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**HOLY CHILDHOOD AND  
THE HOLY SEE**

*THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN*

**LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN...  
AUSTRIA**





MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER  
N.12 - OCTOBER 2022

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### 52 LITTLE MISSIONARIES IN... AUSTRIA



*You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth... by the power of the Holy Spirit...*

**W**hat we read on the following pages is the work of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit in every missionary disciple, in every baptised person. Indeed, everything that the Spirit can produce when we are docile to the Spirit's action is beauty itself!

The Holy Spirit, as Pope Francis clearly announce in his message for World Mission Sunday, celebrated last October 23rd, is the real protagonist of mission.

Indeed, the mission continues...even today and everywhere. It is clear to us that the witness and stories of others can nurture and enrich us about how one can live the Gospel in different contexts, cultures and stages of life. It is less evident to those who still do not have an experience of a living Church, of the living Christ. And it is exactly this that powerfully urges us to announce and share the joy of being in and with Christ; of being members of his Body!

Evangelization is not just a program, an activity, but it is the expression of various aspects that come together in each particular church in the way it experiences Baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ attracts us, not our proposals. It is Christ and his Kingdom that we are serving and a quest to be recognized.

In the light of the Holy Spirit and in the context of the centenary of the Pontifical title accorded to the Society of the Holy Childhood, we continue to discover and remember how much Popes Pius XI and Pius XII had supported and recognized the proposal of Bishop Charles de Forbin Janson.

It remains an ever-relevant proposal that expresses a continuous development of the Charism.

Pope Francis releases his prayer intention for November, inviting everyone to pray for the millions of children who are suffering around the world. In the video message he says:

*"...Too often, we forget our responsibility...Each marginalized child, abandoned by his or her family, without schooling, without healthcare, is a cry! A cry that rises up to God and shames the system that we adults have built. An abandoned child is our fault...they are entitled to an education and to feel the love of a family so they know that God does not forget them. Let us pray for children who are suffering, especially for those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war. May they be guaranteed access to education and may they have the opportunity to experience family affection.*

We find this concern and responsibility when we read what was at the heart of Bishop Charles de Forbin Janson when, in 1842, he reflected on the purpose of the foundation of the Holy Childhood:

*To free from death a multitude of children born of unfaithful parents, whom caprice or misery, superstitions and the most repugnant and unnatural barbarism destroy by hundreds of thousands, either in the waters of rivers and the abysses of the sea, or devoured by dogs and swine; above all, to open, by baptism, the gates of heaven to the greatest possible number of these poor creatures, deprived at birth of paternal love; to prepare a sure and effective means to regenerate idolatrous nations, by giving a Christian education to those who can be freed from death, and later to make of these rescued children instruments of salvation, as school teachers, doctors and midwives, catechists, and even priests and indigenous missionaries.*

The Founder of the Holy Childhood didn't only sought to rescue the children of unfaithful parents from death in order to provide them with acceptable living conditions, but also to form them in a human and Christian way, in a series of centers, so that they could become those new Moses who, rescued from the waters, would be the liberators and evangelizers of their own peoples.

Already a few months after its foundation, the positive effects of the Society are not only felt in the mission lands; it also contributes to raising the spirit of piety and sacrifice in Christian societies of the 19th century.

Today, in the 21st century, the educative task of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood is more relevant than ever before because its goal is forever current, that is, of forming Jesus' disciples, missionary disciples.



**SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI**  
*Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood*



# HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE

*THE SOCIETY IS PLACED UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF A CARDINAL PROTECTOR APPOINTED BY THE HOLY FATHER, UNLESS HIS HOLINESS DEIGNS TO EXERCISE THIS HIGH PATRONAGE HIMSELF.*

*THIS FAVOUR IS PRECIOUS TO US AND WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO FIND IN HIM WHO OCCUPIES THE PLACE OF THE ABSENT CHRIST ON EARTH, THIS PREDILECTION FOR CHILDHOOD THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST TOUCHING AND PERHAPS MOST DIVINE TRAITS OF OUR LORD'S HUMANITY*

*Monsignor Bressolles – President of the Superior Council of the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood (1950)*

## PIUS XI

**(1922 -1939)**

### 1928

Monsignor Mério is always happy to go to Rome every year in order to express his deep gratitude to his Eminence Cardinal Vannutelli, protector of the Society. And it is always with new joy that he places, at the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, the respectful and filial homage of the Central Council, together with the report of the efforts and results of the annual exercise.

This year his joy was doubled by the importance of donations. The newspaper "La Croix" reported the hearing of April 12 in the following terms:

*S.S. PIUS XI AND THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD  
Rome, April 13*

*During the private audience that His Holiness Pius XI granted him yesterday, Monsignor Mério, General Director of the Holy Childhood, was able to present to the Holy Father the very interesting state of the Society's revenues since 1914. [...]*

*His Holiness expressed satisfaction with this continuous improvement. The Pope expressed his admiration at the sight of the so many sacrifices of the associates from all over the world that these figures allow us to glimpse. Providence, he observed, blesses the action of the General Director, the Grace of God has visibly poured out on the Society, as evidenced by the collected alms, which are the fruit of charity. This is what the Directors of the Society corresponded with their dedication, their zeal, their spirit of apostolate. The Supreme Pontiff rejoiced in the collaboration that the national and regional Directors, the aggregates and the associates provide to the Central Council and the General Director, and has instructed Monsignor Mério to communicate, on May 30 next, to the members of the Central Council, belonging to all the nations, his heartfelt congratulations and blessings for them and their country. The Holy Father once again insisted on the multiplication of the feasts of the Holy Childhood in parishes and educational institutes, in order to instill in children the spirit of sacrifice and apostolate.*



Annals of the Society of the Holy Childhood  
n°482  
October 1928  
p. 262



# 1931

To our dear Son Bonaventura Ceretti, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Titular of Santa Cecilia :

*Our dearest son,*

*Greetings and apostolic blessing.*

*Since the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, whose headquarters is located in the archepiscopal city of Paris, is currently without protector at the Roman Curia, we believed, in view of providing for the good of this fruitful society, to designate You this function, Our dear Son, whose patronage, we have full confidence, will bring to the aforementioned society numerous advantages and a strengthening*

*Therefore, motu proprio, with sure knowledge, mature deliberation and with the fullness of Our Apostolic power, it is You, Our dear Son, by means of these Apostolic Letters and by virtue of our authority, who choose, decree and proclaim Patron or Protector to life, with us and with this Apostolic See, of the aforementioned Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, with the ordinary and usual honors, privileges, rights, powers and burdens.*

*Therefore, we order each and every one of the directors and associates of the aforementioned Pontifical Society to welcome their patron and to treat You with due respect, despite any contrary provisions.*

Given in Rome, in St. Peter's, under the Fisherman's ring, on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of June of the year 1931, the tenth year of Our Pontificate.

# PIUS XII

(1939 -1958)

## 1940

SECRETARIAT OF STATE OF HIS HOLINESS

From the Vatican, April 8, 1940.

*Monsignor,*

*the Holy Father has received the plea that you have recently sent to him through the good offices of the Apostolic Nunciature in Paris. It is with great pleasure that I can give you today the answer to what the object was, an answer in accordance with the desire you expressed: the Holy Father has deigned to decide to continue to be the protector Himself of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood in the future.*

*Happy to be able to convey this message to you, I take this opportunity to renew to you, Monsignor, the expression of my feelings always devoted to Our Lord,*

L. Cardinal Maglione

to Monsignor Mério, General Director of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood- Paris





# HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE

His Holiness Pius XII Protector of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood.

*Dear Associates,*

*you remember that his Eminence Cardinal Pacelli was the official protector of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood at the Holy See. The testimonies we have received of his benevolence throughout the pontificate of His Holiness Pius XI are innumerable. How not to mention, among others, the visit that, as papal Legate at the Lisieux feasts in 1937, he deigned to hold at the Society's Headquarters on Saturday, July 10. It was an unforgettable morning for us.*

*To this distinguished favor, Cardinal Pacelli added, every time the General Director went to Rome, various proofs of the interest he had in the development of the liberating Society of pagan childhood.*

*His Holiness Pius XII, having become Pope, gives us proof of always reserving a privileged place in his heart for Holy Childhood.*

*Despite being forced, with the elevation to the Papal Throne, to abandon, as usual, most of the "protectorates" that had been entrusted to him as Cardinal, he deigned to keep the protection of our Society.*

*The General Director, acting as interpreter of all the members of the Central Council and of the National and Diocesan Directors, as soon as the news was communicated to him by His Eminence Cardinal Maglione, wrote to the Holy Father to express his heartfelt gratitude.*

*With what joy, dear Associates, you are in turn informed that His Holiness Pius XII remains your protector. With what zeal you will respond to this exceptional sign of benevolence by doubling the fervor in your prayers and the generosity in your offerings.*

*The Holy Childhood is therefore a doubly pontifical Society. It is certainly a title of glory. To convince you of this, it would be enough to see how this news was received everywhere, after the press made it known.*

*This must also be a stimulus for all of you, an invitation to dedicate yourselves, with greater dedication than ever, to the cause of unhappy childhood in mission countries.*

*The Pope has shown you how dear this cause is to him and how much he appreciates your efforts. It is up to you to show yourselves worthy of his trust and of his pontifical benevolence..*

Annals of the Society of the Holy Childhood  
n ° 551, May 1940, pp. 2-4

## 1943

To dear son Eugenio Mério, General Director of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood- Paris

*Dear son,  
greetings and apostolic blessing.*

*Among the noteworthy works that contribute considerably to the propagation of the faith, the Society of the Holy Childhood certainly emerges, whose creation in Paris dates back to a century ago.*

*This Society aims to arouse in the delicate souls of children, with a marked devotion to the unfortunate pagans, the holy desires of the apostolate.*

*It is truly surprising with what compassion innocent young people are animated, when they see the*



*fate of so many little ones, who, deprived of everything, abandoned by their parents and exposed to death, resemble those flowers that wither prematurely and consequently, find themselves immersed in a very critical situation for their life and their eternal salvation. These Christian children, moved by such piety, naturally respond to the charm of charity and willingly sacrifice their meager savings, painstakingly collected, to redeem the bodies of the children of infidels and also to win their souls for Jesus Christ. At the same time, by eagerly reading the stories of the sacred Missions, or listening with interest to the heroic deeds of the heralds of the Gospel, they learn to know the nobility and grandeur of the sacred apostolate and support the Society of the propagation of the Faith with greater generosity. Sometimes the example and virtues of missionaries excite them to the point of making them discover in themselves the seeds of an apostolic vocation among non-believing peoples.*

*How much praise, therefore, must be given to the Society of the Holy Childhood, which proves to be of such great importance and of such high moral value if it is carefully considered in the light of all its happy results!*

*It is for this reason that the Popes, in the course of this century, have always given their benevolence and support to this Society. First of all, Gregory XVI was very favorable to its creation and Pius IX, in his letter of July 18, 1856, in the form of a*

*short: Quum aetate qualibet, by approving it, urged bishops from all over the world to establish and develop it in their dioceses . Leo XIII granted many privileges to his associates and Pius XI deigned to elevate it to the rank of a Pontifical society. We ourselves have never stopped loving this society so full of humanity and charity; elevated to the dignity of cardinal, we were its protectors and, being appointed Papal Legate during the solemn celebrations in Lisieux in 1937, we visited its seat in Paris with great joy. We are particularly happy to take the opportunity of the centenary to congratulate the Society of the Holy Childhood for its fruitful and constant work and to all those who, with their zeal and their help in supporting and promoting it, have shown themselves worthy of a well-deserved esteem. We are confident, therefore, that all those who boast of the Catholic name, encouraged by the solemnities of this centenary, will not fail in that duty of piety which is so dear to us, that they will not bear to see so many pagan babies deprived of the benefit of Christian regeneration, but they will work with zeal and perseverance so that as many as possible, purified by Holy Baptism, may grow, with God's help, within the Church or, in danger of death, may enjoy eternal bliss.*

*In the meantime, as a messenger and dispenser of heavenly gifts and also as a pledge of Our special devotion, we impart with great affection in the Lord, Our Apostolic Blessing to you, Our dear son, to your collaborators and to all the directors and collaborators of the Society of the Holy Childhood.*

Given in Rome at St. Peter's, on June 13, Pentecost Sunday, in the year 1943, the fifth of our pontificate.





# HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE

## 1946

ENCYCLICAL QUEMADMODUM

Pleading for the care of the world's destitute children, 6 January 1946

*...In the light of such words and sentiments, Venerable Brethren, you see with what love, diligence and care the Church looks after infants and children following the lead of her Founder. While she exercises all possible care to see that they be provided with food, shelter and clothing for their bodies, she does not ignore or neglect their souls which - born, so to speak, from the breath of God - seem to portray the radiant beauty of Heaven. Her first care and endeavor is, then, to preserve their innocence from stain and provide for their eternal salvation. Accordingly, there are numberless institutions and organizations to educate the young, form them to solid virtue, and satisfy their needs in education as they grow in mind and body. In this important field, as you know, many Religious Orders and congregations of men and women are laboring with admirable zeal and effect, and their prudent, alert, devoted activity is making a magnificent contribution to the progress of Church and State. This is being done not only in civilized countries, with large and excellent results, but also among uncultured peoples or those which the light of Christian truth has not yet reached, where missionary endeavor and, especially, the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, rescues so many children and infants from the slavery of the devil and of wicked men, procuring for them the freedom of the children of God, and trains them to be members of civilized society.*

## 1947

To our dear son Adrien Bressolles, Pontifical Prelate, General Director of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood

*It is with fully paternal satisfaction that we recently learned that the wonderful Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood is preparing to celebrate, in a few weeks, the centenary\* of its foundation.*

*The ties that unite us to this worthy institution impose on us the duty of not missing the solemnities that will mark this memorable anniversary in Paris, in the presence of many members of the French episcopate.*

*In fact, after having been for many years, at the time of Our cardinalate, protector of the "Holy Childhood", we have agreed to remain so at the moment of Our elevation to Supreme Pontificate, to express our full interest in this Society.*

*How could We forget that thousands of abandoned souls in the most distant mission countries undoubtedly owe their eternal salvation to it? Furthermore, we would not know how to pass over in silence the great current of faith and apostolic and missionary zeal that its leaders have been able to instill among the Christian children of the many European countries where the Society of the Holy Childhood has progressively taken root. The devotion and generosity of all - parents and children, priests and religious - responded to the happy initiative, and this is how the fragile seed thrown into the earth a century ago by Monsignor de Forbin-Janson has now become a large tree, of which we can only hope to see the happy development increase.*

*It is therefore with these sentiments of great paternal benevolence that we will be present in the spirit of the great family of the Holy Childhood on November 27th and which we send, from now on, to all those who will participate in the solemnities of the Centenary, starting with the representatives of the hierarchy and from you, as a pledge of the most abundant celestial favors, Our Apostolic Blessing.*

Castel Gandolfo, September 30, 1947

\* World War II had not allowed the celebration of the centenary of the Society in 1943 (n.d.R.)



# 1951

Encyclical EVANGELII PRAECONES, 2 June 1951

*[...] You are quite aware, Venerable Brethren, that We recently instituted a special children's festival to help the Society of the Holy Childhood with prayers and alms. These little children of Ours are thus accustomed to pray earnestly for the salvation of the infidel; and may it be the means of sowing the seed of a missionary vocation in their innocent hearts and of fostering its growth. (N65)*

# 1952



## SECRETARIAT OF STATE

Letter to Monsignor Adrien Bressolles, President of the Superior Council of the Society of the Holy Childhood August 26, 1952

*Monsignor,*

*the day after the annual session of the Superior Council of the Holy Childhood, you took care of informing His Holiness about the results of your work and to renew your gratitude to him for the recent institution of a "World Day" of Holy Childhood.*

*On this occasion you asked the Holy Father to write a prayer himself that the children affiliated with the Society could recite in all parts of the world during the celebration of this "Day".*

*I am happy to inform you that His Holiness has deigned to consent to this filial desire by writing the prayer himself, the text of which I have the joy of attaching.*

*Your Holiness is pleased to give this new testimony of paternal interest in the Society of the Holy Childhood and expresses his best wishes so that the pleas of so many innocent souls contribute to the progress of the Kingdom of God in today's tormented world.*

*Please accept, Monsignor, the assurance of my religious devotion.*



# HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE

PRAYER  
FOR  
WORLD HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY  
ARTICULATED BY HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII  
PROTECTOR OF THE SOCIETY

O Jesus- born a child so that all children may experience you as their brother  
and know that you love them-  
we now gather around you from every corner of the earth  
to express with one voice our love for you and  
our desire to be like you in mind, heart and life.

You draw us to yourself and how well do we hear your invitation!  
You open your arms to us, and how delighted we are to rest upon your chest!

But not all of your little ones are here today.  
There are so many of those born when we were,  
who still do not know that you seek and wait for them;  
that you love them like the most welcomed, most pleasing,  
and most desired of gifts.

Oh Jesus, we pray to you for them as we do for ourselves.  
Let the Good News of your coming and of your Kingdom  
reach them in every corner of the earth.

Let the hosannas proclaimed by the children of Jerusalem  
on your triumphant day resound to your Name, Jesus.  
And may our tongues, made eloquent by you, our dear brother,  
friend and master, give you praise, which human arrogance denies.

Amen.



# 1953

## STATE SECRETARIAT OF HIS HOLINESS

From the Vatican, July 29, 1953.

Letter to Monsignor Adrien Bressolles, President of the Superior Council of the Society of the Holy Childhood

*Monsignor,*

*Upon receipt of your letter of 23 June last, I handed over the Annual Report of the Society of the Holy Childhood that you sent to His Holiness.*

*The Holy Father took note, with keen interest, of the elements of this report and, with all his heart, congratulates the Society that you preside over the constant growth of its revenues over the last few years. The needs of the missions are so great and so urgent that the zeal of Christians to participate in this apostolic sacrifice of the Church could never be excessively stimulated, nor to thank them enough*

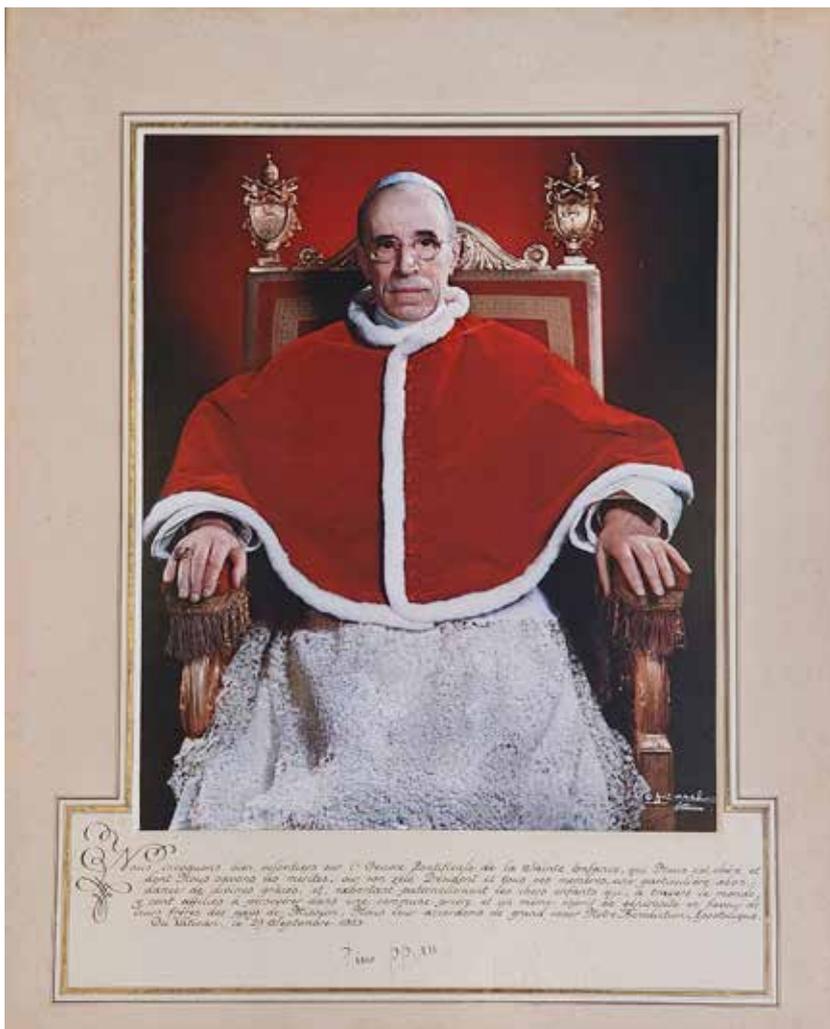
*for their generous contribution.*

*In particular, Your Holiness is grateful to you for the important gift that you enclose with the intention of so many miseries that solicit its tireless charity. He thanks all the donors who participated in this gesture of filial deference and gives them, as well as all the members of the Society of the Holy Childhood, a fatherly Apostolic Blessing.*

*Finally, through me, you solicit the privilege of a Pontifical Autograph (an autograph on a photo) that would be placed in the same seat of the Society, a precious testimony of the constant benevolence of your Augustan Protector. I very gladly made myself the interpreter of your pious wish to the Holy Father and I am pleased to inform you that he has favorably consented to your request. I will certainly, therefore, agree with Monsignor Ercole for the realization of this project.*

*Please accept, Monsignor, the assurance of my religious devotion.*

G.B. Montini  
Pro-Secretary



**Pontifical Autograph kept at the International Secretariate of the Society in Rome**



# HOLY CHILDHOOD AND THE HOLY SEE



*Pope Pius XII with the Cardinal  
Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria  
Montini, future Pope Paul VI*

## 1957

Extract from the speech of His Holiness Pope Pius XII to the Second World Congress of the Lay Apostolate October 5, 1957.

*...We wish to draw your attention particularly to one aspect of the education of young Catholics: the formation of their apostolic spirit. Instead of giving way to a slightly selfish tendency by thinking only of the salvation of their own souls, they should be made aware of their responsibilities toward others and of the ways to help others. No one doubts that prayer, sacrifice, and courageous action to win others to God constitute very definite guarantees for personal salvation. We do not in any way condemn what has been done in the past because there have been many remarkable achievements in this respect. We refer, among other things, to the many Catholic weeklies, which have sustained popular enthusiasm for the charitable activities of the apostolate. Movements such as that of the Holy Childhood have given proof in this respect of fruitful initiatives. However, an apostolic spirit takes root in the child's heart not only at school, but long before the school age, and it is engendered by the care of the mother herself. The child should learn how to pray at Mass and offer the Sacrifice with an intention, which embraces the whole world and, above all, the important interests of the Church. Examining his conscience concerning his duties toward his neighbor, he will not only ask himself, "Have I harmed my neighbor?" but will also ask, "Have I shown him the way which leads to God, to Christ, to the Church, and to salvation?"*





## FROM THE LETTERS



### **THE LITTLE ASSOCIATES OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD DO CHARITY TO THE CHILDREN OF PAGAN COUNTRIES, THEY PRAY AND SACRIFICE THEMSELVES FOR THEM**

*Having managed to save some pennies, we want to show that we are very interested in the missions. We are in an orphanage and we are fortunate to receive an excellent religious education. To thank the Good Lord for such a great grace, we want, in turn, to give him souls. We send you our savings (?) And we also give you what is most important, our prayers and our sacrifices.*

M. D.

*At the end of the second quarter I will send you the reward of my composition profit. I'm only in fifth A. Some time ago I sent you something, from time to time, when I had some success. This year I am not doing badly, as I am in first place, so that I can send you a little more and more regularly.*

*I pray for my little godchildren and for the wonderful Society of the Holy Childhood. The missionary apostolate is so beautiful, and since I'm not yet old (I'm 11), I help as much as I can.*

D. B.

*The girls of the school of C. are happy to send 30 francs in postage stamps for the baptism of 6 pagan children.*

*These are the savings made during Lent by giving up sweets and various delicacies. We ask the prayers of our little godchildren to always be able to love the Good Lord and to make him loved by those around us.*

S. B.

### **CHILDREN IN PAGAN COUNTRIES PRAY FOR THE LITTLE ASSOCIATES OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD AND MAKE SACRIFICES FOR THEM**

*Every day, we give the little Chinese girls from the Paotingfou orphanage some boiled beans for their snack. Well, one of the little girls aged six, knowing the high price of cereals, decided to give up on her daily snack.*

*Taking advantage of the nun's absence, the little girl asked her friends, of the same age and younger, to give her all the beans in order to give them back to the Nun for the next day, so that the Good God may bless the great Monsignor of France, their good Father, and all the children who donate money for them.*

*Said, done, and the Nun, upon her return, found all the beans in the basket. After the explanation, the nun kept everything, and expressed her gratitude that the little Chinese girls had towards the Holy Childhood.*

*A few weeks later, this 6-year-old girl died. In her last moments of life she repeated: "In the arms of Jesus, in heaven, I will watch over Monsignor and all the little benefactor friends of France".*

Sr B.

Annals of the Society of the Holy Childhood  
n°551, May 1940, pag. 53-54

# THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES: SCHOOL OF MISSIONARY WORK\*

The concatenation of anniversaries and missionary celebrations, which converged in the year 2022, is presented as a necessary provocation for the missionary awakening of the Church. It is the opportunity to continue deepening the missionary renewal, so clearly explained by Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, when he points out: "I dream of a missionary option capable of transforming everything, so that customs, styles, schedules, language and every ecclesial structure may become a suitable channel for the evangelization of today's world rather than for self-preservation. The reform of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this sense: to see to it that all of them become more missionary, that ordinary pastoral care in all its instances is more expansive and open, and that it places pastoral agents in a constant attitude of going out and thus favor the positive response of all those whom Jesus summons to his friendship. As John Paul II said to the Bishops of Oceania, "every renewal within the Church must aim at mission as an objective so as not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion" (n. 27).

The so-called centenary year of The Pontifical Mission Societies (TPMS) is a way and a tool to reflect on the missionary experience of our communities, of every man and woman, to highlight the centrality of the Gospel in every actions of TPMS, to review the ecclesial actuality of the PMS in the world, to promote a new adaptation of the TPMS, to look at and strengthen ourselves by looking at the roots



**FERNANDO  
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BENITO**

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and origins of TPMS.

This year, therefore, cannot be reduced to 2022. It must become, as the Extraordinary Missionary Month called for by Pope Francis for Missionary October 2019, the missionary impulse and stimulus for all of us to renew, strengthen, change and walk together. These centenaries, these celebrations, should provoke the search for new pastoral challenges in the Pontifical Mission Societies so as not to close ourselves in, not to anchor ourselves in stillness and calm, but to be always in missionary movement and the places and the peripheries (human, geographical and existential) that a society in need of the Gospel message of Jesus demands.

These centenaries make us recover "the

*\*Extract from the article published in Misiones Extranjeras: Revista de misionología, Nº 302, 2022, pp. 226-234.*



missionary dream of reaching out to all” (EG 31) and make us aware that we walk “On the shoulders of giants,” as shared by PMS Spain. Taking the words of a disciple of Bernard of Chartres (1070- 1130), TPMS reminds us that “our time, however, enjoys the benefits of those who preceded it and often knows many things, not by its ingenuity, but by relying on the strength of others and the rich doctrine of the Fathers. Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants. We can see further and further than they, not because of the sharpness of our sight or the height of our body, but because their height as giants lifts us up”.

We could also take Isaac Newton’s words to Robert Hooke in 1676. Although they were confined to his discoveries in optics, they could also be helpful for our anniversary year: “If I have been able to see farther, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.” These missionary giants have names like Blessed Pauline Jaricot and Blessed Fr. Paolo Manna, Bishop de Forbin-Janson, Jeanne Bigard, St. Francis Xavier... who make us stand on their shoulders to return to our origins, to return to what is essential and radical in the Gospel, to renew in tradition, so that the Church from its missionary nature never remains stagnant, but open to communication and synodality, as has been demonstrated in the processes initiated by Pope Francis in recent years.

To return to the original charisms of our Pontifical Missionary Societies, to return to our fathers and mothers in missionary animation, to return to the origins of our missionary institutes and institutions, will help us to strengthen the steps that from the missionary ministry will contribute to awaken the courage, commitment and responsibility of each baptized person, affirming that “in all the baptized, from the first to the last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit that impels to evangelize is in action. The People of God is holy because of this anointing which makes

it infallible “in crescendo.” This means that when the People of God believe, it does not err, even if they cannot find words to explain their faith. The Spirit guides them in the truth and leads them to salvation. As part of his mystery of love for humanity, God endows all the faithful with an instinct of faith—the *sensus fidei*—that helps them to discern what is truly from God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities and a wisdom that enables them to grasp them intuitively, even if they do not have the proper instruments to express them precisely.” (EG 119).

The 400th anniversary of the creation of Propaganda Fide; the 150th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Paolo Manna; the 400th anniversary of the canonization of St. Francis Xavier, Patron of the Missions; the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the Work of the Propagation of the Faith; the 100th anniversary of the elevation to the category of “Pontifical” of the Works of the Propagation of the Faith, the Missionary Childhood and St. Peter the Apostle; and the beatification of Pauline Jaricot, are moments that show us the great presence and contribution to the Mission of the Church made by our founders, our predecessors, our men and women, our missionaries.

The “feminine genius” deserves special mention. As Pope Francis pointed out in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “the Church acknowledges the indispensable contribution which women make to society through the sensitivity, intuition and other distinctive skill sets which they, more than men, tend to possess. I think, for example, of the special concern which women show to others, which finds a particular, even if not exclusive, expression in motherhood. I readily acknowledge that many women share pastoral responsibilities with priests, helping to guide people, families and groups and offering new contributions to theological reflection. But we need to create

still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church. Because ‘the feminine genius is needed in all expressions in the life of society, the presence of women must also be guaranteed in the workplace’ and in the various other settings where important decisions are made, both in the Church and in social structures (n. 103).

The confluence of all these circumstances and experiences, in the light of the Gospel, should make us take up again the five actions that identify the missionary disciple and that the Pontifical Mission Societies have been able to duly integrate in their current renewal: ‘to take the first step, to get involved, to accompany, to bear fruit and to celebrate’. Pope Francis already indicated it in *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 24: ‘The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. To take the first step. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek

those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: ‘You will be blessed if you do this’ (Jn 13:17). An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the ‘smell of the sheep’ and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance. Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time. Faithful to the Lord’s gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelizing community is always concerned

with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line,





even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed. Finally an evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving.

It is in this missionary community that we identify the birth and the permanence of the Pontifical Mission Societies, which have always been supported by the lay faithful, as "a network for missionary animation, to promote the faith through prayer and charity" (Bishop Dal Toso). It is the TPMS that make us truly Catholic, that transform us as Christians so that we integrate in our life, in our community, a missionary and universal perspective, according to the mandate of Christ.

We are a Missionary Church because faith grows if it is shared. We are Universal Church because together with the Pope we help the poorest Churches. We are Catholic Church because the perspectives of TPMS make us realize that our small community is missionary to the extent that it gives itself, that it shares itself, that it is at the service of all the other communities.

The Pontifical Societies for the Propagation of the Faith, Missionary Childhood, St. Peter the Apostle and the Missionary Union should be strengthened and taken more into account in every Diocese throughout the world, because they make us not forget the missionary nature of the Church (AG 2), put it into action and also prioritize it so that the whole missionary family feels that it is participating in this

renewed encounter with Christ.

The missionary ministry should always be the first ministry in each Diocese, accompanied by the Pontifical Mission Societies. It is TPMS, which are at the service of the Pope, that offer the guidelines for renewing the entire pastoral ministry of the Church, for renewing the entire action of the Church. The nominal thing is the missionary thing. Everything else must be at the service of the Gospel and of Christ's command: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (cf. Mk 16:15-20).

[...]

We can all participate in this missionary network, and we are all called to share in this missionary network because we are called to evangelize the world, and we have to share what we can, each one from their place and through their work. We must also remember that TPMS are not only there to collect money, something that sometimes is the message transmitted and seen by others, but they are there to serve the Gospel as best as possible: through formation, prayer, and also with the contributions that each one of us, from our baptismal responsibility, can give.

May each prayer, each formation, each donation, when it is given to TPMS or is put in common for TPMS, be a testimony of personal dedication, a giving of oneself without limits, a being there, because to go on Mission, as Pope Francis recently indicated, "is to go out of oneself to give the best of oneself and the best that God gives, and that is a very beautiful thing". That is what TPMS do!

Many things could be said about the Society of the Missionary Childhood, in this meeting with the Pontifical Societies, in the framework of the many and many centenaries and celebrations. However, the first thing is to recommend the publication

“History, charism, spirituality of the Pontifical Missionary Work of the Holy Childhood,” edited by the International Secretariat of the Missionary Childhood and whose authors are the distinguished Juan Carlos Carvajal Blanco and Rafael Santos Barba. By reading this work of theology, missiology, spirituality, and catechesis, we can verify that there is a great actuality and validity of the Missionary Childhood and its charisma in the XXI century. The boys and girls, the children, catechize us constantly. They are the best example of how to live missionary discipleship with freshness, joy, and service.

Missionary Childhood helps us centralize the children’s dedication and service to the Pope and to all the missions, to all the missionaries, to all the places where Christ is present, and this helps the feeling of universal belonging to the Catholic Church. It is an effective and valid instrument for education in the faith, for the sense of fraternity and, gratuitousness, solidarity, from a universal missionary conscience.

This Society, the Missionary Childhood, anticipates any work of help to children, but also with a particular one: children help children, children evangelize children (and their families), and children pray for children. All of us pray, united with the children, with the work that brings the most novelty and joy for this spiritual renewal, for this institutional and ecclesial conversion that TPMS must live.

The Pontifical Mission Societies are undergoing change and transformation. We feel invited to Christian and missionary witness, which in this 21st century is presented as a true call to Joy, an encounter with the Lord, and life in the Lord. TPMS will serve and will continue to serve the Church if they are able to incarnate themselves in each baptized person, in each missionary disciple. Only in this way will they contribute to a missionary, personal and ecclesial lifestyle that rekindles the ardor and desire to encounter the Lord. TPMS can help,

through formation and prayer, to transmit confidence and credibility to the Church before and in the world.

One challenge is to contribute decisively to make Jesus known. This is the priority: facilitating the fraternal encounter to get to know Jesus. We live in a time of deserts and emptiness, personal, spiritual, and existential ... we are full of peripheries. Still, we cannot spend all our time lamenting about secularism and indifference. Let us make Jesus known! TPMS can and must help in the first proclamation, in the Kerygma. And this challenge involves communicating the joy of faith, and finding new ways to proclaim the heart of the Gospel. Let us be creative in TPMS, but without getting into constant repetition, which happens on many occasions with campaigns and special days.

Let us also be able to transmit the strength of credible testimonies: it is the story and the life of each person who embodies the Gospel that speaks and is waiting to be spoken! The testimony of the missionaries is one of the most credible that we have and possess in the Church. This is also a challenge: to find testimonies that make themselves present with their lives and amid life. But especially in the most complicated places. It is the witness of those who live freely, of those who are close to their brothers and sisters, always avoiding a culture of exclusion. TPMS must be capable of transmitting these testimonies, of being a witness in themselves. This year, full of commemorations, is the perfect time for each society to present the holiness and life of the founders. It is the time to present, without compromises, without too many artifices, that foundational charism, going out to encounter the other. Life is played out in families, in the streets, in schools, with friends... life is not played out behind a screen. On the contrary, it happens and it is found during a real encounter with the other: let us go out, without fear, so that the PMO can present themselves



without masks before the people, so we can say, categorically, that we were at their side in every moment of their life, because the PMO are part of you and are for you, because the Gospel, Christ, is for everyone and is part of everyone. Let us meet with Him!

Charity and fraternity must be two basic pillars of TPMS in this 21st century. TPMS should not be presented as places far from society, far from people, but as places to live communion, to walk together in a missionary synodality, to create and forge occasions and spaces for TPMS to be a reflection of a welcoming community that listens and enters into dialogue with the world. TPMS will be helpful to the Mission of the Church to the extent that they can share spaces and life more than slogans and images. TPMS will be helpful when they focus on the essentials of the Gospel and the words of their founders, being a school of humanity, being a school of mission, and putting the whole Church in a state of Mission.

We have been sent to proclaim the Gospel to everyone, everywhere, at all times and in every age. Charity, fraternity, witness and proclamation must be present in this school of missiology that are The Pontifical Mission Societies. This school should continue to promote missiology as a core line of theological studies. A school that must continue to be at the service of all people. A school that must be Gospel. A school that should be a place of encounter, integrating in it all the institutions and entities that cooperate with the missionaries. A school of missionary activity that is always at the disposal of the Pope and for the Pope, which means being available to the Church and for the Church: in conclusion, a school of the Gospel and for Jesus Christ.

Today TPMS reflect the presence of God. The face of each member of TPMS reflects the presence of God. This is the time to continue putting ourselves at the service of TPMS, to be life, dedication and hope so that the

reflection of the presence of God becomes a reality in every Parish, every Diocese, every Baptized. Through this effort, we will truly be missionary disciples who are dedicated to and live for the Mission.

# MYANMAR

## DIOCESE OF PEKHON

### RE-EVANGELIZATION FORMATION PROGRAM THROUGH HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION IN THE LOCAL ECCLESIASTICAL TERRITORY



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Pehkon is situated in the southern part of Shan State, in eastern Myanmar. There are five townships in the diocese: Pehkon, Pinlaung, Naungtaya, Hsi Hseng and Mawkmai. The diocese covers an area of about 10,150 square kilometers and is mostly hilly and mountainous. The population in the diocese is about 298,690.

Buddhism is the predominant religion whereas Christianity, animism and a few other religions are in the minority. Ethnic minorities are the Shan, Paoh, Intha, Kayan, Kayah and Lisu. The diocese was originally part of the Archdiocese of Taunggyi. PIME Missionaries started evangelization work in the late 19th century. The mission territory was made a diocese by Pope Benedict XVI on Dec. 15, 2005, as a suffragan of Taunggyi archdiocese, and it was inaugurated as a new diocese on April 1, 2006.

#### MISSION AND VISION OF THE DIOCESE

MISSION - To follow and actualize the meaning of the name of the Diocese: PEKHON.

- P = Prayer,
- E = Eucharist,
- K = Kindness, compassion, charity
- H = Honesty, sincerity
- O = Obedience which is to be actualized
- N = "NOW"

VISION - To build up a community of faith, love, obedience, cooperation with priests, Religious and people which means re-evangelization.

The formation program is carried out yearly at the diocesan as well as parochial level with full enthusiasm and lively spirit among the children. It will be a singular and special occasion for children to join for this Re-evangelization program. It is really an invaluable action for the children as well as for the people in the diocese. Although, the operation is short term,



yet it is full of meaning and there is truth in its substance.

It was rather sad and depressing not to be able to hold the annual formation programme as planned. The COVID-19 pandemic, aggravated by political conflicts between military troops and the local PDF (People's Defence Forces), created greater hindrance in our pastoral work and we changed our programme according to the possibility and accessibility of the environment in our context. As a result, many had to flee to safety and take refuge in the western part of the Pekhon diocese. Many of the internally displaced people come from Loikaw, Pekhon and Moby. This is why we had to shift our programme to a safe place where there are no longer Covid 19 restrictions, but the instability is still real as the territory is under the control of PDFs and EAOs. However, many came there to survive and to educate their children. Thousands of children are in Santa Maria's,

Hwarikhu, Lopu, Han O, and Nanki Parishes.



There are no virus infections in our region at the moment, but due to some political concerns, people have to be alert to travel and gather safely. We thank God for the providence, which guided us and provided us with the best opportunity to conduct our people.

For this, we had to hold the programme in four locations and it was implemented in each parish with limited numbers.

In 2021, there were more than 5200 children of the whole Holy Childhood Association in Pekhon diocese. This year, the numbers suddenly increased, as many displaced children from Loikaw diocese attended the gathering. It is good that the numbers are improving, but sometimes it is

difficult to organise them because of the large numbers and different diocesan backgrounds.

In **HWARIKHU PARISH**, the associates of the Holy Childhood was initially 515, excluding displaced children. But this year, as children from other parishes and displaced children joined, the number rose to 650. The course lasted five days and was really effective and fruitful for the re-evangelisation of children in the diocese.

In **SANTA MARIA'S PARISH**, the course was held from 5 to 9 April 2022. Moby, Pehon and Lweyin Mingalar joined it. It hosted 453 children, being the vicariate of the parish and the central place in the region. The other place is Lopu, where there are many displaced children from other parishes and where 450 children actively participated in the seminar held from 13 to 17 May 2022.

The program took place in HWARIKHU in the **NANKI PARISH** from 9 to 13 May. 250 children participated in the course.

The other parishes that carried out the seminar are: His Hseng - 150 participants, Yepu - 120 participants, Han O - 150 participants, Lehtun - 120 participants, Konethar - 120 participants and Nanpolon - 110 participants. Lweyin Mingalar, Moby and Pehon could not hold the meetings because they are in the conflict zone.

The total number of children who joined the



*Hwarikou Parish*

summer course at diocesan and parish level was 2573. The themes and schedule of the course remained unchanged. Sports, games, social activities, cultural dances and other activities are no longer prohibited. In this way, the courses ran smoothly from the beginning to the end.

The daily schedule would be occupied with following items: The day begins with the Holy Eucharistic celebration. After breakfast, all children accompanied by their guides proceed to the different halls to learn and share with designated animators and lecturers about class matters and pre-assigned topics. Lectures

covered the most basic teaching of the Church, the stories of the Old and New Testaments, Sunday obligations. Almsgivings, prayers, holy vocations, cooperation and formation in the missionary work were given at said program. Many liturgical songs and hymns were practiced and taught as necessary.

Our main objective was the re-evangelisation of young people through the formation of children, missionary children. We strongly believe that every child has the right to know Jesus and make new friends for Jesus, to discover his/her true vocation and calling. We also



*Santa Maria's Parish*



***Nanki Parish***

believe that God has His ways of saving souls and is willing to work with every individual, including children.

Under the direction of the local ordinary of Pehon diocese, Bishop Peter Hla, and the constant supervision of the diocesan director of the Holy Childhood, the Reverend Fr Johny Soerch, and pastors, sisters, seminarians, some professionals and experienced lay people, these children had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the universal Church and its teachings, as well as getting to know new friends and comrades.

We have tried to animate and share with them the importance of the spirit of communion and basic social skills. Although we believe

that there is much more room for improvement, we are really satisfied and proud to recognise that this gathering achieved and realised the goals of the diocese. It is truly blessed to witness that the assigned animators took their roles and tasks very seriously and actively. Although the length of time is a bit too short for a formation program per se, we all believe that it was a very fruitful gathering to pass on the most basic information to our younger brothers and sisters.



***Kuntha Parish***



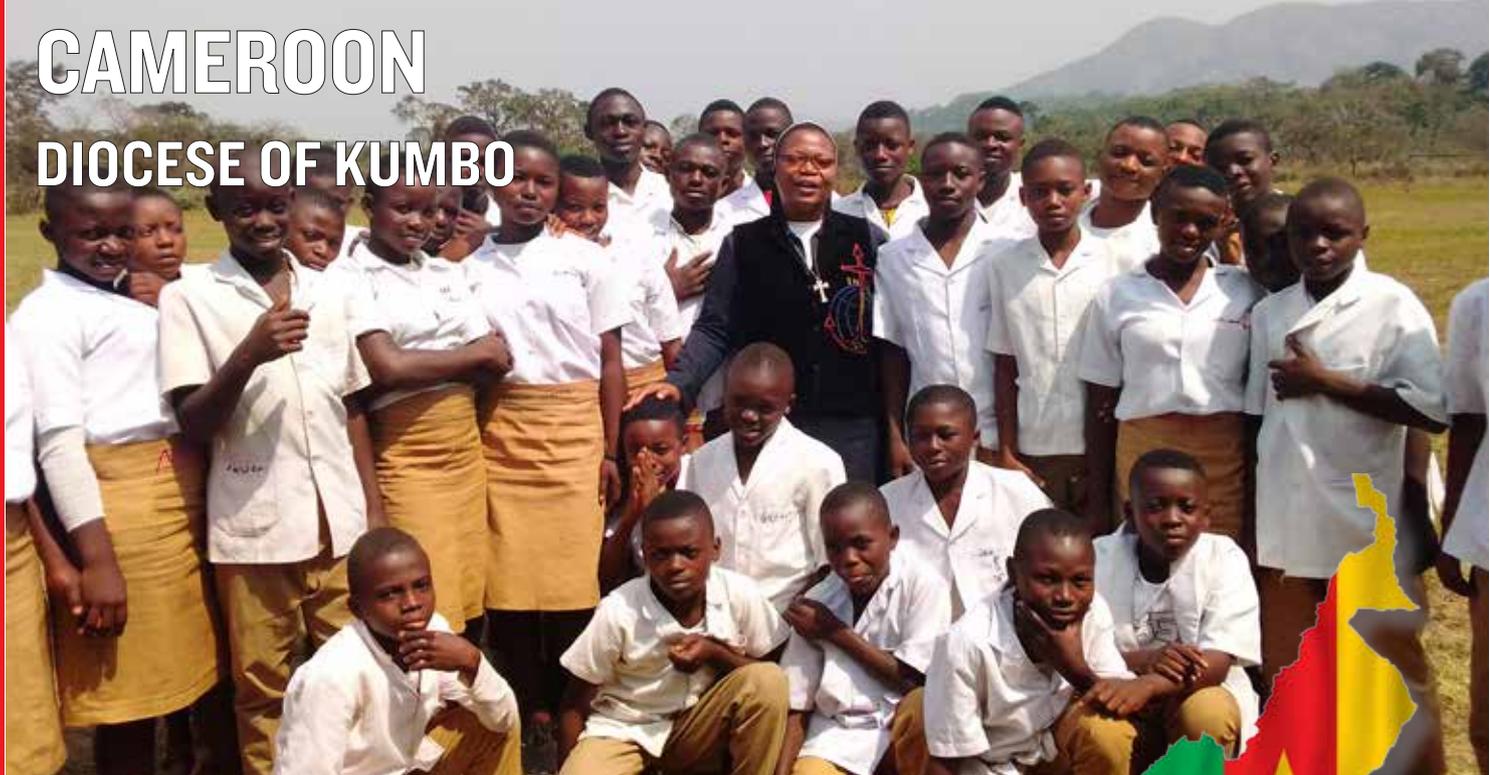
***Lweyin Mingalar Parish***



***Lunke Parish***

# CAMEROON

## DIOCESE OF KUMBO



The Catholic Diocese of Kumbo was erected by Pope St John Paul II on 18 March 1982.

It currently has six main pastoral divisions (Deaneries). These are further divided into 39 Parishes and Pastoral Zones. Each of the deaneries has at least three parishes, regrouped according to the geographical context, and having a certain cultural, missionary, or pastoral homogeneity or history.

The diocese covers a surface area of 8,600 sq. k.m., with a population estimate of 953,250 in 2020.

The Catholic population is 14,4%.

Other Christian groups in the area include Presbyterians, Baptists, and some Evangelical and Pentecostal Communities. Other Religions present are Islam and African Traditional Religion.

The Diocese is placed in the North West Region of Cameroon where there are 11 ethnic groups: Nso', Oku, Noni, Wimbun, Mbembe, Jukum, Nchanti, Mfumte, Yamba, Mbaw and Mambila. Each of these tribes has its own language and dialects.

The Diocese of Kumbo has a Christian population that has children aged between 1-15 years, as the greater majority and are catered for by the Kumbo Diocesan Federation of Catholic Youth, where they receive integral formation. The Diocese is in one of the areas that has been greatly affected by the sociopolitical crisis in Cameroon.

The children are first-hand witnesses of a war that is now 5 years and running, a war that has grown from a minor unrest of a few grieved citizens, into a major civil war. Such is their unfortunate condition. The sporadic violence, educational distress and socio-political unrest has negatively impacted the whole population but more so the children who are the most



victimized by the war.

They have seen and still see the rampant murder, constant torture and heavy weaponized confrontation between the state and non-state armed group who prey on the young minds of the children and easily recruit the youths for weaponized service without proper and clear guided orientation. Many have escaped to safer areas in search for a haven, the same haven sought for by those left back in the Diocese, with little hope of fulfilment.

There is untold hunger, inadequate formation, and food shortages. For the past years, there has been no school at all. Last academic year schools timidly started operating. The young look for life with meaning but with many unanswered questions as the war has not announced an imminent end.

This year the Diocese of Kumbo celebrated a pastoral year on the theme “Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ” (Rom 8:35). The Pontifical Mission Society Team has stressed the importance of financial contributions towards the youths by ensuring proper sensitization and donations for the Holy Childhood collection done yearly in our diocese on the 1st Sunday of May in spite of the Corona virus pandemic and the war.

Children’s-club activities and child-friendly space were created, continued and made use of in many parishes of the diocese to help relief stress, trauma, educational facilities in some safe areas of the Diocese.

## PROGRAM FOR CATECHESIS IN NON-CATHOLIC COLLEGES

This program is geared towards improving on the quality of life of the beneficiaries who are

primarily students between the ages of 11-18 years who otherwise would never have had the opportunity especially in sustaining their faith and empowering them with Christian values.

With the reality of the socio-political crisis in the North and South West Regions of Cameroon for the past five years; the complete shot down of schools in some parts kept the students idle and exposed to a great number of social ills such as drug abuse, premarital sex, stealing, prostitution, lies telling etc. In their idleness, they have been negatively affected and traumatized by the continuous gunshots, kidnappings, massive arrest of people, burning of homes, property, businesses and numerous





killings, the culture of violence and disregard for the sacredness of human life.

All these have a negative influence as they experience them daily and keeps them greatly traumatized. These daily experiences from the violence, murders and human right abuses have greatly weakened their faith and they tend to forget about Moral/Christian values, and therefore, educating them with these values will help to keep them on track. With the trauma they need too psychosocial support/counselling and a continuous reminder of the values so that the violence does not take an upper hand in their decision making.

The observation especially on students who are living by themselves most especially girls is that a lot of moral guidance is needed to assist them stay away from harm's way. A good number of these students who are in their teens and highly vulnerable, need to be accompanied especially during moments like these. This will contribute to their moral integrity and forming them to be good, useful and responsible citizens.

Knowing the effects of the crisis on children,

especially at the age, which they get into secondary school, we went on to build their moral lives and our target was in non catholic colleges in other words lay private and government schools. This is because we realized that most of the time the moral aspect of life in those schools is hardly taken into consideration, their focus is often on the intellectual aspect.

Giving moral instructions in these schools

brought about a change in behaviour as well as healing especially for those who have been traumatized by the war reality in which they are living. In addition to that, in some government schools especially in the French speaking part of Cameroon, there have been cases of killing and wounding teachers as well as their fellow school mates. The program also aimed at avoiding such incidents in the schools within the Diocese.

We have foreseen the introduction of Commitment Cards for the students. These Cards which have been termed "my moral card", were printed out with some moral expressions and shared to the students to constantly remind them of the way to live and to behave morally. Stickers with some of these messages were produced for use at strategic corners in the schools, homes where they live, behind their exercise books etc.

To ensure the effectiveness of the program, workshops and formation sessions were organized for Instructors, meetings and provision of the necessary didactic materials have been



very essential in addition to the visits and controls of the Coordinator. Enrichment sessions like Retreats and Recollections were organized and were of added advantage to the moral upbringing of these children.

We are glad to communicate that the administrators of those schools greatly appreciated the program. It is also worthy to note the interest these children have in the program. From the table above, four thousand one hundred and fourteen students benefitted and continue to benefit from the program and the fruits live on in them.

With the intense sensitization of this academic year and with the recent resumption of schools, a good number of government schools have been reopened especially in Donga Mantung and in some areas of Bui such as within the territories of Oku and Noni Sub divisions.

*Sr. Miranda Musong Nange  
Sisters of Saint Ann  
Coordinator of Moral Instructions*

# TESTIMONIES





## WESTERN SAHARA APOSTOLIC PREFECTURE

The Apostolic Prefecture extends on the entire territory of Western Sahara. The territory is divided in two parishes: the church of Saint Francis of Assisi in El Ayun, that serves as cathedral of the Apostolic Prefecture; the second church is in Dakhla. In 2020 it counted 350 baptized of 1.075.350 inhabitants.

The reality of our local church is humble and at the same time beautiful. Without local Christians (there are no Moroccan/Saharan Christians in the Sahara), all Christians on the territory are foreigners, in the best of cases residents, even though most of our Christians are migrants on their way to the Canary Islands and Spain. There are few families among them, but more and more single mothers. A child missionary ministry becomes difficult. However, we work a lot with children and young people who live in the Sahara and help

them so that they can study or go to nurseries. They are very poor migrants who come from the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Cameroon or Guinea. Another important reality are poor or disabled children from Muslim families that we help in various ways. It is a way of cooperating and collaborating with our Muslim brothers, a collaboration to which Pope Francis invites us with insistence. We put our heart into it. Thus, in this very humble situation, what we can do is spread the charism and activity of missionary childhood to everyone. To poor



Muslim families or with disabilities and single migrant mothers who benefit from our action and the subsidy of the Missionary Childhood, we talk about the prayers and financial aid of the Society, sharing the affection and work of Christian children from all over the world who think about them too. We did some catechesis with the mothers and we plan to have more awareness sessions.

During the Missionary Childhood Day we also tried to explain this activity to our parishioners. Muslim families understand that there are Christian families who help them out of pure love, for free.

We do not want to forget the work we do with the disabled children of the city of Dakhla in the Therapy Center for Children



with Disabilities. Our support is "qualitative" rather than "quantitative". We try to support aspects that can give the center a qualitative leap. We are committed to explaining where we collaborate that it is thanks to the generosity and love of thousands of

Christian children from all over the world that we can be there. It is a great witness that we joyfully bear in the name of our Lord Jesus and his Church: a sign of hope that announces the coming of the Kingdom of God.

*Msgr. Mario LEÓN DORADO, OMI  
Apostolic Prefect of Western Sahara*





## ALBANIA ARCHDIOCESE OF TIRANA - DURRES

The Archdiocese of Tirana-Durres has 124.120 catholics, which represent 10 % of the local population, equivalent to 1.245.590 people in 2020.

Dearly beloved,  
I greet you all with pleasure, also on behalf of the Community, hoping to find you well. Thank you for your attention in responding to our request for help. Please excuse me for arriving late. The recent installation of the latest games forced us to wait, but we are happy with the result. The games are beautiful and strong. Our garden will become the gathering place within the Oratory, especially for Kindergarten and Elementary School children who love these games. For the older ones, we have two games that are more suitable for their age: table football and billiards. We would like to have a few more, and we trust Providence will help us with this. The children are also happy to have the games you subsidized in the village, the only ones in the region. We also have a field for volleyball and one for soccer. The Oratory, by which I mean our home, will become "THE OASIS" on the outskirts of Durres, where the children will come to "quench" their need to be together having fun peacefully, leaving their cell phones aside, even if for a few hours. Our Oratory is quite busy, and we hope the number of those coming here will grow since the area is

becoming a place of expansion due to increasing housing being built by the state, and the presence of several factories, more of which are under construction.

The Pastoral Year 2021-2022 project implemented by the Canossian Community based in Shen Vlash involved 65 children aged 3 to 14. The Community devoted itself to training the animators most engaged in the Shen Vlash Oratory, catechizing children and youth in the villages indicated in the Project. A lot of energy has been dedicated daily to the Nursery School.

Growth in faith is slow, but it bears fruit: we are seeing an increased attendance at Sunday liturgy and broader participation in the other sacraments. Catechism groups for preparation for the Sacraments are not very numerous (we operate in the villages), but those attending manifest a desire to know and deepen the value of their place in the Church and the local Community. The path ahead in this regard is long and steep because of so many problems, both within society and in the family ... but hope sustains us.



The area surrounding our village is being developed, with the state building a new neighborhood due to the earthquake that wiped out many homes in Durres. In addition to this, factories are being built as a promise of jobs for so many families. We are in poor areas, and we must take this into account. In all realities, there is a focus on an integral formation of the person, taking into consideration the human, cultural, religious, and universal fraternity perspectives, all starting from the formation of the heart, welcoming to all, first and foremost, the Lord.

The photos represent some events lived by the children of the Nursery School. We keep you present in our Community and personal prayer and also in the prayer we do with the children. May the Lord increase the good in your hands so that you can sow it in favor of so many brothers and sisters in need.

*Sr. Antonietta Salinardi and Community  
Shen Vlash 18.10.2022*



***The National Day, known as Flag Day, commemorating the Independence (Sept. 1912)***



***The celebration of Christmas and New Year. The New Year holiday is celebrated more by Muslims- it was the only holiday celebrated during the Communist Regime***



***Three photos depict a special moment: the prayer for peace in Ukraine. The one with the hands near the Crucifix tells of participation in an initiative of the Catholic School Commission in Albania, which involved all the Catholic Schools: "COLLABORATE TO COLLECT FUNDS FOR THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE." Several parents participated in the collection.***



***The feast of St. Magdalene, celebrated on May 8***



***Feast of Children and their Rights (June 2)***



## COLOMBIA APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF MITÚ

### **CAPI CENTER OF INDIGENOUS PASTORAL ANIMATION OF VAUPES**

To speak of the CAPI or Center for Indigenous Pastoral Animation is to speak of Mitú, in the department of Vaupés, Colombia. This space of evangelization was established to encourage and strengthen the integral life of the indigenous peoples of the Apostolic Vicariate of Mitú - Vaupés; In Yeral language, it means Paujil, which is a representative bird of the Colombian Amazon; Its mission is to accompany native peoples, and from them "Build a Church with an Indigenous Face and Amazonian Heart", motto of the Pastoral Life Plan from 2022 to 2026.

Being a department of the Colombian Amazon, most of it is jungle, which is one of the major drawbacks for evangelization, because it is only possible to travel and access the communities by trails on foot, by river in motorboats, or by air in light aircrafts whose costs are high because of the risk and fuel. Only three municipalities have airports: Mitú- Fabio Alberto León Bentley Airport, Carurú- Jorge Enrique González Airport and Araracuara - Araracuara Airport. The other municipalities and townships have small airstrips

where only short flight airplanes can land.

Due to the difficulty in accessing the different parishes and mission centers, the Apostolic Vicariate of Mitú created the Indigenous Pastoral Animation Center- CAPI- located in the main town of Mitú, to train the different Pastoral agents of the Vicariate, at different times of the year, who are brought to access training in different pastoral areas; the CAPI receives groups that participate in meetings, events, retreats, retreats, activities and even lends itself to organizations outside the Church.

CAPI welcomes indigenous people from all over the department, whether they are children, youth, adults and seniors, who participate in activities in different pastoral areas: Social, Catechetical, Children and Youth, Educational, Parish, Priestly and Consecrated Life, Vocational.

The CAPI's mission is to be a center of welcome, formation, dynamics, contemplation, which has beautiful spaces with its own cultural aspect, its construction is made of wood and has a chapel hall, dormitory for 30 people, catechesis hall,



dining room, kitchen, basketball and micro soccer field, ecological spaces for rest and prayer; and a Maloka type cultural kiosk, which has been worn out by the heavy rains and winds.

This Animation Center supports training events for the community of the department of Vaupés, with training, lodging and food, according to the programmed activity. It is currently administered by the Missionary Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who also coordinate the animation of the Catechetical and Ministerial Pastoral Ministry, and the Pastoral Ministry of Children and Youth.

During the weekdays, the children and adolescents of Missionary Childhood from different shelters attached to CAPI meet with them and develop activities around making friends for Jesus and generating missionary awareness in the little ones, following the OMP methodology of missionary catechesis, missionary spirituality, missionary pastoral and group life, which helps them to grow in grace and faith.

Currently in Vaupés there are 9 MCA groups, 5 in the municipal capital: Shelters del 12 de octubre, San Francisco and Mitu Cachivera, in the 2 parishes: Cathedral Inmaculada and Santa Laura; and 4 in communities, Mituseño Urania 30 minutes by river or road, Piedrañi, Acariacuara and Buenos Aires which are reached by plane, totaling approximately 130 children, who encourage other children



Seasonally, the CAPI attends to the retreats of the schools of the municipality. On weekends, formation in the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation, the Missionary Youth, and an Agricultural Technical Formation Course for youth and adults is being developed, coordinated by the Social Pastoral. Every year we joyfully welcome the formation of Pastoral Agents: priests, deacons, catechists, religious, at different times of the year.

This space in the Apostolic Vicariate of Mitú is a gift for all the indigenous people of Vaupés, which fills with joy and wisdom those who participate and enjoy it and is also a gift for the Church in Mission.

*Sr. Luz Adriana Meneses A.*

*Teresita Missionary*

*Delegate of the Children and Youth Ministry of the Apostolic Vicariate of Mitú*



## IVORY COAST

### **MY EXPERIENCE AT THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD**

I am Sister Gisèle N'Guessan, missionary of the Missionary Community of Villaregia, former national secretary of Holy Childhood at the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) of Ivory Coast. First of all, I would like to thank God for his paternity and for his goodness, because he allowed me to have the experience of guiding the children of Ivory Coast as national secretary of the Holy Childhood from 2019 to 2022. I had the opportunity to collaborate in the mission that was entrusted to the National Director by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, to participate in and support the Pope's global network of prayer and charity in our country.

2019 was the year in which Pope Francis proclaimed the month of October as the

Extraordinary Missionary Month. Thus, as soon as it was proclaimed, it was necessary to organize, as National Direction, the different ceremonies linked to this event of the universal Church. It was truly an occasion for mission, of encounter, of celebration, of seeking the best that really led me to rediscover the beauty of our Church, which is missionary by its very nature.

After this period of celebration, I tried to understand how to carry out my work and what the pastoral needs and challenges were related to the reality of children in our country, and I looked at what was already being done in the Dioceses to strengthen and improve it. After this period of analysis of the situation, I realized that it was necessary not only to strengthen



spiritual formation, but also to find a structure of communion that would connect all the diocesan chaplains who worked directly in the pastoral care of children, with the National Secretariat and with the National Direction, to unify not only missionary formations and initiatives, but also to carry out some common activities. Faced with these two urgent challenges, I thought it appropriate to give priority to the spiritual formation of children.

It should be noted that, in matters of formation, in addition to the contents of catechesis, groups, associations and movements of children in our country, there is a support for missionary formation, drawn up by the National Direction and the Diocesan Directors, on the occasion of the national councils for children, to be used throughout the month of October or, for some Dioceses, in November. These documents are prepared on the basis of the Pope's speech on the occasion of World Mission Days. In addition to this support of missionary formation, I thought it was necessary to strengthen the knowledge of Jesus through the reading of the New Testament, so that the children knew how to explain their faith and their missionary action as little disciples, called in turn to evangelize their friends.

And therefore, based on the Holy Childhood slogan "Children evangelize children", I thought of a sort of biblical agenda (a calendar, a diary ...), which would allow each child, with the

daily reading of two chapters a day (except Sundays), to read the entire New Testament. This document, which is therefore a didactic tool for the biblical formation of children, provides that every evening, after the reading of the two chapters, one in the morning and one in the evening, the child writes the most significant verse in his biblical diary, immediately after noting a commitment for the next day.



This biblical agenda allowed the child to make a journey with the Word of God and thus grow in friendship with Jesus. According to my calculations, in a maximum of four months, the assiduous child will have read the entire New Testament, acquiring a good knowledge of the content of the gospel, since he will have noted and put into practice the good intentions.

Another training and information tool on which we are reflecting is a missionary magazine for children which provides for exchanges and sharing of missionary experiences.

In support of the formations, there are activities that group children at the parish, vicarial and diocesan level, according to the reality of each diocese. These activities generally consist of catechesis often given by the bishops themselves, artistic performances to show the cultural riches of the country and biblical competitions to increase the spiritual formation of children. For children, these are opportunities for training, information and for making friends.



Therefore, depending on the Dioceses, the celebrations of the Holy Childhood or the Lenten pilgrimages are organized according to a goal pursued by the organizers and the chaplains of the children. In addition to these celebrations, which are compulsory in all Dioceses, some chaplains organize additional activities

in favor of the children, to promote meetings and formation. It is the case of the Diocese of Agboville, the Archdiocese of Abidjan, which this year organized a biblical competition tournament for all the children of the 50 parishes of the Diocese, divided into four vicariates. Thus, during the two weekends of the Easter holidays and the school holidays of the first weekend of July, the children were able to test their Bible knowledge. The tournament ended with three parishes in the lead.

To organize this kind of activity the presence of the animators is extremely necessary. For this reason, it is necessary to examine their formation, which is the responsibility of each Diocese. In any case, the National Direction organizes training sessions during the visits to the Dioceses. The greatest difficulty we encounter on the occasion of these visits, as regards the formation of the animators, is that in our meetings, which take place during the week, there are not many participants, for work reasons. With regard to taking care of children, the greatest difficulties, especially financial, are moving, housing, rental of communication equipment with the public and logistics as a whole, which are often too expensive for the organizers.

However, it should be remembered that all children's activities are carried out thanks to the great generosity and time, given free of charge, by the young animators or by the religious who accompany the children with love and great dedication. The missionary

formation of these animators must be strengthened, so that they are true shepherds concerned for the mission and for the good of the flock.

The other aspect of the Holy Childhood slogan, "Children help children", will be able to take on all the meaning and allow for an increase in collections for the Universal Solidarity Fund, thanks to the national network of children's chaplains, created at the beginning of this year.

In conclusion, what I will treasure thanks to this assignment is that working for the spiritual growth of children within the Pontifical Mission Societies has taught me to better understand this sentence of Pope John Paul II: "The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and





that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service". (RM 1). Indeed, the real concern that the Church has towards each of its members and above all towards the weakest, is to give them a good formation so that they may be true disciples, capable, in turn, of transmitting the teaching received. I understood that we are all in the same boat and that, therefore, the need to form the young generation well into faith in God is an urgency for the Church of tomorrow, which must be stronger, in order to face the challenges that will arise.



In any case, despite these real challenges, far from having been a chore, I must say that it was a fantastic and exciting adventure, the one I experienced within the Pontifical Mission Societies. For me it was like working alongside the Holy Father, to give my small contribution to the great mission that Christ entrusted to his Church. Even though we were thousands of kilometers away, it was easy to make the intentions and concerns of the Pope and, therefore, of the whole Church my own. All this has spurred me to inform myself better about the reality of the Vatican, to be more sensitive to everything concerning our mother Church, to love the documents of the Church and to make the young people I accompany love them. In short, I became more aware of the Church's service to all men and all of humanity and I was able to experience firsthand the Church's motherhood.



It is an experience that I would gladly do again if the opportunity arises, but I know that, wherever I am, every service I carry out with love is in continuity with the mission of the Church and, therefore, I am happy to pass the baton to another person who, in turn, will be able to live this experience of the Church.

I still thank God for His faithfulness and fatherhood that He has shown me by allowing me to serve Him in the Church.

*Sr. Gisèle N'GUESSAN  
Missionary  
Community of  
Villaregia*

# ARGENTINA

## NATIONAL CONGRESS OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE



### LET'S LISTEN TO EACH OTHER!

*In August, during the MCA month in Argentina, the Society joined the synodal proposal of the Church through an instance that allowed both the children and adolescents of all the dioceses of the country to speak up- and be heard.*

A "congress", according to the definition proposed by the dictionary, is a meeting in which people from different places, linked by the same activity or profession, present on topics of interest to exchange information and reflect. Based on this notion, the National Secretariat of the MCA Argentina proposed a "National Congress of Missionary Childhood and Adolescence" for August, the month of the MCA.

It was an instance of active participation of children and adolescents in the call of the whole Church to be part of the synodality, this "walking together", which seeks to promote dialogue,

listening, reflection. From the National MCA, it was encouraged that this opportunity of meeting should take place within the framework of the Jubilee of TPMS as a possibility, also, to think and reflect about the Society and the charism at the present time.

The objective of the Congress was, then, to generate a space for meeting, dialogue and reflection of children and adolescents, in which they were the protagonists of the word and those who were allowed to share their concerns, ideas, proposals about the Church in general and the MCA in particular, through the rediscovery of the charism of the Society,



illuminated by the Word of God. Each diocese of the country, according to its reality, by means of subsidies adapted to children and adolescents sent by the National Secretariat of the MCA Argentina, asked the children and adolescents about their reality, the problems, desires, challenges, pains of their context, in order to look at them, then, at a global level. Following the Encyclical Letter "Fratelli Tutti" of Pope Francis and the call to become brothers and sisters to each other, to look at each other, to recognize each other, to listen to each other, to accompany each other to "walk together", the



Congress was illuminated through the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10, 25-37). The MCA National Congress, in this Jubilee year, tried to get the members of the Society to reflect on the following questions: What things hurt children and adolescents? What things make them sad, worry them? What is the answer or solution that we as MCA give in the world? Who is the neighbor, who are the "children and adolescents" we help today? How do we involve the families in this challenge of missionary cooperation?

*WE SHARE BELOW SOME TESTIMONIES, THAT CAPTURE THE RESONANCE OF THE CONGRESS, HAILING FROM DIFFERENT DIOCESES*



**DIOCESE OF SAN MARTÍN**

*"The teenagers said they know another adolescent who is going through some kind of problem, and some of them even said they are going through it themselves. They are worried about fitting into society, having the approval of others; they are worried about not having money, not finding a job in the future, unhealthy relationships, drugs, delinquency, bullying, cyberbullying, abandonment, mistreatment by relatives*

### DIocese OF CONCORDIA

*The children (4-11 years old) expressed: "We are friends of the children and teenagers of the world because we are friends of Jesus, we pray for them and we help them. We show it by sharing, playing, being friendly, giving gifts, giving food, acting like Jesus, giving what the other needs, offering sacrifices and listening.*

*It hurts us when they hit us, fight or say mean things, when they exclude us, mistreat us, when they don't pay attention to us, when they make fun of us. We care about the children in Ukraine, because of the war, and those children who are hungry; we help by praying and donating*



### DIocese OF RÍO CUARTO

*In addition to celebrating the month of the MCA, we held the proposed National Congress, during which wonderful responses inspired by the Holy Spirit emerged from the heart of each of those who participated. From our diocese, we also believed it was important not only to listen to the children and adolescents, but also to give a voice to the families, who are also part of the Society. For their part, they agreed about the lack of dialogue in the family; technology occupies a very big place in people's lives and in family dynamics. Children and adolescents are discouraged by uncertainty and loneliness. Many times it is because parents work, but many others because despite being home, they remain absent from the lives of their children. Yet adults too are asking for a change: to be able to be protagonists in their children's lives, to accompany them at every step. They see a more active Church, the MCA as a group where their children and adolescents go on mission and do things they would never have imagined*

*before. A place where they are protagonists.*



## DIOCESE VILLA MARÍA

*The experience of living a synodal church, from the place of active children and adolescents who live together in missionary harmony, was very positive and enriching. Opening a space for listening and sincere dialogue allowed them to review, recognize and propose strategies, gestures and concrete actions that are valued and need to be increased. We emphasize that speaking in the light of the Gospel allowed us to do so from a loving and constructive point of view.*

*Some of the reflections that emerged from the children and adolescents: "The Church I see is a refuge, a place where I find peace and love without measure"; "I see my church as dull, without enthusiasm that many times shows obligations"; "In the MCA I get to be myself without having to pretend"; "You always meet someone who is sad but many times we do not dare to put into action all that Jesus taught us*

Ezequiel Rogante  
National Secretary MCA Argentina



## NICARAGUA

Because of the reality of our country, little by little we have been carrying out activities and meetings with the children, but not yet massive activities with them at national level. However, because of the pandemic, we have limited ourselves to carrying out the meetings in the parishes and pastoral zones of the different dioceses, to preserve the life of the children and trusting in God. Our hope has been that at the right time we could effectively share, celebrate and live with the children a pleasant and spiritual space, trying to avoid affectations to the children's education in the faith.



Another reality that is present in the missionary childhood in our dioceses is that some of them are gradually organizing and re-structuring their commissions and work strategies due to our national reality, but others,

on the other hand, still need more support and motivation.

As for the small groups of missionary childhood, we are once again trying to spread the work in the different parishes of the dioceses of our ecclesiastical province. We are also seeing the formal reemergence of missionary activities, thanks to new animators, advisors and parish priests who entrust this ministry to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

The Pontifical Society of the Missionary Childhood promotes every year the National Day of Missionary Childhood, during which it draws the attention of the children to the human, spiritual and material needs of the little ones, but... due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meetings and activities with the children were held virtually instead of in person.

The National Day is celebrated on the Sunday closest to September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### NATIONAL MEETING OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD (VIRTUAL)

SEPTEMBER 25, 2021. DIOCESE OF LEÓN

It seemed that the pandemic was going to stop us in our evangelization efforts, but we learned to use the media to proclaim Jesus Christ. We had hoped an in-person meeting would allow us to share and celebrate with one another. However, it wasn't possible. But, through the diocese of Leon and its media, we were able to adapt in time and celebrate our missionary meeting, on the occasion of the feast of the Nativity of Mary (the Child Virgin), the missionary feast in Nicaragua.

We began to work with the participation of all the dioceses, who sent their videos and songs. It was great joy what made this work possible, as well as the efforts of those who organized it and the parishes that participated. The day began with Eucharistic adoration, because without the presence of the Lord we are nothing. The words we had from the pastor of the diocese, Monsignor René Sándigo, motivated everyone to love the mission in the children.

There was a storm, which delayed things a little, but did not stop the celebration of our meeting. Every Childhood, in the dioceses and parishes, joined in the transmission through

Facebook, which is the most popular social network in the country.

The participation of the children through the different dynamics, as were the choirs that made beautiful the songs of the different parishes of the diocese.

The children danced and sang. They were really the ones who made this meeting possible, helped and guided by their animators, from their communities. They are the great little collaborators, as St. John Paul II called them. We have learned along the way to use the means at our disposal. It has been a joint effort.

We hope to meet again soon, this time perhaps traveling from afar to take part will be possible, and people from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific in Nicaragua will be able to come together in the name of the Lord. Each missionary group makes its own piggy bank and there, during each meeting, adds a grain of sand for its own activities. The meetings of the MCA process were combined, which allowed us to have a complete vision of the whole process and thus share with other children and invite them to the Society.

The preparation is an experience that takes time and dedication, and we have limited resources, but it is carried out with a missionary heart, working for the work of the Lord. The work of the Lord is not stopped by anyone, because he gave us his holy Spirit and made us missionaries of the Father.





# NATIONAL ENCOUNTER OF NATIONAL MISSIONARY ADOLESCENCE (VIRTUAL)

OCTOBER 24, 2021. ARCHDIOCESE OF MANAGUA

I want to share with you about the realization of a meeting of teenage missionaries. Most were children who have grown up in taking part in the network's activities and have now entered this wonderful period that are their teenage years.

For some time now, we have been working in three sections: Missionary Childhood, Missionary Adolescence and Missionary Animators. This leads us to better serve the members of the Society. We have a meeting of missionary animators pending. It is beautiful to see all this richness cultivated, some of them for many years, as well as to see the adolescents who have been working with us for many years. It is beautiful to see all this richness cultivated, some for many years, as well as to see the adolescents who become missionary animators.

Once again, because of the pandemic, the meeting was virtual. We asked for videos with testimonies of teenagers who have walked in the MCA since they were children, and they shared their experience in their parish communities, and

the motivation of the diocesan and religious directors who in their communities are a strong push to the work of the Lord in the Church.

We held the life feed in a parish kindly lent to us by a parish priest.

We hope for the future to strengthen the missionary teenager network and then to make presence of youth and missionary family (Propagation of the faith). It is a long process, we know that the Lord will move the hearts of so many adolescents who want to live the experience of faith, having a missionary heart. Soon we will have the CAFOMI (Course of Animation and Formation and Missionary Animation) which will be a tool for the animators, some of whom are teenagers.

In the end, the meeting was wonderful, a great success. We have to say that we were able to reach everyone, and we had the opportunity to interact with confreres from different places and Church movements, eager to bring the Society to their communities. It was a team effort, rooted in faith, because prayer and listening to the Word were never lacking in the preparation. We hope to have face-to-face meetings soon. We are committed to these because the mission does not stop.

Thanks to Cardinal Leopoldo José Brenes, Metropolitan Archbishop of Managua, head of the commission of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua for always encouraging us and being at the head of the Society.

TESTIMONIES



P. Henry Silva  
IAM Nicaragua



**“YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES... TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH” (ACTS 1,8)**

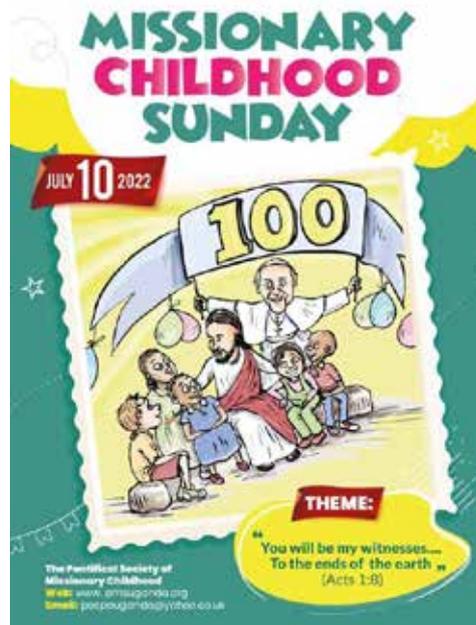
Every year the Society of Missionary Childhood organizes a national day of prayer for children. This day brings their attention to spiritual and material needs of the church throughout the world. Children are encouraged to offer to other children all over the world their assistance. This year the day was celebrated colorfully on 10th July 2022 in all the 19 catholic dioceses under the theme “you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth” (acts 1:8).

In view a successful and uniform celebration the national office printed and distributed posters to all the 19 dioceses. The posters were accompanied by the children’s liturgy. This liturgy works as a guide with readings and gospel skit to the animators. We always do this to make sure that at the end of the day children have some messages to take home.

For the material collections made , as a country, we always have a centre of focus and this year our special focus was on the children of Moroto diocese. WHY? For the first time in three years, all the nine districts of Karamoja: Kaabong, Moroto, Kotido, Napak, Nabilatuk, Amudat, Karenga, Abim and Nakapiripit are at Famine crisis.

As an office we encouraged children to come with a cup of any cereal food, ie beans, maize for the children in Moroto.

The Diocesan well as catholic radios encouraging children to be more generous towards their peers.





## DIOCESE OF HOIMA

*YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES STARTING TODAY AND NOT TOMORROW'*

*"The call to witness to Christ starts today and not tomorrow, it does not depend on age, colour, or race but on sharing one's personal experience about the wonders that Christ has done in a person's life."*

This was the opening statement by the Bishop of Hoima Catholic Diocese during the Annual celebration of Missionary Children on Sunday 12th July, 2022. The major celebration was held at the Bujumbura cathedral and the Mass was led by the Rt. Rev. Vincent Kirabo; the bishop ordinary of Hoima Diocese who congratulated children upon reaching their annual celebration. He noted that this day brings all children on board to evangelise and share their missionary experiences with fellow children.

The bishop reminded the children that they belong to the Church, they are loved by the Church. Therefore, they have a purpose and mission to evangelize to both their fellow children and the adult members of the church by witnessing to the wonders god has worked int their lives.

Missionary Holy Childhood annual celebration is a special day dedicated to all children with a purpose of re-awakening their missionary spirit and creating awareness about the Holy Childhood Association.

In Hoima Diocese, this day was well celebrated in all parishes and all children were given an opportunity to participate in liturgy especially singing in the choir, taking readings and petitions,

enrolling new members and leading the offertory processions.

In his homily, the bishop called upon all children to witness to Christ by being ambassadors of good morals, being active in Church activities and respecting elders and being focused in their studies and their faith. They should know Jesus, love him fully, walk with him always and this will make Christ known and loved by others. Children should be bold about practicing their faith and this will help us to get better leaders tomorrow.

The bishop encouraged parents to invest in their children not only money but things that will lead them to a bright future like; good.

education, good morals, a sense of responsibility, good catechetical instruction, being good role models in the families and being close to the growth and developmental processes of their children. This will enable the Church to have good, responsible and reliable leaders.

The Children in other parishes also shared various gifts with fellow children and were helped to understand the importance of belonging to the Holy childhood association.

These celebrations were climaxed by social gatherings whereby children prepared special items of entertainment like songs and plays and thereafter a luncheon.

*Fr. Lawrence Ayesiga  
Diocesan Director PMS  
Hoima Catholic Diocese*



**DIOCESE OF LIRA**

**PARTICIPATION**

The celebration received a stunning enthusiasm from the Children with participations from Primary & Secondary schools, Chapels and parishes. Therefore, the children in Lango sub-region joined the rest of the Nation on 12th July to commemorate the Day of the Missionary Holy Childhood at the diocesan level. A Parish (St. Joseph Catholic Parish, Alanyi) was chosen which is at the extreme Eastern side of the Diocese to host the celebration with the aim to animate the Children in that part of the diocese. The day provided a good opportunity for the children to learn about the different experiences of witnessing Jesus Christ among their fellow Young ones across the entire Diocese.

**ACTIVITIES OF THE DAY**

The celebration involved a series of activities.

1. **PARADE:** The Day opened with a parade through the Small township of Amugu led by a children’s marching band played by the pupils of Atin Yesu Nursery and Primary School to raise awareness on the children’s active involvement in the church’s mission.

2. **Holy Mass:** this was the core of the celebration. It was a fully children’s animated liturgy with most parts taken by the children, thanks to the National secretariat of Missionary Holy Child liturgical Guild: The second reading of the word of God was acted; Choir and dancers; Petitions where children prayed for themselves and other children worldwide especially the Children in Ukraine and Russia. The Eucharistic celebration was led by the Vicar General Rev. Fr. Innocent Vallente Opiio.

3. **PLAYS:** The children performed songs, cultural dances, poems to colour the day. The presentations were welcomed from the different six deaneries that make up the diocese for a uniform integration and participation to envision a wider scope of the missionary experience within the diocese.

4. **MESSAGES:** Two children (a boy and a girl) were honored as Chief guests and they passed in their speeches encouraged their fellow children to be church goers and pray always and respect their parents and elders.

The main celebrant, the Vicar General Fr. Vallente called for the support and protection of the

children from the adults to secure the mission of the church for the children need all of us.

5. **THE DAY’S SOUVENIR:** A particular concern of the children is the need to do better showing more to the people their love for Christ. They promised to undertake a contribution of a cup of Maize each by August following the National concern for the Children in Moroto who are hit by severe hunger.

*FR. Stephen Odwongo  
PMS Director, Lira Diocese*





## DIOCESE OF NEBBI

Like any other diocese in Uganda, Nebbi catholic diocese, hundreds of children from all the 19 parishes gathered at Panyimur Parish to celebrate this great day in their missionary life of children.

The celebration was guided by the theme, “you will be my witness ... to the ends of the earth”, (Act 1:8). All the activities done in the celebration was directed towards the theme.

The children from different parishes reported in Panyimur parish on Friday evening the 8th July, 2022, and left for going back to their various homes on Sunday the 10th July, 2022, in the evening after the celebration.

In the homily, Rt. Rev. Raphael p’Mony Wokorach, M.C.C.J. stressed the major pillars of missionary animation, prayer and generous giving. He said that we give, not because we have a lot or enough, because we want others to experience the love of God manifested in the little good things we share with from our humble sacrifices.

He observed that this is what Bishop Charles Forbin intended to inspire in the children of his time, so that rich in spirit they could reach out to numerous children with their little sacrifices. Our situation today still calls on us to work hard to reach the ideals of our missionary mandate as members of Holy Childhood.

While in Panyimur parish the celebration was characterized by a number of activities for the three days the children were together. The following were the activities the children had in Panyimur;

- common prayers (night prayers and rosaries),
- mass on Saturday and Sunday,
- teaching on the life of St. Kizito and other Uganda martyrs,
- inspirational films, Drama, music, dance,
- marching and parade,
- sport encounters (football games) for both boys and girls,
- cleanliness,
- some charitable works were done by some of the representatives, they were involved fully in the liturgy of Saturday and Sunday.

In all these activities there was the spirit of competition to make them lively. All in all the children were throughout helped to appreciate the spirit of being missionaries. Besides money, children fundraised towards the Universal Solidarity Fund

and other assorted materials for their fellow neediest children.

Children were encouraged to be witnesses of Christ starting to themselves, fellow children, and to the elders especially their parents through; prayer, humility (respect for humanity), studies, and smartness or health

There were many activities done at both diocesan and parish levels that preceded the celebration in Panyimur parish. All these were for the success of the diocesan celebration and putting the theme in practice. The following were some of the activities; serious mobilization of the children in the entire diocese for the celebration, preparation meetings with the animators and the parish coordinators at the diocese and at the host parish, charitable work done by the children to the vulnerable at both parish and diocesan level, radio presentation about the celebration, individual parishes had their celebration before the diocese, the children were taught how to say the missionary rosary and how to make it for their sustaining source of finance and others.

There have been a lot of challenges we faced in the celebration. The following were some of the challenges faced.

As the result of COVID 19 which hindered the celebration in the previous years, many children came making their management not easy.

There was challenge of accommodation due to the large number of the children who reported for the function.

*Rev. Fr. Melki Thokerunga*

*PMS Diocesan Director, Nebbi Catholic Diocese*



# COLOMBIA



## THE MISSIONARY FAMILIES

The experiences of the Missionary Families in Colombia have been acquired in the course of the last 33 years, following the guidelines of the Pontifical Mission Societies through the Program called "MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF COLOMBIA", within the Universal Evangelization Plan of Our Holy Catholic Church, which responds to the call made by St. John Paul II when, to motivate the families, he gave us some phrases among which stand out: "The family is called to be a missionary sign for those who are far away, for families who do not yet believe and for Christian families who do not consistently live the faith they have received", "Either the Family is Missionary, or it is not a Christian Family", and "The Family is both the object and the subject of family pastoral care" . Pope Francis also said

to families: "You, families, are the hope of the Church and of the world. With your witness to the Gospel you can help God to realize his dream, you can contribute to bringing all God's children together, so that they may grow in unity and learn what it means for the whole world to live in peace as one big family." In the same sense, Mark 16:15 says: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature". That is why the Missionary Families of Colombia have embraced the exhortation of the Popes and the biblical foundation, to assume the commitment and fulfill the Missionary Mandate with the certainty that we have the help of the Holy Spirit, as the protagonist of the mission.

We have acquired and lived this experience,



through the different meetings of families, based on the guides that the PMS of Colombia and from the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, to which the Missionary Families Program belongs, have provided us with the tools to carry out the work of formation and accompaniment and thus be able to fulfill our Universal Evangelizing Mission with the Families.

**THE PURPOSE**

The purpose is to continue the animation and formation, so that more families are linked to the program and can encourage other families to support and help the Catholic Church



of Christ to fulfill the Evangelizing Mission, through the promotion of the missionary vocation in function of the propagation of the faith, participating as a Domestic Church in the development of a Catholic community practicing the Christian Doctrines of the Universal Church, so that with the testimony of the Gospel they can help God to fulfill His dream: "That all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tm 2:4).

**TESTIMONY**

For approximately 33 years, we, the Missionary Families, have been carrying out our evangelizing task in three lines of action:

- a. Within our family.
- b. In our environment (local community).
- c. Beyond the frontiers.

It is there where the Pope's message has left a significant mark of faith in our lives and in the families that have passed by our side,

which have been formed by father, mother and children, also grandparents, uncles, aunts and uncles and other relatives that make up the family nucleus. We feel that it is not so much what we give, but how much we have received from the families with whom we have shared the message, with the certainty that the Holy Spirit

has enlightened us through prayer, the Eucharist, works of mercy and sharing the word of God. Spreading the faith has allowed us to know more about God and to understand that there is more joy in giving than in receiving and for this reason we seek, united as a family, to reach holiness, salvation

and eternal life through the path of charity, as Jesus Christ made man taught us, being an example of holiness and obedience to his heavenly Father and who after serving so much, sacrificed himself and gave his life for love to



save all mankind.

The testimony has been lived, sharing and participating with other families in the evangelization activities programmed by the parishes, to promote the faith and Christian values beginning with each home. We also witnessed when we collaborated in the implementation and development of diocesan pastoral plans.

We have also spread the testimony with all the families that have been evangelized in the meetings held at local, departmental, regional and national levels, where many Catholic families of the Colombian territory have been encouraged and formed, who have become a community of people at the service of life, who participate in the development of society and the mission of the Church, where we all learn to have as a model of family life, the Family of Nazareth.

Now, the pandemic has given us the opportunity to reach the families of Colombia and the Spanish-speaking world, through the prayer of the Virtual Missionary Holy Rosary, every day without interruption, for almost three years at 8:00 pm. Allowing us to share the universality of prayer for the intentions and needs of the missionaries of the 5 continents and regions of

our country.

In the same way, virtuality has allowed us to approach the different regions and cities of Colombia with virtual meetings through which we encourage other families to awaken, discover and revive within each family, in their environment and beyond the borders, their missionary spirit.

### *PROPOSALS OF THE MISSIONARY FAMILY PROGRAM*

- That all the members of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Colombia and the committed laity, know the *raison d'être* of the Pontifical Mission Societies, so that we get involved together in all the actions that this institution leads, and in our particular case, to welcome and promote the fundamental tasks of the Family, as indicated in the Apostolic Exhortation "Familiaris Consortio", and thus awaken in families the universal missionary sense as true evangelized and evangelizing Catholic families that spread the message of salvation to all people, at all times and in all places.





# TESTIMONIES

— To form communities of Missionary Families in each diocese of Colombia who replicate the missionary animation of evangelizing and evangelizing, so that, in the not too distant future, all the pastoral ministries of the different parishes will carry out actions with and for the families in function of the propagation of the faith with a missionary spirit, ready to heed the call, participating in the universal mission of the Church.

*Sarcey Antonio Leiva Vallejo  
Family Leiva Pemberthy  
Missionary Families of Colombia*



# AUSTRIA



Through Young Missio, the original mission of the Pontifical Mission Societies should thus also become visible to a young target group - children (4-10) and young people (10-18) - not to get stuck with the tasks of a “normal” aid organization, but, as Pope Francis wishes, to start with prayer and to fertilize the local Church in a new way. Young Missio is a movement that accompanies them on their personal journey of faith and broadens their horizons regarding the universal Church.

Young Missio’s mascot is our Missio-donkey, a stuffed animal we call “Eli.”

During Lent 2020, we encouraged the children to draw a donkey and answer the question about the important role the donkey plays in the Holy Bible. As a gift, all the children received our Missio donkey Eli.

We received over 800 drawings.

The Missio-donkey has become a new member of many families. First of all, the added value of such actions certainly lies in the strengthening of the Missio brand, that is, in increasing the awareness of the Pontifical Mission Societies. At the same time, it is precisely through the donkey, that children are confronted with the story of salvation and the mystery of Easter.

Young Missio has been continuously celebrating a weekly children’s Mass on every Monday since March 30, 2020, which is broadcast on our livestream and on television. Missio National

Director Father Karl Wallner always addresses the children directly through the camera and preaches in a child-friendly way, inviting them to enter into and live a friendship with Jesus.

**young missio**

When all Holy Masses were forbidden in Austria at the beginning of the Corona pandemic in March 2020, and suddenly no more face-to-face meetings with families were possible, Pater Karl Wallner, the National Director of PMS Austria, started a Children’s Mass, which was broadcast every Monday at 5 p.m., on the YouTube channel of PMS Austria and on the Catholic TV channel KTV.

At a children’s mass, Pater Karl, together with the team of “Young Missio”, invited all children to send drawings of donkeys to the National Directorate. In addition, he asked the children the following question:

*What is the significance of the donkey in the Bible?*

For example, the children wrote to us:

*The donkey is the most important animal in the Bible because it carried Jesus*

The children also wrote us their prayer requests, such as Elena (6 years) and Tobias (4 years):

*Dear Fr Karl,  
please pray for our dad too, he has been sick in bed for days because of the Corona virus*

We received drawings from thousands of children. This enabled us to enter their addresses in our database and to be in regular contact with them since then via email, direct mailings and newsletters. Thus began a community of missionary children who follow Jesus together with Young Missio. We celebrate the weekly Children’s Mass at the National Directorate via livestream or television and read the children’s sent-in intercessions there. We also invite the children to pray the rosary for peace and together with the children, we want to get to know Jesus better.

*Tabea Planz  
Matthias Möller  
Marcel Urban*



Liebes Vater Karl,

Liebes Missio Österreich-Team,

Wir senden euch herzlichste Grüße aus der Diözese Rastenburg-Stuttgart. Unser Dank an euch alle ist schwer in Worte zu fassen.

Mit unseren 4 Kindern Aaron, Katharina, Trella und Nathanael (10 Monate) dürfen wir dieses Jahr ein in vielerlei Hinsicht besonders Oster feiern.

Für uns, Lieber Vater Karl, war es besonders schön, denn sie haben unsere ganze Familie mit hineingenommen und unsere Herzen für die Kar- und Ostertage geöffnet. Ein wunderliches Vergleiß Gott dafür!

Die Kinder sind in unserem Familienalltag zu einem festen Bestandteil geworden. Es ist zwar nicht immer ruhig, ordentlich und wahrscheinlich ausreichend genug bei uns, doch wir haben den Herrn in gewisser Weise.

Lieber Vater Karl, eine Bitte haben wir, bitten Sie und ihr Team für unsere Kinder und die Generation unserer Kinder, dass sie dem auferstandenen Herrn begegnen und ein brennendes Herz für den Herrn geschult bekommen.

Nun zu den Eseln: Leider haben wir erst später etwas von der Eselsaktion mitbekommen und wir war es schon unangenehm nach Eselsbilder zu verschaffen. Bei meine Kinder haben mir keine Bitte gelassen. Wir hoffen ihr freut euch an dem Handabdruck - Eseln.

Lieber Vater Karl, grüßen Sie mir meinen Cousin Vater Malachias ganz lieb von uns. Wir lieben ihn sehr!

Gottes Segen und Mariens Schutz für euch alle!

In Gebet verbunden

Die Familie Neubacher

Stefan & Anna

KATHARINA

mit Aaron, Theresa  
Nathanael



Dear Fr. Karl,

Dear Missio Austria staff,

Warm greetings from the Diocese of Rastenburg-Stuttgart. It is difficult to find the words to express our thanks to you.

This year we and our four children, Aaron (age 10), Katharina (age 5), Theresa (age 3) and Nathanael (age 10 months) celebrated a special Easter in many ways.

It was something especially beautiful for us, dear Father Karl, because you involved our whole family and opened our hearts to the Lenten and Easter days. May God give you credit for that!

Afternoon Masses are now an integral part of our family life. Most likely, our home is not always quiet, peaceful and perhaps respectful enough, but yet we love the Lord with all our hearts!

Dear Father Karl, we have a request: that you and your staff pray for our children and our children's generation to meet the risen Lord and be given a burning heart.

And now let's talk about the donkeys: unfortunately, we first became aware about the initiative a little late and felt uncomfortable sending donkey drawings late. But my kids didn't give me a break! I hope you enjoy these donkeys made from handprint.

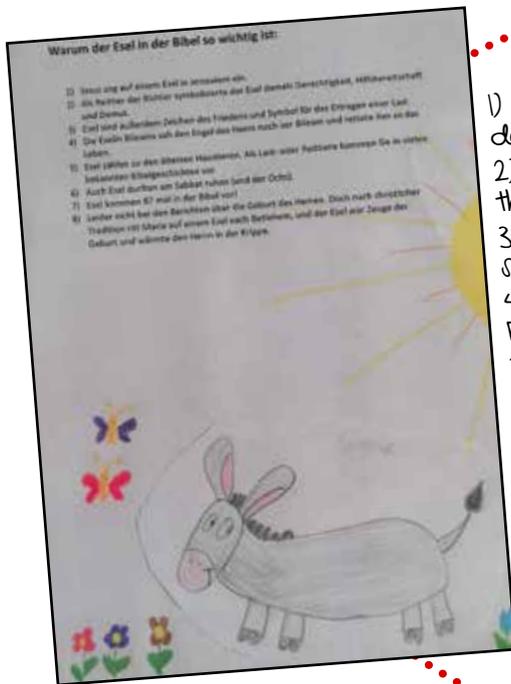
Dear Father Karl, please give our sincerest regards to my cousin Father Malachias! We love him.

May God bless you and Mary protect you all!

United in prayer,

Neubacher Family

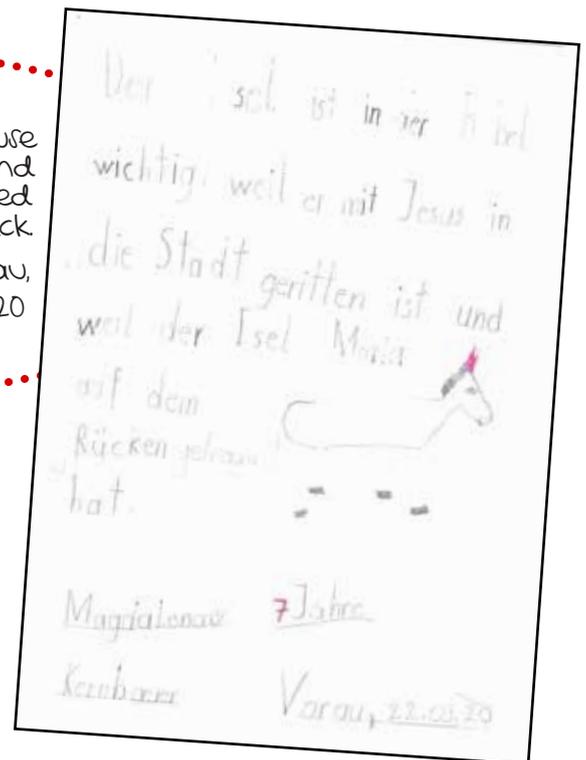
Stefan & Anna con Aaron, Theresa, Nathanael



Why is the donkey so important in the Bible?

- 1) Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.
- 2) As the judges mount, the donkey symbolized at that time justice, helpfulness and humility
- 3) Donkeys are, in addition, a sign of peace and a symbol of the bearing of burdens
- 4) Balaam's donkey saw the Angel of the Lord before Balaam, thus saving his life
- 5) Donkeys are among the oldest domesticated animals. They appear in many biblical stories as mounts and pack animals
- 6) Donkeys can also rest on Sundays (and the oxen too).
- 7) Donkey appears 87 times in the Bible?
- 8) Unfortunately, donkey is not in the records of the Lord's birth, yet according to biblical tradition Mary rode to Bethlehem on the back of a donkey and the donkey witnessed Jesus' birth by warming him in the manger.

The donkey is important in the Bible because it enters the city with Jesus and because it is a donkey that carried Mary on her back  
Magdalena Kernbauer, age 7, Vorau,  
22.03.2020





Dear Lord, as the donkey brought Jesus, take on our worries, fears and needs too!

Good Lord, as the donkey is considered a strong pack animal, help us carry our daily burdens.

Good Lord, help us to quiet our quarrels.

Dear God, help us respect one another in this uncertain and difficult time.

Dear Lord, help all the sick, those who doubt, those who are sad, lonely and desperate to find help in carrying their burdens.

Dear Lord, help all who help, that they may discover you, find you or have recourse to you as a burden-bearer.

Good Lord, help us to solve our problems!

Liebe Gott, wie der Esel Jesus getragen hat, trage auch du unsere Sorgen Ängste und Nöte!

Guter Gott, der Esel gilt als als starkes Lasttier, hilf uns unsere Lasten des Alltags zu tragen

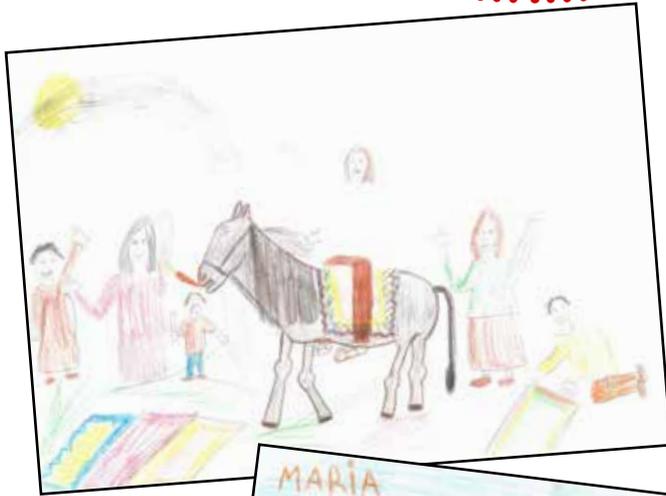
Guter Gott, hilf uns unsere Streitereien zu versöhnen.

Guter Gott, hilf uns in dieser ungewissen und anstrengenden Zeit, respektvoll miteinander umzugehen

Liebe Gott, hilf allen Kranken, versorgten, Traurigen, einsamen und verzweifelten Menschen Hilfe in ihrer Not zu finden.

Liebe Gott, hilf allen hilfesuchenden Menschen dass sie dich als Lastträger entdecken, finden oder suchen

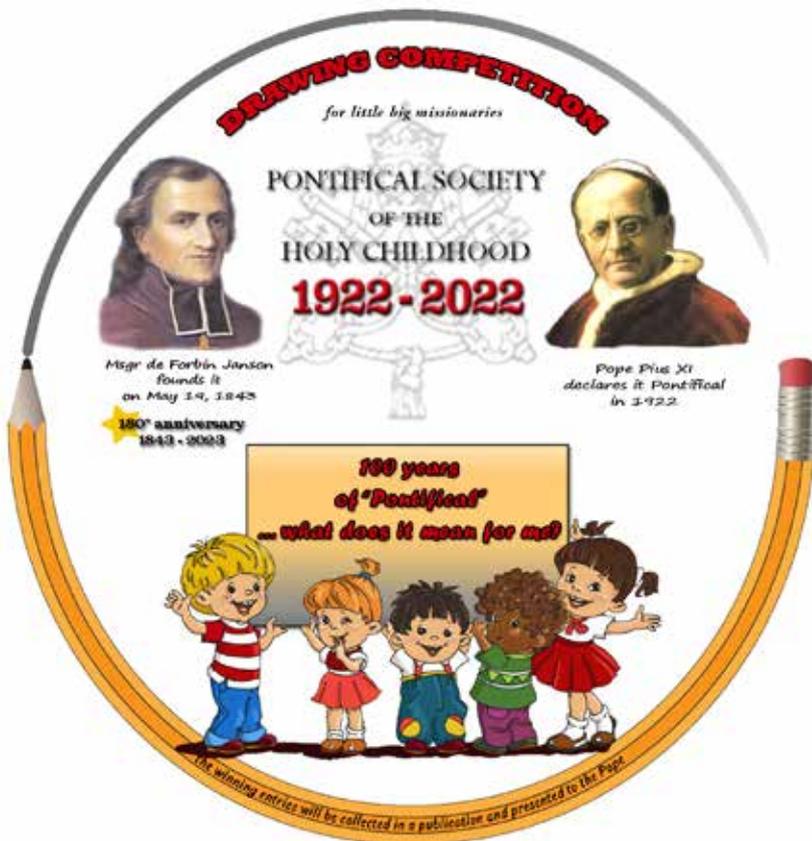
Guter Gott, hilf uns aus allen Problemen etwas Gutes zu machen!



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



**1922-2022**



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