



PROCLAIM

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A Magazine for Missionary Animation



spiritual
cooperation:
witness
prayer
sacrifice

HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY 2024

Through the alchemy of cooperation, darkness becomes illuminated, and shadows become dancing flames.



HOLY CHILDHOOD INDIA CELEBRATIONS '23





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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

In the spirit of this auspicious moment of the New Year, we reflect on the profound significance of 'spiritual cooperation' as the theme for Holy Childhood Day or Missionary Childhood Association Day. The theme takes us to a harmonious coming together of hearts and minds in pursuit of shared values. It is through such unity that we find strength, compassion, and the ability to make a positive impact on the world. Through the Holy Childhood Society, our children become agents of change. Their innocent prayers, fundraising efforts, and acts of kindness weave a powerful tapestry of compassion that stretches across continents. Let us nurture this spirit of generosity in our young ones, fostering future generations dedicated to building a just and loving world.



Pope Francis announced on 8 December 2023 that the Catholic Church will celebrate its first World Day of Children on 26 May 2024. "Like Jesus, we want to put children at the centre and care for them," said the Holy Father. The Pope explained that the day, organized by the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, will seek to answer the question, 'What kind of world do we wish to pass on to the children who are growing up?' The event was inspired by a 9-year-old boy named Alessandro, who proposed the idea to the pope to have an international event like World Youth Day.

Children must be celebrated every day. World Day of Children is a stark reminder of the responsibility we hold towards our most vulnerable. Millions of children globally face poverty, injustice, and unimaginable hardships. Let the Holy Childhood Day be a preparation to celebrate this day. In our parishes, through the Pontifical Mission Societies, let us reach out to children in need. Whether it's sponsoring a child's education, supporting child welfare initiatives, or simply offering a loving hand, let's build a world where every child's laughter fills the air.

The journey towards a brighter future necessitates spiritual cooperation, transcending boundaries and embracing diversity. In this interconnected world, may we recognize the universal thread that binds us all—the thread of humanity. As we celebrate the start of a new year, let us fortify our collective resolve to build bridges of understanding, sow seeds of kindness, and contribute to the betterment of our global family.

May this new year be a canvas upon which we paint moments of grace, compassion, and shared joy. In the spirit of spiritual cooperation, may we embark on this journey together, guided by the light of wisdom and unity.

Wishing you a blessed New Year filled with love, purpose, and the joy that comes from making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Fr Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

National Director (PMO-India)

The Child and the Church - Biblical and Theological Perspectives

Bishop J. Susaimanickam

1. Children: Divine Blessing and Human Delight

The distinction between children, youth and young adults is not neatly delineated in the Bible. From different terms that are used to refer to children we can infer that children are dependent, innocent, docile, vulnerable, owned, and gifts of God.



The Bible speaks of an ancient, patriarchal societies in which children were considered as God's blessing and gift and a source of delight for the parents. Children embodied the hope of the family or the people for a meaningful future expressed symbolically in the form of a "name," "progeny," "inheritance," or divine "promise." This applied mainly to the male children and female children were treated as less privileged like woman themselves. The legal code explicitly favours the first-born son, particularly in the inheritance of property – double inheritance for the first born (Deut 21:15-17). Nevertheless, this normative pattern is repeatedly subverted in Israel's historical narratives. Time and again the tables are turned, and the younger sibling comes out ahead: Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh, David among his brothers. However, we learn that Job had given his daughters an inheritance along with their brothers (Job 42:15^b).

On the contrary in some modern societies children are not welcome nor wanted, especially the girl children. Surprisingly animals are slowly taking the place of children.

It is heartening to note a child is given as a sign of salvation to the people of Israel (Isa 7:14; Mt1:23). "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us..." (Isa 9:6). The coming or birth of that child was long awaited by the people of Israel as the Messiah." But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children (Gal 4:4-5; Lk 2:1-20). Later Simeon, prompted by the Holy Spirit presented Jesus "as a light for revelation to the Gentiles" and glory of Israel (Lk 2:25-35).

2. Children and Education

Childhood in itself was regarded as a stage of immaturity, ignorance and deficient reason. Therefore, education played a critical role in moulding children for adulthood. In early Judaism, the centrality of *Torah* (Law) observance carried with it a privileged status and the adult male bore full responsibility to know and keep the Torah.

Evidently educational practices routinely employed severe discipline, both verbal and physical as it is obvious from the proverb: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This was taken too seriously by the ancient society and children were subject to discipline and control of parents. Sometimes the mode of discipline was



quite harsh as found in (Prov 22:15; 13:24; 3:11-12). The book of Sirach recommends severe discipline of a son, not so much for his own sake (discipline as training), but to spare the parent great misery (Sir 30:1-13). All manner of physical discipline is child abuse.

Emphasis on parental control of children appears in the NT as well, although generally without a harsh tone. Later epistles of St. Paul assume clear structures of authority within the patriarchal household. Children will have to be obedient to their parents, and effective discipline will enable the family to avoid public dishonour (Col 3:20-21; Eph 6:4). In other words, children are expected to be obedient and well-disciplined. Whereas Jesus is portrayed as a model boy: "There the child grew in stature and strength. He was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him... Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Lk 2:40, 52).

3. Vulnerability and Threat

Sacrificing children to gods was in vogue in those days (Jer 32:35; 7:30-31; 19:5; Ezek 16:20; 20:31; 23:37-39). It is in this context that the dramatic story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son Isaac can be rightly understood. However, by a last-minute intervention of God, Isaac survived (Gen 22; cf 19:8).

Pharaoh attempted the genocide of the Israelites by killing all the male children; whereas God intervened in the history of Israel and protected Moses who would become later the liberator and leader of the Israelites (Exod 1-2). Similar stories abound in the Bible (1 Kgs 17:17-23; 2 Kgs 4:8-37, Lk 8:49-56; 9:42; Mt 9:25; 17:18; Mk 5:41; 9:26-27). So also, Jesus survived the death threat of Herod the great (Mt 2:16-18).

The book of Lamentations contains a number of descriptions of the painfulness and injustice of situations where children are dying because their basic needs are not met (Lam 2:11-12, 19; 4:4). It is shocking that similar evil practices against children like infanticide, child neglect, migration, slave trade, child labour, abuse of children by parents themselves, prostitution and human trafficking continue.

Child abuse is not only physical violence, but it can be emotional, sexual and the like.

The story of Ishmael shows how God is concerned about children by protecting them (Gen 21:8-20). Like God we also should seek to be aware of children in need of protection, to meet their needs and to be there for them. Jesus also warns against oppressing and mistreating the children (Mt 18:6; Mk 9:42). "It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble" (Lk 17:2). Jesus also says: "See to it that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven" (Mt 18:10).

God himself acts to protect children and he will not turn a blind eye to those who try to exploit vulnerable children (Isa 49:25). Protecting children is not only the responsibility of parents or those who work with them, but all of us should be part of ensuring that the children around us are safe and being protected from harm (Lev 20:22-25; Dt 24:17-21; Ps 82:3; 72:4; Is 1:17).

4. Jesus' Predilection for Children

Children are conspicuous in the cast of characters who receive healing from Jesus in



the Synoptic Gospels: Jairus' daughter who is twelve (Mk 5:42); the boy tormented by an unclean spirit since childhood (Mk 9:14-29); the daughter of a gentile woman (Mk 7:25-30).

It is not surprising, therefore that people would bring young children to Jesus to be blessed by him (Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15), "And he [Jesus] took them [the children] up in his

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Children: Their Rights and Obligations

Fr Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose

Introduction

“Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him” (Psalms 127:3). Children are not just the future of the Church; they are an integral part of its present. Our responsibility towards children is multifaceted and extends across various domains, including ensuring their safety, well-being, education, and overall development. As a society, community, and as individuals, we bear a collective and moral responsibility to create an environment that nurtures and safeguards the rights and dignity of every child. Our children are our future - they will be the leaders, the believers, the parents, the citizens of tomorrow. In responding to their needs today, we shape a better future for all. Our children are our present - our children bring us special gifts, today, not just tomorrow. They are the sign of God's continual gift to the world. Thus, we need to respect them and place their rights as a priority in our society and our church.

Family and Children

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “*Gaudium et Spes*” of the



Second Vatican Council recognises the family as the basic unit of society and the domestic church. It emphasises the importance of family life in nurturing and educating children in the faith and in human values. The obligation to promote the good of children is described in canon 1136 as follows: “Parents have the most

serious duty and primary right to do all in their power to see to the physical, social, cultural, moral and religious upbringing of their children. According to canon 975, such an education comprises an integral formation of the child. Since a true education must strive for the integral formation of the human person, a formation which looks toward the person's final end and, at the same time, toward the common good of societies, children and young people are to be so reared that they can develop their physical, moral and intellectual talents harmoniously, that they acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and correct use of freedom, and that they are educated for active participation in social life.

A greater number of canons on the role of parents in regard to the education of their children are found in Book III of CIC 1983. These canons reiterate the duty of parents to form their children by word and example, in faith and Christian living. Christian parents and those who take their place have the duty and right to choose those means and institutions which, in their local circumstances, can best provide for the Catholic education of their children. They are to send their children to those schools in which Catholic education is provided.

In the sacred realm of the Code of Canon Law, the rights and obligations of children occupy a significant place, emphasising the Church's commitment to nurturing and safeguarding the well-being of its youngest members. Rooted in the teachings of Christ and the understanding of the Church as a family, the Code of Canon Law outlines principles that acknowledge the inherent dignity of children and delineates the responsibilities entrusted to them within the ecclesiastical community.

Children's Rights in Canon Law:

1) Dignity and Respect: Canon 220 asserts the rights of all Christian faithful, including children, to respect and protect their dignity. This echoes the fundamental Christian belief

that every person, regardless of age, is created in the image and likeness of God.

2) **Spiritual Formation:** Canon 217 highlights the right of the Christian faithful, including children, to receive spiritual assistance from the Church. This underscores the Church's obligation to provide guidance and nurture the spiritual growth of its young members.

3) **Access to Sacraments:** Canon 843 §2 specifies the right of children to receive the sacraments at appropriate times. This affirms the Church's commitment to facilitating access to the sacraments as essential components of the Christian journey.

Children's Obligations in Canon Law:

1) **Reverence and Respect:** Canon 209 emphasises the obligation of the Christian faithful, including children, to maintain a sense of reverence and respect for the Church and its ministers. This underscores the importance of instilling a sense of decorum and reverence in the youngest members of the ecclesiastical community.

2) **Participation in Formation:** Canon 226 §2 outlines the obligation of parents and those who take their place to ensure the Christian education of their children. This extends to participation in religious formation programs, reflecting the Church's expectation that parents play an active role in the spiritual development of their children.

3) **Active Engagement in the Faith:** Canon 225 §1 stresses the obligation of the Christian faithful, including children, to work towards building up the Church through active participation and engagement in the mission of evangelisation. This encourages children to view themselves not only as recipients of the faith but as active contributors to the Church's mission.

In the tapestry of Canon Law, the provisions addressing the rights and obligations of children resonate with the Church's deep commitment to fostering a nurturing and spiritually enriching environment for its youngest members. By recognising the inherent dignity of children and outlining their rights and responsibilities, the Code of Canon Law reflects

the ecclesiastical community's dedication to cultivating the spiritual growth and well-being of its future stewards of faith. As the Church continues to evolve, the principles embedded in



the Code of Canon Law serve as a guidepost, ensuring that children remain cherished members of the ecclesiastical family, with rights to uphold and responsibilities to embrace.

Child Protection and Zero Tolerance in the Church

Child sexual abuse is a deeply disturbing and reprehensible crime that involves the exploitation of children for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. It is a grave violation of a child's rights, safety, and well-being, leaving lasting physical, emotional, and psychological scars. Addressing this issue is of utmost importance to protect children and create a safer environment for their growth and development. Child sexual abuse encompasses a range of activities, including but not limited to molestation, rape, incest, child pornography, and grooming. Child pornography represents a particularly terrible threat to children. They serve as subjects in the production of pornography and sex objects for those who make use of pornographic materials. This illegal and immoral use of children for sexual purposes and profit must be confronted and stopped. Pornography demeans women, degrades our society and destroys the love at the centre of human sexuality. We need effective, constitutional remedies which protect children, women and all of society. Growing violent abuse and neglect of infants and children has led to families where children are not only rejected but endangered and to the phenomenon of the "no parent" family. Canon 1398, which incorporates Article 6 of the Norms regarding Delicts Reserved to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the

Faith (2022), clearly prescribes the canonical provisions for the protection and penalties for the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. Prevention is a key component in addressing child sexual abuse. This involves educating parents, caregivers, teachers, and children themselves about healthy boundaries, safe touch, and recognising inappropriate behaviour. Community awareness campaigns, workshops, and training programs play a vital role in preventing abuse. Reporting suspicions of abuse to the appropriate authorities is essential to ensure the safety of the child and to initiate legal proceedings against the offender.

Our responsibility towards children is an investment in the future. By prioritising their well-being, we contribute to building a compassionate, just, and sustainable world where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The gravity of the obligations of parents and those who take their place regarding the children's baptism and Catholic education is stressed by the prescription of a canonical penalty for their negligence. According to canon 1366: "Parents and those who substitute for parents are to be punished with a censure or another just penalty if they hand their children over to be baptised or educated in a non-Catholic religion."

Key Aspects of Our Responsibility Towards Children

Protection from Harm: Ensure children are protected from all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. Advocate for and contribute to the creation of safe spaces where children can grow, play, and learn without fear.

Providing Education: Support initiatives ensuring access to quality education for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. Encourage and actively participate in programs that promote literacy and lifelong learning opportunities.

Health and Well-being: Advocate for comprehensive healthcare services for children, including vaccinations, regular check-ups, and

access to mental health resources. Promote healthy lifestyles and nutrition to ensure the physical well-being of children.

Fostering Emotional Well-being: Create nurturing environments that prioritise children's emotional and psychological well-being. Support mental health initiatives and awareness to address issues such as anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges in children.

Respecting Rights and Dignity: Uphold and advocate for the rights of children as outlined in international conventions and national laws. Treat every child with respect, dignity, and kindness, recognising their individuality and unique potential.

Ensuring Equal Opportunities: Strive for equality and inclusivity to ensure that every child, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or ability, has equal opportunities to thrive. Advocate against discrimination and work towards dismantling barriers that hinder the development of certain groups of children.

Encouraging Participation: Empower children to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility. Create platforms for children to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas.

Promoting Positive Role Models: Act as positive role models for children by demonstrating empathy, integrity, and ethical behaviour. Encourage and celebrate positive behaviours and achievements in children.



Environmental Stewardship: Advocate for sustainable practices that protect the environment, ensuring a healthy planet for future generations. Teach

children the importance of environmental stewardship and responsible citizenship.

Global Citizenship: Cultivate a sense of global citizenship by fostering an understanding of different cultures, perspectives, and global challenges. Support initiatives that address

global issues affecting children, such as poverty, conflict, and lack of access to basic necessities.

Conclusion:

The Holy Childhood emphasises the inherent innocence and purity of children, calling upon adults to approach them with humility and openness. Christ's words, "Let the little children come to me," encapsulate the essence of this sacred concept, inviting believers to perceive the divine light that shines through the eyes of every child. Central to the Holy Childhood is the commitment to fostering

spiritual growth from an early age. Recognising the formative power of childhood experiences, the Church encourages parents, guardians, and the entire faith community to actively engage in the spiritual formation of children, helping them develop a strong foundation in the teachings of Christ.

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arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them" (Mk 10:16). He was indeed the friend of children.

5. The Child and the Church

Regardless of age, all the people of God bear the identity and role of a child in relation to God. In OT Israel as a whole is termed as God's child and son (Exod 4:22-23; Hos 1:1; cf Deut 1:31). In the NT the believers receive the identity and status of children of God by sharing in Jesus' own filial relation to God (Jn 1:12-13; Gal 4:1-7; 1 Jn 3:1-2, 10; 5:19; cf Rom 8:14-17, 19). By faith Jews and Gentiles alike become children of Abraham and hence "children of the covenant and children of God" (Rom 4:11-18; Gal 3:29).

In this vein, leaders who exercise authority in a congregation or Church may view its members as children and provide guidance and thus play the parental role (2 Cor 12:14; Gal 4:19).

6. Our Mission

Hundreds of children from around the world were encouraged to send their questions to Pope Francis. He chose 30 questions and sent his answers. That is published as a book by name "Dear Pope Francis" (2016). The thirtieth question was raised by William aged 7 from the US. His question is: "Dear Pope Francis, if you could do one miracle, what would it be?" Pope's answer is: "Dear William, I would heal children. I've never been able to understand why children

suffer. It's a mystery to me. I don't have an explanation. I ask myself about this, and I pray about your question. Why do children suffer? My heart asks the question. Jesus wept, and by weeping, he understood our tragedies. I try to understand too. Yes, if I could perform a miracle, I would heal every child... My answer to the pain of children is silence, or perhaps a word that rises from my tears. I'm not afraid to cry. You shouldn't be either."

As Church members, let us all of own responsibility for every kinds of suffering



children are undergoing, and weep with them and try to do the miracle of healing children by our child-friendly approach like Jesus – like his Vicar Pope Francis. This is our mission ahead!

[Most Rev. J. Susaimanickam is the Emeritus Bishop of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu. This article is the summary of his keynote address at the National Conference on 'Child Protection: The Church, Law and Our Mission', convoked by the Legal Cell of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council, in 2021] ♦

Activities of the MCA in India

Selvaraj, Kadugu Vidhai

1. Children Animator Training Program for the Catechism Teachers

The Children Animator Training Program for Catechism Teachers was a resounding success! These comprehensive programs held in the Archdioceses of Madras-Mylapore, and Madurai, and in the Dioceses of Palayamkottai,



Chingleput, and Sivagangai, held in July, Aug, Sep, October 2023 aimed to equip catechism teachers (1340 in total) with the skills and knowledge needed to engage and inspire children in their faith formation.

a. Program Highlights

(i) *Interactive Workshops*: Renowned experts in child psychology, catechetics, and pedagogy led engaging workshops covering topics like child development, effective teaching methods, creative activities, and fostering a vibrant learning environment.

(ii) *Practical Skills Development*: Participants honed their storytelling skills, learned how to incorporate music and games into lessons, and explored various technological tools to enhance children's learning experience.

(iii) *Faith Formation and Reflection*: The program also emphasized the importance of the catechism teachers' own faith formation. Dedicated sessions on spirituality, scripture, and prayer provided opportunities for personal growth and reflection.

(iv) *Collaboration and Sharing*: Throughout the program, participants actively collaborated, sharing best practices, exchanging ideas, and creating a supportive network for ongoing learning and mutual encouragement.

b. Outcomes and Impact

(i) The program's immediate impact was evident in the participants' enthusiasm and newfound confidence. They left equipped with a toolbox of practical skills, fresh ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose to make their catechism classes dynamic and engaging for children.

(ii) Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the program's relevance to their daily challenges, focus on practical skills and tools, inspiring and uplifting sessions, strong sense of community and support

c. Looking Ahead

The Children Animator Training Program is not an isolated event. The aim is to create a sustainable support system for catechism teachers. Plans include:

(i) *Mentorship program*: Experienced catechism teachers will mentor newer colleagues, offering guidance and ongoing support.

(ii) *Resource library*: A curated collection of lesson plans, activities, and multimedia resources will be readily available to all catechism teachers.

(iii) *Online community platform*: A dedicated online platform will foster ongoing communication, collaboration, and resource sharing among catechism teachers.

2. Retreat for the School Children on the Theme 'Becoming Like Christ'

a. *Time and Place*: 29 October 2023. Parish of the Church of Holy Trinity. Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore

b. *Objective*: To help children understand and cultivate the qualities of Jesus Christ in their lives.

c. Highlights:

(i) *Inspirational Talks*: Mr. Selvaraj of Kadugu Vidhai delivered captivating talks on

Jesus' teachings, focusing on values like love, compassion, forgiveness, and service.

(ii) **Interactive Activities:** Children participated in engaging games, workshops, and role-playing exercises that brought Jesus' life and teachings to life in a tangible way.

(iii) **Nature Exploration:** Through hiking and outdoor activities, children reflected on Jesus' connection with nature and his teachings on mindfulness and appreciation for creation.



(iv) **Creative Expression:** Children expressed their understanding of Jesus through art, music, and drama, fostering creativity and personal reflection.

(v) **Fellowship and Prayer:** Group discussions, prayer sessions, and moments of silence provided opportunities for children to connect with their peers and deepen their personal relationship with God.

d. Outcomes:

- (i) Children exhibited a deeper understanding of Jesus' teachings and values.
- (ii) They expressed a stronger desire to emulate Jesus' qualities in their own lives.
- (iii) The retreat fostered a sense of community and shared faith among the children.
- (iii) Many children expressed a renewed commitment to prayer and service.

"I learned that Jesus is closer to me." - Rekha, Grade III

"The retreat helped me realize that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference, just like Jesus showed us." - Vijesh, Grade VI

"I used to be afraid to stand up for what I believe in, but now I feel empowered to do so because of Jesus' example." – Anura, Grade X

e. Conclusion:

The Retreat for the School Children on the Theme 'Becoming Like Christ' was a resounding success. It provided a meaningful and engaging experience that helped children connect with Jesus on a deeper level and cultivate the qualities he embodied. The retreat's impact is sure to resonate in the children's lives as they strive to become more compassionate, forgiving, and service-oriented individuals, inspiring others to follow suit and create a more Christ-like world.

3. A Day with Jesus: An Immersive Catechism Workshop for Children

Imagine stepping back in time and walking alongside Jesus, experiencing his teachings and miracles first-hand. That's exactly what children did at the 'A Day with Jesus' workshop, at by Catholic Good News Group, of Palayamkottai diocese on Sunday, 5 Nov 2023, at St. Ignatius (Convent) Higher Secondary School, Tirunelveli. Around 350 catechism children participated in this retreat. The event brought the Bible to life through engaging activities and immersive storytelling.

a. Stepping into Scripture: The workshop transformed the familiar classroom into a bustling marketplace in ancient Judea. Children donned colourful tunics and headbands, transforming into merchants, fishermen, and curious onlookers ready to encounter Jesus.

b. Interactive Storytelling: A captivating storyteller, dressed in traditional garb, narrated key moments from Jesus' life. Children weren't just passive listeners; they were active participants.

c. Hands-on Learning: But the learning didn't stop at theatrics. Children also participated in fun and educational activities that reinforced Jesus' teachings. They crafted parables in clay,

sang uplifting hymns, and played cooperative games that emphasized values like forgiveness, kindness, and helping others.

d. Reflection and Sharing: Throughout the day, children were encouraged to reflect on Jesus' message and how it applied to their own lives. They discussed their emotions during the re-enactments, shared personal connections to the parables, and brainstormed ways to embody Jesus' teachings in their everyday interactions.

e. A Lasting Impact: By the end of the day, the children weren't just reciting Bible verses; they were buzzing with excitement about Jesus and his teachings. They hugged goodbye, not just as classmates, but as friends united by their shared journey through the life of Christ. The 'A Day with Jesus' workshop wasn't just an educational experience; it was a transformative one, sparking a love for Scripture and a desire to live by Jesus' example.

f. Safety and Inclusion: The workshop organizers ensured a safe and inclusive environment for all children. Activities were designed to be accessible to participants of different abilities and learning styles. Sensitive topics were handled with care and respect, and all children were encouraged to participate and share their thoughts and feelings.

g. A Spark of Inspiration: The 'A Day with Jesus' workshop is a testament to the power of creative and engaging methods in catechism education. By bringing Scripture to life and making it relatable to children's experiences, the workshop not only imparts knowledge but also ignites a passion for faith and a desire to follow Jesus' teachings.

4. Children's Day Special Retreat

Imagine a haven where laughter echoes through sun-dappled meadows, imaginations soar like kites on a gentle breeze, and creativity erupts in vibrant bursts of colour. This wasn't just a scene from a storybook; it was the reality of a recent Children's Day special retreat,

a place where kids were whisked away on an unforgettable adventure.

From the moment they arrived, the retreat buzzed with excitement. Wide-eyed wonder and infectious enthusiasm painted the faces of the young participants. Whether it was the thrill of exploration, the joy of newfound friendships, or the simple delight of being in a space designed just for them, the energy was palpable.

The retreat wasn't just about fun and games; it was about planting seeds of hope, resilience, and self-belief in the hearts of these young explorers. As they departed, their backpacks brimmed not just with souvenirs, but with newfound confidence, a spark of creativity, and the echo of laughter that would forever remind them of this magical adventure.

5. Daily Online Rosary for Children

In today's digital age, connecting children with their faith can take innovative forms. One inspiring example is the Daily Online Rosary for Children, a virtual gathering that brings young hearts together to pray, learn, and grow in their spiritual journey, since October 2021, through zoom meet, in English and regional languages.



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'Come to Me Daily'

A Year of Nurturing Faith and Fun in a Children's Prayer Group

Sr Margarita Dias SCB



'Come to Me Daily' is not an average children's prayer group. It's a vibrant community woven with faith, fun, and unwavering dedication to nurturing young minds and hearts. As you delve into their 2023 journey, a kaleidoscope of events unfolds, showcasing the group's commitment to fostering spiritual growth, community, and a love for God.

A Strong Start

The year kicked off with a special online prayer for the new academic year, where nearly 70 children raised their voices and hearts in unison. This spirit of shared devotion extended to grandparents and parents, who gathered in July for an impactful meeting focused on their role as intercessors and pillars of support.

Family - The Cornerstone

July also marked the launch of the 'Year of the Family' in the Archdiocese of Bangalore, a beautiful initiative that saw children take centre stage every Saturday, leading reflections on biblical

families. This weekly ritual, coupled with family-focused prayers throughout the week, strengthened the bonds within the group, creating a supportive network of over 30 families.

Beyond Walls and Screens

The group's dynamism transcended the digital space with an enriching offline retreat for 80 children at Lake Montfort School. August 15 witnessed another burst of joy with online games and prayers, while September saw children honouring their teacher-parents with heartfelt wishes and prayers.

Moments of Reflection and Action

The year held space for both celebration and contemplation. Special prayers were offered for peace in Manipur, while All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day brought opportunities to remember and honour the dearly departed. In November, the group stepped outside the virtual world, gathering at St. Charles Provincial House for a fun-filled day of prayer, fellowship, and family bonding.

Everyday Devotion and Individual Care

Underpinning it all was the unwavering rhythm of daily prayers, with each evening dedicated to a different prayer format at 5pm. Birthdays were celebrated with special wishes and prayers, ensuring every child felt cherished



and loved. And for those needing extra support, one-on-one counselling provided a safe space for guidance and encouragement.

Sharing the Light

To amplify their reach, the group even uploaded a video showcasing their activities on



the Archdiocesan Youth YouTube channel during the Mission Month of October. This act of sharing served as a beacon of hope and inspiration, inviting others to join the journey of faith and community.

Looking back on 2023, 'Come to Me Daily' emerges as more than just a prayer group. Through their innovative activities, unwavering dedication, and unwavering focus on family and inclusivity, the group has nurtured a vibrant haven where children can connect with God, their families, and each other, creating memories and experiences that will stay with them for ever.

[Rev. Sr. Margarita Dias SCB is a member of the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo Western Province] ♦

Continued from Page 11: Activities of the MCA in India

Each decade of the Rosary is offered for various intentions including Mission, Church, and world Peace.

Free from the traditional constraints of a physical location, the online platform fosters a sense of inclusivity and accessibility, welcoming children from diverse backgrounds and locations to join in prayer and fellowship.

The daily sessions are carefully designed to spark curiosity and engage young minds. Interactive elements like age-appropriate stories, scripture readings, and quizzes make learning about the mysteries of the rosary both fun and meaningful. Children actively participate in the prayers, responding with enthusiasm and a genuine sense of devotion.

Beyond the prayers, the online platform fosters a strong sense of community. Children interact with each other through chat features, sharing their thoughts and experiences. This virtual space allows them to connect with peers who share their faith, building friendships and a sense of belonging that transcends boundaries.

Our MCA children participated in the chain rosary prayer in response to the World day of

Prayer for Peace called by our Beloved Pope on 27 October 2023.

6. Other Initiatives

Kadugu Vidhai team has also initiated to send a good-morning-messages with Scriptural



Texts in English and regional languages to all the members of Missionary Childhood Association since September 2023. Besides, *Kadugu Vidhai* also helps the young missionaries of the Holy Childhood Associations with spiritual messages, inspirational videos, and motivations. ♦

Exploring Spiritual Cooperation: A Multifaceted Perspective

Fr Dr Yesu Karunanidhi

The Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood promotes children's missionary cooperation in three ways: "Spiritual cooperation: through the offering of their Christian life (witness), continuous prayer for the mission and offering their sacrifices by joining them to Jesus for the salvation of children and the world; material or economic cooperation: through the economic missionary offering and other material goods; and missionary cooperation: God needs our collaboration. He needs us as missionaries. Moreover, he needs us to help him promote missionary vocations."

(cf. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cevang/p_missionary_works/infantia/documents/rc_ic_infantia_pro_20011106_profile-part-4_en.html)

This year we reflect on 'spiritual cooperation.' Spiritual cooperation is a concept deeply embedded in the fabric of various religious traditions, particularly in the Judeo-Christian context. This article aims to delve into the biblical, theological, and sociological dimensions of spiritual cooperation, unravelling its significance and implications for individuals and communities.

a. Biblical Perspectives

The Bible serves as a foundational source for understanding spiritual cooperation. From the very creation story, where God collaborates with humans to cultivate the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15), to the image of humanity created in God's image, a relational being (Genesis 1:27), the theme of working together runs like a leitmotif through the Bible. The concept is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who emphasized love, unity, and collaboration among believers. The Apostle Paul, in his letters,

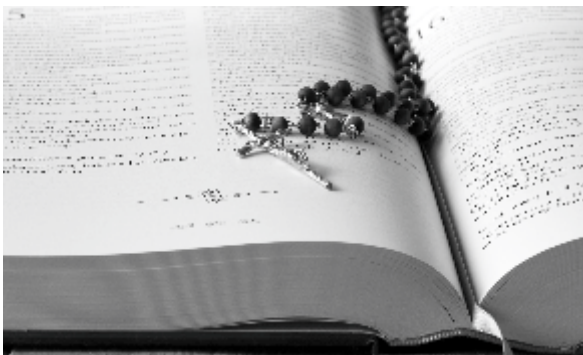
frequently addressed the importance of believers working together for a common purpose. The metaphor of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12 highlights the interconnectedness of believers, each contributing unique gifts for the greater good.

Furthermore, acts of cooperation permeate the narrative, from the Israelites constructing the tabernacle under Moses' guidance (Exodus 35-40) to Jesus' emphasis on loving one another (John 13:34). The concept transcends mere human collaboration, as the Holy Spirit is seen as actively working in and through individuals and communities, fostering unity and purpose (Acts 2:1-4). The early Christian community in Acts 2:42-47 illustrates the power of spiritual cooperation in achieving shared goals.

b. Theological Reflections

From a theological standpoint, spiritual cooperation is deeply intertwined with the concept of the Kingdom of God. Theological reflections on cooperation often revolve around the understanding that God's ultimate plan involves the restoration and reconciliation of all things. Cooperation, then, becomes a means through which individuals participate in the divine mission of bringing about God's kingdom on earth.

Concepts like the 'Body of Christ,' signifying the interconnectedness of believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27), emphasize the unity and shared responsibility within the faith



community. Likewise, the notion of 'synergy,' where the combined efforts of individuals produce a greater outcome than they could achieve alone, highlights the role of divine grace in amplifying human cooperation.

Spiritual cooperation is rooted in the nature of God as a relational being. The Trinity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, models perfect cooperation and unity. Humans, created in the image of God, are called to reflect this divine cooperation in their relationships with one another.

c. Sociological Dimensions

Examining spiritual cooperation through a sociological lens reveals its impact on human communities. Faith-based organizations and interfaith initiatives serve as tangible expressions of collaboration, tackling social issues, fostering dialogue, and providing mutual support. Sociologists also explore the ways in which shared spiritual values can contribute to social cohesion and collective action.

However, the sociological perspective also cautions against potential drawbacks. Issues like power dynamics, exclusion, and differing theological interpretations can pose challenges to achieving true cooperation. Careful consideration of diversity and inclusivity is paramount in forging strong and equitable partnerships.

d. Challenges and Opportunities

While spiritual cooperation offers tremendous potential for positive impact, it is not without challenges. Differences in theological interpretation, cultural practices, and individual preferences can create tension within religious communities. Navigating these differences requires a commitment to dialogue, understanding, and a shared commitment to core principles.

Opportunities for spiritual cooperation lie in the recognition of common values and shared goals. Interfaith initiatives, collaborative social outreach programs, and partnerships for community development are examples of how diverse groups can come together for the greater good, transcending religious boundaries.

e. Children as Agents of Spiritual Cooperation: Tiny Hands, Mighty Hearts

The image of a child, eyes wide with wonder and hands outstretched, embodies the very essence of spiritual cooperation. In their innocence and openness, they possess a unique capacity to bridge divides, foster compassion, and weave together the threads of faith and community.

From the moment they enter the world, children exhibit an innate inclination towards connection. They readily reach out to their peers, forming bonds through shared laughter,



playful interactions, and a natural inclination to care for one another. This innate empathy forms the fertile ground for nurturing the seeds of spiritual cooperation.

Religious traditions across the globe recognize the vital role children play in spiritual life. Many faiths involve children in rituals and ceremonies from a young age, allowing them to witness and participate in acts of shared devotion, prayer, and service. Through these experiences, children internalize the values of cooperation, compassion, and service, laying the foundation for their own contributions to a more harmonious world.

Beyond formal religious settings, children's natural inclination towards empathy and collaboration can be channelled into powerful agents of change. Their creative perspectives and boundless enthusiasm can inspire adults to embrace inclusivity, break down barriers, and work together for the common good. Initiatives like interfaith dialogue groups, peace-building projects, and environmental activism offer platforms for

children to actively contribute to a more just and compassionate world.



Nurturing children's capacity for spiritual cooperation requires careful attention. Exposing them to diverse faiths and perspectives fosters understanding and respect. Equipping them with tools for conflict resolution and empathy empowers them to navigate

differences constructively. Creating safe spaces for open dialogue and shared experiences allows them to express their own spiritual journeys and learn from one another.

f. Conclusion

In conclusion, our Holy Father Pope Francis' initiative of taking us on the synodal journey is an exercise of spiritual cooperation. Our Supreme Pontiff underlines that the Trinitarian communion is at the centre of our synodal journey. As we now march towards Jubilee A. D. 2025 as 'pilgrims of hope', let us promote and foster 'spiritual cooperation' in children, who are the agents of change.

[*Rev. Prof. Dr. Yesu Karunanidhi*, a priest of the Archdiocese of Madurai, currently serves as the Executive Secretary to the CCBI Commission for Bible, and as the National Coordinator for the Synod for a Synodal Church 2021-2024, and Jubilee A.D. 2025. He can be contacted through www.yesukarunanidhi.in] ♦

Year of Prayer begins in preparation for 2025 jubilee (Dicastery for Evangelization)

(2-1-24) Pope Francis has asked that the year 2024 be dedicated to prayer, in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year. Since the 15th century, it has been customary for the Church to celebrate a jubilee every 25 years. "In preparation for the Jubilee, dioceses are invited to promote initiatives to remind people of the centrality of both individual prayer and community prayer," the Dicastery for Evangelization explains. "One idea might be for 'pilgrimages of prayer' to be organized at a diocesan level—these would be effectively courses or 'schools of prayer' with monthly or weekly meetings, presided over by the local bishops, but open to the entire People of God." The Year of Prayer follows the Year of the Council, devoted to the four constitutions of the Second Vatican Council. The Pope emphasized the Year of Prayer in his year-end homily. "The coming year, which precedes the Jubilee, is devoted to prayer," he preached. "An entire year devoted to prayer. And what better teacher could we have than our Holy Mother? Let us place ourselves in her school: let us learn from her how to live every day, every moment, every occupation with the inner gaze turned towards Jesus. Joys and sufferings, satisfactions and problems. All in the presence of and with the grace of Jesus, the Lord."

Children's Quotes on Mission, Jesus, and Church

On Mission:

- “The world is like a big playground, and Jesus wants us to share our toys!” - Sarah, 5
- “Helping others makes my heart smile bigger than when I eat ice cream!” - Thomas, 7
- “Even though I'm little, my prayers can fly around the world and help kids who need it most!” - Anjali, 9
- “Mission work is like climbing a mountain, but we can help each other reach the top.” - David, 11
- “The best way to tell someone you love them is to share your lunch.” - Kiran, 7
- “Sometimes the biggest mission is just being kind to the kid sitting next to you.” - Isabel, 11

On Jesus:

- “Jesus is like my best friend, even though I can't see him. He always listens when I whisper prayers.” - Anna, 6
- “God is like the sunshine, even when it's cloudy, He's always there.” - Geeta, 9
- “Jesus loves everyone, even the kids who don't have dresses or enough food.” - Felix, 8
- “Jesus' stories are like magic lessons, they teach me how to be kind and brave.” - Janet, 10
- “Jesus said love your neighbour, so even if your neighbour lives far away, you can still hug them with your heart.” - Santhosh, 12



On Church:

- “Church is like a treehouse for my soul, it's a place where I feel safe and happy.” - Sophia, 13
- “Singing in church makes me fly high like a butterfly.” - Catherine, 14.
- “The stories in the Bible are like a treasure chest, full of adventures and wisdom.” - Elias, 10
- “Church is where I meet my friends who love Jesus too, we're like a superhero team!” - Antony, 13

These quotes are a reminder that children have a unique and often profound perspective on faith, mission, and community. Their innocence and sincerity can offer fresh insights and inspire us all to act with love and compassion.

(From the interviews taken by Ms. Jenitha Mary Francis Xavier, for the PMS India, during her retreats to the children across South India). ♦



Holy Childhood Sunday Celebrations Ideas



Here are some ideas to celebrate Holy Childhood Sunday, a day dedicated to promoting awareness and raising funds for underprivileged children worldwide:

Engaging Children:

- a. Interactive Storytelling: Tell stories about missionary kids or challenges faced by children in different parts of the world. Let the children ask questions and discuss solutions.
- b. Fun Quizzes and Games: Organize age-appropriate quizzes about Catholic missions and the Holy Childhood Association. Use games like bingo or charades to make learning interactive.
- c. Arts and Crafts: Have children create artwork reflecting their understanding of mission work. These can be displayed during Mass or sold to raise funds.
- d. Special Performances: Encourage children to prepare songs, dances, or short skits related to the Holy Childhood theme. This can be performed during Mass or as a separate event.

Community Engagement:

- a. Guest Speaker: Invite a missionary or someone who works with underprivileged children to share their experiences and inspire the community.
- b. Missionary Walkathon: Organize a walkathon or fun run where participants raise pledges for the Holy Childhood Association. This can be a great way to involve the whole community.
- c. Service Project: Organize a service project within the community, such as visiting a nursing home or volunteering at a local charity. This can teach children about compassion and the importance of helping others.
- d. Social Media Campaign: Encourage the community to share stories and photos on social media using a relevant hashtag to raise awareness about the Holy Childhood Association.

Additional Ideas:

- a. Decorate the church with posters and banners related to the Holy Childhood theme.
- b. Incorporate special prayers and hymns focused on children in need during Mass.
- c. Create a prayer chain where individuals commit to praying for underprivileged children throughout the year.
- d. Offer resources such as information pamphlets or books about missionaries and mission work.

From Rome to Home

May Christmas bring peace to our world and turn sorrow into joy (25 December 2023)



Greeting the crowds gathered in Saint Peter's Square from the central loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis offered his traditional good wishes on this Christmas Day with a message followed by his solemn 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing, to the city and the world.

The Pope said we look to the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem during these times, sadly marked by 'sorrow and silence.' Yet the birth of the Saviour there and the proclamation of the angel, "To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord," give us great hope as 'the Lord has been born for us ... the eternal Word of the Father, the infinite God, has made His home among us.'

Introducing his message, the Pope said the 'good news of great joy' we celebrate is the 'sure promise of an unprecedented gift: the hope of being born for heaven' as the Lord's birth reveals God's tender love and that Jesus 'gives us power to become children of God'.

Pope begins series of general audiences on virtues, vices (27 December 2023)

At his December 27 general audience, held in Paul VI Audience Hall, Pope Francis announced the beginning of a series of Wednesday general audiences devoted to the virtues and vices. The following is a summary of his talk:

Today we begin a series of catecheses on the virtues and the vices opposed to

them. The very first pages of the Bible present us with the drama of original goodness, temptation and sin. The Tempter, in the form of a serpent, is subtle, instilling doubt about God's wisdom and intentions, and playing on our ambition and pride. Just as love is its own reward, so evil is its own punishment; only after sinning do we truly appreciate the wrong we have done. The Scriptures and the masters of the spiritual life urge us to recognize and reject evil at its root, to be alert to the wiles of the devil, and above all, to keep watch over our hearts, lest the first stirrings of sin threaten our closeness to the Lord and our obedience to his loving plan for our lives.

Germany - Star Singers Campaign 2024: "Together for our Earth - in the Amazon and worldwide" (29 December 2023)

"Together for our Earth - in the Amazon and worldwide" is the motto of the 66th Star Singers campaign of the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood in Germany (Kindermissionswerk/Die Sternsinger). The committed children and young people all over Germany want to draw attention to how important it is to protect the environment and cultures worldwide. The focus of the 2024 campaign is the preservation of human livelihoods and the promotion of an ecological economy in the Amazon and worldwide ♦



Communicating to Children: A Teaching Strategy

Lucille Dass

Name of the Teacher: Lucille Dass

Task: Select one major prophetic theme and explain it to a child.

Format chosen: Conversation

Theme: Pride: a major sin

Setting: Parish cafeteria.

Characters: 10-year-old Ethan & me

Ethan : Hi Auntie Lucille, can I sit with you while you have your coffee. Actually, I want to ask you something. I asked mum, but she said, "Ask Auntie Lucille when you see her."

Me : Sure Ethan. I know your mum is quite busy right now. Ok, tell me how I can help.

Ethan : My catechism teacher told us something about this bad king ---Nebu... how to pronounce his funny, long name, Auntie?

Me : Ok. Let's chop it up to make it easier; then you can say after me: Neh-byuh-kuhd-ne-zuh.

Ethan : Neh-byuh-kuhd-ne-zuh ... I got it! But what kind of name is it? Sounds strange.

Me : I know. It's Greek. In our bible it has a meaning. But first tell me, do you know the meaning of your name? Your mum must've told you.

Ethan : oh yeah! Ethan means strong! (flexes his skinny arm)

Me : Right! And firm too...like, you don't simply let others to boss you around! Ok, this guy you call the bad king – his name means tears and groans – like when in pain or suffering. Actually, Nebu by itself means to protect. So as king he should protect his people, right? But does he?

Ethan : No, he's evil! I read a bit. Simply kills people. But I don't understand everything.

Me : Now, your name means strong, right? Are you proud and like to show your tiny muscles when you tell people your name -like you just did! Or show off in the way you talk to people?

Ethan : Ha, ha...ha! Auntie Lucille ...you're so funny! Yes, I'm proud of my name. But no, I don't show off.

Me : That's good, Ethan. You see, there's good pride and bad pride. This Nebu guy suffered from the wrong kind of pride.

Ethan : How, Auntie?

Me : He was a big show off, a big bully! He acted like he was a god. He wanted people to worship him and worship huge statues he built, covered with gold...a big waste of money, right? You said he was cruel ... you're right. If anyone didn't obey him ...

Ethan : “off with their heads!” like the wicked and evil Red Queen in Alice in Wonderland!

Me : Clever boy! Right. Do you know he had strange dreams that he himself didn't understand? So, he demanded his advisers to tell him their meaning. When they couldn't... you know what happened. Only Daniel ...you know about this handsome, strong, brave, and God-loving young guy (like you!), right? Daniel explained how the dreams were a warning. Nebu must stop doing all the bad things or his kingdom will be divided and he will lose everything. Nebu felt grateful, and agreed. But later continued to behave badly, too proud to change. You know one day he was walking on the roof of his palace, he looked at the city of Babylon below and boasted that he had built it and even said, “I built it to show how great I am!” Bigtime boaster! Go and find this bit in Daniel chapter 4, Ethan, and underline all his boast, okay?

Ethan : Ok Aunty. What happened next?

Me : After the first dream in chapter 2, he had another strange dream. You go and read about it in chapter 4. Daniel was very brave and told him he simply must do good, must humble himself and accept the one most high God who rules over all men or else he will suffer, he will be driven out into the field, live with the oxen and eat grass like them! Only when he humbly accepts the rule of God, begs forgiveness for his wrongdoings, he will become a normal person again.

Ethan : King eating grass? Really? Yuks! So shameful, Aunty!

Me : Oh yeah! Daniel's words came back to warn him again when he was walking on his rooftop, bursting and boasting proudly about his power. And one year later, it happened! His hair grew long and looked like an eagle's feathers, and his nails became like bird's claws! Imagine how ugly he looked – he became like an animal. It's all in the bible, Ethan. His punishment from God. Just think how he suffered – with tears and groans, meaning of his name, remember? Only when he was truly sorry for his sins and prayed hard for forgiveness, he became normal again. Hey, you're a good artist – just think how ugly this Nebu king must've looked. Sketch him! Then show me, ok? One last thing before you go... tell me, what did you learn from this story, Ethan?

Ethan : Umm... Don't act proud; don't act tough! Do good to others because God loves them, loves me and is good to me. If not, I'll become an animal! Ha, ha! Joking only, Aunty.

Me : I know you're joking. But yes, we shouldn't be so boastful or proud because what we are and what we have, is given to us by God. And let me teach you an idiom here – a clever saying full of special meaning – it is connected with this story, “Pride comes before a fall.” Guess what? This is also in our bible. Write down – Proverbs 16:18. Go and underline this in your bible, ok? Remember: avoid false pride. It's a big sin!

Ethan : Oh yeah, I get it, I don't want to fall and get hurt! Thank you, Aunty Lucille. Wait till I tell mum what I learned!

[Mrs. Lucille Dass, from Malaysia, is a veteran teacher. She has been involved in ministry to the children, in the Diocese of Penang. She can be contacted at lucidlucille@gmail.com] ♦

Missionary Childhood or Holy Childhood



Missionary Childhood or Holy Childhood celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1993. Today there are millions of "little missionaries" distributed throughout parishes, schools and movements of the five continents.

Concretely, **the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood** proposes to:

- Help educators 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 program of Christian education, to which it will contribute its missionary projection.

In order to achieve its objectives, Missionary Childhood lends two services to children: the first and principal one is missionary education; the second is missionary cooperation with the neediest children and the missions of the whole world.

Therefore, the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood or Holy Childhood, which is a Society of the universal Church and of the local Churches, is animating and forming

children (up to 14 years of age) from a missionary viewpoint and their educators so that they will live in ecclesial missionary communion and carry out their local mission and their missionary cooperation with universal evangelization, especially of children.

The boys and girls belonging to Missionary Childhood, accompanied by their animators, propose to be missionaries in their communities and to help the children of the whole world. They are friends of Jesus and they make friends for Jesus.

Educators, parents, catechists, young people, religious sisters and priests can participate in this Society as animators of Missionary Childhood. The animators help and guide the children while letting them take on their own responsibilities and accompanying them in carrying out everything that they themselves must do.

The universal Church asks all the ecclesial Institutions and Movements to collaborate with Missionary Childhood in its life and service to the children of the whole world.



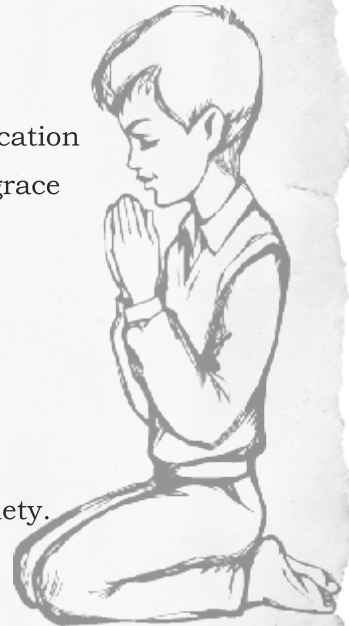
[https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cevang/p_missionary_works/infantia/documents/rc_ic_infantia_pro_20011106_profile-part-1_en.html] ♦

The Children's Prayer

O Infant Jesus,
model of Holy Childhood,
Grant to all the children of the world
to grow up in a family
like the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Like You,
may they rejoice in love and affection
of parents and relatives.
May they receive human and religious education
in order to grow in wisdom, maturity and grace
in the presence of God
and with human community.

Allow them to be dully accompanied
by loving adults,
so that they be worthily prepared
to take their role in the Church and in society.
We ask You through the intercession of
the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.
Amen.



(Courtesy: PMS - Togo)

Pope's Prayer Intentions – 2024

January: *For the gift of diversity in the Church*

We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

February: *For the terminally ill*

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

(Courtesy: The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network)

HOW TO CELEBRATE? HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY 2024

Engage

the parish community in Holy Childhood Day celebrations.

Encourage

children to become members of
the Missionary Childhood Association.

Energise

the world in synergy with children.



Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood

The Missionary Childhood Association

Founder

Bishop Charles-Auguste of
Forbin-Janson

Secretary General

Rev. Sr. Roberta Tremarelli



www.ppoomm.va



Since 1843. Founded in France by Bishop Forbin-Janson, who as a priest wanted to work with the poorest of the world's children in the missions, an initiative of children helping children - as children pray and sacrifice for their brothers and sisters in need across the world.



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