

PROCLAIM

A Magazine for Missionary Animation

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**HOLY
CHILDHOOD
DAY 2025**



9 FEBRUARY

**MATERIAL
COOPERATION**

- Energy
- Time
- Resources



PONTIFICAL MISSION ORGANIZATIONS

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Material cooperation: time, energy, and resources in mission

Celebrating Missionary Childhood Association Day with purpose



The Church's mission is a shared responsibility, inviting every member of the faithful, including children, to participate actively in spreading the Gospel. The Missionary Childhood Association (MCA), rooted in the idea of “children helping children”, reminds us that

even the youngest members of the Church can be instruments of evangelization, charity, and solidarity. As we prepare to celebrate Missionary Childhood Association Day (Holy Childhood Day), we are called to reflect on the theme of material cooperation — offering our time, energy, and resources for the mission of Christ.

Time: A gift for the mission

Time is one of the greatest resources we can offer. As dioceses, parishes, and schools come together for Holy Childhood Day, we must encourage children to dedicate time to prayer and reflection for their peers worldwide. Through missionary rosaries, Eucharistic adorations, and scriptural reflections, children can grow in awareness of the universal Church and their role in its mission.

Energy: active participation in evangelization

Mission is not merely an abstract concept; it is a lived reality requiring active participation. Children, through their enthusiasm and joyful witness, play a unique role in evangelization. On Holy Childhood Day, dioceses can organize activities such as storytelling sessions on the lives of young missionary saints, dramatizations of Gospel stories, and interactive mission-themed games.

Resources: Sharing in the Mission of Christ

Material cooperation also involves tangible contributions. The Missionary Childhood

Association has long emphasized the value of small sacrifices made by children to support other children in need. Dioceses can promote creative fundraising initiatives, encouraging children to offer part of their allowance, make handcrafted items, or organize charity events to support missionary projects.

An Invitation to the dioceses

As we approach Missionary Childhood Association Day, we extend an invitation to all dioceses to celebrate this occasion with deep missionary fervour. Let this day be marked by prayer, evangelization, and sacrificial giving, fostering in children a sense of responsibility for their peers across the world.

We encourage dioceses to:

- Organize special liturgies emphasizing the role of children in mission.
- Facilitate storytelling and catechesis on missionary work.
- Promote charitable initiatives led by children to support missions.
- Encourage prayer campaigns for young missionaries globally.

By investing time, energy, and resources in this celebration, we affirm the mission of the Church and empower children to become protagonists in the work of evangelization. May this Missionary Childhood Association Day inspire a new generation of young missionaries, filled with zeal for the Gospel and a heart for service.

Let us journey together in mission, embracing the call to be children helping children in and for mission.

+ Most Rev Dr Ambrose Pitchaimuthu

Bishop of Vellore
Director - PMO (India)

Children helping children in and for mission

A biblical, theological, and missiological foundation

Anthony Cardinal Poola*

Introduction

The mission of the Church is universal and embraces all, including children, who are called to be active participants in the proclamation of the Gospel. The concept of 'children helping children' in mission is deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture, theological reflections, and missiological perspectives. This article explores how the biblical witness, Church teachings, and the insights of Pope Francis provide a robust foundation for children engaging in mission to assist and evangelize other children.

1. Biblical foundations

The Bible affirms the role of children in God's salvific plan. Jesus' special concern for children highlights their capacity to contribute to the mission of the Church.



Children as models of the Kingdom: Jesus declares, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt 19:14). Their innocence and openness make them authentic

witnesses to the Gospel.

Children as instruments of God's mission: The story of the boy who offered his five loaves and two fish (Jn 6:9) demonstrates that even a small contribution can lead to a great miracle when entrusted to Jesus.

Prophetic role of children: In Joel 2:28, God promises, "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy." Children, too, can be bearers of divine messages, testifying to the love and mercy of God.

Service and love: The biblical injunction to love and serve one another extends to children. Proverbs 22:6 instructs, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it." The call to mission starts from an early age.

2. Theological foundations

Theologically, children's participation in mission reflects their baptismal dignity and the ecclesial nature of evangelization.

Baptismal call to Mission: Every baptized person, including children, is incorporated into the mission of Christ. "The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated to be a spiritual house and a holy priesthood" (Lumen Gentium, 10).

Children as witnesses of love: St John Paul II recognized the missionary potential of children, stating, "Every child is a precious gift of God and a sign of His love." Their missionary





engagement becomes a way of making God's love tangible.

The missionary nature of the Church: The Church exists to evangelize (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14), and children, by virtue of their incorporation into the Body of Christ, share in this mission.

Solidarity and evangelization: The Second Vatican Council teaches that the Church is a "sacrament of unity" (Lumen Gentium, 1). Children helping other children in mission fosters unity and solidarity within the global family.

3. Missiological foundations

The concept of "children helping children" aligns with the mission ad gentes, emphasizing evangelization, charity, and formation.

Children as evangelizers: Pope Francis highlights the role of young evangelizers, urging them to "be missionary disciples, sharing the joy of the Gospel" (Christus Vivit, 239).

Mission through charity: The Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood encourages children to support their peers in underprivileged communities, living out the words of Christ: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

Formation for mission: Children's missionary engagement is not merely an act of charity but also a means of forming them as future leaders of faith. "We need to provide an education that teaches young people to think critically and discern their role in the world" (Fratelli Tutti, 223).

Synodality and the role of children: In a synodal Church, all members, regardless of age,

walk together in mission. Pope Francis insists, "Children are not the future; they are the now of God" (Christus Vivit, 64).

4. Practical implications for missionary engagement

How can children be effectively engaged in mission?



Catechesis and formation: Parishes and schools should educate children about their baptismal call to mission.

Prayer and iintercession: Encouraging children to pray for their peers worldwide fosters spiritual solidarity.

Acts of charity: Initiatives such as the Missionary Childhood Association promote active participation through small sacrifices and material support for underprivileged children.

Storytelling and witness: Children sharing their faith stories can inspire others, creating a ripple effect of evangelization.

Conclusion

The mission of children helping children is biblically inspired, theologically grounded, and missiologically necessary. By recognizing their role in evangelization, the Church affirms that children are not mere recipients of mission but active participants in the divine plan. As Pope Francis urges, "Dear young people, do not be afraid to give your all for Jesus, for He will give you the grace to be joyful witnesses of His love" (Message for World Mission Sunday, 2021). May the Church continue to nurture young missionaries, forming a generation of children who help children in and for mission.

*** The author, His Eminence Anthony Cardinal Poola, is the Archbishop of Hyderabad. ♦**

Creating safe environment for children

NGOs collaborating to celebrate Holy Childhood Day in India

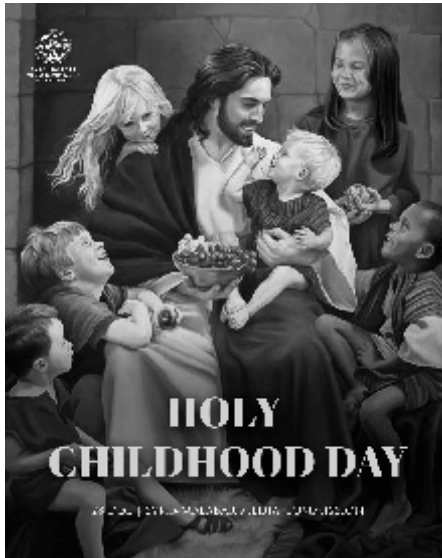
Jenitha Mary Francis Xavier*

Holy Childhood Day is a special occasion to recognize and uplift the spiritual and social well-being of children, especially the most vulnerable. In India, where millions of children face challenges related to poverty, education, and health, NGOs can play a pivotal role in celebrating this day with a mission-driven approach. By working together, faith-based and secular organizations can create meaningful initiatives that reflect Christ's love for children and promote their dignity.

Ways NGOs can collaborate for Holy Childhood Day

1. *Joint Awareness Campaigns:* NGOs can organize awareness drives in schools, parishes, and communities to educate children and parents about their rights, faith formation, and holistic development. Social media campaigns and creative storytelling can amplify the message.

2. *Special Eucharistic Celebrations and Prayer Services:* Partnering with local churches, NGOs can facilitate Holy Mass, prayer services, and catechesis sessions to help children understand their role in the mission of the Church. Special blessings and interactive faith-sharing sessions can be arranged.



3. *Educational and Skill-building Programs:* NGOs working in education can conduct special workshops, literacy programs, and digital learning initiatives for underprivileged children. Life skills training, value education, and leadership formation programs can empower young minds.

4. *Health and Nutrition Drives:* By joining hands with medical organizations and charitable institutions,

NGOs can organize free health check-ups, nutrition programs, and awareness sessions on child well-being, ensuring that children receive the care they need.

5. *Cultural and Creative Events:* Celebrating children's talents through art, music, drama, and storytelling contests can help them express their faith and joy. NGOs can work with schools and orphanages to conduct competitions that inspire creativity and moral values.

6. *Outreach to Street and Vulnerable Children:* NGOs engaged in child welfare can organize special visits to street children, orphanages, and slum communities, offering food, clothing, educational support, and pastoral care to ensure that every child experiences love and inclusion.

7. *Advocacy for Child Rights and Protection:* Holy Childhood Day can serve as a platform for NGOs to advocate policies and initiatives that safeguard children from exploitation, trafficking, and abuse. Partnering with government agencies and child protection

...Continued on Page 10

Small hands, big hearts

Children's contributions to the missions

*Sr Margarita Dias**

In a world that often celebrates adult achievements, the impactful contributions of children to the mission field are a beautiful reminder of the immense love and faith they carry. These young hearts, driven by deep compassion and a love for God, demonstrate that even the smallest acts of kindness can create significant ripples in spreading God's message of love across the globe.

Take, for example, Sasha and Dan. Despite the critical condition of Sasha's grandmother, the two children chose to share their testimony and declare God's goodness to children who were physically and visually challenged. Their courage in the face of personal challenges reflects the message of Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Their actions remind us that children are powerful vessels of God's love.



Similarly, Keerthi, Bhavya, Keith, Karen, and Neha, despite the pressure of exams, organized a retreat for other children at the Divine Mercy Retreat Centre in Bangalore. Their dedication to lead, even in busy times, is a testament to their zeal for God's glory, echoing the words of Romans 12:11, "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord." These children's willingness to serve amidst personal challenges inspires others to make faith a priority.

Calfina, Joanna and Catherine showed the power of generosity by sacrificing their pocket money for children in need, demonstrating the truth of Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Through this simple act, they remind us of the importance of giving selflessly.

In the face of personal loss, Mrs Lydia, who lost her child during the Covid-19 pandemic, sponsored

the education of another child. Her sacrificial giving reflects 2 Corinthians 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver." Her example reminds us that, even in grief, we are called to serve others.



Every day, the children in the prayer group along with their parents and grandparents dedicate time to pray for the universal Church and the world. Their prayers are powerful, reflecting the words of James 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Their commitment to daily prayer highlights the impact that even young hearts can have through intercession.

These children also make time to read Scripture daily, as Psalm 119:105 reminds us, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Their dedication to God's Word equips them to grow in faith and become better witnesses of His love.

Despite busy schedules, the families of the prayer group unite in fellowship, demonstrating Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together." This commitment to community strengthens their bond and spiritual growth.



These stories show us that no act of kindness is too small. Whether through prayer, sacrifice, or generosity, children prove that small hands and big hearts can make a lasting impact on God's mission. As Matthew 18:3 reminds us, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Through their actions, these children serve as shining examples of faith, love, and the transformative power of God's grace.

*** The author is a Charles Borromeo Sister living in Bengaluru. She is a collaborator at the Pontifical Mission Organizations – India. ♦**

'Protect the innocent'

Shielding children from the Herods of our time

*Sr Anjala Lincy Clark**



In the Gospel of Matthew, we encounter the chilling account of King Herod, who, driven by fear and jealousy, sought to destroy the Christ Child. The massacre of the Holy Innocents remains a stark reminder of the lengths to which power and insecurity can go to preserve themselves at the expense of the innocent. Today, the 'Herods of our time' may not wield swords, but they manifest themselves in insidious forms: exploitation, trafficking, neglect, and the systemic injustices that rob children of their dignity and rights.

a. Biblical foundations: sanctity of children

The Bible is replete with affirmations of the sanctity and value of children. Jesus Himself emphasized their importance, declaring, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). This declaration elevates children as models of purity, humility, and receptiveness to God's grace. Moreover, the Book of Proverbs (22:6) reminds us to "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it." These verses underscore the responsibility entrusted to adults to nurture, guide, and safeguard the young. Failure to protect them not only harms individuals but also compromises the moral fabric of society.

b. Biblical foundations: call to protect

From the earliest pages of Scripture, God's care for the vulnerable, especially children, is evident. Psalm 127:3 declares, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him."

Jesus' own words in Matthew 18:6 carry a stern warning: "If anyone causes one of these little ones — those who believe in me — to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." These passages underscore the divine mandate to prioritize the welfare of children. The story of Moses, preserved by his mother and sister despite Pharaoh's decree, resonates as a testament to courage in the face of oppressive powers. Similarly, Joseph's obedience in fleeing to Egypt with Mary and Jesus emphasizes the role of guardians who act decisively to shield the innocent.

c. Saints as protectors of children

The lives of saints offer compelling examples of those who embodied Christ's care for the innocent:

(i) St Nicholas: Known for his generosity, St Nicholas' legacy includes saving children from exploitation. One story recounts how he provided dowries for impoverished girls to prevent them from being sold into slavery.

(ii) St Dominic Savio: A young saint himself, Dominic tirelessly encouraged his peers to live virtuous lives, setting an example of holiness and advocating for the moral and spiritual protection of children.



(iii) St Maria Goretti: Though she suffered martyrdom at a young age, Maria's forgiveness and resolve to protect her purity highlight the strength and dignity of a child standing against evil.

(iv) St Josephine Bakhita: Once a victim of trafficking, Bakhita became a powerful advocate for dignity and freedom, embodying hope for countless children suffering similar fates today.

d. Children Helping Children: A lesson in global solidarity

In a remarkable reflection of Christ's teachings, children themselves often rise as defenders of their peers. Initiatives like Children Helping Children, a Pontifical Mission Society



program, empower young people to share their resources and prayers with underprivileged children worldwide.

This movement

mirrors the story of the boy who offered his five loaves and two fishes to Jesus, enabling a miraculous feeding of thousands (John 6:1-14). It reminds us that even the smallest contributions can create profound change when inspired by faith and compassion.

e. Modern Herods and the Church's Response

The modern-day Herods take many forms:

(i) Exploitation and trafficking: Millions of children are trapped in labour and sexual exploitation. Organizations inspired by Christian values, such as Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Relief Services, work tirelessly to rescue and rehabilitate these victims.

(ii) Neglect and abuse: The Church has taken significant steps to address and prevent abuse within its own institutions, fostering a culture of accountability and safeguarding.

(iii) Systemic injustice: Poverty, lack of education, and war disproportionately affect children. Missionary efforts to provide education, healthcare, and safe spaces for children embody the Gospel's call to care for the least among us.

f. Practical steps to protect

(i) Advocacy and Awareness: Educating communities about the rights of children and the dangers they face is crucial.

(ii) Support for families: Strengthening families through pastoral care and social support prevents vulnerabilities that endanger children.

(iii) Fostering a culture of life: Promoting respect for life from conception to natural death ensures that children are valued and cherished.

g. A call to action

In a world often indifferent to the cries of the vulnerable, Christians are called to be the voice for the voiceless. Just as the Holy Family relied on divine providence and human courage to protect the Infant Jesus, we too must rise to shield children from harm. In confronting the Herods of our time — whether in the form of exploitation, neglect, or violence—we must emulate the saints who devoted their lives to protecting and caring for the innocent.

By embracing Scripture's call to defend the vulnerable, we are reminded of the moral imperative to safeguard every child as a beloved creation of God. Just as God entrusted the care of His Son to St Joseph and the Virgin Mary, we too are entrusted with the protection of children.



The saints, through their unwavering commitment to the poor and oppressed, exemplify the transformative power of love and action. St John Bosco, St Josephine Bakhita, and St Nicholas serve as shining examples of what it means to act courageously and compassionately for the good of children.

Shielding children from the Herods of our time is not just a moral obligation, but a sacred mission — rooted in Scripture and made real in the lives of the saints. By nurturing children's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being, we participate in God's mission of justice and mercy. As we confront the forces that seek to harm the innocent, let us rise as protectors of the vulnerable, ensuring that every child experiences the love and dignity they deserve.

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.” (Psalm 82:3)

*** The author is a Franciscan Sister of the Presentation of Mary, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. ♦**

Towards a fully synodal and missionary Church

Re-Reading Ecclesia in Asia for the Jubilee Year

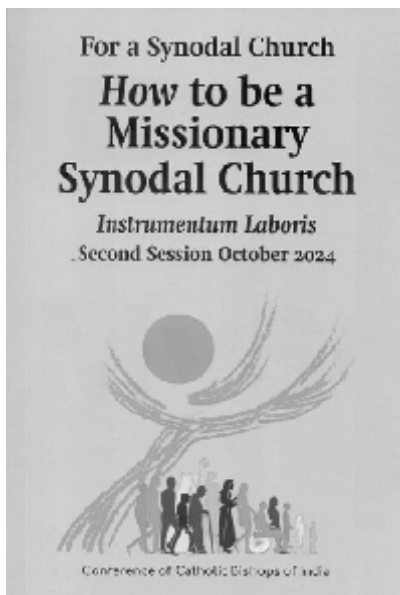
[Declaration issued at the end of the International Symposium *25 Years of Ecclesia in Asia - Towards a Fully Synodal and Missionary Church in Asia: Re-Reading Ecclesia in Asia for the Jubilee Year* organized by the Pontifical Missionary Organizations – India in collaboration with the Pontifical Missionary Union International Secretariat, Rome, and the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, on 13-14 December 2024 at St John's NAHS, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India]

As we conclude this enriching International Symposium commemorating the 25th anniversary of *Ecclesia in Asia*, we are deeply inspired by the vision and pastoral wisdom articulated by Saint John Paul II. Reflecting on the evolving realities of our continent, the Spirit calls us to renewed commitment in shaping a synodal and missionary Church.

Recognizing the challenges and opportunities of the Asian context, we present 12 Calls to Action as a roadmap for our ecclesial journey towards the Jubilee Year:

1. Deepen the synodal journey. Promote listening, dialogue, and discernment at every level of the Church, ensuring active participation of the laity, clergy, and religious in decision-making processes.

2. Foster interreligious and ecumenical dialogue. Embrace Asia's pluralistic landscape by building bridges of understanding and collaboration with people of other faiths and Christian denominations.



3. Promote evangelization through witness. Prioritize a life of authentic witness, characterized by humility, service, and love, to make Christ known in word and deed.

4. Support contextual theologies and liturgies. Encourage theological reflections and liturgical expressions rooted in the rich cultural diversity of Asia, fostering inculturation and local engagement.

5. Empower marginalized communities. Stand in solidarity with the poor, migrants, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups, addressing systemic injustices and advocating for human dignity.

6. Enhance formation programs. Equip clergy, religious, and laity with resources and training for pastoral leadership, synodality, and missionary outreach in contemporary contexts.

7. Empower lay leadership. Encourage and form lay faithful to take active roles in ministry and leadership, ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

8. Prioritize youth and family ministry.

Develop programs that engage young people and strengthen families, recognizing them as vital agents in building a vibrant Church and society.

9. Care for creation. Integrate ecological conversion and sustainability into Church ministries, echoing the call of *Laudato Si'* in safeguarding our common home.





10. Utilize digital media for mission.

Leverage technology and digital platforms to spread the Gospel, form faith communities, and address the challenges of an interconnected world.

11. Celebrate Asian spirituality. Affirm and celebrate the richness of Asian spirituality, incorporating its unique expressions into the life and liturgy of the Church.

12. Enter the Jubilee Year with purpose. Use the Jubilee Year as an opportunity for renewal, reconciliation, and recommitment to Christ's mission, rooted in gratitude and hope. As we journey together, let us remain united in prayer, strengthened by

the Holy Spirit, and committed to being a Church that listens, learns, and loves. With Mary, the Star of Evangelization and Queen of Missions, may we bring Christ to Asia and Asia to Christ.



Conclusion

The work ahead demands courage, collaboration, and creativity. Let this symposium

mark the beginning of a renewed commitment to building a synodal and missionary

Church in Asia, reflecting the richness of our faith and the transformative power of the Gospel. Together, we step forward with faith, hope, and love towards the Jubilee Year. ♦

◆ *Continued from Page 5: Creating safe environment For Children* ◆

organizations can strengthen these efforts.

8. *Missionary Formation for Children:* NGOs working in catechesis and faith formation can introduce children to the missionary spirit of the Church, encouraging them to participate in acts of kindness, charity, and small missionary projects in their communities.



A united effort for a better future

By working together, NGOs can ensure that Holy Childhood Day is not just a celebration but a catalyst for change, inspiring children to grow in faith, knowledge, and service. The collective efforts of different organizations will not only honor the day but will also create a lasting impact on the lives of children, truly embodying Christ's call: "Let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:14).

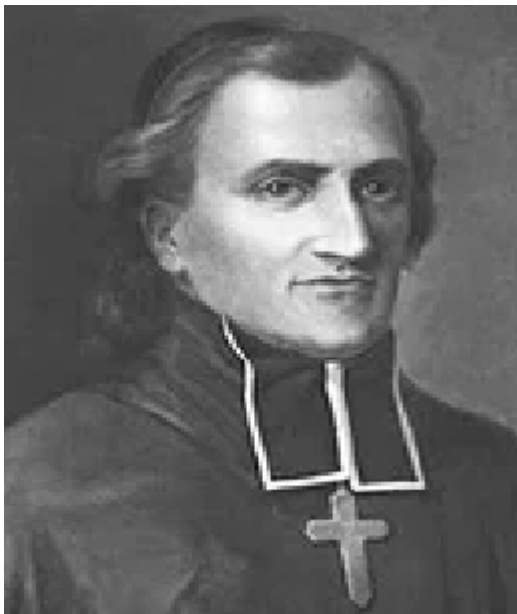
This collaboration can be a model for long-term partnerships, reinforcing the commitment to the holistic development of children in India.

*** The author, the founder-president of Yesni Foundation, is a collaborator at the Pontifical Mission Organizations – India; she is committed to creating safe environment for children at home, in church, and society. ♦**

A brief history of the Missionary Childhood Association

The Association was founded by Bishop Charles de Forbin-Janson. He was born of nobility in France, and as a youngster, he was deeply concerned about the plight of unwanted infants abandoned by their parents in China, a practice that was prevalent in that country during the early 19th century. As a young priest, he requested permission to be sent to China where he planned to devote his life to alleviating any condition of child abuse. His request was denied. Later, he again appealed to the Missionary Father for an appointment to China. Instead, he was urged to apply his energy and zeal to home mission services in France.

The welfare and education of mission children remained foremost in his mind. After extensive discussions with missionaries and Pauline Jaricot, foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Bishop de Forbin-Janson conceived the idea of an organization made up of children in Christian countries helping, through prayers and alms, these abandoned children of China.



In 1843, he formally organized his 'children helping children' society and called it the Association of the Missionary Childhood. Members were asked to pray a daily Hail Mary for mission children and contribute one penny in monthly dues which would be given in direct aid to assist those children.

The movement flourished and spread to other countries, arriving in the United States in 1846. Called the Holy Childhood Association, it enjoyed papal approval from its inception, and was formally designated a Pontifical Association in 1926. Its name was changed to Missionary Childhood Association in 2011 to closer align its identity with the Society worldwide. Today, children in over 110 countries are being helped through the prayers and sacrifices of Missionary Childhood members throughout the world.

[from the Report of the Pontifical Mission Organizations – India] ♦

Trump announces new order to probe 'anti-Christian' bias

President Donald Trump said in remarks to the National Prayer Breakfast on Feb 6 that he would create a task force, to investigate "anti-Christian" bias in the federal government.

The president also said he would sign an executive order to make Bondi head of a task force "to immediately hold all forms of anti-Christian targeting and discrimination within the federal government, including at the DOJ -- which was absolutely terrible -- the IRS, the FBI and other agencies."

Among his first actions in office, Trump issued pardons for 23 pro-life activists he said were improperly At the prayer breakfast, Trump shared that his own views on religion had changed in the wake of the July assassination attempt against him.

"It changed something in me, I feel," Trump said of the nearly fatal incident on the campaign trail in Butler, Pennsylvania.

"I feel even stronger," he said. "I believed in God, but I feel, I feel much more strongly about it. Something happened." ♦

Canonical takeaways from the final document of the Synod

Fr Dr Merlin Rengith Ambrose*



The second session of the 16th Synod of Bishops concluded on 26 October 2024. As per the Pope's directive, a final document consisting of 155 sections was immediately published. There will be no subsequent Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation since he decided to adopt (ratify - Canon 343) the Final Document drafted by the participants, marking another demonstration of synodality.

Stable lay ministers – instituted and non-instituted

A missionary synodal Church would promote lay ministries that do not require Holy Orders. They can be instituted or not instituted. Instituted ministries through ritual are lector, acolyte (*Motu proprio Spiritus Domini*), and catechist (*Motu proprio Antiquum ministerium*). Instituted ministries are complemented by those not instituted that are exercised with stability as mandated by the competent authority. Such ministries include coordinating a small church community,



leading community prayer, organising charitable activities, and so forth. They have a great variety of expressions depending on the local community. A public mandate should be established to promote its recognition within the community. Extraordinary ministries of the Eucharist, leading Sunday liturgies in the absence of a priest, and administering certain sacramentals need to be fostered.

Participatory bodies

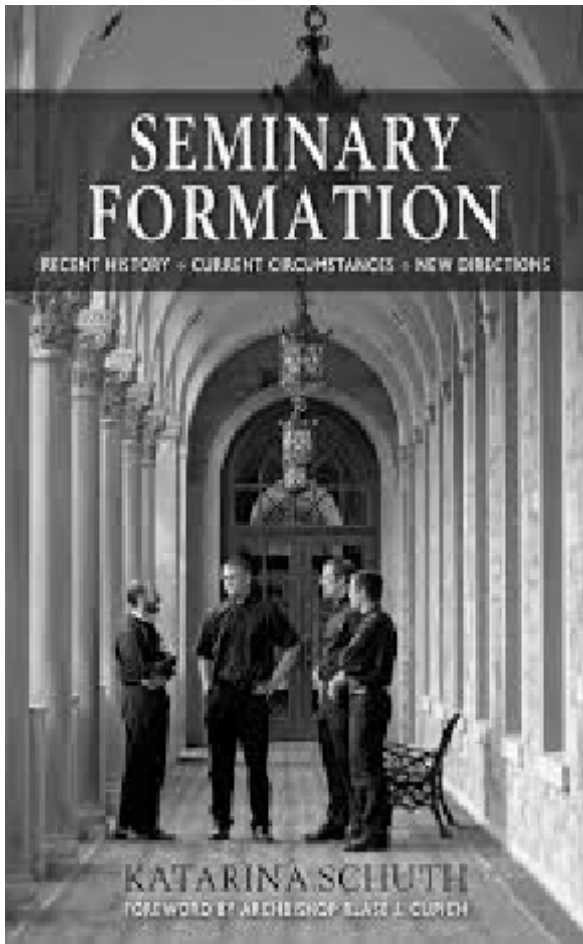
The lay faithful should be given greater opportunities to participate in decision-making processes with co-responsibility primarily through Diocesan Synod (cann. 460, 466), Diocesan Pastoral Council (can. 514 §1), Parish Pastoral Council (can. 536), Diocesan and Parish Finance Committee (cann. 493 & 537). It must be ensured that bodies that are optional hitherto must be made mandatory, and other bodies that Canon Law mandatorily envisages must be established to ensure lay participation. The particular law must provide for it.

Organs of evaluation for accountability and transparency

The Assembly recommends recognising the diocesan Synod (cann. 460-468) as vital for regular consultation between the Bishop and his community. The diocesan Synod also must provide a platform for the Bishop to report accountably on pastoral activities, including implementing the diocesan pastoral plan, receiving Church synodal processes, safeguarding initiatives, and financial management. Strengthening the Canonical provisions to make this body meet regularly is necessary.

Rejuvenation of particular councils and “sound decentralisation”

To realise a “sound decentralisation” (EG 16), it is necessary to rejuvenate the institution of provincial and plenary councils. The periodic celebration of councils has been an obligation in the Church's history and is required by



Canon Law (cann. 439-446). The Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* allows Bishops and Superiors of Consecrated Life to address familiar issues while preserving the Church's unity of doctrine and communion. This should be done in line with the recent *Motu Proprio Competentias quasdam decernere*, which modified 11 canons (cann. 237 §2; 242 §1; 265; 604; 686 §1; 688 §2; 699 §2; 700; 775 §2; 1308; 1310). These canons, which, until 2022, reserved the power to the higher authority, have left it to the lower authority to resolve.

Formation in the seminary

There was a widespread request for the discernment and formation of candidates for ordained ministry to be done in a synodal manner. There should be a significant presence of women, an immersion in the daily life of

communities, and formation to enable collaboration with everyone in the Church and how to practise ecclesial discernment. The Assembly calls for a revision of the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (can. 241) in order to incorporate the requests made by the Synod.

Non-diminishing the voice of the consulted

According to Canon Law, those in authority are, in several instances, obligated to consult before deciding. Those in authority ought to listen to those who participate in the consultation and may not act as if the consultation had not taken place by departing from the fruits of consultation that produce an agreement without an overriding reason (*CIC* can. 127, §2, 2°; *CCEO* can. 934, §2, 3°).

Lay participation in other ecclesial avenues

Apart from participatory bodies envisaged by Canon Law and this Final Document, greater access for lay people to positions of responsibility in dioceses and ecclesiastical institutions, including seminaries, institutes and theological faculties, is required. There should be greater recognition of the charisms of the consecrated and more qualified lay judges in Canonical processes, along with improved respect for the rights of employees in ecclesial institutions.

Abrogation of the word “only”

In Canon Law, the word “only/merely” (*tantum*) is added in many places wherein a consultative vote is envisaged by the parish priest or Bishop to make decisions. It is not appropriate to set the consultative and deliberative elements in opposition to each other: in the Church, the deliberative element is undertaken with the help of all. For this reason, the recurring formula in Canon Law, “**only/merely**” consultative vote (“*tantum*” *consultivum*) should be reviewed to eliminate the possibility of ambiguity.

*** The writer is a Professor of Canon Law, St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore. He is also the Executive Secretary of the Commission for Canon Law in the CCBI. ♦**

Pope: Religious life is a total gift of self to God through others

Pope Francis praised the vow of poverty in religious life as a bond that builds communion, as he greeted the Canoness Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Saxony, which were founded in Rome by Blessed Guy de Montpellier, on 5th December 2024..

The audience comes after the Pope extended the title “Blessed” to the 12th century French religious on May 18, 2024, calling him a “humble and modest servant” of the poor.

Speaking to the Canoness Sisters on Thursday, the Pope recalled their mission to “devote themselves primarily to the care and service of the poor.”

Blessed Guy de Montpellier, he said, began his Rule for the community in the name of the Holy Trinity and sought to respond to the reform of religious life called for by Pope Innocent III.

“It is fascinating to see how God's plan matures in the 'kitchen' of the heart,” said the Pope, “and how the flavors and colors gradually permeate the rules of life, eventually spreading their fragrance throughout the Church.”

Evangelical poverty that creates communion



Pope Francis highlighted the importance of communion, poverty, and service, as well as the connection between them.

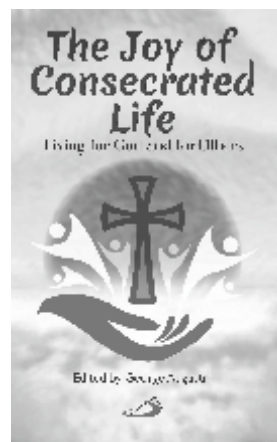
The Canoness Sisters make a vow of poverty that requires them to live without anything of their own.

This vow, noted the Pope, goes beyond the modern understanding of a rigorously sober and detached life.

“It means recognizing that we are guests in the house of the Trinity, which welcomes us and shares its dwelling with the poor we are called to serve.”

The vow of poverty connects closely with communion, he said, adding that it involves a “total gift of ourselves to God through our brothers and sisters, without reservation.”

“Without holding back anything 'of our own' in the hidden chambers of worldly securities—whether tucked away in our cells, pockets, or, worse, in our hearts,” said the Pope. “Only in this freedom can we embark on a shared project that becomes an eschatological sign of the journey toward the eternal dwelling places to which God calls us.”



Servants who welcome the poor in charity

In conclusion, Pope Francis invited the Canoness Sisters of the Holy Spirit in Saxony to work to make their hearts and communities living temples of the Trinity.

Religious life, he said, “is a journey toward God, moved by the Holy Spirit, in which we become followers of Christ the Redeemer—who ‘came not to be served but to serve’—and teachers of life, if we can make ourselves small and servants of all, welcoming the poor and offering them the comfort of our charity.”

Source:www.vaticannews.va/news ♦

Pope calls for renewed study of Church history

Pope Francis has called for a profound renewal in the study of Church history, urging seminarians, clergy, and the faithful to embrace history, which continues to play a role in their daily lives.

History as collective memory

In the letter, the Pope reflected on the value of history as a communal inheritance, stressing that the study of the Church goes beyond memorising dates and events.

It is about keeping "the flame of collective conscience alive," he said, explaining that by doing so, the faithful can navigate the present with a clearer sense of perspective, rooted in the Church's lived experience across centuries.

Pope Francis went on to speak of "deconstructionism," which he described as being a growing trend in today's culture.

The one thing deconstructionism can leave in its wake, he wrote, "is the drive to limitless consumption and expressions of empty individualism."

These tendencies, the Pope warned, often appear as "a form of blindness that drive us to waste our energies on a world that does not exist, raising false problems and veering towards inadequate solutions."

The Church in all her imperfections

Pope Francis then warned against



idealising the Church to the point of detachment from her human, and often flawed, journey.

True love for the Church, the Pope insisted, is rooted in her authenticity, not an imagined perfection.

He stressed the importance of loving the Church as she truly is, emphasising the strength of learning from her failures.

"A Church that, even in her darkest moments, is conscious of her deepest identity can be capable of understanding the imperfect and wounded world in which she lives," he said. "In her efforts to bring healing and renewal to the world, she will use the same means by which she strives to heal and renew herself, even if she at times does not succeed."

Memory and reconciliation

Speaking of the importance of preserving history within the Church and in society, Pope Francis cautioned against the "cancel culture" and partisan historical narratives that distort the past to justify present ideologies.

Instead, he continued, we need a balanced engagement with history, recognising both humanity's darkest chapters and moments of extraordinary grace.

Memory, he stressed, "is not an obstacle to progress but a foundation for justice and fraternity."

Reformation of historical studies

Near the end of his letter, Pope Francis touched on several areas for renewal in the study of the history of the Church.

He criticised approaches that reduce Church history to mere chronological facts, and highlighted the need for a passionate, engaged study of history.



...Continued on Page 17

Nicene Creed unites all Christians



“The proclamation of our common faith requires before all else that we love one another.”

Pope Francis offered that reminder on Thursday as he met with a delegation of Orthodox clergy taking part in a study visit to Rome.

Promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, the fifth Study Visit brought together priests and monks from the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Malankara, and Syrian Oriental Orthodox Churches.

In his greetings to the group at the Casa Santa Marta, the Pope called the annual visit an “exchange of gifts,” which helps theological dialogue to go hand-in-hand with the dialogue of charity.

He noted that this year marks the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, the first Ecumenical Council, which produced the Nicene Creed, a Symbol of Faith professed by all Christians.

'Symbol' of Christian faith

Pope Francis went on to explore the

meaning of the term “Symbol” in reference to the Nicene Creed.

On a theological level, he said, the Creed “sets forth the ensemble of the principal truths of the Christian faith, which harmoniously complement one another.”

The Nicene Creed, he added, was the first synthetic Symbol created by the Church, and was therefore “exemplary and unparalleled.”

The Pope said the Creed also bears an ecclesiological significance, since it unites both truth and believers as a single Christian people.

“In antiquity, the Greek word *symbolon* indicated half of a document broken in two, to be presented as a sign of identity,” he said, noting that the Nicene Creed represents a sign of our identity and communion.

Each Christian, added the Pope, possesses a piece of the symbol, which can be fully expressed only when united completely to all other pieces, as witnessed in the Nicene Creed's original plural form: “We believe.”

“Carrying this image a step further,” he said, “I would say that we Christians, still



divided, are like 'shards' who must recover unity in the confession of the one faith."

Christian unity sought in fraternal love

Pope Francis then reflected on the spiritual significance of the Symbol of Faith, recalling that it is primarily a prayer of praise that unites Christians to God.

"Union with God necessarily takes place through unity among us Christians who proclaim the same faith," he said.

The Pope urged Christians to feel united to Christians of all traditions when we profess our faith by proclaiming the Nicene Creed.

He pointed out that the Eastern liturgy has a phrase that precedes the recitation of the Creed: "Let us love one another, that in unity of spirit we may profess our faith in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit."



In conclusion, Pope Francis expressed his hope that the study visit of the Orthodox priests and monks would serve as a "symbol" of communion as the Church journeys toward full union for which Jesus prayed. ♦

Devin Watkins : vaticannews.va

Continued from Page 15: Pope calls for renewed study of Church history

He also called for greater emphasis on primary sources, urging seminarians to engage deeply with early Christian writings.

"What is needed is a personal and collective passion, an engagement proper to those who are committed to evangelisation, and who have not chosen a neutral or sterile position," said the Pope, emphasising the importance of giving volume to the voices of the marginalised.



Martyrdom

Finally, the Pope reflected on the centrality of martyrdom in Church history, reminding the faithful that the Church has often found her greatest beauty in moments of persecution and suffering, when her witness to Christ shone brightest.

"The Church herself also recognises that she has benefited and is still benefiting from the opposition of her enemies and persecutors," explained the Pope.

Bringing his letter to a close, the Pope emphasised the importance of studying history, reminding the faithful that "study is not gossip."

True study, he concluded, requires the courage to ask deep questions and resist the distractions of cultural consumerism. ♦

— **Francesca Merlo: vaticannews.va**

SAINT OF THE MONTH - I

St Angela of Foligno

1248 – 1309

Feast Day : 08 January

Some saints show marks of holiness very early. Not Angela! “My place is in the world”. This conviction accompanied Angela da Foligno throughout her life: from the years of her youth, characterized by worldliness and an a p p a r e n t indifference to God, to those of her spiritual maturity, which followed, in which she realized that she was called to better things: to serve and imitate the Lord, to live a life of holiness in the concreteness of the everyday. Born in Foligno, a town near Assisi, in Umbria on January 4, 1248 to a well-to-do family, she soon lost her father, and received little supervision from her mother. Thus, did she spend her youth far from faith. Beautiful, intelligent, passionate, she married a notable local man, by whom she had several children.

The frivolity and light-heartedness of her youth were upset by a series of events in quick succession: the violent earthquake of 1279, an impetuous hurricane and then the long war against Perugia led her to question the precariousness of life and to feel the fear of hell.

The desire to approach the Sacrament of Penance was born in her. Nevertheless, the chronicles narrate, “shame prevented her from making a complete confession and for this she remained in torment.” She constantly sought

the intercession of Saint Francis of Assisi, who visited her in a vision in 1285 w i t h instructions on how to begin her conversion. In prayer she obtained from St Francis of Assisi the reassurance that she would soon know God's mercy.

"I gathered courage to confess all my sins to him, and I did this immediately after the sermon. With zeal and perseverance I performed the penance he imposed, but my heart continued to be

full of bitterness and shame. I recognized that the divine mercy has saved me from hell, hence I resolved to do rigorous penance; nothing seemed too difficult for me, because I felt I belonged in hell. I called upon the saints, and especially upon the Blessed Virgin, to intercede with God for me.



"It appeared to me now as if they had compassion on me, and I felt the fire of divine love enkindled within me so that I could pray as I never prayed before. I had also received a special grace to contemplate the cross in which Christ had suffered so much for my sins. Sorrow, love, and the desire to sacrifice everything for Him filled my soul."

Three years after her conversion her mother and, within a few months, her husband and all of her children died. Angela sold all her belongings and joined the Third Order of St Francis. Considered a "great medieval mystic," she is said to have exhibited stigmata and to have received mystical revelations, which she dictated to a scribe in the late 1200s. These accounts are contained in a compilation of two works, usually published under the title *Il Libro della Beata Angela da Foligno*. She later established a community of sisters in Foligno and by example added a Third Order rule to live commonly but without being bound to enclosure, so as to better contribute works of charity.

In addition to constant prayer, especially expressed in Eucharistic adoration, Angela of Foligno always conducted charitable activity, assisting lepers and all the sick with a tenderness in which they saw Christ Crucified. Known already in life as *Magistra Theologorum*, she promoted a theology based on the Word of God, on obedience to the Church and on the direct experience of the Divine in its most intimate manifestations.

At her confessor's advice, Angela wrote her *Book of Visions and Instructions*. In it she



recalls some of the temptations she suffered after her conversion; she also expresses her thanks to God for the Incarnation of Jesus. This book and her life earned for Angela the title "Teacher of Theologians."

She wrote: No one can be saved without divine light. Divine light causes us to begin and to make progress, and it leads us to the summit of perfection. Therefore if you want to begin and to receive this divine light, pray. If you have begun to make progress, pray. And if you have reached the summit of perfection, and want to be super-illuminated so as to remain

in that state, pray. If you want faith, pray. If you want hope, pray. If you want charity, pray. If you want poverty, pray. If you want obedience, pray. If you want chastity, pray. If you want humility, pray. If you want meekness, pray. If you want fortitude, pray. If you want any virtue, pray.

And pray in this fashion: always reading the Book of Life, that is, the life of the God-man, Jesus Christ, whose life consisted of poverty, pain, contempt and true obedience.

At Christmas, 1308, Angela told her companions she would die shortly. A few days later Christ appeared to her, promising to come personally to take her to heaven. She died in her sleep on January 3, 1309. Pope Innocent XIII beatified Angela in 1693, and on October 9, 2013, Pope Francis declared her a saint.

Source:

www.franciscanmedia.org;
www.vaticannews.va/en/saints;
<https://stfrancis.clas.asu.edu>;
www.loyolapress.com/catholicresources/saints ♦

SAINT OF THE MONTH - II

St Gilbert of Sempringham

1083 – 1189

Feast Day : 04 February

The Founder of the Order of Gilbertines was born at Sempringham, on the border of the Lincolnshire fens, between Bourn and Heckington. The exact date of his birth is unknown, but it lies between 1083 and 1089. His father, Jocelin, was a wealthy Norman Knight holding lands in Lincolnshire; his mother, name unknown, was an Englishwoman of humble rank. Being ill-favoured and deformed, he was not destined for a military or knightly career after his father.

Gilbert followed a path quite different from that expected of him as the son of a Norman knight. Sent to France for his higher education, he decided to pursue seminary studies. He returned to England not yet ordained a priest, and inherited several estates from his father. But Gilbert avoided the easy life he could have led under the circumstances. Instead he lived a simple life at a parish, sharing as much as possible with the poor. Following his ordination to the priesthood he served as parish priest at Sempringham.

Among the congregation were seven young women who had expressed to him their desire to live in religious life. In response, Gilbert had a house built for them adjacent to the Church. There they lived an austere life, but one which attracted ever more numbers; eventually lay sisters and lay brothers were added to work the

land. The religious order formed eventually became known as the Gilbertines, though Gilbert had hoped the Cistercians or some other existing order would take on the responsibility of establishing a rule of life for the new order.



Similar establishments grew elsewhere, and, after failing in 1147 to incorporate them in the Cistercian order, Gilbert received encouragement from Pope Eugenius III to continue as before. In the following year, the Pope approved the new order, confirming Gilbert as its first master general. The Sempringham Canons were a double community of men and women, the property belonging to the nuns and the superior being head of the establishment. There were also houses for canons only, all under the master of Sempringham. During Gilbert's lifetime the order reached several thousand members, all associated with such institutions as

orphanages, hospitals, and alms-houses.

In 1165 Gilbert fell out of royal favour; he was charged by officials of King Henry II with having assisted in the escape of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had taken refuge in France from the King's wrath. Affirming ecclesiastical rights, Gilbert refused to deny the charges, and the case was eventually dropped. Subsequent revolt among his lay brothers, however, caused a scandal that was finally judged at Rome; Gilbert was vindicated of the slander he had suffered.

Forced by old age (he reputedly lived 106 years) to resign his Generalship, Gilbert retired to the simple rule of his order. Except for one Scottish house, the Gilbertines never spread beyond England. They were brutally dissolved (1538–40) by King Henry VIII.

The Gilbertine communities became known for their discipline, fasting and self-denial, and service to the poor. Over the years a special custom was created in the houses of the order called “the plate of the Lord Jesus.” The best portions of dinner were put on a special plate and shared with the poor, reflecting Saint Gilbert's lifelong concern for less fortunate people. He himself ate little, mainly roots, and slept little—taking short rests in a chair. He would instead spend the night in prayer. At one point in his life, he suffered imprisonment on the false accusation of aiding the exiled Saint Thomas Becket.



While he had not sent aid, he refused to make an oath stating as such, as he did not want to appear uncharitable toward the exiled bishop. Rather, he endured prison until his name was cleared. Despite the harshness of his daily penance, Saint Gilbert lived a long life, past age 100. At the age of 106 he passed away. His death was marked with “bright lights, sweet odours and incorrupt clothing.” Numerous miracles and cures have been reported at his tomb.

Gilbert was canonised in 1202 by Pope Innocent III. His liturgical feast day is on 4 February, commemorating his death.

Source:

www.franciscanmedia.org;

www.catholic.org/saints;

www.newadvent.org/;

<https://anastpaul.com/2017/02/16/saint-of-the-day> ♦

Regnum Christi receives Vatican approval

In a letter Feb. 5 to federation members, the three-member General Directive College of Regnum Christi said the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life granted the approval Dec. 16.

Both the Legionaries of Christ and Regnum Christi were founded by the late Father Marcial Maciel Degollado, who was condemned by the Vatican for having sexually abused boys in his seminaries and fathering children.

Pope Benedict XVI ordered an apostolic visitation of the Legionaries and Regnum Christi in 2009 and appointed a papal delegate to oversee the groups as they underwent a Vatican-ordered reform of their communities and constitutions.

A key part of the process was spelling out how the branches of Regnum Christi relate to one another and, particularly, how to give the consecrated men and women greater autonomy from the priests of the Legionaries of Christ in their daily lives and apostolic work while still promoting cooperation.

At the same time, each branch of the federation -- the Legionaries of Christ, the consecrated women of Regnum Christi, the consecrated lay men of Regnum Christi and the lay members -- began drawing up their own constitutions and submitting them to the Vatican for approval. ♦



A true story about athlete Glenn Cunningham who was horribly burned in a schoolhouse fire at the age of 8. Doctors predicted he would never walk again. Determined to walk, Glenn would throw himself off his wheelchair and pull his body across the yard and along a fence. Twenty-two months later, he took his first steps and through sheer determination, learned to run despite the pain...

The little country schoolhouse was heated by an old-fashioned, pot-bellied coal stove. A little boy had the job of coming to school early each day to start the fire and warm the room before his teacher and his classmates arrived.

One morning they arrived to find the schoolhouse engulfed in flames. They dragged the unconscious little boy out of the flaming building more dead than alive. He had major burns over the lower half of his body and was taken to a nearby county hospital.

From his bed the dreadfully burned, semi-conscious little boy faintly heard the doctor talking to his mother. The doctor told his mother that her son would surely die – which was for the best, really – for the terrible fire had devastated the lower half of his body.

But the brave boy didn't want to die. He made up his mind that he would survive. Somehow, to the amazement of the physician, he did survive. When the mortal danger was past, he again heard the doctor and his mother speaking quietly. The mother was told that since the fire had destroyed so much flesh in the lower part of his body, it would almost be better if he had died, since he was doomed to be a lifetime cripple with no use at all of his lower limbs.

Once more the brave boy made up his mind. He would not be a cripple. He would walk. But unfortunately from the waist down, he had no motor ability. His thin legs just dangled there, all but lifeless.

Ultimately he was released from the hospital. Every day his mother would massage his little legs, but there was no feeling, no control, nothing. Yet his determination that he would walk was as strong as ever.

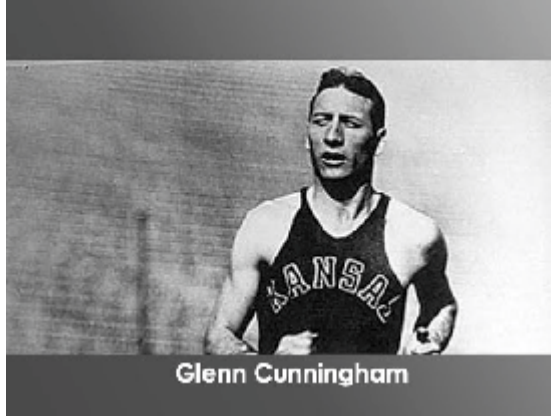
When he wasn't in bed, he was confined to a wheelchair. One sunny day his mother wheeled him out into the yard to get some fresh air. This day, instead of sitting there, he threw himself from the chair. He pulled himself across the grass, dragging his legs behind him.

He worked his way to the white picket fence bordering their lot. With great effort, he raised himself up on the fence. Then, stake by stake, he began dragging himself along the fence, resolved that he would walk. He started to do this every day until he wore a smooth path all around the yard beside the fence. There was nothing he wanted more than to develop life in those legs.

Ultimately through his daily massages, his iron persistence and his resolute determination, he did develop the ability to stand up, then to walk haltingly, then to walk by himself – and then – to run. He began to walk to school, then to run to school, to run for the sheer joy of running. Later in college he made the track team.

Still later in Madison Square Garden this young man who was not expected to survive, who would surely never walk, who could never hope to run – this determined young man, Dr. Glenn Cunningham, ran the world's fastest mile**!

***On June 16, 1934, Glenn Cunningham ran the mile in 4:06.8 minutes, breaking the world's record. His effort portrays that whatever you want to create in your life is yours for the making. As long as you desire it enough and allow your will to guide you, you can have and be whatever your heart desires. The only one that can put limits on our personal will is ourselves. Develop and encourage your will to create and all*



Glenn Cunningham

the forces of nature within and without will help you bring your desire to pass.

Life Summary:

- 8 years old, was horribly burned in a schoolhouse fire. Doctors predicted he would never walk again.
- 22 months later, took his first steps and through sheer determination, learned

to run despite the pain.

- In high school, set records for the mile and later attended Kansas University.
- While at Kansas, refused all scholarship money, preferring to pay his own way.
- By sophomore year, ran the 1,500 meter race at the 1932 Olympics, but finished fourth due to a severe cold.
- By senior year, set a world record for the mile of 4:06.8 and held seven of the top 13 fastest recorded times for the mile.
- In 1936, voted "Most Popular Athlete" by his fellow athletes.
- He went on to earn a master's degree from University of Iowa and later a doctorate from New York University.
- While in New York, won 21 of 31 races at Madison Square Gardens and set an indoor mile record there in 1938. His fastest mile time was 4:04.4 at a Dartmouth track meet in 1938.
- When the 1940 Olympics were cancelled, he retired from his running career and taught at Cornell College in Iowa.
- During World War II, he served two years in the Navy.
- Spent the remainder of his life running the Glenn Cunningham Youth Ranch for troubled kids in Kansas, USA. It is estimated that he and his wife raised around 9,000 kids on their ranch in the years until his death in 1988.♦

By Stephen in Awakening Stories, True Stories



Cardinal Koch rejects extreme traditionalist, progressive positions on Vatican II

Madrid, Spain(Catholicnewsagency.com)

In his acceptance speech for the honorary doctorate awarded him by the Catholic University of Valencia, Cardinal Kurt Koch rejected the extreme positions of progressives and traditionalists regarding the Second Vatican Council.

The prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity reflected in his address on the tension between the two essential parts of the Second Vatican Council: fidelity to the sources and fidelity to the signs of the times.

For the cardinal, “the relationship between these two dimensions has always characterized the Church, but the tension has become more acute in a new way after Vatican II.”

Faced with this dichotomy, Koch argued that “beyond secularist conformism and separatist fundamentalism, it is necessary to seek a third path in the Catholic faith, which has already been shown to us by the council.”

According to the prefect, both the so-called progressives and the traditionalists “conceive of Vatican II as a rupture, although in opposite ways.” For the former, the rupture occurred after the council, while the latter understand that it occurred during it.

In light of this, the cardinal considered that “the two extreme positions are so close, precisely because they do not interpret Vatican II within the general tradition of the Church.”

In his address, Koch recalled, with regard to the traditionalist view that focuses solely on the

sources, that Pope Benedict XVI stated that “the magisterial authority of the Church cannot be frozen in 1962.”

The risk of worldliness in the Church

On the other hand, “if the emphasis is placed solely on 'aggiornamento' [updating], there is a danger that the opening of the Church to the world, desired and achieved by the council, will become a hasty adaptation of the foundations of faith to the spirit of the modern age,” the cardinal noted.

“Many currents in the postconciliar period were so oriented toward the world that they did not notice the tentacles of the modern spirit or underestimated its impact,” the cardinal observed, “so that the so-called conversion to the world did not cause the leaven of the Gospel to permeate modern society more but rather led to a broad conformism of the Church with the world.”

Koch's proposal in the face of both positions, which he considers equally disruptive, is “the restoration of a healthy balance in the relationship between the faith and the Church on the one hand and the world on the other.”

In his view, if the Church cannot be confused with the world, “the original identity of faith and the Church must not be defined in such a way that it separates itself from the world in a fundamentalist way.”

In this sense, he added that the dialogue between the Church and the contemporary world “must not make faith and the Church adapt to the world in a secularist way, dangerously renouncing her identity.” ♦

Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

January 2025: *For the right to an education*

Let us pray for migrants, refugees, and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.

February 2025: *For vocations to the priesthood and religious life*

Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.



Towards a Fully Synodal and Missionary Church in Asia.

CELEBRATE HOLY CHILDHOOD DAY

The Missionary Childhood Association

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.



**“Children are the joy of the family and of society.
Children are called to help renew the world.”**

Pope Francis



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