



PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS



OCTOBER 2020 - N. 6

BULLE IN



FOCUS

FAITH FORMATION OF
CHILDREN IN CATHOLIC
FAMILIES

THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN
COVID-19 SPECIAL

LITTLE
MISSIONARIES IN...
GUATEMALA



**MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER
N.6 - OCTOBER 2020**

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ARGENTINA - Siempre amigos hasta el cielo!



“The Christian family evangelizes with its very existence; it is a living gospel; good news that brings hope! Parents transmit the faith to their children simply and concretely in everyday life and the children edify their parents. Together, all of the family members bear witness to salvation in Christ in their relations with others, beginning with their relatives and neighbors” (Italian Episcopal Conference, Catechism of Adults n.1072)

The new publication of the Bulletin in March 2019 introduced us to a path of sharing not only the reality of the Society of the Holy Childhood in its various contexts, but also themes that we consider important in the faith journey of every baptized person, with particular reference to the little ones, considering the missionary nature of the Church. We began with the spirituality of children and continued with motherhood and spiritual fatherhood. In this issue, we wish to focus our attention on the Christian family in the world today.

All adults, regardless of their condition or location, have some educational responsibility towards their children and, among adults who have a special and irreplaceable role, parents are the first to have the duty and the right to educate their children in an integral and in their own way from person to person (cf. *Amoris laetitia* n.16).

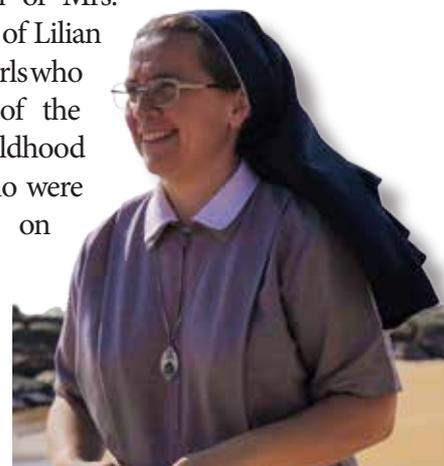
"The feeling of being orphans that many children and young people experience today is deeper than we think". (AL n.173). In responding to this feeling of being abandoned, the civil and ecclesial community plays an important role, but can never replace the role of parents.

"In today's world, often at odds with, and even hostile to the faith, believing families are of fundamental importance, as hearths of living and radiant faith". (CCC n.1656) In fact, the reception and remaining in the faith depends mainly on the person's experience in the family from an early age. Pope Francis affirms, "the habits acquired as children have a positive function allowing the great internalized values to be translated into healthy and stable external behavior. (AL n.266). For this reason, parents together with their children can become subjects of evangelization, formation, and missionary activity.

In this regard, the new Directory for Catechesis presents a truly beautiful, ecclesial and fully missionary definition of the family. It speaks of the family as "a proclamation of faith, the natural place where faith can be lived in a simple and spontaneous way" (DC n.227). At the same time, it affirms that the Christian family proclaims the Gospel and participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church. Therefore, in its educational service to children, the family contributes to the building up of the Christian community and to the Gospel in society. (DC cf. n.231)

Amoris Laetitia in n.289 has already stated that "children who grow up in missionary families often become missionaries" and if parents know how to live in relation with the world, the children will grow up in the same style. Even today, many families live in love and faith and realize their vocation as a domestic and missionary church. We thank God the Holy Spirit, for helping and supporting families in "finding new resources and inventing new methods".

As an extended spiritual family, we unite in prayer and sharing the pain of Mrs. Carmen, mother of Lilian and Blanca, two girls who were members of the Missionary Childhood in Nicaragua, who were violently killed on September 14th.



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI
Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood



**Obras Misionales Pontificias de Nicaragua
(OMP- N)
Secretariado nacional de Infancia y
Adolescencia Misionera (IAM)**

COMUNICADO

“Jesús les dijo: Dejen que los niños vengan a mí y no se lo impidan, pues de los que son como ellos es el Reino de los cielos” Mt 19, 14.

La comunidad de Infancia y Adolescencia de Nicaragua (IAM) está de luto ante el atroz crimen perpetrado en contra de las hermanitas: **Lilium Yunielka (12 años)** y **Blanca Marlene Gonzáles Rodríguez (10 Años)**, de IAM, en comunidad de **Lisawé**, de la parroquia Espíritu Santo (**Mulukuku**), en la Diócesis de Siuna.

Solicitamos justicia ante la maldad de privar la vida de estas niñas de forma tan violenta en su tierna edad.

Compartimos el dolor y manifestamos nuestra oración desde todos los secretariados de América Latina, por doña Carmen del Rosario Rodríguez, madre de nuestras misioneritas, con la comunidad de **Lisawé**, y el Padre William Mora.

Instamos a todos los grupos de IAM de Nicaragua, a hacer jornada de oración (hora santa, rosario misionero) por la erradicación de la violencia en contra de los niños.

Que nuestra madre, la Santísima Virgen María cubra con su manto a todos los niños de todo el mundo, principalmente a los que sufren.

En Managua, Nicaragua. 16 septiembre del 2020.

**Pbro. Henry Silva Espino.
Secretario Nacional IAM – Nicaragua**

“De los niños y adolescentes del mundo, siempre amigos”



PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS



Rome, 21st September 2020

Reverend Fr. Enrico Silva Espino,

With sorrow, I received the sad news of the violent death of the little sisters Lilian and Blanca, from the Holy Spirit Parish in Mulukuku.

I would like to express my condolences to their mother, Mrs. Carmen del Rosario Rodriguez. We accompany her in this moment of grief, and we pray that this crime may not remain without justice and that violence against children in Nicaragua and throughout the world may cease.

At the same time, we thank the Lord for the witness that these sisters gave in the group of Missionary Childhood in the community of Lisawé. I am sure that their death will bear fruit for the Church, the mission, and the country of Nicaragua.

Dear Father, thank you and the entire PMS team and animators of Missionary Childhood who courageously persevere in the proclamation of the Gospel, for your sacrifice and the efforts made in this time of toil and suffering.

May God continue to bless your precious work in the service of the missionary Church and of children and adolescents.

"De los niños y adolescentes del mundo, siempre amigos"

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Sr. Roberta Tremarelli
Secretary General
Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood

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JESUS AND THE PILGRIMAGE IN HIS HUMAN FAMILY



The Gospel account narrated in Lk 2:41-42, 51-52, proposed for consideration in this article, is set in a very specific context of the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. A pilgrimage is about going on a journey to a sacred place and, at the same time, a movement from Nazareth to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem back to Nazareth, from the family house to the Temple (house of God) and from the Temple back to the family house in Nazareth.

The house, which constitutes a consistent symbol for Luke, both in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles, reveals a truth of faith for all times: every home in which the Child Jesus is welcomed becomes the place of the presence of God at the centre of human life and seed (source) of sanctification and salvation.

The child Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, needed a favourable milieu in which to develop fully his mission on earth. Like any other child, whose growth requires familiar surroundings (for some it may be the natural family, for others a school or college, an orphanage or another family structure). In his family house in Nazareth, Jesus found a perfect home for his full development.



FR. DIEU BÉNI NICAISE YASSIGAO

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FROM THE HOUSE IN NAZARETH TO THE HOUSE OF GOD IN JERUSALEM

Like his parents, the child Jesus was part of the religious and cultural tradition of his people (Ex 12: 24-27; Dt 16:1-8.16). From his early childhood, the Lord Jesus experienced pilgrimage in his human family. In this, he is



like any other person that is born in a specific socio-cultural context, in which he grows to maturity and dies. In this regard, St. Paul does not hesitate to say that Jesus was subject to the Law, with the exception that he did not sin, “*in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children*” (Gal 4:5).

The child Jesus, before he was found by his parents, had found in the house of God an ideal space where the human person would discover true beauty, like a tree planted near a stream (cf. Ps. 1:3). *When he was twelve years old* he remained in Jerusalem unknown to his parents. Like the Psalmist chants, *zeal for your house devours me*. The child Jesus had a passion for the house and the Word of God. Full of wisdom, he was deeply within a debate with the learned of the Temple. Thus, his parents began the trek back to Nazareth without him (Lk 2:44-45).

Like all parents that are concerned about the life and protection of their children, Mary and Joseph experienced great concern in their tireless search among their relatives and friends until they finally went back up to the Temple.

The family circle was large and went far beyond the parents. The child Jesus lived among many other children of his day, in modesty and respect for the family and religious values of his people. He experienced and shared many wonderful experiences with his circle of friends and relatives.



“**Son, why have you done this to us?**” (Lk 2:48): This is the restless heart of God, as well as of every parent, especially when their child appears to be in danger. God is first, because as the psalmist says, “**if my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will care for me**” (Ps. 27:10). Thus, an important aspect of childhood and of growing up is living in the house of the Lord with God and being nourished by His Word.

FROM THE HOUSE OF GOD TO THE HOUSE OF NAZARETH

After a long stay in the Temple, Jesus agrees to be led by his parents and is obedient to them: *Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them* (Lk 2:51).

Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary¹ (Mk 6:2-4). This was the wonder of Jesus’ compatriots when they hear his teachings and see his miracles.

The term “Nazarene” which will be linked to Jesus’ name comes from his childhood lived in the very modest village of Nazareth (Jn 1:46). There was the house of Mary and Joseph (Lk 2:51; 4:16; Mk 1:9), there he preached the Gospel without great success (Mk 6:1-6). Furthermore, the People of the Covenant didn’t expect long and much from Nazareth. Now Luke makes an inclusion: *Nazareth Jerusalem Nazareth*.

Returning to Nazareth, the child Jesus “was obedient to them” (Lk 2:51). This saying “*was subject to them*” or “*was submissive to them*” is specific to the language of the New Testament. In fact, submission is an important virtue of Christian pastoral care.² Since God subjected everything to Christ (Heb. 2:5; 1 Pt 3:22), Christians should be subject/submissive to God (to His law and to His formation) and

to others for good harmony and cooperation (1Cor 16:16) with a sense of fear of the Lord. Paul's domestic code goes further by detailing how the woman must submit (obey) to the man, the wife to her husband and the husband must love his wife as Christ loves the Church (Eph 5:22-24); the young to the elderly, the slaves and servants to their master. (Eph 6:5; Tt 2: 9; 1 Pt 2:18).³

In the context of family life, this means that submission of love (agape), of oblation must preside over all human relations. The place and condition that God has established for us allow us to realize our full potential in the mist of and with others.

The letter to the Hebrews, emphasizes the paternal pedagogy (Heb 12.9) and underlines the dimension of docility of spirit, humility of the heart, the respect that implies a renunciation of oneself. In the same way the child Jesus, who accepted to be subject to his parents and to the traditions of his people, becomes a model of obedience to God his Father and to his plan of salvation for all humanity. This is the paradigm of every childhood lived under the protection and benediction of God and of people. Jesus certainly worked with his own hands, He was known as the "carpenter from Nazareth".

"Before God and before people", God can only divinize that which people humanize.⁴ These are the two sides of the coin, which constitute the human and spiritual formation of a child and of an adult.

THE HOUSE AS A PLACE OF TESTIMONY

The symbolism of the house "*oikia, oikos*" (Greek for house), in the Gospels refers to the residence of a third as in the episode of the house of Simon and Andrew (Mk 2:1; 3:20; 9:33). Often it was in a house that the crowd would gather to listen to Jesus.



The *domus ecclesiae* or the *domestic church* was characteristic of the community of the primitive Church (Acts. 2:46; 20:7-12; 1Cor 6:19; Rm 16:5) where one would listen attentively to the teachings of the Apostles, share in the prayer and the breaking of the bread in all simplicity.

In Luke's works, there is like a delocalization of the Temple, a place of ethnic and moral separation to focus on the home, a place of integration of all, children and adults where everyone has a name. It is loved, supported, welcomed and also contributes in a certain way to the development of all. As Daniel Marguerat expresses it well commenting on the Gospel of Luke and the Acts, "The presence of the divine is no longer found in the Temple, but in every house where Jesus is welcomed (see Lk 1:5-22.26-38; 9:1-6; 10:1-16; Acts 16:15.40).

THE FAMILY AUTHORITY THAT GROWS IS ONE BASED ON THE FEAR OF GOD

"Wisdom begins with the fear of God," the Holy Scriptures tell us. The fear mentioned here is not at all the anguish of an evil father or a ruthless mother. Jesus teaches us to call God "Our Father" in filial trust.

The real authority is the one that makes you grow. Like little Samuel (1 Sam 2:26), "Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and before men. (Lk 2:52)

In Lk 2:40 and Lk 2:52, there is a great semantic affinity: "The child grew and strengthened, full



of wisdom, and the grace (the favor) of God was upon him. (Lk 2:42). Word for word, these two verses framing the recovery of Jesus in the Temple where he was discussing with the Doctors of the Law, form an inclusion that emphasizes the wisdom and unusual intelligence of this Child God, but above all that the blessing-favor of God his Father was upon him. God is the source of all intelligence and wisdom and abundantly fills those who have his favor with his gifts. This account echoes in a certain way or preamble to that of the life and ministry of God's chosen one, Jesus. As well as some biblical characters like Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, little Moses saved from the waters of the Nile, David, little Samuel and so on. Beauty, both physical and moral, strength and intelligence always characterize those who are chosen to be God's "place" among His people. And Jesus-child is no stranger to this law. To say that the Lord God fills from an early age those whom he calls to his service with all the qualities and faculties to be worthy of the mission entrusted to them.

Finally, a symbol of family solidarity is the one often represented as a hearth made of three stones to make fire for cooking or to warm up when you are cold. We know how the warmth of family life during dinner in the evening is often one of the unforgettable moments in life. Likewise, the meaning and importance of the family as a domestic church is more important than ever in our cold world where



the anonymity of big cities is the watchword.

Under other skies, the warmth of the family, especially around the fire when listening to legendary tales and songs, allows to strengthen family and social ties and also to socialize to higher values such as love, solidarity, reconciliation, peace, hospitality, etc..

The life of the family, the fundamental cell of society in which everyone really occupies their place, is the beginning of a successful future life. All children and young people become, through their commitments, the actors of today, co-pioneers of their current life and the decision makers of tomorrow for a world of justice and peace. The house of Nazareth will forever remain "the prototype and example of all Christian families."⁵

FOOTNOTES

1. Cf. Lafon M., with Charles de Foucauld, *Coll. Prier 15 jours, Nouvelle Cité*, 1998. p.60.
2. Celas Spicq, *Lexique Théologique du Nouveau Testament, Paris, Cerf, Ed. Universitaires de Fribourg*, 1991. Word "upotasso".
3. *Ibidem*
4. François Varillon
5. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio n°86 §8*.

FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN IN CATHOLIC FAMILIES



P. LINSON K. ARADAN
*Diocese of Quilon
India*

In Asia, family occupies a central place in the network of relationships, and children in their early childhood learn the value of family and family structures. The needs of the children are met in the family which provides them security and sense of belongingness. They learn in the family the values of unity, brotherhood or sisterhood, cooperation, collaboration, and sympathy.¹ In family, even though the members are closely attached to each other by blood relationship, they are more profoundly related to each other with the love and concern for one another.²

Asia has a deep sense of the sacredness of marriage and of family life, a deep sense that is culturally passed on from generation to generation. They value and protect life from conception to natural death; and preserve stability in marriages.³ Even though Catholic families in Asia remain in the midst of rich variety of cultures, ethnicities, and religions, they share their Christian values and characteristics to all.⁴ That all our institutions from Diocesan to Parochial, particularly educational institutions make special effort for the faith formation and value education of all people especially the young so that they will be able to respond with Christian maturity to the process of secularization.⁵

Those in family ministry see themselves as defenders of life and advocates for life from

conception to death. Family ministries take special care for the poor and marginalised families struggling with daily needs.⁶ A family is called to serve the needs of its own members, members of other families and the large community, the local church and the Universal Church. As a result, family catechesis must aim at uniting families, empowering them and learning from them, help them to celebrate different aspects of Christian life, and to carry out their responsibilities effectively in the Church and in the world.

WHEN AND WHAT TO TRAIN CHILDREN?

Children should be trained from the beginning of childhood to strive for the



Kingdom of God and to sacrifice for the cause of Christ. Jesus says: “But strive first for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6:33). According to the Second Vatican Council, “Children should be taught to know and worship God and to love their neighbour, in accordance with the faith which they have received in earliest infancy in the Sacrament of Baptism.”⁷

The very first things that the children learn must be about God and His will. From the time they learn to talk, they should be growing up talking about God.⁸ It is a simple fact that proper training in childhood will definitely help a child to avoid most of the serious spiritual problems in the future. The root cause for most of the evils found among adolescents traces back to their childhood days. The problem grows as the child grows. It would be really hard to correct a problematic teenager.⁹ Therefore, the best way to avoid serious problems among the teenagers is to instruct them properly long before they become teens.

Childhood is the time to begin a Catechesis

aimed at deepening the personal relationship of the child with the three Divine Persons of the Trinity. This is the formation in a life of personal prayer. It is the time to awaken an authentic Christian moral sense, one that develops within a personal relationship with God and with others. Childhood is the best time to let the children know that God has a dream for them and they need to get to know what He wants them to be in life.¹⁰ Therefore, the Church is insisting that the faith formation of the children should begin in the early stages of the life of a child.

A FORMATION TO ATTAIN FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

Lumen Gentium speaks of the duty of parents to be “the first preachers of the faith to their children.”¹¹ It says that in a truly Christian family, husband and wife find their proper vocation in being witnesses to one another and to their children through faith in Christ and love for Him. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come.”¹² Imitating the Church as a community of faith, hope and charity, the family members live their faith in God. They trust each other, and by sharing and eating together they maintain a mutual communion among them and they accept the structures of family for the sake of love, protection and wellbeing of the family members.¹³



A family must spare some of its resources to offer food for the hungry, clothes for the needy, and shelter for the homeless. There must have time to visit a widowed neighbour, prepare a meal for a sick friend, or baby-sit for an overstressed single parent, believing that what is done for the needy is done for Christ (Cf. Mt. 25:40). Families should find out opportunities to discuss serious social issues and thus help each other come to more Christian attitudes toward the rejected, including the im-prisoned, the mentally disabled and those suffering with HIV.¹⁴ Hence, the Domestic Church becomes a community of faith, hope, and charity.¹⁵

A FORMATION TO RESPECT LIFE

Life is a gift of God. Today there exists a great multitude of weak and defenceless human beings, unborn children in particular, whose fundamental right to life is being threatened. Life comes from God; it is His gift, His image and imprint, a sharing in His breath of life. God therefore is the sole Lord of this life; and human beings are not supposed to do with it according to his or her will.¹⁶ Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* says that the social role of the family for the common good is the gift of life and education of citizen.¹⁷ The Psalmist states:

Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them. He shall



not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate (Ps. 127:3-5).

The fundamental task of the family is to serve life. The Scripture says that the blessing of the Creator is shared through procreation and the divine image is transmitted from person to person (Cf. Gen 5:1-3). The life of human being is the greatest social good that all must protect. Thus the fruit of human generation, from the first moment of its existence, demands absolute respect. An unborn child must be respected and treated as a person with the recognized rights. Therefore, the right to life can be considered as the foundation of all other human rights.

In the Catholic families, the parents must be aware of this fundamental human right.¹⁸ Valuing the dignity of every person in the family is basic to the relationship within the family. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly states that in a family the “members are persons equal in dignity.”¹⁹ This “respecting and promoting each one of its members in his or her lofty dignity as a person, that is, as a living image of God”²⁰ offers a sense of equality to all the members of the family. In the Catholic families, there must have appropriate catechesis to uphold the value and dignity of human life. A proper Catechesis on the issues related to the ‘culture of death’ must be given today in order to convey this message of life.²¹

A FORMATION TO STAND FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND PEACE

Firstly, a family should serve the cause of truth. Family intimacy is formed in terms of individuals getting in touch with the truth within themselves and in sharing the truth with each other: the truth about oneself, the truth of what it means to be human, and the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the family must serve the cause of justice. Its members should cultivate the attitude of



religions. In other words, its growth must be inculturated. We should make adaptations while not changing the basic essentials.²⁵ Pope John Paul II was in favour of the necessity to contextualise, to enter into dialogue, and to keep the faith pure.²⁶

Love towards all religions and hatred to none must be the key word. Every good found in any religion belongs to God and is to be gratefully accepted. Offence against any religion is offence against charity; and lack of charity diverts God. Therefore, each family must be an Ashram, a spiritual centre to the surrounding families.²⁷

respecting one another's rights within the domicile and must learn how to share among themselves in an equitable way. It would definitely help a family to have awareness about the countless injustices that take place outside its walls and the inequities that harm and destroy the lives of millions of fellow human beings. Thirdly, as a servant people, the Christian family is supposed to serve the cause of peace. Peace can only be actualised by confronting injustice.²² The peace that Christ offers (Cf. Jn. 14:27) would definitely be attained through honest discourse, mutual respect and sensitivity, and above all, through charity. It would also contribute to the building of peace in the global village.²³ Hence, family can be considered as the "school of deeper humanity."²⁴

A FORMATION TO RESPECT OTHER RELIGIONS

Teach the children to respect every religion since each religion stands for justice and peace. India is a deeply religious country which has received from the Almighty an uncommon gift. It has a great thirst for whatever is spiritual. We have inherited the Christian faith through the missionaries. It has to be harmonised with other Indian

A FORMATION TO RESPECT NATURE

A transformation from "ego" to "eco" is the need of the time. Teach the children to treat the nature with the same reverence we would extend to our own being.²⁸ Pope Benedict XVI says that "the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human coexistence"²⁹ and in this way he urges us to come to the realisation that the natural environment has been seriously damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. Therefore Pope John Paul II invites Christians to realise an essential part of their faith, ie., their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator.³⁰ The Hindu phrase *vasudaiva kudumbakam* is applicable



to all of us.³¹ It is a Sanskrit usage which means the whole world is a single family. The world is like a small, tightly knit, nuclear family.³² Pope Francis suggests the example of St. Francis of Assisi, telling that this great saint “shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.”³³

A FORMATION TO DISCERN THE VOCATION

Helping the children to discern their vocation and preparing them to accept the state of life fitting for each one are an important part of education.³⁴

According to the *National Catechetical Directory*, “A truly Christian family is the best soil for nurturing priestly, religious and missionary vocations and more generally, for forming children from childhood to recognize God’s love for all people.”³⁵ The vocation to the priestly and religious life is sown and nurtured by the Lord usually in a family environment of religious faith.³⁶

Preparing for marriage, and to generate their own families are basically the task of the family. As family is the community of initial and basic formation, it is from there a child acquires the first knowledge of the faith, the spirit of dedication and service. The seeds of vocation are planted in the hearts and minds

of children already in their early childhood. Consequently parents have the responsibility to prepare the ground to receive God’s call. The *Magisterium* of the Catholic Church considers family as the privileged place, the cradle, the natural garden, the ideal atmosphere and above all the first seminary where vocations are sown in abundance by God. It is there, in the family that they bloom, grow and reach maturation for the good of the Church and society at large.³⁷



HOW TO INSTRUCT CHILDREN?

A fascinating way of introducing children to the Word of God can be seen in the Jewish tradition. When parents find the right time to present God’s Word to their children, they begin by applying some honey on their lips. The Jewish parents might have been inspired by the words found in Ezekiel: “He said to me, Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it. Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey” (Ezek. 3:3). God, in this narration,

orders Ezekiel to eat the scroll of God’s Word. Ezekiel follows the command of the Lord and discovers that God’s Word is sweet as honey. Eating the scroll is a symbolic way of saying that Ezekiel embraced the Word of God. It became part of him and nurtured him in a spiritual way. Only after this nourishment, he could successfully remain in a position to go out and proclaim and share it with



others. Accordingly, the Christian parents are the prime and irreplaceable proclaimers of the good news to their children. It is the mission given to them by the Lord through the Sacrament of Matrimony.³⁸

There are two important methods to instill God's Word in our children. They are:

WORD OF MOUTH

It means to proclaim the Word of God to children by the way of talking.

Psalm 78:4-8 says like this:

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Parents should tell God's law to their children so that they know, feel and assimilate it and eventually tell it to the next generation. What is important is sparing time with children to talk about God's Word. Explain the teachings, discuss with them, ask them questions, and clarify their doubts.

LIFE - WITNESSING OF PARENTS

It is crucial that Christian attitudes and habits are infused from childhood, especially in the multi-cultural and religious context of India.³⁹ Faith formation of children by devout parents must begin from the tender

age. This irreplaceable catechesis comes from the parental witness to God's love and their own love for God and their children. The way parents relate with each other and with the children, the way they pray, worship and live their faith in everyday life, are the most important channels of true formation in faith.⁴⁰

Right through early and middle childhood, children learn most by observing and imitating. This is the time children begin to learn from parents and elders the moral values such as kindness, generosity in sharing, respect, truthfulness, justice, forgiveness etc. It is the period when a child continues to be catechized by what is felt, seen and touched. Watching parents, especially the mother in prayer is a learning experience for the child.⁴¹ Pope Francis therefore urges:

In the family, faith accompanies every age of life, beginning with childhood: children learn to trust in the love of their parents. This is why it is so important that within their families parents encourage shared expressions of faith which can help children gradually to mature in their own faith.⁴²

Parents, first of all, need to become deeply aware of their faith obligations as parents, study their own priorities, and take at least some part in the faith formation of their children. Children learn more from the example of parents rather than their instructions. Even an illiterate Catholic parent can be a successful faith educator in this regard.⁴³ Therefore, nothing is as worthy as good example since parents are the first teachers of their children.

Both the parents must have a positive influence on their children. Children need both their parents to set good examples. Otherwise, the bad example of one parent may strongly oppose and defeat the effect of the good example.⁴⁴ Let the children see their



parents praying, attending the Holy Mass, serving others and doing charity. Encourage children in giving alms, and in organizing and reciting prayers at home. Parents who offer good example of obedience to the divine law and to the laws of their country can expect their children to be faithful to their duties to God, to parents and to fellow human beings. There can, of course, be exceptions, but in general the vast majority of children follow the life style set by their parents.

CONCLUSION

There is an old Yiddish proverb, “Little children disturb your sleep; big children your life.” Parenthood is an unavoidable lifelong relationship. What is given at the beginning is rewarded at the end.⁴⁵ From solid, devout families, there arise workers who will build up the nation, parents who will raise godly children and children who will become the hope for the future. The absence of such families will create darkness on the face of the world. From such families the Church and the nation will find strength. Therefore, as family life goes, so goes the future of the Church. Family, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.⁴⁶ Family is the place where God is worshipped and where the discernment

of God’s mission is of ultimate importance. It means that a Christian family is not just a social arrangement of conviviality, but a basic communion of believers, or a medium in which both parents and children are able to live the Christian call and discern their mission.⁴⁷ The best method of transferring faith to the next generation is not a new method but a very old one suggested in the Bible. The parents or significant adults teach and encourage children to be the faithful followers of Christ. If parents are not sure where to start, then start with the heart. The final words of the Prophetic Book in the Old Testament (Mal. 3:24) and the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament (Lk. 1:17) invite parents to turn their hearts to their children. Acquire God’s vision for your family and turn your heart to your children.



FOOTNOTES

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THE PHILIPPINES



OUR LADY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE HOME CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ULDOG, TALISAY CITY, CEBU

It has been almost 2 months now since the implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine, yet the children productively used the ample time that they have in the Center. Since the suspension of their school classes last March 13, 2020, all the children in our care were engaged in various daily activities in our Center.

Mindful and sensitive of the situations that is happening around the world, they have been offering their own little sacrifices and acts of charity among themselves for all those who were suffering especially the children in need and for all the front liners and those afflicted by the pandemic disease all over the world.

May 2020



ACTIVITIES

THE PHILIPPINES



GOD'S SMILE HOME LIPA CITY, BATANGAS

May 2020

I would like to share the experience of these two months March, April and we don't know until when it will continue. We cannot forget these months, it remain in the story of our life, Church and of the whole world. As we are in quarantine... we thought it is better to stay home especially for the good of the children in "God's Smile Home".

To stay at home, seems it is very difficult and boring for the children... We started to organize our days with online Holy Mass, Eucharistic adoration, rosary and various prayers... Gardening, preparation for the next schooling year, manual activity, sports, watching TV in order to know the situation of the whole world and entertainment. At the end of the day, it was amazing to see the enthusiasm and happiness of the children. Now we spent almost two months... And they are able to study many things improving their intelligent and talents. Even the children of 3 and 4 years of old ready to pray spontaneously for the children in difficulty because of the COVID 19.

Usually we explain our children about the society of Holy Childhood and its spirit to help the children in need, all over the world, starting from the children in God's Smile Home". This is an inspiration for the big children, they are trying to help the small ones with love and dedication, it is evident to see their good will to dedicate their time, even to help others for the school assignments. We inspire them to pray for those who are helping in our needs and at the same time we are implanting a missionary spirit in them for spreading the Good News of Jesus to other children and to help other children, giving others whatever they have.

At present we stop the activities for the children in bry. Tambo as, catechesis and the feeding program but we are helping the families of these children. We come to know that these families are suffering because of lacking the necessary things. So we started to share whatever we have... it was very difficult to go to buy the things, but we find the way to cultivate the vegetable, fruits, to produce eggs, etc... so we are able to share others, with our products.

Sr. Marria Jeseenda

LEBANON

JEUNE FILLE DU LIBAN COLLEGE - BEIT HEBBAK



Charbel KHOURY, Member of Missionary Childhood

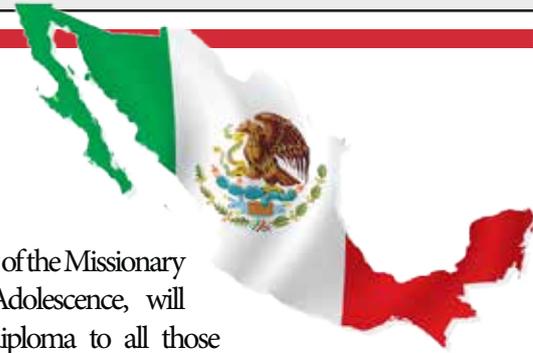
For more than three months I have been locked in the house due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

Like many children in the world, I no longer go to school and never go out. However, as a member of the missionary youth, I have not lost hope or faith that one day this nightmare will end. In fact, every morning I attend mass live on television and, in the afternoon, I pray the Rosary with my parents and siblings.

My family and I are following hygiene measures adopted by the Ministry of Public Health. I help my mother more often to prepare good food and keep the house clean and tidy. In the evening I watch television, play cards or Monopoly with my brother and sister.

The school sends us lessons and homework through Microsoft Teamset. Twice a week I communicate via web with my professors to continue learning, in the hope to return to class soon.





MEXICO

In this time of pandemic, we have developed several initiatives and activities, with the aim of animating and training our children and adolescents and MCA animators in our country.

The work of the MCA in Mexico continued on the margins of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Holy Childhood in Mexico, having realised all that has changed in our society, it reflected and analyzed the way to continue to animate and train our children, adolescents and animators. At first, we united the children and adolescents in prayer, sending them one prayer a day, to be celebrated together with their families. In this way, prayer becomes a spiritual force for all Christian families. This prayer goes viral through digital platforms and social networks, reaching thousands of children and adolescents not only in Mexico, but also throughout the American continent. In addition, many of the groups did not abandon their formation, and continue to gather virtually every week in their respective dioceses. On the other hand, motivational videos were made to help them live in greater family harmony and learn how to become little missionaries at home. These videos have gone viral through digital platforms and social networks. In addition, we encouraged and helped them with our magazine *Sembradores*, reaching out to children, teenagers and animators who did not have access to the internet, thus reaching the most remote places in Mexico.

We have come together to convey all that the governmental and ecclesiastical authorities have shared with us. Because only if we are united will we be able to get out of this pandemic that, unfortunately, we are suffering. Indeed, as missionaries, we share a common nourishment, which is prayer, small sacrifices, and especially the Eucharist. The live broadcast of the Holy Mass has begun, so that missionary children and adolescents and their families can follow it every day in a virtual way. Although it seems likely that this pandemic will not end soon, nevertheless, gradually, a course of missionary formation will be provided virtually for MCA councillors. They will focus on four important areas: spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral. The Pontifical Mission Societies in Mexico,

through the Society of the Missionary Childhood and Adolescence, will grant an official diploma to all those who finish the course. The more well prepared animators that we have, the better our MCA groups will become. We continue to communicate with all diocesan mission directors and MCA animators.

COURSES IN MISSIONARY ANIMATION AND FORMATION

“We are called to holiness!”

The current situation has brought about changes in the MCA's formation and missionary animation activities. Therefore, in response to one of the objectives of this Pontifical Mission Society and taking advantage of today's platforms and digital tools, we suggest the implementation of a digital training program, which can be a permanent part of the programming of activities. We propose as the thematic axis of the first module the call to holiness.

Objective: To give continuity to the process of formation of animators, children and adolescents of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood (and Adolescence), making use of available technology.

Methodology: We want to develop each of the modules making use of “cooperative apprenticeship”, with the aim of strengthening not only the assimilation of each of the themes, but also the teamwork and the coordination of distance activities; this underlines the importance of interaction with a community.

Dynamics: Participants will be invited to form groups of 4 to 6 persons, who will communicate through a WhatsApp group. The coordinator will receive the themes, and will be in charge of assigning the tasks.

*Fr. Ivo Saúl Flores Venegas
National Secretary of the Missionary
Childhood and Adolescence (MCA) in Mexico*

(May 2020)



KENYA

ADRIAN YAY

My name is Adrian Yaya. The disease of Coronavirus known as Covid-19 is a very dangerous disease that has affected all continents. Many people have been affected. Kenya is one of them. Kenya has 1.888 cases, 64 deaths, recoveries 464.

U.S. has a lot of cases. Covid-19 is spreading so fast. Covid-19 symptoms are: fever, cough, problem of breathing, body ache and muscles. Covid-19 has made my life miserable. I miss my friends, school, mu cousins, teachers of my school.

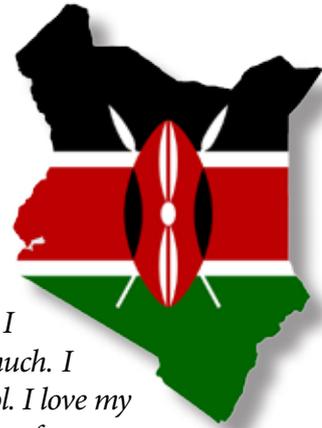
Covid-19 has made the life of people hard. People are dying outside the border. Most of all observe the guideline of the ministry of health and WHO. One of them are where the masks are buy and wear while going outside.

Covid-19 other guidelines are: maintain social distancing 2 meters, wash your hands with soap and water. If there is no soap and water sanitize your hands if you have touched dirty or affected surfaces and most important thing stay home and save lives.

I pray for coronavirus to finish. The prayers I have been praying are Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father and to the Son and the Holy Spirit, O My Jesus, Holy Rosary and the Angelus and we have been pray novena. Please stay home. We have been watching church service on the internet. We watch mass on Sunday on the tv live.

RUBY BAKHITA

My name is Ruby Bakhita. When corona virus started we don't go to church, to school. I miss to go to church and school. It has spread in the whole world. The first country was China. It has affect Kenya. People don't go outside. Others go outside. I miss sister Mary and sister Veronica. I miss even my friends so much.



The corona virus has affected my school. I miss my teachers so much. I have not gone to school. I love my school so much. I pray for corona virus to end forever.



TESTIMONIES

KENYA



COLOMBIA

I AM A MISSIONARY IN THE HC

TO BE A TRUE SAINT!



In May, we celebrated HC Month and we met virtually from our homes, amidst the situation of isolation we live in due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Despite this reality, HC groups continued to be animated, actively participating in the weekly meetings together with the animators and above all involving families in the various activities and moments of prayer, whom many shared through social media.

The HC National Secretariat, in coordination with the national team and in view of the HC National Day, broadcast weekly topics via Facebook Live in order to allow animators, teenagers, children and parents to be more involved and grant more participation in the Society. On May 2 the celebration of the Eucharist of thanksgiving for the HC in Colombia and in the world began, presided over by Fr. Javier Alexis Gil Henao, National Director of the PMS.

THE CARISMA OF HC

On 9 May the theme of the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood was shared, starting with the charism, spirituality, objectives and process of formation, highlighting the importance of having these elements clear in order to better understand its origins and its validity in our time.

In fact, to fully understand the educational significance of Missionary Childhood, it is necessary to go back to the founding charism of the Society. At the root of the charism, as a gift of the Spirit, there is the driving force which is necessary for the path of holiness of children. The theme was shared by Disney Lopez Lara, National Secretary of HC, and Edwin José Bolàvar, Coordinator of HC in the

Archdiocese of Barranquilla.

A PATH TO BECOME A MISSIONARY SAINT

On May 16, the meeting was led by Fr. Yeison Ramirez, PMS director of the diocese of Neiva, who shared the theme: HC is a way to be a holy missionary. He presented the Child Jesus and Mary as models, so that by imitating their virtues, children and adolescents may seek holiness. In this Pontifical Society we have two patron saints: Saint Therese of the Child Jesus and Saint Francis Xavier who inspire us to seek holiness through prayer and mission.

The Sacred Scripture is another means that helps us to walk towards holiness, and we must be careful to listen to the Word of God; accepting the invitation to be saints and reach salvation, making ourselves saints in everyday life: making the ordinary extraordinary. Another special path towards holiness is the Missionary Rosary, where we pray for the whole world, for the mission of the Universal Church. We also try to be holy through the sacraments. And above all we become saints in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer, carving out spaces for the encounter with Jesus, the holy of holies.



A SCHOOL OF SOLIDARITY

On May 23, the meeting was held by Efraàn Salazar, Delegate for Child Care of the Archdiocese of Bucaramanga, who shared the theme: HC, a school of solidarity, as an invitation to effectively assume the founding charism of the Society.

There was talk of the importance of promoting the knowledge of the needs of others in children and adolescents and to respond to them with what they are, with what they have and where they are. Another aspect that was highlighted is missionary cooperation, since solidarity is not only the sharing of material goods, but also the sharing of faith and the experience of the encounter with Jesus, living the daily prayer for children and adolescents of the world with an Our Father, a Hail Mary and short prayers: "Jesus we are your friends, make all the children of the world also your friends" "Holy Virgin, pray for us and for all the children of the world".

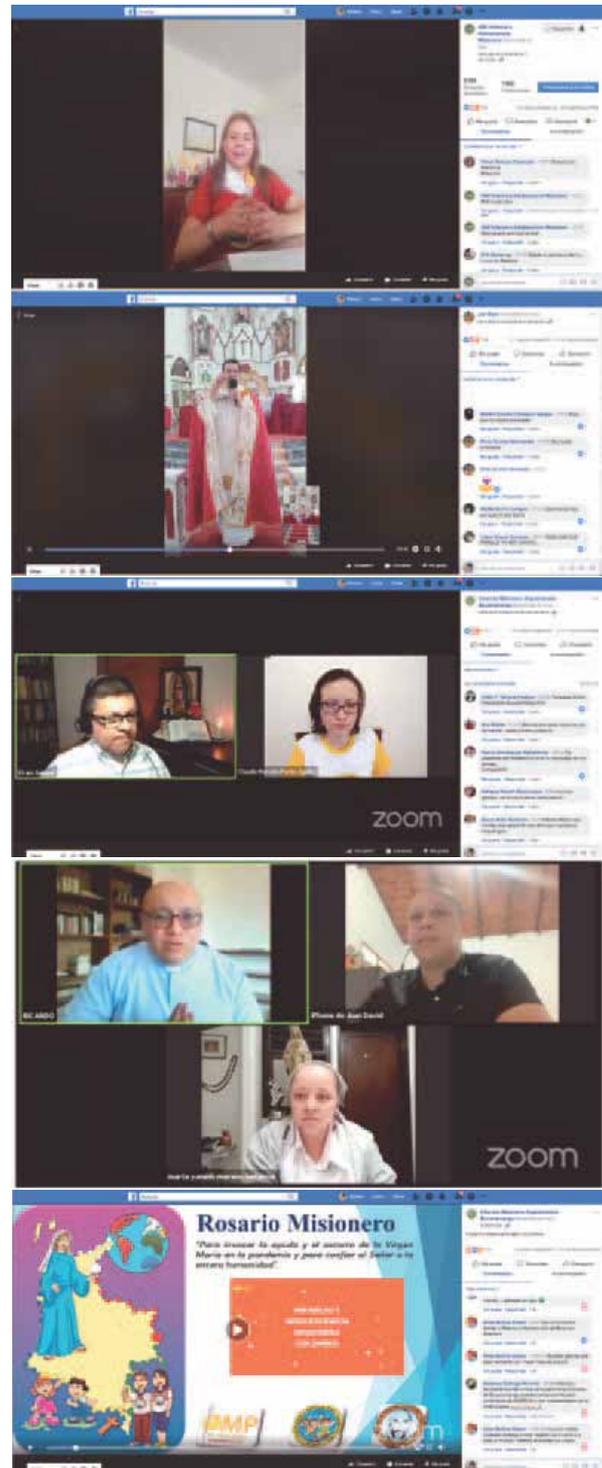
EVANGELIZING IN THE TIC

On May 30, a forum was held on the theme: Evangelizing in the TIC, shared by Fr. Ricardo Cortés, Delegate for Child Care of the Diocese of Epaquir, and Juan David Martanez, Coordinator of HC in the Archdiocese of Medellin. There was also the collaboration of Hna. Martha Yanet Moreno (Sister Selfie), renowned Titokera. The theme was structured as follows: the Magisterium of the Church on the Internet, advice on how to be present on social networks; what the various applications allow us to do.

THE ROSARY

At the end of the month, on May 31, the members of HC of Colombia joined in prayer with the Missionary Rosary to invoke the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the pandemic and to entrust eternal humanity to the Lord "as proposed by Pope Francis to all the Marian shrines. Each mystery was offered for a continent and a region of Colombia. The prayer of each decade was led by 5 members of

HC: Camila Trochez de Piendamà - Cauca, Ellen Mejàa Jiménez de Medellín, Giuliana Patricia Gazabàn de Cartagena, Sara Sofàa Mancera de Villavicencio and Juan Esteba Santamara de Piedecuesta - Santander.





MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IS ACTIVE AND IN SOLIDARITY DURING QUARANTINE

In the college of the Pontifical Bolivarian University, missionary fervor follows the following initiatives that arose during the quarantine.

CONNECTED BY DIFFERENT MEANS, WE ARE UNITED BY THIS REFLECTION

This reality of confinement and quarantine took us all by surprise. The current situation invites us to reflect, as a form of human solidarity and to become aware of who we are and what we are doing in our life. With God's help we will get out of this crisis as better people for the entire planet, everyone's home, which is the Earth.

Covid-19 has power because we humans have given it to it. It moves if we move. It deposits on our hands. It spreads without borders. It is inactive with confinement. If humanity slows down and takes care of itself, the virus will stop. It has awakened us from a dream, from passivity in front of others, from a coldness and an unbridled pace of life. Only solidarity and brotherhood will stop the spread of this pandemic. The world will not be the same after this. This fragility we are experiencing will teach us to be humbler, simpler, calmer. When everything happens, we can shake hands again, but from the heart. A society will be born without contamination of discrimination. The air will also be decontaminated. Human and spiritual values will be reborn more than economic ones. This virus made us think about how fragile we are and that universal health is in everyone's hands, regardless of race, gender, creed, party or social level. It also aroused compassion for each other, the ability to put ourselves in the shoes of others. Life has

changed, human pride has knelt before a small enemy, showing us that we are like clay vases. Kisses, hugs, holding hands and other gestures of closeness are now prohibited, which we miss very much. HOW MANY TIMES DO WE DENY A HANDSHAKE, A SMILE, A HELP. We do not know what we have until we lose it. Therefore, even if isolated for prevention, we must be united in a new and creative way through virtual messages, prayers, donations. We will never look at each other in the same way again, we are concerned about those we may have forgotten or ignored. Today we value a doctor, a nurse and we see in them the hope of intervening promptly and in time to save lives, by the hand of God. We can no longer spend time in stadiums, spend large sums of money for concerts. We leave cinema, parks, restaurants, parties behind us. The dining room of our home has regained importance, all sitting together for dinner because now we have time. There is already time for all of us to play together, study together, listen to each other, look at each other, laugh a little and even cry together. Many are no longer eager to go to work or study, everything happens at home. It is ironic to see that animals are free from contagion and we are the ones locked





who, in his fifth grade, to the delight of his parents, became a missionary. Since then, he has always supported Christmas activities for less fortunate children. He has

already participated in several mission fields, giving his time and energy to many children and young people of the population of Old Tolu (Sucre). His big heart led him to drive a campaign here today in Medellin with his family. He is raising money, to organize markets for many people who are now in quarantine and in need of food. The seed we sow in our children is never lost.

up because we have polluted our common space. We are motivated by new things, we do not mind going out and singing or clapping on the balconies and putting our talents at display to cheer up others who do not want to sink into the solitude of confinement. We look at the policemen who go from neighborhood to neighborhood with their teams to sing melodies of hope with different eyes. Others with their creativity through mobile phones send jokes and games to make people smile ... we plan our virtual meetings, pray together at special Eucharistic Celebrations, share meetings, craft works

and everything we can think of. This and many other examples and testimonies remain in our minds and hearts. Now we must ask ourselves ...what will my action be, in this new opportunity, to make a better world?

EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL

The passage of the Gospel is assigned to a child of HC who with his/her family prepares the explanation in a creative way. This is then published by several pastoral communities and shared.

MISSIONARY ROSARY THROUGH THE TEAMS PLATFORM

CELEBRATION OF MOTHER'S DAY THROUGH THE TEAMS PLATFORM

Children participated with songs, poems, reflections, piano performances, sharing family experiences in this quarantine and the blessing of the school chaplain.

ANSWER OF A YOUNG MISSIONARY

David Felipe Hoyos G, is a young man

*Blanca Doris Jiménez Jiménez
Lecturer at the College of the Pontifical Bolivarian University and IAM Animator*





MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IS STILL ALIVE DURING QUARANTINE!

Let us share the experience of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence of Jesus Eucharist Parish, of the Archdiocese of Medellin. We held several meetings during this period of quarantine which allowed us to have direct contact with children and families.

Since October 2018 the communication between the members of IAM has been facilitated by a WhatsApp group of whom only parents (for data security reasons, since they are adults and responsible) are part and where all the information of the group for children is communicated: meetings, children's Mass and everything necessary to

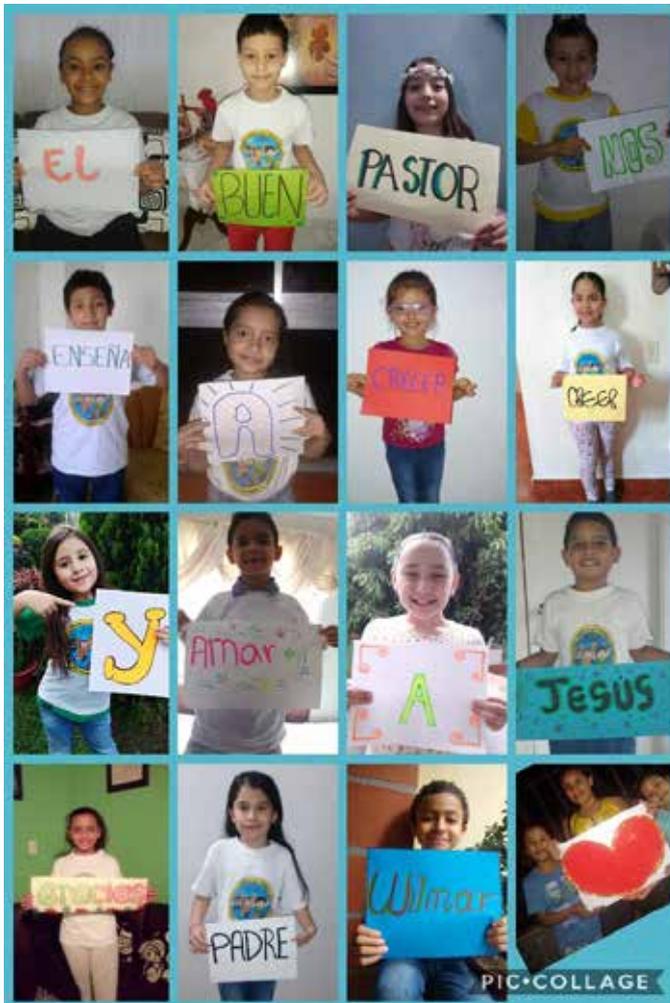
have a good journey and accompaniment. During the isolation there were meetings through a platform which were attended by about 28 children in each meeting. The activities include several moments: greeting, listening to the children to get to know their state of mind, prayer, reflection, the central theme, play and manual activities.

The topics discussed were: the commitments of missionary children, solidarity, the day of the child, the good shepherd, the Virgin, Mother's Day.

These activities are carried out in a didactic and playful way to allow a better understanding and participation of children. Also during the week, the children's Mass is prepared which is broadcast by all the parish media every Sunday at 10:00 (Facebook Live, radio, Youtube).

The meetings we do have the following scheme:

- ✓ Greetings.
- ✓ Prayer made by some children.
- ✓ Videos and photos of activities for missionary children and adolescents from previous years.
- ✓ Activities.
- ✓ Greeting message from our parish priest Father Wilmar Darius Galeano, or another message.
- ✓ Greeting.



*Francy Yaneth Bedoya Montoya
Animator*



MALAWI

CHILDREN'S MISSIONARY PROGRAM ON RADIO MARIA MALAWI DURING THIS TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC!



TESTIMONIES



My name is JOSHUA MASEKO aged 12 years old. I am in standard 8 at Tafika primary school. I go to Church at Ndirande Holy Ghost Parish in the Archdiocese of Blantyre, Malawi. During this period of lockdown, there are so many things which seem strange to me, for example, I used to go to school each and every day, meeting my best friends, my lovely teachers but now am just staying at home. I used to go to Church for classes on each for catechetical missionary lessons and every Saturday and Sundays but now it is sad and painful because am no longer going to church to pray and meet my lovely friends.

Although I am not going to church, at least am very happy. This is so because am able to listen a certain program for children on Radio Maria Malawi which runs on Saturday from

10:00 am to 11:00 am. I really enjoy the program with my brothers and sisters at home because I am able to learn a lot of things such as: catechism of the Catholic Church, prayers as well as other teachings concerning baptism. Not only that, but I am also able to take part during the program by calling the presenter and ask them some questions which are difficult to understand to. This is really very important to me as well as other children who listen to this program.

I am very sad seeing a lot of children in this World losing their beloved parents due to COVID-19 pandemic. I always offer my prayers to God on their behalf so that they remain strong in faith and hence realize that death of the beloved ones is not the end of everything in this World.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) National Director, Father Vincent Mwakhwawa, for considering children in their programs. It is my plea for the producer to run the same program in other different languages like English and Yao thus in addition to Chichewa and Chitumbuka. I call upon well-wishers to come in and sponsor the program so that we can still enjoy more especially during this tough time.

My advice to my fellow children is to stay home, wash hands with soap

MALAWI



ZAMBIA

PMS AND COVID-19 VIRTUAL ANIMATION FORUM



In an effort to prevent the spread of Corona Virus, the government of the Republic of Zambia instituted health guidelines that impacted on all aspects of human life. This happened in March, just before Holy Week, when the first case of COVID 19 was recorded. Churches were closed, public Mass with the congregation was prohibited and generally all public gatherings were highly regulated.

A NEW INITIATIVE

Prohibition of public gatherings prompted the Pontifical Mission Societies National Direction in Zambia to launch a Missionary Animation Initiative called; PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES ON-LINE ANIMATION FORUM. This is a virtual platform that has been carrying weekly Conferences using ZOOM with the following Four main objectives:

1. to develop alternative ways of Missionary Animation amid the COVID 19 Pandemic and beyond;
2. to introduce our local PMS collaborators to Missionary Animation Activities that are being done in different parts of the World;
3. to develop the Missionary zeal in our

local PMS Collaborators after interaction with our brothers and sisters in different parts of the World;

4. to promote the sense of Universality and Solidarity among our local PMS collaborators.



A FORUM FOR HOLY CHILDHOOD ANIMATORS

The Platform initially targeted Holy Childhood animators in Zambia who virtually met every Sunday evening, with an average number of Sixty (60) to Ninety (90) participants, to listen to a featured

National Director from an English-speaking National Direction. Every week, a PMS Director from an English speaking national direction was invited to speak to the members on the Animation Forum. The programme begun in May 2020 to the date of this article. National Directors from several countries have made presentations and provided a virtual environment for interaction and sharing. These countries include Malawi, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, UK, Liberia, Antilles, Philippines, Switzerland, Ghana, Canada, Uganda, Lesotho, Kenya and Austria.



OPENNESS TO ALL PMS' COLLABORATORS

Eventually what started as an initiative exclusively for Holy Childhood animators in Zambia has now grown into an animation Forum for all those who are close to the Pontifical Mission Societies; Priests, Religious and Lay Faithful in Zambia and Malawi. Once in a while one or two of our Bishops would join the Forum. It has been an exciting experience for us and our collaborators to listen to diverse Missionary animation experiences from men and women in the church all over the World.

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

To afford our collaborators an opportunity to interact with our PMS Superiors in Rome, we further extended the invitation to the International Secretariat for the Secretary Generals to make their presentations. Sr. Roberta Tremarelli was the first to feature and our collaborators were elated to listen to her.

CHILDREN'S ONLINE CONFERENCE

Furthermore, after the inspiring presentation of Sr. Roberta, an additional initiative was born in the same line; 'Children's On-line Conference'. Members on the Forum proposed to extend Sr. Roberta's interaction and presentation to Children. Consequently, a Virtual Children's Conference with the Secretary General was slated for 11th October 2020 with the Theme; 'Children Participation in the Mission of the Church'. The Forum expected One hundred gadgets, that is, laptops and phones, to be connected translating to more than five hundred (500) expected participants from both Zambia and Malawi.





ANGOLA

PMS VIRTUAL ANIMATION FORUM IN TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Luanda, 14 September 2020

As we approach another World Mission Day (18 October) and due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we would like to share what we have done in this period.

In Angola, we registered two first cases of coronavirus in March and since the 27th of the same month, the Angolan government has declared a state of emergency. The measures were confinement, prevention and containment. To date, 3,388 positive, 134 deaths, 1301 recovered and 1953 active cases have been confirmed.

FACEBOOK AND WHATSAPP

In consideration of this, it was not easy to manage the activities that had been planned, both at national, diocesan and parish levels. Due to the measures adopted, the 1st Assembly of the PMS diocesan Coordinators, which would be a milestone for our reality, has been postponed to next year. In this phase of social confinement, in order to enhance our actions and stay in tune with our leaders, animators and members, we have used social networks, in particular the platforms: facebook and whatsapp.

On these platforms we share: information, both at a national, diocesan and parish level, for compliance with the directives of the Ministry of Health and religious authorities; Masses; missionary, religious and social formation; prayer of the rosary; Adoration and other celebrations. Sunday Eucharistic celebrations are broadcast on national public television channels at 8 am and are also broadcast by Radio Eclésia and other local radio stations; information from people and/or families with difficulties that can be helped as much as possible.

TO RAISE AWARENESS AND GUIDE

As coordinators of the HC we communicate with parents and teachers, also in order to raise awareness and guide compliance with the measures, the use of safety materials and to be together in this period. Since not everyone has access to these platforms, especially in more remote areas, communications are expensive, which hampers the interaction and reach of guidelines and information.

Some animators of HC, Christians and volunteers are engaged in the distribution of basic food rations and safety materials to the communities most in need and not only, but unfortunately there is still much to do to meet existing needs. There is also a sharp increase in the number of people in need, due to the closure of some businesses and services during this period, others cannot even pay wages.

We have organized two conferences, online, via zoom, with the Directors and Coordinators of Groups, in preparation for missionary month 2020. Sharing our experiences for Missions, will not be easy, given this new reality, however, the reopening of Churches is expected on September 19th for the Saturday and Sunday Masses. This will be a resource for all the proposals we intend to carry out during the month of October.

Finally, we all hope that everything returns to normality and may the Lord be our refuge in these times.

United and in prayer!

Anacleto da Silva
National Secretary OMP/Angola



In this time when we are confronted with the pandemic caused by the coronavirus, I have intensified prayers to call for an end to this disease: for the elderly, the sick, health workers, for our people and for those from other countries and other continents etc... I am looking for information on the local situation and on the reality outside. Therefore, in this period of the pandemic, I try to know what the situation is like in other countries, especially the most vulnerable ones, like those of the African continent, or even places like the slums here in Angola. Through the knowledge of the reality, we become more aware and sensitive, breaking with indifference.

Because of the social isolation measures, so important at this time, I am, as well as many other people not allowed to gather in our groups and communities. However, we have not failed to fulfill our commitments as missionary children. As a member of HC, I am fulfilling my role as an evangelizer, through the protagonism of the little ones.

Current knowledge tells us that people with weak immune systems, such as children and adolescents undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or who finished therapy less than 6 months ago, should be more cautious with COVID-19.

Ariadne Ermelinda

12 years

S. José Parish, Caponte/Lobito - Diocese of Benguela

THE SPREAD OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IN SANT'ILDEFONSO PARISH - LUMEJE-CAMEIA

DIOCESE OF IWENA



In January 2019 we carried out an intensive formation with the Parish leaders, for 5 days, in order to organize and animate the MC in the territory and spread MC groups in the communities of Parish villages.

THE FIRST GROUP

Starting from this experience, Missionary Childhood was organized with 6 groups and 12 leaders, and two Coordinators. As a result of this formation we see the commitment and responsibility of the animators in the various organized activities:

- Weekly prayer of the rosary for the neighborhoods of the village
- Weekly MC group meetings
- Evangelization outings (missions) through the neighborhoods every two weeks
- Animation of the parish liturgy once a month

- Organization of the children's Mass once a month
- Visits to families

THE ACTIVITIES

Starting from June 2019, the activities carried out were the following:

1. Formation in pastoral centers for MC leaders: they were carried out in the pastoral centers of Sakambondo, Mufupo, Cijimbeji and Cambowa between July and September 2019. The leaders of each place organized the formation program, being 3 leaders for each center. Between 6 and 11 children participated in the formation days in each center, depending on the community. There were moments of theory, with brochures and training material, and other practical activities (organization of groups and activities, missionary visits to houses in



the neighborhood, missionary prayers, songs and animations, etc ...). At the end of the meetings, there was the delivery of basic materials to start the activity in each community.

2. Formative and sharing meetings with the parishes of the pastoral area (Leua and Luacano): within the program of organization and sharing of the pastoral area composed of the 3 parishes (Lumege, Leua and Luacano), training and sharing meetings were held at the MC of Lumege with the other parishes. This activity was the response to a request made by parishes where there was still no MC. In these meetings, the formation and methodology was similar to that carried out in the Pastoral Centers, with the participation of the children and future leaders of the parishes visited, as well as responsible missionaries of each parish.
3. Service commitments in the parish: programs are organized with parish groups for visits to the sick in their homes, as well as to children in the municipal hospital. In these visits of closeness and prayer the children also shared some offerings, the result of personal renunciations.
4. Missionary Rosary Prayer: On Wednesdays they gather for prayer according to the intentions of the MC and for children all over the world.
5. Year of the MC: in February 2020 the opening of the year was held, prepared by the leaders to present MC to the children who are part of the various groups present in the parish. There were movies, games, prizes and a shared meal for everyone.
6. Since March 2020, with the declaration of the state of emergency and the subsequent disaster situation (still in force) following the guidelines of the government and the Episcopal Conference of the country, despite the

limitations, the MC has not failed to serve with the prayer, with some visits to the group members in the houses and training sessions with the greatest leaders. The program will in particular continue to monitor and strengthen the training of leaders in the various pastoral centers, as long as conditions allow it.



INDONESIA

DIOCESE OF PANGKALPINANG



The area of the Diocese of Pangkalpinang is very vast and consists of many small islands scattered in the South China Sea. It is divided in two Vicariates, one in the Province of Riau Archipelagos (North) and the other in the Province of Bangka-Belitung Archipelagos (South). Most of the small islands have no schools and the Diocese helps the children welcoming them in the dormitories of the central parishes. Unfortunately, not all children can be reached, due to the vastness of the territory. The Diocese also supports very poor families economically, so that their children can study and have a better future. After basic education, some go to university and become leaders in their parishes while others continue their studies entering the seminary.



Every year the Diocese celebrates the Holy Childhood Mission Day in the parishes, also taking part in the action of the Three Kings. The School of Missionary Animators takes place every year, so as the Jamboree for children and adolescents. Last year the Vicariate of Babel and the Parish of Tanjung Balai celebrated a Jamboree.

In these events the children and adolescents could meet many others peers from various villages of the Vicariate. In their own diversity but in unity as one, they learn how to share as the friends of Jesus and become aware for their responsibility in the Church, helping each other in serving.



BENIN



TESTIMONIES

In the Church in Benin, in all its parishes, the life and vitality of the Missionary Childhood is an obvious and proven reality. Children's movements such as the MADEB (Movement of the Apostolate of Children of Benin), known for their scarves, colored according to age and grade, the Scouts, children's choirs, altar servers, readers, and so on, carry out the life and animation even of the most remote communities. These different groups, with the help of their chaplains and religious sisters, animate the various activities in favor of the Holy Childhood in all the Dioceses of our local Church.

*Father Cosme Tayéwo Adjomale
National Director of the P.M.S. -Benin*



I am 12 years old, and I am in 6th grade. In my parish, the Sacred Heart Cathedral of Djougou, I have been a member of the group of readers since 2016. Our group rehearses every Saturday evening at 5 pm. We prepare the liturgical texts for Sunday.

We normally participate in the 9:30 am Mass. My group often organizes and participates in the reading competition in the parish. I am very happy to be part of this group and member of the Missionary Childhood, because it allows me improve my reading skills and helps me learn more about the Word of God.

Lovrik GAMDE

My name is Dotchamou Victorine. I am 9 years old, and I am the fourth among my brothers and sisters. I have been a member of the MADEB group, which is also part of the Missionary Childhood of the Diocese of N'dali, in northern Benin, for the past three years. I am learning to pray the rosary, do adoration, and answer questions in the course on the Word of God. I love my friends very much. I am very happy to be in the group because it gives me the grace to be with my friends, to have fun and pray with and for them.

Victorine DOTCHAMOU



BENIN

BURKINA FASO

Celebrating the first pilgrimage of the Society of the Missionary Childhood, from the Burkina-Niger Episcopal Conference to the Shrine of Our Lady of Yagma in Burkina Faso.



The assembly of the Society of the Missionary Childhood during its annual meetings expressed a desire to organize an activity that could bring together the children of the Burkina-Niger Bishops' Conference for a spiritual experience. In fact, all the activities for children take place in parishes and dioceses, due to the difficulties associated with meetings of children. We must be more attentive so as to assure the success of these activities. In this context an idea was born: to celebrate a national pilgrimage of children to the Shrine of Our Lady of Yagma in Ouagadougou, the capital. Yagma is the national shrine and several groups are already making pilgrimage to this holy place.

The project matured and was accepted by the Episcopal Conference. To allow the participation of even the most distant dioceses, three consecutive free days have been identified in the calendar: March 7, 8, and 9, 2020.

By the grace of God, the encounter with the Blessed Virgin Mary went very well. The pilgrimage followed a theme proposed by the PMS in Burkin-Niger for this year's Missionary Childhood Week: "Children, baptized, we are sent on mission in the world". Each diocese organized itself autonomously to arrive at the shrine. About 1,962 children and their guardians (youth, priests, men and women religious) made the pilgrimage to Yagma. The welcoming diocese arrived the same day of the celebration, because the premises had a limited capacity for housing and receiving pilgrims.

THE PILGRIMAGE

The spiritual encounter began with the reception of pilgrims and the prayer of the rosary in the Marian grotto. Then, after

the cleaning and the meal, we planned a charismatic vigil. Due to a delay in the catering service, we were forced to replace the rosary at the vigil. Our intentions presented to Mary were universal. After this first busy day, we all turned in for a restful sleep.

THE DAY DEDICATED TO MARY

The spiritual encounter began with the reception of pilgrims and the prayer of the rosary in the Marian grotto. Then, after the cleaning and the meal, we planned a charismatic vigil. Due to a delay in the catering service, we were forced to replace the rosary at the vigil. Our intentions presented to Mary were universal. After this first busy day, we all turned in for a restful sleep.

On March 8, the children of the Archdiocese of Ouagadougou ran from the four corners and so a huge crowd of children invaded the Marian shrine (about 42,000 according to the rector of the shrine).

On this day, March 8th, World Women's Day, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the woman par excellence, was surrounded by her children. No doubt she was very happy to present them all to Jesus, her son, during the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Monsignor Gabriel SAYAOGO, Bishop of the Youth-Childhood Commission, and new Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Koupéla. The children with faith and joy provided the animation of the celebration. In short, it was nice to be there, as Peter says in the Gospel of the day.

The Eucharistic celebration brought us, like the apostles Peter, James and John, to the culmination of our meeting. Then it was necessary to descend to Burkina loaded with



the splendor of Christ and announce it with joy. The delegations after the meal, personal prayers and small meetings returned to their respective dioceses.

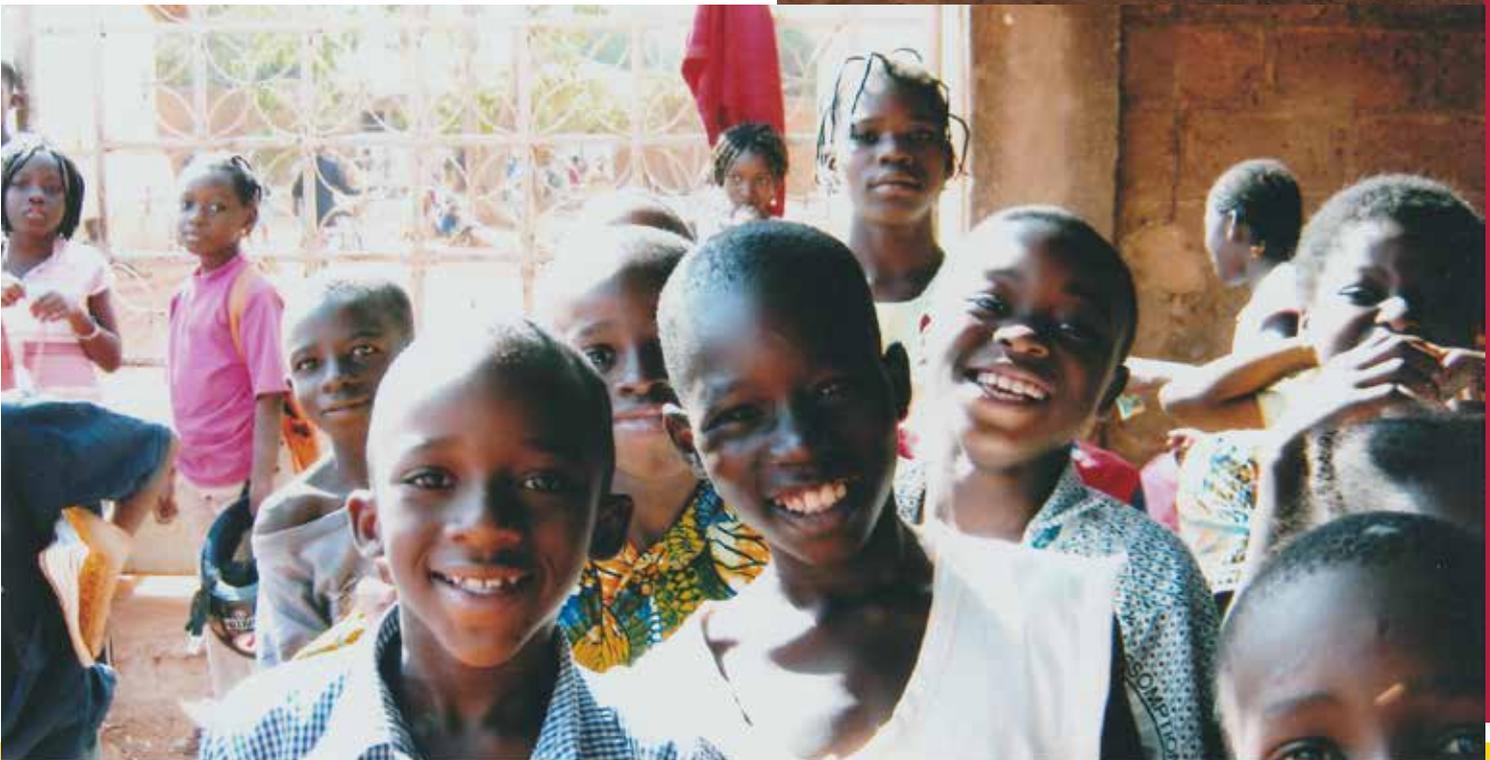
A GREAT JOY

All in all, the grace of God and the protection of the holy angels accompanied us in the celebration of the first national pilgrimage of children to the Shrine of Our Lady of Yagma. The difficulties were not lacking, but the joy was greater. In fact, climbing a very high mountain is not easy, however, finding Christ in all his splendor cancels all bitterness. To Him all glory forever!

We sincerely thank the Episcopal Conference who believed in our project and accompanied us, the national director of PMS in Burkina-Niger who supported us financially and participated in the Eucharistic celebration, the rector of the sanctuary and all those who worked in silence to ensure that this much desired activity would be conducted in serenity.

Fr. Paulin DAMIBA

*National Secretary of the Holy Missionary
Childhood in Burkina-Niger*



GUATEMALA



In 1973, the Pontifical Missionary Societies were established in Guatemala to awaken the missionary awareness of the Local Church, being Father José María Suárez Vásquez, Priest of the Community "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart", the first National Director of PMS.

Later, on March 16, 1985, Monsignor Mario Ríos Mont, the new National Director, sees the need for a permanent staff to promote the PMS with their respective programs; then it is requesting the presence and collaboration of four sisters belonging to the congregation "Missionaries of St. Teresita del Niño Jesús" (Missionary Institute of Colombian Foundation). Sister Candelaria Martínez remains as National Secretary of the Missionary Childhood and with great enthusiasm one dedicated to spreading it throughout the country.



THE FIRST GROUP AND THE FIRST CONGRESS

On April 13, 1985, the first missionary children's group was founded, in Colonia Cotiό de Guatemala, zone 3 of Mixco. In 1987 from April 22 to 25, the first National Missionary Congress was held: "CONGUA I", a significant event for the Church of Guatemala. It gave a great incentive to the Missionary Children in the country; among the fruits of this Congress, we highlight the openness and welcome of some Dioceses to this Society.

In 1995, the First National Missionary Children's Team was created and the First National Missionary Children's Meeting took place. The MC has spread throughout the country and it was possible to establish agreements with Catholic institutions and associations, such as Fe y Alegría, Casa Alianza, Renovación Carismática, and with parishes to take

the MC model as for Child Pastoral Program.

THE NATIONAL DAY

In 2001, Guatemala's Episcopal Conference in communion with the National Director of PMS, Father Antonio Bernasconi, sets the third Sunday in July as the official date for the National Missionary Children's Day, as until then, it was celebrated in the month of May. The reason for the change of date was because of the little importance given to this day, since that the various activities in this month absorbed the time for motivation

and organization of it.

THE MISSIONARY ADOLESCENCE

After the Continental Meeting of Missionary Childhood and Adolescents in Costa Rica in 2002, also PMS in Guatemala assumes missionary adolescence within the MC Society.

In 2003, CAM2 and COMLA 7 were held in Guatemala and 350 children from all over the continent participated. During the next few years, Guatemala has worked in the dioceses and communities that have approached, during all this time, they organized Schools of Missionary Animators, Animations, Consecrations, Missionary Festivals and spaces to publicize Missionary Children and Adolescence, currently counts on the national secretariat of the Society.



In 2018, a work has been done with the pastoral agents of childhood, in a special way in dioceses where the MC was present. Locally and according to the needs of parishes and communities, appropriate training processes are proposed and integrated in all training processes of the Particular Churches in a joint work plan.

A TEAM FOR THE PROMOTION OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

In 2019, the National Director appointed Mario Monterroso as National Secretary of Missionary Children and Adolescents and established a supporting team for the promotion of the missionary activities to children and adolescents.

NATIONAL VIRTUAL DAY 2020

Currently Guatemala, like the rest of the Countries in the world, is experiencing the pandemic situation due to Covid-19 and as a people we experience this reality with its deadly consequences that have brought the country into a state of calamity and, by the Government, the restriction of mobility with a curfew, closure of shops, schools and even churches, to prevent the spread of the virus as much as possible.

On 19 July we celebrated the National Day of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence and even if in a digital way, with love and hope, overcoming the obstacles caused by parental unemployment, the lack of internet connection in many

places, which however was overcome, with the sharing of Internet access and the generosity of the animators in supporting the children.

The slogan of the day was “Here I am, send me” (Is 6:8) recalling the call of the prophet Isaiah and the theme of World Mission Sunday 2020.

The poster tells us that we can all welcome God’s call and be part of missionary action worldwide. The missionary child, who belongs to the Archdiocese of Guatemala, invites us and to be saints, she has a rosary in her hand since it is prayer that unites us to

God through Mary to fulfill our mission in the world; she has her white and yellow scarf, the symbol of MC in Guatemala and a sign that she belongs to the level of “Ripe Wheat” committed to praying incessantly for the missions.

Catecheses were prepared for the day and each diocese shared them with the children and animators of their own reality.

In the diocese of Santa Rosa and in the Apostolic Vicariate of Izabal it was broadcast on television and radio, while the remaining dioceses shared the day via Facebook, other social networks and radio.

At a National Direction level, the Day was shared via Zoom, inviting all the children leaders of each diocese. About 100 children participated in a virtual way and each one was prepared with missionary colors and a poster on the theme of the Day.

Currently Guatemala, like the rest of the Countries

The Pontifical Society of MC is currently present in 11 dioceses of the 16 present in Guatemala, with 500 active animators and thousands of children engaged in it.

For the 2020, the National Office aims to give a missionary impetus to those communities that do not yet know the proposal of Missionary Childhood and Adolescents and establish their presence in all the particular Churches of the country.





CHILDREN'S PASTORAL ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE ORDINARY SUBSIDY

Kathleen Mazio

Tshumbe's Diocese in Democratic Republic of Congo is a virtuous example of a complete and assorted pastoral for children and youth, organized thanks to the ordinary Subsidy of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood. It is organized in two ways: "open pastoral" and "closed pastoral", depending on the membership in the MAC (Catholic Action Movements) or not.

The "open pastoral" secures all educational activities for the children non-members of the MAC, as daily masses, prayers, catechesis in preparation to receive the sacraments, Christian education in Catholic schools.

The "closed pastoral", instead, concerns all activities

for children and youth members of the several Catholic Action Movements: B.Y.M. (Youth of the Light), Kizito-Anuarite, Youth of Charity, PAI (Little Friends of Jesus), Scouts and Guides, Junior Legion, Kiro, Emmaus' Pilgrims, St. John, St. Theresa, Minzoto (The Stars), Totshitshe (the little ones). These groups are organized by age and on the specific spirituality. They meet regularly and take part in the end of the month's retreat and in each movement's annual Diocesan Day.

Besides these two sections, some children participate in liturgical groups as the "Joyeuses", the altar servers, the Readers, Young choruses, The Youths of the New Life, the Young Technicians and Instrumentalists, the "Lumières", the "Hozana" and the "Joms". The children of these groups animate the masses.



These activities promote the Catholic message among the children, who are the future of the Church and, through these little missionaries, among their families and communities.



HELP TO DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

Matteo Maria Piacentini

Wajir Catholic Mission Rehabilitation Centre (WCRMC) is a Day Care Centre for differently abled children. The Centre is located in the North Eastern Province of Kenya (Wajir County), bordering Somalia to the East and Ethiopia to the North. The Centre was started by the late Annalena Tonelli in 1976, an Italian volunteer who was killed in Somaliland in 2003 by armed gunmen. The aim was and it still is to cater for the differently abled children of the Somali community and beyond, living in this region. It is run by the Camillian Sisters (Kenya) under the administration of the Catholic Diocese of Garissa. The reason is to help reduce the level of

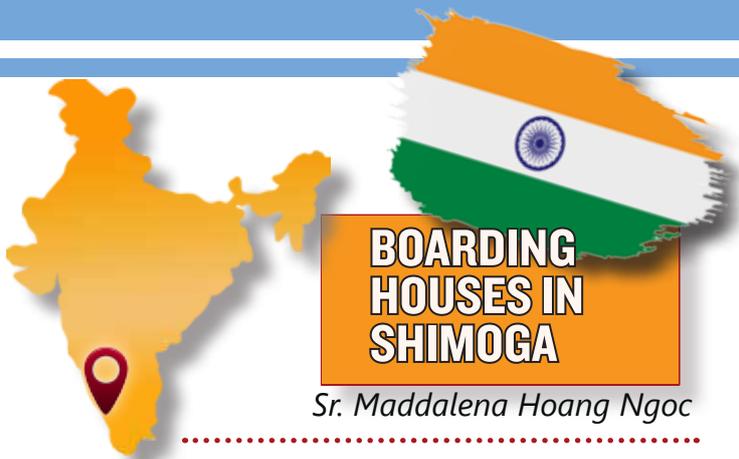
illiteracy of the children with disabilities and those belonging to disadvantaged families.

"Education is key to knowledge for every child. As missionaries this project will help us to witness the love of Christ, the Teacher, of the less fortunate in our contemporary society regardless of the physical, economic status and creed."

The Camillian Sisters organize also for a get together of Missionary Childhood to visit the children of the center as one way of breaking religious barriers between Christians, who are the minority, and the Muslims who are the majority. It is an enriching experience as both Christians and Muslims children are able to play together without any prejudice.

The purpose of the project was to renovate the old classrooms, in order to provide to the children a safe and well conductive learning environment.





BOARDING HOUSES IN SHIMOGA

Sr. Maddalena Hoang Ngoc

The budding mission diocese of Shimoga (India) is in the 30th year of its existence. Although the diocese covers a vast geographical area of 22,893sq kms., due to lack of rainfall and various other reasons, the area has not seen much development. Most of the Catholics in this area are migrants. Most of the rural children have no access to quality education in their villages. 95% Catholic children are studying in Catholic schools. In total, there are 17 Hostels/Boarding houses. The boardings provide community atmosphere, healthy food and better living conditions.

Thanks to the subsidy received by Holy Childhood Society, many programmes have been introduced, books, stationery, medication, food, etc. have been provided. The children are happy to stay in the boarding. Since there, they feel like a family.

A boarder shares his experience in staying in Divya Kripa Boarding:

"My name is Manedeeep, I coming from a poor family. My mother is sick, she has undergone major surgery, and my father goes for vendor work when they were not able to give me education. They asked me to join them for work but I wanted to continue my studies for I was studying well and had lot of interest for studies. My father was finding very difficult to maintain the family and he told me that he was not able to pay the fees. I joined my father for work and my friend who was in Divya Kripa boarding asked me to approach Divya Kripa convent Sisters and I requested my father and pleaded him. The Sisters hearing my desire and struggle of my parents showed the good will and in requesting the school, management admitted me to the school and gave me shelter in the boarding. Joy of tears flowed in my eyes for receive uniform, books and the needed things to go to school. Being satisfied with good food, I put all my efforts for I was already late admission. Along with my studies I also learnt the value of education, followed discipline way of life and also began to help my classmates who were in need".



MANY OF THE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CHANGE AND BECOME SOURCE OF HELP IN THEIR FAMILIES

Augustine George Palayil

Paramaribo Diocese, Suriname.

The applicant of the project Sr. Maria Boomiki Foe Karmel Djoe, SSVN, describes the project -vacation camps- as follows:

(...)With love and enthusiasm, the sisters complied with the special request of the former Bishop of the diocese to engage themselves with the formation of the children and youth.

The present situation of youth and children in Suriname is alas sorrowful in family matters, as many of them live in broken families in which the father or mother is absent, in many cases even both. The children live in situations exposed to violence and immorality. In time of vacations, this even becomes a greater danger for the children as they do not even spend part of the day in school. During the camp, the children receive teachings about the catholic faith and morals. For the majority of these children, it is only during the camps they receive preparation and are able to make their confession. Many of the children attended the camps then became active in their parishes.

Motivate and stimulate love and loyalty to the catholic teaching at an early age will increase the chance for becoming firm and faithful Catholics in the future. Helping with the good formation of children in catholic and moral principles will help to secure a better future for the country and its people. (...)

The project and efforts of the Sisters are particularly appreciable being in tune with the charism of this Society.

The Christian families as "domestic churches" have the double role: to be believing and evangelising communities, as taught by the Apostolic Exhortation of St. John Paul II, Familiaris consortio.



But, as we see, also from the description of the project, many children are denied of their right not only to be part of such domestic churches, but even of their basic rights. In this scenario the charism of the Missionary Childhood - prayer and solidarity- and its activities are ever more relevant.

Let us remember in a special way all the persons, especially the children and the families, undergoing severe hardships due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CUBA

CHILDREN'S PRAYER FOR THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Lord Jesus

Our brothers and sisters are suffering the effects of the pandemic in their countries.

Have mercy on them;

Do not abandon them;

Embrace and protect them.

Since nothing is impossible for You,

By your power we pray,

Stop the spread of this pandemic

And eliminate it from our midst.

Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother

Embrace these our suffering brothers and sisters with your love.

Grant that they never feel abandoned by Jesus, your Son.

Amen.

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory be

BULLE  **IN**



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