



HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

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INTERMEDIATE NEWSLETTER – ADVENT, 2021

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The word “Advent” (from the Latin root *adventus*) means “coming”. It has also been translated as “arrival”, from the Greek “*parousia*”. The Cambridge dictionary defines the word *advent* as: the fact of an event happening, an invention being made, or a person arriving. Each of these meanings supports what most of you already know, that the season of Advent for Catholics is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of Jesus’s birth at Christmas. At the same time, and often forgotten, it is preparation for the return of Christ at the Second Coming.

The meanings also evoke feelings of anticipation, waiting, uncertainty, mystery, possibly fear, and most importantly, **hope**. As this Newsletter is being written, Canada is in the grips of the third wave of the COVID pandemic. It is impossible to predict how things will be when it is published this Fall. However, there are definite similarities between the feelings aroused by the season of Advent and what people are feeling during these uncertain times.

Welcome to our Autumn/Advent edition of the Holy Childhood Association (HCA) Newsletter. Let us stress the feeling of HOPE that Advent brings. Enjoy the information on our feature country THAILAND.

THAILAND: Land of the Free



Formerly known as Siam, in 1948 the country became known as the Kingdom of Thailand, which means “Land of the Free”. People are proud of this title because Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia not to have been colonised by a European country. While technically under Japanese influence during World War II, its involvement was minimal compared to other Southeast Asian areas.

Here are a few interesting facts about our featured country.

- **Population:** 69 million people live in Thailand (2020)
- **Capital:** Bangkok with over 10 million inhabitants.
- **Name:** Kingdom of Thailand (former *Siam*)
- **Government:** Constitutional Monarchy. The Thai chief of state is King Vajiralongkorn.
- **Language:** Thai
- **Religion:** Buddhism (95%); only 1.17% Christian
- **Literacy rate:** 93% (population over 15 years who can read and write)

FLAG OF THAILAND



The colours are said to stand for nation-religion-king. Red is for the land and people, white for religions and blue for the monarchy.

GARUDA

The Garuda is a mythical figure that is half bird and half man. It is the national symbol of Thailand and this figure adorns many Buddhist temples.



TEMPLES AND MONUMENTS

Thailand has many Buddhist temples and monuments that attract worshippers and tourists.



Grand Palace, Bangkok
kids-world-travel-guide.com)



Wat Phra Kaew, Bangkok
(Basile Morin, CCA 4.0 International)



Alex Kovacheva, CCA 4.0 International

FLOATING MARKETS & FOOD

Thailand is famous for its foods. While rice is a staple, there are many varieties of dishes that include noodles, vegetables, sprouts, seafood, chicken rice and barbequed pork. There are lots of fresh spices such as garlic, lemon grass, lime juice, hot chillies, peppers, coriander as well as palm sugar. Thailand grows a large variety of exotic fruits such as mango and papaya. Tourists like to buy and eat food at the famous floating markets.

THAI CLASSIC DANCE

There are different forms of dance in Thailand. Traditionally, kindness, grace and beauty are reflected in traditional dance. The dances are hypnotic and follow lovely rhythms made from oriental musical instruments. The dances have ancient roots and have been used to entertain guests over the centuries.



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thailandhighlight.com

THE KING AND I



The King and I – Yul Brynner & Deborah Kerr
(Rotten Tomatoes)

Your grandparents may recall a movie/stage play entitled The King and I, a musical. The story took place in the 1860s in Siam (Thailand), and was perhaps the only thing Canadian people in the 1950s knew about the country. It may not surprise you to know that before our time of political correctness and “cancel culture”, this film was banned in Thailand for several scenes that, it was claimed, distorted history and presented the king as inferior and patriarchal. It also had colonial overtones, as the British were heavily involved in Thailand and the play /movie was considered an embarrassment. How times change!

2004 TSUNAMI

On Boxing Day 2004, the third largest earthquake ever recorded resulted in a huge Tsunami that affected coastal areas around the Indian Ocean. In Thailand, the tsunami hit the coastal provinces of Phang Nga and Phuket. Locals and tourists were caught completely unaware. The death toll in Thailand was nearly 5,400 including 2,000 foreign tourists. In the region, 230,000 people died.



Ban Nam Khaem (History.com)



Patong Beach, Phuket (History.com)

HCA PROJECTS IN THAILAND

Two of the most recent projects that the HCA has supported are described.

A Congregation of Dominican sisters operate the Our Lady of the Rosary Boarding House for girls in Udon Thani in northern Thailand. This house supports access to educational facilities in the area so that poor families can have their girls receive adequate education. The goal is to allow girls access to realistic life choices that allow them to avoid being absorbed into one of the many child prostitution networks in the country.



Girls at OLR Boarding House



Children at the MPH Aids Centre

In nearby Nong Bua Lamphu, the HCA has supported the Mother of Perpetual Help Aids Centre. Assistance has been given to poor children either infected with AIDS or in families that have been affected. Help has been given in the form of food, milk and educational requirements, in particular school uniforms and stationery requirements.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – October 24, 2021

World Mission Sunday was on October 24. The theme was: ***“We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).*** You can download the children’s animation for this Sunday from our Education Resources on the website.

Advent 2021

In Advent 2020, Pope Francis wrote:

“Advent is a continuous call to hope. It reminds us that God is present in history to lead it to its ultimate goal and to its fullness, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. God is present in the history of humanity, He is the ‘God-with-us’, He walks beside us to support us.”

Earlier in the newsletter, reference was made to our feelings of anticipation, anxiety and hope during these times, and how Advent traditionally brings these emotions also.

Get your teacher or catechist to help you with this. Download two resources that are on our website missionsocieties.ca/holy-childhood-association-hca/: the **Advent calendar** and **Advent Prayers and Reflections for Children**. The prayers and reflections are directly linked to the daily thoughts and can help you each day with your Advent/Christmas preparation.

*Let us travel to Christmas by the light of a star.
Let us go to the hillside right where the shepherds are,
Let us see the shining angels singing from heaven above,
Let us all see Mary cradling God’s holy child with love.*
(Author anonymous)

YEAR OF ST JOSEPH (2021): PATRON OF CANADA



In the Apostolic Letter "Patris corde" ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis proclaimed a "Year of Saint Joseph" from 8 December 2020 to 8 December 2021.

Saint Joseph is described as "a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows." (Vatican News)



He was chosen as the patron saint of Canada by the first Recollect Franciscan missionaries in 1624. The Jesuit missionaries who followed the Franciscans named several of their missions for St. Joseph. In a letter written in May of 1635, St. Jean de Brebeuf said:

"We owe much also to our glorious St. Joseph, Spouse of Our Lady and Protector of the Hurons, who has rendered us tangible aid several times."

