



# Archdiocese of Philadelphia MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

## Nov Dec 2023 • Mission Resource

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*Dear Mission Moderators, Principals and Directors & Coordinators of Religious Education,*

*May God's blessings be upon you as we give thanks for World Mission Sunday and the month of the Holy Rosary! The **Missionary Childhood Association [MCA]**, is grateful to those of you who have already reached out to collaborate and we are eager to continue to inspire young Missionaries and build a sense of prayer and service for other children globally.*

In this resource you will find resources geared towards Thanksgiving, Advent, and the Epiphany. We hope you will consider participating in our **National Christmas Artwork Contest**, our **Advent Virtual Prayer Service**, and our **Mite Box Initiative**.

As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, Advent, and eventually Christmas, we are challenged to reflect on our own blessings and the gift of Christ. When we begin with gratitude we are more likely to be generous. As your students enjoy their blessings, we ask you to help them gain a global perspective and to learn about how other kids live around the world.

**MCA** strives to be a **RESOURCE FOR YOU**, whether it is through Mission Animation presentations, virtual prayer services, Rosary-making service activities or various initiatives to help your students embrace their Catholic identity *and be Missionary!* Please let us know how we can best serve you and the students in your care.

Sincerely in Christ's Mission,

*Monsignor James D. Beisel*  
Reverend Monsignor James D. Beisel  
Archdiocesan Director

*Paul Cillo*  
Paul Cillo  
Mission Education Manager

### What is Missionary Childhood Association [MCA] ?

In collaboration with OCE & OCF, MCA provides this **MISSION RESOURCE** so you can pull ideas from it, engage your children with Missionary activities and teach them about the Missions.

Archbishop Perez has asked that all Archdiocese of Philadelphia schools and PREPs **prioritize the Mission Societies**. We understand that you cannot possibly use all of our resources, but you are asked to implement them, *how many as possible*, into your curriculum to inspire the youth of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia **to be Missionary Disciples!**

## What is a Mite Box?

Mite boxes have been used for over a hundred years to raise money for Missionaries. The name comes from the story of the Widow's Mite from the Gospels of Mark and Luke. The Widow is commended for giving all that she had, "two pennies." While it may not seem like a lot the boxes add up. Advent is a wonderful time to have a Mite box collection for your school or class. As your students prepare for the gift of Jesus and the gifts they will receive on Christmas, encourage them to give to improve the life of kids around the world.



### Check out the story to the right about Mite boxes from 1926



To the left  
Archbishop Fulton  
Sheen gives to a  
young boy's Mite  
Box

#### V. MITE BOXES

To those who appreciate the value of their Catholic Faith continual sacrifice in behalf of that Faith is a pleasure. Therefore there are many Catholic homes that find joy in the presence of a mite box in some prominent place where it may attract attention and receive the small change of the family. Such generous spirits help a great deal to make mission work possible.

Some mothers have found it quite helpful to the Christian spirit in their home to put a fine on those who have been guilty of profane language in the home. This fine is ordered to be put in the Mite Box that stands there, always a reminder of the prohibition. The regular payment of such fines has done much to clear the air of objectionable language. These Mite Boxes can be obtained from the Diocesan Office, 1459 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pa. When they are filled, they may be returned there or given to any of the promoters if there are any in the Parish.

## 2023-2024 Christmas Art Contest

Each year we participate in the National MCA Christmas artwork contest. The contest allows students to share their faith and share their artistic gifts. The best artwork submitted to the Archdiocese is sent on to the National Contest. National winners are invited down the National Basilica to be recognized and the Archdiocesan winners are recognized at World Mission Sunday.

Check out this year winners on the next page.

**For more Mission ideas, contact Paul Cillo**

**Mission Education and Communications Manager**

**[MCA@archphila.org](mailto:MCA@archphila.org) • 215-587-3945 • [www.phillymissions.org](http://www.phillymissions.org)**

## Upcoming Dates and Events

### Christmas Art Contest

Begins in December  
Submission Deadline is  
Friday January 26th

### Advent Virtual Prayer Service

Click to join on  
Tuesday December 12th,  
11:00AM

### Schedule a Mission presentation



## National Artwork Winner

Charlotte, Regina Coeli Academy

## Diocesan Winners



Our diocesan winners clockwise from the top right:

Stella, St. Jude School, (top left)

Penelope, Regina Coeli Academy, (top middle)

Lily, St. Katherine of Siena School, (top right)

Gabrielle, Maternity BVM, (middle left)

Faith, St. Michael the Archangel, (middle middle)

Andrew, Notre Dame de Lourdes School, (middle right)

Layla, St. Peter the Apostle School. (bottom left)



## Classroom Resources

### November MCA Calendar

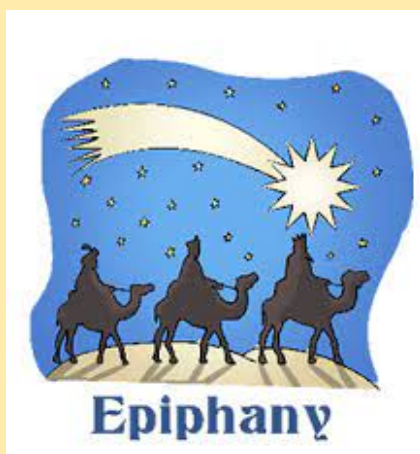


### Thanksgiving Prayer Service

### Advent Prayers for the Classroom and family.

### Advent Calendar

### Other Advent Wreath activities



### Epiphany Calendar and Door Blessing

### Additional Mission Christmas Tree Activity



## Saint Francis Xavier

**Birth: 1st Century**

**Death: Circa 1st Century**

**Feast day: December 2nd**

### Patron Saint of the Missions

Francis Xavier was born on April 7, 1506, in Xavier Castle, located in the kingdom of Navarre, part of present-day Spain. He was a member of a noble family, and his childhood was one of privilege—however, it was disrupted by his father's death, as well as by outside efforts to take control of Navarre.

In 1525, Xavier went to study at the University of Paris. There, he met Ignatius of Loyola, who had experienced a religious conversion while recovering from a war wound. Loyola did his utmost to convince Xavier to join him on the same path of devotion.



Though at first hesitant, Xavier was eventually inspired by his friend's example. On August 15, 1534, in the Montmartre section of Paris, Xavier, Loyola and five others pledged themselves to the Society of Jesus [the Jesuits]. In addition to vows of celibacy and poverty, they also promised to visit the Holy Land.

Impressed by the Jesuits, King John III of Portugal asked the order for Missionaries to work in his empire. Though Loyola initially selected others for the task, Xavier stepped in when a fellow priest became ill. He left Rome on March 15, 1540. Xavier arrived in Goa, India, on May 6, 1542. He came to be admired in that country for his ability to live and work side by side with the poor. Seeking more converts, Xavier continued to travel.

On August 15, 1549, Xavier landed in Japan. As he had at his other Missions, Xavier arranged for the translation of religious texts. These steps helped him reach more converts in the year and a half he spent in Japan.

Xavier's next focus for Missionary work was China. He traveled to Sancian (Shangchuan) Island, near Canton, but was not able to access the mainland because borders had been closed. Before he could find a way inside the country, Xavier became very ill. He died on the island on December 3, 1552, at the age of 46.

Though he passed away at a young age, Xavier had accomplished much in his life. In addition to being a founding member of the Jesuit order—the Society of Jesus was officially recognized by Pope Paul III in 1540—he baptized an estimated 30,000 people. Xavier was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1619, and canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.

A famed Missionary himself, he is now the Patron Saint of Missionaries.

## Mission Focus: The Maids of the Poor Home in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Have you ever been enchanted by Christmas lights? They often fill us with joy and remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Missionaries continue to bring the light of Christ to the people they serve and this is especially true in Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, Sister Miriam and her fellow sisters run the Maids of the Poor Home for orphaned or abandoned children.

Here, young souls scarred by life's hardships find solace. Sister Miriam, a pillar of love and dedication, recently shared, "we pray daily for their sustenance. But many evenings, as I gaze into their innocent eyes, my heart shatters. Often, we lack even the funds to buy them milk." Despite the daily struggles to care for these abandoned and orphaned children, there is profound joy and love evident in this home. Through the prayer and support of Catholics around the world, through the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) the sisters are transformed into the living embodiment of the Star of Bethlehem for these children.

As we embrace the spirit of Christmas, reflecting God's boundless love in our actions, we are challenged to remember the circumstances of the birth of Jesus. We are also invited to reflect on the words of our Savior, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Christmas is a wonderful time to reflect on the gifts we have received and the way we can be gifts to others.

Sister Miriam and the children of the Maids for the Poor Home are most grateful to you and send their love and prayers! With your support, we can bring hope and shine the Gospel's light even brighter.

- Will **your students** pray a Hail Mary for kids around the world who benefit from MCA? Pope Francis asks all students in **MCA** do so.
- Can **your class** sacrifice and participate in our **Mite Box Challenge** to help support orphanages around the world??
- Can **your school** raise enough to provide books for an entire classroom?



This year's theme for World Mission Sunday is "Hearts on Fire, Feet on the Move" from the story of the Disciples on the Emmaus. It is a reminder that when we encounter Jesus in the Scriptures and Eucharist it should push us to action. Think about the ways that you are encountering Christ and then going out and sharing the Gospel with the world

Below are pictures of people around the world with their hearts on fire and feet on the move







## ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

July 7, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I know that many of our worthy charitable ministries seek your support each year by asking that you share information with your school and PREP families.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, our parishes and schools are asked to support our own Catholic ministries, one of which is the Pontifical Mission Societies through the Missionary Childhood Association and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Church documents tell us that the Pontifical Mission Societies should be given “*first place*” [*Ad Gentes* no. 38] and “*the leading role*” [*Redemptoris Missio* no. 84] in the Church’s work of missionary formation through their material support, benefiting the poorest in the world. Those of us with the means to do so have a responsibility to support that work as best we can.

In this light, I ask you to promote the *Missionary Childhood Association* and the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* to the best of your ability. Parish weekend appeal schedules should follow those established on the Diocesan and Extra-Diocesan Collections list where dedicated weekends are allocated to garner support for this missionary work.

Parishes, schools, and religious education programs may elect to support other worthy charities, but this should be *in addition* to their works of prayer and sacrifice through the Missionary Childhood Association, one of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

Following these guidelines should help better support the universal evangelization efforts of the Church through the Pontifical Mission Societies.

I extend my thanks to all those in our local Church that already actively participate in the works of these charities, and am ever grateful for your efforts in forming those you serve in the Catholic Faith. Please be assured of my prayers for you and your intentions.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nelson J. Pérez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" at the end.

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia