

Back-to-School 2023-2024

100 years of Missions in the Diocese of Harrisburg

2024 is our 100th anniversary!

The very first Diocesan Director of the Missions Office was Father Joseph A. Schmidt (later Monsignor), appointed by Bishop Philip R. McDevitt in 1924. It was the first formally established diocesan office.

Father Schmidt immediately not only reached out to the adults in the diocese, but included our youngest as well. In his first Annual Report, Father Schmidt reported that "...eight hundred dollars was collected in the schools in the 1924-1925 term." He also noted that the children offered up

"...81,281 Masses and 40,255 Holy Communions besides 634,733 other good works for the spread of the Gospel."

Thereafter, he offered a report every year listing the contributions by the children in the diocesan schools and parishes.

In 1931, he included a letter that accompanied the donations from one school:

"Enclosed you will find two dollars towards the Missions saved by nine of the Seventh Grade boys at Holy Trinity School. We saved it by paying one cent a

week; but to make it higher, we raised it to five cents a week. We met at each others' houses. We were going to buy a baseball and bat but thought that this would be of better use. The name of our club is the 'Jolly Crew.'"

In the one-hundred years, there have only been four Directors of the Missions Office: Monsignor Joseph A. Schmidt (1924-1955); Father Leo A. Beierschmitt (1955-1967); Monsignor George V. Lentocha (1967-1997); and the current director, Father Robert Sharman, who began in 1987 as Assistant Director (1997- present).

Ad multo annos!



Above: Bishop Philip McDevitt, far left, with Father Joseph Schmidt, far right, on the steps of the Cathedral for the first Mission Sunday Mass in 1925. More than 900 people attended.



Above: Father Leo Beierschmitt, second diocesan director, in 1957 with Holy [Missionary] Childhood Association banner awarded to Saint Patrick Cathedral School in Harrisburg for their exceptional mission-mindedness.



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Left: Father Robert Sharman, current director, in 1997 with MCA newsletters and in 2002 with diocesan children at an Education Conference.

From the Diocesan Director



Dear Principals, Coordinators/
Directors of Religious Education,
Teachers, and Catechists:

I invite you to be a special part of the
Missionary Childhood Association.

MCA helps teachers awaken
missionary awareness among
children in our Catholic schools and
programs of religious education. This awakening encourages
children to share their faith and their material goods with
children in the more needy regions of the world.

Can a child be a missionary? Yes! Children are sensitive to
the needs of other children and question why children of the
same age in other countries do not have the basic necessities:

shelter, sanitation, water, food, clothing, school books,
love. Children have big hearts that see where there is
need and show the desire to act accordingly. Children
have generous spirits, are willing to share, and are able to
overcome the prejudices of culture, race or religion.

Your students' prayers and sacrifices allow children in
mission lands to experience the joy of faith, the hope of
the Gospel message, and the love that comes from
knowing the Lord's great love for each of us.

Thank you for all you do to encourage the missionary spirit
among the youth of our Diocese.

Reverend Robert F. Sharman
Diocesan Director

Diocesan Winner in the MCA Christmas Artwork Contest

Art teachers, take note! Continuing with
our diocese's track record of talent, we
congratulate **Ellie Kirkpatrick of St.
Patrick School, Carlisle**, winner in the
2022-2023 national MCA Christmas
Artwork Contest.



Every year, 24 winners are chosen
from thousands of entries nationally
and their artwork is displayed in the
Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
in Washington, DC during Advent/
Christmas season. Winners and their
families are treated to a special day
there in December with awards, Mass,
lunch, and tours of the Shrine.

Go to our website for rules and entry
form for 2023-2024:

www.hbgdiocese.org/MCA, click on
link at bottom.

Deadline is January 31, 2024.

In the past nine years, Harrisburg has
had a winner every year except one,
for a total of 14 winners from:

St. Patrick School, Carlisle

Our Mother of Perpetual Help School,
Ephrata (2)

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish,
Ephrata (2)

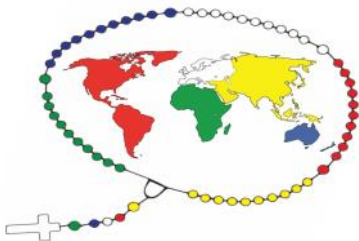
Sacred Heart of Jesus School,
Lancaster (4)

St. Columba School, Bloomsburg (2)

St. John Neumann Parish, Lancaster

St. Leo the Great School, Lancaster (2)

Know your colors: the World Mission Rosary



The World Mission Rosary, created by
Archbishop Fulton Sheen in 1951, calls
to mind the great needs of our mission
family in each part of the world, as well
as offering prayers for the missionaries

who give practical help and the hope and
love of Our Lord.

Since our office began this project in 2014,
more than **43,000** rosaries have been
given to children in our diocesan schools,
religious education programs,
homeschool families, and campus
ministries; and more will be offered when
the new school year begins.

The Missions Office gives a heartfelt
"thank you" to the volunteers who spent
hours upon hours stringing and knotting

these rosaries.

The World Mission Rosary is a perfect
way to show your students how
prayers are important to the missions.

Contact our office for your free World
Mission Rosaries and pray as a
classroom or a school (order form
online at **[www.hbgdiocese.org/
MCA](http://www.hbgdiocese.org/MCA)**).

Comes with rosary prayers, missions
intentions, and activity packet.

Bulletin Board Ideas

- Use the colors of the World Mission Rosary: (green, white, red, yellow, blue) to create a background or border for your bulletin board.
- Display in bold letters “Missionary Childhood Association” (or ask Missions Office for a printout of the MCA logo).
- Display the MCA poster (from Missions Office).
- Write this year’s theme for World Mission Sunday in October 2023: **“Hearts on Fire, Feet on the Move.”** Accompany it with a picture of Pope Francis, or ask the Missions Office for a World Mission Sunday poster.
- Display the Monthly Missions Calendar from the monthly email packet.
- Display the World Mission Rosary and an explanation of what the colors mean; include a map colored with the rosary colors.
- Display the Mission Country of the Month, adding maps or pictures from that country.
- Post the Mission Saint of the Month.



Classroom Ideas

- Designate a time during the week to talk about the missions. Point out the correlation between our calling to mission and how we live out our Catholic faith everyday.
- Read the story of a missionary saint and talk about how their example helps us find our own way of answering our call to mission.
- Highlight the different cultures and traditions that make up our Catholic family. This emphasizes that we are one family in mission and one family in faith with more things that make us alike rather than divides us.
- Learn a song that talks about mission—the mission of Jesus or of the Church today.
- Make a collage representing the body of Christ around the world.
- Ask the Missions Office for old mission magazines; cut out pictures

of the missions to make a collage. Or, google missions photos and print.



Ideas for the School

- Designate a bulletin board or a space in the school for the Missions. Display projects that the students do to contribute to MCA. Share prayer intentions for other children in missionary countries.
- Organize/host World Mission Awareness Week, for example during Mission Month (October), Catholic Schools Week (end of January), or Liturgical seasons (Advent, Lent).
- Offer a prayer intention for the missions once a month when the student body attends Mass.
- Organize a walk-a-thon or dress-down day to help raise funds for MCA. Many other fund-raising ideas available from the Missions Office.
- Have a missionary speaker come and share their experience with the whole school.

- Pray the World Mission Rosary as a school.





Missionary Childhood Association
 Office of Pontifical Missions ~ Diocese of Harrisburg
 4800 Union Deposit Road ~ Harrisburg, PA 17111
 Phone: 717-658-4804 ext 240
 Email: missions@hbgdiocese.org
www.hbgdiocese.org/MCA



Diocesan Director: Reverend Robert F. Sharman
MCA Coordinator: Karen Harding

Policy #1324 Student Fundraising and the Missions

Students should be encouraged and educated to make personal sacrifices for the Church and for the missions. All elementary schools are required to participate in the Missionary Childhood Association program sponsored by the Diocesan Office for the Missions. Secondary students are encouraged to participate in the Lenten observance, Operation Rice Bowl, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services.

Participation in local civic fund drives, or similar requests, is left to the discretion of the Pastor and Principal. Each request for participation in fund-raising must be evaluated in terms of the organization's activity in relation to the teaching of the Church, and with a concern for the additional financial burden this places on families. *Diocese of Harrisburg*

How to Get (free) MCA Materials



World Mission Rosary posters and brochures, MCA prayer cards, mite boxes, Helping Hand envelopes, and Rosaries may be ordered by filling out the Order Form found on our website: www.hbgdiocese.org/MCA.

There are also **Monthly Email lesson plans**. Each month from September-May, we present a different mission prayer service, mission country with MCA story, mission saint, and other activities. **Sign up at www.hbgdiocese.org/MCA.**

Your email address is never used for anything else and is never shared with others.



Remitting Contributions from Students

MCA donations are used to help fund projects that benefit children in mission countries where resources are limited. These donations give them a chance to have access to medical aid, food, education, and the catechesis to prepare for their sacraments.

Donations for MCA may be remitted through checks payable to "**Missionary Childhood Association**" and mailed to:

Missions Office
 Diocese of Harrisburg
 4800 Union Deposit Road
 Harrisburg PA 17111

Or, for **HCAS transmittals** please contact our office for the correct coding.



Looking Ahead to World Mission Sunday

With the theme of "**Hearts on Fire, Feet on the Move**", World Mission Sunday is on **October 22**. Look for more information in the October monthly activities.



2023
WORLD MISSION SUNDAY
OCTOBER 22ND