

Pakistan



The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is located in southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea. The country's name literally means "Land of the Pure" translated from the Urdu and Persian languages. The name was first used in 1933 as an acronym for five northern territories under British control that longed to be a Muslim nation - PAKSTAN. The "I" was added later for easier pronunciation.

Pakistan covers an area that is just a bit larger than the state of Texas while its population is about seven times the size of that state's. The capital city of Pakistan is Islamabad.

Although English is the official language and used in most government offices, Pakistanis speak many different languages: Punjabi 38.8%, Pashto (alternate name, Pashtu) 18.2%, Sindhi 14.6%, Saraiki (a Punjabi variant) 12.2%, Urdu 7.1%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2.4%, Brahui 1.2%, other 2.4%.

Although education is free and compulsory in Pakistan up to grade 8, literacy rates show that the laws are not enforced. Under 60% of the population above age 15 can read and write, but when broken down by gender, a gap is revealed—for boys, the literacy rate is 69.3%, while for girls it is 46.5%.

In Saint Joseph Parish in the Diocese of Hyderabad, Missionary Childhood is called Holy Childhood. Membership means the same thing - coming together to learn more about our Catholic faith and understanding our how our shared Baptism calls us to help others around the world.

Info

Population 57,970,293

Religion 96.5% of Pakistanis are Muslim, the official religion of the country
3.5% call themselves "other" which usually means Christian
<1% of the population is Roman Catholic

There are 552 Catholic schools in Pakistan. They educate more than 150,000 students of all faiths. Most of these institutions have been established during the past 25 years. Catholics are also known for the care for the sick and disabled. The Church runs hospitals, clinics, and orphanages. The total number of Catholic charitable institutions is 169.*

Other data There are 138 parishes that make up 7 dioceses.

Just as we recently journeyed through Lent and celebrated Easter, so too did the Missionary (Holy) Childhood members of the Holy Family School in the Diocese of Hyderabad, Pakistan.

During Holy Week, they reenacted the Stations of the Cross. They shared their photos of this moving event with us via Facebook. Here are a few:



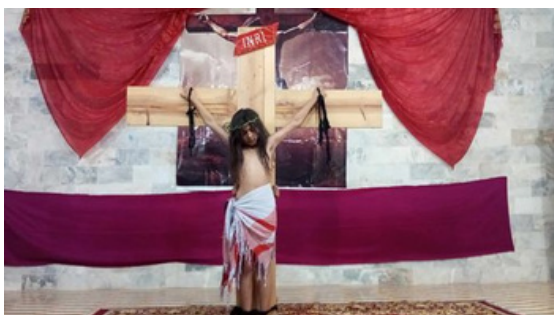
Jesus is Condemned to Death



Jesus Meets His Mother



Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross



Jesus Dies on the Cross

As you can see, a lot of work, practice, and preparation went into the children's recreation of the Stations of the Cross. When Missionary Childhood members around the world pray and sacrifice, this is the direct result - children who live in a Christian minority country not only learn about our faith but also put it into public practice!

According to the spring Bollettino (Bulletin) from our Vatican office, the programs of the Missionary (Holy) Childhood are present in seventeen parishes with fifty-seven schools in Pakistan. The numbers of children involved are steadily growing, thanks to the many teachers and adults who step forward to lead the groups.

These membership groups encourage the children in their personal faith formation while also helping them to develop a missionary spirit. They are reaching out to their local peers, too. According to the Vatican Bollettino, the Missionary (Holy) Childhood groups are welcoming youth of other denominations as well as members as well.

A special "shout out" was given to teachers in the Diocese of Hyderabad for their role in enlivening a missionary spirit in the children of the schools and faith formation programs.

Most Rev. Samson Shukardin, Bishop of Hyderabad said, "The missionary spirituality in the little friends of Jesus helps them to Live with Him, Live like Him, Unite in Him and Go with Him. He who did not seek to be served but instead, served and gave his life for the Salvation of all."

Missionary Childhood helps to lead children to Jesus!