



HOLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

INTERMEDIATE NEWSLETTER – ADVENT 2026

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Grades 7 - 9

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Hello and welcome to our Autumn/Winter 2026 edition of the Holy Childhood Association (HCA) Newsletter.

We have just passed a very important day of celebration for the Pontifical Missions Societies, of which the HCA is a member. October 18 was **World Mission Sunday**. This annual anniversary marked the centenary of a celebration established by Pope Pius XI in 1926. Our present Pope Leo reminds us that this special occasion “calls Catholics worldwide to support the Church where it is young or challenged.” He declared the theme ***One in Christ, United in Mission***. As young missionaries of the HCA, you are perfectly placed to join in this celebration.



As you read the present Newsletter, remind yourselves, as Pope Leo says, “*to renew in ourselves the fire of our missionary vocation*” and *advance together in the commitment to evangelization, in this “new missionary age”*. Once again we anticipate the season of Advent, which begins on Sunday, November 29.

As you know, in each Newsletter we focus on a missionary country so that we can learn something more about its people, especially the children, to offer prayers for them and to try to raise funds to support ongoing projects. In this Newsletter, we feature **Sri Lanka**. There are many immigrants in Canada from Sri Lanka, and you may know some children from there.

SRI LANKA



OVERVIEW

Sri Lanka bears the nickname *Teardrop of India*, due to its shape and geographical position in relation to India. It is an island country relatively close to the southeastern tip of India. It has also been called *The Pearl of the Indian Ocean* because of its beauty, variety of plants and animals and many natural resources. Many people remember that the

country used to be called Ceylon. The name Sri Lanka was adopted in 1972 when the country became a Republic.



The Great Monastery in Anuradhapura

SOME INTERESTING DETAILS about SRI LANKA

- **Population:** 21.9 to 23.3 million (2026)
- **Capital city:** Sri Lanka has two capital cities, side by side: Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, referred to as Kotte (legislative) with 103,000 inhabitants and Colombo (commercial) with 640,000 inhabitants
- **Languages:** Sinhala and Tamil with many people speaking English
- **Currency:** 1 Sri Lankan *rupee* = 100 cents
- **National Symbols:** Ceylon junglefowl (national bird), Ceylon iron wood tree (national tree), blue water lily (national flower), jackfruit (national fruit)

FLAG OF SRI LANKA



The Sri Lankan flag is also known as the Lion Flag because it features a lion holding a sword. The lion represents bravery. The four leaves stand for kindness, friendliness, joy, and calmness. The sword signifies sovereignty, freedom and national defence. The crimson background represents the Singhalese people. The orange stripe represents the Sri Lankan Tamils and the green stripe represents the Sri Lankan Moors (Muslims).

HISTORY

The island was first settled in the 6th century BC, most probably by people from India. They developed a Buddhist culture which became known as Sinhalese. Around 900 BCE Tamils from India set up a kingdom in the north of the country. Portuguese and Dutch settlers arrived in the 16th and 17th century before the British arrived on the island. In 1802 Sri Lanka became a British crown colony. It was granted independence on 4 February 1948 and became a republic in 1972. In the 1980s, fighting began as the Tamils in the north tried to form their own kingdom.



TEA PLANTATION



Haputale Plantation (Sallyjaya, CCAShare-Alike 4)

"Tea is to the body as music is to the soul." (Erlene Grey)

Sri Lanka is the second largest exporter of tea and this product is still known as **Ceylon tea**.



Rock fortress Sygria

SIGIRIA – the Lion Rock

Sigiria is an ancient rock fortress on a rock that stands 180 m high. A palace was built by King Kasyapa protected by a gates that resembled a lion but the fortress was abandoned after his death in 495. A city was built by the King's son, but the later history of the site is confused and the subject of many stories. Buddhist monks used it in later years. Today it is a World Heritage Site featuring many rock paintings and elaborately laid out gardens.

SPORT – CRICKET (of course!)

In Sri Lanka, cricket is the most popular sport. Sri Lanka won the cricket world cup in 1996 and the Asia Cup in 2022 where they were also runners-up in 2023. The Sri Lankan national cricket team is called "The Lions" and the team colours are blue and yellow.



Wallpapers.com



HCA PROJECT – SRI LANKA

The HCA has provided funding for various projects in the diocese of Ratnapura. The following assistance has been provided:

- Food and equipment for children in catechism classes
- Health facilities to 200 children in Doloswala Parish
- Nana Pahaduma scholarship program for 192 children
- Assisting 31 street children in Ratnapura city
- Provision of snacks, uniforms and stationery to 363 children of the tea and rubber labourers in 10 pre schools
- Program for altar servers

These contributions are particularly significant given that the area served by the diocese is not too far from where the Tsunami struck in 2004. Families are still recovering materially and emotionally.



ADVENT 2026



Advent this year begins on Sunday, November 29. As we await Pope Leo's Advent message for 2006, we can think back on what he said last year:

"Let us be careful not to get caught up in frenetic activity in preparing for the feast, which would lead us to experience it in a superficial way and leave room for disappointment. Instead, let us take the time to make our hearts attentive and vigilant as we await Jesus, so that His loving presence may become the treasure of our lives and hearts forever".

ACTIVITY FOR INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

Below is a Nativity Scene painting by Josef Kastner done toward the end of the 19th Century. Examine it and as a class or in groups discuss the following questions based on your interpretation of the work.

- ♦ What emotions do you think are being felt by Mary at this moment? What makes you think this?
- ♦ Joseph depicts a different presence. What do you think he is feeling, and how do you know?
- ♦ What do you think of the artist's portrayal of the Baby Jesus? How is He pictured? Could He look like this if a photographer were taking a family photo?
- ♦ There are shepherds in the painting. Do they look like the shepherds you have imagined each Christmas? What features allow you to say this?
- ♦ There are kings in the painting. Do they look like the kings you have imagined each Christmas? What features allow you to say this?
- ♦ Advent is a time of waiting for an important event or person. What do you see in the painting that indicates that people have been waiting?
- ♦ Do you think that the visitors in the painting will go home satisfied? Why do you say so?



Fresco of Nativity Scene Erioserkirche, Vienna. Josef Kastner

AN ADVENT PRAYER

The advent of our God.
With eager prayers we greet
And singing haste upon His road.
His coming reign to meet.

The everlasting Son
was born to make us free;
And He a servant's form put on,
to gain our liberty.

Praise to the incarnate Son
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one,
to all eternity.

Charles Coffin (1676 - 1749)

HCA ACTIVITIES AROUND CANADA



The Student Council of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada hosted the school's annual "Valentine's Candygrams Campaign" in February to support the important work of Holy Childhood Association. The Student Council shared about the important value of **"children helping children"** in our world.



Pictures from Children Helping Children at Mass also called Children of the Light on Palm Sunday at St. Anthony Church in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



Dear Missionary Children,

You have being great missionaries in the academic year 2025/2026! As you begin a new academic year, may Jesus who loves you dearly, help you to continue to love your parents, your teachers and one other. May Jesus bless you as you continue to extend his love to your friends around the globe.

I encourage you to let your teacher help you to send your photos and writeups of your missionary activities to the National Office to be published in the HCA newsletters.

Thank you, and may God continue to bless you!

*Sister Juliana Tanye
National Secretary of HCA*