# MISSIONS TODA

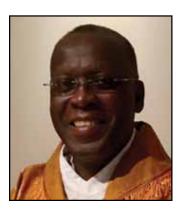


World Mission Sunday October 22nd 2017

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

### National Director's Message

Mission Today Message Fall 2017



In lieu of Father Alex's usual message, "Missions Today" presents Pope Francis's World Mission Sunday 2017 Appeal beginning on page 3.

#### The Pope's Monthly Prayer Intentions:

#### **SEPTEMBER - Parishes:**

That our parishes, animated by a missionary spirit, may be places where faith is communicated and charity is seen.

#### **OCTOBER - World Mission Day:**

That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

#### **NOVEMBER - Collaboration of Priests and Laity:**

That within parishes, priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

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### Mission at the heart of the Christian faith



Photo: Benhur Arcayan, wikimedia.org

#### Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Once again this year, World Mission Day gathers us around the person of Jesus, "the very first and greatest evangelizer" (PAUL VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 7), who continually sends us forth to proclaim the Gospel of the love of God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. This Day invites us to reflect anew on the mission at the heart of the Christian faith. The Church is missionary by nature; otherwise, she would no longer be the Church of Christ, but one group among many others that soon end up serving their purpose and passing away. Therefore, it is important to ask ourselves certain questions about our Christian identity and our responsibility as believers in a world marked by confusion, disappointment, and frustration, and torn by numerous fratricidal wars that unjustly target the innocent. What is the basis of our mission? What is the heart of our mission? What are the essential approaches we need to take in carrying out our mission?



Photo: Daniel Ibanez, Catholic News Agency

1. The Church's mission, directed to all men and women of good will, is based on the transformative power of the Gospel. The Gospel is Good News filled with contagious joy, for it contains and offers new life: the life of the Risen Christ who, by bestowing his life-giving Spirit, becomes for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6



Photo: Jeff Bruno, EWTN

2. God the Father desires this existential transformation of his sons and daughters, a transformation that finds expression in worship in spirit and truth (cf. Jn 4:23-24), through a life guided by the Holy Spirit in imitation of Jesus the Son to the glory of God the Father

3. The Church's mission, then, is not to spread a religious ideology, much less to propose a lofty ethical teaching. Many movements throughout the world inspire high ideals or ways to live a meaningful life. Through the mission of the Church, Jesus Christ himself continues to evangelize and act; her mission thus makes present in history the kairos, the favourable time of salvation. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, the risen Jesus becomes our contemporary, so that those who welcome him with faith and love can experience the transforming power of his Spirit, who makes humanity and creation fruitful, even as the rain does with the earth

4. Let us never forget that "being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a Person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (BENEDICT XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 1). The Gospel is a Person who continually offers himself and constantly invites those who receive him with humble and religious faith to share his life by an effective participation in the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection.



Photo: Daniel Ibanez, Catholic News Agency

5. The world vitally needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Church, Christ continues his mission as the Good Samaritan, caring for the bleeding wounds of humanity, and as Good Shepherd, constantly seeking out those who wander along winding paths that lead nowhere. Thank God, many significant experiences continue to testify to the transformative power of the Gospel to overcome narrowness, conflict, racism, tribalism, and to promote everywhere, and among all, reconciliation, fraternity, and sharing.



Photo: Alisia D'Silva, Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy

- 6. The Church's mission is enlivened by a spirituality of constant exodus. We are challenged "to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel" (Evangelii Gaudium, 20). The Church's mission impels us to undertake a constant pilgrimage across the various deserts of life, through the different experiences of hunger and thirst for truth and justice. The Church's mission inspires a sense of constant exile, to make us aware, in our thirst for the infinite, that we are exiles journeying towards our final home, poised between the "already" and "not yet" of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- 7. Mission reminds the Church that she is not an end unto herself, but a humble instrument and mediation of the Kingdom. A self-referential Church, one that is content with earthly success, is not the Church of Christ, his crucified and glorious Body. That is why we should prefer "a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security" (ibid., 49).



Photo: Alisia D'Silva, Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy

- 8. Young people are the hope of mission. The person of Jesus Christ and the Good News he proclaimed continue to attract many young people. They seek ways to put themselves with courage and enthusiasm at the service of humanity. "There are many young people who offer their solidarity in the face of the evils of the world and engage in various forms of militancy and volunteering... How beautiful it is to see that young people are 'street preachers', joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth!" (ibid., 106).
- 9. The Pontifical Mission Societies are a precious means of awakening in every Christian community a desire to reach beyond its own confines and security in order to proclaim the Gospel to all. In them, thanks to a profound missionary spirituality, nurtured daily, and a constant commitment to raising missionary awareness and enthusiasm, young people, adults, families, priests, bishops and men and women religious work to develop a missionary heart in everyone. World Mission Day, promoted by the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, is a good opportunity for enabling the missionary heart of Christian communities to join in prayer, testimony of life and communion of goods, in responding to the vast and pressing needs of evangelization.



Photo: Alisia D'Silva, Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy

10. Dear brothers and sisters, in carrying out our mission, let us draw inspiration from Mary, Mother of Evangelization. Moved by the Spirit, she welcomed the Word of life in the depths of her humble faith. May the Virgin Mother help us to say our own "yes", conscious of the urgent need to make the Good News of Jesus resound in our time. May she obtain for us renewed zeal in bringing to everyone the Good News of the life that is victorious over death. May she intercede for us so that we can acquire the holy audacity needed to discover new ways to bring the gift of salvation to every man and woman.

From the Vatican, 4 June 2017

Solemnity of Pentecost

Franciscus

## 2.5 Million Pilgrims Attend 2017

## Uganda Martyrs' Day Celebration By Jacinta W. Odongo, Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

This is an edited version of the original report filed in the AMECEA News Letter of June 16, 2017. Photos by Ultimate Media Consult for the Uganda Episcopal Conference



Every June 3, Catholic faithful from across the world usually gather at Namugongo Catholic Martyrs Shrine to celebrate the Uganda Martyrs Day in honour of the 22 Catholic Martyrs that were killed on the orders of Mwanga II the Kabaka (King) of Buganda between 1885 and 1887.

However, this year's celebration attracted more pilgrims both locally and internationally than the previous editions. According to

organizers, although they had anticipated receiving about 1.5 million of pilgrims, over 2.5 million attended the celebration.

"This year's celebration was a milestone in terms of pilgrims' attendance. The magnitude of people at Namugongo Shrine was massive. Items like drinks, food and a number of consumables reportedly ran out of stock around the shrines." said one of the

organizers.



Pilgrims came from different countries including Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and South Sudan besides hosts Uganda. Others came from Italy, USA, Canada, Mexico and India. According to the pilgrims' desk statistics, Tanzania had the largest contingent of registered pilgrims with over 2500, while Kenyan had at least 2000 and 600 came from Rwanda and more from other countries.

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The majority of these pilgrims came to the shrine on foot as a demonstration of their faith while others used various means of transport to reach the Shrine. Robert Macharia from the Diocese of Nakuru in Kenya is one of the pilgrims who trekked for days to reach Namugongo Catholic Shrine.

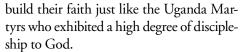
"This is not my first time to walk from Kenya to Namugongo. I have been coming here since 2015 on foot together with my fellow parishioners. We usually converge at a place called Mabira Forest just a few meters from Jinja town with other groups of pilgrims who also walk from Kenya. At Mabira, we recite the rosary and pray for one of our fellow pilgrims from Kenya who



was killed there some years back in a car accident on her way to Namugongo." he said.

For the first time, this year's celebration also featured an award called 'pilgrim of the year' where one of the pilgrims from the Diocese of Lira won an air ticket to visit the Vatican City in Rome.

In his homily, the Bishop of Hoima Rt. Rev. Vincent Kirabo called upon the pilgrims to



"Christians should live a true virtue of Christianity free from corruption, hypocrisy, irresponsible sense of leadership and anger among other actions that abuse God." Bishop Kirabo said.

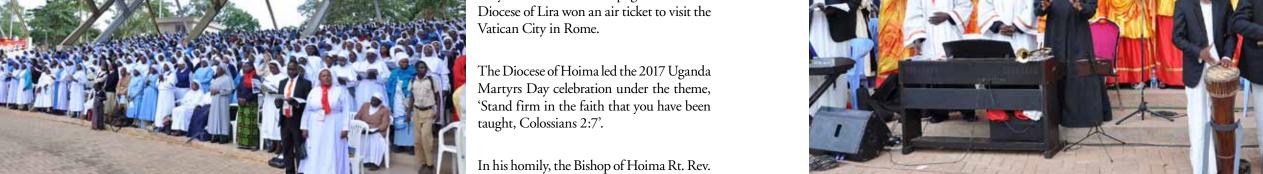
In his speech, The Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference and Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama urged the pilgrims to pray for the soul of the 23-year-old pilgrim from Lira Diocese who died on her way to Namugongo while walking. The 23 year-old was three months' expectant at the time of her death.

The celebration was graced by the Vice President of Uganda, His Excellency Edward Sekandi, who was the Chief Pilgrim. There were also other dignitaries including the former First Lady of Tanzania, Mama Maria Magige Nyerere, wife of the late President Julius Nyerere and the chief Justice of Uganda, Bart Magunda Katureebe among others.

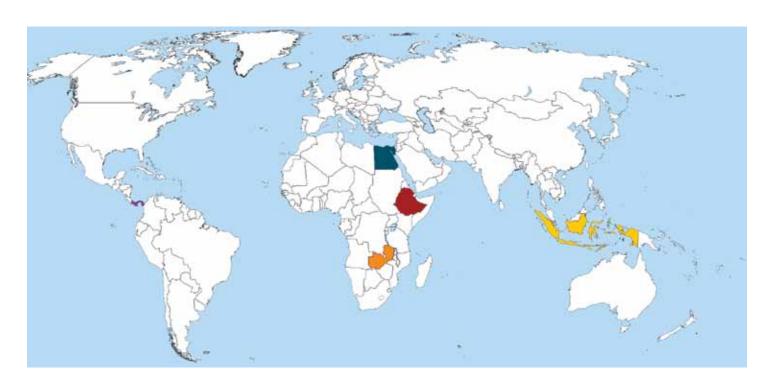








## Across the Globe



### EGYPT - Church built in the village of Ismailia with the offerings of Muslims

Minya - The village of Ismailia, in the Egyptian province of Minya, now has a second church thanks to the financial contribution of the local Muslim population.

The inauguration of the new church, dedicated to St. George and the Virgin Mary, took place last week with the festive participation of many villagers, both Christians and Muslims. In his speech, Mayor Ibrahim presented the construction of the church as a visible and concrete sign for strengthening national harmony.

In the village area of Ismailia there are about 20,000 Egyptians, one third are Christian Copts, and two-thirds are Sunni Muslims. The decision to build a second church was taken little more than a year ago so that Christian residents would not need to travel far from their homes to take part in liturgies. Given the religious persecution being experienced by many Christians in Egypt, such travel would expose them to the risk of attacks and abduction.

The "reconciliation committee" of the village of Ismailia, in charge of preventing or solving sectarian conflicts, had approved the construction of the new Coptic Church, establishing the area to be used for the construction of the place of worship. During the assembly of the committee, members of the organization, largely Muslims, had cast their votes on the eventual construction of the church and the location chosen. The proposal obtained 49 votes in favor out of a total of 53 votes cast. The almost unanimous consent to the construction of the Coptic Church was welcomed by local Christian communities in an area marked by past episodes of sectarian intolerance. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 05/16/2017.* 

#### PANAMA - Mary, at the centre of the 2019 World Youth Day logo

Panama City - Ambar Calvo, a 20-year-old student of architecture at the University of Panama, was the winner of the competition for the next World Youth Day logo (WYD), to be held in Panama from 22 to January



27, 2019. The logo was chosen from 103 proposals evaluated by a jury of graphic design specialists, marketing and other professions who selected the 3 best proposals, which were then evaluated by the WYD Executive Committee, along with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life in Rome.

Mgr. José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, Archbishop of Panama, said he was enthusiastic about the talent of this young Panamanian because the design managed, "to capture the message we want to send to young people all over the world, the smallness of our Country, but the greatness of our heart, open to all, without excluding anyone, from the hand of the Virgin Mary, model of a young brave, committed and generous woman, who said yes to God's call".

In the logo one can see the Panama Canal, which symbolizes the pilgrim's journey that discovers in Mary the way to meet Jesus; the Pilgrims Cross; the profile of the Virgin in her 'Fiat'; the small white spots are a sign of Mary's crown, and of the pilgrims from all continents who will attend the event. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 05/15/2017.* 

### ZAMBIA - A Church on Mission – Zambia Celebrates 125 Years of the Catholic Faith

Lusaka – At the end of a year of celebration marking 125th anniversary of the founding of since the Church in the country, Zambia's bishops state that while it was once a missionary Church, it is now a Church on mission.

"Share your faith with other people, members of your extended families, and with other Zambians. Faith that is not shared remains small and is infantile. Faith shared is multiplied," Archbishop Telesphore Mpundu of Lusaka said at a July 14-15 ceremony in the nation's capital.

"Since the Church in Zambia has grown, it is now time to send missionaries to the world," agreed the Apostolic Nuncio to Zambia, Archbishop Julio Murat, noting it was time to be a witness to Western countries.

The two-day celebration included a focus on youth and on the variety of Catholic activities, highlighting the diversity found among the 11 Zambian dioceses.

The event was attended by the Zambian vice president, Inonge Wina, who praised the Church for its work in education and social support, saying the "the Catholic Church has continued to be a strong and reliable partner with government in not only the delivery of social services but also in advocating for integral development."

She recognized that although the Zambian government and the Church haven't always seen eye-to-eye, both parties have similar goals. The government and the Church emphasized the need for more communication between the government and the Church as well as the need to combat tribalism.

Zambia was colonized by European nations in the 19th century, and missionaries were among the early European contacts with the natives. Jesuits and Franciscans established missions in the country's south, while the White Fathers were based in the north, starting in 1891. *This is an edited version, taken from CAN/EWTN News* 07/28/2017

### INDONESIA - Fertile land of vocations: 37 deacons ordained in Flores

Maumere - "The island of Flores, Indonesia, is still a fertile land of religious and priestly vocations. This is demonstrated by the fact that, in the space of only eight days, on Saturday 10 and Sunday, June 18, in Maumere, 37 deacons were ordained", stated Father Luigi Galvani, MI, who lives his missionary commitment on the island. "Of them - continues the religious - 18 belong to the Verbites, 16 come from the four dioceses of the Island of Flores and 3 belong to the Missionaries of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Everyone follows theological studies in the Verbite Seminary in Ledalero, which with its nearly a thousand students from 12 different religious institutes is considered the largest Philosophical and Theological institute in Asia". "The feast was not only in the

church, but also in the various families of the new deacons with good food and music. There are still great traditions here!" adds Father Luigi.

"Indeed, here in Flores, the only island with a Catholic majority in Indonesia, there is no vocational crisis. In fact every year there are still hundreds of young people who enter the various religious communities and seminars to begin their formation. Certainly, many of them will one day strengthen the number of Indonesian missionaries already spread around the world", the missionary concludes. *This is an edited version of the original story taken from Agenzia Fides*, 06/19/2017.

## ETHIOPIA - Testimony of a Fidei Donum missionary: "One can learn and receive so much from missio ad gentes"

Adaba - "This is my house, rather my two parish houses: the first one in Adaba, where I live, the other in Dodola, where I go during the week and on Sunday", says Don Giuseppe Ghirelli, a Fidei Donum missionary in Ethiopia

Parish houses are within an area that the government grants to carry out social and pastoral activities that the Catholic Church intends to develop".

"In Ethiopia – explains Don Giuseppe - the Catholic Church is considered an NGO, represented by a central Office based in Addis, to which all the Catholic eparchies of Oriental rite and Catholic vicariates of Latin rite must refer. Within the area assigned by the Government to individual parishes, one can carry out social activities (schools, health care, women's promotion, job creation, sports, agricultural projects ...) and pastoral care (catechesis, celebrations, Christian life education ...) only after the government, through the Central Office, approves the project submitted by the individual Churches. The project must have a precise description of what it intends to do, the duration of human resources and finance. The government follows and verifies through the state office for religious affairs the projects presented and their implementation".

"We foreign priests can only be present if we have the appropriate studies to do a job. I, for example, with my Theology Diploma, equivalent to a civil law degree, have permission to stay in Adaba as an elementary school principal, which is to be renewed annually. Within this normative framework, socio-pastoral work is carried out with the help of salaried lay people, who follow social activities".

"If someone wants to come to the mission - concludes Don Giuseppe -, he can stay in Ethiopia as a tourist for a maximum of 3 months. If you want to stay more, one should be part of one of the government-approved projects. If you come for just a few weeks, you can still learn and receive a lot from the missio ad gentes". *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 5/9/2017.* 

How Your World Mission Sunday Collection in English Canada

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

392,057.40

214,998.00

Contribution: ETHIOPIA

Contribution: 799,116.80

飼 NIGERIA

Contribution: 485,185.60

MALAWI

Contribution: 1,063,852.48

(S) INDIA

Contribution: 360,824.40

FONDAZIONE DOMUS MISSIONALIS

 Contribution:
 389,479.86

 SUBTOTAL
 3,490,516.54

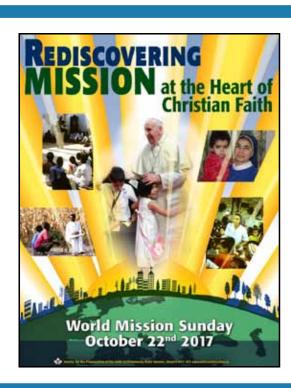
MISSIONARY DIOCESES

OF THE GREAT CANADIAN NORTH

VIA CCCB

**GRAND TOTAL** 3,705,514.54





## WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2017

This Year World Mission Sunday will take place on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Parishes worldwide will celebrate this unique Sunday, every Catholic across the world will have the opportunity to join in as brothers and sisters, with prayer and financial support for the poor and emerging church.

World Mission Sunday is a global sign of the Universal Church and your donation will help provide emergency aid when disaster strikes, care for refugees in war torn countries, rural and health clinics and transportation for priests, catechists and religious and lay pastoral workers.

Please join the Universal Church's efforts to share with justice and fraternity amongst all the Dioceses in the world.

GIVE GENERALISIV	ON OCTORER 22ND -	WORLD MISSION SLINDAY

You can contribute at Mass on October 22<sup>nd</sup> in your parish, you can donate by filling the form below and posting it to us (envelope inside this magazine), by phone or online.

Name :				
Address:		_ City:	Province:	
Postal Code:	Tel:	E-mail:		
By cheque; payable to:	):	Frequency: One time gift	•	
	OPAGATION OF THE FAITH	By credit card. Amount: \$		
By preauthorised debit; I am enclosing a voided cheque or use my credit card information.		☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐	☐ AMEX	
By secure online dona www.missionsocieties	tion; visit .ca or call 1 800 897 88 65	Card number	Expiry date (mm/yy)	
Help us reduce costs to receipts instead of pa	,	Name (as it appears on card)		
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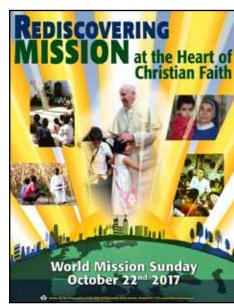
## Thank you, Canada! From Propagation of the Faith

#### Donations for the Year 2016 - English Canada

Donations for the Year 2016 – Eng	glish Canada	
ARCHDIOCESE	2016	2015
Antigonish	13,026	14,126
Calgary	143,1 41	119,044
Charlottetown	22,822	20,915
Churchill-Hudson Bay	1,563	(9,586)
Corner Brook	5,654	8,465
Edmonton	94,505	97,300
Grand Falls	7,202	7,085
Grouard-McLennan	20,003	1,483
Halifax	5,120	5,000
Hamilton	90,000	90,000
Kamloops	18,581	19,730
Keewatin-Le Pas	3,167	2,556
Kingston	42,382	42,610
London	108,277	97,469
Mackenzie-Fort Smith	3,525	165
Ordinariat militaire	2,940	3,361
Moosonee	179	0
Nelson	22,323	35,377
Ottawa	46,331	47,157
Pembroke	14,225	11,692
Peterborough	35,700	19,476
Prince Albert	15,632	8,446
Prince George	13,434	3,051
Regina	43,648	36,139
Saint John (NB)	26,370	27,1 79
Saskatoon	42,931	26,777
Sault Ste. Marie (English sector)	22,141	14,173
St. Catharines	32,594	29,461
St. John's (NL)	13,099	15,274
Thunder Bay	11,000	10,000
Toronto	615,321	415,635
Vancouver	154,731	158,260
Victoria	13,907	17,366
Whitehorse	1,335	2,627
Winnipeg	38,339	30,198
Ukrainian Eparchy•Edmonton	2,000	1,000
Ukrainian Eparchy•Saskatoon	0	0
Ukrainian Eparchy•Winnipeg	0	1,714
Ukrainian Eparchy•New Westminster	0	605
Maronite Eparchy•St Peter	0	210
Chaldean Eparchy•St Assai Toronto	0	0
Others (individuals)	2,094	1,780
Total	1,749,242	1,433,320

World Mission Sunday collections are sent to the National Office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Toronto, ON.

Every year in May National Directors from around the world meet in Rome to approve projects submitted for financial assistance. Specific projects submitted for financial assistance. Specific projects are allocated to specific countries for financial support. The money is sent directly from the National Office to the country of the approved project. The money is not sent to Rome.



ALL our World Mission Sunday materials are available on our website. This will make it easier for those who wish to copy directly on to bulletins, etc. The documents can be downloaded in Word format.

Our website is at www.missionsocieties. ca Items of missionary interest are available there, including World Mission TV and links to related sites.

## Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION CANADA - MISSION DAY

One of the entrenched traditions of the Holy Childhood Association (HCA) is the observance of MISSION DAY on an annual basis. Schools and parishes are encouraged to celebrate this important day on the first Wednesday of May, or as close to this day as circumstances allow. Doing something special at this time is an opportunity for HCA communities to reflect on their involvement in the missions, do something concrete in support of mission projects and to remind them of the responsibilities we as Catholic Christians bear toward less fortunate children in the world.

How can you observe this important day? Here is a short list of possibilities:

- celebration of the Eucharist for the entire community, (children, families, staff);
- have a Mission Para liturgy, if it is not possible to hold a Mass;
- get as many children as possible involved in the preparation and conducting of the Mass/Para liturgy;
- renewal of the HCA pledge;
- Organize a special Mission related homily. Invite a guest speaker who has been involved in the missions;
- Mission Assembly, with either a guest speaker or mission related video;
- Say the Mission prayer each day throughout this special week;
- advertise in the school Newsletter or local paper;
- Research a missionary saint. Presentations could vary according to ability and age levels (written information, essays, power point presentations, posters);





- close to Mission Day, conduct fund raising activities as a school or individual classes or groups (bake sale, candy sale, hot dog day, car wash, other traditional means);
- Organize a wider activity throughout your School District, Family of Schools, or Board. Each year, the Niagara Catholic District School Board organizes a walk-a-thon in support of the HCA. St Anthony's School in West Vancouver ran a "Herb Plant Sale", in which they raised over \$600 for the HCA. St Benedict's School in Leduc, Alberta, organized HCA presentations that raised almost \$300. Your imagination is the limit for what is possible!



This year, Father Alex Osei, National Director of the Pontifical Missions Society for English Canada, attended Mission Day in Vancouver. His presence was an inspiration and encouragement for the hard work conducted in that area.

What do you do on Mission Day? the National office welcomes reports and photos of your Mission Day activities, or any other projects and activities that you perform throughout the year. Please send them to us.

## Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: Project Report: Jamaica - Mandeville Diocese

By: Tom Staples, HCA Canada



#### **Missionary Childhood Association**

The Holy Childhood Association has provided financial support to our corresponding missionary organization in the Mandeville Diocese, Jamaica, called the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA). The MCA shares our dedication to the threefold ambition to learn about the missions, to pray for less fortunate children throughout the world and to share resources in order to improve lives

In the Mandeville Diocese, children participate in a Calendar Poster Competition. This is then published and sold to raise funds for the missions. Of course, appropriate prizes are awarded to the thirteen winning entries.

Special emphasis has been directed toward educational programs



for children regarding the Sacraments, Liturgy, Prayer and Christian Living. In addition, the MCA has promoted the recitation and use of the Missionary Rosary. Information regarding this special Rosary is available in the educational materials section on our website.

The MCA has also been very active in the promotion of vocations: priests, sisters, brothers and responsible parents. It also promotes the growth of faith and our Missionary responsibility as Christians.



"In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

(Matt 25:40)



## Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: Project Report: Tanzania – Spring Of Hope Centre - Kibamba

#### **Spring of Hope**

**By: Tom Staples, HCA Educational Support** 



The Holy Childhood Association has contributed to the ongoing support of the Spring of Hope initiative in Tanzania.

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI) work on behalf of underprivileged and disadvantaged children in Tanzania. Their programs are aimed at assisting children who are vulnerable to the dangers of child trafficking, which includes kidnapping for the implementation of human labour and sexual exploitation. They also assist in the areas of school retention, health (in particular HIV/AIDS), life skills education for both urban and rural children and education regarding child rights. They have a special interest in furthering life expectations for young women.

The Daughters have established a Spring of Hope Centre in Kibamba, a suburb of Dar es Salaam. It is a rehabilitation centre for

orphaned children who have been abandoned. Many of them have been victims of human





trafficking. The centre provides medical assistance, education, counselling, spiritual guidance, vocational training and recreation. Recently, some of the education programs have included photography, computer skills, textiles, drug abuse information, agriculture, gardening, personal grooming, self awareness, stress management and leadership.

The DMI have focussed quite strongly on the issue of Human Trafficking, which despite official efforts at its eradication by government and private non-profit organizations, is still an ongoing problem. "Break their chains! Heal their Pains!" was the theme for World day against human trafficking on July 29. The Daughters try to raise awareness among the public on this issue in an attempt to prevent women and children from becoming victims of this unfortunate practice.

### DMI motto: I DON'T STOP WHEN I AM TIRED: I STOP WHEN I AM DONE!



"Thank you for making my day better when I was depressed. Even though you didn't know it you (DMI) saved my life."

## Bangladesh's Catechists: 'True Missionaries'

In the absence of priests, the faith relies on a small group of dedicated catechists.

This is an edited version of a report that originally appeared in ucanews.com on 04/12/17

By Stephan Uttom and Rock Rosario



Dhaka, Bangladesh - Onarai Tripura treks through the hilly roads and rivers of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts to meet some 1,000 tribal Catholics and offer spiritual and pastoral care in 15 remote villages.

"Sometimes I take vehicles and boats but I mostly walk because it's only way to reach villages. It takes two-days to reach the farthermost one," said Tripura, a catechist.

A catechist in Bandar-

ban district accom-

Moses Costa of Chit-

tagong (with bamboo

stick in hand) during a

pastoral visit in this file

photo. (Photo Courte-

Each village has about

80 Catholics and he

tries to meet them all

during his monthly vis-

its. He listens to their

problems, offers solu-

tions, and keeps them in

touch with the church.

sy: Elvis Penheiro)

Archbishop

panies



Districts of Bangladesh – Map by Nafsadh, wikimedia.org

During Lent, he stays with them for a whole day and night, leading prayer services, and the Way of the Cross.

"Sometimes, people are upset as they can't access priests but we encourage them and help them keep their faith alive," said the catechist with 25 years of experience.

During Lent's 40 days, Tripura returns home to Antaha Para village near Bandarban district town, for a day and a night, to spend some time with his family.

"Catholics living in nearby villages see priests three or four times a year but Catholics in remote areas don't see a priest once in a year. I meet them to offer catechism, spiritual and pastoral care in lieu of them," he says.

During Lent and Easter, he helps conduct various para-liturgical services.

The three hill districts are the only mountainous regions of Bangladesh and home to some 25 ethnic tribal groups who are largely Buddhist. The picturesque area was the scene of sectarian clashes and two decades of bush-war between tribal militia and government forces ending in 1997.

Catholic missionaries reached the hills in 1950s and today there are over 20,000 Catholics in seven parishes in all three districts. The growth of the church in the hills is largely due to catechists like Tripura.



A catechist in Bandarban district accompanies Archbishop Moses Costa of Chittagong (with bamboo stick in hand) during a pastoral visit in this file photo.

Photo Courtesy: Elvis Penheiro

There are 28 salaried catechists and 65 teachers who serve as volunteer catechists in the area. Across the country, about 1,000 paid and voluntary catechists offer similar services to Catholics in eight dioceses.

A catechist's life of vocation and service is tough economically with hardships for their families. Tripura struggles to run his sixmember family on his 5,410 taka (US\$68) monthly wage.

To support the family, Tripura relies on jhum (slash and burn agriculture) to run a small plantation.

"It is really hard to maintain family on our wages. My children have grown up and I need to support their education. Yet, I am happy and satisfied as a catechist as it gives me the pleasure of serving people", Tripura says.



Cathedral of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary,
Old Chittagong. The church is part of the oldest Christian
settlement in Bengal, tracing its origins to 16th-century Portuguese rule in the region.

Photo: Bazaan, wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-3.0



Holy Rosary Church, Dhaka, was founded by Portuguese Augustinian missionaries. The is the second version of the church built in 1677

Photo: Hameem Shakhawat, wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-3.0]

Lalmoni Tripura has worked as catechist in neighboring Rangamati district for nearly 28 years. He takes care of some 1,200 Catholics in 18 villages and, like Onarai, he also has a busy time during Lent.

"People are devoted and they eagerly await our visits. During Lent, I fast with them, take part in liturgy, night vigils, and Way of Cross. It gives them a spiritual boost ahead of Easter," he says.

Despite the difficulties of low pay, Lalmoni says he loves the job.

"Through my works, I can spread Jesus' love among people and put them on the right track. In return I get immense respect and love from the people and it gives me unbounded joy and satisfaction," he added.

The local church has grown thanks to catechists and they keep the church alive in remote corners," said Holy Cross Father Dominic Sarkar, from the parish of Queen of Fatima Catholic Church in Bandarban, the largest in the hills with over 8,000 Catholics.

"Priests cannot make pastoral visits to villagers more than once or twice a year. Catechists keep their faith alive and help the church survive among them," the priest said.

Father Sarkar said due to limited resources and funds they could not offer better pay to the catechists.

"Catechists deserve much more than they get and what they do for the church is a tremendous service. They are the true missionaries and the church needs more people like them to survive and grow," the priest added.

## Mission Conversations with the Editor

"...a good Christian must be a leader of great change."



"Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Take a moment and go back to your earliest memories of hearing the gospel stories. Whether they were part of your bed time

story lists at home or read out as part of the Gospel on Sunday mornings, I am sure you have a few favourites. My particular ones include those that left me guessing at the meanings behind such parables. All I wanted to know was how the camel was going to get through that needle. Any other significance washed over me as not as relevant. I have researched this particular parable and come across several scholarly arguments about the "meaning" behind the camel/ needle conundrum. Some

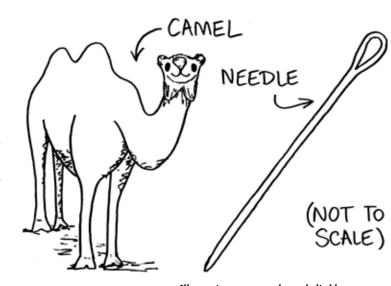


Illustration courtesy: phatcatholic.blogspot.ca

scholars argue that the needle represents a small opening in a Not today. Our society now craves distance from the reminders wall, forcing a camel to struggle to pass through (although, apparently, the poor creature does finally manage the task). Others question whether the people of Jesus's time even had such needles as we think of the term. Still others argue to stop trying to take the passage too literally, and to focus on the rich versus poor dimension to the parable.

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disparity in over seven decades. Accompanying this trend is the increasing isolation of the haves from the have nots. Growing up in Toronto in the '50s and '60s, I remember my street as being very income diverse. The first Italian immigrant phase was on, and the semi-detached tri-levels were being purchased by poor, working class families who quickly spruced them up, as best they could afford, and then converted the second and third story

In any event, now that I am older, I will follow the last recom-

We live in a society that has seen the greatest increase in wealth

mendation in my commentary.

levels into mini-apartments for their extended families. Nothing unusual in this according to my parents, who came from similar Irish-English backgrounds and shared the values presented to them by the Spataro and Cornacchia and Vessio and Mangialardi families all around them. This was not a "working class" area of the city in that several well off families continued to live there throughout the time I lived at home. Why move when you can enjoy the sights and sounds and incredible cooking aromas coming from all around you?

that not everyone gets a fair share of the communal pie. Better to go find a nice condo development that is well beyond the means of most people "not of your class". Robert Reich, the American economist who served as Secretary of Labour under President Bill Clinton, provides this insight: "We're the richest economy in the history of the world. For the majority of Americans not to get

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## In Remembrance

#### **Our Deceased Donors**

the benefits of this extraordinarily prosperous economy, there's

There are so many examples of the rich person out of sight out

of mind syndrome (my new term) and they are all around us.

One example is the lack of affordable housing in our cities and

block all attempts to live in integration and harmony. Finally, I

end with a particularly relevant quotation for our world today

from Mark 10: 21-22: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him and

said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the

money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then

come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went

One last thought: What's up with "the poor you shall have with

Paul Coady

Editor

away grieving, for he had many possessions".

you always?" Was Jesus on to something there?

something fundamentally wrong".

affordable units.

of their areas.

\*LUXURY, right?

Please remember in your prayers the recently deceased members of the Pontifical Mission Societies:

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