DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

MEMO

TO: All Pastors

FROM: Most Rev. James F. Checchio
Bishop of Metuchen

DATE: October 28, 2016

RE: DIOCESAN POLICY – MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION (MCA)

Brothers,

I have been asked to write to renew and recall to your minds the long standing policy of our diocese on the MCA. During the past two centuries, every Successor of St. Peter has emphasized the primary status of the Missionary Childhood as the Pope's "arm" for "children helping children" worldwide. In our Diocese, many youngsters through our schools and religious education programs, have responded generously each year to their needy peers. However, not all parishes respond to our Holy Father's request regarding the MCA.

Given the on-going proliferation of worthy causes seeking our children's support (-- from medical research to care for animals), it is important for our pastors, principals, parish catechetical leaders, youth ministers, teachers and catechists to be faithful to the mind of the Church:

1. The Church repeatedly insists that children be formed with a sense of missionary activity (offering other children Christ's Gospel and offering them material help through the MCA). ("The Pontifical Societies are the means of imbuing Catholics from their very infancy with a real universal and missionary outlook." Vatican II, Ad Gentes, 38)

2. All "good causes" are not equal or urgent.

3. Many "good causes" (e.g. cancer, heart research, etc.) can and do solicit support from the entire population -- believers and non-believers, Christian and non-Christian, old and young. Some of these organizations have reserve funds in the hundreds of millions of dollars. In contrast, MCA solicits donations from a much smaller portion of the population -- only Catholic children -- with little reserve funds.

4. Whereas some charities and individuals working for needy children can make widespread appeals in wealthy countries, others who have no such contacts (native local sisters/priests/catechists) must rely on the Universal Church, i.e. the MCA, for help in staffing/maintaining/ constructing orphanages, clinics, schools, etc.

Accordingly, I write to remind you of the long standing policy of every Bishop of Metuchen that the Pope's Missionary Childhood Association is the mandated program for our children in supporting other children. Schools and religious education programs may participate in other charitable causes, but never in place of the Missionary Childhood Association.

Thank you in advance for your faith-filled understanding and cooperation and for helping to form our young Catholics with a heart worldwide in its love and compassion.

cc: School Principals
Parish Catechetical Leaders
Mission Coordinators