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**HOLY CHILDHOOD AND
THE HOLY SEE**

THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

**LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN...
SLOVAKIA**





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IN THIS ISSUE

3 EDITORIAL

Sr. Roberta Tremarelli

4 HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE

10 HOLINESS IN AN ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

Fr. D. Prof. Lawrence Iwuamadi

16 THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICES

NIGERIA

SIERRA LEONE AND GAMBIA

GIAPPONE

PARAGUAY

ARGENTINA

CUBA

FROM THE DIOCESES

DEM. REP. OF THE CONGO - DIOCESE OF KOLE

BURKINA FASO - DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU

TCHAD - DIOCESE OF DOBA

GHANA - ARCHDIOCESE OF ACCRA

KYRGYZSTAN - APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATION

ANTIGUA - DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S BASSETERRE

JAMAICA - DIOCESE OF MANDEVILLE

PERÚ - APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF IQUITOS

BANGLADESH - DIOCESE OF BARISHAL

50 LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN... SLOVAKIA



Pontifical and holiness are two key words in this new issue of the Bulletin.

These are words, however, that should always remain engraved in our hearts and minds as we undertake a journey of missionary discipleship in which, incorporated into a particular Church but as members of the universal Church, we seek to be docile to the Spirit in order to become holy, as God is holy.

To this end, a meeting of the European Conference of Missionary Childhood (CEME) was held in Geneva last March on the theme of “holiness”. This was the common theme proposed by this Secretariat in 2019, and, although the meeting had to be postponed for two years due to Covid, the theme was maintained.

This aspect of holiness is present in the very name of the Society from the moment of its foundation. In fact, Bishop Charles de Forbin Janson placed it under the protection of the Holy Childhood of Jesus. Christ’s was a Holy Childhood, because He is the Son of God, who sanctified the age of childhood. In this way, the Founder hoped that, by following His example, children and young people could become saints.

To be holy does not mean to be perfect but to be open to the life of God.

Holiness consists in bestowing dignity to the human person and remembering that he or she has been created in the image and likeness of God.

I am happy that currently several National Directions present the example and life of the saints within their program and initiatives for the members of the Society of Missionary Childhood. In this sense, we promote the sanctification of life, by educating children to grow not only from a human, physical, and intellectual point of view, but also in their desire for God and their aspiration to become saints.

With reference to the 100th anniversary of its Pontifical designation, and in order to involve children and adolescents in a more conscious and profound way, the International Secretariat has

launched a survey: “What does the fact that the Society of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence is Pontifical mean to me?”

The question is addressed to children and teenagers, but it is also an opportunity for every adult involved in the Society to deepen their understanding of the meaning and implications of this pontifical character.

Let us therefore ask ourselves this question and try to answer it with the help of the pages that follow.

Let us now take a few steps back into the past, into the first hundred years of the Society, to share what the Pontiffs said about it when it was not yet pontifical but had already obtained their approval and blessing.

The words of Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI help us to relish the value of Bishop Charles de Forbin Janson’s proposal not only at the level of material cooperation, but with reference to the relevant dimension of education to faith and of the faith.

On May 22, we celebrated the beatification of Pauline Jaricot, and this event gave many National Directions, along with the children, the opportunity to learn more about her life and the charism entrusted to her by the Holy Spirit. I hope that the same will be done with regard to the Founders of the other two Societies. In fact,

this would help promote, from an early age, a sense of belonging to a universal network of prayer and charity at the service of the Holy Father, in favor of the evangelizing action of the Church, in support of the young churches.



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI

Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood



BLESSED PIUS IX

(1846-1878)

1856

Pius IX raised it to the rank of the canonical works of the Church and defended it. In the short *“Quum aetate qualibet”* of July 18, 1856, when many years of experience and multiple relationships made it possible to give an opinion, the Pope wrote:

The charitable association of the Holy Childhood is born, it is true, from another society of charity known as the Propagation of the Faith, however, if we consider both what is its main object and the people who are naturally called, we consider it more than worthy of being supported by a special act of Our Authority. Indeed, if on the one hand it is dedicated to the salvation of the unfortunate children of China and other idolatrous countries, condemned to a premature end by the barbarism of their fathers, and redeems them from a cruel death and purifying them in the salutary waters of baptism, on the other hand it calls and encourages Catholic children to make every possible effort to save these abandoned children. With the very exercise of this sublime act of charity, it leads them to recognize for themselves, in the most propitious period, the privileged grace for which God has deigned them to be called to the admirable light of faith. This is what this new Society of Christian charity is. Far from obstructing the Propagation of the Faith even minimally, on the contrary, it has been shown that it helps it wonderfully. [...]

And we do not want to forget Our Venerable Brother Bishops of the Catholic Universe. In drawing their attention to this new Catholic institution, We invite them to introduce it to one’s own Diocese and to carefully cultivate this young branch that is sprouting in the Lord’s Vineyard, and which will reward them with the most abundant fruits.



1869

To the Central Council of the Holy Childhood

My dear Sons – Greetings and Apostolic Blessings.

We have just received the letter that you sent through our Venerable Brother Louis Gabriel, the Bishop of Adrianople and Vicar of the Province of Tche-Kiang. It was a great consolation to Us considering the great persecution of the Church, which We regret to see clearly spreading and intensifying everywhere.

[...] The numerous public demonstrations of faith and piety that are admirably manifested in all regions give Us strength and courage as they demonstrate that religious sentiment has not only not grown cold in the people, but that it is even more alive and stronger than ever. [...]

Your letter nourished this hope by announcing not only a greater generosity of the faithful towards the Holy Childhood, which you direct, but also an increase in the number of children to whom you have been able to bring help to provide for their earthly needs and for their eternal salvation. All of this in spite of all the difficulties that the present situation presents. We are convinced that this testimony of divine benevolence can only bring you courage and greater reassurance, so that you can continue with more joy and steadfastness what has already begun and which proves to be very salutary. Without a doubt, all this can only bring eternal glory to countless souls and a significant reward to many sons of the Church as well as to yourselves...

[...]

Given in Rome, at St. Peter’s, 16 June 1869, the 23rd year of Our Pontificate



1870

■ To the Central Council of the Holy Childhood

For future reference

With great satisfaction, We gladly grant all sorts of spiritual favors designed to encourage religion and the salvation of souls.

For this reason, wanting to listen to the humble prayers presented to us, in the name of the Director and of the Priest Members of the Superior Council of the pious Association, better known with the name of Holy Childhood, canonically established in the city of Paris and so, as already said, full of confidence in the mercy of Almighty God and in the authority of His Apostles Peter and Paul, based on the content of these letters, we grant that each and every one of the Directors of this Association, the priests, the members, the leaders of the groups which include at least 12 members, starting from now and for a duration of five years, with the consent of the Ordinary (which would be null if this letter of ours were missing), they will be able to privately or in the usual way in church, bless crosses and medals, granting the plenary indulgence “in articulo mortis”, on the deathbed, as well as the rosaries with the application of the indulgences known as Santa Brigida. We ask that the present letters and dispositions retain their value by virtue of Our apostolic authority, notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter’s, under the fisherman’s ring, on March 15, 1870, the 24th year of Our Pontificate

For Cardinal Parracciani Clarelli Félix Profili, substitute

■ To the Central Council of the Holy Childhood - Apostolic Brief

For future reference

Recently, in the name of the Director and of the members of the Superior Council of the pious Association usually known as the Holy Childhood and canonically established, as is known, in the city of Paris, we were asked to deign to add to spiritual favors already granted to this Society by the Holy See, other new favors by virtue of our benevolence; therefore, taking into account the eternal salvation of all the faithful and wanting to consent as far as we can in the Lord, to these pious requests, we think we can grant them in the way indicated below. Entrusting ourselves to the mercy of Almighty God and under the authority of the Apostles Peter and Paul, by virtue of Our authority, we grant to all current or future members and associates of this Institution, who have not yet been able to be admitted to the Eucharistic table because of their age, to be able to freely and lawfully earn the indulgences granted to this Association for which this pious practice had been declared necessary, provided that, according to the judgment and permission of their respective confessor, carry out a pious work instead of Holy Communion.

Furthermore, according to the provisions contained in these letters, we grant to all and to each of the members already registered in the aforementioned Association, or who will register in the future, that all and each indulgence, plenary or partial, granted by the Holy See to this same Society, or that will be further granted to it, can be applied by universal suffrage or that are equally granted to Christian souls who, united in God through charity, have left this world. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary. The present letters will have a future perpetual value.

Given in Rome, at St. Peter’s, under the fisherman’s ring, on March 20, 1870, the 24th year of Our Pontificate.

For Cardinal Parracciani Clarelli

Signed: F. Profili, substitute



LEO XIII

(1878 - 1903)

1883

Since the third year of his pontificate, on December 3, 1880, His Holiness Leo XIII had declared in his Encyclical “Sancta Dei Civitas”, how he had at heart the development of the association, however, much more intimate and touching is his papal letter of February 3, 1883.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Holy Childhood coincided with the Pontifical Golden Anniversary and, evoking the memories of the Nunciature in Belgium in 1843, he wrote:

When we retrace the beginnings of this Society in Our memory, we feel a sweet joy and full of consolation. In fact, when it was born under happy but humble auspices, and We held the office of Apostolic Nuncio according to the law of the Belgians, We dedicated the greatest interest towards it and gave it all our support, since it already appeared to us as a saving Society, full of the spirit of humanity and charity. Raised now, by the Will of God, to the peak of apostolic dignity, We feel, for this Society of the Holy Childhood, which has become so flourishing both for the number of associates and thanks to its goodness, a long-standing affection and we rejoice in seeing it celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its birth in the same year in which We celebrate that of Our episcopal consecration.

AND HE FILLED IT WITH SPIRITUAL FAVORS



HOLY PIUS X

(1903 - 1914)

1913

Leo XIII wanted all the children of the Catholic world to become part of this pious Association. This desire was renewed by Pius X on December 17, 1913:

In the deep desire to know all the Catholic children gathered in the pious and saving association of the Holy Childhood, which will contribute admirably to their good education and will attract the best of heavenly graces to their families, We wholeheartedly grant them, as well as to their blessed parents, the Apostolic Blessing.



1911

- To dear son Maurice Deminuid, Apostolic Protonotary, General Director of the Superior Council of the Holy Childhood in Paris.

Dear son, greetings and apostolic blessing.

The letter you sent us, which included the Annals of all the activities carried out during the last year by your Society, filled us with profound joy in these days of the feast of the Nativity of Jesus. We have well understood that thanks to the effort and the work of this Society, all the works you have undertaken have been covered with success and brought to a successful conclusion. Continue to protect and extend the good that comes and derives from Holy Childhood, especially towards these little children who, once born, do not see the smiling face of their parents and towards those who, deprived of everything, need to be helped by the pity for their neighbor. The words of the prophet Isaiah concern you in a particular way: "Ad ubera portabimini et super genua blandientur vobis" (As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms, and fondled in her lap Is 66:12). May the children educated by your care be a consolation in your old age; may the innocence of the children saved from mistreatment by your dedication eliminate the evil that usually comes from the malice of old age.

In order to continue this beautiful Society with an even greater commitment from day to day, may you animate the thought that it is about the cause of Christ. And we know the words that he himself said about it: "Qui susceperit unum parvulum talem in nomine meo, me alzipit" (And whoever welcomes even one of these children in my name welcomes me). Therefore, may Our Apostolic Blessing grant you the happiness promised to those who are merciful. As a testimony of Our paternal benevolence, we grant it to you, dear Son, and to all the Society you lead, with our affection.

Rome, St. Peter's, January 16, 1911, the 8th year of Our Pontificate

Annals of the Holy Childhood
April 1911
n° 379
p. 75-77)

- Autograph letter of Saint Pius X to Maurice Deminuid, Apostolic Protonotary, General Moderator, President of the Superior Council of the Society of the Holy Childhood

To our dear son Maurice Deminuid, Apostolic Protonotary, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his position happily held as venerable President of the pious Society called Holy Childhood, we wholeheartedly extend our congratulations for the good done in the Society, which does nothing but increase in an admirably way from year to year, thanks to its fervent commitment. For our part, let us ask the Lord for every kind of benefit and joy for him. As a testimony of Our particular benevolence, we affectionately grant him the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, May 9, 1911

BENEDICT XV, ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1914, MADE HIS OWN THE WORDS OF HIS VENERABLE PREDECESSOR AND DID NOT CEASE TO SHOW HIS DEEPEST SYMPATHY FOR THE LITTLE INFIDELS AND THEIR LITTLE SAVIORS



BENEDICT XV

(1914 -1922)

1914

Autograph letter of Benedict XV

We make ours the desire expressed by our late predecessor of venerable memory, to see the number of members of the Holy Childhood grow and we wholeheartedly grant the apostolic blessing to the emeritus Director General of this important Society and to those who collaborate in its activity.

Vatican City, September 13, 1914



1919

FROM THE APOSTOLIC LETTER **MAXIMUM ILLUD**

We also strongly recommend the "Association of the Holy Childhood", a group that arranges for the administration of Baptism to dying children of non-Christian families. This organization is particularly commendable because of the fact that our Catholic children can take part in it and in this way learn to appreciate the value of the faith that has been given to them. If they learn this, they will also learn to associate themselves with the work of sharing this gift with others.

May the great Mother of God, the Queen of Apostles, hear our united prayers and call down upon the heralds of the Gospel the graces of the Holy Spirit. As a token of these graces, venerable Brethren, and as a proof of Our cordial good will, We very affectionately impart to you, and to the clergy and people in your charge, Our apostolic benediction.

Given in Rome at Saint Peter's, on 30 November 1919, the sixth year of Our Pontificate



Holy Childhood prayer card - year 1919



PIO XI

(1922 -1939)

1924

His Holiness Pius XI, the Great Pope of the Missions, addressed Monsignor Méiro, Director General of the Society of the Holy Childhood, during the audience granted to him on May 12, 1924 with these words:

Holy Childhood is a very beautiful Society, not only because it contributes considerable sums to the missions, but above all because it forms children for the apostolate. In order to stimulate vocations, may the reverend parish priests multiply the feasts of the Holy Childhood, and each parish celebrates its own. This feast will be an occasion for preachers to speak about the apostolate and its necessity. May Catholics throughout the universe know that they must collaborate in the work of evangelization.

We ardently desire that the Society, already so prosperous, develops even more.

We express this desire because of the missions it supports, of the poor little pagan children to whom it gives the life of the soul and also for all small members, whose zeal it stimulates, awakens charity and, in this way, arouses the spirit of apostolate.



1927

We have an even more recent testimony to His paternal benevolence.

It is May 12, 1927, and the Holy Childhood also wished to have its share in the pontifical jubilee celebrations, also having the joy of being represented before the Holy Father by some fifteen thousand of its little members, gathered in the courtyard of San Damaso. The Most Eminent Protector of the Society, Cardinal Vannutelli, initially made himself the interpreter of all, before the common Father, who then wished to entertain “His beloved little boys and His beloved little girls, beloved of His heart, beloved of the Heart of Jesus”. He wanted to assure them that this moment together is for Him among the most distinguished graces of His pontificate; it is among the most beautiful manifestations on His 50th anniversary of priesthood. Overflowing with joy, He said, in noticing that this crowd of children perfectly symbolized the magnificent development of such a fruitful Society, as Holy Childhood. What an admirable growth in the number of members, of collaborators! The incredible increase in offerings is proof of this. In recent years, concluded the Holy Father, the numbers have risen from 9 million to almost 29 million francs, and, therefore, it must be said that this is not a mere human work. Delighted with such encouraging progress, Pius XI first congratulated Bishop Méiro, “who has truly worked miracles.” Faced with such consoling results, the Holy Father felt like thanking the Lord and asking Him to continue to support the Holy Childhood with His graces. At the same time, He invited all the members to persevere in their missionary zeal to make the Society known and help it spread: You have done a lot, His Holiness said, but you can do even better, and you will. After that, the Holy Father’s hands rose in a solemn blessing, which he wished to extend to the whole crowd of little ones grouped at His feet and to those scattered throughout the world who take an interest, from near or far, in such a beneficial Society.

Connaître – Organ of the Missionary League of Schools
3rd year, No. 28, October 1931

HOLINESS IN AN ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

PASTORAL EXPERIENCES IN THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE PRESENTED AT THE EUROPEAN HOLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

Even after 10 years of teaching and working on ecumenism, I realise through this presentation that there are aspects of the pursuit of Christian unity that are still open for deeper reflections. This paper gives me, for the first time, the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between ecumenism and holiness. For that, I am thankful for this invitation to speak at this European Holy Childhood Conference of *Missio* on the topic of holiness in an ecumenical context. I will speak from my experience of teaching at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey for a decade now.

A general outline of the relationship between holiness and ecumenism will be the first thing I do in the presentation. I will then locate holiness in an ecumenical context using the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey as the primary point of reference because of its importance as a centre for ecumenical education and formation in the World Council of Churches.

ECUMENISM AND HOLINESS

While addressing a delegation from the Church of Greece in 2002, Pope St John Paul II highlighted the connection between ecumenism and holiness when he said,

In our responsibility that consists in tending toward the ecumenism of holiness that, with the help of God, will eventually lead us to full communion — meaning neither absorption nor fusion, but a coming together in truth and



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*love (cf. *Slavorum apostoli*, n. 27) — we must organize our collaboration and work together to make the voice of the Gospel resound forcefully throughout the Europe that is ours where the Christian roots of the peoples must be revived.¹*

These words of the Holy Father make clear that ecumenism of holiness entails being together in “truth and love” as the way to full communion. Seeking the truth is important because “ecumenism is not premised on compromise as if unity should



be achieved at the expense of truth.”² The witness that issues from the ecumenism of holiness is a proclamation of the gospel as truth. It makes for a credible Christian testimony of the gospel of Christ for which he prayed, “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:21).1).

The Second Vatican Council makes this connection between ecumenism and holiness based on the biblical exhortation to “be holy, for I am holy” (1Peter 1:16). God’s holiness is tangible in the love and the relation of the Trinitarian family. The Trinitarian relation is not only an example for Christian unity, it is also a force that attracts us to holiness. The common purpose that results from our efforts at being transformed by God’s holiness predisposes us towards, and gives us a mark of, unity. In that regard, the search for Christian unity is also a search for holiness and vice versa.

Building on the universal call to holiness³, , the decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* invites all to “aim at Christian perfection and, each according to his [or her] station, play his [or her] part that the Church may daily be more purified and renewed.”⁴ This is the channel for the Church to attain “the fullness of catholicity proper to her, in those of her sons [daughters] who, though attached to her by Baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her.”⁵ Christian divisions oppose this call to holiness. “Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.”⁶ Praying for the unity of his followers in John 17:21, Jesus reckoned that the unity of Christians is God’s project. As God’s project, it is therefore a holy task. Thus the call to holiness is at the foundation of the quest for Christian unity, as *Unitatis Redintegratio* aptly states:

All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the

*closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual fraternal love. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name, “spiritual ecumenism”.*⁷

In spiritual ecumenism, Christians pray together, and for one another, and they read the Bible and engage in other spiritual activities in the spirit of humility and conversion. Ecumenical formation, on the other hand, serves “to awaken the hearts and souls of Christians to the ecumenical imperative;... and to form persons of dialogue now, especially in order to pave way for the education of future generations who are committed to the quest for unity.”⁸ Spiritual Ecumenism and ecumenical formation are therefore essential and indispensable components in the search for Christian unity. For a holistic training of future leaders and key players in the ecumenical movement, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey brings together these two elements.

HOLINESS AND ECUMENISM IN THE LIFE OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE AT BOSSEY

A group of pioneers that were active at the beginnings of the World Council of Churches founded the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey in 1946. Among them was Visser’t Hooft, who later became the first General Secretary of the WCC. Struck and shocked by the destruction the World War II caused in Europe and elsewhere, those founders were convinced that a more active engagement of the churches could make a difference. They therefore committed themselves to establishing Bossey, as a place where young and future Church leaders could meet and share and work through the pain of disagreement that separated peoples and churches endure. Bossey was thereby to become a place of reconciliation and healing and a safe place where people could have honest discussions on difficult subjects. It was to be a place of encounter where

people could meet, get to know each other and nurture friendship and love across various divides.

Despite its evolution, the core content of ecumenical formation at Bossey remains true to its foundation. “Though the content of its programmes developed over the years, Bossey has kept its initial vocation of providing a free academic platform and ecumenical laboratory where people from different parts of the world, often from antagonistic camps can come for studies and ecumenical formation, for reconciliation, healing of memories and growth into a new ecumenical identity”.⁹ The Institute’s holistic formation brings together reflection and action, academic research and intercultural engagement and learning. We combine these with an emphasis on community life, common prayers in the chapel, and study visits to different confessional and faith communities. Thus, the Bossey curriculum maintains the traditional paradigms of unity in the WCC, whereby Mission and Evangelism emphasizes *unity in witness*, Faith and Order focuses on *ecclesial unity*, while Diakonia and Public Witness seeks for *unity in action*. Attentive to contemporary concerns, the formation has also integrated the questions of economic and ecological justice, sustainable development, migration and other contemporary challenges, showing how crucial ethical and practical issues have become in the quest for the unity of Christians.

Bossey has a diverse and multicultural faculty from different regions and Church traditions. It receives about 35 students into the regular ecumenical academic programmes and about 21 for the Interfaith summer course for the so-called Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—annually. Since the early 2000s, the Ecumenical Institute expanded student representation to include young people from WCC non-member churches such as Pentecostals, Evangelicals and Orthodox churches that have withdrawn from the WCC. It is important to mention here that the Catholic Church, which is a non-member, has supported ecumenical formation at Bossey since the late 1960s through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

of the Vatican, by, among other ways, sponsoring two students Orthodox students annually and seconding a fully supported Catholic professor to serve on the faculty.

Described as the “laboratory of the ecumenical movement”, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey offers a vibrant learning atmosphere that promotes a passion for ecumenism by engaging students in a triple project of *walking, praying and working together*. The more challenging part of the ecumenical formation at Bossey is living together in community. It is in life-together that the real *walking, praying and working* takes place and is tested. In my view, that is where holiness in ecumenical formation truly manifests. In the 75 years of its existence, the Institute has trained over 5000 women and men from all parts of the world. All of them speak of the life-changing experience they had at the Institute. The shared joys and pains of the ecumenical learning become their embodied manifestations of ecumenical holiness.

HOLINESS IN PASTORAL EXPERIENCES AT BOSSEY

In an ecumenical context such as Bossey, where young people from different regions of the world and different churches and communities live, eat, study and pray together, holiness is a matter of practical life. They experience it as existential, rather than ascetic holiness – what I prefer to call “practical holiness.”

WALKING TOGETHER

Community life is an important component of the formation Bossey offers. Striving for ecumenical holiness in relationships would therefore include the disposition to listen, to tell the truth in love, to be patient and to be humble. The humility this entails allows one to step back to revisit theologically and culturally informed positions without fear of the vulnerability that it takes to do so. Living together, the students confront themselves and others on such tough issues with a growing sense of trust of themselves, others and their collective



experiences as content for ecumenical formation. As they question their identities and that of others, they grow and in that process break down stereotypes and prejudices as they incrementally discover a path towards friendship. This aspect of the formation takes place in the living room of the students' residence, in the dining room and on the way, as they walk together to and from their residence to go for prayers, meals and classes. As Pope Francis said, "The metaphor of walking reveals the real meaning of our life, a life that is not self-sufficient but always in search of something greater."¹⁰ An essential aspect of walking together is the need to look out for one another that requires a secure disposition to not be scared to see one's previously held positions challenged and trusting that no one intentionally seeks to undermine another's belief or stance. Walking together as an aspect of ecumenical formation in holiness rests on our ability to nurture trust in our common striving for deeper communion with God and with others.

PRAYING TOGETHER

At the heart of student-life at Bossey is the common prayer that takes place in the main chapel. It is an important and integral part of the life at Bossey as the place of ecumenical spirituality. Students take turns to prepare and lead the daily morning prayers in various groups. This way, the Institute lives out those words of Pope Francis, "Prayer is the oxygen of ecumenism. Without prayer, communion becomes stifling and makes no progress, because we prevent the wind of the Spirit from driving us forward."¹¹

Thus, the centre of the ecumenical spirituality at Bossey is the Bible and biblical spirituality grounded in the common prayer and in the study of ecumenical hermeneutics and intercultural biblical studies. Through that, we have discovered the veracity of the saying that "all Christians agree on the Bible provided it remains closed". The moment we open the Bible for common prayer and studies, we realise how differently people from different backgrounds come to the holy book. Each individual

brings presuppositions formed by confessional and cultural backgrounds. Ecumenical spirituality therefore requires the ability to listen patiently to others' interpretation with a sense of trust that "whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realization of the mystery of Christ and the Church."¹² The awareness of the existence of different historical and cultural modes of theological transmission "opens the space for mutual enrichment between confessions, since they can realise that the distinctive ways in which they have understood the Bible may emphasize different aspects of the Bible but that they do not need to exclude or condemn one another."¹³ For that reason, student-organised and led ecumenical prayers form the core of the pastoral experience for ecumenical formation at Bossey. In praying together, students not only pray for Christian unity but also for a "change of heart and holiness of life" (UR§8) as they encounter 'the other' in God's holy presence. studenti hanno organizzato e guidato le preghiere ecumeniche dal fulcro dell'esperienza pastorale della formazione ecumenica a Bossey. Pregando insieme, gli studenti non solo pregano per l'unità cristiana, ma anche per un "ripensamento e una santità di vita" (UR§8) mentre incontrano "l'altro" alla sacra presenza di Dio.

WORKING TOGETHER

This aspect of formation at Bossey, which is related to the practical call to holiness, is about the shared goal of building up our common home, the *oikumene*. We call this important component of formation "service learning" and use it to bridge the gap between theoretical ecumenism and its application in real life. Care for creation and community service are good examples of working together that have been applied to ecumenical formation at Bossey. The vegetable and fruit garden at Bossey is an important aspect of working together in the practice of earth care through eco-friendly and sustainable agriculture. Community service requires that students take turns to wash

dishes in service of the community. The aim is to help students become “sensitive to the needs of the other and to act accordingly.”¹⁴ Such sensitivity to creation and other people’s needs nurtures virtues in students that honour God’s people and the rest of creation as sacred. The ability to work in service of others and the rest of creation when viewed as a grace is an act of worship that orients one towards God and therefore growth in holiness.

In an ecumenical context, therefore, one needs to see holiness from the perspective of Christian unity. With formation that aims at unity, in truth, and in love, the Ecumenical Institute hopes through *walking, praying* and *working* together it helps to deepen the pastoral dimensions of the formation it offers to students and thereby to nurture holiness.

ECUMENICAL FORMATION AND THE EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN

Holiness in the ecumenical context needs to be holistic, in that it must address every aspect of faith and life. Such an approach offers an opening for churches to walk, pray, and work together in a way that connects ecumenical formation at Bossey to the welfare children. I bring this dimension in intentionally since this is a meeting of European Holy Childhood Conference.

In the history of the World Council of Churches, the fellowship has organized three consultations on Children, namely, in Geneva (1996), in Brazil (1997) and in Harare (1998). The churches made a declaration at the 10th Assembly on “Putting Children at the Centre”. That declaration led to the publication in 2017 of an important document titled “Churches’ Commitments to Children”. This document, prepared by the WCC secretariat in collaboration with the member churches and children’s rights experts, has become an ecumenical *vademecum* for addressing “the needs of children as an integral part of the ecumenical commitment to the pilgrimage of justice and peace.”¹⁵ The commitments focus on three areas, namely, 1) promoting child protection through church communities, 2) promoting meaningful

participation by children and adolescents; 3) to raise church voices for intergenerational climate justice and supporting initiatives for and with children and adolescents.

The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, as part of the World Council of Churches, is aware that no holistic ecumenical formation can ignore the place of children and therefore, gives it particular attention in the Core Course on the History of the Ecumenical Movement. The contemporary ecumenical realities convince us that, 1) It is paramount to form future and actual church and ecumenical leaders of the need to ensure that the churches and places of worship are safe spaces for children; 2) It is important to integrate, even minimally, aspect of ecumenical spirituality into the curriculums of Sunday schools and catechesis, so that children from an early stage could learn not see other expressions of Christianity as enemies.

ECUMENICAL HOLINESS AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE ECUMENISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Ecumenism in the 21st century is at crossroads. Some people use the expression “ecumenical winter” to describe the current state of the ecumenical movement. I do not agree with the pessimistic expression. I think that the ecumenical efforts of the past century have been successful and remain fruitful. However, I understand the disillusionment that stems primarily from the lack of common understanding of Christian unity and what paradigms of unity to propose to the contemporary society. This lack of agreement explains the tension between those that emphasise the importance of doctrinal concerns and those whose perspective is that churches need to focus on what they could do together in society.

Arguably, with the influence of post-modernity, there is a desire to replace Ecumenism with World Christianity today. Faced with these contested positions, even if the goal of Christian unity remains, the visions and the way towards it differ. This ultimately affects how people may view holiness



in an ecumenical context. From the standpoint of Bossey Institute, the current context begs for curriculum transformation that entails continuing to grow and deepen closeness to God as we discern what *walking, praying* and *working* together entails in this century in the search for the visible unity of Christians.

CONCLUSION

God is holy, and all holiness belongs to God. Human holiness draws from our life in God because our holiness is from God alone. To the extent that the search for Christian unity “is a mystery that finds its highest exemplar and source in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity”, it is a search for holiness. Our common baptism into the Most Holy Trinity justifies the search for Christian unity. It is our baptismal call to rediscover our common humanity, common dignity as daughters and sons of God in Christ.

The bedrock of holiness in the ecumenical formation that Bossey offers is in the blending of academic rigour, community life, and openness to the Holy Spirit. The pastoral experiences at Bossey show that holiness in an ecumenical context demands being together, entails learning to listen to one another and to trust the Holy Spirit, who is at work in others and in us. It calls for a spirituality of sharing. It is in the exchange of spiritual gifts from our diverse confessional and ecclesial heritage that we deepen our communion with God and others. By letting ourselves experience the cultural richness of different churches and ecclesial communities, we open ourselves up to God to nurture in us the humility, patience, trust, and generosity that deepen a sense of community and generates love. With love at the centre, ecumenism is “a great enterprise operating at a loss”. It calls for a “mindset of service and growing in forgiveness.”¹⁶ As St Gregory of Nyssa puts it “When love has entirely cast out fear, and fear has been transformed into love, then the unity brought us by our Saviour will be fully realized, for all human beings will be united with one another through their union with the one supreme Good.”¹⁷

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NIGERIA

2022 HOLY CHILDHOOD NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION



YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES (ACTS 1:8)

The church in Nigeria celebrates the Holy Childhood National Day annually on a Sunday closest to the Feast of Presentation of the Lord. The celebration for 2022 took place on 30th January. The Theme of the celebration is “you shall be my witnesses” (Acts1:8). It is a special day dedicated to all children to re-awaken their missionary spirit and create more awareness about the Holy Childhood Association.

The day was well celebrated all Dioceses across the country. The Children in Most Parishes in Nigeria participated actively at Mass through singing parts of the Mass, reading and special presentations at Mass. Collections were also taken in favour of the Universal solidarity fund of Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood Association.

At the National Secretariat of PMS in Nigeria,

the National Director, Rev.Fr. Solomon Zaku presided over the 9:am Mass at St. Gabriel Chaplaincy, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, where he admonished the Children to be witnesses to Christ and one another in





proclaiming the Goodnews, he further noted that HCA enables the children to know Jesus, love Jesus and know about the situation other children in the whole World. Fr. Zaku stated that the Holy childhood has dual mandate: Prayer and Sacrifice (Spiritual and Material). Members of the Holy childhood are expected to pray daily, for the children of the whole world and also make sacrifices for the comfort of other Children through their mission bank.

HE FURTHER ENCOURAGED THE PARENTS TO ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION SO THAT THEY MAY GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

There was an evening session during which the children had Mission Rosary Procession. The theme of the celebration was explained to the children. by the children by Mr. Peter Adubi, National Coordinator, Young Missionary Movement of Nigeria (YOMM). He admonished the Children to be fervent in prayers and be true witnesses of Jesus Christ. He explained to them practical ways to be witnesses of Christ.



SIERRA LEONE AND THE GAMBIA



MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IN GAMBIA AND SIERRA LEONE

Like the other Pontifical Societies, the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood in the Local Churches of The Gambia and Sierra Leone are gradually growing over the past years. It is more organised at Diocesan levels than at the National level.

At diocesan levels, besides the Diocesan PMS Directors, there are also full-time catechists, priests, religious brothers and sisters; animators and coordinators appointed by the parish priests on voluntary basis, who help in the promotion of the Missionary Childhood.

At the national level, the situation is a bit different because the absence of full time animators and coordinators in some dioceses makes it very difficult to organise national activities. This was one of the important and urgent issues that was presented to the Bishops' Conference for discussion at their Plenary Meeting held from 24th to 31 January, 2022. The Missionary Childhood will be more structured at national level after

the appointment of full time animators and coordinators in all the dioceses

As regards the formation and animation activities at national level, much was not done last year mainly for the frequent interruption of the Covid 19 Pandemic that slowed down activities.

However, a program was scheduled for a National Bible Quiz and Singing Competition to take place in the capital city of Freetown. That decision was made at a meeting held with the Diocesan PMS Directors on 1st May, 2021. Owing to the arrival of the Omicron Covid in the country, the program did not materialise. Presently, missionary activities are ongoing in a low key in the various dioceses.

In all of the parishes, there is an organised Missionary Childhood Association (M.C.A) and children group that is commonly known as 'Special Friends of Jesus' (S.F.J.) that also include non Catholic children, who often join our Catholic children for certain occasions such as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter





Seasons in singing Carols; Bible quizzes in our learning institutions, where they are also taught the basic prayers and doctrine of the Catholic faith.

BY SO DOING, THEY SHARE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH THE NON-CATHOLIC CHILDREN

In the celebrations of Masses occasionally in our learning institutions, the children participate in the liturgy and thanksgiving masses are offered for them very often.

It is in their meetings in these groups that they are taught how to take care of the poor and needy; how to take responsibility in the Church as young missionaries; instil in them the sense and obligation of attending Masses, especially on Sundays, etc. In most parishes, they fill the Churches on Sundays in great numbers.

The attached photos are testimonies and experiences related to our children, youths, voluntary animators promoting the Missionary Childhood. These are photos taken during different activities organised for the children over the year.



- *voluntary animators (Religious Sisters and Lay Faithful) giving catechesis to children about their responsibility in the Church as young missionaries*
- *Outing organised for children at Easter by voluntary animators (Religious Sisters).*
- *Video Drama of the Christmas story organised by voluntary animators*
- *Children jubilating after a meeting held of how to celebrate the Missionary Childhood Day on Christmas.*



MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD DAY

The celebration of the Missionary Childhood Day was celebrated differently in the different dioceses. The common pattern in all of them was this:

- Weekly prayer sessions held on all the four Sundays of Advent in preparation for Christmas.
- Christmas retreat on the 24th December for a better understanding of the meaning of our salvation history.
- They took care of the liturgy on Christmas Day: acted as ushers, did the singing, procession of the Book of the Gospel, did the readings, announcements.
- Sharing of their little among themselves and with the poor was made after the Christmas Mass
- The Christmas Day was climaxed with outing.





PARAGUAY

ROSARY OF DAWN, WITH AND FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



TESTIMONIES

The Pontifical Mission Societies carried out their mission called "Mission of Compassion" in the city of Pedro Juan Caballero, in Paraguay and while the mission was taking place, photos, testimonies and videos of the activities carried out were shared, including the Rosary of Dawn with the missionaries and the community every day at 5 am. Not all the animators and members of the PMS were able to participate in this mission, so many of those who did not go followed and accompanied the mission through social networks. This is the case of the missionaries of the Nuclear Community 2 of the district of Choré, who seeing the photos, mainly shared by acquaintances and friends who were on that mission, felt the desire to do the same, to pray with and for children and adolescents from all over the world, every day, at five in the morning.

This is how the children and adolescents of this community, inspired by what they saw on social networks, met every day in their chapel, accompanied by their parents, to recite the Rosary of Dawn. We start by praying together, then sharing breakfast and some songs, full of joy and enthusiasm for the missions, because a small gesture full of love goes beyond borders.

*Chapel of the Virgin of Caacupe
Choré*



PARAGUAY

JAPAN



In Japan, the National Direction of the Pontifical Mission Societies does not have its own office, but makes use of a location at the Catholic Bishop Conference Japan (CBCJ) and the help of some of its employees, who assist the missionary animation of the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood.

Similar cooperation there is with the Secretary General of the CBCJ and with the bishops.

In Japan, at the diocesan level, there are 16 dioceses. Due to the small number of priests, for the most part, they have not appointed a Diocesan Director. So, it is the Chancellors of the Curia who help with the celebration of Missionary Childhood Day.

Following the designation of a Diocesan Director in the Archdiocese of Tokyo and the Diocese of Sapporo, the National Office was able to begin a missionary animation planning even with these two local churches as well.

On Jan. 30, 2022, in Japan's approximately 900 dioceses, was celebrated the Missionary

Children's Day, entitled "Sharing Hearts." For the celebration, each parish, congregation, school and the National Direction prepared poster (2,800) and postcard for children (165,000) for outreach and awareness, which were then distributed to parishes (900), religious congregations (540), schools (740: kindergarten 600, primary to high school 110, university 30), others (620: curia, hospitals, etc.).

Diocese of Niigata

"Akita Holy Spirit Institute" High School has started the "Children helping Children" project. In February 2021, it has begun a collection of aluminum cans to be exchanged for money to be sent to needy children around the world through Holy Childhood. The collection takes place twice a month: the high school students crush the cans and the children take care of the cash permutation.

This is also their small participation in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

世界こども助け合いの日

2022年1月30日



わかち合うところは
たからもの

世界中の子どもたちのためにお祈りと献金をお願いいたします。

教皇庁宣教事業 児童福祉会



HOLY SPIRIT INSTITUTE AKITA

"CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN" PROJECT

TESTIMONIES

In February 2021, as a joint project between Holy Spirit High school and Holy Spirit kindergarten, we started collecting aluminum cans and exchanging them for money to be sent to the children in need in Japan and around the world for the Holy Childhood Sunday (The last Sunday of January every year).

With the cooperation of the parents, the kindergarten collects aluminum cans twice a month. The members of the high school's St. Mary's Club (Seibo-kai club) then take and crush them one by one. After doing so, they will return it once again to the kindergarten.

With the 5-year-olds, we would take the cans to the aluminum can collection box at a nearby supermarket. If we put 10 cans in the box, they would be exchanged for 5 yen. Children were so excited to get shining 5-yen coins!

The first day, we were able to get only 30 yen from 60 pieces of aluminum cans. How hard to earn money! However, there are people in Japan and around the world who collect recyclable items like this from trash and take them to a



trader to be exchanged for a little money which is indeed a huge labor.

Through this simple project, we hope that the children could experience the importance and difficulty of labor, solidarity with people especially with other children who are living in poverty, cooperating with the Holy Spirit High School students, and the joy and sense of accomplishment that comes from contributing to the society. "Let's start with what we can do!" This is also our small participation in the SDGs.

We got total amount of 26,687yen from this project and donated to Holy Childhood Association at this time. We would like to continue this Holy Spirit Academy Combined Project "Children helping Children" and to be connected with children all over the world.



ARGENTINA



PROJECT

WITH MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD WE GO AROUND THE WORLD FOR PEACE

Waiting for Missionary October which invites us to bear WITNESS to what “we have seen and heard”, the National Secretariat of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence (IAM) has proposed a missionary challenge; go around the world for peace for the month of September!

This initiative, which took place in almost all the Dioceses of the country, had the goal to walk as if to embrace the world at every step and in order to do this, it was necessary to count the kilometers traveled by each community to reach forty thousand kilometers (40,067, to be exact) represented by the line of the equator.

During the month of September and a few weeks of October, some groups of the IAM from different Dioceses of the country (and from other Dioceses of the world such as, for example, Poland) repeated the initiative,

walking and invoking Peace in the world. After each walk they counted the kilometers traveled, sending the total on a spreadsheet which, at the end of the project, would have reflected the final mileage of the whole country. They managed to cover 28,525.26 kilometers, just under eleven thousand kilometers short of their target. The fact of not being able to win the challenge gave the necessary impetus to institutionalize this walk and repropose it in the 2022 race, reinforcing the invitation to continue adding stages to achieve this goal.

Here are some testimonies collected by the different Dioceses of the country on the occasion of the walk for peace, which was held in September 2021. For most of the Dioceses of the country this event was the first activity in presence of the year.





"The walk for peace was very emotional. Children, adolescents, families and animators all felt renewed, full of love and the peace that comes from God.

Walking means following Jesus - we join our friends, our brothers and sisters from all over the world. Only IAM can succeed in transforming the world by transforming the simple into the extraordinary."

Maria Regina Parish
Diocese of Concepción

"Morena, a teenager, wanted us to travel more kilometers because we are few in number and therefore we planned a walk of 6.5 kilometers. 4 adults accompanied her and it was so moving to see how she took care to add the kilometers and, above all, to bring a message to those we met, not only with words, but with her presence, which did not go unnoticed: the dove of peace, the banner of the diocesan IAM, the hat of the IAM, etc."

Carmen and Bernadette Chapel,
Diocese of San Justo

"As a group of the IAM it was the first experience, both for families and adolescents and, above all, for children. They assumed their missionary commitment by going to the neighborhood and they lived this experience with a lot of joy and emotion (...) My name is Rocío and I wanted to say that, as I walked, I was surprised by the curiosity of the people, who came out of their houses and was encouraged to discuss with the children, they even took pictures. We all aspire to peace wherever we go. How many people have asked us to also pray for Peace within their families!"

Parish of the Divine Word
Resistencia

A MISSIONARY CHALLENGE





“We organized a bicycle excursion because, every year, we do it with the IAM to launch the patronal novena, but this year was very special because we did it for peace and this gave it a different meaning. Children and families lived it intensely and, today more than ever, we pray for peace. The St. Francis school children and other children and families who wished to participate in this prayer joined us. It was an unforgettable day! Even if the distance separates us from the IAM of other countries, we felt very, very united and I can say that we almost had the impression of walking side by side. We were all deeply moved.”

Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary
Diocese of San Luis

GO AROUND THE WORLD FOR PEACE

“We joined the walk with the images of the Pilgrim Mother by visiting the chapels of the parish that are located in the surrounding area. We stopped at San Luis chapel, in a rest area, San José chapel and San Cayetano chapel, where we concluded the march with the Holy Mass. In each chapel we recited a short prayer and wrote an intention to present to Maia, our Mother. In one of the chapels one of the children of about 10 years of age said that he could not write and so I asked him if he wanted me to write his intention. He agreed and dictated to me: I am grateful for the life you have given me and please free my mother and my grandmother (his mother and grandmother are in prison). The fact that a child asks for the release of two important figures for his growth struck me a lot. Thank you for this initiative”



Parish of San Roque
Diocese of San Nicolás de los Arroyos



“We connected the parish church to our chapel of Our Lady of the Good Way. We walked downtown, on the beach and along the waterfront, stopping to read the Word, in the context of Bible Month, where God speaks to us of peace, and we prayed. Luis Aguirre, our parish priest, although diabetic and recently underwent surgery, accompanied us, putting his mission as pastor before his personal suffering. It was very moving when children, adolescents and families placed their toil at the feet of Mary our Mother for peace in the world and for the whole world to know God.”

Santa Margherita Maria d’Alacoque
Chascomús

**TO WALK TO
EMBRACE THE
WORLD AT
EVERY STEP**

“The walk took place along the main street of the village. The children, accompanied by their families and their neighbors, participated in the event by dancing, singing songs, carrying banners and showing their joy. It was a great experience that makes the work of the IAM visible in the village.”

Parish of Saint Anthony of Padua
House of the Sisters of the Poor of
Saint Catherine of Siena
Archdiocese of Tucumán



CUBA



I HAVE COME TO SET THE EARTH ON FIRE, AND HOW I WISH IT WERE ALREADY BLAZING!



Enthusiasm, joy, participation, re-encounter, missionary fire ... were the characteristics that marked the celebration of the Easter of the Missionary Holy Childhood and Adolescence (IAM) of Santiago de Cuba.

On Sunday, April 24, 2022, more than 150 children and adolescents of the IAM of Santiago de Cuba gathered in the Parish of Sant'Antonio Maria Claret, for a long-awaited meeting.

The participants from 9 parishes of the city were welcomed with the magnificent animation of the young leaders. Everyone could feel the wonderful work of the IAM in their hearts and could celebrate the joy of Easter.

Among presentations, dances and missionary songs, a dynamic developed that favored group work and made it possible to share and deepen the knowledge of the richness of the

IAM. Group reflection, representing the five continents, the mutual sharing of missionary ideas and experiences, was a moment of joy that contributed to maintaining the desire and animation for an ever more serious and generous commitment. Three hours full of fire, like the missionaries themselves, the fullness of an intensely lived afternoon was evident on all faces. Every word spoken, every experience, every moment lived, increased the love for this missionary work.

"To follow Jesus we need enthusiasm, joy. I encourage you to keep this missionary spirit and to continue to be faithful to Jesus". These are the words of Fr. Yosbel Lazo, National director of the PMS, who thanked everyone for the welcome and the effort to celebrate the joy of the Resurrection together with the IAM of Santiago de Cuba.





PROCLAIMING JESUS, EVERYONE'S DUTY

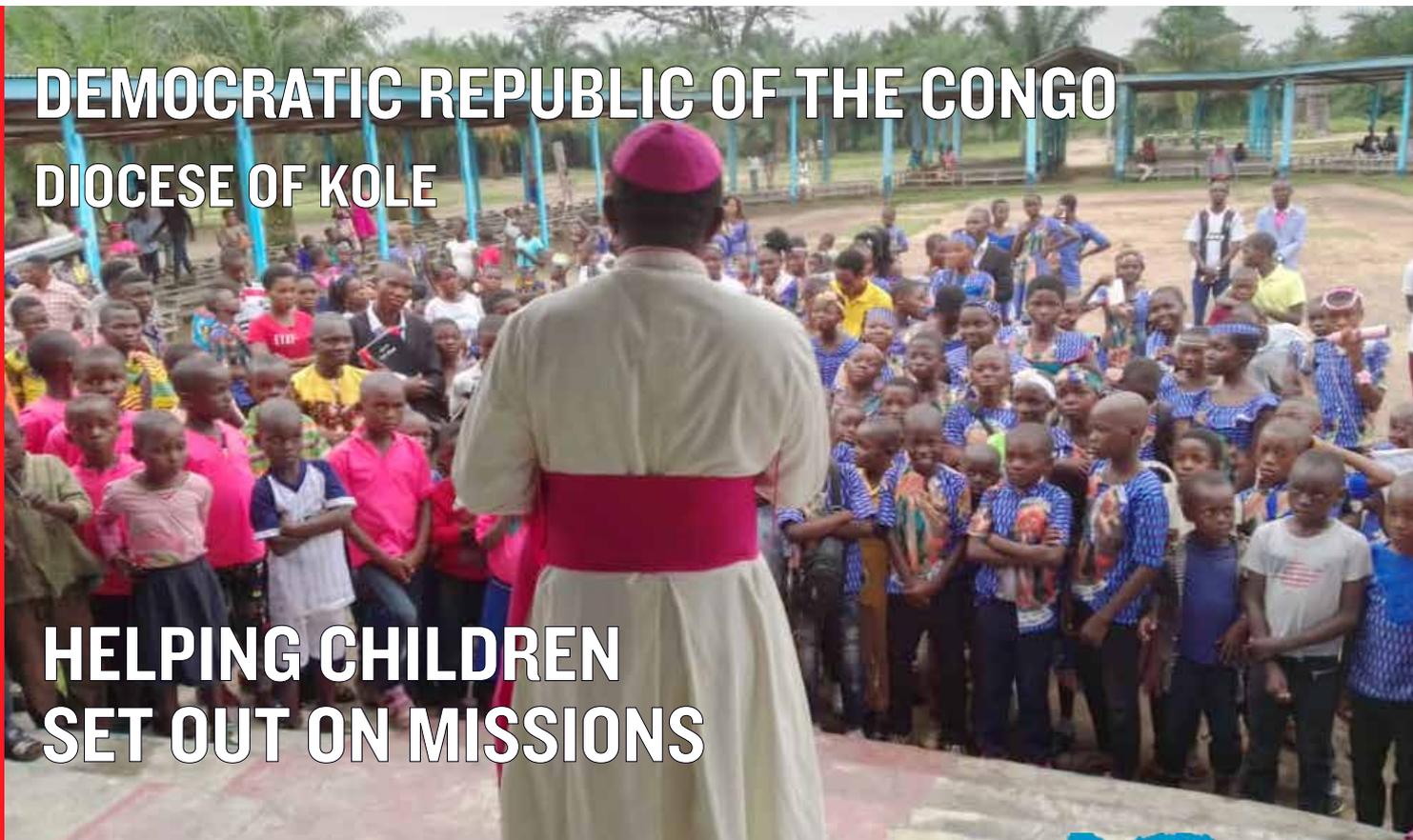
During school break week near Easter, a group of teenagers from different communities of the archdiocese of Camagüey dedicated their holidays to an Easter mission in Vertientes.

It was a wonderful week for these young missionaries, who brought the message of the risen Lord to different families, door to door.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DIOCESE OF KOLE



HELPING CHILDREN SET OUT ON MISSIONS

The Diocese of Kole, ecclesiastically erected on September 14, 1964, is located in the heart of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dependent on the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), it is a suffragan of the ecclesiastical province of Kananga and has an area of 66,000 kilometers.



Since 1984 the Diocese has vibrated to the rhythm of the pastoral care of children and young people (PEJ). And every year training moments are organized for the children by the older ones, affectionately called YAYA in the local language (Lingala). There is also this custom in the Parish of St. Joseph of Vango in the deanery of St. Paul of Lomela.

Here children aged 5 to 18 are divided into four categories:

the small

(TONTSHINTSHI, in the local language)

An initiation movement into missionary life from 5 to 7 years of age, founded in 1985 in the parish of Saint Teresa of Dumba, diocese of Kole. It is based on Jesus' invitation "Let the children come to me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

(Mt 19:14). We use African stories and images as educational material, highlighting the values of reception, gratitude, truth, collaboration, sharing and forgiveness. The movement's slogan is OSALA which means We rejoice.



the stars

(TOOTO or MINZOTO in the local language)
Originating from the figure of the patriarch Abraham, the movement of the Stars welcomes children aged 8 to 10, eager to shine in their life as stars of the Father of believers, indicating the way with their fragments of light. As for the little ones, here too we use African stories and images as didactic material for teaching.

the kizito

With its motto "Let's be courageous", this movement, born in 1979 in the archdiocese of Kinshasa, is well established in the Parish of St. Joseph of Vango. Children aged 11 to 18 follow the example of their patron saint Kizito, a Ugandan martyr, burned alive at the stake in Namungongo between 1885 and 1887. They evangelize the other children of the communities with joy, life and faith in Christ. They greet each other by saying: Salamu-Amani (Shaloom-Amen!) And are not afraid to go on missions to other parishes of the diocese during the school holidays.

the anuarite

Born around 1979 (like the Kizito), this movement brings together girls aged 11 to 18, following the great virtues of joy and service of the Blessed Anuarite. A young Congolese woman who, at the age of 17, knew how to help and bring happiness to the poorest and most needy. The Anuarites of the parish of St. Joseph of Vango strive, urged by their coordinators, to imitate the life of their inspirer, collecting water from the well and the larvae for the elderly and sick people in their respective communities ...

IN THIS WAY, THE CHILDREN HELP OTHER CHILDREN TO REGAIN MISSIONARY MOMENTUM AND TO IMITATE THEM IN THEIR FAITH



The missionary children and young people of the Parish of St. Joseph of Vango diligently follow the teachings received, when they find themselves in their initiatory grove¹, called Nganda in the local language. On their return, around 5 pm, they sing songs of hope and joy that arouse the admiration of those who listen to them, especially children.

“LET THE CHILDREN EVANGELIZE IN THEIR OWN WAY!”

Salamu Amani!

*Father Justin Etotshi Okeya
Coordinator of Missionary Childhood
former diocesan director of the PMS of Kole*



¹ a place far from the village intended for the teachings to children

BURKINA FASO

DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU



THE DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU HELPS CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY TO SMILE AGAIN WITH JESUS CHRIST

CURRENT SITUATION OF STREET CHILDREN IN THE DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU

In Burkina Faso all the children of the CV (Cœurs vaillants - valiant hearts) and AV (Âmes Vaillantes - valiant souls) groups know this beautiful song: "It is missionary week for children from all over the world. Let us pray for all the children who suffer throughout the world". This song calls into question the situation of the child in our parishes and in our environments of life. In the Diocese of Koudougou, the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees acts throughout the territory of the Diocese in collaboration with the Diocesan Office for Childhood in favor of children who find themselves in difficult situations. The aforementioned song prompts us to act for the well-being of all children in the Diocese. During this pastoral year 2020-2021, the Commission for the Pastoral Care

of Migrants and Refugees worked in favor of the education, training and accompaniment of children in difficulty in the locality of Koudougou and in the parish of Saint Jean di Fara, particularly in the communities of Fara and Poura. To address the problem of educating children in difficulty, three categories of children must be distinguished:

-  **VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
-  **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON THE STREET**
-  **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHILDCARE INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING PRISONS**



Each of these categories falls within the scope of a specific intervention strategy, be it preventive, corrective or post corrective. Like other dioceses in the country, the population of the diocesan territory is mainly young. Indeed, more than half of the population (58.6%) is under the age of 20 and children under 15 make up 48.1% of the population. This rapid demographic growth is forcing rural youth to migrate to cities in search of work, thus increasing the ranks of the unemployed or doing small unstable and often precarious jobs. The percentage of children in difficulty is estimated at around 15%.

Promoting the universal missionary spirit so that the Church may live throughout the world - this is the mission of the Pontifical Mission Societies in general and of the Society of Missionary Childhood in particular. Attentive and sensitive towards the poorest children, the Society of Missionary Childhood has achieved one of its objectives in collaboration with the Diocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of Koudougou.

THE MAIN CAUSES OF THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY IN THE DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU

Our experience in the field of street children has allowed us to identify the reasons of their situation. These are family conflicts, the child's position within his family, as well as family economic difficulties which are also factors that weaken the family balance, resulting in the child being exposed to the following situations: non-attendance at school, idleness, exodus from the countryside, street situation, begging. The poverty and misery of the parents also justify the presence of children on the street and put them in situations of vulnerability. The other causes are, for example: single-parent families (children of single mothers), the lack of education, the persistence of some Koranic teachers in letting children beg, orphans left to fend for themselves. In addition, the children of parents who emigrated to Ivory Coast who are entrusted to their grandparents, the lack of love of parents and society towards children. These are the main reasons for the presence of so many vulnerable and abandoned children in the Diocese.



Educational activities of children in difficulty

FAMILY CONFLICTS
CHILD'S POSITION
WITHIN HIS FAMILY
FAMILY ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SITUATION OF THE CHILD IN DIFFICULTY IN THE DIOCESE OF KOUDOUGOU

The situation of these children has had the perverse effect of putting them in this pathogenic environment.

Our experiences allow us to describe the characteristics of these consequences:

SERIOUS CRIMES (SALE OF DRUGS, THEFT WITH A STABBING WEAPON, AIDING AND ABETTING, PROSTITUTION)
STRONG DRUG ADDICTION
STRONG IDENTITY BELONGING TO THE STREET
PROLONGED BREAKDOWNS OF FAMILY TIES
NUMEROUS PASSAGES IN INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT.



Street children met during the patrols



THE ACTIONS OF THE DIOCESE TOWARDS CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY

Faced with this phenomenon of childhood in difficulty, there are many challenges to be faced in order to save the faith and the future of our Diocese and our nation. The actions of the Diocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees consist in showing closeness to these orphaned, abandoned, street children. The goal is to contribute to their protection through the following activities:

carrying out night tours from 11pm to 4am to meet street children (we made eight outings and met almost a hundred children in the town of Koudougou and in the villages of Fara and Poura). Promote access to school for children in difficulty (in this year 2021, 8 children) and their training (6 children). Promote their return to the family (12 children) and make home visits (VAD) to communicate with the child and parents. Bringing food



to the parents of the children and granting micro credits to parents who wish to commit to helping their children. Celebration of Christmas for children in distress in the city of Koudougou.

All these efforts have been possible this year thanks to the generosity of men and women of good will, whom we thank again. Given the specific nature of the education of some children in difficulty, the commission also emphasizes the training of its members towards specialized education and hopes, thanks to God and the many supports of all, to create a reception center, hospitality, education and training for these children. The Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees thus hopes to spread the Gospel among children in difficulty, marginalized and stigmatized to restore their dignity as a child of God like others.

*Abbot Norbert Zongo
In charge of the pastoral care
of refugees and migrants*

- CARRYING OUT NIGHT TOURS TO MEET STREET CHILDREN
- PROMOTE ACCESS TO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY
- PROMOTE THEIR TRAINING
- PROMOTE THEIR RETURN TO THE FAMILY AND MAKE HOME VISITS
- BRING FOOD TO THE PARENTS
- GRANT MICRO CREDITS TO PARENTS WHO WISH TO COMMIT TO HELPING THEIR CHILDREN
- CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN IN DISTRESS IN THE CITY OF KOUDOUGOU



Christmas of children in difficulty with other children in the bishopric of Koudougou



CHAD

DIOCESE OF DOBA

WHOM SHALL I SEND? HERE I AM, SEND ME!



TESTIMONIES

This theme of Mission Sunday in 2020 was the motto of all the children of the Diocese of Doba, not only throughout the year, but also thereafter. To bring together all the children of the Diocese, the Diocesan Direction of the PMS decided to create a missionary animation team formed by Sr. Loredana Mennino and a group of young people, who had the clever idea of touring all the parishes of the Diocese (12), staying a week in each, organizing missionary animation through various activities and testimonies.

Given the long distances between the villages, it took us about two years to complete our tour in the Diocese of Doba.

The purpose of these animations was to show the children how the Good News of Jesus Christ spread throughout the world up to Chad and, precisely, in the territory of Logone Orientale in 1929 thanks to the Spiritan Fathers and, subsequently, to the Capuchin Fathers.

During our visit, the children had the opportunity to get to know the most significant figures who have marked the history of mission in the world, such as: St. Daniel Comboni, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, patroness of our Diocese, St. Domenica Savio, St. Francis of Assisi, Saint Giuseppina Bakhita and, in particular, the witnesses of faith in Chad, such as Monsignor Michele Russo, first bishop of Doba.

Each village had about 400/500 children. We have had the experience of a living, young Church which has a constant desire to know Jesus more and more. This made us animators feel like missionaries in our own country. In fact, we made the slogan of this Mission Sunday our own and we saw here, in our context, the lack of workers and the abundance of the harvest. We therefore wanted to respond to this call of God, who never ceases to call those who are available to work in his field.

We were marked by the joy and welcome of the children who, even though they did not know us, trusted us from the first moment, participating actively and dynamically in all the proposed activities. We also visited other young people from the villages, disciples of Jesus, who, seeing us animate the children in joy, asked us to be able to join us to be missionaries in their own village. There is no greater joy than giving and bearing witness to Christ, arousing missionary impetus in others. If this is the purpose of the mission, then we can proudly say that we have completed the mission that the Lord has entrusted us and are ready to continue to proclaim aloud: "Here I am, send me!"

*Sr. Loredana Mennino
Diocesan Director of PMS
February 21, 2022*

A missionary is a person who has been entrusted with announcing the Good News. It is for this reason that we, animators, are committed to this itinerant mission with Sr. Loredana, in the various parishes of the Diocese, with the aim of animating the children on the theme of World Mission Sunday "Who will I send? Here I am, send me!"

In this work of missionary animation we have noted a profound joy in the proclamation of the Gospel, an immense happiness and a great love for children who, in turn, want to animate others as we did with them.

This led us with pride to continue the animation in other environments as well, in the light of the biblical passage that says: "Go out to the world and tell the Good News!"

The animators of the Diocese of Doba

CHAD

GHANA ARCHDIOCESE OF ACCRA



Corpus Christi Parish has been a cosmopolitan Catholic Community since 1989 located in Sakumono a suburb of Tema in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. We formally became a parish in 2005 and most recently are now part of the newly created Tema Deanery of the Accra Archdiocese under the current leadership of Most Reverend Bishop John Bonaventure Kwofie.

Our parish has over the years till date had an active Children's Liturgy with Children between the ages of 2- 15years and recently a developing Teens Liturgy to help our transitioned Children in middle school. We have a membership of at least 500 children, 50 teenagers and 10 Missionary Childhood Animators respectively. We also engage the services of our Parish Catechists to help with the formation of our Children in the Parish. We are ably supported by our Parents, Guardians, Priests and Parishioners who have all been very instrumental in supporting us also in our works and activities.

Currently we are evolving from the concept of Children's Service/Sunday School to Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) at various levels. We would love to have manuals, materials and

resources to help us achieve this as it is done in other dioceses where the MCA has been established effectively. We also have a parish Children's Choir as one of our many but to mention a few achievements. We are a very vibrant team who love the Lord.

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD'S WEEK

As part of being a listening Church, Children of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood Association of the Corpus Christi Catholic Church-Sakumono, celebrated the Missionary Childhood Sunday under the theme "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8) from the 6th- 13th February, 2022.



Activities to mark the week included the Launch and meeting with the Parents which was held on the 6th February, 2022. Series of selected talks and discussion topics were shared on social media platforms during to enable Parents bond with their children and learn more about being a witness of Christ.

To end the weeklong celebration, Children together with their Animators went for a Street Evangelization on Saturday 12th February, 2022 within the environs of the Sakumono Township amidst brass band music carrying placards with messages from the Holy Bible. The call was to get people to return to God The thanksgiving Mass



celebrated by Rev. Fr. Sylvester Segbawu on 13th February, 2022. Children were colorfully adorned in their M.C.A T-shirts. They also played an active role in the Mass, taking up the Singing, Ushering,

READING AND ALTAR SERVING

After Mass, children visited the Kressner Handmaids Orphanage ran by the HDR Sisters at Otaten near Ardeyman on the Am asaman-Obom to spend time and support the Children at the orphanage with some gifts as their motto Children Helping Children.



*Anthonia Senam Abla Fesu Adu
Animator Corpus Christi M.C.A.
Sakumono - Accra Archdiocese*



KYRGYZSTAN APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATION



Kyrgyzstan is one of five mid-Asian former Soviet republics that suddenly appeared on the world map in 1991 as an independent country. Kyrgyzstan borders Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan is approximately 200,000 square kilometres with 90% of its surface covered with mountains reaching over 7000 meters. The population is approximately 6 million with a mix of Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Russians, Uygurs, Dungans, Germans, Ukrainians, Kurds, Tadjiks, Turks and Poles. (In all, Kyrgyzstan's inhabitants represent about 60 nationalities). Muslims dominate the religious landscape, but they are not radicals.

The Apostolic Administration of Kyrgyzstan is one of the smallest Catholic Church entities in the world and probably one of the most marginalized. Catholics (Polish, German settlers and others) arrived at the end of the 19th century. In the 1930s and 1940s, tens of thousands of Catholics were deported to Kyrgyzstan by Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin. The first legal parish was established in the sixties. This time parishioners were mainly German. Step by step with many difficulties was built a little church. In 2006 Pope Benedict

XVI established in Kyrgyzstan the Apostolic Administration. Most of the Catholics here have Polish, German, Ukrainian or Korean roots, but more and more people of other ethnic backgrounds are attending the Holy Mass: the Russians, Kyrgyz and Uzbek. Most of them are elderly and very poor, but there is also quite a few young people and children. There are three regular parishes on the territory of the Administration and more than ten smaller communities regularly visited by a priest every week.



THE “CHILDREN’S REHABILITATION AND SPIRITUALITY CENTER”

The work of the “Children’s Rehabilitation and Spirituality Center” is doubtlessly the most significant catechetical and charity undertaking of the Catholic Church in Kyrgyzstan. It is also our largest and most direct activity of engagement with Muslims. The activities of the Children’s Center are very effective in the sphere of pastoral and charity work—and key to the Church’s endeavor to witness and to serve the spiritual and humanitarian needs of the poor. The Project seeks to reach mentally, social, physically challenged children across the country. 900 children during the summer months and an additional 200 in the remainder of the year participate in programs that include more than thirty different groups—mainly children and youth groups but also adults. In particular, disabled children in this area suffer from an extreme lack of basic care. For us very important is to grow up new generation of Christian.

SUMMER CAMPS

Many of our children are very poor background and they family situation is often irregular. A big advantage for catechization are a summer camp for children. Such camps



THERE ARE A FEW CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND IT MAKES IT ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT FOR THE YOUTH: THEY HAVE NO BELIEVING FRIENDS

are very important for us, because they are giving us a great chance to do pastoral work with children. Most of the children during the year are living in the villages, which are visited by a priest once every two weeks. There are a few children in our communities and it makes it especially difficult for the youth: they have no believing friends. Summer camp would make it possible to achieve more pastoral work with children as compared to all year round without such a camp.

This year catechetical camps was for very special for our children and youth because in effect of COVID they should wait two years to meet their believing in Christ friends. Most of the year they are living in Muslim environment

MOST OF THE YEAR THEY ARE LIVING IN MUSLIM ENVIRONMENT AND ONLY AT SUNDAY THEY CAN MEET IN LITTLE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

TESTIMONIES



and only at Sunday they can meet in little catholic community. During this summer we have three catholic catechetical camps: for children from south Kyrgyzstan (30 children) 11-18 June, for children from north Kyrgyzstan (40 persons) 14-20 July and for Catholic youth from all Kyrgyzstan (30 persons). This last camp we planned organize beginning of August, but because some of us become sick of COVID we move it to the middle of September. The themes for camp for children was St. Joseph. The youth had the conferences about human relation and love. Every day we have Holy Mass, rosary and different kind of religion lessons. Naturally we have also different kind of sport activity, swimming in the lake, tour to the mountains. Children was involved in different craft workshop for example making icon of Our Lady. Children themselves should help in the kitchen and by housekeeping. In organization of the camps are involved Franciscan Sister working in Kyrgyzstan, 3 priests and volunteers from Poland and France. Also many of our adult parish member was helping us during camps and what is very important: big group of our youth was animators during camps for children.

*Father Remigiusz Kalski SJ
National Youth Chaplain
Director of Children Rehabilitation Center
on Issyk-kul Lake*





ANTILLES ANTIGUA & BARBUDA DIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S BASSETERRE



TESTIMONIES

As a testimony both to the commitment of PMS teams involved with Missionary Childhood animation in the Antilles, and to their resilience in the face of a most challenging Covid-19 setting, we present the testimony of the PMS Director for the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre, Ms. Noleen Dyett-Azille.

This Diocese is unique, as it is the only AEC Diocese that comprises several national entities, namely the independent island nation of Antigua & Barbuda, the independent twin-island nation St. Kitts & Nevis, and the British Overseas Territories of Monserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. Ms Noleen has Missionary Childhood animators from all the islands in her team, is very experienced, committed and imaginative.

Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the planned activities for the years 2020 and 2021. Churches and schools were closed, and it was almost impossible to have suitable face-to-face activities. Mission Sunday and the activities that surrounded Mission month also had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 protocols and curfews. While the virtual option was available, we realized that parents and children seemed "over wired" and the difficult decision to curtail activities was made. This was especially painful since 2021 was the 50th anniversary year of the Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre and many plans were in place to celebrate, inclusive of rededication of our Missionary Childhood Association (MCA). Through the perseverance of the youth of the parish, we were able to have a two-week summer camp with only one quarter of the usual number of participants. Even with this activity there was so much fear of exposure that many parents were not willing to have their children participate... During Mission Month we embarked on a weekly series of activities and invited the Catholic School on island to participate. We encouraged special assemblies and prayer services to celebrate the Feast of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Bulletin, WhatsApp, and Online messages were sent out to suggest ways to celebrate Mission Month inclusive of weekly challenges. For example, one such

challenge requested parents of toddlers and children to take an ordinary sock and hang it in their bedroom or another room in their home. Each day of the month they were to help the child pray for someone and add that person's name to the prayer sock... A Missionary Sensitization video was created by the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit, and this was sent out worldwide highlighting what Mission meant from the perspectives of children. Sound bites were created to highlight the theme and meaning of Mission Month. In December, on the Feast of St. Lucy, there was a children and youth Mass and Christmas Lighting Competition. The Diocese of St. John's-Basseterre will aim to strengthen its MCA in the schools and in the parish... The Synod on Synodality 2021-2023 activities had to be implemented, thus our missionary animation will centre on listening and helping children to understand synodality. We look forward to a better Mission year in 2022. Hopefully, missionary animation and zeal will be alive in our diocese. We will begin with formation for the YPOP (Young People of 4 Praise) Group to help them help the children who will in turn help other children.

Ms Noleen Dyett-Azille
PMS Diocesan Director

ANTILLES - ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

ANTILLES JAMAICA

DIOCESE OF MANDEVILLE



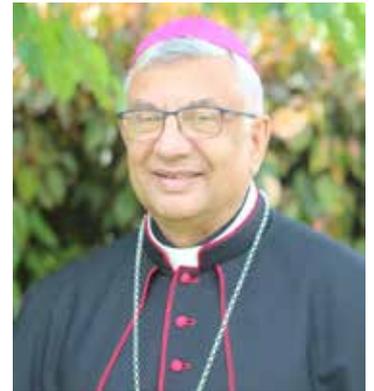
The PMS Team of the Diocese of Mandeville prepared and published a 2021 Missionary Childhood Calender, which is the result of a missionary drawing competition for children.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

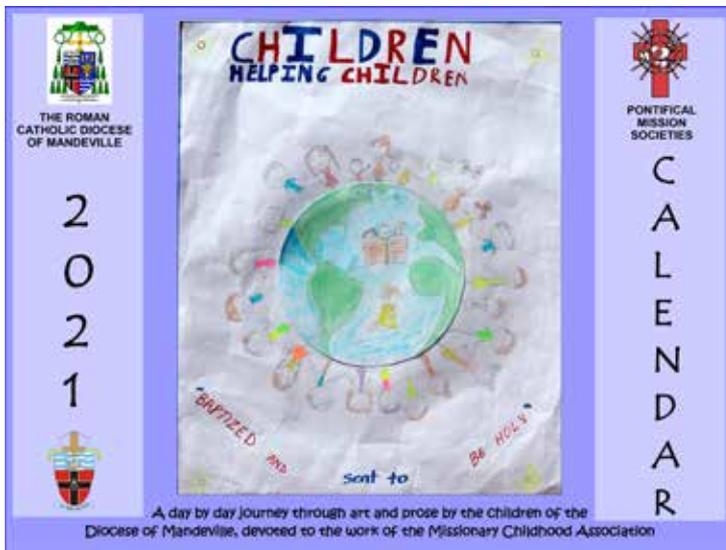
The Theme of our Missionary Childhood Association 2021 Calendar is "Baptized and sent to be holy!" As in previous years we invited our children (from Parish and School) to express our theme through the medium of art. A calendar is a useful tool as it provides a guide for our year and highlights special moments. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis wrote a letter in October 2020 to the Church and the world inviting us to reflect on our lives and to make some important decisions to change our way of living. He called us to build up our human family, recognizing every person as a child of God and in need of our love, respect and encouragement. I

challenge us then as we live through the days of our 2021 calendar that we seek to become holy and live as God's family.

With every blessing and prayers,



*Most Rev. John D. Persaud
Bishop of Mandeville*



**cover image by
Emmorie McNamee
1st Place (9-11 yrs)
Mount Saint Joseph Prep School,
Mandeville**





Christine Iwudyke, 3rd Place, (12-14yrs)
Sacred Heart Church, Christiana



Gloria Iwudyke 4th place, (12-14 yrs)
Sacred Heart Church, Christiana

To Our Devoted Friends of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Our Missionary Childhood Association Calendar once again with color and creativity captures our theme, “Baptized and sent to be holy!” These youngsters bring enthusiasm, appreciation and even a fresh look at the Call to Mission. That’s the call Jesus gave all of us with his words, “By this they will know you are my disciples—by your love for one another!” I feel our young calendar artists understand “love” both as “mission” and as “holiness!” Look at the youngsters’ drawings, their exciting colors, their imaginative ways to show real life situations. Check out September with Mario Morris’ million dollar smile as he tells us, “I’m on a mission to help those in need of help!” I smile at Jaheem Whyte’s July’s drawing of his own baptism by his pastor, Fr. Paul Mushi. I feel November’s drawing is special: Gloria and Christine Iwudyke, of Sacred Heart, Christiana, offer some creativity to holiness. Their details include not just a wheel chair patient-- but the leg in a cast! Even the young lady helping the poor Rasta man is wearing stylish pumps!!! Our youngsters’ drawings agree with Pope Francis:

“The Christian Community gets involved

by word and deed in people’s daily lives. We bridge distances, willing to humble ourselves if necessary to embrace human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.” (Joy of the Gospel. #24)

I am always proud of our Missionary Childhood Calendar. But this year brings a special pride--- Covid-19 hasn’t stopped our children. They had to make greater efforts to share to share their skill and spirit. Yes, they make us proud. They are a credit to their families,

to their principals, teachers along with their Pastors and Catechists! I congratulate all.

*Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P.
PMS Director
Diocese of Mandeville*

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS:

- Mount Saint Joseph Prep School
- Christ the King Mission, Braes River
- Holy Spirit Church, Maggotty
- Sacred Heart Church, Christiana
- St. Anthony Church, Oxford
- St. Croix Church, Santa Cruz
- St. Gabriel Church, Balaclava
- St. Mark’s Mission, Farm, Lititz
- St. Martin de Porres Church, Victoria Town
- St. Robert Bellarmine Church, Chapelton



PERÚ

APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF IQUITOS

The Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos is one of eight Catholic vicariates in Peru. The Vicariate is located in the Amazon rainforest of Peru and its area of evangelization expands between the provinces of Maynas and Loreto in the Department of Loreto. Its headquarters is located in the city of Iquitos capital of Maynas province and of Loreto department as well.

The Mission was established on a territory that exceeded 300,000 km² and covered the Marañón and Amazonas rivers with their tributaries to the limits with Brazil and Ecuador, a region populated by only 50,000 inhabitants, 10,000 of whom lived in Iquitos. Peruvian immigrants from the Selva Alta, colonies of Spaniards, Portuguese, Chinese, Jews and others, were attracted by the illusion of rubber in the area.

It currently occupies an area of 100,142 sq. km. with a population of 951,400 (in 2004) of whom 770,200 (about 81 percent) profess the Catholic religion.

Regarding the condition of children, more than 30 percent of children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition, while nearly 50 percent of children between 5 and 56 months suffer from anemia. Children and adolescents make up about a third of the population in this region. In this region of Peru, the percentage of children in neglect is very large.

“CASA DE LA NIÑA DE LORETO”

The *Casa de la niña de Loreto* (House of the child Mary of Loreto) is run by the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará. They devote themselves not only to welcoming girls and young women, but also to catechesis and integral formation.

Christian doctrine meetings were held throughout the year 2020 and 2021, encouraging girls to attend the sacraments and receive them with good preparation, especially spiritual.

Catechesis classes are developed within a framework of integral formation, so every morning from Monday to Friday, there are three workshops, including in the first shift in the morning catechesis (separated into groups based on age and years of participation in catechesis) and the other two shifts that complement are craft workshops, singing and after-school activities.

Christian and missionary education is encouraged

through training that orients to a life of grace and sacramental and missionary experience, through sessions in which the gospel is learned day by day, formation sessions and also intellectual education,



all for the purpose of strengthening human virtues and harmonious psychophysical growth, through the exercise of small responsibilities, strengthening the will, etc...

Manual labor becomes important in the integral development of children, in learning crafts, sewing, making rosaries, carpets, etc. Crafts are a tool capable of generating the acquisition of new knowledge, awakening our senses and those of our neighbors. With crafts, we will help you enrich your ability to communicate and express yourself, as well as expand

your ability to see, understand and interpret the world. All of which help their healthy development and can then be passed on in the oratory days.



*I am RONDA PUA HUIÑAPI
I am 12 years old.
In this year, we went on mission in a community
called Santa Maria.
Father gave us a missionary cross. We visited
small towns, played with children and also
taught them catechism.
We invite people from the village to come to
Mass. We also teach children and babies to sing
songs of Our Lady and God.
We prayed the holy rosary with them and they
learned how to pray.*

*I am MARIA IUDITH TELLO REYES and
I am 12 years old.
In this year, I have been preparing and studying
catechism a lot to receive Christ for the first time
in my life.
I live in the Casa de la niña de Loreto in Iquitos.
When I was about to receive the Eucharist I felt
that my heart was beating very fast and I was
very excited.
When I was at the time of the offertory, I asked
him to always come spiritually, open the door
of my heart, and enter me so that I could be a
faithful girl to him and to the Virgin.
When the priest said, "This is my body given for
you," I felt such immense emotion that my soul
rejoiced, and when I received Jesus, I felt that my
soul was happy and so was my heart.
For me, my goal was to receive Christ for the
first time in my life.
I promised her to be her handmaiden, to be an
obedient child, and not to offend Him so much.*



BANGLADESH DIOCESE OF BARISHAL

In Barishal Catholic Diocese, there are about 5,188 children who belong to the age-group of 5 to 14 years. Most of the families of these children are located in villages near by parishes. The main occupations of their families are mainly fishing near by the river and ponds. Some of them are farmers but only few of them are educated and work in government and non-government organizations. These educated people are mostly living in big cities but come to parishes on Christmas and Easter holidays. There are 23 Catechists who conduct liturgical services in absence of priests and teach Catechisms. There are 17 primary schools, 02 junior and 01 high schools under this parish where Catholic teachers are teaching religion besides academic education.



The diocese is giving training of animators of the Holy Childhood. The national PMS organizes training programs and the diocese sends the participants there. The diocese also organizes



programs for their training. After having proper trainings, the animators guide the children to have some cultural, social and religious activities. They organize vocation seminars, Bible seminar, altar boys training programs, cultural programs for religious feasts, etc. The animators also inspire the children to make them study regularly, give them hygienic training, ensure their presence on Sunday liturgy and help them to receive Sacraments regularly.

The Barishal Catholic Diocese has tried its best to take care of the children even though Covid-19 has interrupted it's regular activities. For few months, government imposed lockdown and



schools were closed. Therefore, home, hostel, orphanages of this diocese were also closed. Once the government opened the schools and allowed the children to stay together, we have done different kinds of programs with them. The diocese has provided full expenses of food for orphan and home children. Even, when they were at home and the parents could not work for Covid-19 Pandemic lockdown, the diocese has given food support at home.

Holy Childhood Day was observed in diocesan level and parish levels.

Altar boys and girls joined in a seminar to learn how to serve in the altar. In order to help them to discover their vocation, one diocesan seminar was organized. Different parishes also organized seminars, workshops, conferences and animated programs for the children. The animators, religious members, priests and Catechists prepared these programs in different meetings.

Some children in parish level have received First Communion. Animators have prepared them for this initial Sacraments. YCS children also have done seminars in parish level.



NOYAKANDI VILLAGE

The Noyakandi village is quiet far from the Baniarchor parish and this sub-parish is surrounded by water and separated by a river. Therefore, a chapel and school are established in this sub-parish where teachers provide academic education and Catechists provide Catechism to the children. Because of Covid-19 Pandemic the financial condition of the poor families has deteriorated and therefore, financial assistance has been given to the poor families to support food, medical and other basic needs.



Some children, who does not have good house, are now living in diocesan home and hostels and those who have lost their parents are living in diocesan orphanages. The orphans have received full support from this project and the others have received partial support.

Two programs were organized for the children of

Noyakandi children. First one on the 15 June, 2021 and the other one on the 5th of November, 2021. The first one was to celebrate Holy Childhood Day with the children of neighboring villages. The second one was to make them aware of the care of the mother earth. In this seminar, core message of Laudato Si was shared

with them and helped them to understand the urgent need to keeping the environment clean and plantation in their own residence, taking care of their own plants, etc.

Some of the children of this village come to St. Michael Junior school and the other goes to near by schools. Educational

assistances were provided to these children so that they can continue their studies. A training program for the altar boys and girls was also organized so that they can serve the altar during Eucharistic celebration with full confidence.

LOKHONDA SUB-PARISH

For the children of Lokhonda sub-parish, two seminars were organized. First one was organized on the 27 September, 2021 at Narikelbari parish center. In this seminar, the importance of the care of the nature and creation was discussed with the children. Importance

of the plantation of trees and taking care of trees were also emphasized in this seminar. The second seminar was to observe the Holy Childhood Day in which they have prayed together and enjoyed different kinds of sports, drawing, writing articles, competitions, etc. The Lokhonda sub-center is quiet far from the parish center and there is no good schools near by.



Therefore, the boys stay in the Narikelbari hostel, and the girls are in the Ghorarpar home. Logistic supports were provided for these children. The orphan children

have received full support and the poor children have received partial supports. This project covered their educational fees, books, stationaries, dress, medication, traveling, food, lodging, etc. During this time Covid-19 Pandemic financial assistance were provided to some poor families who could not work during lock-down. The Young Christian Students

(YCS) of Narikelbari school have organized some programs. among them, regular meetings in which the children sit together following See-Judge-Act method. Based on this meetings they have taken some activities like keeping their school campus clean, taking care of flower garden, visiting families and prayer for the sick, saving some

money from their pocket money and helping the poor students for their school fees, books and stationaries, helping the parents in different ways, etc.



THE CHILDREN OF BEJOYPUR

The Bejoypur children have joined a seminar organized by the Barisal Catholic Diocese at the Cathedral parish on the 31st January, 2021. They have joined with the children of Cathedral parish and participated in lessons, group activities, prayers and games. The Holy Childhood Day was also observed at Bejoypur center, Sacred Heart Parish, Gournadi, on the 17th of September, 2021. The children have reflected on the pastoral theme of the year “Children’s Participation for the Care of the Nature.” Being inspired from this seminar, the children have started making flower and vegetable garden on their roof, window garden, etc. They have brought their trees in the parish exhibition which is planted in flower tub, ice-cream box, etc. The children also have planted trees at their home compound and takes care of their own planted trees.



GOURNADI PARISH

Because of natural disasters and Covid-19 Pandemic, parents of many children could not work as a day-labor, farmer, fishermen and carpenters. Therefore, they could not support their children for education, food, lodging, medical expenses, school dress, stationaries, etc. The diocese has admitted these poor children in St. Joseph’s Home at Gournadi parish and provided their basic needs. During Covid-19 Pandemic lock-down period, when the children went back to their families



from St. Joseph’s Home, financial assistances were provided at home so that they may not suffer from nutritions. After Covid-19 Pandemic, Catechism classes were given for the children to prepare them for the First communion and the Sacrament of Confession. Children from all the villages come at the parish center and they all receive Catechism classes. After receiving the First Communion, the children enjoy the day with cultural program and return their home.

SLOVAKIA



MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD MEMBERSHIP APPEAL

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow“ (1 Cor 3:7).

Dear friends, activity leaders, catechists, parents and priests,

We would like to invite you to become members of Missionary Childhood. Thérèse of Lisieux became a member of Missionary childhood at the age of 9 and she was fulfilling her task to pray and help missions with fondness.

We are **planning to create a children’s prayer network in Slovakia** to awake children’s mission call and start **MISSION BEAD** prayer groups – the basic element of the children’s prayer network. In this way, Mission beads in Slovakia will join the world missions and thus become members of Missionary Childhood Association which is active in more than 120 countries around the world. The main idea that connects all its members is “Let children help children“.

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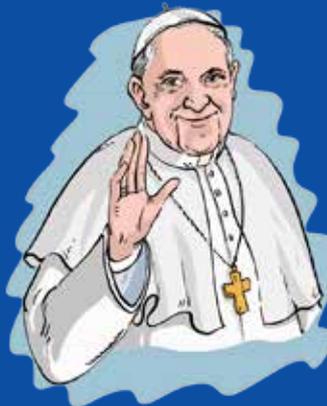
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Pope John Paul II wrote these words for Missionary childhood:

“Is Let children help children not a true miracle of the vast and silent love of God that makes a mark on the world? Dear boys and girls, you must all take part in this miracle! Missionary activity helps you grow in faith and makes you joyful disciples of Jesus.“



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Holy Father Francis also calls us:

“Please, pray for me, your family and parish, but also for all families around the world. I am counting on your prayers. How many children in the world are waiting for someone to take care of them! Children suffer in wars. Let us pray together that the strife will cease and hatred will diffuse. In many countries, children are engaged in some kind of paid work, they starve and do not have access to essential medicines. My prayers are weak without your prayers.“



WHY NOW?

We want to begin the activity of mission prayers **on the occasion of the beatification of Pauline Jaricot (May 22, 2022)** who built a huge network of prayers in France and thus helped the world's missions. This simple woman nurtured the charisma of helping missionaries and mission countries. She is the founder of the Pontifical Mission Societies.



MISSION BEAD



is a prayer group of children accompanied by a leader (catechist, parent, priest);



members pray the rosary for the Pope, missions and missionaries around the world;



is a long-term program and it could last for years in your parish;



members meet once every two weeks; a group consists of at least 2 and at most 12 members;



prayers can be organized in your parish, school or at home;



is entrusted to the protection of Child Jesus in Bethlehem;

HOW TO START A MISSION BEAD

1

Register at www.misijnediela.sk. We will send you all materials and instructions needed to pray the rosary, start and lead your Mission bead group. We will support you methodically, whether you are a priest, parent, catechist or a leader. Pontifical Mission Societies will communicate with Mission beads and provide them with further inspiration throughout the year. Every Mission bead can choose a saint who will become their patron. The name of the patron saint will be the name of the group. You can inform us about the name you and your children picked for your Mission bead group also after your registration.

2

Methodical materials should help you explain the motivation of starting a Mission bead group in a simple and clear way. After you receive it, schedule your first meeting. Please, let us know about the date of your first Mission bead prayer meeting. It will be the date of your Mission bead birthday.

“Jesus and his Mother often choose children and give them important tasks for the life of the Church and of humanity. What enormous power the prayer of children has!”

*John Paul II, Letter to children
December 13, 1994*

COMMITMENTS OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD MEMBERS

- Say 1 Hail Mary a day
- Pray the rosary once every 2 weeks at your Mission bead prayer meeting
- Donate a penny once a month for the missions
- Children become members of Missionary Childhood when they pray for the missions

Join this beautiful work by which you can help develop a mission call in children. Jesus and Mary chose you and we will be grateful for your time.

May Almighty God bless you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE METHODOLOGY OF LEADING A MISSION BEAD GROUP

It is vital to keep in mind certain rules in your MISSION BEAD group.

7 POINTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT IN YOUR SERVICE FOR MISSION BEAD

1

Your example and the time you spend with children are worth more than your words. Building relationships in your group leads children to building a relationship with God.

2

Remember, it is quality rather than quantity that matters in the life of the community. So don't be upset, if only two children come to pray – simply begin and you will see God act.

3

Your group and the children who arrive are a gift from the Holy Spirit.

4

The first testimony of your group is joy. Ask God for a pure heart and go to a confession before you meet your MISSION BEAD group for the first time.

5

Children usually don't read the Bible but when they are close to you, they observe the way you live. Have a lively relationship with Jesus!

6

Relationships are the foundation of Jesus' ministry and it should be yours, too. If you want to pray with children, you should pray on your own as well.

7

Spreading the Gospel means to share the good news of Jesus' coming to our earth and of his redemptive work. IT IS LEADING OTHERS TO JESUS. If you are determined to take up this ministry, that's awesome!



THE METHODOLOGY OF LEADING A MISSION BEAD GROUP

You have all you need to start a MISSION BEAD. Show the courage and faith you have in God and he will work through you, he will bless you. Sleep in peace because you are the one who sows the seeds and God is the one who makes them grow.

7 RULES TO FOLLOW IN YOUR MINISTRY FOR THE MISSION BEAD

PRAY FOR YOUR MISSION BEAD GROUP

Do not start unless you pray first! Pray for yourself and for the children who will arrive

LET YOUR PARISH PRIEST KNOW

Talk to your parish priest (not only a chaplain) and let him know about the BEAD. Ask him for a prayer and assistance with inviting more children.

INVITE CHILDREN

Invite children in a special way – make invitations, give it to schools with the aid of priests and catechists who teach religion. Also, if there is a children’s community that you regularly attend, you are welcome to join the appeal. In case you are a family and you want to pray with your children, it’s a great idea! Two or three families can also pray together.

REGISTER

If you have not registered yet, please go to the website: www.misijnediela.sk. After your registration, e-mail us the date of your first prayer meeting and the name of your MISSION BEAD patron saint.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE DATES

MISSION BEAD group members meet at least once in 2 weeks. It is up to you whether you want to keep meeting during the summer holidays as well or you want to take a summer break.

ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF YOUR MISSION BEAD

You and your children choose a patron saint of your MISSION BEAD, e.g. The mission bead of saint James in Pruské.

CHOOSE A PLACE

Pick a place for your meetings with MISSION BEAD. It could be a parish clubhouse, rectory, school, your house or flat. It is essential that the atmosphere is relaxed and the environment comfortable. You can decorate it, too (liturgical table cloths, candles).



“Greetings from Považská Bystrica! We received everything from you in the mail to establish the Missionary Grain and it was a pleasure, all three of us (my daughters Terezka and Dáška and I Paulína) were amazed by the beautiful pictures and beautiful words from you! Thank you for being able to be connected with you! We chose the NAME of our missionary grain: MISSIONARY GRAIN bl. PAULÍN JARICOTOVA since I am also Paulina and I spoke to her last year, when I did not even know that she would be blessed :) and I also painted a children’s “icon” of her beauty :) GRAIN START DATE No.244- 12.6.2022 Thank you for everything and we pray with you !!! Smiling greetings send

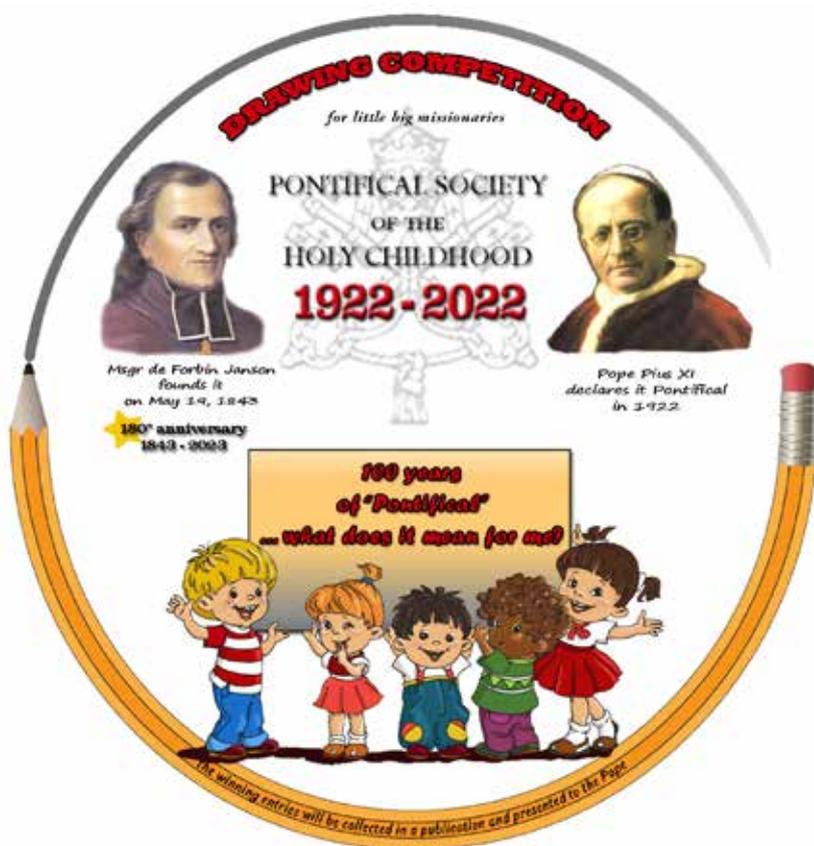
Terezka (8 years), Dášenka (5 years) and Paulina (mother)



d r a w i n g
COMPETITION
for little BIG
MISSIONARIES



1922-2022



**100 years of
"Pontifical"
...what does
it mean for
me?**

for more information please contact
the National Office of your country

