

Vol 44, No. 1

January – February 2021

PROCLAIM

A magazine for Missionary Animation

HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY

14th February 2021

be my
witnesses Acts 1:8

Blessed Carlo Acutis

Pontifical Mission Organizations
No. 18, 3rd Cross, Ulsoor Road, Bangalore - 560042, Karnataka, INDIA.
Tel: +91-80 3558 9246 Email: pmorgindia@gmail.com Website: www.pmoindia.org App: Pontifical Mission India (Android/iOS)

***Celebrating the faith &
witness of our children***

“Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation” Mark 16:15



It became the most
glorious night,
although it was silent.

Pontifical Mission Organizations

wishes you
a Joyful

Christmas

&

a Prosperous

New Year



Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Christ's birth is an epoch-making event, which could not be silenced. The resounding resonance of Christmas invites us to "un-silence" the silence of the night Jesus was born. The birth of Jesus is the ultimate proclamation or witness of the boundless love of God the Father.

It becomes the duty then, for each of us to proclaim what we have seen and experienced and thus become witnesses to His eternal love, from wherever we are.

As I joyfully greet you this grace-filled Christmas, I express my sincere gratitude for your active efforts, collaboration and guidance for our missionary efforts in India. May the theme for World Mission Sunday 2021 – **"We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard"** (Acts 4:20) – and the theme of the Holy Childhood Day 2021 – **"Be my witnesses"** (Acts 1:8) – be our prayer and wish during this hopeful time of our Christian life.

With prayerful regards,

Your brother in Christ Jesus,

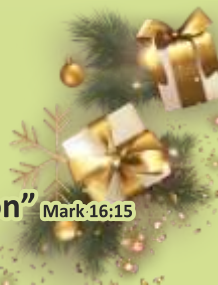
Fr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
NATIONAL DIRECTOR



Pontifical Mission Organizations

10, 3rd Cross, Ulsoor Road, Bengaluru - 560 042, Karnataka, INDIA.
Email : pmorgbindia@gmail.com www.pmoindia.org Tel : 080 2558 5946

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Editor:

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

Editorial Board:

Dr Thomas J DSouza

Mahesh Lobo

Parimala Selvaraj

Publisher:

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

National Director - Pontifical Mission Organizations

Printer:

James Arts Crafts

Sivakasi – 626189

☎ 9789774520

Subscription rates: (six issues/year)

Inclusive of postal charges for
Subscribers in India.

Annual: ₹ 150

3 years: ₹ 400

Annual bulk subscription

(i.e., 20 or more copies): ₹ 125

DONORS: ₹ 5000 (for 15 years)

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PONTIFICAL MISSION ORGANIZATIONS

No. 10, 3rd Cross, Ulsoor Road,
Bangalore– 560042,
Karnataka, INDIA.

Tel: +91 80 2558 5946

Email: pmorgbindia@gmail.com

Website: www.pmoindia.org

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- **Black & White Inside (Full/Half) Page = Rs 2000/1000**



Solemnity: Epiphany of
The Lord
(3rd Jan 2021)

**When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly
with great joy. And going into the house, they saw
the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down
and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures,
they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and
myrrh.**
- Matthew 2:10-11

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Children are the Hope of the Present and Future

A year full of anxiety, suffering, and distancing is over, though the pandemic is not over yet. The danger is still very real. Still at the infancy level of vaccines being tested, we are not sure, if and when the world would return to normalcy. Even if it could do so, it would not be a return to the 'old normal' but a 'neo-normal' life with all our lessons from the past year.

We are beginning a new year. From the lessons we have learned we need to become aware of our priorities. When Pope Francis was speaking about the post-pandemic economy, he said that we need to come out of the profit making economy. He further said in November 2020: "... the future will be a time that reminds us that we are not condemned to economic models whose immediate interest is limited to profit and promoting favourable public policies, unconcerned with their human, social and environmental cost." And therefore, we must invite the poor to sit with policy makers. We need to envision a new world which would hinge on equality and fraternity amidst crisis.



Older generations might find it hard to unlearn what they considered priceless - their power, wealth, status, bossing over, exercising authority, etc. Only the children of a new generation can fully envision a neo-normal life without any bias. It becomes our duty to bring up our children in the Christian values of charity and justice. We need to instruct our children about our values, what we believe in, and what is close to our heart. As we begin the new year, let us reflect on the Passover meal in which the head of the household would reiterate what the Lord did and how they ought to be faithful to the Lord: "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians'" [Ex 12: 26ff]. By reiterating what has happened in the past, they instructed the children about gratitude, fidelity and the interconnectedness between the past and the present.

The same is to be passed on by Christian parents today to their children, about their past life, how God has been good to us, our values, our faithfulness to the Lord etc. Holy Childhood Day, which we are about to celebrate on 14th February reminds us that children are the hope of the present and future who need to be properly guided by us. Holy Childhood day was first celebrated on 4 December 1950 by Pope Pius XII. Since then we have been celebrating it with various themes. The theme for this celebration this year is "Witness".

Parents have to first of all lead a witnessing life during this pandemic period with a heart of charity and compassion towards the weak. They should also continually recount the stories of the Gospel to them so that they will be able to lead a witnessing life and envision a better world for the future and inspire others. They are the hope of building an egalitarian world as the Pope envisages for the neo-normal post-pandemic world. We need never give up hope as long as we enlighten our children with the message of Christ who is a witness to them. In turn they will be witnesses to Christ and the world.

A healthy Covid-19-free New Year! and a meaningful celebration of Holy Childhood Day!

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu
National Director (PMO-India)

Year of St Joseph

Pope Francis has announced a Year of St Joseph in honour of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church.

The year begins Dec 8, 2020, and concludes on Dec 8, 2021. The pope desires "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfilment of God's will."

Holy Childhood Associations in India

By Parimala Selvaraj



Introductoin

The 2nd Sunday of February is a day of mega celebration for our children all across our nation. That is when we commemorate the significance of the *faith and*

witness aspect of our young and growing Catholics. This issue of our magazine for missionary animation is dedicated for the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood Associations (Missionary Childhood Associations) or MCA, which serves children by enhancing their missionary education and supports them in their missionary co-operation with the neediest children and the missions of the whole world.

The Universal Church defines the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood Associations as *a Society of the universal Church and of the local Churches, animating and forming children (up to 14 years of age) from a missionary viewpoint and their educators/animators so that they will live in ecclesial missionary communion and carry out their local mission and their missionary co-operation with universal evangelization, especially for children.*

In the Indian context, the focus of Holy Childhood Associations is the well-being of children, complete with the right spiritual formation, along with adequate child-protection and sustainable growth. While animating and assisting the spiritual and material needs of children, they are also made conscious of those among them who require help in order to overcome obstacles, be it in the financial, health or educational areas.

This is the “*children helping children*” phenomenon that richly networks children not just from a particular social setting but more widely from across the world, making them aware of the diverse nature of human interactions, strengths and weaknesses, so as to invigorate in them a consciousness of reaching out to anyone in need and in giving from what they have.

As this Pontifical Society entrusts the protection of its mission to the care of Child Jesus and uses His holy childhood both for inspiration and adoration, the name also attests the same. Although this is a movement meant for Catholic children, the outreach aspect covers all children in need, regardless of any social segmentation.

History

In 1843, Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson of France, was greatly troubled by the situation of unrest in China, where-in many young children were dying without having been blessed through the Sacrament of Baptism. As he was unable to visit there as a missionary, he sought the help of a faith worker by name Pauline Jaricot, who had successfully begun the *Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith (P O P F)* involving all the faithful in the Catholic Church. Inspired by her example, he was keen to involve the children of France through their offerings of prayer and material support, to aid the children of China.

It was decided then that the children in France will offer *one Hail Mary a day and one small coin a month* for the purpose of the spiritual and



material well-being of the children of China. Little did anyone know that a simple work of charity like this would gain such unimaginable momentum, that the children of Belgium, Spain, Italy and many other nations would become so thoroughly involved in it, so as to make this into a widespread heroic movement.

On 3rd May 1922, Pope Pius XI recognised as **Pontifical**, the pious and generous works of charity from this international network of little children, thus elevating their mission to be united with the Universal Church through the Statutes of his office. On 4th December 1950, Pope Pius XII created the **World Day of Holy Childhood**, making the feast of **Epiphany** (manifestation of Lord Jesus as a little human child lying in a manger for the visiting wise men from around the world) as an optional date for celebration, leaving it to the nations to adapt as per cultural and local needs.

Today, Pontifical Society for Holy Childhood Associations is working in over 150 nations all over the world. In India, the Pontifical Mission Societies has been functioning since 1922 in accordance with the guidance enumerated in the Statutes and slated the 2nd Sunday of February as the **Holy Childhood Day** to co-ordinate celebrations across all the States. A Deed of Declaration of Trust was registered on 25th September 2018 declaring all the existing and future assets and properties as belonging to the Pontifical Mission Organizations India Trust, of which Holy Childhood Associations is a unit.

Animation in India

The National Director along with the Board of Trustees of Pontifical Mission Organizations and the CCBI Leadership takes keen interest in formulating and evaluating the progress of the “*children helping children*” programme all

across our nation through the active participation of the Regional and Diocesan Directors (14 Regions and 174 Dioceses) who efficiently network programmes dissemination so as to reach children of the Holy Childhood Associations even at the grassroots, as in, at the Parish Churches.

Although he develops and animates the four Pontifical Mission Societies in India, his primary work in this mission is to mobilise resources through creative, inclusive, timely, engaging and effective programmes for the spiritual nourishment and well-being of the children of India under the Holy Childhood Associations.

The following objectives of the Universal Church for this Pontifical Society are adhered to creatively for the fruitfulness of the Holy Childhood Associations in our country.

- *Help educators/animators to progressively awaken in children a universal missionary conscience.*
- *Help children to develop their missionary protagonism.*
- *Move children to share their faith and material means, especially with the children of the neediest regions and Churches.*
- *Promote missionary vocations.*
- *To be integrated into the overall pastoral programme of Christian education, to which it will contribute its missionary projection.*

Our animators are trained at the Diocesan and Regional levels, so as to rise to the challenges that may be involved in the faith formation of the children and their active participation, so that they are united in togetherness in the mission of the Universal Church.



The two key roles of the Holy Childhood Associations

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, we have two important functions of the Holy Childhood Associations to focus on. The first is that of the spiritual nourishment and the material well-being of children, for which the



completion of basic education is a requirement along with an emphasis for enhancing moral values. The second is that of reaching out to those in need in their immediate social circles while also correctly networking through the collaborative exercises across nations, so as to reach out to the children who are most in need of basic amenities like food, clothing, medicines, etc.

Little notes of love and concern, charities done with self-giving and with heartfelt joy, offerings collected out of little sacrifices using mite-boxes (giving up part of their meals, movies, expensive excursions etc), offering to pray for other children while giving up entertainment for the self, etc are some of the ways where children are encouraged to value the power of solidarity and reciprocal support through the *“children helping children”* programme.

Holy Childhood Day celebration in India

The yearly programme for the children of the Holy Childhood Associations involves catechetical, biblical, liturgical, humanitarian and missionary aspects that their animators work on including in their UNIT meetings. Hence special occasions like their Parish Festival, feast days of Patron Saints and Missionaries of India, Lent and Christmas Seasons, are set aside and marked for

talent and sports competitions. Such events become a mini-preparation for the mega event on the 2nd Sunday of February.

For the Holy Childhood Day festivities, a valuable theme that is appropriate and encouraging for children is chosen and the same included in all Gospel sharing sessions so as to unite them in one voice. Archdioceses, Dioceses and Parish-Churches, then work on their cultural format, so as to include the applicable, appropriate combination of theme-oriented skits, Bible-Quiz, sports, drawing, dancing and singing competitions, food fests, etc., in order to make the day most meaningful for children of the Holy Childhood Associations and their mission. In all of these events, the functions of the Pontifical Mission Societies are highlighted, focussing on the best results for the *“children helping children”* programme.

We have chosen Acts 1:8 – *“Be my witnesses”* – as the theme for the 14th February 2021 Holy Childhood Day, encouraging our children to voice their personal experiences of their encounter with Lord Jesus so as to revel in His Divine presence with them all through their daily activities. We are hoping that the pandemic will ease by then though, failing which, we will continue reaching our children through video-conferences and YouTube Channel programmes.



Most nations follow the same method of ensuring collections for this Pontifical Society just as it happens for World Mission Sunday celebrations (3rd Sunday of October) which is led by the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the

No peace without a “Culture of Care”: Pope



In his message for the Catholic Church's World Day of Peace, Pope Francis appeals to the international community and every individual to foster a “culture of care” by advancing on the “path of fraternity, justice and peace between individuals, communities, peoples and nations.”

“There can be no peace without a culture of care,” the Pope stresses in his message for the 54th World Day of Peace, held on 1 January 2021. He offers the Church's social doctrine as a “compass” to foster a culture of care for peace in the world.

The Holy Father calls for “a common, supportive and inclusive commitment to protecting and promoting the dignity and good of all, a willingness to show care and compassion, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to advance mutual respect and acceptance.” In this task, Pope Francis offers the principles of the Church's social doctrine as a compass on the path to peace.

Established by Pope St. Paul VI in 1967, the first World Day of Peace was observed on 1 January 1968. On New Year's Day, the Church also celebrates the solemn feast of Mary, Mother of God.

“A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace” is the theme of the Pope's message, addressed to heads of state and government, leaders of international organizations, spiritual leaders and followers of the different religions, and to men and women of good will.

Lessons from the pandemic

Pope Francis begins his message noting how the “massive Covid-19 health crisis” has aggravated deeply

interrelated crises such as those of the climate, food, the economy and migration, causing great sorrow and suffering to many. He makes it an occasion to appeal to political leaders and the private sector to spare no effort to ensure access to Covid-19 vaccines and to the essential technologies needed to care for the sick, the poor and those who are most vulnerable.

Alongside the pandemic, the Pope also notes a surge in various forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and wars and conflicts that bring only death and destruction in their wake. These and other events of 2020, he says, have underscored the importance of caring for one another and for creation in our efforts to build a more fraternal society. Hence, “*A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace*” is a “way to combat the culture of indifference, waste and confrontation so prevalent in our time,” he says.

Evolution of the Church's Culture of Care

The Holy Father traces the evolution of the Church's *Culture of Care* from the first book of the Bible to Jesus, through the early Church down to our times.



After the creation of the world, God entrusts it to Adam to “*till it and keep it*”. Cain's response to God – “Am I my brother's keeper?” – after killing his brother, Abel, is a reminder that all of us are keepers of one another. God's protection of Cain, despite his crime, confirms the *inviolable dignity* of the person created in God's image and likeness. Later, the institution of the Sabbath aimed to restore the social order and concern for the poor, while the Jubilee year provided a respite for

the land, slaves and those in debt. All this, the Pope says, shows that “everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationship with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.”

The Father's love for humanity, the Pope says, finds its supreme revelation in Jesus, who asks His disciples to do likewise. The early Christians followed Jesus by sharing what they had and caring for the needy, thus making their community a welcoming home.

Today, the Church has “many institutions for the relief of every human need: hospitals, poor houses, orphanages, foundling homes, shelters for travellers...”

Church's social doctrine – a “grammar” of care

This culture of care of the Church, enriched by the reflection of the Fathers and the charity of luminous witnesses to the faith, the Pope continues, became the “beating heart of the Church's social doctrine.” This, he says, can serve as a “grammar” of care: commitment to promoting the dignity of each human person, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, the pursuit of the common good and concern for the protection of creation.”

The Christian concept of the **person**, the Pope says, fosters the pursuit of a fully human development. “Person always signifies relationship, not individualism; it affirms inclusion, not exclusion; unique and **inviolable dignity**, not exploitation.” “Each human person is an end in himself or herself, and never simply a means to be valued only for his or her usefulness.”

According to the “compass” of social principles of the Church, every aspect of social, political and economic life achieves its fullest end when placed at the service of the **common good**, which allows people to reach their fulfilment more fully and easily.

In this regard, the Pope says, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed that all of us, fragile and disoriented, are **in the same boat**. All of us are called to row together”, since “no one reaches salvation by themselves.”

The Church's social principles also urge us to concrete **solidarity** for others because we are all really responsible for all. It also stresses the interconnectedness of all creation, as his Encyclical *Laudatosi*’ points out.

This highlights the need to listen to the cry of our brothers and sisters in need and the cry of the **earth our common** and care for them.

“A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be authentic if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings,” the Pope says, citing his encyclical.

“Peace, justice and care for creation are three inherently connected questions, which cannot be separated.”

Church's social doctrine - a “compass”

In the face of our throw-away culture, with its growing inequalities both within and between nations, Pope Francis urges government leaders, and those of international organizations, business leaders, scientists, communicators and educators, to take up the principles of the Church's social doctrine as a “compass”. It is capable of pointing out a *common direction* and ensuring “a more humane future” in the process of globalization. He also calls on everyone to take this compass in hand and work to overcome the many existing social inequalities.

Humanitarian law needs to be respected, especially in situations of conflict and war, which cause enormous suffering to children, men and women. Instead of regarding conflicts as something normal, the Pope says, we need to convert our hearts and ways of thinking in order to work for true peace in **solidarity and fraternity**.



Weapons and peace

In this regard, the Pope calls for resources spent on arms, especially nuclear weapons, to be used for priorities such as safety of individuals, the promotion of peace and integral human development, the fight against poverty, and the provision of health care. He says it would be a courageous decision to “establish a 'Global Fund' with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, in order to permanently eliminate hunger and contribute to the development of the poorest countries!”

Educating to peace

The promotion of a culture of care calls for a *process of education*, the Pope says.

This begins in the family where we learn how to live and relate to others in a spirit of mutual respect. Schools and universities, the communications media, as also religions and religious leaders are called to pass on

a system of values based on the recognition of the dignity of each person, each linguistic, ethnic and religious community and each people.

“At a time like this, when the barque of humanity, tossed by the storm of the current crisis, struggles to advance towards a calmer and more serene horizon,” the Pontiff says, “the “rudder” of human dignity and the “compass” of fundamental social principles can enable us together to steer a sure course.”

Pope Francis concludes his message, urging “We never yield

to the temptation to disregard others, especially those in greatest need, and to look the other way.” “Instead, may we strive daily, in concrete and practical ways, to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another.”

Source: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12> ♦



Continued from Page 5: Holy Childhood Associations in India



Faith (POPF). In India, programmes are animated for children through the *Season of Christmas* at times, so as to

keep the essence of the glories of the Holy Childhood of Lord Jesus alive and infuse enthusiasm in their creative programmes.

Hope for tomorrow

For a while now, Pontifical Mission Organizations India has been concentrating on reaching out to children with special needs. This aspect was also discussed extensively during the National Council Meeting in February this year and the Regional Directors were encouraged by the National Director to adapt viable programmes so as to address the varying challenges that children

face in our world today.

With our social environment changing drastically after the recent COVID19 and lockdown situation, new emphasis has been placed on addressing mental health issues and the pressures on children towards the completion of their school curriculum in the unpredictable uncertainties.

Conclusion

The future of our children rests in the faith that the centrality of God in all that we do will turn every obstacle into a providential teaching and that it will make way for nourishing and lasting blessings for all children, especially as they grow to foster joy not just for the self, but for those who become more valuable by their need.

May we give ourselves generously in order to make this Holy Childhood Day celebration a time of joyful caring and heartfelt sharing, all across our nation. ♦

A new road for a new year

Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12

Rev Kenneth C Landall

A new year always brings a sense of hope, doesn't it? The previous year with all its tragedies, problems, disappointments, failures, and sadness is now behind us, and a clean slate lies ahead.

For sure there has been plenty in the news to make anyone depressed. Also, many of us are feeling *personal* pains or anxieties this new year. Some of us are wrestling with important decisions regarding a primary relationship or a task to be done; some know firsthand the powerful effects of disabling disease or worry about health issues in the upcoming months; some have had to deal recently with a major loss; some wonder if we can make it in the coming year without the presence of one who meant so much; some of us are feeling very lonely, in spite of people all around us; some of us fear growing older, or fear what the future may hold; some wonder if dreams will ever be realized, or whether the new year will be even more frustrating and filled with feelings of futility than the last. Many of us are feeling pain or anxiety this new year. What is this pain or anxiety like for you?



When we feel this way, the temptation is to stay with the familiar and the comfortable, to crawl back into bed and pull up the covers, or to sneak into the manger with Jesus, where it's warm, safe, and secure. The temptation is to stay where we are – in the dark crevices of depression or defeat, of fear or foreboding, in the deep ruts of sameness, boredom, or lethargy.

But Epiphany with its emphasis on a light shining in the darkness, reminds us that life continues on, that revelation and growth and new beginnings

loom on the horizon, that new roads appear up ahead, new roads that will take us, if we choose to let them, into new adventures, new challenges, new opportunities to be the persons God wants us to be. Epiphany reminds us that life continues on, even as one year ends and another begins, “one season following another,” as they sing in “Fiddler on the Roof.”

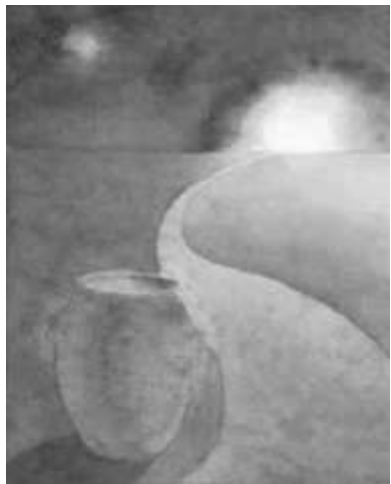
The Magi, also called the Wise Men or the Three Kings, who bring their gifts to the Christ Child, illustrate this movement.

They were from the East. They were inquisitive, adventurous, obedient to their calling, and sought no honor for themselves. They humbled themselves before the Christ Child and offered sacrificial gifts of great value. In short, they fit the image of *servants* more than royalty or those with superior wisdom, and thus, are exemplary role models for us. But it's what they did at the end of the story that is of particular interest this morning. Matthew says they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod. In the Bible, dreams are an important conduit for God to communicate with people.

The Magi, after they had offered their gifts, realized the danger in returning to Herod, and



left “for their own country *by another road.*” They didn't hang around to bask in the beauty of the babe. They didn't stay where it was comfortable and secure. They set out from there by *another* road, a *new* road, a different road than the one they'd been traveling upon. They move on in their journey of life, and so must we.



For us, the manger is only one stopping place on our journey of faith. And while the tranquility of the manger may move us deeply, it should never transfix us. The rest of Christ's journey, and our journey, remains to be traveled.

As we embark on this new year, embodied so well in the spirit of Epiphany and the reality of life moving on, a fair question for us to ask is, “how can we move on?” The answer may be found in the refrain from an old church camp song I'll bet many of you remember: “Rise and Shine.” Isaiah tells the people of Israel to “Arise, shine; for your light has come...” They no longer have to live in darkness – nor do we. Rise and shine, get up, begin again – there is more to come! There are new roads to travel upon in this new year.

But there are also powerful forces working against this directive. Apathy, lack of confidence, our physical or mental state, extreme caution or timidity – all these tend to hold us back. Worse than any of these is *fear* – disabling, crippling, immobilizing *fear*.

But remember: God has promised to uphold us no matter what – believe this promise! God has promised to grant us victory over all our spiritual enemies – believe this promise! God has promised to grant us full and free forgiveness of our sins through and because of Jesus Christ, our newborn Savior – believe this promise! Don't creep upon these promises as though they were

too fragile to hold you up. Stand upon them, confident that God is as good as God's word, and that our living, loving Lord will deliver them as promised.[v] Maybe you've heard the expression: “even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there!” It's true! So, in this new year, let's get up and get going. Let us rise and shine, knowing that it is God's light that empowers the light within us.

This sounds like a great New Year's resolution, doesn't it? But it won't be complete until we “give God the glory.” We do this by living thankful lives, thanking God for the blessings we've received, and by sharing the Good News with others. We do this individually and together as the church. The mission of the church, as Paul implies to the Ephesians, is to reflect the light of Christ, to point to Christ's work in the world, to declare Christ's redemption, to reveal the mystery, to make known God's wisdom, but perhaps most important, to mirror and imitate Christ's love and deeds of mercy. And this is our individual mission as well.

Each of us has a new road ahead of us in the new year. It's another road, a different road than any we've traveled on before. As we step off down that road, not knowing what we may find, not knowing exactly where we're going, we can be comforted in knowing that for sure, the light goes with us, leading us, guiding us, showing us the way. God will be with us on our journeys down that new road ahead. Even now God is



calling to each of us, whoever we are, whatever our circumstance, calling us to get up off our hands and knees, to stop creeping, and rise and shine, and continue on the journey, giving God our praise, and sharing the Good News with others along the way. ♦

The Bishop and Christian unity

Working for Christian unity is not optional

By Hannah Brockhaus (CNA)



The the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity published on Friday, 4th December 2020, a guide with suggestions for Catholic bishops to promote unity with other Christian communities, offering practical advice for how to overcome common challenges to ecumenism.

The 26-page *vademecum* emphasizes the responsibility of diocesan bishops to promote unity among Christians within their jurisdiction and gives practical suggestions for how this can be achieved.

The *vademecum* recalls that ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious dialogue have different aims. Dialogue with different religious traditions aims at establishing “good relations and cooperation,” but dialogue with different Christian communities “aims at restoring the unity Christ willed for his Church,” it says.

The guide also addresses questions such as marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian, “communicatio in his opinion that the issue of whether there is valid

sacris,” and the use of Catholic church property by other Christian communities.

“Communicatio in sacris” means to participate in Holy Communion with a church or Christian community outside one's own tradition. The document restates Church law, which says that a Catholic bishop may allow a non-Catholic Christian to receive the Eucharist in “exceptional” cases, such as danger of death or “grave necessity,” provided that the person shares the Catholic belief in the Eucharist.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said in a press conference Dec. 4 that “the Catholic Church holds that Eucharistic communion has as a prerequisite ecclesial communion.”

This is why, he said, Canon 844 of the Code of Canon Law -- which indicates the conditions under which a Christian not in full communion with the Catholic Church may receive Holy Communion from a Catholic minister -- states that the person must “manifest Catholic faith” in the Eucharist and be properly disposed.

The *vademecum* notes that a bishop's judgment about what constitutes a “grave necessity” and “when exceptional sacramental sharing is appropriate” always requires “pastoral discernment,” because it has to do with “the care and the salvation of souls.”

“Sacraments may never be shared out of mere politeness. Prudence must be exercised to avoid causing confusion or giving scandal to the faithful,” the document says.

Cardinal Koch said it was



ordination in Christian communities outside the Catholic Church is “the biggest obstacle” to resolving the theological question of intercommunion.

He cited, for example, the fact that the Anglican community has allowed the ordination of women as priests and bishops, which the Catholic Church cannot accept.

“We must work on this situation very hard in the future, but we have not resolved this situation today,” he said.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, also said that the problem of episcopal ordination was “fundamental, and so it is at the core of ecumenical dialogue.”

Another place where the guide addresses giving scandal is in the use of a Catholic church by another Christian community. The bishop may offer that possibility if the need arises, but he must discern that it “will not cause scandal or confusion to the faithful,” the vademecum says.

In January of this year, a controversy erupted over a Virginia bishop's decision to allow an Episcopalian diocese to use a Catholic parish for the consecration of an Episcopalian bishop, Susan Haynes.

Bishop Barry Knestout of the Catholic diocese of Richmond defended the decision to allow the Episcopalian Diocese of Southern Virginia to use St. Bede Catholic Church in Williamsburg, citing Vatican II



documents on ecumenism. But the location of the event was changed after an internet petition objecting to the event drew national attention.

The new document may help bishops navigate situations like this in the future.

The guide for bishops also addresses what it calls “interchurch marriages,” when a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian marry. It says these marriages “should not be regarded as problems for they are often a privileged place where the unity of Christians is built. However, pastors cannot be indifferent to the pain of



Christian division which is experienced in the context of these families, perhaps more sharply than in any other context.”

The document recommends that bishops meet with and listen to interchurch families in their dioceses, especially during marriage preparation and as couples have children and prepare them to receive the sacraments.

Koch said that the idea for the vademecum came about during the pontifical council's 2016 plenary meeting, attended by bishops from around the world. He explained that some members of the council asked for a practical document for bishops to learn from and reference on the topic of ecumenism. The guide then took three years to write, in consultation with other curial departments.

“The ministry of the bishop is the ministry for unity,” the cardinal said. “Not just for his own diocese or for the Catholic Church, but unity for the whole of Christians.”

The new document also notes the obligation of lay Catholics to work for unity with other Christians and promotes “practical ecumenism,” which it describes as Christians serving together to promote a common cause or to address injustices, such as human trafficking, mistreatment of immigrants, and

attacks on the sanctity of life, among other issues.

“The experience of bishops in many parts of the world is that cooperation between Christian communities in service of the poor is a driving force in promoting the desire for Christian unity,” it says.

“Our common service manifests before the world, therefore, our shared faith, and our witness is more powerful for being united.”

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect of the V a t i c a n ' s Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, emphasized the importance of Christians being united in order to give authentic witness to people of other religions.

“Lack of unity among followers of Jesus ... undermines evangelization and obscures the person of Jesus. The non-Christians are confused: 'How many Christs are there?'" he said in the press conference.

“The non-Christians are scandalized, really scandalized, when we all claim to be followers of Christ and they see how we are fighting one another,” he continued. “It weakens -- the lack of unity and even this almost outright anger toward one another -- it weakens evangelization.”

The vademecum stresses “the long history of Christian divisions and the complex nature of the theological and cultural factors that divide Christian communities” and the challenges they present to those engaged in ecumenism, noting that “the obstacles to unity are beyond human strength; they cannot be overcome by our efforts alone.”

“But the death and resurrection of Christ is God's decisive victory over sin and division, just as it is His victory over injustice and every form of evil. For this reason Christians cannot despair in the face of Christian division, just as they cannot despair in the face of

injustice or warfare. Christ has already defeated these evils,” it says.

“The task of the Church,” it continues, “is always to receive the grace of the victory of Christ. The practical recommendation and initiatives suggested in this vademecum are ways in which the Church and, in particular, the bishop can strive to actualise Christ's victory over Christian division.”

The document highlights prayer, noting that by “praying for unity, we acknowledge that unity is a gift of

the Holy Spirit and not something we can achieve through our own efforts.” It also lays out some of the common beliefs among different C h r i s t i a n communities, such as in the saints and martyrs, liturgical feasts, and Sacred Scripture.

It also explains that ecumenism is not based on

compromise, “as if unity should be achieved at the expense of truth. On the contrary, the search for unity leads us into a fuller appreciation of God's revealed truth.”

“The bedrock of ecumenical formation, therefore, is that 'the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms as our separated brethren can also really understand,'" it states.

Ecumenism also requires the virtue of charity, the guide says, urging Catholics to “avoid polemical presentations of Christian history and theology” and to “seek to emphasize the Christian faith that we share with others and to present the theological differences that divide us with balance and accuracy.”

The guide ends with an appendix of the names and descriptions of different Christian communities with which the Catholic Church conducts bilateral dialogue, as well as a list of the ecumenical groups with which it engages in multilateral dialogue. ♦



Catechesis on prayer - 1

The mystery of prayer

By Pope Francis



loudly cries out.

He cannot see. He does not know whether Jesus is near or far away but he hears him. He understands this from the crowd which, at a certain point, grows and comes closer....

But he is completely alone and no one is concerned about him. And what does Bartimaeus do? He cries out. And he cries out and continues to cry out. He uses the only weapon he possesses: his voice. He begins to

shout: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 47).

And he continues to cry out in this manner. His repeated cries are a nuisance. They do not seem polite and many people scold him, telling him to be quiet: "But be polite; do not do this". However, Bartimaeus does not keep silent but rather cries out even more loudly: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 47):

That beautiful stubbornness of those who seek a grace and knock and knock on the door of God's heart. He cries out; he knocks. That expression: "Son of David", is very important. It

m e a n s " t h e Messiah" — he professes the Messiah. It is a profession of faith that emerges from the mouth of that man who was despised by all.

And Jesus listens to his cry. Bartimaeus' prayer touches his heart, God's heart, and the doors of

salvation open up for him. Jesus calls for him. He jumps to his feet and those who had first told him to

Prayer is the breath of faith; it is its most proper expression. Like *a cry* that issues from the heart of those who believe and entrust themselves to God.

Let us think about the story of Bartimaeus, a character in the Gospel (cf. Mk 10:46-52), and I confess that for me he is the most likeable of all. He was blind and sat begging for alms by the roadside on the periphery of his city, Jericho. He is not an anonymous character. He has a face and a name: Bartimaeus, that is, "son of Timaeus".

One day he heard that Jesus would be passing through there. In fact, Jericho was a crossroads of people, continually criss-crossed by pilgrims and tradesmen. Thus, Bartimaeus positioned himself: he would have done anything possible to meet Jesus. So many people did the same.

Let us recall Zacchaeus who climbed up the tree. Many wanted to see Jesus; he did too. In this way the man enters the Gospels as a voice that



be quiet, now lead him to the Master. Jesus speaks to him. He asks him to express his desire — this is important — and then the cry becomes a request: “that I may see again, Lord!” (cf. v. 51).

Jesus says to him: “Go your way; *your faith has made you well*” (v. 52). He recognises in that poor, defenceless and despised man, all the power of his faith, which attracts the mercy and the power of God.

Faith is having two hands raised up, a voice that cries out to implore the gift of salvation. The Catechism states that “humility is the foundation of prayer” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2559). Prayer is born of the earth, of the *humus* from which “humble”, “humility” derive. It comes from our precarious state, from our continuous thirst for God (cf. *ibid.*, 2560-2561). Faith, as we have seen with Bartimaeus, is a cry.

Lack of faith is the suppression of that cry. That attitude that the people had, in making him keep quiet: they were not people of faith, whereas he was. To suppress that cry is a type of *omertà* (code of silence).

Faith is a protest against a pitiful condition the cause of which we do not understand. Lack of faith is to limit ourselves to endure a situation to which we have become accustomed. Faith is the hope of being saved. Lack of faith is becoming accustomed to the evil that oppresses us and continuing in that way.

Dear brothers and sisters, we begin this series of catecheses with Bartimaeus' cry because perhaps everything is already written in someone like him. Bartimaeus is a persevering man. He was surrounded by people who explained that imploring was useless, that it was clamouring without receiving a reply, that it was noise that was only bothersome, and thus please stop crying out. But he did not remain in silence. And in the end he obtained what he wanted.

Greater than any discussion to the contrary, there is a voice in mankind's heart that invokes. We all have this voice within. A voice that comes forth spontaneously without anyone commanding it, a voice that asks itself about the meaning of our journey on earth, especially when we find ourselves in darkness: “Jesus, have mercy on

me! Jesus have mercy on me!”. This is a beautiful prayer.

But are these words perhaps not chiselled in all of creation? Everything invokes and implores so that the mystery of mercy may be definitively fulfilled. Not only Christians pray; they share their cry of prayer with all men and women. But the horizon can be further widened: Paul states that all of creation “has been groaning in travail together until now” (Rom 8:22). Artists are often the interpreters of this silent cry of creation that is found in every creature and emerges above all in the heart of men and women, because they are “beggars before God” (ccc, 2559). It is a beautiful definition of mankind: “beggars before God”. ♦



Pope Francis: Be God's people, not God's elite



Guaranteeing justice for all men and women is not possible while a few people control most of the world's wealth and everyone else's right to a dignified life is disregarded, Pope Francis said.

Those who truly sought social justice did not regard themselves as “an enlightened elite,” but rather as a people dedicated to “the work of including, integrating and raising the fallen.”

He said: “And, from the Gospel, what God asks of us believers is to be God's people, not God's elite. Because those who go the way of 'God's elite' end up in the so well-known elitist clericalisms that, out there, work for the people, but nothing with the people, without feeling like a people.”

In a Nov. 30 video message to judges from 18 countries, the pope urged them not to lose sight of “the distressing situation in which a small part of humanity lives in opulence, while an increasing number of people are denied dignity and their most elementary rights are ignored or violated.” “We cannot be disconnected from reality,” he said. “This is a reality you must keep in mind.”

The judges were taking part in a virtual meeting Nov. 30-Dec. 1 on “Building the New Social Justice.” The meeting was sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences for members of the recently formed Committee for Social Rights of Africa and America that brings together two groups: the Committee of Pan-American Judges for Social Rights and Franciscan

Doctrine. and the Pan-African Committee of Judges and the Pan-African Committee of Judges for Social Rights and Franciscan Doctrine.

The Committee draws on the magisterium of Pope Francis to promote the economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights of the world's most vulnerable people.

At “such a critical time for all of humanity,” the pope said, the virtual meeting to discuss the work of building “a new social justice is, without doubt, excellent news.”

Offering a reflection for their discussions, the pope said that building social justice is a “collective work” that must be achieved on a daily basis “because imbalance is a temptation at every minute.”

Working toward true social justice must also be done with an “attitude of commitment” that follows “along the path of the good Samaritan” and that is mindful of not falling “into a culture of indifference,” he said.

People “must recognize the all-too-frequent temptation to disregard others, especially the weakest,” the pope explained. “We have to assume



that we have become accustomed to turning a blind eye, to ignoring situations until they hit us directly.”

And, he continued, one must not ignore

Parables: How to read and pray on them - 2

By Ralph DCosta SJ

Our approach to the Parable then is to be:

- To come to the original text as given by the Jesus of history, so that we can then see how the apostolic preaching, respecting the original words, adapted them to the changed situations of preaching (the Jewish background and Gentile hearers, a rapidly Greek speaking community etc)
- How it was used to lead believers to grow in their faith in Jesus, the Risen Lord, building the Kingdom of God here on earth,
- See how do we remain faithful to the original words and make the message relevant to our world of today and make our faith operative in love while we remain filled with hope.
- Can we allow ourselves to grow in faith to discover and respond to the Risen Lord in the ever changing boundaries where the Spirit is still active and making everything new. The old understanding of seeing everything within the established perimeters indicated and contained by the rules of DO and DON'T must yield to an expanding horizon filled with the radiant light of the Spirit of Pentecost.
- The Parables could also be considered as a wonderful way of "Finding God in all things", present, active revealing his way of bringing about his rule in the hearts of all people, what St Ignatius of Loyola



offers as the final contemplation of his Spiritual Exercises. They take up snippets of daily life and challenge us to penetrate them in a deeper, in an out of the box way, and

there discover God revealing Himself and His plans for the world and for us personally. It is this revelation that calls us to an ever deeper experience of God in our world and our ordinary life, asking us to submit ourselves and our plans to what we daily pray: "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done."

- Jesus spoke in parables and without parables he did not teach anything Mt13:34. This gives us a clue that he saw his teaching as a part of the way he carried out his basic mission of "Repent and believe in the Gospel. The kingdom of God is at hand". This is his challenge that he proposes to all his hearers. It demands their personal involvement
- understand the revelation of God's word contained in the teaching, accept it, commit yourself to the following of Jesus in and through this revelation. Hence, we can see that the parable

as it deals with an event from daily life challenges the hearer to find God present in the events, sharing the Good News through that event which draws the human person into a deeper and closer relation of intimacy with God, a greater sharing of divine life in



situations of daily secular life. The world is full of the grandeur of God. Can we read the parable in this way? Can we come in touch with the life of

God in the everyday affairs of human existence? Human life goes beyond observance of rules, rituals and practices concerning the



commandments and laws found in the Old Testament and traditions collected down the centuries. It involves every circumstance of every moment of our daily existence. Religion is, for Jesus unlike for the Pharisees of his time, a relationship with a God dwelling in human beings and in all creatures, and the conscious observance of certain practices that facilitate a relationship in mind, heart and deeds that express the personal encounter with a God who loves the individual, all one's neighbours, and the whole of what God has created to enable us to love Him with all our thoughts, words and deeds. For Jesus, therefore, the Parables are moments of life experience to attain this goal. They are inroad journeys in a troubled but truth-filled world.

- With this summary note to the method of approaching the parable, we can look at the parables of Jesus as we see them in the Synoptic Gospels. We will on careful examination see the same parable in Matthew, Mark and Luke as e.g. Mk 3:4-27 and Mt 12:25f and Lk 11:17f, or Mk 3:27 and Mt 13:3-9; Lk 11:21-23, or Mk 4:3-9 and Mt 13:3-9 Lk 8:5-8; or Mk 4:21 and Mt 5:15, Lk 11:33. Similarly we can also find the parables in the versions of Mark and Luke only, or in Luke

only. This enables us to identify which, what in biblical parlance is termed 'sources', the Evangelist fell back upon in writing his narrative - sometimes

it is a common source, at other times it is a source particular to the individual evangelist - all this helps us to better understand the compilation of each of the Gospel narratives. It would also indicate to us that what we term parable can mean many things beyond the parable. The Hebrew word *masal* Aramaic *mathal* can indicate the English *parable*, *similitude*, *allegory*, *fable*, *proverb*, *riddle*, *symbol*, *example*, etc, and roughly speaking, would indicate several forms of figurative speech. For our reflection in these moments we will limit ourselves to seeing them as a story which leads to reflection to arrive at a better

understanding of what Jesus meant when he said: "The Kingdom of God is like...". A parable is to lay something along something else. Once this is grasped the reader of the biblical narratives can work out his/her understanding of the statements in the text using his acumen and his practical experience in drawing out comparisons and their consequences in practical life and in the life of the Spirit which challenges him/her to "Repent and Believe."

- So in our mission today according to Mk 9:9c, 13:26, 14:62, Ph 2:10-11. Tit 2:15. What is now hidden will one day be revealed; Go and Proclaim it to mankind amidst all the contradictions; what Jesus demanded be kept secret in his earthly life was to be made manifest once he was, raised from the dead. The Messianic Secret is needed till faith is made perfect Mk 14:62. The death of Jesus finds its meaning only in the Risen Lord Phil 2:10-11 when all will proclaim that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.

- Our duty is to understand what we believe and then proclaim it to the whole world: The Kingdom of God has come. If this is the mind of Jesus here, what are the exact words that he said to convey this idea in the parable, that is STAGE I. ♦

history with all its “struggles, triumphs and defeats.”

“Therein lies the blood of those who gave their lives for a full and integrated humanity,” he said, as well as the roots of what people are experiencing today.

Pope Francis insisted that true social justice is impossible if the human person is not the center of concern. “God asks us believers to be God's people, not 'God's elite.' Because those who go the way of 'God's elite' end up in the so-called elitist clericalisms that work for the people, but do



nothing with the people, do not feel like a people,” the pope said.

Lastly, Pope Francis said that solidarity is essential in the fight against poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Solidarity means “fighting against that culture that can lead to using others, to enslaving

others and ends up taking away the dignity of others,” the pope said. “Do not forget that solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history.” ♦

Pope Francis awarded ecology prize

The 4th International Prize of the *Accademia Kronos* Association for the Protection of the Environment, for this year has been awarded, among others, to Pope Francis.

This Prize sees in the concept of integral ecology, expressed by the Holy Father, especially in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, “a new vision that can become a beacon”.

The Pope was awarded for “having put at the center of his pontifical action the subject of integral ecology and the shared cultural patrimony in a logic of sustainable development and universal solidarity, addressing every person that inhabits our planet,” reads the letter announcing the Prize. His work stresses “the duty of everyone to do their part in the Common Home.”

This international Prize is titled “*Io Faccio la Mia Parte*” (I Do My Part”), and it consists of a small sculpture made from recycled material, which represents a hummingbird of an African fable. It's said that during a forest fire, while all animals fled to the river, the hummingbird flew in the opposite direction, taking a drop of water in its beak and saying: “I do my part.”

The Pope's message goes beyond ecology, given its intensity and universality, explained lawyer Ottavio Maria Capparella, head of the Association's Juridical Office and Delegate for institutional relations with the Vatican. And this message is simple and accessible to all, he added.

In a letter to Pope Francis, dated November 16, the Association's President, Franco Floris, paid tribute to the Pontiff's teaching, who has “made the necessary appeals, not only to institutions and the powerful of the world but to all that live on our planet, entrusting to them the duty to do 'their part,' including through daily actions.”

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Andre Besette

09 August 1845 – 06 January 1937

Feast Day: 06 January



Alfred Besette was born in Quebec on August 9, 1845, and he was orphaned by the time he was 12. From an early age he had a lively faith and a strong devotion to St Joseph. His father died in a work accident when he was nine, and his mother died three years later. His large

family was split up and the future André, barely literate and physically weak from birth, suffering from chronic stomach pains, moved from job to job for years. He had to work to support himself and had little formal education. After a few years trying to find work in the United States, he returned to Quebec. There, his childhood pastor encouraged him to consider a vocation to religious life.

When Alfred came to the Holy Cross Brothers in 1870, he carried with him a note from his pastor saying, "I am sending you a saint." The Brothers found that difficult to believe. The Holy Cross Brothers were teachers and, at 25, Alfred still did not know how to read and write. Initially, Holy Cross did not accept Alfred because of his poor health. He had been baptized right after birth because they had been afraid that he might not live more than a few days, and he was sickly all his life. Though admitted later they asked him to discontinue due to his very poor health. But Alfred, out of desperation again, appealed to the Archbishop of Montreal and with his assistance received entrance into the Holy Cross Novitiate on December 27, 1870.

Upon entering the Novitiate, Alfred took the name André, which was the name of his childhood

pastor. Given his frail health and lack of a formal education, Brother André was assigned as doorkeeper of Notre Dame College in Montreal. He continued this assignment as a professed brother. Among his many duties, he greeted visitors and tended to their needs.

Many people began to experience physical healings after praying with Brother André, and his reputation as a healer began to spread. So many people flocked to see him that the Congregation allowed him to see sick people at a trolley station across the street. Through it all, Brother André remained humble, often seeming confused that people would lavish such praise on him. He knew that the real source of these miraculous cures was St Joseph's intercession.

Brother Andre had great devotion to St Joseph. In 1904, he surprised the Archbishop of Montreal if he could build a chapel to St Joseph on the mountain near the college. The Archbishop refused to go into debt and would only give permission and asked Brother Andre whether he has money to build. What money did Brother Andre have?

Yet his desire to increase devotion to St Joseph inspired him to found a shrine to his favourite saint across the street from Notre Dame College. He saved the money he earned from giving haircuts at five cents apiece; eventually earning the \$200 he needed to construct a simple structure. This shrine opened on October 19, 1904, and in 1909, Brother André was released from his duties as doorkeeper and assigned full-



SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Jacinta Mato

11 March 1910 – 20 February 1920

Feast Day: 20 February

The youngest children of Manuel and Olimpia Marto, Francisco and Jacinta were typical of Portuguese village children of that time. During this time, Europe was involved in an extremely bloody war. Portugal itself was in political turmoil, having overthrown its monarchy in 1910; the government disbanded religious organizations soon after. The children were illiterate but had a rich oral tradition on which to rely, and they worked with their cousin Lúcia, taking care of the family's sheep. According to Lúcia's memoirs, Jacinta was affectionate, even though a bit spoiled, and emotionally labile. She had a sweet singing voice and a gift for dancing. All three children gave up music and dancing after the visions began, believing that these and other recreational activities led to occasions of sin.

Two years younger than Francisco, Jacinta charmed all who knew her. She was pretty and energetic, and had a natural grace of movement. She loved to dance, and was sorry when their priest condemned dancing in public. Sometimes wilful, she would pout when she did not get her way. She took a special delight in flowers, gathering them by the armful and making garlands for Lucia. At a First Communion, she was among the little "angels" spreading petals before the Blessed Sacrament. She had a marked love for Our Lord, and at the age of five she melted in tears on hearing the account of His Passion, vowing that she would never sin or offend Him anymore.

When Lucia had to pasture the sheep, Jacinta pestered her parents so much so that they too send her with Lucia to pasture a few sheep, accompanied by Francisco. She used to imitate Jesus, the good shepherd, by carrying a lamb on her



shoulders. Her days were playful and happy, delighting with her brother and cousin in the things of nature around her. They called the sun "Our Lady's lamp," and the stars "the Angels' lanterns," which they tried to count as it grew dark. They called out to hear their voices echo across the valley, and the name that returned most clearly was "Maria."

They prayed the Rosary every day after lunch, but to make more time for play, they shortened it to the words "Our Father" at the beginning of each decade, followed by "Hail Mary" ten times. This frivolity soon changed once they witnessed the apparitions.

In the spring of 1916, as the children watched their sheep, an Angel appeared to them in an olive grove. He asked the children to pray with him. He appeared again in midsummer at a well in Lucia's garden, urging them to offer sacrifice to God in reparation for sinners. In a final appearance, at the end of the summer, the Angel held a bleeding Host over a chalice, from which he communicated the children. This experience separated them from their playmates and prepared them for the apparitions to come.

As might be expected, the three were changed by the visitations of the Queen of Heaven. Jacinta, talkative sometimes to a fault, became quiet and withdrawn. After the first apparition, Lucia had sworn her and her brother to secrecy. But Jacinta, bubbling over, had let slip all they had seen to her family, who then told the village. The news was received with scepticism by many, with mockery by some, and with anger by Lucia's mother. Jacinta was so contrite, she promised never to reveal another secret.

Her reluctance to reveal anything more of their experiences was increased by the vision of hell given the children in the third apparition seems to have affected Jacinta the most. To rescue sinners from hell, she was in the forefront of the three in voluntary mortifications, whether it was in giving up their lunches (sometimes to their sheep), refusing to drink in the heat of the day, or wearing a knotted rope around their waists. Involuntary penances included for her, as for her brother and cousin, the constant mockery of unbelievers, badgering by sceptical clergy, and needling by believers to reveal the Lady's secret.

When she came down with influenza, she was removed from her family to a hospital a few miles away. She did not complain, because the Blessed Mother had forewarned her that she would go to two hospitals, not to be cured, but to suffer for the love of God and reparation for sinners. She stayed in the first hospital for two months, undergoing painful treatments, and then was returned home. She developed tuberculosis and was sent to Lisbon, first to a Catholic orphanage. There she was able to attend Mass and see the Tabernacle, and she was happy. But her stay there was short. She was soon transferred to the second hospital



prophesied by the Blessed Mother, where Jacinta was to make her final offering in dying alone. Her body came to rest in the Sanctuary built at the Cova da Iria, where the Lady had appeared to her.

At her departure she gave Lucy these recommendations:

Soon I will go to Heaven. You stay here to tell people that God wants to establish devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the world. When you say it, don't hide. Tell all the people that God grants all the graces through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Ask her for it because the Heart of Jesus desires,

next to His Heart, the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be venerated. Ask the Immaculate Heart for peace, for God has confided this to her. If only I could put in the hearts of people the light that I have inside my heart; this light embraces me and allows me to taste so much of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

She was beatified on May 13, 2000 by Pope John Paul II and canonized on May 13, 2017 by Pope Francis.

Source: www.catholic.org/saints; www.indcatholicnews.com; www.ewtn.com/fatima/jacinta ♦

Continued from Page 20: St Andre Besette

time as the caretaker of the Oratory of St Joseph.

The Oratory attracted large numbers of pilgrims, and plans were made to construct a large basilica. Brother André's full-time ministry for the rest of his life was to receive the long lines of sick visitors who flocked to the Oratory to see him. He became known as the "Miracle Man of Montreal," and thousands of miraculous healings were attributed to his intercession over the following decades.

Brother André died on January 6, 1937 at the age of 91. During the week that his body lay in state outside of St Joseph's Oratory, an estimated one million people braved the bitter Montreal winter to pay their respects. The basilica was eventually

completed and remains a major pilgrimage site, attracting over two million visitors a year. The side chapels are filled with the crutches of people healed through André's prayers.

André Bessette became first saint of the Congregation of Holy Cross when he was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 17, 2010. On this day, the Church recognized that God chose a very simple man for a remarkable life of service to the Church. He had previously been beatified by Blessed John Paul II on May 23, 1982.

Source: <http://holycrosscongregation.org>; www.catholicnewsagency.com/saint; <http://saintsresource.com> ♦

A school bag full of love makes a difference

By Bob Gelinas



I must share a heart-warming experience I enjoyed this week, both as a parent and a human being.

My daughter, Emma (in 7th grade), started back to school last week. There is a young boy in her class (call him Jake) who is quite overweight. As you might expect he is the butt of many jokes and is treated very badly by other kids (and even by the teachers). Jake gives the impression that he's not a nice guy, mostly because of the fact that he's constantly picked on.

For several nights this week Emma came home from school upset about the fact that Jake gets picked on so much. She also mentioned that he had no school supplies as his family could not afford them. He was constantly asking to borrow paper, which just gives kids even more reason to pick on him.

One night Emma was extremely upset about this situation, not only because Jake was picked on but also that he also had no supplies. We sat together that evening and discussed the situation in great detail. We devised a plan for Emma to engage Jake in a conversation and for her to ask Jake what he needed for supplies.

The next day Emma spent some time with Jake and really came to realize that this young man had a heart of gold, but rarely was able to show it because he was always on the defensive. Emma asked Jake if he needed supplies and if he could make a list for her for she would bring in extra supplies that she had at home for him. He put together a small list, 3 ring binders, paper, pens, pencils and a pencil sharpener. Emma told him she would help and he was most appreciative.



That evening Emma and I made a pilgrimage

to the store where we bought everything on his list and then some! Emma mentioned that he needed a new pencil box for the one he had got destroyed when one of his pens exploded - so we added that to the list. When we got home, we put all the supplies into a brand new grey back pack - because Jake did not have a back pack either.

The next day, I brought the bag to the school principal and explained the situation. I asked the principal to give the bag to Jake discreetly so that he did not have to feel embarrassed.

Later that day I picked Emma after school and she was all smiles. The principal had called Jake down to his office and gave him the bag. Jake read the little note that Emma had put inside hoping that he had everything that he needed and to enjoy the supplies. As Jake walked into the classroom - he winked at Emma and later thanked her very much for all the stuff. He loved it all!



Emma said that it was so cute to see him take out his new pencil box and to start arranging his pencils and pens. He seemed very happy.

This was a great experience for my daughter but I can't tell you the joy it brought to me to see a young kid acting upon something that was truly bothersome to her. Blossoming kindness and the willingness to take action are wonderful things to see.

I encourage all the youth of this world to keep your hearts open and never be afraid to show random acts of kindness to those in need. No matter what your friends say. Act upon what's in your heart, you never know it may create a ripple effect for others to do the same!

As for Jake ... I saw him walking home yesterday with his new back pack. It was a good feeling to know we had made a difference in his life!

Source: www.kindspring.org/story ♦

News Round-Up

Bishop Raphy Manjaly appointed Archdiocese of Agra

Pope Francis has transferred Bishop Raphy Manjaly of Allahabad to the metropolitan see of Agra, Uttar Pradesh. The appointment comes after the Pope accepted the resignation of Archbishop Albert D'Souza, who has been heading Agra Archdiocese since 2007.

Bishop Manjaly was born on February 7, 1958, in Vendoor, Kerala. After his school in his native state, he joined St Lawrence Minor Seminary, Agra, in 1973 and continued his philosophy and theology at St Joseph's Regional Seminary, Allahabad. He did his graduation and post-graduation degrees from Agra University. He obtained a doctoral degree from Angelicum University of Rome, Italy.

He was ordained a priest on May 11, 1983. Pope Benedict VI appointed him Bishop of Varanasi on February 24, 2007, and he was consecrated bishop on April 30 that year. Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Allahabad on October 17, 2013. ♦

Bishop Anthony Poola appointed Archbishop of Hyderabad

Pope Francis has transferred Bishop Anthony Poola of Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, to Hyderabad as archbishop. His appointment comes after the Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Thumma Bala of Hyderabad, who reached the bishops' canonical retirement age of 75 in April last year.

Ordained a priest in December 1970 and appointed Bishop of Warangal in 1986, Archbishop Bala has headed the Archdiocese of Hyderabad for 9 years since 2011.

Bishop Poola, 59, who will now head Hyderabad Archdiocese, was ordained a priest in February 1992 and appointed Bishop of Kurnool in February 2008.

The ecclesiastical province of Hyderabad includes the suffragan dioceses of Adilabad, Cuddapah, Khammam, Kurnool, Nalgonda and Warangal. ♦

Abp Sebastian Kallupura succeeds Archbishop William D'Souza of Patna

Coadjutor Archbishop Sebastian Kallupura has succeeded as Archbishop of Patna, Bihar. His succession came after Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Jesuit Archbishop William D'Souza of Patna who has retired.

Auxiliary and coadjutor bishops help the head of the diocese in the pastoral care and administration of the diocese. However, unlike an auxiliary bishop, a coadjutor bishop has the right of succession. On the resignation or death of the bishop of the diocese, the coadjutor bishop or archbishop automatically succeeds his predecessor.

Archbishop Kallupura, 67, is a native of Teekoy, in southern India's Kerala state. He joined the minor seminary in Palai in 1971 to work for Patna Diocese and was ordained to the priesthood on May 14, 1984. He holds a bachelor's degree in education from Bombay University. He served the Archdiocese of Patna as parish priest in various places and was assistant treasurer, director of the archdiocesan social apostolate and director of the Bihar Social Forum.

Pope Benedict appointed him Bishop of Buxar on April 7, 2009, and Pope Francis appointed him Coadjutor Archbishop of Patna on June 29, 2018. ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

January 2021- Human fraternity:

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

February 2001 - Violence against Women:

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

Feel free to share our 2021 calendar with your friends & family



Website: www.pmoindia.org

App: Pontifical Mission India (Android/iOS)

“Go out to the whole world and PROCLAIM the GOOD NEWS to all creation” Mark 16:15

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works through **FOUR** Mission Societies

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PROPAGATION OF
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was founded in 1822 by
PAULINE MARIE
JARICOT, in Lyon



PROMOTES MISSIONARY
ENTHUSIASM &
PASTORAL CARE

**PONTIFICAL SOCIETY
OF SAINT PETER THE
APOSTLE (POSPA)**
was founded in 1889 by
JEANNE BIGARD, in Caen



SERVES FORMATION OF
APOSTOLIC PERSONNEL

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OF MISSIONARY
CHILDHOOD
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was founded in 1843 by
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FOSTERS "CHILDREN
HELPING CHILDREN"

**PONTIFICAL
MISSIONARY UNION of
the clergy, religious and
the consecrated laity
(PMU)**
was founded in 1916 by BL
FR PAOLO MANNA, in Rome



ANIMATES TOWARDS
MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

In 1922, Pope Pius XI proclaimed the first three Societies Pontifical.
In 1956, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the fourth one Pontifical.

Have you added activities for Pontifical Mission Societies in your 2021 planner?

ST JOHN NEUMANN
(Feast Day: 5th January)

Merciful Father, You have given me all that I have in this world, even life itself. In all my daily needs, help me to remember the needs of others too. Make me aware of the need to pray to You not just for myself but for the Church, the Pope, for the clergy and for people who suffer any need.

Make me as selfless as Saint John Neumann was. Throughout my life, give me the grace to direct my first thoughts to the service of You and of others. Make my prayer – "Your will be done" – knowing that in Your mercy and love, Your will for me is my sanctification. I ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



For more information contact:

PONTIFICAL MISSION ORGANIZATIONS

No. 10, 3rd Cross, Ulsoor Road, Bangalore – 560042, Karnataka, INDIA.

Tel: +91 80 2558 5946 Email: pmorgbindia@gmail.com

Website: www.pmoindia.org App: **Pontifical Mission India (Android/iOS)**



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