



JUNE 2024 - N. 17

BULLE IN

PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS



THE VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

BURUNDI
TANZANIA
UZBEKISTAN
MYANMAR
BURKINA FASO
KENYA
CENTRALAFRICAN REPUBLIC
MALI
VENEZUELA
BOLIVIA
THE PHILIPPINES
HONDURAS
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
BENIN
PANAMÁ
ECUADOR
ROMANIA
INDIA

MISSION MEANS COOPERATION

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MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER
N.17 - JUNE 2024

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Dear Readers, Dear children and young people, Dear animators and educators, Dear consecrated Religious and priests, Dear parents,

I am happy to present another issue of the bulletin of the Pontifical Mission Society of the Holy Childhood. Every issue is a joy, a great joy and opportunity to be able to share the beauty, the richness, and the hopes that are present in many parts of the world today. This is also thanks to what many children and young people, together with adults, try to do in announcing the Kingdom of God, and making the Kingdom of God present here on earth every day, which Kingdom of which Jesus himself speaks: a kingdom of peace, love, mercy and welcome.

A few months ago, I participated in the European Missionary Childhood Conference, in Bucharest, Romania. It was an important and enriching meeting. In reality, we are enriched every time we meet with someone else and the most interesting (challenging) thing is to then be able to carry away the fruits of these meetings and share them with others.

This European meeting had as its theme: cooperation, which is our common theme for this year- spiritual cooperation.

We also met children and young people from various cultures, because Romania is a country rich in different cultures, churches and rites. Yet, all of us, as baptized in Christ, who calls us to be witnesses and disciples.

In the following pages, you will be able to discover the variety, the multiculturalism, the beauty of this Pontifical Mission Society through testimonies and narratives that help us to delve deeper into the reality of the Church present in the various continents. This will help us to promote and grow in a

sense of belonging to the same universal Church, to the same family of God.

I would like to thank each of you, dear children and young people who believe and commit, from the bottom of your heart, to be protagonists today in the Church and in the mission, according to the style of Jesus and the charism inspired and shared by Monsignor Charles De Forbin Janson.

In this issue, we are introducing something new: a game, on the last page.

Prayer and play are two important realities for children, for every missionary child, and for every missionary disciple, large or small. I therefore invite you to read this new issue with curiosity, amazement and gratitude, and to share more about our friend Jesus. I do hope that you become more and more friends with him.

Enjoy the reading!



SR. ROBERTA TREMARELLI

Secretary General Pontifical Society Missionary Childhood

MISSION MEANS COOPERATION

FROM THE HOLY TRINITY
TO MY NEIGHBOR NEXT-DOOR

MISSION AND COOPERATION WITHIN THE HOLY TRINITY

Mission means Cooperation: this daring statement has its foundation in the Trinity itself. As we contemplate the overwhelming Merciful Trinity by Sr. Caritas Muller OP, we notice simultaneously a double truth. The first one tells us about Missio Dei, the threefold Mission of Triune God: The Father, in the circle on the right, bends over the man, tenderly holding him, supporting him and kissing him (Gen 2:7). The Son, in the circle on the left, gently touches his feet, tending his wounds. The image reminds us of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-35) and the washing of feet at the Last Supper (Jn 13:3-16). The Holy Spirit, in the middle, looks down on the man as if beckoning him to wake up and

get up. The image reminds us of the Epiphany of the Spirit in the form of tongues of fire at Pentecost and in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism.

The second truth concerns the cooperation: just as the three Divine Person are united and interwoven in their substance, they always work together in favor of the whole humankind. There is not a single moment from this Divine Mission where One Person might work without the cooperation of the Two Others. Therefore, we can conclude this introduction by quoting the Gospel: „What God united, man should not separate”: this regards also Mission and Cooperation of the Church!

MISSION AND COOPERATION DURING THE LITURGY

If this is true for the Missio Dei, we shouldn't and couldn't do otherwise, neither in the Church nor in the concrete relationship with the people we are sent to, since we don't have other mission, but His Mission! In this spirit, the Second Vatican Council employed only collective nouns to express both the identity and the mission of the Church: „Assembly of those called by God”, „People of God”, „Kingdom of God”, „Body



P. Talos Marius SJ
Director Manresa CLUJ
Center - Romania



Trinità misericordiosa - Sr. Caritas Muller OP



of Christ”, „Temple of the Holy Spirit”, „Community of believers”. Empowered by this awareness, we delve within the next part of this presentation into the four determinant parts of the Holy Mass, where the Mission and Cooperation are intrinsically articulated together:

1. The Introductory Rite with the joint Confession of the sins;
2. The Liturgy of the Word, where the People of God listen together the Word of God;
3. The Eucharistic Table, where the people of God is washed and nourished together and
4. The Sending, where the God's People is sent on Mission.

1. The Gathering and the Penitentiary Moment: in the first part of the Mass, the cooperation is enabled first of all by the constitution itself the Liturgical Assembly and then by the common prayer of *Confiteor* where we ask for repentance and mediation. The striking fact is that Mission emerges so early as in the beginning of the Holy Eucharist, as each faithful is requested personally to pray for the others: „therefore I ask blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sister, to pray for me to the Lord our God”.

2. Passing to the second part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, we discover again how mission and cooperation are enacted and shared among the priest and the members of the Liturgical Assembly. Indeed, just as the content of the Good News is not limited



to the Gospel's Proclamation, in the same way there are different persons from the Assembly who convert themselves in Missionaries and Cooperators of spreading the Word of God. Thus, the Collect, the Readings, the Creed, the Hymns and songs, and foremost the Eucharistic Prayers form altogether ways of telling the Redeeming Story of God's love, which need different actors within the Holy Liturgical Drama.

3. As we proceed further to the third part of the Mass, from the Offertory to the Communion, Mission and Cooperation are impossible to be separated. The priest, before acting in *Persona Christi* both in the „sacrament of the towel” by washing feet and then by feeding the People of God with the Eucharist, he asks first the intercessory prayer of the faithful and then washes his hands from the Altar servants. We can actually highlight four different missionary dimensions during this Liturgical moment, where the cooperation of all is required: the mission of the acceptance accomplished by obeying the Words of the Preface: „Take and receive , Take and drink”; the mission of witnessing the Mystery of Faith: „We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again”; the mission of nurturing the people of God; and the mission of keeping alive those who received the Holy Sacrament, as we pray after Communion.

4. Finally, we find the most impressive and the clearest expression of the relationship between Mission and Cooperation at the end of the Mass! In fact, the word itself „Missa” takes its roots from „Missio”. And the final words of Dismissal: „Go in Peace” express in Latin: *Ite Missa est*, both our sending and our being sent together, not alone, each one to his or her home. Actually, these words mirror the Great Commission from Mt 28, 18-20: „Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age”..



MISSION AND COOPERATION OF THE APOSTLES IN THE WORLD

And, „once the Mass of the Altar has ended, starts the Mass of the Neighbor” (Blessed Vladimir Ghika): here again we called to uncover how the



Christian Mission and Cooperation are mingling together in the daily life. Since we contemplate the Acts of the Apostles, we discover six ways through which the first missionaries were unfolding their spreading of the Good News.

THE AMBASSADORS: 2Corinthians 5:20

refers to the church as Christ’s ambassadors, through whom God makes his appeal for the world to be reconciled to him. Cooperation means here to build bridges between the Kingdom of God and the culture you are living in.

THE ILLUMINATORS: God sends his people into every corner of the earth to shine His light. It does not matter how deep the darkness is in a given place, Christians are still called to shine forth God’s light because, as Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, / the world, and all who live in it ” Cooperation

means here Co-existence: to be present in the world, with the people we are sent to.

THE TRANSLATORS: Christians are to live as translators by contextualizing the gospel and the church. Contextualization means adapting the gospel and the church so that they make sense to the local context. But without losing any of the fundamental, nonnegotiable elements of either Gospel or Church! Cooperation means here to convey the Christian message

in an understandable, yet uncompromised way to its receivers!

THE STORYTELLERS: Storytelling may not seem like a missional practice, but it is in fact crucial to faithfully living out our missionary



calling. Indeed, it would be impossible for people to share common ways of life if they did not also share some sort of common narrative, some kind of social story to shape the way they view life, themselves, their relationships to one another and to the world. Cooperation means here to act like Jesus with the disciples in Emmaus: Dialogue

involves practicing conversation, “give and take” which involves listening and speaking, learning and proclaiming.

THE FOREIGNERS: The church is not to feel at home in this world or to strive to be a culturally elite establishment. Instead, the church is to understand that it belongs to God and his kingdom, and is therefore not of this world. This understanding means that the life of the church is one of pilgrimage and journey, of being exiles and strangers, of being foreigners in a land that is not their own. Cooperation means here to be and act like Paul in Athens.

THE ENHANCERS: Bringing Out the Beautiful. Jesus declared to his followers that they were the “salt of the earth”. As the salt of the earth the church enhances the world around it, bringing out more vibrancy in what is beautiful and preserving what is good. It also keeps the ugly and the evil at bay. The role of the enhancer is simple: make the good even better and minimize the bad. Cooperation means here to highlight the Good from the local culture, without compromising with its corrupted parts.



PRAYER

Lord,
you have called me
to be a missionary.
Even in my lowliness
and sinfulness,
you have chosen me
to sing the Song of your love,
the Hymn of your mercy,
the Hymn of your justice.
Guide my way, O Lord.
Send me to the people you created,
whether I must cross the world
or just the street

BURUNDI

NATIONAL OFFICE



INAUGURAL CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IN BURUNDI



In Burundi, the Missionary Childhood saw the light of day on January 6, 1976 in the current Archdiocese of Bujumbura, on the initiative of His Excellency Monsignor Michel Ntuyahaga, bishop of the Archdiocese at the time.

After 10 years, this initiative spread to all the dioceses of Burundi in the following succession: Diocese of Bujumbura in 1975; Diocese of Bubanza in 1975; Diocese of Muyinga in 1980; Diocese of Bururi in 1990, Archdiocese of Gitega in 1994, Diocese of Rutana in 1999, Diocese of Ngozi in 2003.



THE STAR SINGERS

In the course of this activity, Missionary Childhood saw the birth of an apostolate group called the Star Singers. This group animates families by bringing them the joy of Christmas and asking for donations for the Society.

The period of greatest activity is around Epiphany, when the Day of the Holy Childhood is celebrated. In this period, the children of the Missionary Childhood groups, accompanied by their animators, perform the activity of the Star Singers. Like the Magi who came from the East to adore the Child Jesus, guided by the star, they go from one hearth to another announcing the Glad Tidings of the Saviour's birth. The activity takes place in all parishes and the number of children taking part is growing day by day.

Similarly, the number of animators is increasing, which facilitates the missionary catechesis of children in the various areas. Their apostolate is appreciated by adult Christians and arouses in them a missionary commitment.

At this year's Epiphany, Missionary Childhood celebrated the opening of the 50th anniversary Jubilee (Golden Jubilee), which will end on the eve of Epiphany 2025, i.e. Saturday, January 4, 2025. To date, there are Missionary Childhood groups in all the parishes of the Church of Burundi, led by the animators of this Society, who are priests, men and women religious, catechists or lay Christians involved in the Christian and missionary education of children.



BLESSING OF THE MONUMENT FOR THE JUBILEE OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IN BURUNDI

Saturday 6 January, full of ceremonies, ended in the evening in the Parish of St Michael, the first parish where the Missionary Childhood Society in Burundi was founded, with the blessing of a double monument by the Archbishop of Bujumbura. On one side, the monument was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the founding of Missionary Childhood in Burundi, on the other side another monument commemorated 100 years since the ordination of the first Burundian priests, a period sufficient for a mature Church.

The evening ended with a prayer vigil in which the Catholic bishops of Burundi, the priests, the Missionary Children and their animators, in adoration of the Holy Sacrament, entrusted themselves to Jesus.

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION AT THE OPENING OF THE JUBILEE OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD IN BURUNDI

On Sunday, January 7, 2024, during the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Bishops members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Burundi solemnly opened the Jubilee of 50

years of existence of Missionary Childhood in Burundi. The Mass brought together on Mount Sion Gikungu in the municipality of Bujumbura, Archdiocese of Bujumbura, missionary children from all the dioceses of the country, under the theme "All baptized children are sent by Christ to Burundi and the whole world".

In the opening message of this Jubilee, Monsignor Bonaventure Nahimana invited the children, parents, animators and chaplains to place pastoral emphasis on the following points: "Provide all children with a Bible appropriate to their level; organize training courses, retreats and pilgrimages for Missionary Children, their animators and chaplains; organize concerts and missionary celebrations for children based on biblical knowledge; sensitize children to love school and works of solidarity and development; organize a day dedicated to prayer for children and raising awareness of the need to protect them from various forms of abuse".





TESTIMONY OF A MISSIONARY CHILD

We thank God who inspired Bishop Michel Ntuyahaga to launch Missionary Childhood activities in Burundi. We also thank the Catholic Church in Burundi that always supports us and the National Direction of the Pontifical Mission Societies that sends us material for missionary animation and organizes the training courses, pilgrimages, retreats, recreational moments during missionary concerts and other initiatives.

We are happy when exchange visits are organized between children from different parishes to share their experiences, as well as the monthly Masses for Missionary Children, which help us meet the Lord and collect aid for the poorest children.



INDONESIA

NATIONAL OFFICE

DIGI SEKAMI & TEENS SCHOOL OF MISSION



Digi SEKAMI

DIGI SEKAMI is an abbreviation of digital sekami (the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood in digital), which is a tutorial for assisting the faith of missionary children in a digital Android application. This digital application was created in 2021 and is intended for family-based missionary children. This application can be downloaded on Android phones through the play store under the name Apps Digi Sekami. With this app, spread throughout Indonesia, the parents are assisted and guided to accompany their young missionary children. In 2023, the National Office of PMS completed the content of the Digi Sekami application for the year of Liturgy A.



TEENS SCHOOL OF MISSION

As a project of particular interest, the national office holds “Teens School of Mission” program. Teens School of Mission (TSOM) is a special missionary education and formation program for teenagers or young people. It was held for one year (January 2023 – January 2024) as a third batch.

TSOM’s vision is that Catholic teens live in Christ smartly, strongly, joyfully and missionary. TSOM’s directions are:

1. educating teens who have been baptized Catholic intensively
2. instilling Christian values in adolescents as a form of life in Christ
3. fostering Christian joy in adolescents
4. training creative skills and intellectual, emotional, and spiritual and social intelligence
5. guiding adolescents to faith in Christ firmly in the habit of reflection and prayer
6. forming adolescents who are ready to proclaim the Gospel through prayer, charity, sacrifice and witness of daily life

Teens School of Mission (TSOM) was held as a follow-up to the formation of missionary children from the national jamboree 2018. Until 2023, three batches have been held, namely TSOM 2019 as batch I, TSOM 2020-2022 as batch II, and TSOM 2023 as batch III. TSOM batch III was attended by missionary teenagers from 14 dioceses, namely Archdiocese of Medan, Archdiocese of Palembang, Archdiocese of Makassar, Archdiocese of Semarang, Diocese of Surabaya, Diocese of Bandung, Diocese of Pangkalpinang, Diocese of Padang, Diocese of Manado, Diocese of Tanjung Selor, Diocese of Palangka Raya, Diocese of Jayapura, Diocese of Amboina, and Diocese of Sintang. TSOM program was held on January 2023 – January 2024 at each diocese and on some occasions nationally together.



TANZANIA

ARCHDIOCESE OF MWANZA



The Archdiocese of Mwanza is blessed with many children especially in the rural areas most of whom, unfortunately, do not know how to read and write simply because their parents did not attend any school. We reach such children and find ways to help them go to school and to Church.

In their great numbers, children in the Archdiocese of Mwanza frequent catechism classes and like coming together in matters of Faith and social activities like sports and games, pilgrimages. We see the future of the church in our children. We want to hold them together for the good of the Church.

The People of God in Mwanza contribute money to cater for PMS activities in the Archdiocese and we collect money from them and we send it to NDPMS every year.

On the 8th of January we have Christmas for Children where the Archbishop prays together with Children in Mwanza. There will be various seminars and Catechism classes to Children and Their guardians. Children play together and make friendship with other fellow children.

We now have a group of experts who deliver seminars to children in pre & primary schools and in secondary schools on child protection and on how to report the different abuse cases to respective authorities. This is an ongoing activity



in the Archdiocese of Mwanza. Further, in 2023, we have organized two congresses at Diocesan level, one at Sumve parish and one at Kawekamo Shrine). In all congresses we edify our children on prayer, good morals and faith.

THE SEMINAR FOR CHILDREN AND THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

Thanks to the Ordinary Subsidy of the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood we could organize a seminar for children and a Missionary Childhood National Congress, which was held in Kondoa Parish. The seminar for children was held at Magu Parish and children came from different parishes.

For the diocesan seminar for Children we established a four people team to deliver various lessons: a priest, a nun, a parent and a lay catechist.

Children were taught to be aware of the possible child abuse, how to refuse, how to report and

help each other to report to respective authority on various abuses.

There was dissemination of the diocesan child protection and safeguarding policy together with that of the Episcopal Conference of the Church in Tanzania.



The Congress in Kondoa awakened Faith in Children belonging to the Archdiocese of Mwanza, they prayed together, enjoyed lessons together, played together.

The Children appreciated the various efforts of the Church in caring for their spiritual, physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing. They are as well ready to collaborate with parents and pastors of souls in Evangelization as missionaries to fellow less fortunate children in their areas and schools.

Msgr. Renatus Leonard Nkwande
Archbishop of Mwanza



UZBEKISTAN

APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATION



The Apostolic Administration of Uzbekistan is a jurisdiction of the Catholic Church that extends across the entire territory of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The administrative center of this jurisdiction is the capital, Tashkent, where the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is located. The territory is divided into five parishes: the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Tashkent, St. Andrew's Church in Bukhara, St. Mary's Church in Ferghana, St. John the Baptist Church in Samarkand, and Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Church in Urgench. In 2020, there were 3,098 baptized Catholics out of a total population of 31,867,000.

Our parish prioritizes working with children, especially focusing on their formation and education in faith and Christian values. We invite children to spend the day at the parish, where we strive to create a healthy and joyful environment. This also provides parents with peace of mind, knowing their children are in a safe place. In predominantly Muslim countries, evangelization

is a gradual process that encounters challenges. The local mindset is often unfamiliar with certain Christian principles, such as respect for other religions and specific human values. Therefore, a significant part of our work involves teaching children both human values and Christian principles. We engage in these conversations when children visit the parish oratory, allowing us



to connect with them directly.

THE ORATORY

Over the past months, we have made significant progress in strengthening our work with the children who attend our oratory. They join us regularly on three specific days: Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. These oratory days have allowed us to establish closer connections with the children, providing an ideal setting for instilling values through personal conversations, catechism, and communal prayer.

A crucial aspect of these gatherings is the provision of snacks or dinners for the children. Many of them come from impoverished backgrounds and lack adequate nutrition at home. Our commitment is to offer nourishing meals.

WE PICK UP CHILDREN FROM THEIR HOMES

The consistency of the children's participation in our parish activities owes much to our dedicated priests, who pick up the children from their homes using the parish vehicle. These children reside in different parts of the city, and their parents often face challenges in bringing them due to limited public transportation coverage. After school, we collect them from their homes, and after a nourishing dinner, we take them back to their houses.

GAMES, RETREATS, GATHERINGS

During oratory sessions, we recognize the children's

need for play and enjoyment so we spend some time playing games—often educational, sports-related, board games, or creative crafts.

We have also organized some retreats for children and gatherings for altar servers. Children look forward to these events because they blend catechetical games with catechism classes, sports, intellectual competitions, and Bible knowledge contests. Some of these enriching activities take place in the mountains, allowing the children to connect with nature, which also helps to develop virtues. All of this has become possible thanks to your material support. We are very grateful and remain steadfast in our prayers—for you, your work, and all the children in the world.

Fr. Cristian Ariel Alvarez Toncovich
Pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Samarkand



MYANMAR

DIOCESE OF HAKHA



The Diocese, together with the country is experiencing a tragic and deeply challenging time. The children are among the most vulnerable population affected by the conflict. Our children are facing various hardships, including:

- Displacement, which results in loss of stability, access to education and exposure to harsh living conditions.
- They are exposed to violence, both directly and indirectly. Many children are deprived of the opportunity for education due to lack of resources, schools being closed or destroyed.
- Due to war torn environment the children are traumatized in both physical and mental life



THE DAY OF THE HOLY CHILDHOOD

There is monthly Eucharistic Celebration for the children. Before the Holy Mass, they say their morning prayer and the Rosary together for those children who are in great difficulty because of war, famine and ill health and for peace around the world. After the Holy Mass, they would spend the day together by learning Catechism, reciting some Bible verses by heart, singing hymns and Gospel songs, dancing and playing social games. They would perform all these items group by group in unison: they would have lunch together in the afternoon. The children usually help with the necessary of the parish. Spending one day together as God's children once a month is a wonderful time for them.



*Fr. Joseph Aung
Lwin
Sacred Heart
Church –
Calthawng
Parish
Rezua Sud-
Township
Chin State*



BURKINA FASO

DIOCESE OF NOUNA



The Diocese of Nouna has a predominantly young population, with children comprising a significant portion. In recent months, concerns about insecurity have heightened uncertainties regarding the future and development of this youthful and still innocent segment of society.

Insecurity has caused a massive migration of rural populations towards urban areas. There is a natural divide between urban and rural populations, exacerbated by the fact that many of these children are aware they live in someone else's home. Therefore, fostering interactions among children, particularly through activities like sports, is crucial to bridging this divide and promoting principles of mutual support.

The children's movements, "Brave Hearts" and "Valiant Souls" (CV-AV), as well as the children's choir (Samuel Group), serve as a means of transmitting moral, human, and spiritual values to Burkinabé society. For this reason, like other dioceses in the Burkina-Niger Episcopal Conference, the Diocese of Nouna has focused its pastoral work on children's education.

In this challenging situation, exacerbated by the lack of security in Burkina Faso and even more so in the province of Kossi, of which Nouna is the capital, the full development of children is under threat. Between March and July 2023, we witnessed a massive movement of people from rural to urban areas, resulting in many children being unable to access local schools due to

overcrowding. Consequently, we are grappling with incivility and organized crime. Therefore, our pastoral approach must emphasize non-violence, culture, and social cohesion. We must convey a message of peace and tolerance to the youngest among us, as they are a cornerstone of social unity.



BIBLICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

In the challenging security context, the Diocese of Nouna has embraced the following pastoral theme: "Remain faithful to your faith in Jesus Christ and be a builder of peace". Indeed, our community has witnessed horrifying and tragic scenes, prompting many to seek refuge in safer places. In the face of this tragedy, they no longer know which saint to turn to. There's a real risk of turning to alternatives outside their Christian faith. Amidst these tribulations, children are not left behind. Providing them with a strong foundation in faith will help them navigate these challenging times in their spiritual journey. As St. Jerome once said, to ignore the Scriptures is to ignore Jesus Christ. Therefore, we aim to help children better understand the person of Jesus Christ through the Sacred Scriptures.



FRATERNIZATION DAY WITH CHILDREN FROM INTERNALLY DISPLACED GROUPS (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE - IDP)

Parishes are already familiar with Children's Christmas, a day after the celebration of the Nativity when communities place special emphasis on children through fraternal sharing. Like the early communities, resources are pooled and redistributed based on everyone's needs. Due to the security situation, the number of children in shelter areas has significantly increased. That is why we are organizing a campaign called 'One child, one full meal for Christmas.' This meal is complemented by gifts to encourage efforts in building daycare centers and organizing group activities for the children.

*Msgr. Joseph Sama
Bishop of Nouna*

Thanks to the aid received, we could provide school kits (notebooks, pens, books, backpacks) to 460 children. The actions of unidentified armed individuals have had



a profound impact on the students. Some were repeatedly threatened on their way to school, while others witnessed their school supplies destroyed or set on fire by these very people. Many of the children who endured these abuses were on the brink of despair, not knowing where to find what they needed for their education. This assistance was a huge relief for the children, as well as for the parents who were left speechless and the teachers who watched helplessly as their classrooms emptied day after day.



THE COMMERCIAL

The subsidy we received allowed us to create a commercial that aired throughout the year. The commercial, featuring children, was based on one of the principles of the Brave Hearts and Valiant Souls movement (CV/AV: a good child, a good sibling, and a good companion). The ad encouraged cautious openness towards others and aimed to restore hope to children far from their homeland. Additionally, we produced four programs in four different languages: French, Dioula, Bwamu, and Mooré, the main languages spoken in the Diocese. Through these broadcasts, the participating children could understand the mission of the diocesan radio, which is to be “the voice of the voiceless.”

My name is Coulibaly Félicien and I'm in fifth grade. In our village, the school is a bit out in the bush, about 2 km away. One evening, on our way home, some armed men stopped us. They told us to tear up our notebooks, then they burned our backpacks and the school as well. They also warned us not to come back to school anymore. My parents took me to Djibasso to stay with an uncle. I wanted to keep going to school, but I had nothing left. When we went to the parish, they helped my parents send me back to school. Thanks to the support from The Missionary Childhood Association, I could continue my education. My parents were overjoyed. I have learned that we should think of those in difficult situations. May God bless all the benefactors and bring peace back to the world.

COULIBALY FÉLICIEN

My name is Drabo Raoul. I am 11 years old and in fifth grade at Stade School in Nouna. Every day, I used to make fun of my classmate Baye Fabrice because he was new in town. I didn't know his family had been forced out



of their village. He felt terrible and stopped playing soccer with us. But one day, while I was teasing him again, Naty Hermélène, another classmate, told me she heard on Radio Kantigiya that we all have the same opportunities and we should be kind to others. From that day on, Baye Fabrice became my best friend at school.

DRABO RAOUL



KENYA

ARCHDIOCESE OF MOMBASA



TESTIMONIES

The Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa is situated in the coastal province of Kenya. It is a metropolitan with Garissa and Malindi dioceses as it covers an area of 38,000sq kilometres with a population of approximately 3.5 million people and majority of Catholic are from upcountry.

The Archdiocese covers four counties that is Taita Taveta, Kwale, Kilifi, and Mombasa, we have 12 deaneries and 61 parishes.

Mission statement of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa is “With our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ our guide and inspiration, we strive to create a just, loving and caring society that recognizes the dignity of the human person from the moment of conception to natural death”. Our motto in Archdiocese is: That all may be one (JN 17:18 -21), which all Christians and our PMC children are practicing as they live their own motto: Children Helping Children.

The PMS office each year have its activity calendar that goes to each deanery of which we have some children who are in arid and semi-arid areas of our Archdiocese and others from very poor and vulnerable families to get two meals is very hard. Our PMC children are in all these deaneries and very active despite the challenges they come across. The animators -assist the parish Priest to reach out where the children are especially those who are from unstable families and in schools. Most of the families who are living in informal settlements are in a very hardcore state and so our PMS office has a feeding and education program because of the children who are suffering and abused. We are grateful to God despite the challenges they are facing they are able to cope up with them. Our Archbishop, Priest and religious men and women who are working in our Archdiocese are very supportive to our PMS office and our national director and



coordinator help us so much.

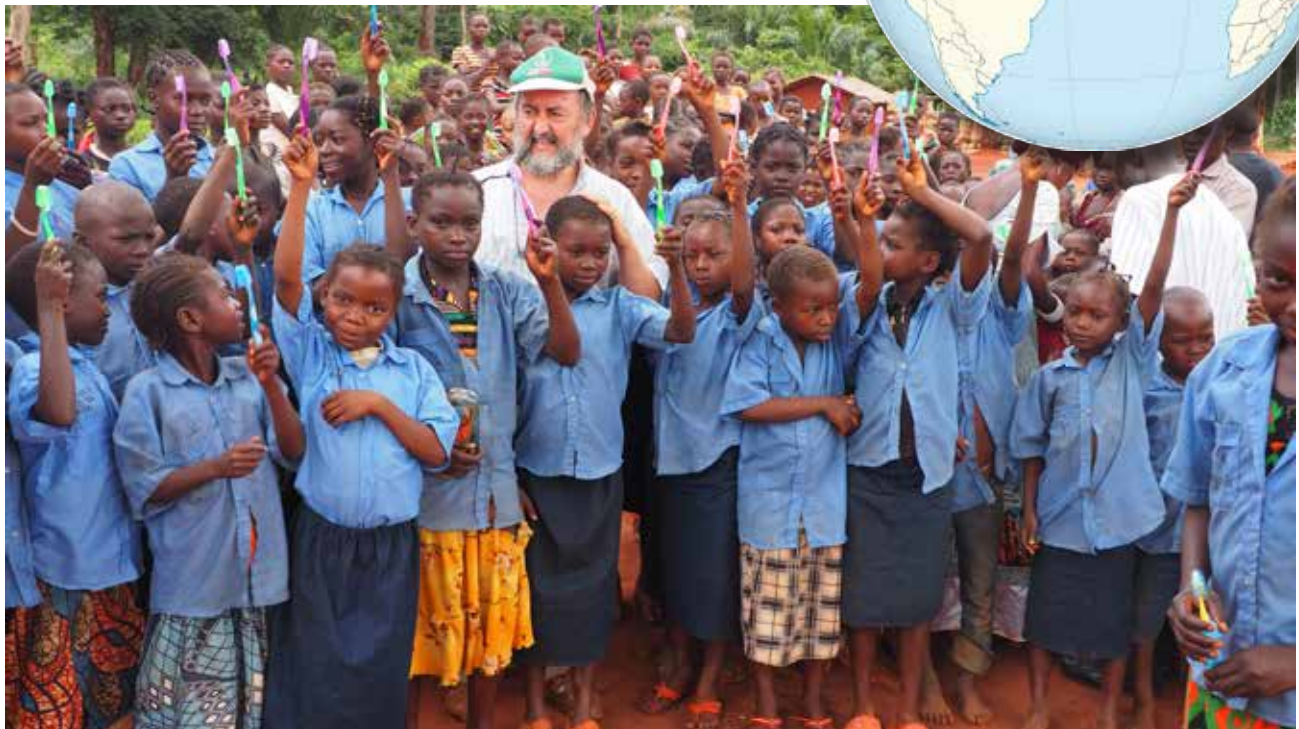
This year is a great year for our children because despite of diversity of our Archdiocese the children celebrated 180 years of foundation of the society by Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson in a very big number from all deaneries and being escorted by their priest and animators. All parishes where these children came from contributed for their feeding and the parents provided for their means of transport and accommodations because some couldn't make to and back.

Msgr. Martin Kivuwa Musonde
Archbishop of Mombasa

KENYA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

DIOCESE OF BANGASSOU



The vast Diocese of Bangassou spans an area of 134,000 square kilometers, almost half the size of Italy. Despite its expanse, the diocese comprises only 13 parishes, served by 29 priests and a few religious men and women. Among the 603,000 residents, approximately 85,000 (14%) are Roman Catholic Christians.

The eastern part of the Diocese is plagued by ruthless mercenaries, who have inflicted immense suffering upon the civilian population and children. These vulnerable individuals live under constant pressure in a war-torn environment. We especially celebrated Missionary Childhood Day, organizing a wonderful program for children and teenagers—Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics. With their parents' approval, they spent three days together at the Catholic mission. These days were filled with tolerance and prayer, uniting more than a thousand children.

Annually, on Epiphany Day, the diocese holds

a collection for the Missionary Childhood Association. We conduct awareness meetings with children, engage in activities, share community prayers, recite the missionary rosary, and embark on pilgrimages to the Grotto of the Madonna, where we pray the rosary.

We emphasized the importance of the Missionary Childhood collection in all parishes, alongside other significant initiatives such as World Mission Sunday and support for our Indigenous clergy.

Msgr. Juan José Aguirre Muñoz
Bishop of Bangassou
Bangassou, 20 February 2024



ST. ANDREW'S PARISH OF BAKOUMA



The situation of the children in Bakouma

Saint Andrew's Parish is located in the sub-prefecture of Bakouma, near the town of Nzacko, an area plagued by high insecurity due to the presence of rebels. Bakouma has been repeatedly attacked by these rebels, causing many villagers to flee their homes, settlements around chapels, and even Nzacko, to the center of Bakouma. Currently, there are more than two displaced persons camps here. Some of our chapels have been closed and looted. These circumstances paint a vivid picture of the children's situation in this area: numerous war orphans, displaced children, some still traumatized and out of school, and others lacking even the most basic necessities for their well-being. We see displaced, orphaned, malnourished, lost, and traumatized children.



Measures and Support Initiatives

The Parish, through the Diocese, has established a primary and a secondary school to support these children. These schools provide an ideal environment for education and human value formation. Children come to school every day in their uniforms and stay until noon.

At the parish level, we have revitalized several groups to engage the children. Twice a week, the members of ACE (Aita Kwe) meet in the afternoon with their leaders. They learn to set up camp, dance,

and read the Word of God. Similarly, altar servers, scouts, and guides have their meeting days to read their statutes, organize weekly apostolates, and participate in charity days.

Catechism classes are held every afternoon, attracting many children who learn about themselves and Jesus, guided by catechists and priests.

In addition, at the beginning and end of the pastoral year, we organize two-day excursions. These outings are moments of bonding and, more importantly, serve as Bible camps. The priest responsible for the children's movement invites all the children from the parish and surrounding settlements to a chapel, where they learn about God and how to live as Christians.

Together with other laypeople, the priests organize games and competitions involving reciting Bible verses and performing biblical stories. The children, individually or by parish, contribute money or goods, which are then pooled together.

Finally, every year, the Epiphany celebrations are led by the children. They prepare the songs and the mass. To achieve this, we organize two days of training and teaching on the "Magi" and the "Prophets." The children recite Bible verses to familiarize themselves with the Word of God. The themes of these meetings include The Role of the Child in the Parish or the Settlement Around the Chapel, and the Child Jesus.



PARISH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BEMA



The Situation of Children in Bema

The Parish of the Holy Spirit in Bema is located near the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This location results in a diverse population that includes both Central Africans and Congolese, which influences the local lifestyle and behavior. The community is home to over 2,000 children, but many do not attend school. Bema also has a large monthly market that attracts traders from various backgrounds.

The town is primarily a fishing community because of its proximity to the river. This situation poses several challenges for the children in Bema. First, children are often split between parents on either side of the river, which disrupts their education. Parents frequently involve their children in fishing from a young age, preventing them from attending school regularly. Second, Bema has become a hub for “revivalist churches” from the Congo. Even baptized children are innocently taken by their parents to these places of worship instead of the parish. Lastly, as a border town, Bema struggles with a crisis of moral and religious values. Children, especially girls, are at risk of sexual predators, while boys are often engaged in trading or fishing from morning until night.



Support and Guidance Measures

In response to these challenges, the Diocese of Bangassou opened a Catholic Associated School (ECAC) in the center of Bema, which now serves over 325 children. Managed by the parish priest, the school provides education and nurturing for the children. Additionally, our Catholic Action movements, including ACE, altar servers, scouts and guides, and dancers, help welcome these children and provide them with spiritual and biblical education, especially during catechism meetings. Twice a week, children come to the church according to their level to learn about the history of salvation from our catechists. The ACE children gather twice a week to sing, read, share the Word of God, and dance. Altar servers also meet weekly to learn more about their roles, sing, and share the Gospel; they are in the parish or chapels daily and learn catechism from the catechists. We also organize retreats and outings for children aged 5 to 12. These two-day excursions to chapels around Bangassou allow them to experience Church life, fostering a sense of faith and community.

We organize these trips and retreats outside the town, in one of our settlements around the chapels, to invite all the children from the parish chapels. These events occur at the start of each important liturgical season, such as Advent, Lent, and especially in the two days leading up to the Epiphany celebration. The themes we explore with the children include: “The Call of Samuel,” “Being Missionary Children,” and “Good Company or Influences.”

These gatherings are always overseen by a layperson and are organized with everyone’s contribution and the help of the Missionary Childhood Association.





PARISH OF CHRIST THE KING IN TOKOYO



The Situation of Children in Tokoyo

The Parish of Christ the King in Tokoyo is located in Bangassou, nestled within a Muslim neighborhood and surrounded by homes. It comprises over 13 chapels. While children in the city center can attend school thanks to public facilities, those in our chapels and villages lack almost everything. The cultural diversity of Tokoyo means many children struggle to receive a proper education. Some are even influenced by delinquent youths to become petty thieves in the neighborhoods or market. In the villages, children work in the fields every day because their parents prefer to use them as laborers. Many of these children lack moral and Christian values.



Support and Guidance Measures

To educate these children, who have strayed morally and educationally, the parish, with support from the Diocese of Bangassou, has built a primary school, which provides quality education and training to numerous Muslim and Christian children. Every day at the parish center, we offer catechism classes for baptism or confirmation. These numerous children are guided daily by two catechists. Additionally, every Saturday they participate in apostolate activities and attend the Basic Ecclesial Community (CEB) on Sundays. Through these activities, we teach the children to be Christians, which means to believe in God within the Church.

Moreover, the ACED movements, altar servers, and Children of Peace meet once a week on Saturday afternoons. The Children of Peace is a group we created to help and oversee young children, aged 3 to 6, who haven't yet attended catechism classes. They learn to make the sign of the cross, common prayers, God's commandments, and especially children's Bible stories. Every year, at Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter, they present biblical verses and songs inspired by the Word of God to the Church.

In the settlements around the chapels, we support village schools by providing educational materials and helping orphans. Catechism is also active and lively in our chapels; lessons are held twice a week, on Saturdays and Sundays. Almost all chapels have the ACE and Children of Peace movements to awaken the children to faith and community life.

At the beginning of each important liturgical season, we organize re-enactments on themes such as "Child, God Loves You" and "The Birth of Jesus."

Each year, before the Epiphany celebration, we gather all the children from the settlements around the chapels, and sometimes even those from other religious denominations, for events like peace marches, conferences on the role of children in the Church, games and competitions, concerts, and dances. These events always conclude with a grand Mass followed by a festive lunch. Over 150 children participate every year.

CATHEDRAL OF ST. PETER CLAVER IN BANGASSOU



The Situation of Children in Bangassou

The Cathedral of St. Peter Claver in Bangassou is located within the city and comprises over 7 chapels. It shares the Christian community of Bangassou with the Parish of Christ the King in Tokoyo. Besides its urban setting, every day we welcome many children who do not attend school, often left or abandoned by their parents. There are numerous cases of single mothers with multiple children. Given the context of NGOs, we also witness many cases of rape and sexual abuse of minors. Similarly, in the villages surrounding the chapels' settlements, many children are not attending school and are reduced to agricultural labor.



Support and Guidance Measures

To address the moral and educational needs of these vulnerable children, the parish operates a kindergarten and elementary school managed by the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Paul of Chartres, along with a high school overseen by the priests. Each weekday, children arrive in uniform to attend morning classes. Additionally, four times a week, children enrolled in catechism courses come to the parish in the afternoon, guided by parish catechists who prepare them for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. We have also revitalized the ACE movements, altar servers, and dancers, who gather once a week. During these meetings, they read the Word of God, share insights, and learn songs and dances, all under the watchful eye of their leaders. Every year, during the Epiphany celebration, the parish organizes gatherings and outings to strengthen the children's faith, culminating in a festive meal for all orphaned children.

In the settlements surrounding the chapels, we support over 35 orphans, some of whom face challenging circumstances.

"MAMA TONGOLO" ORPHANAGE IN BANGASSOU



The Situation of Children

The "Mama Tongolo" orphanage, part of the Diocese of Bangassou, has been a refuge for vulnerable, abandoned, disadvantaged, and sometimes stigmatized children, whose parents were suspected of practicing witchcraft. There are orphans as young as seven months old (premature newborns) whose mothers died during childbirth, others aged one to three years, and older children ranging from three to eleven years, all victims of war. These children come from various backgrounds, many of them orphaned or displaced. Some have suffered due to rebel activities, while others were born to mothers facing mental health challenges. Besides the children residing at the Center, there are orphans placed in foster families, sometimes sent from distant locations when families realize they cannot provide adequate care.



Support and Guidance Measures

The "Mama Tongolo" center provides essential care, including shelter, food, clothing, and nurturing. Managed by three caregivers and a supervisor, under the guidance of Sister Yolande from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, the center ensures daily routines that cater to the children's educational and personal development needs.

School-age children attend kindergarten, elementary, or middle school classes. In the afternoons, they engage in domestic and culinary activities, learning skills such as palm oil, jam and soap production. They gather firewood for cooking, and in the evenings, three times a week, they gather for communal rosary recitations and spiritual study sessions. Every year, those who have not yet been baptized attend catechism classes at the Bangassou Cathedral and prepare to receive the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. They participate in all major diocesan events, including the diocesan pilgrimage and ordinations, to revive their faith and feel part of God's family. In October, they recite a daily missionary rosary to raise awareness about the hardships faced by others. During Christmas celebrations, they prepare meals and extend invitations to marginalized elders and prisoners, creating a compassionate and inclusive atmosphere.

As part of their community life, older siblings take on roles of responsibility, caring for younger ones. Finally, the orphanage provides vocational training; girls aged ten to twelve learn sewing, while boys are taught soap and palm oil production, aiming to make them responsible. Currently, the "Mama Tongolo" orphanage accommodates 35 orphans and provides care for over 250 children who have lost either a father or a mother. These children are placed in foster families.



ST. BERNARD'S PARISH IN GAMBO



The Situation of Children in Gambo

The Parish of St. Bernard in Gambo is situated within the municipality of Gambo and comprises several settlements around its chapels. One of the newest settlements, Pomboio, lies in a rebel-controlled area bordering the Diocese of Alindao. The proximity to this conflict zone has profoundly affected the children in these areas. Many have been displaced or orphaned, and there are prevalent issues of malnutrition and illiteracy. Families fleeing the war have lost everything—homes, fields and crops, beds and basic essentials. Some children lack birth certificates and have uncertain birth details. Daily life sees them either at home or toiling as laborers in the fields.



Support and Guidance Measures

Moved by the plight of these children, we have launched a pastoral program focused on revitalizing parish children's movements and supporting existing chapels. We've also refurbished our nursery and elementary schools. Our aim is to facilitate access to education for displaced families, ensuring children attend school regularly, learn, and experience a safe environment free from violence.

At the parish level, we conduct catechism meetings daily at various levels for baptism and confirmation, led by dedicated catechists. Once a week, children participate in activities within their groups—ACE (Action Catholic Education), altar servers, and dancers, while others have time to play together. These sessions include prayer, sharing of Gospel teachings, and spiritual formation.

Additionally, every quarter, we organize camps or outings to bring together children from three settlements/chapels and spend time with them, explaining the meaning of missionary faith and how to be missionaries. During these moments, we explore themes such as "God and His suffering," "Jesus and the children," and "The importance of children in the Church's mission." In addition, children animate the feast of Epiphany and the Day of the African Child every year. On Epiphany Day they recite Bible verses, while on the Day of the African Child, they walk around the town to raise awareness of children's rights.



ST. GEORGE PARISH OF OUANGO



The Situation of Children in Ouango

The Parish of St. George in Ouango is situated in the city of Ouango, which, much like Bema, lies on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Being a border town, Ouango shares similar challenges and existential uncertainties. It's a densely populated sub-prefecture with many families having multiple children, struggling to provide them with the basic necessities for their natural development. As a result, many children are not enrolled in school, and some are left to fend for themselves, spending their days at home or engaged in activities like fishing. In rural villages around the chapels, educational opportunities are scarce due to limited resources and lack of public infrastructure.



Support and Guidance Measures

To support these children, the Parish of Ouango, with assistance from the Diocese, has established a primary school

with minimal fees, enabling many children to access quality education. The parish actively addresses the financial challenges parents face in educating their children. Each day, many enrolled children attend morning classes at the school.

At the parish center, catechism classes are held four times a week to prepare children for Baptism or Confirmation. The catechism sessions are led by dedicated catechists and lay volunteers.

Additionally, the ACE (Action Catholic Education) and Altar Servers movements meet once a week on Saturday afternoons. During these sessions, they read the Word of God, share Gospel teachings, and learn values such as respect, obedience, and service under the guidance of their leaders. They sometimes organize outings or biblical training camps outside the city, helping them fulfill their mission as disciples of Christ. These activities, which include participation from a priest and movement leaders, focus on themes such as "God is love," "The story of young Samuel," "Jesus and children," and "The importance of children in the church." These events also serve as moments of reflection.

To ensure we continue to educate the children in our settlements and chapels, we emphasize catechism teaching in all chapels. Catechists engage with catechumens two or three times a week and organize apostolic activities among the elderly.

Every year on Epiphany Day, we organize missionary events ranging from Bible verse recitation competitions to sessions promoting missionary faith. The day concludes with a festive meal honoring all children on the margins of society.





PARISH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST IN ZEMIO



The Situation of Children in Zemio

The Parish of St. John the Baptist in Zemio, one of our eastern parishes, is located in Zemio, besieged by armed groups for several years. Zemio is also close to Mboki, a city that has seen violent clashes among armed militias, making it a highly insecure area due to rebel presence. Despite these challenges, Zemio has provided refuge to many families with young children fleeing from destroyed villages, particularly those escaping from Mboki. Some of these displaced families find shelter within the parish. Additionally, five years ago, some residents of Zemio relocated to the village of Zapai in Congo, where they still reside, and their children cross the river daily to attend school. Therefore, we encounter cases of displaced children, traumatized children, and even victims of war, child soldiers, and abused children. Moreover, due to the distance from Bangui, the deteriorating state of roads, and the insecurity in the area, cases of malnutrition are still prevalent.



Support and Guidance Measures

To assist these children, the Parish, supported by the Diocese, has established both a primary and a secondary school. These institutions provide children with an ideal environment for education, learning, and moral development. From Monday to Friday, children arrive at school in their uniforms and stay until noon, including those who come from across the Congo.

At the parish level, we have revitalized various movements to engage children. Twice a week, members of ACE (Aita Kwe) meet in the afternoon, along with their leaders. They learn practical skills such as setting up camps, traditional dances, and study sessions focused on the Word of God. Similarly, altar servers, scouts, and guides have designated meeting days to study their roles, organize weekly apostolic activities, and participate in charitable events. Every afternoon, catechism classes are held, where children learn about themselves and come to know Jesus, guided by dedicated catechists and priests.

In all our settlements and chapels, we provide catechetical instruction to prepare these children well for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Catechesis sessions are conducted twice a week, and apostolic activities are organized once a month. Some settlements and chapels also host children's movements such as ACE and altar servers, encouraging the children to serve God actively in the Church.

Considering the area's insecurity, we organize outings near the city twice a year. In late September and June, we spend time with the youth to educate them on good companionship and moral values. Additionally, we invite local elders to speak to the children about virtuous living.

Lastly, during Epiphany and African Children's Day, the children gather to prepare games and competitions to celebrate these occasions.



MALI

ARCHDIOCESE OF BAMAKO



The situation of children in the Archdiocese of Bamako is quite diverse. Ecclesiastically, they are organized into Catholic action movements such as the Friends of Kizito, the Samuel groups, and the altar servers. On a family level, many children face challenges in practicing their faith due to various factors:

- Parents residing in other cities for work-related reasons.
- Mali is a predominantly Muslim country, making it more likely for children to interact with Muslim peers who might try to distance them from their faith, rather than with fellow Christian children.
- Many Christian children live in refugee camps due to the ongoing war and instability in the central and northern regions of the country.

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD DAY

In the Diocese, Missionary Childhood Day is celebrated on the day of Epiphany. Each parish organizes its celebration. On that day, children actively participate in the Holy Mass, portraying the Three Wise Men, collecting offerings for the mission, and organizing games and fairs.

Each year, a diocesan festival is held during

the holidays for all children in the Diocese. It provides a space for the children for human, cultural, religious, and catechetical education. An entire week each year is dedicated to the Missionary Childhood celebration. During this week, the children come together to pray the rosary.

Training sessions are organized for the accompanying groups within the Friends of Kizito movement, the Samuel groups, and the groups of altar boys in the Archdiocese of Bamako. The aim is to coordinate and standardize the Missionary Childhood activities at the parish level.

His Eminence Cardinal Jean Zerbo
Archbishop of Bamako





TESTIMONY

I come from a Muslim family. All my brothers and sisters attended a Catholic school. Following my mother's advice and my father's consent, all their children have always been involved in this educational movement called Kizito's Friends. In our neighborhood, situated in a popular area of Bamako, everyone appreciates the children's behavior in our family. This fills us with pride, for ourselves and our parents, who encourage us.

As for me, I am delighted to have participated in this peace-oriented training, which will enhance my abilities, shaping me into a well-formed individual ready to contribute to a more beautiful world. I would like to express my gratitude to all the generous donors and all of you who made it possible to provide this grant. Thanks to it, we were able to benefit from this organized training here in Bamako. May God bless you all.



Siratigui Doumbia
Kizito's friends



KIZITO'S FRIENDS - BAMAKO

VENEZUELA

Hello, dear missionary friends! My name is Leonardo Alfonso Menco Castillo. I am 10 years old and belong to the San Eugenio y María Inmaculada Parish in the Diocese of Machiques. I've been a member of the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) since I was 4. I've learned so much about God, and received both my green scarf and now my yellow scarf. I'm eagerly looking forward to becoming a great sentinel. I've also learned to spread the Good News. Sharing Jesus' message with fellow children and adults has been a life-changing experience for me. It's a privilege to be part of this global family, always connected with other young souls who share the same mission.

Leonardo Alfonso
Menco Castillo

LEONARDO



Hello, fellow Missionaries! My name is Victoria Gómez, and I just turned 14. I am from the Diocese of Margarita, María Auxiliadora Parish, where I have been active since I was 10. I belong to the MCA group Santa Teresita del Niño Jesús in Espinal. Our community experience is amazing—we play, pray, and share among friends. We remember children and adolescents in need and pray for missionaries worldwide. I attend religious gatherings and activities in my parish. Sundays are special because I go to Mass, following the path of faith. My goal within MCA is to follow Jesus and make new friends for Him!

Victoria
Gómez



VICTORIA

Hello to all the missionaries around the world! My name is Yenmary Sánchez. I am 9 years old and a proud member of the Missionary Childhood Association at San Eugenio Parish in the Diocese of Machiques de Perijá, located in the state of Zulia. Being part of the MCA is a wonderful experience. Here, we receive education, play games, sing, engage in activities, and participate in prayer vigils. All of these activities bring us closer to our dear friend Jesus. I also serve at the altar and feel a deep commitment to sharing Jesus' love wherever I go: at home, with my schoolmates, and within my parish. I pray that Jesus, who loves and supports us, will strengthen my commitment as a missionary, allowing me to spread His love far and wide.

Yenmary Sánchez

YENMARY





BURKINA FASO

MADELEINE

My name is Madeleine Dah Ikpegniné and I am from Kpéré. This year I learned a lot in the CV/AV movement and in serving during mass, here, in Batié. Thanks to our chaplain, my friends and I attended training sessions on evangelical values and the missionary commitment of children in the Church. Thanks to the teachings I received, I understood that, as a Christian child, I must be a witness to the evangelical values of Jesus Christ to my brothers and sisters. Once we return to Kpéré, we will see how we can pass on what we have learned to others.

Madeleine Dah Ikpegniné



MATTHIEU

As diocesan president of Missionary Childhood, I accompany children in their integral development. We organize spiritual activities with them, such as collections, Lenten marches, intellectual and recreational activities, etc. We thank God for allowing us to contribute to their growth.

Matthieu Zango
Diocesan President of the Ouahigouya Children's Association



BOLIVIA

EVER

What motivates me to be a missionary is my faith in God and the desire to help my friends and family believe as well. The missionary experience was incredible; I cherished the communication with all the parishes. I enjoyed everything we did and gained valuable insights into what it means to journey together as missionaries



Ever Gutiérrez Oquendo
16 years old
Parish of San Martín de Tours
Diocese of Potosí

LUANNA

Being a missionary girl is a beautiful experience because it helps me grow spiritually and know God better. We pray together, love God above all things, and express our love by sharing food with those in need. I tell children around the world not to let the fire of the Lord go out and to become great missionaries.



Luanna Larissa Vaca Moirenda
7 years old
Parish of San Francisco de Asís
Apostolic Vicariate of
Ñuflo de Chávez



JOSÉ



For me, synodality means walking together, and within the MCA, that's exactly what we do. We walk side by side, in communion with the whole Church. We learn about God's Word and the Magisterium of the Church, and we pray not only for the children but also for all missionaries, the entire Church, and the whole world. We share the good news with our friends, classmates, family, and neighbors. God loves us and teaches us to live as brothers and sisters, sharing our joys, which is why we celebrate. Walking together makes us a big, strong family. Synodality means walking together!

José Wayar Oliver Quispe
11 years old
Parish of Immaculate Conception
of Apolo
Diocese of Coroico



"Burning hearts..." signifies our bravery—we fearlessly proclaim the Lord. Yet when the fire within us wanes, we hesitate to share His message, gradually drifting away. "Feet on the move" urges us to step out, not remain seated. We venture forth with the Lord as our companion, each day growing a little more like Him.

Nataly Calderón Condori
10 years old
Parish of San
Andrés
Poroma
Archdiocese of
Sucre



NATALY



SAÚL

"Burning hearts, feet on the move" embodies the inner strength to proclaim that Jesus is alive among us. It is the joy, enthusiasm, and courage that propel us to step out and announce Jesus to the world. I am happy to be part of MCA, where children evangelize other children. Together, we infuse the Mass with praise songs and prayers. I am called to invite more children to join this beautiful mission because we can be missionaries at home by behaving well and at school by being good classmates, sharing, and supporting one another.

Saúl Coca Paniagua
12 years old
Parish of Purísima-Tarairi
Apostolic Vicariate of Camiri

THE PHILIPPINES



Good day everyone!

I am Ivan Pabilic, 9 years old, a grade 3 student, and a member of the Holy Childhood Association for almost a year. I am one of the Sagip Moral (Values Formation) beneficiaries in our barangay (district). Regular session is conducted every Saturday. I am very excited about learning good values and having a genuine relationship with God by praying the rosary every day. Then later I became a scholar of the parish where I actively participated in various activities like attending Saturday rosary session, values formation, attending Sunday Mass, and being a member of the children care group in which we are trained to be a junior catechist someday. These activities that I have attended has developed me as a person, and strengthened my faith in God. I know that he is always with.

Through these activities, I have a group of friends to whom I can share myself. We inspire other children in the community to serve and pray for other children. The motto of the Holy Childhood Association has a big impact not just on me but on all children in our parish: as children we can help other children who are the victims of calamity, war and abuse by praying for them. As young servant leaders we share our talents and time in the parish. In fact, after my first communion I want to be a member of the ministry of Altar Service and someday to be a priest. The program does not just help me as a person but also my family. We are involved in parish activities through volunteer work, by attending various activities and in getting closer to God. I am very grateful for the opportunity you have given to me to be part of the program. Thank you so much.



Ivan Rain Pabilic, 9 years old, grade 3



ZAFRIANA

THE VALUE OF SHARING



I am Zafriana Lorin T. Naperi. I am 8 years old. A grade 2 pupil of Guardian Angel Learning Center of Pasig. I am also a member of the Pontifical Mission Society (Holy Childhood) since I was in Nursery Level of the School Year 2018-2019.

The advocacy of "Children Helping Children" inspires me a lot and I get so excited to help other kids/people, like sharing my toys, food etc. just like my parents did in our community in "De Castro." Being generous and kind are few of the values I learned from my parents and in our school. I am happy to help because GOD has been generous to us. As my mother said God is our provider. God has been generous to us and the little things I do every day makes me feel blessed and lack in nothing. Our school allows us to experience what it is to help other children, especially the less fortunate. We call it school outreach. One time we went to a slum area together with our teachers, and some of the parents of our schoolmates. My mother was also with me. Some senior high school students of another school were with us, too. It was a great experience to talk to other children, and play with them. Some of the children didn't have slippers, others had very dirty clothes and others didn't go to school. I felt sorry for them and I was moved to help them. We tried to make them happy by giving them what we brought with us: clothes, toys and food. I felt very happy and fulfilled. This is the feeling of what it means to be of help to others. I always look forward to the same experience.

The Holy Childhood Association has helped me realize that by working together with our community we can be instruments of change. We can affect the lives of others in our small gestures of goodness and generosity. My actions can have a meaningful impact on others also. My family and I are thankful to Pontifical Mission Society (Holy Childhood) for helping us through our school, the Guardian Angel Learning Center of Pasig. We, the pupils of GALC, appreciate the sense of solidarity that you are allowing us to experience, giving us a positive attitude, hope and the willingness to help others.

God bless you and more power!!!

Zafriana Lorin T. Naperi
8 years old
grade 2
Guardian Angel Learning Center (GALC)
Pasig

HONDURAS

MAECY



My name is Maecy Gisselle Flores Ramos, and I am 9

years old. I joined The Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) in 2023 at the San Juan Bosco Institute in Siguatepeque, Honduras, in the Diocese of Comayagua. My experience was wonderful; what I enjoyed the most was praying and contributing to help those in need.

I also liked learning about how The Missionary Childhood Association was founded. I especially loved participating in the Mass. I enjoyed being a part of Missionary Childhood for many reasons: we laughed a lot, visited different classrooms to encourage everyone to help others in different countries and people in need, and taught others about the founding of the Missionary Childhood Association. Every day, we said a Hail Mary to help those facing tough times.

Blessings and missionary greetings.



Maecy Gisselle Flores Ramos
Diocese of Comayagua

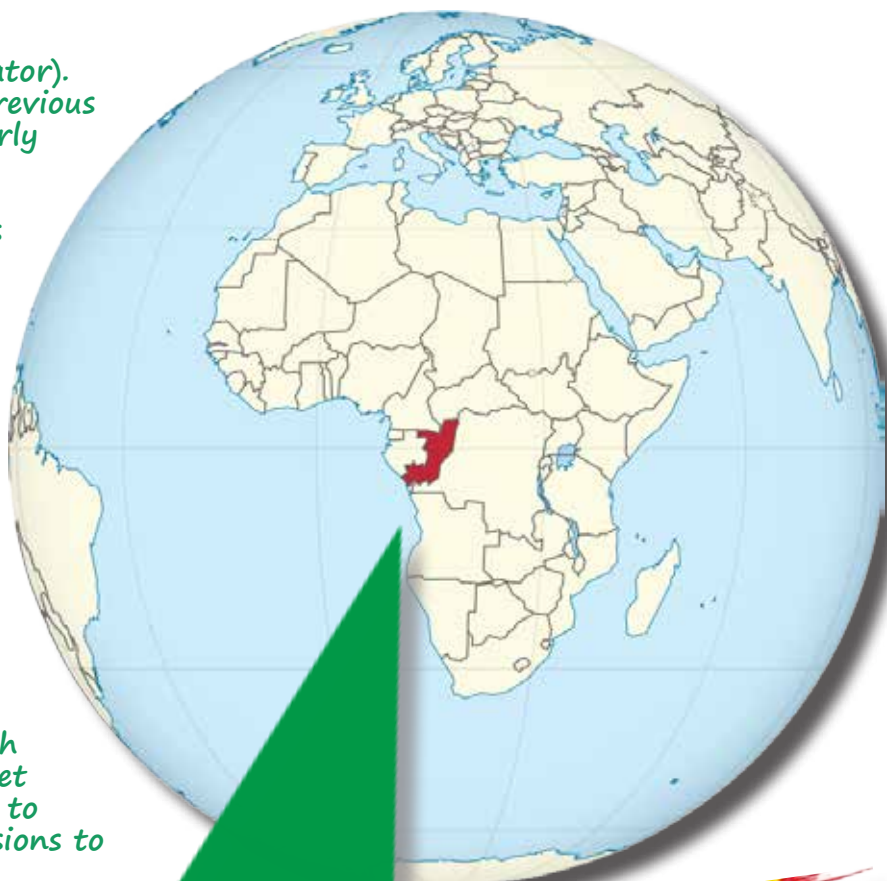




REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

I am yayayamboté (animator). This year, compared to previous years, we had a particularly special experience. This Sunday in which the diocesan Caritas organizes a meal for the poor, we celebrate the Epiphany, which for us is a great celebration at the youth level. This celebration coincided with the organization of World Day of the Holy Childhood. We are even more honored given the presence among us of our National Secretary of the Pontifical Mission Societies and Missionary Childhood. The others were not fortunate enough to see and listen to him: let us pray to the Good Lord to give us other similar occasions to strengthen our faith.

*Joelle Mambeket
18 years old*



BENIN

AKPO



My name is Akpo Léwè Mireille and I am 9 years old. I am a girl from Challa-Ogoi and I belong to the scout group, Kilibo district (Ouessé Municipality). My group is the 'lupetti' (little wolves, scouts under 12 years old). The term scouting, derives from an English word meaning 'explorer', was founded by Baden-Powell on July 29, 1907.

Attracted by the definition 'serve, believe, obey, work', I joined the group. What I like about Scouting, beyond its definition, is the kindness of the 'elders' towards the young children, whom they accompany. At the same time, if you want to stay and grow with them, you have to respect them. Scouts do not steal, during camps they take care of the younger children and the Cub Scouts. In Scouting you have to set an example and be serious everywhere and in everyday life - they know how to survive on very little during their outings and camps...But Scouting also lives in a reality called BCME (Bureau de Coordination des Mouvements d'Enfants - Coordination Bureau of Children's Movements) and is, therefore, a member of the big family of the Missionary Childhood in my parish of St Therese of the Child Jesus in Kokoro. Thanks to the dynamism of our parish priest, the Reverend Father Cyriaque Okoumassoun (Diocesan Director of the PMS), Missionary Childhood is well known and we participate in meetings on the occasion of pilgrimages or diocesan formation days, organized for us.

Of all the children in the world, always friends!

Akpo Léwè Mireille



WINNER



My name is Winner Hounmenou, an altar boy at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Porto Novo. I attend the third year at Béhanzin High School and joined the Samuel community on October 27, 2021.

I have worked hard for this group, given the love I have for the Lord and the behaviour of my leaders and 'elders'. By attending theoretical and practical formation meetings, I have learnt the rules of the group and the right way to serve at the altar. I really enjoy the weekly and Sunday services, because for me serving a priest means serving God. I pray God that he fills me with his blessings. With my determination in this group, I got to know the Pontifical Mission Societies. Thanks to my dear leader, Brother Didier G. Kodjo, I participate in the monthly activities of all the children's movements in the parish.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Father Cosme Adjomale, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, and to Sister Micheline Françoise Towanou, National Secretary of Missionary Childhood, who regularly accompany us during the different activities and, above all, during the diocesan sessions of the Samuel community that took place and the monthly missionary catechesis meetings. Thanks to them I know the four Missionary Societies better. Thanks to all my leaders, who have made me love serving at the altar, to my parents, who support me, and to all those who accompany me in different ways. I invite children and all the faithful in Benin not to hesitate and to commit themselves to the Pontifical Societies.

May the Lord keep me faithful to my commitment.

Altar boy: attends - listens - be available!

Of all the children of the world, always friends! Long live the mission!

Winner Hounmenou
(in the centre, with the cross)



PANAMA

ALIS

The National Meeting was a truly beautiful experience and a time of spiritual growth. Each topic, activity, and game brought me joy, but what touched me the most was seeing parents invested in guiding their children along the Lord's path and supporting them as missionary families. They always stand by their children, both young and old, in their journey within the Church."

Alis Gil
Coordinator of the
Archdiocese of Panama
San Antonio of Padua Parish



SOFÍA

The Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) is a Church service that teaches children to love God, have faith, and share with other children.

Sofía Cruz
"Green Wheat"
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish





LUCÍA



Since I started, I've enjoyed sharing with other children. Being part of the Missionary Childhood Association has helped me grow spiritually and strengthened my family bonds. I love the gatherings, the mass, the walks, the topics, and the games.

Lucía Del Pilar Aguilar
"Advanced Mature Wheat"
Diocese of Colón Kuna Yala



The children of the Missionary Childhood Association pray for you, me, and all the children of the world.



Adriel Aguilar
"Green Wheat"
Changuinola
Bocas del Toro

ADRIEL

ECUADOR



My name is Samuel Antonio Chichay. I'm 13 years old and in ninth grade. I've been attending the Missionary Childhood Association in my community, San Vicente Ferrer in the Parish of San Isidro Labrador since I was 5. My mom's active engagement in the Missionary Childhood Association has allowed me to participate in activities such as

the Missionary Childhood celebration, visiting the sick in our community, and collecting donations to help other children. I've already had my First Communion and am currently in the second stage of Confirmation. Now, I also accompany my mom to assist with the children, guiding them through activities and playing with them.

Samuel Antonio Chichay
13 years old
IAM Sucumbíos



ROMANIA

AMALIA

My experience at the “Pontifical Missionary Childhood” is particularly beautiful because I always learn something new about the life of Jesus, I learn how to behave with others, to be better and to share what I have with other children. God wanted me to become a child missionary, to tell other children about the miracles that Jesus did and invite them to follow his path. For me, being a missionary child means being better, helping the poor, being more forgiving, not repaying evil with evil, praying every day, doing good deeds, helping those who need help and encouraging those who feel discouraged

Amalia Puscasu (Gheraesti - NT)

Since the end of seventh grade I have heard about Missionary Childhood (known as CMP in Romania). I really wanted to join this wonderful “family” because I wanted to make new friends, live and share my faith in a different way. One Sunday evening, after Mass, I met Father Eugen by chance. He proposed that I join this reality and I accepted immediately, without any fear. I knew that together with the missionary teenagers we would have the opportunity to exchange experiences, opinions and live the faith in a special way.

In August 2022, during the CMP meeting held in Odorheiu Secuiesc, I made my accession, which I consider a special blessing for me. Since then, I have lovingly participated in all the zoom meetings with missionary teenagers from all over the country.

We spend wonderful times together talking and discussing the Gospel, which helps me understand and improve my faith values. Thanks to CMP, I learned to be more understanding with the people around me, to listen to them when they need someone to talk to, and together to make them understand



MARCOS

that to every problem there is a solution, and that is God. Being a missionary child is one of the most beautiful calls that God gives to children. Through this call, the missionary child spreads the faith and the word of God, regardless of ethnicity, race or gender. God's love has no borders or limits, and at the same time it unites, helps and leads on the right path. The spread of the Gospel is the main purpose of missions: ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!’ The missionary child must not do something difficult or unusual, but must live the mission, because the proclamation of Christ is particularly linked to the example in everyday life. In addition to prayer meetings and other unique experiences, fairs are organized with handmade objects made by missionary children, and the money collected from these sales is donated to the Holy Father for missionary projects for children. Being a missionary boy means so much to me! Here I learnt to listen, to find a solution and, last but not least, to help. Love for your neighbour and help given at the right time, I believe, make you a ‘man’. Many





DARIA



Hi! My name is Daria, I am 17 years old and I am from Târgu Ocna, a small town in the Bacău district. I became a member of the Pontifical Missionary Childhood on December 19, 2020 together with other children of the parish to which I belong. The person who pushed me to be part of this family (because I am sure that for all its members Missionary Childhood is not an association or a simple group, but a real family) was Father Eugen Blaj. We were friends on Facebook and I often saw his posts about people in mission countries. This has always sensitized me and reawakened in me the desire to help those children who do not yet know Jesus. One day I saw a post with an announcement related to Missionary Childhood, I went in to read more details, and from that whole description, the exhortation 'Children help children!' stuck in my mind and soul. Then I convinced myself that I wanted to be part of it and I convinced other children in the parish as well. I spoke with Father Eugen who was very enthusiastic, and together with Father Ștefan, who prepared us in advance, and Matilda, they came to Târgu Ocna to offer us this wonderful opportunity. I admit that at first I did not really know what Missionary Childhood meant, I thought one could only be a missionary by going to mission countries, but this became clear thanks to the meetings and above all the missionary activities. Due to the pandemic, the safest and easiest way to meet was on Zoom, which then became a nice means of communication that brought us together and helped us meet every week. As a teenager, I can say that I never have enough time to do everything I set out to do, but there is always time to go on Zoom and do other activities. I think this is one of the most important things I have learned thanks to this family: time management. Wednesday is the day we pray the rosary or the Way of the Cross together, depending on the liturgical season we are in. It is so nice to see the excitement of the little ones when introducing a station or sing a song. It lasts no more than 40 minutes and is a moment full of beautiful feelings that end a hectic day. In addition to this Wednesday meeting, each branch of Missionary Childhood also meets on another day of the week for missionary formation. Something can be learned from each child and adolescent, and this shows even more the unity of this family. I fondly remember the many activities I did during these two years, especially my first 'mission' as a missionary teenager when I helped a poor family. It was wonderful to talk about what I felt on Zoom and above all to listen to the testimonies of others who were like grains of wheat planted in my heart, but also in my mind. The campuses organized have done nothing but 'give life' to these seeds. I can confidently say that they were some of the best experiences of my life. To see how the words of others help you grow, but more importantly to see others grow through your words and actions is divine. My dream is to become a doctor and go on a mission to help children, but until then I will be a missionary here, in my family, in my group of friends, at school, because this is the essence: to be missionaries every day of our lives, witnessing Jesus to those who already know him, but do not include him in their lives. This is my warm invitation to be part of the missionary family.

Daria Brânza, parish "The Transfiguration of Jesus" of Tg. Ocna (BC)

times, perhaps when we want to talk about the gospel with other children, we are laughed at, but here in CMP we are like family. We can express ourselves, we can discuss and deepen our knowledge of the faith. I am very happy to be part of CMP because it has helped me a lot in my growth as a person and as a believer.

Marcos Peterca, parish of St Theresa of the Child Jesus', Tețcani (NT)

INDIA

NISCITHA

It was such a great pleasure to be part of the offline gathering organized by Holy Childhood Association. With the stress and tensions of the academic year, it was a great opportunity to encounter the power of the Most High. Had a chance to hear the word of God and realized how powerfully it is working in our lives. In a special way, I am enriched with a strong notion about the dignity of life and how precious we are in the sight of the Almighty. Got to have deep fellowship among ourselves and share our own experiences with the Lord. Icebreakers and Group dynamics united us to know others more and have a fun filled day. It energized us and brought our true selves out. It was truly enlightening moments to spend time in His Holy Presence.



KARE

I experienced great happiness of being together and the activities conducted taught me more about teamwork, patience and effort. We were treated with amazing hospitality, which included flavourful food, which all of us surely enjoyed. This event helped me socialize and mingle with all the children present there. I conducted the praise and worship and used my talents to glorify Gods name, I became aware of the mighty presence of god, I understood that the more I used my talents to glorify God. He would enrich me to touch the lives of other people. I genuinely thank god for having given us this opportunity and for all those who helped in the success of this event. Thanks to Holy Childhood for planning, this kids Connect.



KEITH



I too was a part of the events conducted by MCA and experienced God's mighty blessings. The various programmes that enlightened me were the icebreakers, action songs, talks and the Eucharistic adoration. In the presence of God, we had a lot of time to pray to Him. All of us actively took part and gave our best in order to make this event a grand success.

We had a lot of fun and interesting games for which prizes were given to the winners, we also had an amazing quiz that was prepared by one of the members which indeed increased our knowledge about the Bible. The presence of various soldiers of God among us made our day very special. I am thankful to God for the time he gave us to spend our quality time with many people and to share our life with. I thank everyone for this opportunity to explore new ways of learning and growing.



KEERTHI & MOM

Praise the Lord everyone.

Our family take immense pleasure and feel great blessing to be the member of Holy Childhood and Come to me Children's prayer Group. This gives us opportunity to attend various offline retreat, gatherings and other programmes; so also helped our family to grow more spiritually and face all our problems with hope & trust on Lord Jesus. Keerthi and I felt very happy to be part of the offline programme that was conducted on 3/3/2024 by Holy Childhood Association. Every session and activities was very interesting, meaningful and purposeful. During this meeting, the testimonies of some participants also inspired me to trust God in all times, surrender to God, and lead our lives according to the word and plan of God.

MALI

CHRISTIAN

I am very happy with this training camp that took place in Pèl. Through it I learnt about the love of living as a brother in the Church and in society. Children helping children, which is our motto, helps us more in our daily lives.

I am going back to my family amazed by everything I have learnt, and I am going to share it with my parents and my little sister. From now on, I promise not to miss any more Masses or the daily activities of the "Friends of Kizito", because I am the future of the Church and of tomorrow's society. This camp has been great, I have made new friends, and I have prayed and played. I would like to say thank you to those who helped us finance it. May God bless you all!

Christian Ferdinand DAKOUO
10 years old



My name is Jeanne Somboro, I am 9 years old and I am in 4th year. I thank God and my parents for taking part in this training camp in Pèl. I learnt that Jesus is my friend and my brother and that I can confide in him. I learnt to pray the creed. I also learnt to sing and play with others. I am very happy. Next year, I will be coming with my big brother and my other friends. I would like to thank the sisters, the priests, the chaplains and the Society of Holy Childhood for their material support. Thank you to everyone.

Jeanne
SOMBORO
9 years old



JEANNE



Dear children,

God has loved us from all eternity. He looks upon us with the eyes of a loving father and a gentle mother. He never forgets us and every day he accompanies us and renews us with his Spirit.

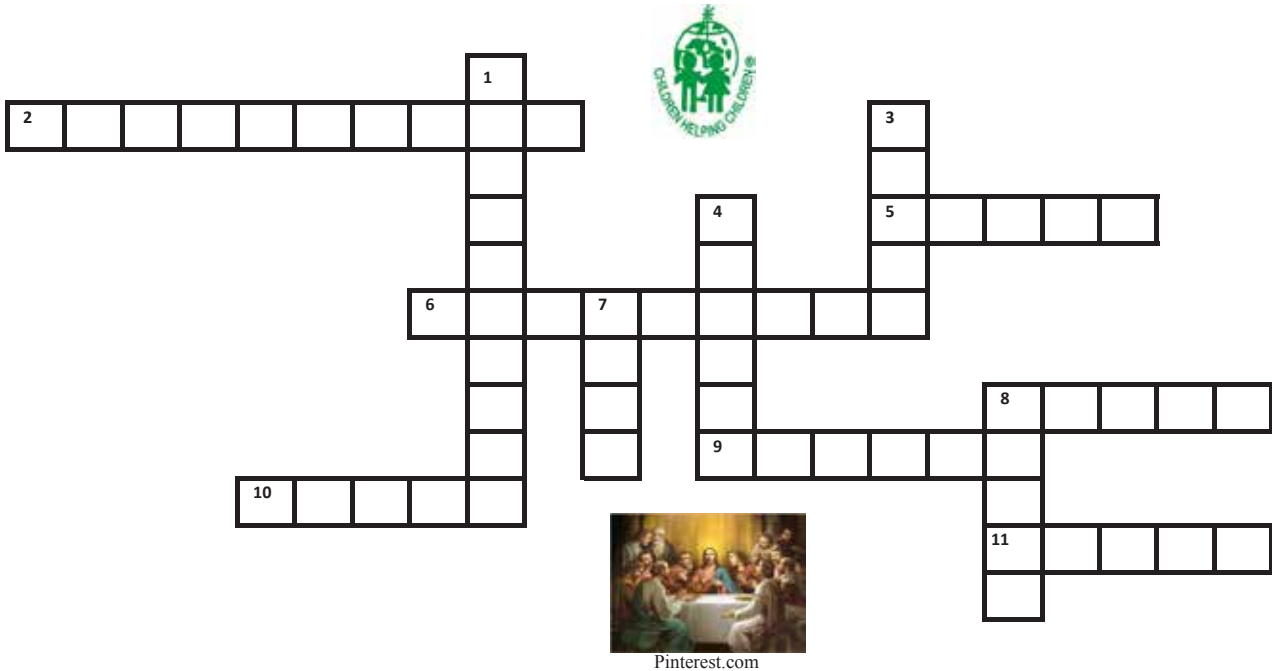
Together with the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, let us pray in these words:

*Come, Holy Spirit,
show us your beauty,
reflected in the faces
of children all over the world.*

*Come, Jesus,
you who make all things new,
who are the way that leads us to the Father,
come and remain with us always.*

Amen.

from the Message of Pope Francis for the First World Children's Day 2024



ACROSS

- 2 The day Jesus died.
- 5 On Easter Sunday, the two Mary's found the tomb_____.
- 6 The Sacrament started during the Last Supper.
- 8 Jesus was forced to wear a _____ of thorns.
- 9 The day we celebrate the resurrection is called_____.
- 10 There are _____ days in lent.
- 11 This was put in front of the tomb so that no one could take Jesus' body.

DOWN

- 1 The Sunday before Easter.
- 3 When Jesus went to pray his disciples _____.
- 4 The Liturgical colour for Lent is_____.
- 7 The last supper was on _____ Thursday.
- 8 Jesus was crucified on the _____.

ACROSS

- EASTER
FORTY
GOODFRIDAY
CROWN
EMPTY
STONE
EUCCHARIST

DOWN

- PURPLE
SLEPT
PALMSUNDAY
CROSS
HOLY



PONTIFICIUM OPUS A SANCTA INFANTIA
SECRETARIATUS INTERNATIONALIS