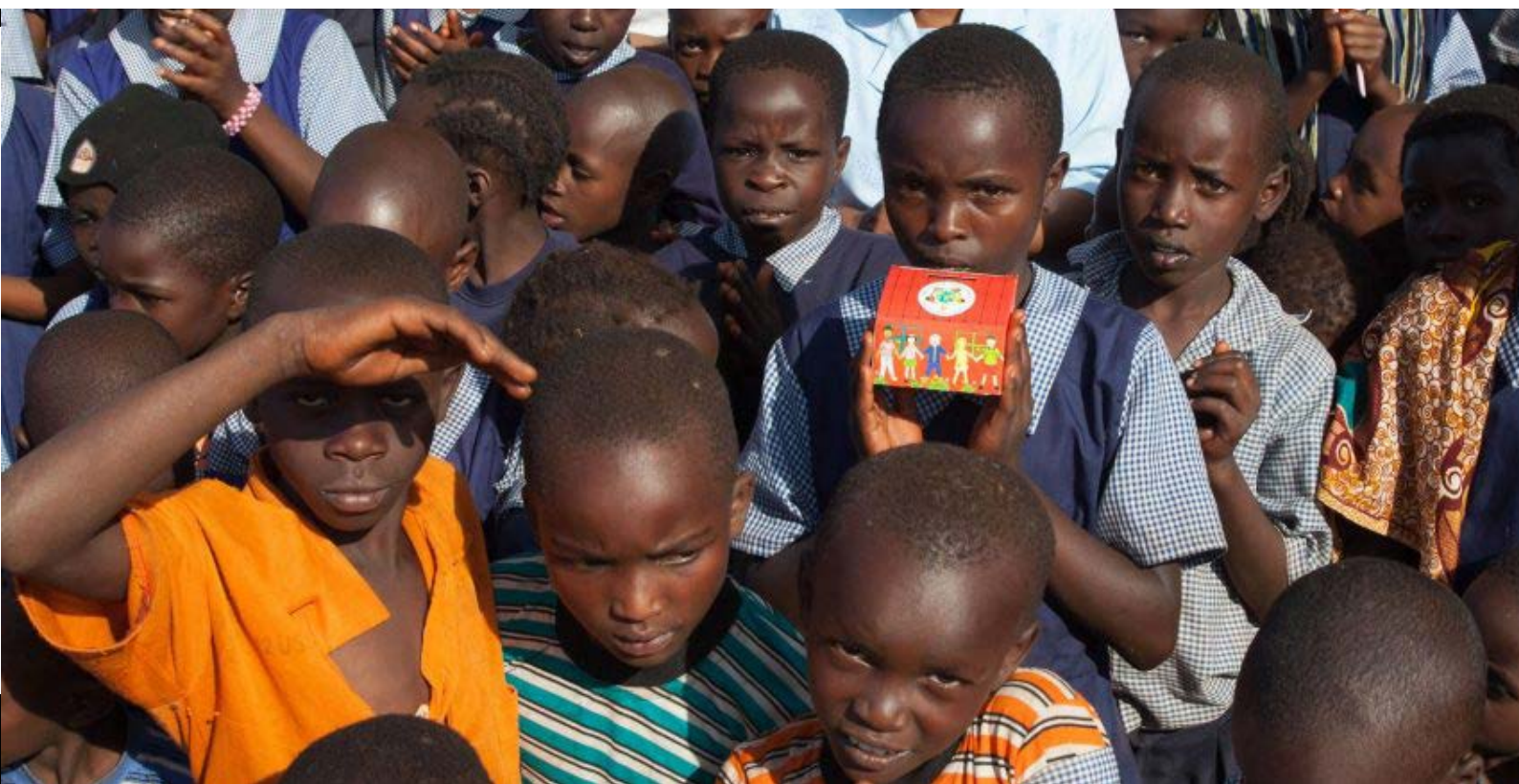
She never lost the joy of faith even in the most difficult moments. She would go into the operating room singing, something that she needed more than 15 times. She spoke to the sick children about God, she told the medical staff that it was a tremendous bliss to have God in one's heart. She told our parents that one day she would go to heaven and that she wanted them to embrace the faith so they could meet her in Eternal Life. I never forget my long conversations with then

Bishop Adolfo Rodríguez, today Servant of God, he commented: "no doubt this girl is a saint."

What happiness and joy to have a sister like Natalys. I pray for her at every Mass and every day when I rise, I tell her to accompany me and guide my steps to the Father's house.

P. Andy Vidal Menéndez





EMMAUS CATHOLIC MISSION

DIOCESE OF GARISSA

POPULATION, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The County population size is more than 200,000 inhabitants. The 60% of the populations falls between 0-19 years. More than half of the population are from the Orma and Wardei tribes, pastoralists and Muslims, and different Protestant denominations, being the Catholics the minority. Almost the 80% of the people live under absolute poverty levels. Education is poorly developed, overcrowded in primary schools in a very poor state. There is a high percentage of illiteracy.

ACTUAL PROBLEM AND NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN

The Pokomo society is established in clans whereby the elders take decisions for the young. They live in communal villages and most of them are Christians which still follow traditional beliefs and practices. They coexist with the Muslims who also are from the Pokomo and Orma tribes. At the same time the young don't have much to do beside going to school and help at home. In this situation of poverty and the exposure to modernity and the new ways of communication and technology through telephones, TV and radio, enhanced by their idleness and poor understanding of the Christian doctrine, the children and the young grow in great danger of loss of values and of God, with no sense of direction.



EMMAUS CATHOLIC MISSION addresses the formation and education of poor children in order to enhance healthy and dignified growth, in an area where the children face a lot of challenges, whereby extreme poverty, traditional beliefs and practices, idleness and poor education that endanger the children in their moral, spiritual and psychological growth. From Emmaus Catholic Mission the children participate in a spiritual formation program that runs the entire week, being involved in learning prayer, praying together, sharing the word of God on different levels according their age, catechetical and Bible studies. Guiding and counselling to the children and the celebration of the Eucharist for children on Fridays. These activities of spiritual formation are done during the evenings after school.

The Catholic children of this area of Emmaus have formed prayer groups according their villages, there are several prayer groups: St. Bernadette, Blessed Imelda, St. Joseph Calasanz, St. Nicholas...

*My name is **Glagys Guyako**. I am 13 yrs old. I am coming from Emmaus Village. I am a member of St. Bernadette children prayer group of about 34 children. I am the secretary of the group. We usually pray Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. We pray from house to house and our procedure of praying is we begin with the song then the recitation of the rosary there after the scripture reading and sharing. After this we have prayers of the faithful then at the end of the rosary, announcements closing prayer then we got back to our houses. Our parents are happy with this programme and they support us, we pray for them.*

We also us children of St. Bernadette participate actively in Liturgical dance in the church on Friday and Sunday.

We are also in children's choir on Friday. We as do charity work as prayer group, visiting the sick and praying for them.

*My name is **Elizabeth Maneno** I am 14 yrs old and I am an alter servant. I am coming from Emmaus Village.*

My friends and I we normal come to Fathers Coumpound (mission) for Christian instructions. Everyday has its own activities on Monday we have prayers with the priest

with the priests and brothers in the Hall at six. On Tuesday we have liturgical preparations for Friday mass and Christian instructions on Wednesday, Thursday in the evening after school.

Saturday we arrange the programs of Sunday where liturgical dances come after servants. We prepare and share the word of God. Sunday we watch Christian movie and also arrange the program of the week organized with the brothers. Every day we usually have some meals.





CHILDREN INVOLVED IN EVANGELIZATION

DIOCESE OF BYUMBA

Small but spiritually strong, the children in the Diocese of Byumba in Rwanda demonstrate the zeal in evangelization in rural places. In the past ten years, the diocese of Byumba in the north of the country has started to train children giving them the opportunity to engage in evangelization. Today, children feel touched by this mission of every baptized person.

SAFARI Dominique, a student at the Busogo Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, is 24 years old. He talks about the role that Missionary Childhood played in his life. "I started the mission in Missionary Childhood in March 2008 when missionary animators came to our parish in Muhura, in Bugarura, with the aim of setting up the Missionary Childhood Society. That day they chose seven children who were to represent the others. I was among these seven.

From that moment on we began to attend different formations on mission, objectives and pedagogy of missionary childhood. We received some documents on the formation and among these there was the story of the founder of Missionary Childhood and the development of the Society in the world". Talking about the organization of their Missionary Childhood group, he says that their activities translated into prayer, kindness, obedience to parents and educators, in acts of



charity, in sharing, in missionary journeys and in the desire for holiness.

In explaining the activities, Dominique says that “in prayer we had the goal of praying for ourselves and for the children in the world, we learned various prayers, in particular the rosary. Many children were motivated to participate in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration and the desire to receive the sacraments. The children’s meetings were always on Sunday after mass.

With regard to education and obedience, the adults who took care of us taught us respect for ourselves and for every person.

The acts of charity and sharing were an important moment for us to exercise our generosity towards vulnerable children and elderly people.

Missionary trips consisted of going to visit

sick children and those who no longer attended mass to try to involve them in prayer.

The desire for holiness was a culmination

of our missionary cooperation. Together we meditated the lives of children who became saints such as St. Dominic Savio, Kizito, St. Agnes, and others.

We were the pioneers of Missionary Childhood in our parish. With a missionary animator we then founded Missionary Childhood groups in all the communities of the parish. In the same year we celebrated the birth of the Lord with various children from our parish”.

In 2010 Dominique became a mission animator. And thanks to the mission of Missionary Childhood, he was also able to develop his intellectual abilities. He claims that “it allowed him to pass State exams and continue all his studies successfully”.

Together with other animators, in 2013, Dominique received the pedagogical documents from the diocesan appointee of Missionary Childhood and states that “these

documents have strengthened their knowledge regarding the missionary animation of children”. Concluding his testimony Dominique says that the celebration of Missionary Childhood Day at a diocesan level, the first time, filled him with joy. “It was a great joy to meet the other children who came from 19 parishes in our diocese”.



GOD USED MANY PERSON TO BRING ME CLOSER TO HIM

ARGENTINA



My name is Elvio Nicolas Costantino, member of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus parish; a very small community in the city of Rio Cuarto, Cordoba in Argentina. I'm 30 years old and 2 years a priest.

I have experienced God's call ever since I was a child. At first, I didn't go to church. My catholic family participated often. They sent me for catechism along with many other children. I liked this because I was very competitive; in my group there was a girl who knew many things, and because I wanted to win, I studied everything diligently to be able to answer before she did. Thus, I came to know many things about the Faith and this pleased me. I also made a friend in my group, a great friend, whom I discovered was from my part of town and we are like brothers to this day.

After completing catechism, this great friend invited me to be part of a group that was called "post-communion". After six months a woman who accompanied us as a coordinator, along with a seminarian that was in the parish, decided to begin start the Holy Missionary Childhood (HMC) in the parish. I didn't know what this was about, but I knew that at the end of the year there would be a camping experience and



this excited me. We were few in number: about 10 children. This is how it all began.

Every year I received a new HMC badge that motivated me more and more to follow Jesus. I can say that came to know Jesus there. I discovered who Jesus was; someone who loved to help, who was always for the benefit of others, who healed and who invited others to do the same. We began to go on mission to various places. Once we came to a little

place in the Sierrre in winter. It was very cold, but our hearts were burning with desire to bring Jesus to others. He was always our model.

As time went on more and more things in the parish began to attract me: I became an altar server and eventually I was involved preparing others for this service; I began to sing in Church and to play the guitar; we formed a group of young missionaries and I was the animator of the youngest members of the HMC. I spent many hours in Church. I began to love the

community. By then we were known to the elder women.

I began my university studies and my friend was in his final year of high school. I continued to be engaged in the pastoral activities of the Church. I



like university, but I felt that God was asking more time of me... or simply was asking more of me! Nevertheless, I continued my work. This continued until my friend invited me to participate in some vocational encounters in the seminary, and I participated. I never would have imagined that this friend Jesus, whom I had known since my childhood in the HMC was using many people to attract me to Him. Jesus became everything for me, notwithstanding the difficulties or the sufferings along the way. He was always with me, just as He was at when the Holy Missionary Childhood and Adolescence began in the parish.

God used many people to bring me closer to Him and from my time as a little missionary now He has made me a priest for ever, to continue to be a friend to Jesus and to bring others into friendship with Him.

First as a child I helped other children; today as a young priest, I am helping young people. I am very happy to have experienced the HMC. I still have the animator's scarf and I am still a councillor for the HMC in my diocese. God has his ways, which

always surpass ours, but He always responds to the deepest desires of our hearts. I hope that one day I can be a missionary far away, beyond the borders; this is something I learned to dream of in the dear and beautiful Society of the Holy Missionary Childhood. Thank you Missionary Childhood and Missionary Adolescence; thank you St. Teresa of Lisieux and St. Francis Xavier!

De los niños y adolescentes del mundo... ¡Siempre Amigos!

P. Nicolás Constantino



PERU

APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF IQUITOS

The head of the PMS in the Vicariate organizes and follows the missionary groups made up of children and young people from different schools and parishes by organizing meetings throughout the year, activities for World Mission Sunday, missionary retreats, evaluation days, missionary "chocolates", Christmas.

JORGE JESÚS ACUÑA COQUINCH, 8 YEARS OLD:

I participate in the meetings of the Missionary Childhood held in the Kanatai House in Iquitos. I really like being a member of Missionary Childhood. We meet every Sunday at 8:30 in the morning, and I like the things we do and the fact that we also participate in the activities organized for World Mission Sunday in the parish of St. Rosa of Lima. I like to listen to everything they teach us, and I also like our greeting, which is: "De los niños del mundo, siempre amigos" (Of the children of the world, always friends). I also participate in the collection; the older children visited the sick in the hospital.

"De los niños del mundo, Siempre amigos"



HOLY CHILDHOOD'S METHODOLOGY, CHARISM AND MISSIONARY SPIRITUALITY FOR A SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



Holy Childhood Society reaches the hearts of many children and teenagers around the world. And as we immerse ourselves in the charism of HMC, there is a reawakening of dreams and hopes of ensuring that Missionary Childhood reaches the hearts of children and adolescents who live another culture, in this case, the deaf.

In a missionary heart, the ardor and anxiety of crossing borders to serve better is a daily reality. This is why the creation of an HMC group was proposed at the special school for the deaf Frei Pacífico, in Porto Alegre/RS (Brazil), so that they can experience the charisma and commitment to reach the heart of other deaf children and adolescents.

Therefore, a period of study and preparation of the animators has begun to take on this noble mission, since it is necessary to adapt the material and communication to the sign language, manual and written, and make it possible to understand everything that involves the Society. Children and teenagers were invited, they accepted the invitation and started the group. At each meeting, the discoveries, creativity, deepening and understanding of the methodology were

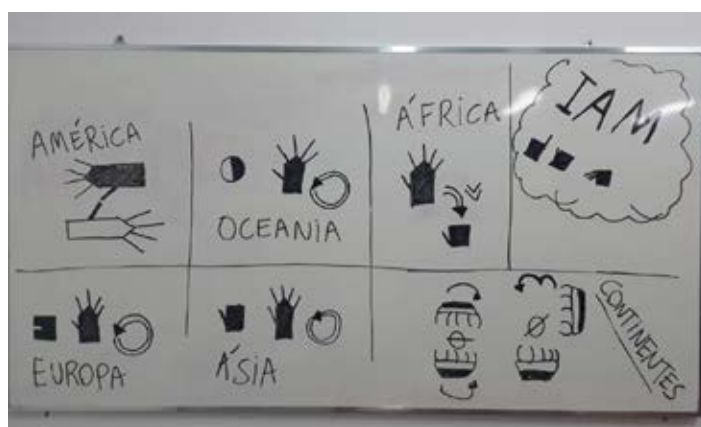
illuminating and inspiring new steps.

In LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language) communication, everything passes by being identified by signs. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the meaning of each person, content, character, symbol and translate it into signs.

Thus, the Patron Saints, Mascots and everything that represents the HMC receives a specific sign; as well as the written sign language visualization. There is still a lot to be done, but the path is open. Children and adolescents are very happy to be part of the Society.

The Frei Pacífico School belongs to the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Nossa Senhora Aparecida.

The group was born with the motivation to be a





missionary childhood pioneer for the deaf, showing that deaf children can also be missionaries, starting from eight primary school children.

The animator of the group, Ruan Mateus de Carvalho, underlines that the initiative is unprecedented and is concerned with helping children understand the reality of those who need it most: *“First of all, it consists of a totally new job: bringing the HMC’s methodology, charism and missionary spirituality for a school for the deaf. This novelty gradually leads children to creating a spirit more open to the needs of others”.*

He also stressed that the group is not only to the benefit of children, but also the school and the community: *“this group also contributes to*

the school community; in order for students to have an open vision for mission, the whole environment changes. In the same way the whole community (religious or otherwise) is influenced by this work - deaf children who dedicate themselves to knowing what is happening in the missionary reality and give their contribution”, concludes the animator.

Making Jesus Christ known and loved through sign language is an inexplicable joy and a conquest well-liked by God. May He guide every teenager towards being ALWAYS FRIENDS, of all children and adolescents in the world.

*Sr. Celia da Costa Santos, cifa
State Coordinator of HMC in RS*



MALI



P. HERVÉ TIENOU

National Director of PMS Mali

The body of reference for Holy Childhood in Mali was born around 1955. It is the movement of the Catholic action of children called “Friends of Kizito” which is part of the International Movement of the Apostolate of Children (MIDADE). Children are organized to defend their rights and participate in building a world of justice and peace. The animation of the Holy Childhood takes place starting from this movement and from other movements involving children but with a great openness to all children in the basic communities.

The animation is done by the diocesan directions of the PMS who rely on the parochial committees of the PMS. To reinforce this animation at a national level, a new experience of empowerment of one of the diocesan directors was started to help the national director to improve the animation of the Holy Childhood and to coordinate the activities at a national level.

Diocesan directors have collaborators at a parish level, where they meet in parish committees for planning,

training, information, awareness and evaluation meetings. All this allows to know the situation of the PMS animations in the parishes from which the diocesan reports are then made, presented to the national council and made available to the national direction. The reports highlight different and varied activities that testify to an increasingly important commitment in the animation of Holy Childhood. Among these we highlight:

- Catholic broadcasts on national television and



radio programmed in the context of the animation of the Holy Childhood.

- Formation of diocesan animators of children on animation techniques and above all to help children live the theme of the year better.
- Information, awareness and animation programs organized by some local radio stations.
- The production and distribution of documents, messages for the animation of childhood day and the week preceding that day, according to the initiatives of each diocese and seminary. Some dioceses continue their efforts to consolidate animation for children by organizing a second week following the day of Holy Childhood.
- Preparation and organization of prayers and collections on the occasion of the week preceding the Epiphany and especially on the day of the Epiphany: day of the celebration of missionary childhood. The children, as usual in most communities, animate masses and present the theme to the parents.
- Sending of pastoral agents (catechists, priests, men and women religious) to the communities for the celebration of Missionary Childhood Day.

Of particular importance is the increasing commitment of the Major seminary of Saint Augustine in the animation of their pastoral and missionary area, thus preparing future priests for the spirit of animation of missionary Childhood.

Through the various activities, the National Direction and the diocesan directions of the PMS in Mali strive to produce improvement, progress. In fact, from a general point of view, the effort to progress in small steps takes the form of prayer, in the material and financial participation for missionary solidarity, at a basic Christian community level, despite the fact that the life situation is delicate and difficult in these past few years. There is a desire to continue in this direction, counting on the precious collaboration of the animators of the PMS, pastoral agents and all the faithful for the success of the activities.

The experience of the chain of friends of the PMS, friends of the mission, which allowed to improve animation in favor of Holy Childhood, continues in the diocese of San. Many children have joined the chain and continue with the commitment to find even more friends to make missionary childhood better known in order to lead them to engage, with the concern of maximizing the length of the chain.

The missionary children animated by the Major Seminary of St. Augustine had a wonderful experience of collections for Holy Childhood using envelopes to be distributed to the faithful and through a strong awareness for the contribution of all to the collection on the occasion of Missionary Childhood Day.

In Mali, in general, the preparation of animation for the celebration of Missionary Childhood Day, made by the children themselves, is very rich in initiatives at least in the week preceding the "G" day. Some organize the rosary prayer above all for peace in the country and in the world. During this time of preparation for the Day, they organize various collections which are added to that of Sunday, in order to improve the contribution to the Universal Solidarity Fund of Holy Childhood.





MUTUAL HELP AND MISSIONARY SOLIDARITY

Kathleen Mazio

The children of Gikongoro, Rwanda are generous souls but they have no means to prove it. They come from very poor families and they can't save money for offers. However, thanks to the project submitted this year, they will also soon be able to support financially the children of the world, like their peers.

The project concerned consists in creating groups of 30-40 children called "tontines", guided by an

adult who may form and guide them. The first five children will receive some chickens or rabbits to breed. As soon as these will get babies, they will be distributed to the next children of the group and so on, until each child will have his animal. Later, the children will sell the product of their small breeding.

Thus, the children will learn about the sense of responsibility and sharing with other children, near and far. First, with their groupmates, that await their turn to get the animals that they have bred. Afterwards, on a larger scale, with the children of the world, when, thanks to the proceeds from the sale, they will participate in the collection for Missionary Childhood's Universal Solidarity Funds.



ST. CHARLES HEALTH CENTRE

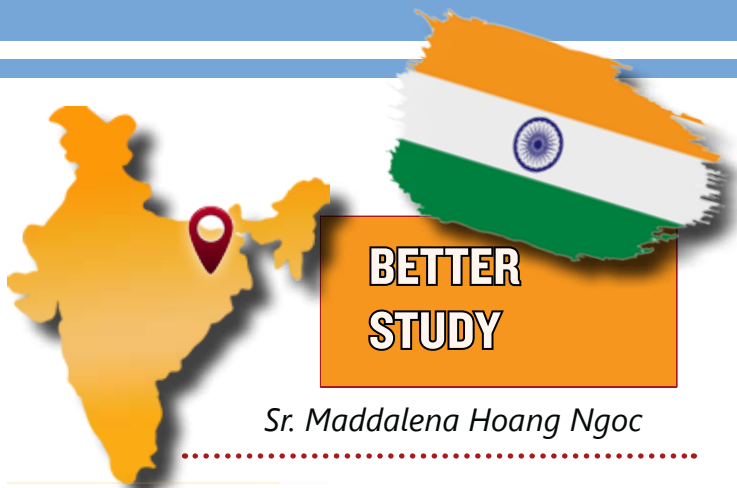
Matteo Maria Piacentini

Children in the Diocese of Iringa, in Tanzania, are facing a number of problems such as poverty, hunger, HIV/Aids infection, kwashiorkor, marasmas and low weight for age. The situation of children is critical, particularly in the remote and hard to reach areas. The Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo are running the St. Charles Health Centre, in order to help the most needy

children of different age group. They provide medical and nutritional care to the children, along with health education to the young mothers who need to take care of the babies. Many children are also orphans and receive basic needs help: school uniforms and materials, hygienic materials, food, clothing, along with care, love and moral and school support. The children stay at the Center about two weeks. After their staying at the Centre, the Sisters notice an improvement in their school performance and improvement in their studies and also better health conditions.

The sisters participate in small Christian community. They visit the houses of orphan children and with the help of clergy they organize regular Eucharistic celebrations, prayer services, confession and sacraments for the sick and the dying.





BETTER STUDY

Sr. Maddalena Hoang Ngoc

R.C. Primary School Mamarla comes under Catholic Church in Gumla Diocese. The School was built in 1946. It was renovated in 1996 and 2017, adding more rooms. There are 412 boys studying in this school. 92% of the children are tribals belonging to oraon, kharia, munda, chiek-braik and lohar.

Thanks to POSI and the benefactors for the valuable support to renovated the school building. At present the children are very happy to get a renovated classrooms. They have become much serious regarding their studies. They regularly come to school. One of the children in this school expressed his experience of school as follows:

"My name is Aman Kerketta. At present I am in class V. I am studying in this school since 5 years. I remember well that when I was in class III our school building was renovated. Before the renovation the condition of the school was very bad. It was not safe for us. Today we all are very happy that we have a removed school building. it is almost like a new building. We all the children of this school thank and extend our deepest gratitude to all the children who have made sacrifice to help us. I would like to inform that our school has an active Holy Childhood Association. All the Catholic Children are the part of this Association. We have weekly meeting and Mass on every Saturday. In our meeting we often encourage each other for praying for the mission and also making sacrifice so that we also could make contribution to the Missionary childhood. We are now take very active part in parish activities namely we try our best to attend Mass on Sundays and serve the altar in turns. We also join the choir group and help singing. We also give our helping hands in cleaning the Parish Church when needed. We have regular Catechism class in our school. We give a good example to non-Christian children of our school. I also tell them the story of Jesus. Finally, I would like to say that this school is making us a very good Christian, a very good citizen of the country. We once again commit ourselves that as we have been helped other children of the world through the POSI, we too would help the needy children by our prayer and sacrifice."



DUC IN ALTUM

Augustine George Palayil

I am happy to share with you the content of a project proposal we received from the diocese of Myitkyina in Myanmar. The responsible for the project is Fr. Peter Zang Yaw Hpung, the administrator of the quasi-parish of Zang Yaw Region and the catechists.

"The Zang Yaw Region is an isolated place and very remote area at the North-Eastern most part of Myanmar. The parish priest can be able to reach here once or twice a year and it takes at least 6 days: one day by motorbike and 5 days on foot. Between the parish centre of Putao, the mother parish, and Zang Yaw Region there are two high mountains, about 8000ft above the sea level. It is very close to China. The problem is that the religious articles are not allowed to carry in China. I have been the administrator from the last year. Last year, when we had implemented a seminar for Missionary Childhood, not only the Catholic children but also Protestants participated. It made them become very closed each other. It became like fellowship and it was a kind of witness. That is why I want to have a seminar as a fellowship program. It is some way to build peace and reconciliation, especially for the future. In this seminar I hope we can give faith formation and missionary education to the children. We are going to share the mission of creation (environment) how much important for us..."

Wishing you all a Happy New Year for a renewed enthusiasm in all your endeavours, especially those dedicated to children!



Augustine George Palayil

PRAYER FOR MISSIONARY VOCATION

Father of mercy, who gave your Son for our salvation and who strengthens us always with the gifts of your Spirit, grant us Christian communities which are alive, fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life, and which nurture in the young the desire to consecrate themselves to you and to the work of evangelisation. Sustain these communities in their commitment to offer appropriate vocational catechesis and ways of proceeding towards each one's particular consecration. Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment, so that in all things the greatness of your merciful love may shine forth. May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus, intercede for each Christian community, so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, it may be a source of true vocations for the service of the holy People of God.

Franciscus



**PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS**