



HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

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Grades 7 - 9

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INTERMEDIATE NEWSLETTER - LENT 2026

Welcome to 2026 and our first Newsletter of the year. We had a very eventful year in 2025. Highlights included the passing of Pope Francis I, the election and inauguration of Pope Leo XIV and of course the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope. There were also significant political events that are still ongoing around the world that required our prayers, such as the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. We pray that 2026 will be more peaceful and spiritually rewarding for all of you.

As usual in this edition, we anticipate the approach of the Easter season. This year, Easter is on Sunday, April 5th, which means that Ash Wednesday is on February 18th, giving us less time than last year between Christmas and Easter! Last year, you were challenged to find out how the date for Easter is determined each year. Do you remember?

In this Newsletter, we will direct our missionary attention to a country that is familiar to most people in some way or other: the North African country of **EGYPT**.



(World atlas)

EGYPTIAN OVERVIEW

You probably know about some of the things about **ANCIENT** Egypt, such as:

- ◆ The pyramids and the sphinx, located near Cairo
- ◆ The Nile River and deserts
- ◆ Hieroglyphics, a form of writing
- ◆ Mummies, preservation for the afterlife



Cairo 2025 (CCA 4.0 International)



Giza pyramids (Ricardo Liberato
CCA Share-Alike 2.0 Generic)



Great Sphinx (Britannica)

Ancient Egypt was ruled by well-known Pharaohs, such as: Tutankhamun, known for his preserved tomb; Ramses II, remembered for his military deeds; Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza; Cleopatra VII, the last pharaoh of Egypt.

However ... do you know much about **MODERN** Egypt and more recent times?

Egypt was taken over by the Arabs in 642 CE and began to convert from Christianity to the Islamic religion. In 1517 the Turkish Ottoman Empire conquered and controlled Egypt until it became a British protectorate in 1914. Independence was achieved in 1922. Since then there have been disputes among the Arab nations and ongoing issues with the state of Israel, with whom two wars have been fought. However, Egypt now has a peace treaty with Israel, but the situation between Israel and Gaza does directly affect Egypt.



Wall drawings, Luxor

Most Egyptians have always lived along the Nile River, which provides the water for agriculture and other necessities of life. Farming has always been a major occupation. Women have generally enjoyed more freedom than in other cultures. Ancient Egyptians had strong views on the afterlife, which accounted for the construction of pyramids and the use of mummies. They developed the science of astronomy, created a calendar based on the sun's rotation, were great mathematicians and were the first civilisation to develop a written language, known as hieroglyphics.

E G Y P T

EGYPTIAN FLAG

The flag of Egypt has three equal red, white and black bands of the Arab Liberation Flag that dates back to the 1952 Egyptian Revolution. It contains Egypt's national emblem, the Egyptian eagle of Saladin, centred in the white band.



(Sharm Club)



Eastern Imperial Eagle (Kiddle)

SUEZ CANAL



Suez Canal (CCA 4.0 International)

The Suez Canal is a man made waterway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. It took 10 years to build and was opened in 1869. It allows ships to pass from Europe to Asia, making the shipping journey much shorter.

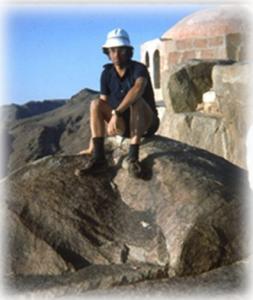


(Alamy)

ST CATHERINE'S MONASTERY and MT SINAI



Catherine's Monastery and Mt Sinai
(Dr Andrej Havelka CCA 4.0 International)



The author atop Mt Sinai 1975

HCA PROJECTS IN EGYPT

The Pontifical Mission Societies, National Direction in Egypt, which includes the Holy Childhood Association, organized a missionary formation course for about 100 young people in Egypt on the theme "Together in the Footsteps of Emmaus". This took place in February 2022 in Durunka, Diocese of Asyut.

In 2025 the HCA is sponsoring 15 projects in the following 5 dioceses in Egypt:

- ⇒ Abu Qurqas Diocese
- ⇒ Al Qusia Diocese
- ⇒ Alessandria Di Egitto Apostolic Vicariate
- ⇒ Assiut, Lycopolis Diocese
- ⇒ Guizeh Diocese

Find these areas on the computer to see where our missionary aid is going.

The projects include missionary formation/catechetics, education, health, feeding programs, etc.





(PngTree)

LENT 2026

As mentioned previously, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th with Easter Sunday following on April 5th. This year, rather than giving you a quiz or asking you to find out things, here are some ideas about what Lent actually is.

Lent is an important time in the Catholic calendar. It takes place 40 days before Easter. This number helps us to reflect on the 40-day period in which Jesus fasted in the desert. It reminds us that the Israelites wandered for forty years in the desert before reaching the Promised Land. The Great Flood lasted for forty days and nights. These events allow you to see that in the Bible, the number "40" signifies *new life, new growth, transformation or a change from one great task to another.*

Ask yourself these questions. How can you change something in your life during Lent to make yourself and our world better? How can you grow in Christian love this Lent? Are there any great tasks or projects you can undertake this Lent? Discuss these questions with your teachers, catechist and/or parents.

Pope Leo's **LENTEN MESSAGE** for 2026 is not yet available at this time of writing. However, Pope Francis' 2025 message still applies to us today:

"This Lent, as we share in the grace of the Jubilee Year, let us journey together in hope, and on the summons to conversion that God in his mercy addresses to all of us, as individuals and as a community."



(Pope Leo XIV (CNN))

A Lenten Prayer

Dearest Lord, I hope to be more observant of your grace.
May you look upon my soul and may my sins erase.

May I know of sacrifice and cherish all you bless
and act with courage to assist others who have less.

Prepare my soul for joy to come, and cleanse me of all sin.
I'll wear my faith and do my best to nurture it within.

With a humble heart, I hope to be your
faithful servant for all to see.

(Loyola Press)



The late Pope Francis I (AP)

JUBILEE YEAR MASSES & ACTIVITIES – 2025

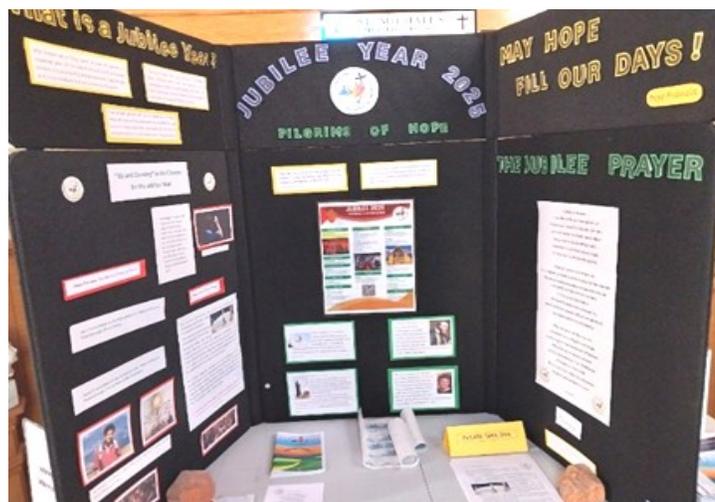
The Jubilee Year was celebrated across the country in many parishes and schools.



Bishop Hagemoen, Saskatoon



Cardinal Leo, Toronto



Jubilee Year of Hope displays by Catholic students in Ontario.



Archbishop Gagnon, Winnipeg



Archbishop Miller, Vancouver

Holy Childhood - Sowers of Hope