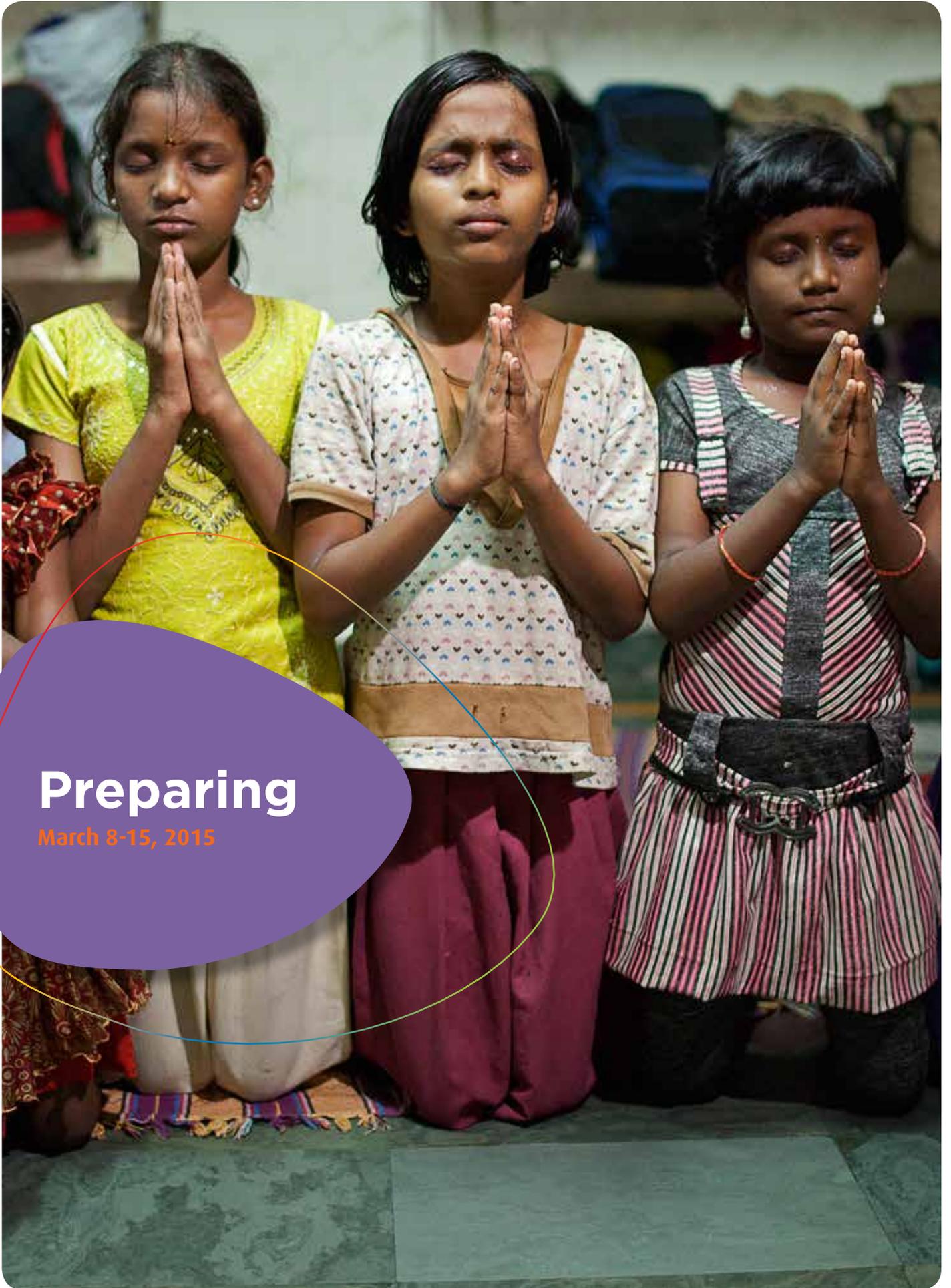


National
Prayer
and
Penny
Week
2015



Missionary Childhood Association
A Pontifical Mission Society

Leader's Guide - Grades 9-12



Preparing

March 8-15, 2015

Preparing for National Prayer and Penny Week

March 8-15, 2015

The activities, ideas, strategies and stories from the Missions that follow are designed to help students in grades K through 12 prepare for the celebration of *National Prayer and Penny Week* (March 8-15). Most of these ideas may be adapted for use with families and small parish groups. If time allows, we encourage students to participate in at least one activity a day. ***If this is not possible, try to implement the program on “Day 6,” since those activities lay the groundwork for the fullest participation in National Prayer and Penny Week.***



Day One | All Grades

Begin the week by sharing some of the history and purpose of the Pontifical Mission Societies, which includes the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) (www.OneFamilyinMission.org) and about *National Prayer and Penny Week*. If your group consists of young children, be sure that they understand the meaning of the word “poor.” Explain the difference between being materially poor and spiritually poor. Then note:

- The Pontifical Mission Societies provide help to local Catholic churches in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands and remote areas of Latin America so that others can come to know about Jesus. (*Consider noting each continent on a world map or globe, or asking students to identify them.*) Here, some of the poorest of the poor learn the Good News of God’s great love for all people.
- Missionaries are people who have been called by God to go out and proclaim the Good News. They are also called to care for those who suffer from hunger, poverty, homelessness and natural disaster. These missionaries offer God’s love to the poor in word and service.

- As Catholics, we, too, are called to be missionaries. While we may not be able to travel to other countries, we can still bring the love of God to others. We can offer our prayers, talents and financial help to support missionaries and local priests, Sisters and Brothers in their service to the poor.
- Prayer is the most important part of being a missionary.
- Next week, we are invited to participate in a program called *National Prayer and Penny Week*. During that time, we will offer special prayers for the world's poorest children. We will also collect money so that children in the Missions may know Christ and experience His love. Next week, we will spend time in prayer, and make sacrifices. We will also experience what it might be like to walk in the footsteps of those served by the Pontifical Mission Societies.
- This week, we will hear stories about people who have been helped by missionaries. We will discover how our prayers, sacrifices and financial offerings are part of making a faith-filled difference in the lives of the poor.

Provide each student with a penny. Ask them to put the penny in one of their shoes. Ask them to take a moment to pray for missionaries around the world each time they feel the penny in their shoe. Encourage them to invite friends and family members to do the same. See if they can keep the penny in their shoes for the entire *Prayer and Penny Week*. Provide a few additional pennies to each student to take home to challenge other family members to do the same.

The story *From Medals in the Soil* found in the Resources Section of this guide, offers students an example of how prayer can overcome anything and allow for the love of Christ. Tell the stories in your own words, or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

- **“Prayer changes things.” Do you believe this statement? Why or why not?**
- **What changes in us when we pray?**
- **Why do you think it is important to pray for the Sisters at the Cheshire Home and other missionaries like them?**
- **In what ways might your prayers for missionaries and those they serve make a difference in their lives? In your life?**

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Provide students with a variety of fabrics and craft supplies, and invite them to create a prayer flag (search the web using the term “make a prayer flag”) Consider flying the flags outside your church or school. You can also provide families with directions for creating their own family prayer flag to hang outside their home.
- Spend time with the students creating a class, school or parish prayer. Once the prayer is finalized have the students brainstorm ways they can share the prayer with others (i.e. making bookmarks, prayer cards, posting on bulletin boards etc.).



Hope in Jesus

Day Two | All Grades

All Grades

The story *Tea-a Drink with Hope and Faith* found in the Resources section of this guide, offers students an example of how missionaries share the love of Jesus with the poor. Tell the stories in your own words or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

- How can you be a missionary by showing Jesus to your peers?
- Can witnessing be fun? How?
- Can witnessing be a challenge? Why?
- How could you be called to be missionaries, especially to the poor around the world?

Activities for Grades 9-12

→ Divide the students into six groups. Provide each group with a Bible or one copy of each of the Scripture passages noted below. Matthew 18:14

- Mark 16:15
- Acts 5:20
- Acts 5:42
- Romans 10:15
- Ephesians 4:32

Ask each group to determine what their Scripture verse says about sharing Jesus with others. Lead a large group discussion on what Scripture says about making Christ known to others. Invite the groups to share their ideas. Invite the students to note their assigned reading and to share it with their family today.

Provide students with some blank paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write about their experience of Jesus. They could include how they came to know Him; what they do to grow their relationship with Christ; and why the relationship matters. Then divide the participants into pairs and ask them to practice telling each other their faith story. If some students are uncomfortable with speaking, they can let their partners read their writings. Challenge the students to tell others about Jesus. If time permits, use role playing to practice sharing faith. Suggest that the students take their stories home to their families – and invite family members to share their own stories of faith.

- Invite students to offer personal examples of when they felt God was with them. Ask them to think of ways they can share their examples with others. For example, by compiling a book, a class blog or class Facebook page where they can post their good news stories and share them with others.
- Ask students to think about ways people today can be reached through technology (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.). Divide them into small groups of four to five and ask each to create a plan for using one type of technology to bring the Catholic faith to others. Invite the groups to share their ideas.

We Give Love and Care



Day Three | All Grades

The story “*St. Anthony’s Mission Center*” found in the Resources section of this guide, shows how love and compassion change the lives of children and families in the Missions. Tell the story in your own words or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

- In what ways is this a caring world? In what ways is it uncaring?
- Describe the most caring thing anyone has ever done for you. What effect did that have on you?
- What can you do to show your care for others without using words?

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Invite students to identify reasons people might not give their love, time, talents and/or financial help to others. For example, people may not give money to charity because they are on a limited budget. Or, they may not volunteer their time because they are overextended with other responsibilities, such as work or family. Jot down the reasons on a sheet of newsprint. Then divide students into small groups, and give each group its own sheet of newsprint and a marker. Ask them to think through each reason and determine how they might lovingly challenge that reason. For example, even someone on a limited budget can offer something of value. Even pennies can make a difference in the lives of those who have nothing. God doesn’t set a price – He just wants us to give from our hearts. Review students’ responses and challenge them to think about their own reasons for not being as generous as they could be. Families might try the same activity, and read and reflect on the story of the widow’s mite (Mark 12:41-44).
- Provide the students with a note card, envelope, and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write a thank-you note to someone in their family, school, church or community who did something very caring. Encourage students to deliver or send these notes of appreciation. Consider sending some extra note cards and envelopes home and invite families to complete the activity.
- Choose an appropriate television show that students can watch at home. Ask them to keep track of the ways the main characters did or did not demonstrate care for others. Lead a group discussion by inviting students to share their insights. Ask them to suggest ways the characters might have been more caring. Suggest that students encourage their family members to consider this approach when viewing at home.



God's Gift of Forgiveness

Day Four | All Grades

All Grades

The story *Rolling Away the Heart's Stone* in the Resources section of this guide, offers students an example of the importance of forgiveness and compassion to others. Retell the story in your own words or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

- What makes someone compassionate?
- Describe a time when you experienced compassion and forgiveness. How did it make you feel?
- Describe a time when you offered compassion and forgiveness. How did it make you feel?

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Divide the students into small groups, four or five in each group. Ask them to discuss what compassion might look like, and express that through a song, rap, skit, pantomime, or poem. Have each group share its idea with the larger group.
- Pope Francis has spoken about the importance of keeping an open heart. Discuss with the student what it means to have a closed heart. What are some of the things that can cause a person's heart to close? What can open a closed heart? How can we help others to open their hearts more fully?
- Divide the students into small groups, four or five in each group, giving each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Ask the groups to create a word web to describe compassion. They can do this by writing the word compassion in the center of the sheet of newsprint. As students discuss words that describe or connect to compassion, they should add those words to the newsprint around the word compassion, thus creating a web. Take some time to discuss how these words are interconnected. Why it is necessary for us to show compassion toward others. Word webs are a great way for families to discuss the concept of compassion as well.



Day Five | All Grades

All Grades

The story *Life's Storms* found in the Resources section of this guide, offers students an example of the importance of celebrating our faith in Christ Jesus. Retell the story in your own words or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Provide each student with five or six index cards, and a pen or pencil. Ask students to write down on each card something they believe. For example: *I believe that all kids should have the opportunity to go to school, or I believe I should get an allowance.* Collect all of the cards and read them one at a time. Invite the students to discuss and determine which statements are based on faith, and which are based on knowledge/opinion. Note that some beliefs may be based on both. Discuss the difference between faith and knowledge. Suggest they initiate this activity at home with their family.
- Provide the students with a couple of sheets of paper, and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write the following phrase at the top of their papers: *This I Believe.* Ask them to write an essay based on the popular National Public Radio (NPR) series of the same name (see <http://thisibelieve.org/>). Once they have completed their essays, you can have them share with the entire group, or pair off with another student for a one-on-one sharing opportunity.
- The Holy Father calls all Catholics to pray daily for the faith life of all followers of Christ. Divide the students into nine groups. Assign each group one of the remaining months in the year. Then, providing each group with a sheet of newsprint and a marker, invite them to write a prayer focusing on faith. Ask each group to share its prayer and to commit to praying that prayer during the designated month. Consider posting all the prayers on your school or church website or bulletin board and ask others to join in.



**On this day you will need to introduce (or re-introduce) the idea of National Prayer and Penny Week. This will allow students not only to begin collecting donations for the Missions, but also to explore the ways these funds may be gathered. For this reason, we ask that the activities listed for each grade level be presented sequentially and completely.*

Day Six | All Grades

The story *To Peace Together Hope* found in the Resources section of this guide, provides an example of the great needs of missionaries and mission churches throughout the world. Tell the story in your own words or make a copy of the story and questions below for use at home.

Questions for Critical Thinking

- Do you think the Lord has given you a mission? If so, what is it?
- In what ways can you support the Missions? Think about both short-term and long-term actions?

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Invite students to think about what they can do with a penny. You may get some funny responses. That is okay – creativity is key! Ask students what they can buy with a single penny. The answers will likely be limited (if any are offered). Then ask the students what they can do/buy with 10 pennies? 100 pennies? 1,000 pennies? 10,000 pennies? 100,000 pennies? Or a million pennies?
- Ask the question again, but in this way: *What could the missionaries we learned about this week do with these amounts of money?* Allow some responses. Acknowledge that some students will say that not much can be done with a few coins. Ask the students to name some of the needs that are present for missionaries like the ones they heard about in this week's stories. Responses should include food, health care, shelter, education, and so forth.
- Divide the students into small groups or pairs. Provide each group with a large jar or clear container and a permanent marker. Tell the students they will be working as a team in the upcoming week to help raise funds for the Missions. Ask them to assign their group a name. Invite them to write the name of their team on the jar, and even decorate the container. Explain that the fundraising goal is to earn money for the people they have been learning about this week.

- Ask the groups to talk about and set a goal for their fundraising efforts. It can be monetary, numerical, weight-related, size-related or color-based (silver vs. copper). The goal should be realistic and achievable. It is always best to exceed a goal rather than fail at meeting one. After some discussion, invite the students to share their goals.
- Gather the students back into a large group. Invite them to brainstorm with you some creative ways to collect funds in the upcoming week. Ask them to think about ways to get other students, family members, friends and neighbors involved. Note their ideas on a sheet or two of newsprint. Then ask each fundraising group to gather and select a few of the options suggested. If they have additional approaches or ideas that they wish to adopt, that is fine. Invite the groups to share their strategies. Encourage ongoing creativity throughout the entire week of fundraising.
- Consider sending home a letter explaining to parents and family members about MCA's *National Prayer and Penny Week* – and asking them to enthusiastically work with their children toward their efforts to collect funds for the Missions.

A young girl with dark hair and a white paper flower in her hair, wearing a blue sweater, has her hands clasped in a prayer gesture. She has a small red mark on her forehead and rosy cheeks. The background is a blurred, warm-toned interior. A purple oval graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Celebrating' and 'March 8-15, 2015'.

Celebrating

March 8-15, 2015

National Prayer and Penny Week

March 8-15, 2015

Day One | All Grades

If you have not previously shared the story *From Medals in the Soil* in the Resources section of this Guide, do so in your own words. The story offers students an example of how the Missions are changing the lives of children and families in poor countries. If already shared last week, invite students to recall its message, or ask someone to summarize it for the group.

Pray today's Responsorial Psalm PS 19:8, 9, 10, 11

R. (John 6:68c) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

*The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul;
The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,
giving wisdom to the simple.*

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

*The precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the command of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eye.*

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

*The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true,
all of them just.*

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

*They are more precious than gold,
than a heap of purest gold;
sweeter also than syrup
or honey from the comb.*

R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

- Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and how it relates to the story and other missionaries like them.
- Introduce the students to the World Mission Rosary. Here is some background information to share with students:
 - In February of 1951, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1950 to 1966), in a radio address (*The Catholic Hour*), inaugurated that World Mission Rosary. He saw the need for us to pray not just for ourselves, but for the whole world, and especially for those who are poor and vulnerable at home and around the world.
- Each decade of that World Mission Rosary calls to mind an area where the Church continues her evangelizing mission: green for the forests and grasslands of Africa; blue for the ocean surrounding the islands of the Pacific; white symbolizing Europe, the seat of the Holy Father, shepherd of the world; red calling to mind the fire of faith that brought missionaries to the Americas; and yellow, the morning light of the East, for Asia. (See www.WorldMissionRosary.org to learn more).
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count the money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and begin making a group paper chain from the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Divide the students into small groups of four to five. Ask them to develop a school- or church-wide campaign to promote praying the World Mission Rosary. Ask them to brainstorm ways they can get the word out about the rosary. Invite other students, family members, friends, and parishioners to join the effort. Invite the groups to present their ideas. Then invite the students to vote on a few approaches they feel they can implement in the next month or so. Develop an action plan based on those approaches. Suggest that the students develop a family action plan for praying the World Mission Rosary throughout the remainder of year.
- Invite the students to write a brief essay articulating what the world might look like if all people of the world joined in prayer. Invite students to share their writings.

Day Two | All Grades

If you have not previously shared the story *Tea-a Drink with Hope and Faith* found in the Resources section of this guide, do so in your own words. The story offers students an example of how missionaries share the love of Jesus with the poor. If already shared last week, invite students to recall its message, or ask someone to summarize it for the group.

Pray today's Responsorial Psalm PS 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4

R. (see 42:3) Athirst is my soul for the living God.

*When shall I go and behold the face of God?
As the hind longs for the running waters,
so my soul longs for you, O God.*

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

When shall I go and behold the face of God?

*Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.
When shall I go and behold the face of God?*

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

When shall I go and behold the face of God?

*Send forth your light and your fidelity;
they shall lead me on
And bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling-place.*

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

When shall I go and behold the face of God?

*Then will I go in to the altar of God,
the God of my gladness and joy;
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,
O God, my God!*

R. Athirst is my soul for the living God.

When shall I go and behold the face of God?

- Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and how it relates to the story and the work of other missionaries.
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count the money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and add to their group paper chain with the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

Share the story of Pauline Jaricot by playing the video version of her story

<http://www.onefamilyinmission.org/society-propfaith/paulinejaricot.html>. Discuss the virtues of Pauline. Invite the students to discuss the qualities needed to serve as a missionary. Then pray the following prayer together:

*Victim Soul of Jesus Christ, pray for us!
Almighty and merciful God, Who has chosen a humble virgin,
Marie Pauline of Jesus Christ, the poor one of Mary,
to found the great Catholic works of the Propagation of the Faith
and the Living Rosary,
and Who has wished in the midst of humiliations, trials and persecutions
to purify her works, deign to hasten the day when Holy Mother the Church will publicly recognize her
saintly life. We pray that by her example of patience and love for the Cross, her life-time prayer may be
realized: the Universal propagation of the Faith in all its Purity.*

- Pauline Jaricot saw her vocation – to become a missionary of the love of God. She came to believe that “to truly help others is to bring them to God.” Discuss with the students what it means “to bring others to God.” Invite the students to reflect on the people that have helped to bring them to God. Provide each student with a thank-you note, inviting them to share a few words of thanks with someone who has encouraged their faith. Suggest that the students either personally deliver or mail these notes.

Day Three | All Grades

If you have not already shared the story, *St. Anthony's Mission Center* found in the Resources section of this guide, do so in your own words. The story offers students an example of how providing loving care changes the lives of children and families in the Missions. If already shared last week, invite students to recall its message, or ask someone to summarize it for the group.

Pray today's Responsorial Psalm PS 25:4-5AB, 6 AND 7BC, 8-9

R. (6a) Remember your mercies, O Lord.

*Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior.*

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

*Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
and your kindness are from of old.
In your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD.*

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

*Good and upright is the LORD;
thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
he teaches the humble his way.*

R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.

→ Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and how it relates to the story and other missionaries.

→ Explore with the students the life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux using the information provided below:

- St. Thérèse of Lisieux was born Marie Françoise Thérèse Martin in Alençon, France, on January 2, 1873, she was the youngest of nine children. Her father was a watchmaker. Her family moved to Lisieux, after Thérèse mother died.
- When she was 15, Thérèse entered the Carmelite convent at Lisieux, becoming a religious Sister two years later.
- Thérèse wanted very much to leave her convent in France and be sent on mission, specifically to Vietnam. Her poor health prevented her from making that journey, but not from being a missionary.
- Determined not only to love God herself, but also to lead others to know and love Him, Thérèse offered her prayers and her own sufferings for missionaries around the world. St. Thérèse did go to the Missions – at least through the mail. She wrote to missionary priests serving in Asia and Africa. In those letters, she told of her great love for Jesus, and of feeling a part of the missionary work of those priests, especially through her prayers.
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- She wrote in one of her books *Story of a Soul* about an incident from her childhood: “Papa rewarded me by giving me a pretty little coin. I placed it in a box, and it was from this box that I drew my offerings on the big feasts when there were special collections for the Propagation of the Faith.” St. Therese wrote of herself in her autobiography as “The Little Flower.”
- Then invite the students to pray the following prayer:
Lord who has said: “Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven”; grant us, we beg you, so to follow, in humility and simplicity of heart, the footsteps of the virgin blessed Thérèse that we may attain to an everlasting reward. Amen.
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count the money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways in which they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and add to the group paper chain with the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Show the students the online video entitled *What is Faith?*, available for viewing at <http://www.archmil.org/c4video/C4-series.htm>. Ask students to think about the question posed in this video. Then divide them into pairs or groups of three. Ask them to talk about their answer to this question. Initiate a large group discussion, inviting the students to share their responses. Encourage students to go out today and ask at least four people the same question. Ask them to bring the responses they received to the next class.
- Invite students to create a prayer book for individual, class or family use. Provide each student with a blank notebook or journal. Ask them to take some time to write an entry in the book, highlighting what they have learned or experienced thus far during *National Prayer and Penny Week*. Have students compose their own prayer of faith, and then share those prayers. Each week allow time for the students to make additions to their prayer book. Suggest that the students create a family-based prayer book, for regular prayer intentions and prayers of gratitude. They should share it with the rest of their family.
- Before he was elected Pope Francis offered a reflection on his favorite saint – St. Therese of Lisieux. View the reflection at <http://www.thereseoflisieux.org/>. Then discuss how the life of the saint has affected the faith life of the Holy Father.

Day Four | All Grades

If you have not previously shared the story, *Rolling Away the Heart's Stone* found in the Resources section of this guide, do so in your own words. The story offers students an example of the importance of forgiveness and compassion to others. If already shared last week, invite students to recall its message, or ask someone to summarize it for the group.

Pray today's Responsorial Psalm PS 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20

R. (12a) Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

*Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates;
he has blessed your children within you.*

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

*He sends forth his command to the earth;
swiftly runs his word!
He spreads snow like wool;
frost he strews like ashes.*

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

*He has proclaimed his word to Jacob,
his statutes and his ordinances to Israel.
He has not done thus for any other nation;
his ordinances he has not made known to them.*

R. Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

- Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and how it relates to the story of the people of Sierra Leone.
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways in which they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and add to their group paper chain with the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Ask the students if God is with us all the time or just sometimes. Ask them how they know when God is with them. Divide the students into pairs or small groups. Ask them to share personal examples of when they have felt God with them. Provide each student with a blank sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Have them write down their personal examples of when they knew God was with them. Compile their examples into a class book and put it in a place where they can all look through it when they need a reminder that God is with them. Invite the students to add new examples as they occur.
- Divide the students into groups of four to five. Ask each group to brainstorm ideas for a school or parish-wide project that would help spread compassion. Invite the groups to share their ideas. Then invite the class to choose one project they wish to implement. Spend time planning details or assigning various tasks to each group. Make sure this includes developing clear goals and outcomes for the project.
- Ask the students what it means to be a witness of faith? Allow for some responses. Throughout the world there are many witnesses for our faith, like the ones students have been learning about this week. But witnesses may go unnoticed. Ask them to think about people who are good examples of faith in their lives. This might include their pastor, their religion teacher, or a godparent. Ask the students to give the qualities they recognize in these people. Allow for some sharing. Then ask the students to brainstorm ways they can offer thanks to these people. List these ideas on newsprint. Then invite the students to choose at least one idea to implement and to determine when and how they will share their appreciation with the people they named.

Day Five | All Grades

If you have not previously shared the story *Life's Storms* found in the Resources section of this guide, do so in your own words. The story offers students an example of the importance of having faith in Christ Jesus. If already shared last week, invite students to recall its message, or ask someone to summarize it for the group.

Pray today's Responsorial PS 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R. (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

*Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.*

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

*Come, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.
For he is our God,
and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.*

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

*Oh, that today you would hear his voice:
"Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert,
Where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works."*

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

- Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and the faith of people in the Philippines and throughout the Missions.
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count the money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways in which they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and add it to their group paper chain from the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Provide each student with a Bible. Then invite them to divide into pairs. Assign each pair one of the four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles or Letters found in the New Testament. Ask the pairs to search their assigned Scriptures and count how many times the word “faith” is found. Tell them to make sure they keep count. To ensure that they are not skimming the readings, ask the pairs to also select one or two readings that convey a message about faith. Ask them to summarize these readings for everyone. Allow time for the pairs to conduct their research, then invite the pairs to share.
- On a number of occasions, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI used the term “faith fatigue” to describe a lack of motivation and zeal among members of the Church. Ask the students if they have ever experienced “faith fatigue.” Invite a few students to share their experience. Then ask the students to brainstorm some strategies for dealing with “faith fatigue” and/or preventing it.
- Pope Francis challenges us as Catholics to “open the doors of faith to all.” Provide students with a copy of the news report found <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-open-the-door-to-faith> which provides a summary of his address. Discuss why it is important to welcome *all* people to the Church, not just ones we think should be welcomed.

Day Six | All Grades

If you have not previously shared the story, *To Peace Together Hope* found in the Resources section of this guide, do so in your own words. The story provides an example of the needs of local mission churches as they serve the poor. If the story was shared last week, invite the students to recall the story, or invite someone to recap the story.

Pray today's Responsorial Psalm PS 81:6C-8A, 8BC-9, 10-11AB, 14 AND 17

R. (see 11 and 9a) I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

An unfamiliar speech I hear:

"I relieved his shoulder of the burden;

his hands were freed from the basket.

In distress you called, and I rescued you."

R. I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

"Unseen, I answered you in thunder;

I tested you at the waters of Meribah.

Hear, my people, and I will admonish you;

O Israel, will you not hear me?"

R. I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

"There shall be no strange god among you

nor shall you worship any alien god.

I, the LORD, am your God

who led you forth from the land of Egypt."

R. I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

"If only my people would hear me,

and Israel walk in my ways,

I would feed them with the best of wheat,

and with honey from the rock I would fill them."

R. I am the Lord your God: hear my voice.

- Lead a discussion with the students on the Psalm and other places throughout the Missions who serve the poor, those living amidst violence and those in need of God's loving care.
- Ask the students to share how they are doing with their money collection project. Invite them to count money they have collected and brought with them today. Then invite them to place their collection in the container they decorated last week. Have a few students share the ways in which they are collecting funds for the Pontifical Mission Societies. Have grades K-4 also take one of the strips of paper and note the amount they added to the jar today, and add to their group paper chain from the strips of paper by connecting their individual links.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Divide the students into small groups. Ask the groups to discuss what it means to “give witness” to faith, not only by acts of service, but also through daily living. Assign each group a particular setting – home, school, work, sporting events, on the road, extracurricular activities, online, etc. Ask them to discuss possible examples for their setting. Then invite the groups to share their ideas.
- Provide the students with a sheet of paper and a pen. Ask them to create a schedule based on a typical day in their lives. For example, if they wake at 6 a.m., they should start the schedule at that time. They should end their schedule with the time they normally go to bed. Now ask them to imagine that they have been given a completely free day to do whatever they choose. Invite them to fill in their schedules accordingly. Lead a large group discussion using the following questions:
 - How much of your day do you spend on your own?
 - How much time do you spend with others?
 - How much time is designated for offering your time, talent, or treasure to others? Do you think it is enough? Why or why not?
 - If you had to give up some of the time on your schedule for giving to others, what would you choose? Why?
 - What does this entire activity say about how we care for others?
 - In light of the discussion, what would you change about your day?



A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark skin and hair, wearing a bright red headband. She has a contemplative expression, with her hands clasped together near her mouth. The background is slightly blurred, showing another person wearing a similar red headband. A purple oval graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Reflecting' and 'March 8-15, 2015'.

Reflecting

March 8-15, 2015

National Prayer and Penny Week

Follow-Up Strategies and Ideas

After *National Prayer and Penny Week* has finished, we encourage you to continue to educate students and families about the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies, and how their prayers and offerings make a faith-filled difference for the poor of the Missions. For this reason, we provide a variety of follow-up ideas and strategies intended to encourage support of the missionary work of the Catholic Church. Choose strategies that work best for your group. Many of these ideas are easily adapted for use at home with families.

Activities for Grades 9-12

- Host a “Mission Week” in the Catholic school. Each day focus on the awareness of a different continent. Ask various students or classes to research food, music, religion and customs of a continent, and prepare a display.
- Brainstorm with students ways they witness to and proclaim the Good News of Jesus. Make a commitment to perform at least one of those actions regularly (every day or every week). Consider keeping a class chart to record your efforts.
- Collect an assortment of clean fast-food containers: cups, bags, meal boxes, small boxes for hamburgers or chicken nuggets, etc. Put these containers on display in your classroom or in the school cafeteria, along with the actual price of the food item they contained. Have other students “purchase” the cartons. Post a sign detailing what the \$1 or \$2 might be able to provide for children in mission countries.
- Invite the students to create a litany of missionary saints – St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Francis Xavier, St. Martin de Porres, St. Paul, St. Thomas, etc. – and use it in prayer.
- Invite a missionary into the class to talk about his/her work in helping others come to know God’s love. Ask how prayer helps their work. Pray for vocations to missionary work.
- Challenge students to contribute to the Missions a certain amount – penny, dime, nickel or quarter – for everyday items that they own. Give a penny for each crayon or a dime for each pencil, or a quarter for each video game, for example.
- Set up a giving tree with paper ornaments to buy. List basic needs on each ornament that children in the Missions are lacking and assign a price. For example, “cup of milk,” a quarter; “school book,” a dollar. Collect and contribute the money for the Missions.

The above ideas are drawn from the Mission Education Guidelines for Religious Educators and Catechists, developed by the Pontifical Mission Societies. To view or download the complete guidelines, please visit: <http://www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html>.

RESOURCES

Day One | Grades K-12

“From Medals in the Soil...”

It started with medals in the soil.

In December 1948, Spanish missionary Sister Guadalupe journeyed to the remote northeastern part of India called Nagaland, invited by the government to help staff a newly established hospital. No direct evangelization, she was told. The same directive was given to the other Sister from her Religious Community, Sister Margarita, and the one missionary priest.

So Sister Guadalupe tried something indirect. As she visited villages, she planted religious medals in the soil, praying and hoping for God’s grace and the growth of the faith.

Just four years later, Sisters Guadalupe and Margarita left Nagaland. Within the year, a small Catholic community formed, and government restrictions on missionaries soon began to ease. Today, more than six decades later, there are close to 60,000 Catholics spread over 35 parishes and 10 mission centers in the Diocese of Kohima, which encompasses virtually all of Nagaland. There are 14 major tribes, with Catholic communities in almost all of them.

Your prayers and help connect you with the growth of the Church there and with the 175 diocesan and missionary priests, religious Sisters in 18 Religious Communities, and the lay faithful who serve those in need.

Just last year, that included aid to build a new church for 1,000 in our mission family who belong to St. Paul’s parish in Peren. In fact, in the past five years, your support through the Society for the Propagation of the Faith helped to build five churches where more than 5,000 of your brothers and sisters in this part of the Missions may celebrate the Sacraments and attend Sunday Mass.

Your generosity has also helped families in villages care for their children, offering their little ones a place to live and an education. At St. Joseph’s Home in Burma Camp, some 45 children, most from poor families, but some orphans as well, are provided with food, clothing, school books and medical care – all for about \$70 per child, help that comes from the Missionary Childhood Association.

And finally, your sacrifices through the Society of St. Peter Apostle form more priests to serve the poor here. Some 60 young men are preparing for the priesthood at *Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Dimapur*.

“The mission in Nagaland is tough and rough, and yet we joyously carry on,” Bishop James Thoppil of Kohima, India, told MISSION. “We move ahead in our work with the support and prayers of mission-minded people. Your interest and support are a great boost for our work.”

Yes, the Church is called to transmit the joy of the Lord to her children – and her children are joined to that effort, on the ground or behind the scenes, through every prayer and every generous sacrifice.



Some orphans are provided with food, clothing, school books and medical care – all for about \$70 per child.

– Nagaland, India

RESOURCES

Day Two | Grades K-12

Tea —a Drink with Hope and Faith

The indigenous peoples — Khasi and Garo — mostly Catholic, are the poorest of the population in Bangladesh. Transplanted from India by the British tea companies, they are now virtually “slaves,” observed Felix Ashacra, a leader in Bidyabill village of the Finlay Tea Estate in Srimangal, located in the dusty center of the country. “Tea workers are like slaves to the authorities,” he said. “We lack in basic human needs.” And there is a reason for their poverty —workers on tea estates earn just the equivalent of 50 cents per day.



The Church here also provides food, lodging, and clothing, as well as health care and education for some 300 children in the tea estates.

Finlay Tea Estate – Srimangal, Bangladesh

For these tribal peoples, rejected in all other ways in their sufferings, it is through the Church that they find hope in faith. This was illustrated by their request of Bishop Bejoy D’Cruze, OMI during his first visit to the area. “We don’t ask for food and clothes from you, Bishop, but help to set up a long desired grotto to our Blessed Mother,” Ashacra said. The Church here also provides the 700 mostly tribal Garo people in 147 families with those basic necessities, as it is able. Bidyabill is the largest Catholic village among the 74 tea estate villages under St. Joseph’s parish in Srimangal. Holy Cross missionary Father Dominic Sarkar serves the area, visiting the 10,000 Catholics spread over 10,000 square miles — lots of work, concrete help for the poor, always with the offering of the hope and love of the Lord; help for body and soul. St. Joseph’s is the oldest and largest in the Diocese of Sylhet. Two other priests and eight Sisters also serve at St. Joseph’s, which operates four hostels for children — providing food, lodging, and clothing, as well as health care and education for some 300 children of the tea estates. In another village a local priest echoes the tragic tale of the tea workers — but speaks too of the Church’s work to change that. “Tea workers are deprived of a good wage, and so also education, for themselves and for their children,” said Father Subash Costa, OMI of DeMazenod Catholic Church in Khadim Nagar. The Kalagool ESA Primary School at the Kalagool Tea Estate provides more than just school subjects to its students.

“Often children come to school hungry, suffering from malnutrition,” Father Subash explained. “So we offer them bread with their learning!”

RESOURCES

Day Three | Grades K-12

St. Anthony's Mission Center

In Bangladesh, there are children with no home, no families — seemingly, no option. They sleep on the floor in extreme cold or extreme heat. Not long ago that had been the reality at St. Anthony Mission Center in Shimulia, some 45 miles north from the capital city of Dhaka. Like about half of the country's population, the people in the area just two years ago had no electricity. Village roads would be muddy and slippery with even a little rain; flooded when rains turned torrential. The main road is now cement, although still poorly constructed, and some electricity is in place.

Founded by a local priest, Father Dominic Rozario, back in 2005, the center is home to 45 children, mostly non-Christians; there they also receive an education, as well as food, clothing and shelter. The village has only seven Catholic families; all who embraced the faith through Father Rozario's own work and witness. Over several decades, his outreach to migrant workers and the most vulnerable peoples in these remote areas led to his opening at least five mission centers within the Dhaka Archdiocese. His own vocation and his work with the most poor and in need was inspired by a now deceased Italian missionary priest.



Up until this year, there had been no electricity, and the Sisters and children had to sleep on the floor.

- Shimulia, Bangladesh

Three local religious Sisters, all Catechist Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Queen of Angels, care for the children at the mission center. Up until this year, there had been no electricity, and the Sisters and children had to sleep on the floor; they endured sweltering heat in the summer and harsh cold winters. But sacrifices of U.S. children through the Missionary Childhood Association purchased beds for the center. Children helping children — the motto for the Missionary Childhood Association, and a model for our own missionary life of prayer and sacrifice, no matter our age.

RESOURCES

Day Four | Grades K-12

Rolling Away the Heart's Stone

A wounded country. That's how Archbishop Edward Charles described his homeland of Sierra Leone. And the wounds are still deep from a civil war that began in 1991. The litany of horror



There are thousands of orphans alone to beg on the streets.

– Sierra Leone, Africa



unleashed by rebel forces seems unfathomable to most. Young boys, eight to 18, were kidnapped, drugged

and forced by soldiers to be killers, even of their own families. Then, when the rebels no longer needed them, the boys would be set free – but with an amputated foot or hand as an ugly reminder of their years of violence. Young girls, some as young as six, also kidnapped, were drugged as well, and then sexually exploited in rebel camps, their bodies mutilated. Many died from lack of care for their wounds. And there are thousands of orphans, alone to beg on the streets, their families massacred in the fighting.

The Church suffered casualties of war as well. Priests and Religious were killed; numerous Catholic churches, schools, convents and clinics were looted or destroyed.

“It is never easy to forgive when another person hurts you,” said Archbishop Charles. “But it’s even harder to do so when you see purposeful evil perpetuated upon innocent people and helpless children. “But forgive we must,” he added.

"My people inspire me and, at the same time, challenge my faith," he explained. "I have asked the Lord in prayer the exact quote as Peter did in the Gospels, 'How many times must I forgive my brother?' And the answer always comes back the same, with a number we will never reach as humans."

The healing efforts include St. Mary's Children's Home, which offers loving care to the youngest victims of the war. Take, for example, the baby girl who was found abandoned and near death by the roadside near Bo. Brought to St. Mary's, she was named Cecilia, and given loving care by the local priest, Father Peter, and the staff at this home. Now four, she is the youngest resident of St. Mary's.

There is also Fatima House of Light, where young women, many of whom had been victims of the war's brutality, are taught a trade, such as sewing, typing, or cooking. Each day, many also attend therapy for the physical wounds of war.

"In the morning and at the end of a long day, I pray to the Lord for strength and courage, for myself and for my people," said Archbishop Charles. "We must carry Jesus in our hearts, and not a pebble of hatred or vengeance, since that pebble becomes a rock, a stumbling block on our God-given journey.

"We need to roll that rock away, just as the finger of God did on that Easter morning," he concluded. "Because with trust in the Lord all things are possible."

RESOURCES

Day Five | Grades K-12

Life's Storms

“Indeed in every storm in our lives we are always reminded that God is the Lord of all. He continuously inspires people to show His infinite love and boundless generosity.”

So wrote missionary Sister Maricris Cabarles reflecting on the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines last November, and the outpouring of support for the suffering in this part of the mission world.

“The storm surge swallowed and drowned thousands of people, houses, cars and establishments along the Eastern part of Leyte,” she wrote *MISSION*. “Huge trees were uprooted. Countless electric posts were blown in all directions.”

More than 250 people took refuge in the Catholic school there, where the Sisters provided food, blankets and sleeping mats. In the days that followed, the food supply dwindled, and there was no electricity or clean water.

Help was provided to some 50 families who lost roofs of their houses, and to others whose homes were totally destroyed.

– Phillipines



And yet, Sister Maricris reflected, despite the difficulties, “God is so good to touch generous people to share their blessings.” And she and the Sisters in her Religious Community who run the

school, the Sisters Oblates of the Holy Spirit, began a campaign to help families in the area restore damaged houses, “Rebuild Houses, Rebuild Homes.” Help was provided to some 50 families who lost roofs of their houses, and to others whose homes were totally destroyed.

“One of those big hearts who allocated their funds was the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Philippines, Father Socrates Mesiona,” Sister Maricris wrote. (And your help to a special appeal from the Pontifical Mission Societies assisted with those homes – and reached those families; see sidebar story.)

Brother Anthony Dameg, who works with Father Socrates, also shared a gift, Sister Maricris noted – 10 coats to warm those who had no cover from the cold, and 15 beautiful images of Jesus and Mary.

“The people were happy to place those images on their altar in thanksgiving,” she noted. “Our grateful hearts extend warm thanks to all the kind-hearted donors who opened the door of hope for us.”

RESOURCES

Day Six | Grades K-12

To Peace Together Hope

“We keep working at it. We labor on by the grace of God.”

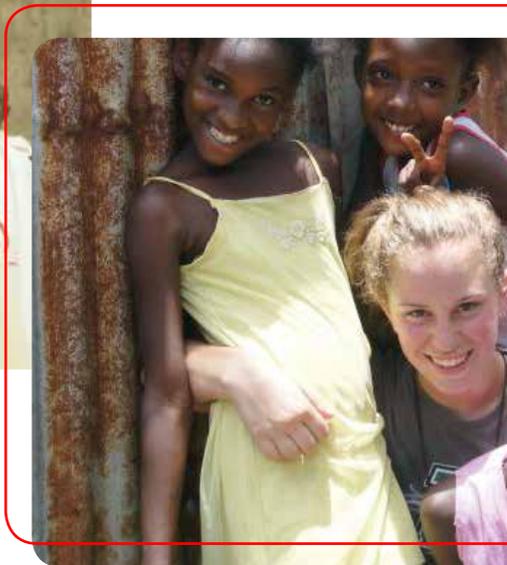
So wrote Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, Nigeria. The task – to restore peace to that once serene and beautiful city in his homeland.

During 2010, repeated conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the area - the first one in January and again the day after Christmas – seemed to make that an almost impossible venture. But Archbishop Kaigama remains determined. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in his Angelus message on December 26, specifically citing the most recent attack, invited the whole Church to pray “to vigorously ask the Lord to touch the hearts of men and bring hope, reconciliation and peace.”

The January 17, 2010 conflict left churches and mosques destroyed, and homes and businesses gone. People watched as loved ones were maimed or killed. Two months later, infants and children were among those brutally murdered in an attack on Dogo Nahawa, near Jos. “I was in tears when I visited the scene as the whole community was shocked to their marrow,” Archbishop Kaigama said.

The local church immediately became the “bridge builder,” Archbishop Kaigama explained, as the Catholic community helped over 600 families affected by the fighting. The faithful joined government and international agencies in reaching out to those families with comforting prayers or just a listening ear.

A Mass of Solidarity was held in mid-March, where prayers were offered for peace and reconciliation. Cardinal Peter Turkson, originally from Ghana and now president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican, journeyed to Jos for that Mass. “In hearing what has befallen you,” he told those gathered, “the rest of the family of God could not sit unconcerned.”



At a Mass in Dogo Nahawa, worshippers asked for forgiveness for those who had committed the violence there. The local community gathered basic necessities for those in need, and distributed crop seedlings as well. They also reconstructed the area's only health clinic, which had been destroyed in the fighting. "The fact that life is gradually returning to normal in villages that lost so much is nothing short of the miracle of love," Archbishop Kaigama said.

At another Mass at the site of additional attacks in Mazah village, there were prayers for peace as well. "We mobilized the faithful within Jos to visit the village and celebrated Holy Mass with the people," the archbishop recalled. "The rough, undulating and steep road to Mazah gave the visit the touch of a pilgrimage as we trekked in a long file, crossing mountains and rivers."

The local church immediately became the "bridge builder," helping over 600 families affected by the fighting. The faithful joined government and international agencies in reaching out to those families with comforting prayers or just a listening ear.

– Jos, Nigeria

Seven people died, and four were seriously injured in the Mazah violence. A man who lost his wife and children told Archbishop Kaigama that he had forgiven the harm done him. The head of the village declared the same. "This visit was as historic as it was healing," he said.

"We keep encouraging Christians not to lose faith in God nor be paralyzed by fear and anger, but rather to renew their love for God and neighbor," Archbishop Kaigama concluded. "In Jos, every Catholic is called upon to be an agent of peace and reconciliation – and then hope will surely come."





Prayer Service

Overview

In Scripture, we read of the challenges faced by Paul and Barnabas and other missionaries of the very early Church. We are told that those who are called on behalf of the Church to bring the Good News of Christ to others in foreign lands must receive support from those of us at home. We must be ready to encourage, pray for and offer our support to those who are called to the work of the Missions. This prayer service invites us to do just that.

Music will greatly enhance this service. Begin and end with a song. Consider selecting songs that speak of faith and belief. Some options include:

- *Thuma Mina / Send Me, Jesus* (South African tune)
- *God Has Chosen Me* by Bernadette Farrell
- *Here I Am Lord* by Dan Schutte
- *Go Make a Difference* by Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek

Introductory Prayer

We begin our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Ever faithful God,

You call us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus each and every day.

Hold us in Your love, and grant us strength to be faithful to Your ways.

*Send us into the world as ambassadors of Your compassion and goodness
that by our hands all will be transformed by Your loving kindness.*

*May we work fervently to grow in our faith,
and to share that faith with all the world.*

*Receive this prayer we offer today,
for those who seek new life in Christ and for all people everywhere.*

Glory to You forever and ever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Amen.

Proclamation of the Word

A Reading from Acts (14:21-28)

After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and made a considerable number of disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. They strengthened the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." They appointed presbyters for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith. Then they traveled through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. After proclaiming the word at Perga they went down to Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now accomplished. And when they arrived, they called the church together and reported what God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

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Sharing

- Invite participants to discuss practical steps they can take to support the Missions beyond *National Prayer and Penny Week*.

Prayers of the Faithful

Ever mindful that our God is present, faithful and true to our needs and those of the world, let us bring our petitions before Him. Our response is *Lord, give us greater faith, and hear our prayer*:

- We pray for all leaders, those in the Church, those in governments and other institutions, that they answer the essential call to care for the poor and vulnerable among us, and in all places throughout the world.
- We pray for all missionaries, those near and far, that God will continue to bless their work and that through their service and example they might make Jesus known to others.
- We pray for our school/parish community, that we may be witnesses without fear in our homes, our schools, our communities, our country, and our world.
- We pray for all missionaries who have sacrificed their lives in the service of God and to the poor, that they may be raised to new life with Christ.
- We pray for those missionaries who minister in challenging and often dangerous environments, that they be of strong faith, and serve as a continual sign of hope for those for whom they serve and care.

God of justice, God of kindness, God of love, we pray these prayers knowing that You are all powerful and that all things are possible in You.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father... For the kingdom, power, and glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray:

God of love,

You show us all that is right.

Help us to become living signs of Your goodness and love.

Lead us to new ways of seeing You, praising You, and growing in our love and commitment to You.

We ask that You give to all missionaries a spirit of wisdom, understanding, strength and courage as they seek to serve You in the name of our Church.

Grant them boldness to walk with our brothers and sisters who live in poverty, loneliness, and despair. Provide them with safety, perseverance, and the fortitude they need to bring Your Son, Jesus to those in need.

And give to us, Lord Jesus, humble hearts.

Give us hearts for serving all we meet.

Inspire all of Your followers to carry Your love to all people.

We ask this through Your good and faithful name.

Amen.

Blessing and Sending Forth

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing:

May God give you today the same grace given the holy apostles.

May God fill you with the Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves.

May God communicate to you your mission in order to procure the salvation of others.

And may God Bless you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Adapted from — St. John Baptist de La Salle, Meditations, No. 43.3



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