

Young Missionaries' Meeting with Apostolic Nuncio
Thursday, 5th March 2020
On the Occasion of PMS 175th Anniversary

FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS

*Good morning, Rev. Fr. Peter Peter Watchasin Kritcharoen,
and to all of you my dear children and youth,
Sawaat dii Luuk **ti rak ying**:*

I am very happy to welcome all of you to this Apostolic Nunciature!
Sabaay dii may khrap?

Rev. Fr. Watchasin informed me that, on the occasion of the 175th Anniversary of the Young Missionaries, the Pontifical Missionary Society of Thailand has organized different competitions under 5 categories, with the theme: *"Friends Helping Friends"*. There was *dancing* in the tune of the young missionary song; then, *writing an article* on the mentioned theme. I heard that you also had *drawing picture with chalk* and *drawing the logo of the PMS*. **What's** interesting is you also had a *writing of a project* concerning "friends helping friends". Later on, the awards will be presented to you.

But before we proceed to the awarding ceremony, I just would like to say a few words to you, my dear children.

On the feast of Pentecost, last May 20, 2018, Pope Francis encouraged children to practice "small daily gestures of love and service." The Holy Father said that the Missionary Childhood Association "sees children as protagonists of mission, with prayer and small everyday acts of love and service. Pope Francis added, "I thank and encourage all children that take part in it, to spread the Gospel in the world. Thank you!"

So how did this Missionary Childhood Association begin? In 1843, a French Bishop, Monsignor Charles de Forbin-Janson of Nancy, founded the Pontifical Missionary Childhood Association at the heart of the Pontifical Missionary Associations. He had been profoundly affected by the suffering of abandoned Chinese children, not baptized and without hope. So, through prayer and material cooperation, the children of France helped the Chinese children of their same age. "ONE HAIL MARY A DAY, ONE SMALL COIN A MONTH" was the commitment made by every child from the first moment. This was in 1843, can you imagine, how many years already passed? 177 years! And through this initiative, the seed was sown from which the Missionary Childhood Association developed. Years later, the motto coined was, "CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN",

Those were the beginnings and now, over 15 million children in 112 countries take part in this work: in fact, it's about "making children missionaries among themselves," by

“a sharing of Faith, of prayer, of material offerings with the most disadvantaged children of faraway countries.”

You see dear young people, beloved children of God, may be in this young age of yours, you haven't thought much about the future or maybe you are thinking, but you haven't gone deeper to reflect much about it. I would like to share to you some words that Pope Francis addressed to the young people during the 92nd World Mission Day, with the theme, “Together with young people, let us bring the Gospel to all”.

“Life is a mission”: “Every boy and girl *is a mission*. This is the reason for our life here on earth.” But we know that to “live out joyfully our responsibility for the world” is a “great challenge”. The heart of the mission is the proclamation of Jesus Christ, meaning to make felt the presence of God in our lives to others. Do you feel that God is here among us? Well, it is not only a good feeling when everything is okay; but all the more, even when there are sufferings and difficulties that we sense more the presence of God. It “fills life with joy”, allows us to challenge evil, and makes us discover the “divine logic of self-sacrifice”. Oh self-sacrifice, today in this time and age that we see more how the society has become more individualistic around us?! All the more that Christ is challenging us to know how to “sacrifice ourselves” for love of Christ in the “other”. Dear young people, do not be afraid of Christ or the Church!

Finally, I would like you to remember the words of Pope Francis in his homily, during the Holy Mass with young people (22 November 2019): “*Dear young people, you are a new generation, with new hopes, new dreams and new questions, and surely some doubts as well, yet firmly rooted in Christ. I urge you to maintain your joy and to look to the future with confidence. Rooted in Christ, view all things with the joy and confidence born of knowing that the Lord has sought us out, found us and loved us infinitely. Friendship cultivated with Jesus is the oil needed to light up your path in life and the path of all those around you: your friends and neighbors, your companions at school and work, including those who think completely unlike yourselves.*

Let us go out to meet Christ the Lord, for he is coming! Do not be afraid of the future or allow yourselves to be intimidated. Rather, know that the Lord is waiting for you there, in that future, in order to prepare and celebrate the banquet of his kingdom.”

Together with our Holy Father Pope Francis, I would like to ask you all to continue to pray to Jesus, Prince of Peace, for the gift of peace in the world.

As Representative of the Holy Father Pope Francis, I bestow on you his Apostolic Blessings, may God bless you abundantly while invoking the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of us all.

✠ Archbishop Paul Tschang In-Nam
Apostolic Nuncio