



FEBRUARY 2024 - N. 16

BULLE IN

PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS



THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

NIGERIA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
SPAIN
IVORY COAST
UGANDA
INDIA
LEBANON
NEW CALEDONIA
SOUTH AFRICA
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
PAKISTAN
KENYA
CHAD
MOZAMBIQUE
GUINEA BISSAU

CONTEMPLATION AND MISSION

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SANCTA INFANTIA
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MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER
N.16 - FEBRUARY 2024

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Five years ago the publication of the Bulletin of the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood was relaunched with the goal of making known the reality of children and the Pontifical Mission Society in the various parts of the world. In fact, it is in looking to others and the good works that they accomplish that we can find the desire and the joy to do likewise, for a Church that is ever more missionary, with an ever-greater involvement of children in the promotion of evangelization, just as Bishop Charles De Forbin Janson desired. In this way, good and beauty proliferate and spread, which is what we hope for and to which we committed. Spiritual Cooperation is the common theme proposed this year to the National Directions throughout the world by this International Secretariat of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Children can be missionary disciples when they cooperate in the mission of the Church and carry out the mandate given by the Risen Jesus to each one of us, his disciples. They can do this by the witness of their Christian lives, their constant prayer for the missions and by the offering of their own sacrifices united with those of Jesus for the salvation of children and of the world.

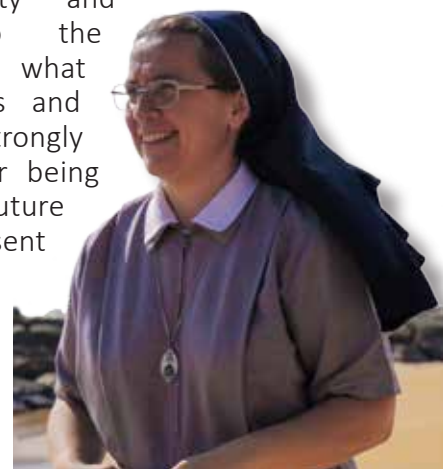
Spiritual cooperation allows the spiritual panorama of evangelization to emerge, because prayer is the heart of Christian life and, therefore, of missionary activity: intense prayer, which is my personal intimate relationship with God and just spoken words. Pope Francis, in his letter announcing the Great Jubilee 2025, wrote that prayer as the royal road to holiness, which enables us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity. Thus, we are fully missionary disciples, contemplatives in action and active in contemplation. Our intimate relationship with the Lord is reflected in the way we relate to those around us, as well as in our daily commitment, whatever it may be, that is always oriented to the Glory of God and the spreading of his Kingdom of peace and love.

“Like the first disciples, do not neglect to nourish your life and your apostolate with the Word of God, the Eucharist and prayer. For the mission, like communion, is first

and foremost a mystery of Grace. It is not our work, but God’s; we do it not alone, but moved by the Spirit and docile to his action. Mission and communion spring from prayer, are shaped day by day by listening to the Word of God - listening in prayer - and have as their ultimate goal the salvation of the brothers and sisters the Lord entrusts to us. Without these foundations, they become empty and end up being reduced to a mere sociological or welfare dimension. And the Church is not interested in providing welfare... helping, yes, but first of all, evangelizing, bearing witness: if you give assistance, let it come from witnessing, not from proselytizing methods.” (Pope Francis, Address to the members of the Conference of Missionary Institutes in Italy, May 11, 2023)

What joy there will be for children and young people to discover that the theme proposed by the Pontifical Mission Society recalls the one presented this year by Pope Francis in view of the next Jubilee. We are invited to intensify our prayer, deepen our friendship with Jesus because only if He is part of our life, can we share it with others. This is the bond that unites, reinforces, and helps us to understand that we are all members of the same Church, and not in watertight compartments.

From the articles that follow, I hope you can appreciate the joy and beauty of the Catholic faith, solidarity and belonging to the Church: this is what the little ones and those who strongly believe in their being not only the future but also the present of the Church and society achieve.



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI

Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood

CONTEMPLATION AND MISSION

I would like to begin this article with two texts of the Pope that are very significant for this topic:

The first is from February 11, 2022, feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. On that day, he wrote a letter to Cardinal Rino Fisichella, entrusting the preparation and organization of the Jubilee to be celebrated in 2025 to him. Near the end of this letter, the Holy Father wrote:

"In this time of preparation, I would greatly desire that we devote 2024, the year preceding the Jubilee event, to a great "symphony" of prayer. Prayer, above all else, to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him. Prayer, moreover, to thank God for the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation, which summons everyone to respect it and to take concrete and responsible steps to protect it. Prayer as the expression of a single "heart and soul" (cf. Acts 4:32), which then translates into solidarity and the sharing of our daily bread. Prayer that makes it possible for every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God and to reveal to him what lies hidden in the depths of their heart. Prayer as the royal road to holiness, which enables us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity. In a word, may it be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are opened to receive the outpouring of God's grace and to make

the "Our Father," the prayer Jesus taught us, the life program of each of his disciples."

And last summer, during the World Youth Day in Lisbon, Francis spoke to the pastoral workers during the prayer of Vespers:

"Only in adoration, only in the presence of the Lord, do we truly rediscover our taste and passion for evangelization. Oddly enough, we have lost the prayer of adoration; and everyone, priests, bishops consecrated men and women, need to recover it, this ability to be quiet in the Lord's presence. Mother Teresa [of Calcutta], busy about so many things in life, never neglected adoration, even at times when her faith was shaken and she wondered if it was all true or not. A similar moment of darkness was also experienced by Therese of the Child Jesus. In prayer, we overcome the temptation to carry out a 'ministry of nostalgia and regrets.'"

Sometimes people make comparisons between Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42). The first is a born worker, who goes out of her way to serve, the second is the one who has discovered the better part – contemplation – while at the Lord's feet, listening to His Word. There may be people



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National Director PMS
Spain



Giovanni da Milano, Christ in the house of Martha and Mary, XIV century, Santa Croce, Florence



who identify with one of these two “polar opposites”, but what is normal, what is logical, is that they are intermingled. Action is the fruit of a relationship, and this relationship comes about in prayer.

The motto the Pope has chosen for last year’s World Mission Sunday, 2023, is very appropriate to speak of ‘contemplation and mission’: “Hearts on fire, feet on the move.” It is St. Luke (Lk. 24:13-35) who speaks to us of these two discouraged disciples who return downcast to their homes because it seems that all their hope has collapsed. Christ, in whom they had trusted and whom they had followed, had died and had just been buried.

But Christ became present to them, the risen Jesus came out to meet them and accompanied them on their journey. He speaks to them, motivates them, and confronts them with their lack of faith and trust. When they finally recognize this, they are inflamed with desires for holiness, for victory!



The encounter with Christ is life-changing. It gives meaning to our existence, even to our pains, contradictions, and sufferings. This encounter cannot remain a momentary thing; it is not a simple crossing of glances. Every day, as the years go by, I see more clearly that the Christian religion is not a religion of doing good things, but of desiring them!

I firmly believe that the Christian is someone who feels thirsty, who feels

the need for God. Like the woman at the well that Jesus

encounters when she goes to draw water, the believer is the person who begs Him: give me some of that water! I feel in need, I feel in need of God’s company, of His compassion, of His mercy, of His gaze, of His smile.

The Pope gave some beautiful catechesis on the subject of evangelization, concluding in the third one:

“Ech of us must make him— or herself ‘poor within’. It’s not sufficient like this, no: [you have to be] poor within.”

With that poverty that makes one say... “Lord, I am in need, I am in need of forgiveness, I am in need of help, I am in need of strength. This poverty that we all have: making oneself poor interiorly. You have to overcome any pretense of self-sufficiency in order to understand oneself to be in need of grace, and to always be in need of Him.

The disciples of Emmaus
Joseph von Führich, 1837



If someone tells me: *“Father, what is the shortest way to encounter Jesus?”*

Be needy. Be needy for grace, needy for forgiveness, be needy for joy. And He will draw near to you.” It is impressive. I desire God, I desire His company, I desire His grace to do the work that He Himself has in mind for me.

For this reason, the Pope insists that

“Indeed, if we look at his days, described in the Gospels, we see that intimacy with the Father — prayer — occupies first place. This is why Jesus gets up early, when it is still dark, and goes into deserted areas to pray (cf. Mk 1:35; Lk 4:42), to speak with the Father. He makes all of his decisions and most important choices after having prayed (cf. Lk 6:12; 9:18). It is precisely within this relationship, in the prayer which connects him to the Father in the Spirit, that Jesus discovers the meaning of his being human, of his existence in the world, because he is on a mission for us, sent by the Father to us.”

If we are to drink from the Lord’s life, we can ask ourselves: *“do we imitate him, drinking from the wells of prayer so that our heart might be in harmony with his? Intimacy with him is, as a beautiful volume by Abbot Chautard suggested, the soul of every apostolate. Jesus himself clearly said it to his disciples: “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). If we stay with Jesus, we discover that his*

pastoral heart always beats for the person who is confused, lost, far away.” These words of Pope Francis are beautiful.

Missionaries must be, in the first place, contemplatives. They find their sustenance and strength in prayer. In his message for last year’s World Mission Sunday, the Pope also spoke of the Eucharist. If in Lisbon he commented on the importance of adoration (remember that at the WYD there is always a time of adoration and a vigil of prayer), in his message for this past October 22nd he tells us:

The decisive element that opened the eyes of the disciples was the sequence of actions performed by Jesus: he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Those were the usual gestures of the head of a Jewish household, but, performed by Jesus Christ with the grace of the Holy Spirit, they renewed for his two table companions the sign of the multiplication of the loaves and above all that of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the sacrifice of the cross. Yet at the very moment when they recognized Jesus in

the breaking of the bread, “he vanished from their sight” (Lk 24:31). Here we can recognize an essential reality of our faith: Christ, who breaks the bread, now becomes the bread broken, shared with the disciples and consumed by them.”

At the table of the Word and the





table of the Eucharist, the moment of God's greatest intimacy with man – and of man with God – takes place. We can live without luxuries, without having all our needs covered. Although you may not believe it, we can even live without a cell phone! But can we live without intimacy with God? Can we do without our personal relationship with the One who loves us so much? Surely you remember that “medicine against stomachache” that the young bishop Van Thuan asked for when he was isolated in a concentration camp. The wine that would become, in the palm of his hand, the Blood of the Redeemer was, without a doubt, the medicine to alleviate the pain and suffering of being separated from his people.

We cannot forget that we are talking about missionaries, about men and women who carry the Lord's message. They are not adventurers (although some of that is found in them), nor expatriates (sent by their organizations to work outside Spain), nor altruistic romantics. “Hearts on fire” reminds us that we are talking about men and women in love. Men and women who, like those two at Emmaus, have listened to Jesus speaking to them in Sacred Scripture and have been transformed.

They are people who have been nourished by the Word of God and – in this case, like the Virgin Mary – have “pondered” on it in their hearts (Lk 2:19) to the point of being identified with it. They are Christians, they are people of prayer and contemplation who have allowed the Holy Spirit to enlighten them with His strength and love to transform them into apostles. Apostles not of a cause or a theory, not of an ideology or a doctrine, but of a Person: of Jesus of Nazareth, true God and true man.

Many saints are depicted with their chests on fire, as if rays of light and life were coming from their hearts. It is the love of God, which Jesus came to bring to earth and which He



wants to burn in the whole world. “*Were not our hearts burning within us when we were on our way?*” the two disciples ask themselves. The Word of God is living and effective, it is always transforming. Like the action of the Holy Spirit, it “waters the land in drought, heals the sick heart, washes the stains, instills warmth of life in that which is frozen, tames the untamed spirit, and guides the one who strays off the path” (from the sequence of Pentecost).

A missionary is a man or woman in love. It is someone who has discovered that God is worthwhile, that God, only God, is enough, and they have decided to live life with Him and for Him. The heart of the missionary has something romantic in it, because it does not measure its own difficulties or limitations. Their heart is on fire because they trust in God who cares for them and attends them, who puts in their wills great desires for self-giving and service.

Therefore, we must be contemplatives, seeking passionately to meet the Lord every day, as the hungry seek bread, as the alcoholic needs wine, as the lover desires his love.

True prayer opens our hearts and minds to the whole world:

“Every day after praying, Jesus dedicates his entire day to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and dedicates it to people, above all to the poorest and weakest, to sinners and to the sick (cf.

Mk 1:32-39). That is, Jesus is in contact with the Father in prayer and then he is in contact with all the people through his mission, through catechesis, to teach the path of the Kingdom of God."

These are the two passions spoken of in *Evangelium Gaudium*: passion for Christ, passion for His people:

"To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which exalts and sustains us, but at the same time, unless we are blind, we begin to realize that Jesus' gaze, burning with love, expands to embrace all his people. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people." (268)

It is impressive how truly contemplative souls have felt great sorrow for the pain of their people, they have felt called to totally give their lives for those whom the Lord loves so much. Prayer requires us to come out of ourselves, our selfishness, our comforts. Prayer makes us aware of the lack of God in the world, in society, in families, in people's hearts. In the Pope's catechesis on evangelization mentioned above, Francis refers to Mother Teresa as a woman of action as the

fruit of her life of prayer. But we could say the same of all the saints. Saint Maravillas of Jesus, a Discalced Carmelite deeply concerned about the workers and their families of Getafe, for whom she built a cooperative... And St. Thérèse of Lisieux?

Patroness of the missions while closed away in her Carmel because her vocation was love, and love encompasses everything and everyone.

"In order to bear fruit we must remain united to Jesus (cf. Jn 15:4-9). This union is achieved through daily prayer, particularly in Eucharistic adoration, as we remain in silence in the presence of the Lord, who remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. By lovingly cultivating this communion with Christ, the missionary disciple can become a mystic in action. May our hearts always yearn for the company of Jesus, echoing the ardent plea of the two disciples of Emmaus, especially in the evening hours: "Stay with us, Lord!"

In fact, I repeat the Pope's words that prayer is the first missionary work. Sometimes people say to me: *"Father, the only thing I can do is to pray..."* No! We cannot say that it is the only thing as if it were the last possibility. No. I usually

tell them that it is the best thing they can do! Prayer is the foundation of the mission. It is Christ who moves people's hearts. Praying for someone, intercessory prayer, is the greatest gift we can give to the one we love. We are



Saint Maravillas of Jesús



Saint Thérèse of Lisieux



Mother Teresa of Calcutta



all missionaries with prayer, supporting in this way the Church, the pastors, those who suffer, the missionaries, their people, the missionary vocations.

If there is no prayer, how can the Church evangelize?

Those who understand this discover that the time we dedicate to missionary action is nothing more than a continuation of our contemplation. Our work becomes prayer. As the Pope says:

“Christ, who breaks the bread, now becomes the bread broken, shared with the disciples and consumed by them. (...) It follows that every missionary disciple is called to become, like Jesus and in him, through the working of the Holy Spirit, one who breaks the bread and one who is broken bread for the world.”

Our life of love for God is the life of love for those to whom we have been sent. We give what we are and what we have.

In this way, we more easily discover God’s work in every person. We can see that our neighbor – whom we are trying to make to fall in love with God – has God in their hearts, and it is the Lord who facilitates their way. The missionary who prays will be the missionary who trusts in God and in His infinite mercy. They will be able to see how much God loves that person to whom he or she is trying to open the horizon of faith. Missionary action, in addition, is thus transformed into prayer. Mother Teresa of Calcutta used to say that she had the good fortune to be in contact with Christ all day long. When she was in the chapel, having Him present in the Eucharist. When she left her house for the immense work with the poorest of the poor, she saw Christ in those people!

In the Pontifical Mission Societies, we insist a lot on spiritual cooperation. It is not the ‘consolation of the poor’, that is, since we cannot go on mission, at least we pray! No. The Pontifical Mission Societies have the responsibility to remember that every baptized

person is a disciple-missionary, that all of us, like an immense choir, have to collaborate in the beautiful concert of evangelization. Synodality, of which we are speaking so much at this time in the history of the Church, means that each one of us, according to our specific vocation, with our specific charism, with our talents and abilities, is called to be a missionary. My life of prayer is the way in which I know myself to be a missionary. By offering up their cross, the sick person is a missionary. It is the missionary participation in the missionary task that I am called to live.

We all make it possible for the Church to fulfill the Lord’s command: “Go out to the whole world” (Mk 16:15). Not all of us can go, not all of us have this vocation, but we all are responsible to procure that the Church can fulfill this “sending out.” Some, the missionaries, going out to the outskirts; others, the sick and those who suffer setbacks, offering up their cross, which is that of the Lord; all baptized, with the prayer of intercession, of praise, of petition. Everyone, with a clear conscience, knowing that no one is so rich that he does not have any need or so poor that he cannot give, contributing what he can, his tithe, to support the Church in those territories.

MALTA

NATIONAL OFFICE



The motto “children helping children” has been active in Catholic schools for 170 years. The programme gives an opportunity to children to help make the love of Jesus known everywhere. The contributions of children in Malta and worldwide makes it possible to carry out education, medical and welfare projects in the poorest communities helping those who are disabled, refugees, orphans and other marginalised people. Through these project we motivate them to be creative and believe in themselves and that they are capable of doing something for others. Being there for other children in the world even though not physically but by supporting them through events and activities in which they grow in knowledge of the gospel and also offering support through prayers.

Another source of information about the mission world is the booklet “Tfal Missjunarji” which is compiled by Missio personnel. This booklet caters for different age groups and contains short stories, games, competitions and general knowledge. These booklets, distributed in local schools, not just in 2022 but on a continuous basis, are also designed to help children understand mission work carried out across the world.

This means that through MissioTfal children are given the opportunity to not only become exposed to the international cultures in developing countries, they appreciate and be grateful for their own culture and for everything they have and also through these events they are given the opportunity to act and become protagonists of positive change to address the needs of other



children.

Besides the distribution of the booklet, as Missio we have also conducted 34 school visits across Malta in 2022, reaching out to approximately 4,000 students through the activities mentioned above and also through prayer spaces.

CHILDREN & SCHOOLS

Instilling and teaching love and values in young children enables them to form relationships. Thus organising events in schools was one of Missio Malta main highlights for 2022. Activities and workshops to define the meaning of the mission world, were organised within the school compounds. It is Missio's goal to help build positive characters in students, with traits such as compassion, respect and kindness towards other children. These activities encompassed talks from missionaries, short video clips about children living in Asian and African countries, competitions and crafts workshops. The children were given the opportunity to participate actively during the events.

CULTURE SESSIONS IN SCHOOLS

Since our schools are becoming more and more multi-cultural and multi-faith, we have seen the need and an increase in demand for these cultural sessions in schools.

It is also an opportunity for MissioTfal to increased its presence in schools. These are done both online and in person. Their aim is to increase knowledge about the traditions and culture of different countries in the world. In this way we create awareness that we can learn from everyone in the world and that this knowledge can help children to interact between each other as it helps them

to know a little bit of each other's background. This helps them to empathise and understand the difficulties and it also helps them to be real friends.



We believe that in this way Missio Tfal can teach students that we can always learn from each other and it is a way of being be little missionaries which means thinking of others and developing altruistic mentality even in little things. This means spreading the Gospel with our way of life and example.

In the first six months last year we did about 10 online sessions consisting of 40 classes reaching about 840 students from different schools.

During summer we also participated in online Summer School sessions with the theme Earth Heros Unite - we were supported by HSBC. We participated with 14 different schools, that consisted of 40 sessions

reaching about 600 students.

ENVELOPE CAMPAIGN

Small envelopes with the Logo "Missio Tfal" were distributed in local schools. The children were encouraged to save some of their pocket money, or collect a small donation from family members and friends. The collected funds contributed to support missionary projects in African and Asian countries with the motto of "Children Helping Children". The envelope campaign was as always a remarkable success, not just to collect funds but also to raise awareness in young children about others in need.

DIVERSITY AWARENESS

October 2022, also witnessed the active participation of local school children in conjunction with schools worldwide, actively embracing diversity awareness workshops: recognizing the uniqueness of all individuals.

SOCKTOBER

A new initiative introduced by Missio during the month of October was the Socktober, a football game, using a ball made out of cloth. In African countries, the children do not have the means to buy a normal ball, so they make balls made out of cloth to play with. The young boys who participated in this activity enjoyed themselves immensely. On the other hand, they understood that promoting physical activities and healthy habits, can also be achieved through minimal things. Missio's goal was achieved, to promote and educate young children about cultures in mission countries.

Throughout the month, Missio Malta organised a series of events, aimed to encourage community engagement. Amongst others, the events included: mass celebrations offering prayers for the missions, school visits including an envelope campaign, diversity awareness, radio programs, socktober and off course Mission Sunday.

PHYSICAL VISITS IN SCHOOLS

Like in previous years, we started visiting schools in person. These are getting more popular during these months.

This year we focused more about Ethiopia, since the project is in Emdibir, Ethiopia. We explained



the water problems in these areas. How the children go and fetch water after school. We explain that sometimes they have to walk about 45 minutes to and from the well or swamp from which they get water. Sometimes the water from the swamp causes them to be sick as it is water exposed to bacteria. We also show our students how the people in Africa live in the time of the Monsoon. How they loose their homes and when the monsoon passes how they settle in dry areas, build their huts and sow new crops. These people teach us that life is precious and that they never give up. We spoke also about coffee and how coffee was originated from Ethiopia. We relate the legend of the shepherd who discovered coffee and the students enjoy the story. With some schools we did also the drums, the traditional instrument of Ethiopia.

Combined with these sessions, we do crafts. With the younger children, this year we did buckets out of coffee cups that they could use as pencil holders. This is done to remind them of the

difficulties these people face because of the Monsoon, how much they need to walk to get some water and also that not all children are so lucky to go to school. But mainly to remind them of these beautiful people, their culture and the coffee legend.

With the older students we do the huts. Little huts out of cardboard and paper plates.





They are encouraged to draw colourful designs on the cardboard. Preferably symmetrical to be similar to the huts found in South Africa by the Indebele Tribes. Then we staple the cardboard the shape of a cylinder. Then we do the tops with paper plates. The students colour the plates then it is shaped the shape of a cone and stuck to the cylinder with tape. Lastly we snip all around the plate to give a more realistic effect.

Knowing different cultures helps us communicate, relate, and understand the background and the need of different countries. It helps us live in harmony with others and in this way, it helps us live the gospel.

ASSEMBLIES AND SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

Our school visits also include school assemblies to promote our school campaign. This year our school campaign was towards Emdibir Centre in Ethiopia where we helped Fr Habte to build a farm to establishing a goat rearing centre that will provide nourishing milk for families in most need. Goats are a common livestock animal in Ethiopia, and their meat is eaten across the country, yet many farmers are not aware of the benefits of their milk, which is more nutritious than cows milk. In addition, goats are cheaper than cows and hardier for the harsh, dry conditions, Goats milk can be used as milk, or turned into foods such as cheese and butter. With the envelope campaign we are supporting the management of this farm. This helps purchasing of goats. It helps buying food to feed the animals and veterinary medication for the centre, as well as contribute towards the construction of the sheds for the goats. It can also support the income of the caretakers for the goats and also includes training for them on agricultural practices on how to effectively cultivate their crops to increase their harvest.



Since schools in Malta are becoming more and more diverse with foreign students, it is time for us to be working more on World Diversity Days where we can create awareness of the different cultures that we have in Malta. We shall be working more on the much needed Faith Encounters, this is to give the opportunity for the secondary students to relate with each other and to know each other's backgrounds even when it comes to faith. This will enhance true understanding, true friendship and true missionary spirit amongst the students and this helps them in the future when they study in various universities, when they work abroad and when eventually they get employed.

This is a way forward to open our hearts and minds to understand and empathise with the people we meet. This is living the Gospel and in this way together we can really make a better world.

*Nancy Camilleri
Missio Tfal Coordinator*

*Robert Farrugia
Head Communications & Fundraising*



NIGERIA

ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS



The Archdiocese is located in the extreme south west of Nigeria. The original Vicariate, which was founded in 1860, has been elevated to Archdiocese on the 8th of April 1860, with the name of Archdiocese of Lagos.

Population: 3.345.899 catholics (25,6% of a total of 13.085.000)
Pastoral Centres: 184 parishes, 25 missions
Staff: 494 priests (265 diocesan, 229 religious), 573 religious (238 brothers, 335 nuns), 101 seminarists.

The children in our Archdiocese are keeping well, very vibrant, interested and very much present in all the activities organized for them at the variuos levels both for their spiritual, psychological, social and physical development. Most of our parishes are veny much involved in promoting and encouraging the MCA (Missionary Childhood Association) activities. There are some places were the priests and the children are able to produce the MCA magazine as a way od supporting the activities of the MCA as well as promoting the writing skills and

talents of the children.

Our children generally are part of the activities in the Archdiocese, participating in diverse ways through representations and contibution in discussions where necessary.

The MCA children of our Archdiocese write monthly on varius themes in the Archdiocesan newspaper called the Catholic Herald.

ANIMATORS' RETREAT GENERAL MEETING

The Maiden Edition of the Animators' Retreat was held on Saturday, 11th February, 2023 during the first general meeting for the year and Rev. Fr. Ehi Omoragbon SJ was the facilitator. He spoke on the theme, "Serving God as an MCA Animator" with emphasis on the need to understand what it means to work for the Church and children (service), cooperation and team spirit, humility and obedience to authority, knowledge and preparation before delivering to children.

MCA ARCHDIOCESAN PATRONS' MEETING

The annual meeting of the MCA Archdiocesan Patrons and Patronesses' meeting was held on Saturday, 18th February, 2023 at Lagos Resource Centre, Victoria Island. This year,





we extended our invitation to the Archdiocesan Laity Council, Catholic Men Organization, Catholic Women Organization and the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria. It was an enlightening experience which brought ideas on how to expand the development of the MCA and improve our collaboration.

MCA LENTEN RETREAT

The retreat was carried out with the Mission Stations of the Cross Booklet at parish levels. Confessions, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Adoration and Holy Mass Celebrations were part of the activities of the day in different parishes for our children.

MAIDEN EDITION OF MCA PARENTS' WORKSHOP

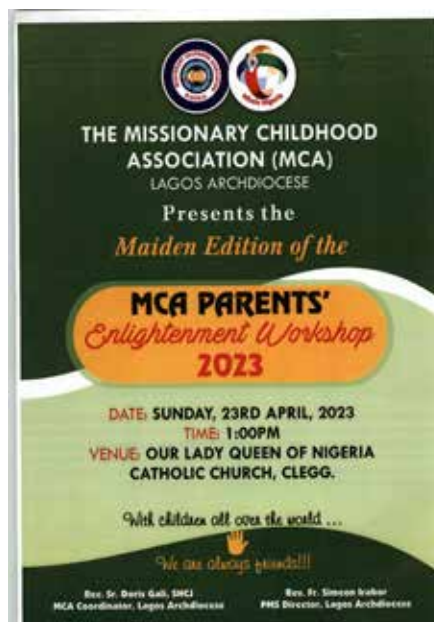
The aim of this maiden edition of the program is to update the parents of our children about the activities of the MCA and to encourage their commitment to the faith formation of our children. It was an insightful and interactive program for the parents of our MCA children from the different deaneries of the Archdiocese and they were happy to be enlightened by the activities of the children in the Archdiocese. This was an avenue to have them sign out the extra subsidy given to the children via bank transfer. It was held on Sunday, 23 April, 2023 at Our Lady Queen of Nigeria Catholic Church.

ENROLMENT CEREMONY

The enrolment ceremony is done to make the children of the MCA official members by giving them the National Enrolment Card, medals of the Infant Jesus/St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Mission bank. It is also an avenue of creating awareness about the MCA in parishes.

MCA REGIONAL MEDIA MASS

The first regional mass for the year was held on



Saturday, 29 April, 2023 by Ikeja Region. This was celebrated by the MCA Chaplains from Agege Deanery.

MCA CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

The Archdiocese celebrated the Children's Day with the MCA children of Badagry Region who visited the Cathedral for the celebration of the regional Mass. They all went home with a present and were indeed happy. The celebration was also held on Sunday, 28 May, 2023 at various parishes where the children animated at various liturgical functions and were specially celebrated by all.

SCHOOL OF MISSIONARY ANIMATORS (SOMA) 2023

The SOMA is an annual event where animators of the MCA come together to learn, unlearn, relearn, share ideas and build networks. The topic and facilitators were:

- We Are Children Of One Father-God-In Mission For Christ With The Children By Rev. Fr. Ikennalkechi SJ
- Child Protection and Safe Guarding of MCA Children by Rev. Sr. Freda Ehimuan RSC.
- MCA Meeting Animation and the Role of the Animators of MCA by Mrs. Anthonia Ogbeifun (Administrative Secretary of PMS National Office).

Certificates of Participation were awarded to every participant after the sessions.

MCA CATHOLIC FAITH QUIZ COMPETITION 2023

The MCA Catholic Faith Quiz and Theme Talk Competition are held biannually to strengthen the faith of our children and to deepen their

knowledge of the Catholic doctrines and morale. The competition featured Catholic Faith Quiz, Theme Talk and Draw Your Sword (this means the fastest person to open the announced passage of the Bible). The Deanery competition was held on Sunday, June 4th, 2023, the Regional was on Saturday, June 17th, 2023 while the Archdiocesan Competition was held on Sunday, August 13th, 2023.



MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION
LAGOS ARCHDIOCESE

Presents the

MCA CATHOLIC FAITH COMPETITION 2023

FEATURING: THEME | TALK & DRAW YOUR SWORD

Theme:
WE ARE CHILDREN OF ONE FATHER-GOD

Dates:
PARISH LEVEL: JANUARY - APRIL 2023
DEANERY LEVEL: SATURDAY, 4TH JUNE, 2023
REGIONAL LEVEL: SATURDAY, 17TH JUNE, 2023
ARCHDIOCESAN LEVEL: SATURDAY, 5TH AUGUST, 2023

Time: 9:00am | Venue: St. Dominic's Catholic Church, Yaba

5 representatives will represent each region at the Archdiocesan level
We are all winners

With Children all over the World We are always friends
MRS MARY OKOLO (Chairperson) | REV. SR. DORIS GALI SHCS (MCA Archdiocesan Coordinator)



SOME MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES OF THE CHILDREN TO BE SHARED

During the month of vocation Sunday, we asked our children about their understanding of the vocation to priesthood and religious life. These are their reactions:

A priest is someone who preaches the gospel of the Lord to the people. They do not marry, chastity as a vow. A church member should respect and obey their leader because they are representing Jesus Christ. A priest should be good and pure, priests will constantly desire that people be converted. During Mass, the priest uses the chalice (a large cup) used to hold the wine, which represent the blood of Christ, the ciborium, the altar candles, and purificator. Religious life is a vocation in which members live in a community with a mission. Forms of religious life are monastery, cloistered, contemplative, apostolic, and missionary. I like the priesthood because they are religious leader ordained to perform the sacred rituals of a religion especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God.

Mimi Gomez Our Lady of Perpetual Help catholic church, Victoria Island
(Lagos Island Deanery)

I want to be a Priest when I grow up. I want to be the first Priest in my family. When celebrating the sacraments, the Priest as an Alter Christus, I want to be a channel of grace that will enable people experience the love and compassion of God. Being a Priest will make me intercede for the whole world through the sacrifice of the Holy Mass. Vocation to the Priesthood is a response to the love of God in one's life. I like the self-sacrifice that is aimed at restoring and recovering God's love to the world. The world is currently full of corruption, especially the city we are living: I want to bring people to God. Open to God's love, His promises and His will.

Afolabi Matthew Olayemi St. Cyprian's catholic church, new Oko Oba
(Agege Deanery)

The word "presbyter" is derived from the Greek word elder. A priest participates in Christ's identity, a committed spouse of the church, shepherd of the flock and divine healer. He celebrates the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Mass. The priesthood vocation is a call to love others. To paraphrase St. John Moore Vianey, "man is not a priest for himself, he is a priest for others. Jesus called men to be his apostles to lay down their lives so that others may have lives. The priesthood is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. God calls men with different backgrounds, personalities and gifts to be priests. What all priests share in common is the one priesthood of Jesus Christ, serving people with their hearts. The priests also encourage people to attend Mass, pray the Rosary, read the Bible and add more efforts in their spiritual activities. I would like to be a priest to be able to partake in Christ's ministry and help others be good followers of Jesus Christ.

Munachi Leonard Osuagwu- St. Michael's catholic church Ketu
(Maryland Deanery)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

MCA YOUTH APPRECIATION MASS



Children from all over the Archdiocese of Los Angeles gathered on Tuesday October 17, 2023, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to celebrate and recognize their missionary efforts as participants of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood Association. This gathering, known as The MCA Youth Appreciation Mass, is an annual celebration of young missionaries in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The mass coincides with other Archdiocesan events celebrating the month of the missions, particularly World Mission Sunday. Each year, to reinforce the collaborative celebration of mission month, the World Mission Sunday theme is adopted for the children of the MCA Youth Appreciation liturgy, this year being, *"Hearts on fire, feet on the move."*

The children started arriving early in the morning by school bus, public transportation or by

carpooling to the Cathedral. With more than 3,000 children in attendance, the joyful sounds of children filling the Cathedral culminated months of dedicated preparation, making this celebration a reality. Barrie Ponce a teacher from St. Gregory the Great Catholic School in Whittier, helped organize the all-student liturgy, particularly those participating in the procession, the readings, those helping with the collection, and gift bearers to the altar.

The choir from Resurrection Catholic School in Los Angeles, along with their choir director, Sr. Adriana Gomez, a Franciscan Sister, animated the mass with music. Also from the same school, was the drum line and dancers led by their teacher, Christopher Nuño, which created an even more joyful celebration. Most of the schools in attendance were part of the pre-mass procession



where two students representing each school walked in with their school poster. The procession also included other students carrying banners and posters of St. Therese of Liseux, Pope Francis, and the logo for the Missionary Childhood Association.

In attendance was the first-year National Director for the Missionary Childhood Association for the United States, Alixandria Holden. She shared

"This year was the first time I had the pleasure of attending the MCA Annual Mass. As soon as I arrived, I immediately wished that every child in the United States could experience the wonderful day presented by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Mission office. Teeming with excitement and packed with children of all ages, the day is truly a celebration of the spirit of mission that only children could encapsulate. The music, the activities and the liturgy not only represent MCA's motto of "children helping children" but encourages them to do so. This became tangible when almost every child in the room got out of their chair to contribute to the collection. It was a beautiful experience of prayer and sacrifice for the Missions from start to finish".

The main celebrant of the mass was, newly ordained Bishop to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Bishop Mathew Elshoff and concelebrating the



Bishop Elshoff, Monsignor Fleming and other priest concelebrating with choir of Resurrection School



Alixandria Holden with MCA artwork contest winner and her parents



As I watched the procession come in, I imagined a banner with all your pictures, your faces on that banner, because you are our modern-day saints that continue to spread the word of Jesus as missionaries."

Monsignor Fleming gave the homily and shared about Blessed Pauline Jaricot and her efforts to support the missions through donations with the help of her friends and acquaintances including children. This helped the children to know that they were also helping do something much more important which was to repeatedly share the story of Jesus. He reminded

mass was Monsignor Terrance Fleming, the Director of The Pontifical Mission Societies for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Other local priest where present to help concelebrate the mass: Rev. Yesu Ratnam, Rev. Emmanuel Francis, Rev. Mike Perucho and Rev. Peter Salcedo.

Bishop Elshoff began the celebration by saying,

"Our God in here! Amen! He is here because he lives through you. You are our modern-day missionaries. You are the ones that spread the word of Jesus to people in different parts of the world, but most importantly to children, through their basic needs.

Monsignor Fleming gave the homily and shared about Blessed Pauline Jaricot and her efforts to support the missions through donations with the help of her friends and acquaintances including children. This helped the children to know that they were also helping do something much more important which was to repeatedly share the story of Jesus. He reminded

the children that they are part of the Pontifical Mission Societies as members of the Missionary Childhood Association and that through the association, they are reaching and help other children in mission countries. He continued by saying,

"God has blessed us, each and every one of us has been blessed by God We can try and imitate Him [Jesus who came to be among us because of love]. Jesus taught us that the most important thing was to share God's love".



Bishop Elshoff, Monsignor Fleming and priest concelebrating the mass with the essay winners and artwork contest finalist

NATIONAL ARTWORK CONTEST

The Missionary Childhood Association has a national artwork contest for the season of Advent. Diocese from all over the United States submit artwork from children who share the good news of the Gospel through their art. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles selects twelve local finalists and submits them to be considered at the national level. Liliana Espinoza from St. Gregory the Great School in Whittier was selected as one of the national finalists. To congratulate her, she was recognized at the mass and received a framed copy of her artwork. Her artwork along with the other national finalists was on display at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. Locally, Liliana and the other eleven local finalists' artwork was on display at one of the chapels in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

MISSION ESSAY CONTEST

Each year, the Lay Mission Helpers missionary group collaborates with our office to hold a mission essay contest and recognizes the winners at the MCA mass. The contest is named after their founder Monsignor Anthony Brouwers. This year the essay topic was: How does the way you live your life bear

witness to Jesus? Students in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, grades 6th through 8th, had an opportunity to write and submit an essay. Three schools had a winner, St. Joseph Catholic School in La Puente, Holy Family Catholic School in Glendale, and Our Lady of the Assumption in Claremont. Presenting the awards at the mass were Lay Mission Helpers affiliates, Damian Kabot, Executive Director and Mariel Brouwers, President of the Board.

AFTER MASS

After mass all the children and adults in attendance were invited to the Cathedral Plaza to have lunch, participate in an activity, stop by a mission group booth and dance to music playing in the plaza. In collaboration with various visiting mission groups, each shared a short, recorded reflection on the theme for World Mission Sunday, "Hearts on Fire, Feet on the Move." We then took an imprint of their shoeprint which were laminated and attached to a QR code that linked their recorded reflection. Students were invited to step "into their shoes" and listen to their mission stories and imagine walking in the footsteps of that missionary.

Five missionary groups collaborated with our office to set up exhibitor





tables with games and information about their work: Lay Mission Helpers, Mission Doctors, Diocese of Eluru- India, St. Francis Xavier Lay Missionary Society, Diocese of Chengleput-India. Students and their chaperons visited to experience the different activities.

Music also filled the plaza where space was provided for schools to have lunch and take group pictures. Teachers and chaperons led their students to participate in each of the activities available.

The staff of the local office for the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles helped to make this event possible. This is one of the office's favorite events to collaborate and participate in. Magdalena Arellano, program coordinator for the Missionary Childhood, shared her sentiments about the event saying,

"Seeing and feeling the children's energy the day of the mass reminds all of us of the bright future we have as a church".

Lydia Gamboa, the Executive Director of the office, mentions:

Our yearly MCA Youth Appreciation Mass is such a joyful time for not only the students, faculty, and parents that attend, but for me and the office staff, to remind us of our obligation to our young church. To see the celebration of life with so much excitement by all is truly a blessing to our Church. The day is a reminder of all the children that we are supporting through our efforts of MCA. We are blessed to be in an Archdiocese that supports our students and children throughout the world. Our goal to continue to build strong and faithful young missionaries locally."



SPAIN

DIOCESE OF MALLORCA



“A MISSIONARY IS THE BEST THING A HUMAN BEING CAN DO”



Once again this year, in the Diocese of Mallorca, we have done a great job of missionary animation to bring the island's children, adolescents and young people closer to the figure of the missionary. Toni Miró, technical head of the Missions Delegation, organized a missionary visit to all the schools that requested it.

Since Toni Miró knew all the schools and the students had already heard his testimony, he preferred to call his colleague and friend Fernando González, head of the Missionary Childhood Society in Spain.

Fernando has missionary experience in Togo and Peru, and although his last experience accompanying missionaries was five years ago, he did not hesitate to explain to the children of Mallorca that they too are missionaries.

VISITING THE ISLAND ON MOTORBIKE

Toni and Fernando, two young men who talk about mission.

They travelled around the island, visiting parishes and schools on motorbikes, driven by a great desire to tell the world that Jesus counts on everyone to be missionaries.

They went so far as to make up to 7 presentations in one day in different places and in order to do this, they had prepared a large amount of material: photos, videos, games and even a missionary kahoot (an interactive quiz).

THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Sometimes, this kind of action does not give short-term results. We talk about mission and



love for God, but only the Holy Spirit knows when this will awaken each child's curiosity or desire to know more about mission and God. But this time something different happened: the missionary testimony of these young people had such an impact in one of the schools that Sister Antonia called Toni the next day and said: "*Toni, I have something to give you.*"

LETTERS TO THE MISSIONARIES

The children of the Colegio Ramón Llull of the Augustinians of Amparo wanted to write letters to the missionaries. The children of this school in Andratx, Mallorca, addressed the missionaries, or rather, one missionary in particular, and wrote to him with the simplicity of someone addressing someone in front of him. Most of the messages from these little ones are thank you messages, for example, H. thanks the 'missionary' to whom he writes 'for everything you do for so many children so that they may have a better life and future.' U., for his part, thanks him "for being able to fulfill our dreams", and that is "to make sure that children have a good childhood." I. also thanks him "for dedicating your time and help to those who need it most, thank you for all the love and hope you bear with all your heart."

Some letters enhance the person of the missionary. V. says that "if I were in your place, I would be the proudest person in the world. I love what you do." The same goes for C. who does not hesitate to rightly point out that "I love your work. I think you are a very empathetic person who really loves to help those in need. I think dedicating a day to celebrate your great work is too short, because you make people happy. I also want to help people, which is why I would like to ask you a question: how can one help people from here?" For his part, P. asks the following question: "Is it fun to go and help people in countries that few people know about?" and then P. moves from this question to another, a more serious one: "I would like to come with you, would that be possible?"

Because it is a fact that missionaries are a source of admiration and inspiration. E. admits that she wants to become a marine biologist and clean up the seas: "Would that help the world, or not? I wanted to tell you that you inspired me to fulfill my dream." And again, "you are people with a big heart and contagious confidence," says L. That is why, says F. "we need many more people

like you, you are very courageous for doing what you do and it must not be easy for you." These children from Andratx understand the extent to which being a missionary involves giving something up. "I thank you for everything you do," says L., "your work is very hard but you make it look easy and I find your courage extraordinary and also the responsibility you have to take."

The pupils of the Ramón Llull school naturally realize that many missionaries have felt their vocation since childhood: "I wanted to ask you if, when you were little, you wanted to become a missionary," says J. In short, "for me a missionary is the best thing a human being can do."

The goal had been achieved: the children had realized that the best thing that can happen to them in life is to be a missionary.

Fernando González

National Responsible for the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood in Spain



IVORY COAST

DIOCESE OF GRAND-BASSAM



Created on 8 June 1982, the Diocese of Grand-Bassam, originating from the Diocese of Abidjan, stretches along the southeast coast of Ivory Coast, from Koumassai to Noé, covering an area of 8354 square kilometres. The diocese is divided into six sectors and has 52 parishes. Missionary Childhood, under the supervision of two animators appointed by the bishop, has a diocesan office consisting mainly of children from all the pastoral sectors and a Holy Missionary Childhood committee, made up of parents and educators of children. In each parish it is the same: the parish chaplain (?), the parish committee and the parish office.

THE GENERAL SITUATION

- Good participation of children in the activities organised for them: pilgrimage, educational and recreational activities, Bible formation session;
- Most of the diocesan activities are now organized in the more remote areas of the diocese;
- The celebration of the Word, in the absence of a priest for children in the diocesan area, is becoming more and more intense;
- Meetings of the children's movements (CV-AV, mass servers, scouts, etc.) are held regularly in the parishes of the diocese, for a more accentuated formation.



- During Christmas we make a Christmas tree in all parishes to make the children happy and let them live better this liturgical period of the Church.
- “The Star Singers” are one of the main actions of Missionary Childhood. On Epiphany Sunday the children of our communities are organized in groups and sent to the houses, accompanied by animators, and they read the Word of God and guide the prayer in the families that welcome them.

THE THEME OF UNITY

The pastoral year 2022-2023 was placed under the banner of unity for a Church in communion and missionary. The theme of unity was a kind of compass for all the children of the diocese, led by two diocesan chaplain fathers of Missionary Childhood.

THE LAUNCH OF THE PILGRIMAGE

Sunday, 8 January 2023, had a hybrid character for the children of the diocese. In addition to the celebration of the Solemnity of the Epiphany, like the entire Church, the Holy Childhood Committee launched the 2023 diocesan pilgrimage. The theme of the pilgrimage “I, a child, join my friends for the mission of the Church” was briefly presented and explained.

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD WEEK

Missionary Childhood Week from 5-12 February, 2023 was characterized by spiritual activities in each parish and ended in a diocesan way in the parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Bassam. The closing Mass was presided over by Monsignor Goudreault, Bishop of Sainte Anne-la Pocatière in Canada. It was a moment of unity between our two dioceses as part of our partnership.

THE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE

On Saturday 25 March, 2023, the diocesan children’s pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Guard in Bonoua took place. Exactly 14,055 children gathered at the feet of the Virgin Mary

to experience unity. After meditating on the theme of the pilgrimage during the march and at the stations, the children attended mass and were sent on a mission to the other children. The message I delivered during the mass to those I affectionately call ‘partners’ is an invitation to be witnesses like the Virgin Mary.

Msgr. Ramond Ahoua
Bishop of the Diocese of Grand-Bassam



UGANDA

DIOCESE OF MASAKA



Masaka Diocese covers nine administrative districts, namely: Masaka, Kalungu, Lwengo, Lyantonde, Bukomansimbi, Rakai, Kyotera, Kalangala, and Sembabule. It has an estimated population of 2,364,243 for 2023 based on the 2014 National census.

The table below gives the details on the population of children in different districts and their different age categories for eight districts. Kyotera district being new, her population figures are still captured under Rakai district. The children under 15 years are estimated to be 49% and those below 5 years are estimated to be 20%.

The Diocese has two Hospitals and thirty seven lower level units and a Transitory Home. During the financial year 2022-2023, the Diocesan Health Institutions offered different services to the children: These included outpatient services (OPD), In-patient services (Admissions), Vaccination, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), HIV Counselling and Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART), Screening and Rehabilitation of malnourished children, support to HIV positive orphans and vulnerable children, and child protection against violence, orthopaedic services, cleft repair and referral of hydrocephalus.

In the Formal Education Sector the Diocese through the Education Secretariat in conjunction with the Parish Education Committees, has continued to advocate for formal education for all children. Parents have been and continue to be exhorted to take all their children to school.

According to the Diocesan Education Secretariat, there are 222,500 pupils enrolled in 445 Catholic founded Primary Schools and 21,400 pupils in

Nursery Schools in the 64 Parishes that constitute Masaka Diocese. "Fathers in charge of Schools" in each Parish and the School inspectors from the Diocesan Education Secretariat, monitor the schools continually to ensure that adequate academic and spiritual formation is provided to the pupils.

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ACTIVITIES

TRAINING OF ANIMATORS

From 6 February when the academic year started up to 23 August, we have given twenty three workshops (of one day) to 598 MCH animators from 23 Parishes. The trained animators are expected to animate children in their respective Parishes.

CELEBRATION OF MCH SUNDAY

MCH Sunday was well organized and celebrated in all Parishes on the 9 July. On that day, financial contributions totalling to UG shs. 69,419,700 in US \$ 19,834 were made towards the Solidarity Fund of the Society.



Estimated Population of Masaka Diocese and the children of different age categories in 2023

Districts	Projected Population for 2022	Projected Population for 2023	Children under 15	Children under 5	Children between 5-15
Masaka	341,530	351,776	172,370	70,355	102,015
Lwengo	363,338	374,238	183,377	74,848	108,529
Kalungu	240,854	248,079	121,559	49,616	71,943
Lyantonde	107,945	111,184	54,480	22,237	32,243
Bukomansimbi	209,034	215,305	105,499	43,061	62,438
Rakai	652,335	671,905	328,233	134,381	194,852
Sembabule	295,307	304,166	149,041	60,833	88,208
Kalangala	85,039	87,590	42,919	17,518	25,401
Total	2,295,382	2,364,243	1,158,479	472,849	685,631

CHILDREN'S RADIO PROGRAMME "LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME".

This programme has continued to be broadcast every Sunday. Through this programme children share about different topics regarding Faith, Prayer, Sacraments, Christian life and Morals, etc. Our Office has made monthly financial contributions towards the programme.

We are happy to report that both children and parents are interested in the programme and participate in it with much enthusiasm. Such a programme has proved to be an effective way of reaching out to the children and animating them wherever there are.

ANIMATION ON UGANDA CATHOLIC TELEVISION

This year, children of the Missionary Childhood Society of our Diocese were requested to participate on two occasions in a children's programme on Uganda Catholic Television. In this programme, children animate other children through prayer and sharing the Word of God with fellow children. The first programme was presented by Uganda Martyrs Primary School Katwe on 14 May and the second programme will be presented by Bishop Ddungu Primary School on 19 November.

As a Diocese, we renew our commitment to continue promoting the Society of Holy Childhood focusing in a special way on inculcating among the children the Spirit of the Society and encouraging

them to love one another and to make sacrifices for the benefit of fellow children in other parts of the World.

*The Rt. Rev. Severus Jjumba
Bishop of Masaka*

*Fr. Augustine Ntabana
Diocesan PMS Director*



INDIA

DIOCESE OD BERHAMPUR

ODISHA DISTRICT

FAITH EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN ST. THERESA OF CHILD JESUS PARISH - KOTTAMA



Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection gave the apostles a final command; "To make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded." This is how Jesus wants the 'Good News' of God's love to reach every person, so that together we may become a people of God. Today, we call the "Good News" the Gospel, the 'People of God' the Church, and the mission to teach and make disciples of all nations is called the catechesis, it means instruction by word of mouth. A catechist is a person who is called to this mission by the Holy Spirit and for Catholics, that means all of us. We are all called to proclaim the "Good News" in how we live our lives. The first and foremost catechists in the life of every child are his or her parents. Parents are the fundamental source of their child's faith formation secondly. The faith Education for the children helps parents in their efforts to raise their child in the Roman Catholic faith, so that he or she will become a disciple of Christ.

Faith based Education in parish level has impact in moral life of children. Classes are held on Sundays.

Parents are asked in their most convenient time to attend Mass together as a family. They are regular in liturgical & sacramental worship and prays on his or her own and in communion with the Church. Our Religious Education Program also incorporates a family "home school" component. Parents are

advised to have evening prayer together with their children at home and ask their pupils to remain present in the SCC prayers organized in different house as well as at home. Educating the Catholic faith at Parish level, village level strengthens family relationships and helps children learn from watching faith modeled by their parents and to experience the joy of helping others through Christian Service. I truly appreciate and thank the Pontifical Society for

the propagation of faith for their kind support and funding. The Faith Education for Children programme has undoubtedly benefited the family and the young children of the diocese.





EFFECTIVE ACCOMPANIMENT OF CHILDREN IN THEIR EARLY TEEN AGE THIRTEEN & FOURTEEN

QUEEN OF THE MISSION CATHEDRAL

Early adolescence can be a challenging time for children and parents alike. Parents often feel unprepared and view the years from 10 through 14 as a time just “to get through.” However, the early adolescent years can greatly influence the growth and development of the children. It has become a challenging task for the parents that it’s not easy to raise a young teen. Many outside influences distract the mindset of the children and complicate parents’ efforts. Exhaustion, anxiety, a lack of support and limited resources make it hard to be all that they want to be for their children. But whatever the challenges, The Roman Catholic Diocese of Berhampur share one aim: to do the best possible in forming the early teenagers periodically in Parish level and Diocesan level through different seminars and trainings. The purpose was to enable and encourage the aims and objectives human life through faith and obedience that gives value and dignity in the society.

It was praise worthy to see children coming up for learning and giving interest to get formed in the awareness programs. During the training session the children were given inputs on physical, spiritual and psychological

growth in respect to the social values and dignity. The parishes have taken great interest in consultation with the parents to have periodical inputs to the early teenage group. It is good to see children growing positively taking initiative in church organized activities like, Holy Childhood, Sunday class, devotion to mother Mary (Holy Rosary), family prayers and learning prayers to receive the Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

I take this opportunity to appreciate and thank the Pontifical Society of the Missionary Childhood for your generous support and encouragement. The awareness program for the early teenagers has surely helped the young age of the diocese and to the family as well.

P. Suresh Chandra Nayak



LEBANON

MARONITE DIOCESE OF BATROUN

“COME TO YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU” **A MANUAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE FIRST COMMUNION IN BATROUN**



Most parents wait until their children turn eight to begin the preparation for their First Communion Mass. This occasion is important not only for the child, but also for the whole family, who gather with their godfather and godmother to share the joy of seeing their child receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

As for our six parishes, which are part of the pastoral sector called “Encounter and Dialogue”, in the Maronite Diocese of Batroun (North Lebanon), a collective work group was created, bringing together a dozen volunteers, including priests and lay people, to prepare for First Communion, with a meeting each time in one of the six parishes.

THE MANUAL

To make these meetings interesting, we invented a catechesis manual for a good preparation of the First Communion entitled “*I come to you because I love you*”. Our journey begins with an initial meeting, after a didactic game, during which the children are given a map with 13 stations, symbolizing the journey to be made with Jesus during the year. As usual, for a trip, you need a bag and, therefore, we

prepared one, which we distributed to each child, containing a booklet of prayers that the child can consult at any time, choosing one, alone or accompanied by his or her family. This booklet contains the main prayers. The Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the Angelus, the Prayer of Reconciliation, the Ten Commandments ... In addition, at the end of the booklet, we have placed two tables; the first is to be filled in by the child and his parents and serves to help them to accompany him in the best way each week, the other is filled in by the child and signed by the priest after Sunday Mass.

In the bag there is also an empty bottle of water. In the course of the preparation, the child must fill it with drops of water, which are made up of plastic crystals that the group coordinator distributes as a reward for any effort, sacrifice, a good deed performed, or an exercise that he or she has been asked to do at home, and which he or she has completed. Each child has 13 catechesis cards. Each meeting has its own title and is accompanied by films and learning techniques and contains the following themes:





1. Creation;
2. The Holy Trinity;
3. Incarnation in a family on earth;
4. The Holy Bible and God's 10 Commandments;
5. The work of mercy;
6. Death and resurrection;
7. The Holy Spirit;
8. The seven Sacraments of the Church;
9. The Sacrament of Reconciliation;
10. The sacrament of the Eucharist;
11. The parts of the Mass, according to the story of the two disciples of Emmaus.

There are then two attachments: an explanation of the architectural elements of the church and the names of the sacred liturgical objects that are used during mass. As for the last two meetings, they take place in the company of the family. One consists of getting to know the parts of the Mass and the vestments that the celebrant uses during the Mass, the other consists of a penitential celebration with the family and godparents, so that the child confesses for the first time during a time of prayer together.

The volunteer parish animators, prepared by the formators throughout the year, refer to the 96-page "master's book" containing all the details of the meetings and the answers to the exercises. In terms of audio visual media, we have prepared 10 films in Arabic, 10 minutes each. Each film is an introduction to the topic we want to share, and some of these films were translated, filmed and produced by a team specialized in audiovisual media.

Indeed, this book has helped us overcome many difficulties and

facilitated the children's preparation, thanks to its variety, the drawings made by a Lebanese artist, the games and exercises, which do not bore the child.



This year, our project is to translate the booklet into French and English, to help our children who study in public schools and do not know Arabic.

THE FAMILY GAME

Our group also prepares a family game whereby children, starting with the questions and answers, can review with family and friends, while playing, what they have learnt during Christian education meetings (catechism).

With the economic crisis that our children have experienced to date, which has affected their psychology and behaviour and probably delayed their school and social learning, due to the corona virus pandemic that has forced them to stay at home, and the fact that our country faces some serious and dangerous challenges, this book should be a sign of hope, a means to soothe the soul, to live with Jesus and prepare to receive Him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, without pressure or the impression of having to attend meetings.

*P. Elie Saadé
Responsible for the
"Encounter and Dialogue"
parish sector*



Last year I had an original experience during my First Communion preparation thanks to the manual we used, which was easy and made me get to know Christ and create a deep bond with Him in a fun and creative way. Moreover, during our 13 preparation meetings, I made new friends.

Sara Khairallah

During the preparation of my First Communion the booklet was useful and fun. It is full of colourful drawings and clear explanations about First Communion.

Edwin Baz



I would like to thank the whole team who formed us to receive our First Communion. It was a great idea to meet new friends, from Jrane and neighbouring villages. I was so happy, every Saturday, to hear about Jesus through group games. This led me more and more to attend mass every Sunday. It was an exceptional year and one I will never forget.

Rayan Elias



NEW CALEDONIA

ARCHDIOCESE OF NUMEA



New Caledonia, like the entire world, suffered the disastrous effects of Covid-19 and the consequences are still being felt.

In New Caledonia, the situation is evolving slowly, influenced by the modern world. Traditional structures are mainly found on the islands and in tribes. Consideration is still being given to how independence and autonomy will be implemented. Thus, the question is still pending. This situation makes investment in the country very uncertain. The emphasis is on living together, but how to do this is yet to be defined. Today, children are practically all attending school thanks to the school bus service. On a religious level, a large proportion of children are catechised, whether in school centres, parishes, tribes or neighbourhoods.

Many people dedicate part of their free time to ensure this education.

However, it is beginning to be perceived that more and more parents are reluctant to enrolling their children in catechism classes and to send them regularly.

Communion and confirmation celebrations follow their normal rhythm in parishes, but too many children do not receive any religious education at home. In many cases, parents send children to catechism classes to receive the sacraments of initiation because it is part of their habits, and then abandon all practice.

Every two years, the so-called 'Feast of Faith' takes place, a meeting of all catechists in New Caledonia. This meeting takes place in a school, during the holiday period. This year, 2023, it was held in two places, to bring together as many catechists as possible: the first on the islands and the second in the North of the Great Land. The big meeting in Téné took place this year

with the theme "The Word became flesh and dwells among us" and brought together several hundred young people, who were happy to get together, because these are always moments of joy and renewal. The theme for 2024 will be "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him". (Mt 3:17)

WORLD MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD DAY

World Missionary Childhood Day, which is organized every year, is characterized by the children's visits to the elderly, occasions when songs and dances instil joy in their hearts.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The annual six-day meetings with several hundred young people that we call "Téné meetings" are part of their religious formation. These meetings aim to open the spirit and hearts of the young people to the needs of the people around them or the parishes.

The "Foyer Béthanie", is a structure created and sustained by the Diocese, which works the whole year around to welcome families, young girls and children in need.

Collection for the Missionary Childhood: In the diocese, the Missionary Childhood collection is integrated into the Lenten campaign- the actions carried out by the children are attributed to the work of Missionary Childhood.

*Msgr. Michel Marie Calvet
Archbishop of Numea*

SOUTH AFRICA

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN



The Archdiocese of Cape Town is found within the Western Cape Province of South Africa (population estimated at 6.7 million people of which an estimated 4.6 million people are living in Cape Town). The Catholic population of the Archdiocese is estimate at 256 600 people, or about 5.6% of the population. The Archdiocese of Cape Town has 74 parishes of which 60 are situated in poor and disadvantages areas where unemployment is very high, gangsterism and drug/alcohol abuse are rife as a result of which many families are dysfunctional. The influx of migrants from other parts of the African continent, and of South Africa into Cape Town exacerbates the unemployment problem and the already depressed economy. Sadly, almost half of the country's population lives below the poverty line.

Poverty and unemployment breed discontent, anger and lead to other vices that cause distress and violence within families and communities. A fragmented and disoriented society is prone to drug abuse, breakdown in marriages, increase in divorces, and sadly even neglect and abuse of children. Children always come out the worst

of any situation the trauma they suffer leaves imprints on their hearts and minds, and the misery of their childhood remains with them for the rest of their lives. Sadly, more and more children/young people are falling out of school, have no aim or ambition and are easily led into the wrong places and habits.



From our observations the following facts stand out regarding the plight of our children from the disadvantaged areas in the Archdiocese of Cape Town:

- **Poverty:** An average 6 out of 10 children between the ages 0-14 are growing up in poverty- this is mainly due to the exceedingly high rate of unemployment in our country, which presently stands at approx 33.9%.
- **Foetal Alcohol Syndrome:** In the most poor and disadvantaged areas of Cape Town where the statistics are high for substance and alcohol abuse and weekend binge-drinking, there is a concomitant prevalence of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome disorder among the children.
- **Single Parent Families:** Around 45% of South African children grow up in single-parent families, normally the father is the one absent. In some cases both parents are absent - children are removed from parents because of neglect and abuse, and sometimes the parents are incarcerated for crimes related to drugs, abuse, gangsterism.
- **Gangsterism and Drug Abuse:** Growing up in a dysfunctional family, living in unstable conditions, deprived of care and love, without the basic daily necessities, hungry and cold - these are reasons that draw children to drug abuse and gangsterism where they get

mixed up with the wrong company and are only one step away from crime and violence.

- **School Drop Outs:** Again children growing up in dysfunctional families and environments where there is no parental supervision and guidance, where there is a constant lack of food, where there are none of the inherent factors that go towards making a “happy child”, where often children are not only neglected but also abused - with this background children drop out of school and get involved in the wrong things and with the wrong people where sometimes they think they find the love and family they are missing!
- **Child Pregnancies / Underage Mothers:** In South Africa the rising number of births to underage mothers is ever increasing. According to StatsSA around 33,000 teens and children gave birth in 2020; of these, 600 child-mothers were between the ages of 10 and 13.

*Stephen Cardinale Brislin
Archbishop of Cape Town*



SCHOOL FEEDING SCHEME

The 2022 subsidy received from the Holy Childhood Society for the School Feeding Scheme was distributed to several Primary Schools and Educare Centres of the Archdiocese.

Of the 27 Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Cape Town, 18 of them are situated in the poorest and most disadvantaged areas of our city. In these communities, unemployment is very high and this often leads to dysfunctional families - parents cannot cope with the responsibility of parenthood and cannot provide in any meaningful way for their children. Children who are not adequately supervised and cared for by a loving family often drop out of school without the knowledge of the parents, and become Easy prey to predators who entice them into distressing vices and activities.

Children are our inheritance, they should be cherished and given every opportunity to grow and develop towards a better future. With the subsidy received from the Holy Childhood Society, the Archdiocese of Cape Town was able to make a monetary contribution to the most needy schools and hence help to provide the children with a nutritional meal each school day. Sadly, many are the children who arrive at school in the morning hungry because there is no food at home. When children know they will get something to eat if they come to school they will want to come to school - where they will not only get a proper education but also have the opportunity of receiving instruction in the Catholic faith.

ST. KIZITO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME

The mission of St. Kizito Children's Programme is to support parish based responses to Orphans and Vulnerable Children and their families in order to ensure that the physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological and spiritual needs of vulnerable children and their families, especially those affected and/or infected by HIV Aids are met.

Orphans, particularly those who have lost both parents, face heightened vulnerability. They often lack essential resources like food, education, healthcare and emotional support. Without proper intervention, these children are at greater risk of falling into poverty, exploitation and a cycle of disadvantage.

The majority of the families assisted by St, Kizito live

THE MASSES FOR THE CHILDREN

In 2023, the Archdiocese of Cape Town, in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Trust and Holy Childhood Archdiocesan Director, organised for the children of our schools to attend three Holy Childhood Masses, which were celebrated at Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Lansdowne, Cape Town, on 17, 18 and 19 October 2023. The celebrant for the three Masses was Stephen Cardinal Brislin.

A lot of work, effort and energy go into making these occasions place. Principals, teachers and the children themselves go out of their way to make these Masses the very special events they have become. A total of 1,365 children from various schools attended the three Masses, and it is always a wonderful sight to see hundreds of school children beautifully dressed in their colourful uniforms filling the church to capacity. A lot of training and rehearsals happen in the schools to prepare the children for their assigned roles at the Masses be it Scripture Readings, liturgical dancing or the mass choirs.

After the Masses comes what the children also look forward to - the delicious snacks and refreshments! This is a time when children from different schools and different backgrounds get a chance to mix and celebrate together. It is also a time when teachers and principals get together to share ideas and discuss matters of common interest.

in poverty-stricken communities with a vast amount of children being orphans raised by grandparents or a family member. St. Kizito volunteers visit identifies families to obtain information pertaining to the families' need and through the information gathered are able to implement initiatives to empower families to improve their own situation. Our actions might seem small and insignificant at times but they mean so much to those we serve. Mother Theresa said: *"Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love"*.

ST. KIZITO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

All our members are Catholic and witnesses of



Christ's love and call to respond to those in need. Our children and their families look to our members as positive role models within their communities. We hold regular workshops and holiday programmes, which comprise of a life skill component as well as Catholic teachings. Although an outreach of the Roman Catholic Church, we embrace and assist children from all sectors of the community, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

St Kizito Children's Programme recognises Christ in every child that is in need of our help. Our members are honoured to be able to serve. It serves as a poignant reminder to be mindful of the gifts we receive and to share our abundance with others. We are incredibly grateful to different organisations whose generous contributions over the years have made a profound impact on the lives of countless orphans and vulnerable children.

Volunteers in our various parish groups identify and work together with families and their children in their communities. Regular home visits provides vital statistics prevalent to a particular family. Volunteers also provide access to various services that will assist the family. All our parish groups are encouraged to identify their own initiatives which result in projects such as life skill programmes, holiday programmes, fundraising initiatives and outings.

The sale of Advent Candles campaign, pop up shops and our annual fundraiser are further initiatives introduced by the office to generate funds. We work closely with various Catholic schools and groups who assist us with emergency relief programmes.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY EVENTS

Most of our groups held Easter events at which Easter eggs were handed out to all the children. Refreshments and eats were given to the children and a food parcel for the family. Games and competitions were much enjoyed by the children. There were multiple speakers presenting topics on abuse, mental health, puberty and the Ten Commandments. Breakfast and a cooked lunch meal with refreshments was provided on each day. The last day ended with the much anticipated Easter Egg Hunt.

SELF DEFENCE COURSE & COMBINED CHILDREN'S EVENT

The majority of our children and families live in communities that are riddled with crime, gang related incidents and gender based violence. At the self-defence course, the children learnt a range of

TESTOMINY FROM SAINT KIZITO

A young girl, aged 10, who attends a Catholic Primary School, heard from one of her teachers about the work of St Kizito Children's Programme. The teacher shared the plight of children helped by St Kizito some of whom are the same age as those in her class. The young learner was visibly upset that children her age were hungry, some had no parents, no warm clothing nor blankets. She approached her friends and arranged a collection of blankets, food and clothing. Her specific request was that her friends had to give an item of clothing and a blanket that they had (could not be purchased, as it had to come from their heart) and could be passed to other children so that they would know they were loved. Although done on a small scale this child's loving gesture and concern touched the hearts of our impoverished children and families making them feel loved and appreciated.

self-defence techniques, including strikes, kicks and grappling moves. Hosted by our youth leadership team a day of fun filled activities and interaction was held for 60 orphans and vulnerable children from various communities in Cape Town. An event like this reminds children that they are valued, cherished and deserving of happiness.

SCHOOL SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

Emergency relief Drives, which encompass items like toiletries, food parcels, winter meals, clothing were provided to children who live in communities facing unexpected crises or disasters. The annual School Shoe Drive was a huge success and we were able to give new school shoes and socks to 233 children. The Winter Rice Meals were packed during the Nelson Mandela Day Initiative.

SCALABRINI CENTRE ST. LAWRENCE HOUSE

Lawrence House is a project of the Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town, the operative arm of the Missionaries of St. Charles Borromeo. Based on Mt 25:35 "I was a stranger and you welcome me", the work of the Scalabrini Centre and Lawrence House is built on the principles of Scalabrini spirituality and its central work on welcoming people on the move. The Mission of the organization is to Welcome, to Protect, to Promote and to Integrate people on the move into local communities.

THE LAWRENCE HOUSE

The Scalabrini Center was established in 2003 and has become in its twenty years of existence a central interlocutor on issues relating to forced migration in South Africa. Lawrence House was founded in 2005 and has since then established itself as a leading care facility for children on the move, influencing with its experience both policy and practice for the advancement of rights of these children, often left out in legislation as far as their protection is concerned.

THE CHILDREN "ON THE MOVE"

The numbers of children on the move has increased over the past decade albeit migration routes have become more risky for those who embark on them. Forced migration affects families while in route and upon arrival in the host country. The overall hostile environment in South Africa and a growing explicit anti-migrant discourse in the media, makes the integration process even more difficult. The constant exclusion and the struggle to access services bears heavily on families; unfortunately, this leads often to family break ups, neglect of children and even abuse. The mental health status, especially of single mothers, is very concerning.

These are some of the reasons that lead to children and youth being separated from their parents once they have arrived in South Africa from countries like Angola, Congo, Rwanda or Burundi. In addition, children do move independently across borders seeking better opportunities in South Africa. Lawrence House has been established to care for and offer

protection to these children, precisely because of their complex and multiple needs.

THE "EMOTION WALL"

We developed routines around key moments during the day, like transitioning from school to home, transitioning to study time, bed time, using tools such as grounding exercises, breath exercises, sport activities, which help the children and youth to regulate. We introduced the "emotion wall", where each child and young person can write or draw their emotions, so that the child first has a moment to reflect on his/her feelings and acknowledge them, and the peers as well as the staff can be more aware of each other's feelings and be more compassionate towards each other.

An important role in designing the individual healing journeys and pathways towards a better future for these children is played by our Social work program. Each child holds an individual development plan which is built by assessing children according to the circle of courage framework. Our multidisciplinary staff team assess how best to accompany children in their growth by developing their mastery, independence, sense of belonging and generosity. It is within this journey that they are exposed to the Christian faith and its values.

EDUCATION AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

Important components of our developmental work are our education and recreation programs. School enrolment is a key contributing factor to normalisation and integration while recreation is used not only as an opportunity to build social networks and explore skills and fun, but also therapeutically as opportunity for emotional release.

SCHOOLS

Currently 13 children attend St Agnes Primary School while 13 youth are enrolled in high schools. The migratory journey and forced displacement have affected the learning of most children requiring additional and remedial support to close learning gaps and build language skills. Generous volunteers, both local and international, join us every year to nurture and develop all children in the care of Lawrence



House.

School often is a place where children and young people build friendships with the peers and connections with the teachers, who become role models as well. At the same time, the school environment can become a place for triggers leading to emotions being expressed in the wrong way, for instance engaging in risk behaviours. Hence, a close relationship with the school and in particular with the teachers is important to keep on supporting and guiding our children in their day to day life.

THE CELEBRATIONS WITH THE CHILDREN

17 october 2023	479 children
18 october 2023	512 children
19 october 2023	374 children
Total	1365 children



REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DIOCESE OF NKAYI



DIOCESAN DAY OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD

The Diocese of Nkayi is mainly rural; the children of the Diocese live in rural parishes and most of them have poor and destitute parents. They are active in the following apostolate movements: Yamboté (Children witnessing their religious life); The Elisas (little girls at the offertory service); Samuels (altar boys); scout guides (the little ones), the Vivai Scholas Popolari (groups of children who sing) and the Legionaries (children who pray to Mary). All in all, there are more than a hundred children who meet in each parish, most of them come from modest and poor families. We pay more attention to orphans, to children of divorced parents who are, for most part, 'street children' or 'children of the street', and native 'pygmy' children. In addition to catechism, many are placed in Catholic schools defined as "destitute", where they are provided with schooling (giving them exercise books, pens, school uniforms and school kits).

The Diocesan Missionary Childhood Day, organized by the Diocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth, is celebrated every year on the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. It took place in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Sibiti (La Lékoumou deanery) from Saturday 7th to Sunday 8th January 2023. More than 373 children from the Parish, sectors and sister churches actively participated in this meeting. The program of this meeting included teachings, games, prayer and fraternal agape.

In order for this activity with the children to take place peacefully, His Excellency Monsignor Daniel Mizonzo, Diocesan Bishop of Nkayi, who was travelling out of the country, sent as delegates his Vicar General, Fr. Pierre Mpandzou Miafouna, the diocesan chaplain of the diocesan commission for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth (CDPEJ), Fr. British KIBINDA, the general secretary of

the CDPEJ, Blaise Mfoutou Bobantissa, and the members of the coordination team, namely, Manu Giscard Mbanzoulou and Madame Raïssa Tekessa.

SATURDAY, 7/1/2023

On Saturday, from 9.30 am to 11.30 am, all the children gathered in church received a communication on the theme "The child, an ignored missionary" ("l'Enfant, un Missionnaire qui s'ignore").

In the course of this presentation, Fr British Kibinda, animator of the theme, reminded the children that none of them is without a mission. Every child who is born and lives is a missionary within his or her family, the Church, catechism, school, neighborhood, village and in society as a whole. The many tasks entrusted to them are all Missions to be fulfilled for them. To keep the children awake, the speaker sang religious



songs about the Mission and asked intelligence questions. From 2.30pm to 3.30pm the Vicar General, Pierre Mpandzou Miafouna, once again urged the children to recognize their own mission. Finally, around 3.30pm all the children were led out of the church for the start of the scheduled games. After this entertainment, concerts of religious songs began. Five movements were on the list: the Yamboté, the Elisa, the Tambourinaires de l'Eglise Salutiste (two are missing...) The program ended at 6pm with a prayer by the diocesan chaplain.

SUNDAY, 8/1/2023

This Sunday was marked by two main activities, namely, the Eucharistic Celebration and the fraternal agape.

The Mass of the Missionary Childhood was celebrated by Fr Pierre Mpandzou Miafouna, Vicar

General representing Bishop Daniel Mizonzo, and concelebrated by Fr British Kibinda, diocesan chaplain, and other priests of the parish.

During his speech, the main celebrant reminded the gathered People of God that the baptism we have received must lead us to a better way of life. It must reveal to each one their true Christian identity and lead us to the recognition of our common mission, to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

A collection was organized: a basket for adults, a basket for children and young people. At the end of the Mass, all the children gathered to share a meal.

MISSIONARY ANIMATION PROJECT WITH THE NEW 2024 SUBSIDY

With the new subsidy for the 2023-2024 pastoral year, we plan to Improve the implementation of ordinary activities:

- o Support children in difficult situations through school supplies (orphans and destitute, poor, natives), from the return to school in October 2023
- o Celebrating the Day of the Rights and Duties of the Child in November 2023, according to the recommendations of the Episcopal Conference for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth (CEPEJ)
- o On the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Family (December 2023), show children their place and indicate their role in their respective families, following the example of the Child Jesus in the Holy Family. Children must be missionaries in their families, asking their parents to take them to church and catechism lessons and to read the Word of God, at home, in a family
- o Organize Missionary Childhood Day even better (Feast of the Epiphany 2024), with a major effort to raise awareness of the collection
- o Organize training sessions for parish leaders of children's apostolate movements in the diocese, by deanery
- o Organize the third edition of the diocesan children's colony Amount of the collection made in favor of the Society

We would like to remind you that Missionary Childhood Day are also made in all the parishes and almost parishes of the Diocese and are organized by the heads of the Parish Commissions for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth. The Catholic schools also make their collection, which is very substantial, especially this year, despite the financial crisis of families, the children of the Catholic schools have really made their contribution to the Society.

The main objective of all the animation activities of the Missionary Childhood is the formation and information of children in the missionary spirit. Children must have a missionary spirit in all the environments in which they live (church, catechism, family, school, apostolate movements, games and free time). This means prayer, reading the Word of God in every place and at all times.

Monsignor Daniel MIZONZO Diocesan Bishop of Nkayi President of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth

Blaise MFOUTOU BOBANTISSA Diocesan Secretary General of the Commission for the Pastoral Care of Children and Youth

PAKISTAN

DIOCESE OF HYDERABAD



The Diocese of Hyderabad was officially erected on August 23, 1958. The territory was carved out of the Archdiocese of Karachi. A sizable part of Baluchistan Province, including the main City of Quetta as its centre and the whole of the Province of Sindh except Kotri, Larkana and Dadu Districts, constituted the new Diocese of Hyderabad.

On November 9, 2001, Pope John Paul II through the Pontifical Bull “Ad Perpetuam rei memoriam” raised Quetta with the whole of Baluchistan to the status of an Apostolic Prefecture and the Very Rev. Fr. Victor Gnanapragassam OMI took charge as Apostolic Prefect on April 7, 2002. So far, the Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad has had four Bishops. Most Rev. Bishop Samson Shukardin OFM was Nominated Bishop on 16-12-2014, Ordained Bishop and took over on 31 January 2015. He is presently working as head of the Diocese.

The Diocese of the Hyderabad seeks to fulfil its prophetic role in terms of the clergy, religious and laity by working with the little ones of the world, including the underprivileged. Through its mission, the diocese endeavours to deepen the faith of its people, ensure quality education, promote equity and justice and provide health care.

The Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad works towards fulfilling the divinatory role of spreading the messages of Christ to the young and poor through Missionary Animation, formation and cooperation.

FAITH FORMATION OF CHILDREN THROUGH EDUCATION

The reality of the Pontifical Society of the Missionary Holy Childhood in the Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad is receiving the wonders of Evangelization in families, schools and other social institutes. The bishop, clergy, religious, lay missionary educators and children work in unison to spread the messages of Christ. The 17 parishes with 57 school and 20 charitable and social institutions have the honour of leading the Holy Childhood Missionary.

The steadily growing number of little missionaries throughout the parishes owes much to the educators who strive to enliven the missionary spirit in children. Children and youth of other denominations are also glad recipients of Holy Childhood missionary

stratagem. Missionary vocations are promoted. Missionary education and collaboration have helped the children to grow and live in ecclesial missionary communion. Accompanied by their respective animators, young boys and girls reach out as friends of Jesus to help other children in distress.

A special tribute to the schoolteachers and the Sunday school team for their role in the animation and formation of children in each Parish of the Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad.

The missionary spirituality in the little friends of Jesus helps them to Live with Him, Live like Him, Unite in Him and Go with Him. He who did not seek to be served but instead, served and gave his life for the Salvation of all.

**Outcome Indicators:**

- Children will continue to grow with confidence in an environment of peace, unity and love
- The universal missionary spirit will grow in children through continuous missionary formation
- Children will evangelize to the non-Christians in a humble missionary style.
- Celebrating the Annual Day of Missionary Childhood will be a good time for missionary animation of all children, an opportunity to renew their missionary devotion, a time to intensify prayer for missions and offer generously in favour of the underprivileged

children.

- Missionary vocations accompanied by discernment and education will be promoted.
- Progressive development will be observed as Missionary Animators partake in mission within and out of the parishes and Diocese to stimulate children as future animators.
- Animators and children will be a constant support in Missionary Childhood Services.

ST. JOHN'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL KALI MORI – HYDERABAD

St. John the Baptist Elementary School is actively playing its vital role in the faith formation of the Christian children of the school through different religious activities. Holy Childhood Group is divided into 5 different sub-groups. The following sub-groups of Holy Childhood have been formed:

- St. John's Group: Classes Pre-Nursery to K.G (Mrs. Hannah Jamil and Mrs. Sonia Junaid)
- St. Luke's Group: Classes One & Two (Mrs. Shagufta Waseem)
- St. Paul's Group: Classes Three & Four (Ms. Maria Mumtaz and Ms. MuskanJaved)
- St. Mark's Group Classes Five & Six: (Mr. Khurram Robin)
- St. Matthew's Group: Classes Seven & Eight (Mrs. Razia Nadeem, Mrs. SameenaKhurram)

The sub-groups of Holy Childhood Group have had different activities during the year. The objectives of these activities are as follow:

- To build up faith formation in Christian children
- To help them strengthen their belief in the Christ
- To bring them near to the Jesus Christ as He blesses them
- To motivate children to actively part in the Church activities

The following steps have been taken to achieve the above-mentioned objectives:

- Catechism as Subject for all classes; 3 days of the week
- Catechesis Class on every Fridays
- Formation of Sub-Groups of the Holy Childhood Group
- Celebrations of Feasts
- Weekly attending the Holy Mass in the Church
- Readings and Prayers by students in the Holy Mass

Decorated Pray Corner in the school

This year we the Animator and members of Holy Childhood prepared a Pray Corner for the staff and students of the school. All groups got the chance to visit it, pray over there and offer their contribution. It was a new initiative. We hope that it will be continued every year.



ST. BONAVENTURE'S HIGH SCHOOL ESSA NAGRI HYDERABAD

August 2022 to May 2023: All the Christian students of Ten Cells conducted four meetings (1st Catechesis, 2nd Spirituality, 3rd Service, 4th Communion) based on "School with Jesus" on every Friday 12:20pm to 1:00pm. To promote the Family Rosary, we conducted a program about Rosary in school in which all the Christian students and teachers were actively participated.

Activities planned for July, 2023-june, 2024 to be held in schools

- Celebrating the feasts of Mother Mary in September and October-2024.
- Ziarat-e-Maa Mariam to be held in September and October-2024
- Recitation of the Rosary by children by visiting families
- Holy Mass every Friday for school children followed by adoration
- Sharing meals
- Synodal approach with teachers and students
- Synodal Strategy listening and speaking to continue with peers, families and neighbours
- Celebrating feasts of saints
- Tableaus and Role plays highlighting Biblical stories
- Excursions
- Summer Camps
- Christmas Pageants
- Christmas get together
- Observing lent by fasting/sharing/praying together
- Stations of the Cross.
- Morning Assembly presentations in Schools
- Interfaith gatherings
- Personal monetary collection by Children for support to the Needy
- Prayer and interactive activities with tribal and local children
- Bible Stories depicted through arts and crafts.

Holy Childhood group is performing very actively in Hostels, schools and among Christian community throughout the Diocesan jurisdiction. Students take active part, wherever they engage

for a program/class/church, etc. It is the sign of good Christian Faith.

These activities were very productive and fruitful for the learning of the students. Students took keen interest in the activities. We hope that this year will be great source of blessing for the students to increase their understanding and faith in the living Christ through the Holy Eucharist.

*Msgr. Samson Shukardin
Bishop Catholic Diocese of Hyderabad*





KENYA

DIOCESE OF ELDORET



PMC ANIMATORS ANNUAL MASS AT ELDORET DIOCESE- KENYA

Color and pomp marked this years' Animators' Thanksgiving mass that was held on Saturday, 14th October, 2023. Over 800 animators from all deaneries arrived in style dawned in their new uniform, painting the town yellow in color. This was as a result of directive order 001 of the newly appointed PMS Director.

"Hearts on fire, Feet on the move" was the theme of the highly elated Mass which was celebrated by the Vicar General of Eldoret diocese, Rev. Fr. John Kiplimo Lelei. In his homily he encouraged the animators to embrace the responsibility given to them with zeal. "Monitoring what children animators teach is important because some people are teaching their own wisdom and these may impact negatively (on) the children as they are not teaching the (Christian) doctrine." Fr. Kiplimo said and explained. Other priests present to concelebrate the Mass included: The PMS director of Eldoret diocese, Fr. Mathew Too, Fr. Godfrey Sachero, PMS director of Kakamega Diocese, Fr. Stanley Tanui from Kipsebwo parish and the host Priest Fr. Peter Paul Indiana of Sacred heart of Jesus, Cathedral. The mass was animated by animators of the Cathedral Deanery under the stewardship of Chairperson Mr. Josphat Talam.

The celebration incorporated the commissioning of 600 animators from the 3 Pastoral regions, following rigorous training that was

done in the months of April and August 2023 respectively. In his speech, the PMS Director of the diocese thanked the animators for their selfless giving and the hard work they put in to implement the PMC teachings of Prayer and Sacrifice to the children. "Each one of you has been instrumental to the continuity of the church and society of tomorrow. Teaching and guiding the children in the right direction guarantees a better society for tomorrow," he said. He also encouraged the lot to keep true to the vows they had taken during commissioning and to work with dedication and sacrifice for the children.

To crown the occasion, animators were treated with nuggets of wisdom by the invited guest and Key note speaker Sr. Rosemary Mwangi who coordinates PMC Nationally. Urging the animators to be careful on their behavior around the kids, she warned, *"An animator is someone who nurtures souls and feeds the children through the scriptures. She/he is a living role model to the children whose actions speak louder than words."*

All said and done, the event was sensational, an epic success. God bless the PMC family of animators Eldoret Diocese.



CHAD

DIOCESE OF PALA

**EPISCOPAL COMMISSION
CHILDREN'S PASTORAL CARE
KEMKOGI – MIDADE**



Kemkogi is a movement of evangelization, education and Catholic action that shapes human and spiritual life, open to all children from 7 to 14 years of age, without distinction of gender, religion or ethnicity. The children are accompanied by young people and adults. It is a mixed movement, which participates in the daily realities of children and helps them find solutions to their problems through activities and guidelines. In the Diocese of Pala, for the pastoral year 2022-2023, we have 4732 registered member children and 345 accompanying adults.

"Kemkogi, witness to the Gospel, we are actors of unity and stability in our country": this was the theme of the annual campaign that guided the children's activities during the 2022-2023 pastoral year.

At diocesan level:

- Meeting of the group of diocesan coordinators from 19 to 22 September, 2022 for the adaptation of the annual campaign and the definition of the roadmap for the 2022-2023 pastoral year.
- The meeting was attended by 26 people, including members of the diocesan team, area coordinators, chaplains, councilor nuns and some area leaders.
- After the re-launch of activities, at the beginning of October 2022, the different pastoral areas organized training courses for those accompanying minors.
- Visits to monitor activities in the areas (Fianga, Léré, Bongor and Pala).

- During our visits, we found that the dynamism of the children keeps the movement alive in the parishes, but there are also many difficulties. The visits took place in Franga and Pala in December, in Léré in January and in Bongor in February.
- The holding of three preparatory meetings for the second edition of the diocesan camp, which took place from 25 to 28 May, 2023 in Bongor under the theme "Children carry life in their hands".
- The holding of an exchange meeting with the area coordinators and chaplains to discuss the good functioning of the movement in the diocese on 27 May 2023 in Bongor.
- Participation in the national meeting of the Catholic Action of Children associated with the meeting of the national team of the Kemkogi movement in Donta, Diocese of Goré from 25 to 30 July, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was the use of a new 2023-2025 campaign.



FIRST QUARTER

In the first quarter (October, November, December) in order to witness their faith, the children organized weekly work and exchange meetings with parents and children on some difficult situations in families, such as the deportation of children to the north of the country for domestic purposes or cattle grazing, the celebration of early marriages that persists in some places in the diocese, the consumption of alcohol and drugs by children.

On the occasion of the celebration of the 32nd anniversary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, on November 20, 2023, the Kemkogi of Bongor parish visited the provincial hospital and gave useful gifts to the newborns. In other parishes, this celebration was accompanied by the cleaning of public places. The children were also the protagonists of a program on children's rights on "Radio Terre Nouvelle" in Bongor.

To make their commitment concrete, the children also enrolled three of their peers in school, two in Lére and one in Fianga.



SECONDO QUARTER

In the second quarter (January, February, March) the Kemkogis, invited to experience concrete actions, organized a meeting with Muslim children and children from sister churches to share the benefits of living together. During Lent, they organized prayer sessions for families who had been kidnapped for ransom.

On the occasion of the Missionary Childhood celebrations, many activities were organized, including children who were not part of the movement: festivals in schools, concerts, exchange meetings with children on their living conditions.

To describe the actions of the children, we would like to describe the life experience of Juge Koumna, an uneducated orphan child discovered by the Kemkogi of his parish.

TESTIMONY

Juge Koumna is an orphan of both parents who died in 2020 (his mother) and 2022 (his father), respectively. He is 10 years old and was adopted by his paternal aunt in Koupor, in the pastoral area of Fianga. This child lives in difficult conditions. In fact, despite his age, he is the only child to do household chores, even though his aunt has sons and daughters of her own. Poorly dressed and poorly fed, little Juge was tortured every time he failed to carry out an assigned task. Discovered by the Kemkogi of his neighborhood, the latter informed the others and the parish priest. As a result, he was invited to a children's meeting. The children then decided to visit him at home and discuss his situation. After several meetings with his aunt, Juge's condition improved and, with the support of the parish priest, the children enrolled their friend Juge back in school.

Next year Juge Koumna will start CE1 and has definitely regained his friends in the movement.

KEMKOGI CHILDREN'S DIOCESAN CAMP 25-28 MAY IN BONGOR

The Kemkogi children's camp is the activity of the diocesan coordination of Pala, which brings together children every two years to introduce them to the realities of the diocese, to reflect on the life of their movement and to share the Word of God, growing in faith.

The general aim is to lead children to live fraternity and synodality. Three conferences were held on Saturday, 27 May:

- The first speech focused on the importance of reading. Guided by Seibana Daniel, chief animator of the cultural center of Bongor, the Kemkogis have learned to love reading to acculturate, educate and inform themselves, in order to discover the world and build their own future.
- The third speech focused on the risks of early pregnancy and voluntary termination of pregnancy. This topic was presented by the diocesan coordinator, Haranga Zoullah Emmanuel, who gave advice to the Kemkogi children and those accompanying them on how to avoid risky behavior among young people and the consequences that can arise from it. The children were made aware of the responsible attitudes to adopt to build their lives.
- The theme of the last speech was taking charge of the movement and the Church. The speaker of the theme, Haranga Zoullah Emmanuel, diocesan coordinator, showed the Kemkogi how they can participate in the survival of their movement and their local Church.

The afternoon of this day was reserved for cultural activities (cultural festival)

The activities ended on May 28, 2023 with the Sunday Eucharistic celebration in the parish. The mass was presided over by the diocesan chaplain, Father Blaise, together with the chaplains of the other areas and by the parish vicar of the host parish, Father Hebyr Walian.

The camp was attended by 322 children and 19 apostolic workers.

*Fr. Blaise Gouabo
Diocesan chaplain*



TESTIMONY

I am Irène Minda, a Kemkogi from St Joseph Parish in Bongor. I attended the Kemkogi diocesan camp in Bongor from 25 to 28 May and benefited a lot from it. First of all, training on how to make drawings on t-shirts; I was taught how to cut out letters. I also discovered a lot thanks to the different topics that were presented. For example, the importance of reading: how to read to remember things. The EVA course, which dealt with risky behaviour, also gave me a lot of information: now I know what to do!

I also met many friends from other parishes in our diocese. We had fun, we danced. All in all, it was a good camp. I thank all those who helped us to organize this camp. If the diocesan office can organize it every year, it will be a good thing.

TESTIMONY

My name is Sylvain Mbadjivia and I participated in the Kemkogi diocesan camp. It was the first time and I am very happy because I won a lot of things. Thanks to the training we received, I now know how to print on t-shirts and scarves. I wish the diocese would organize events like this more often.



MOZAMBIQUE

ARCHDIOCESE OF NAMPULA



TESTIMONIES



MOZAMBIQUE

The Archdiocese of Nampula is in a phase of growth. Most of the children live in poverty. Cases of early marriage have also been reported. There is still a prevalent lack of appreciation of the role of the child and the unborn child. The Church has been working to educate children. In many cases, particularly in rural areas, where agriculture is favored, parents do not take their children to school. In the Archdiocese we have received formation on child protection. In urban centers, there is a large-scale awakening of consciousness regarding the Christian formation of children. The number of baptized children attending catechesis in the various communities is increasing.

In our Archdiocese, the annual Missionary Childhood Day falls on the feast of the Epiphany. In our parishes there are Missionary Childhood parish groups with a coordinator and animators. In the pastoral regions, work is being done to establish Missionary Childhood and Adolescence (IAM) in the parishes. The Archdiocese has a diocesan director of IAM who works closely with the parishes and pastoral coordination. .

Msgr. Inácio Saúre, I.M.C.
Archbishop of Nampula

CHRISTMAS TIME

Generally, the children celebrated Christmas in their respective parishes, with their parents, animators and missionary teams. In this sense, we thank everyone for their involvement in the celebration of Christmas in the parishes where the IAM has been established, while there is an urgent need to take up the challenge of establishing the Holy Missionary Childhood in all parishes.

During this period, the Epiphany of the Lord, Missionary Childhood Day, was celebrated within the communities, remembering our patron saints Francis and Teresa of the Child Jesus, and emphasizing their role in the mission of evangelization. From 2021 to 2023, there were several training courses for animators in the pastoral regions of the City of Nampula, the Pastoral Region of Angoche, Lapala and in the parish of Mecuburi. In their specific plans, the parishes also gave priority to the training of new animators and the involvement of parents in the parishes.

TRAINING OF ANIMATORS

We would also like to highlight the Bible training for all animators in the city's pastoral region, which took place in St Mary's parish, in order to equip animators with essential biblical knowledge, so that they are then able to help the children in the parishes to learn about the Bible.

MAY - THE PILGRIMAGE

During the month of May, children make the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Meconta, together with all the children of the region and the city, and of the regions of Ribaué, Rapale, Meconta and Angoche. It was a unique moment of prayer, with some three thousand children. It was a real school of prayer, in which the children learned to be devoted to Our Lady, to pray for their families and friends, and to be humble like Mary.

JUNE - THE CHILDREN'S MONTH

The month of June was dedicated to children, and so all the parishes celebrated in their respective context, carrying out some acts of charity, such as helping other children in situations of poverty and suffering, visiting hospitals and other activities.

During this period, the commission carried out an accompanying visit to some parishes in the city region, Lapala, Namaita, Angoche, Meconta, and noted numerous difficulties in the accompaniment of children due to the abandonment of several animators and that other parishes are not interested in the work of accompanying children, and that a number of parish coordinators are absent and inoperative, which does not contribute to their task of coordinating and helping children in their mission as evangelizers.





AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

During the months of August and September, the commission gave priority to the preparation of the missionary song and dance festival, which has now become a tradition for the children of our Diocese, with meditation on the Holy Father's message for World Missionary Day, in which children share their missionary zeal for the mission. In 2023, we organized a nationwide novena on the missionary month with prayers for missionaries present in various parts of the world.

It was an unforgettable moment to see the dynamism and enthusiasm of young people and adults involved in the formation of children, with the task of helping them grow in faith.

To stimulate the children to Marian devotion, a pilgrimage to the shrine is made with them every year, where they learn to pray together with Mary our Mother, the Way of the Cross, the procession, adoration and the recitation of the rosary. It is remarkable how the number of children who go to that place of prayer each year continues to grow!

Since many children do not have the financial resources to pay for the transport themselves, the diocesan council tried to help them through the ordinary subsidy. This help consisted of providing transport to accompany children who could not afford private transport. This help was very important in accompanying a considerable number of children to prayer, together with their



parents and the most disadvantaged animators.

ANNUAL MISSIONARY DANCE AND SONG AND BIBLE CONTEST

Besides the pilgrimage, there is another really important activity that the IAM carries out in our diocese: it is the missionary festival on World Missionary Day. All the children from the pastoral region of Nampula and several neighbouring parishes have come together to celebrate World Mission Sunday, and for the past two years, the Lapala region has organized a regional festival during which, based on the Holy Father's message for World Mission Sunday, the children present mission-related songs and plays, and we organize a fraternal gathering. The Archdiocesan Commission purchases IAM symbols and sends them to the parishes to be used in meetings and training courses.

On the other hand, for the past four years we have been running the "I Know the Bible" competition, in which children answer Bible questions posed to them, as a way of encouraging them to read the Bible. For



this reason, the Commission purchased Bibles, rosaries, biscuits and sweets to reward the children who stand out the most and others who participate in the same competition, as well as materials for cleaning, decorating and building the porch. It is a unique experience to be with children and become aware that they take Bible knowledge seriously according to their abilities.

*Fr. Simone Adriano
Diocesan Director of the PMS*





GUINEA BISSAU

DIOCESE OF BAFATÁ



TESTIMONIES

The people who live in the territory of the Diocese of Bafatá are very poor. The majority are not Christian (only 15-20%). Unfortunately those who suffer most in our area are children. There are still many who do not attend school, many who are forced to work or marry at a young age. Not everyone has enough food, especially those under five years of age. Urgent action is needed to promote children's lives, and the Gospel is a huge lever to change mindsets. Starting from the little ones. In the parishes and missions of the Catholic Church of our diocese, we have various activities for human development and the proclamation of the Gospel. There are more than 15,000 children in our Catholic schools. We have catechesis activities in the parishes and we also have some small evangelization groups.

There are already Missionary Childhood and Adolescence (IAM) groups in two parishes. Missionaries, especially from Brazil, have shared their experiences of missionary animation with children and, little by little, this missionary spirit is growing in the little ones. We continue to invest in the formation of animators, especially lay people, so that they can run groups in the

parishes and missions of the diocese.

On the occasion of the Solemnity of the Epiphany, Missionary Childhood Day, children in some communities participate in this missionary action. What is most exciting is the continuity of the groups throughout the pastoral year.

In addition to the IAM, in several parishes there are activities with groups that have slightly different names, but with the same objective: Catholic Action (CVAV), pre-adolescents, several choral groups that sing during liturgies, but are also animated for the evangelization of children. All this is part of a single evangelizing action of the diocese of Bafatá with children. During the pastoral year, we held three training courses for animators and new animators. We purchased t-shirts and flags. We printed some material for the new animators and children. At the end of the pastoral year, we organized a day of activities with all the children of Missionary Childhood.

*Padre Lucio Brentegani
Amministratore diocesano*



Ianara da Cunha, 14 years old: for me, Missionary Childhood makes me feel happy and pushes me to have more faith, also because I have learned many fantastic things, and the counselors made me understand that the world does not belong to me, but belongs to God and to all the creatures that inhabit it. IAM taught me not to put limits on my dreams, but to have faith and trust. I will never forget a missionary childhood meeting, during which the counselor said that life never ends for those who have faith in God.

Carlota Gomes, 14 years old: IAM represents the child who evangelizes another child with their testimony of life, a child who is different from the other children, exemplary at school, at home and on the street, who makes Jesus known and loved, this is our mission as missionaries.

Liliana, 13 years old: I like Missionary Childhood because it has taught me to participate more in the Church, especially in Sunday Mass; I am happy to participate in the IAM meeting.

GUINEA BISSAU

INDIA

THE DIOCESE OF SHIMOGA

The diocese of SHIMOGA has 16 boarding houses for the benefit of schoolchildren belonging to the economically poor, socially backward, educationally deprived as well as for the school dropouts. It provides residential facilities and access to education to the children from the villages.

The MARIA BODEWIG BOARDING, SORAB is one of these boarding houses and it takes care of the rural girls and provides them with appropriate atmosphere. It offers them the basic needs, like food, clothing, shelter, medical care and school requirements. Value based educational input sessions to build up their character are given. There are 44 girls in the boarding coming from the surrounding villages and from the far away districts. The MARIA BODEWIG BOARDING is run by the Missionary Sisters of the Queen of Apostles.

An experience shared by a child of the Maria Boedwig Boarding, Sorab:

I am Shiny from Kerala. Since 7 years, I am in this boarding. I have no father. We are three girls. My younger sister is with me in the same boarding. My elder sister is married. I am from a very poor family. My mother has to work hard to support us. Here in this boarding I am very happy. Sisters formed us into a group called Holy Childhood. We are together once a month. Sisters share with us about other suffering children with the pictures and slide show. I saw some of them are child labourers, we pray for those children who are suffering in different parts of the world and in our country, there are many. I feel I am in a large family of children. Sisters



Sr. Maddalena Hoang Ngoc

sometimes ask us to sacrifice fruits and share this money with the poor children of Holy Childhood. This way I have to share my little sacrifice with the poor. I feel very happy that I can contribute a very small share to Holy Childhood fund. We are also asked to help in the garden to grow vegetables and to share money to help the Holy Childhood. Through the Holy Childhood, I came to know there are many other children who are suffering much more than my family and me. I am grateful pray daily for all those who organize this Holy Childhood programme.



A missionary prayer for children

*Dear Lord Jesus, hear my prayer,
You call me to love, and you call me to care.
Help me to know the peace of your heart,
As I walk in your footsteps, as I follow your path.
Teach me your ways that my eyes may see,
The mission of love you have given to me.
Let my actions this day bring healing divine,
With love and compassion may your ways be mine.
In the trials of this day, let me stand firm and strong,
With faith as my guide, may I never go wrong.
In the service of others, let kindness abound,
In every step taken, let Your love be found.
Let my prayer like a whisper in a gentle breeze,
Echo in hearts, and ripple in trees.
For children I pray Lord, in Your love let them be,
Forever connected, dear Jesus, to Thee.*

Fr Jerry Browne
PMS National Director for South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland



PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS