

December Mission Intention

That children and youth may be messengers of the Gospel. May their dignity be respected and may they be kept free from all violence and exploitation.



... and a child shall lead them.

Country Focus: Thailand: The land of free and smiling people.



Thailand is nestled in the heart of Southeast Asia and has a long, storied history. Prior to the 20th century, it was known as the Kingdom of Siam and was the backdrop to the well-known story of The King and I.

Due to war and instability in the region, Thailand has become home to many refugees and immigrants from neighboring Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Despite the regional conflicts and various religious groups present, Thailand has managed to maintain a state of peace and harmony.

In this country of 60 million, most of the people are Buddhists. Catholics make up less than 1/2 percent of

the population. Therefore, Christian mission is small and aspires to promote Christian faith and build bridges with the majority religions and to serve the vulnerable, especially children.

As Thailand develops and improves in many areas, there is still great concern for the well-being of children in rural areas. These concerns include malnutrition, exclusion from education, trafficking, child labor and other forms of exploitation. Many children have been orphaned by the AIDS epidemic.

More needs to be done to raise the dignity and potential for children.

God's Word for Mission

Promoting Knowledge of Faith

"And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:76-77).

"If you find sustenance in Christ, my dear young people, ...you will not be able to resist speaking about him and making him known and loved by your friends and contemporaries" (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 Message for World Youth Day).

Saint for Children - St. Nicholas of Myra

Education for Community Life

St. Nicholas was born during the 3rd century in the village of Patara, located on what is now the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents died in an epidemic leaving Nicholas orphaned. Nicholas had a deep faith in Jesus and decided to use his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering.

Eventually, he dedicated his whole life to God and was eventually made Bishop of Myra as a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for



Patron Saint of children, sailors and young women getting married. He is protector of all in trouble.

his generosity to those in need, his love for children and his concern for sailors and ships.

Through the centuries many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These include stories of protecting children from harm, improving the state of young women, advocating for those unjustly accused of crime and interceding for those suffering famine. He embodies the spirit of Christmas by sharing the gift of himself like Jesus. His feast day is Dec. 6th.

Economic Justice

Most of the foods we eat and products we use are grown and made by people in other parts of the world.

There is a chain of relationships between us. Fair Trade tries to respect everyone in this relationship by insuring fair prices and labor conditions for workers.

Economic Justice is based on the Catholic principle that the economy should work for people and not the other way around. The economy should serve the common good. People should not be harmed or exploited in exchange for cheaper goods and services, especially children.



My Mission Gift - Offering Prayer, Service and Treasure *Moral Formation*

Give an hour of Prayer

- Pray for children around the world to share the Gospel.
- Pray for children who are sick, vulnerable or exploited.
- Pray the mission rosary joyful and luminous mysteries.
(www.onefamilyinmission.org/hcakids)

Give an hour of Service

- Organize or participate in a Hunger Banquet. (www.Oxfam.org)
- Volunteer at a local food shelf.
- Learn about Fair Trade and avoid products or services that exploit children.
(www.oxfam.org.uk/cool planet)



Give a Buck for Mission

- Give \$1 to **Risen Savior Missions** which exists to provide lifesaving meals to children in Philippines, Africa and Haiti who do not have adequate food or are at risk of starvation.

Risen Savior Mission partners with Feed My Starving Children to transport the food to places it is most needed.

(www.risensaviormissions.org)

Place gift commitments and offerings in your Holy Bucket. If you do not have one and would like one, contact Eric Simon at simone@archspm.org.

Petitions for Mission

Liturgical Education

- ✚ Let us pray for children and youth to be messengers of the Gospel in what they say and do.
- ✚ Let us pray for children who face hunger, sickness, loss of loved ones or unjust treatment.
- ✚ Let us pray for economic justice for those who produce the food we eat and products we use.
- ✚ Let us pray for the people of Thailand facing the effects of monsoon floods and all those recovering from natural disasters.
- ✚ Let us pray that Jesus may be born in our hearts at Christmas. May the peace and joy of Christ among us echo in our hearts so we may share the spirit of Christmas with those around us.

Prayer for Mission

Missionary Initiative

Loving God, you so loved the world that you sent your son, Jesus, into our world to bring good news to the poor and light to those who live in darkness. Help us, your children, to stay close to your son and be messengers of the Gospel. Amen.