

# Philippines



The Philippines, also known as the Republic of the Philippines, is an island country located in Southeast Asia. Its name comes from the Spanish explorers who named the group of over 7,000 islands for King Philip of Spain. In area, the islands cover an area slightly larger than the state of Texas. There are more than 4 times the



Filipino children gather for their MCA meeting and religious education

amount of people living on the archipelago than there are in that state! The Philippines is the seventh most populated country in Asia and the twelfth in the world. The capital city is Manila.

Most people who live in the Philippines are Catholic (about 83%); about 5% are Muslim; the remaining are either a Christian denomination or people who say they follow no religion at all (a tiny minority). The Christian faith was introduced by missionaries in the late 19th century. People who live in the Philippines are called Filipinos. They speak two official languages: Filipino (based on Tagalog) and English. The average Filipino lives on about \$4,500 a year.

Because the country is made up of so many islands, it has the fifth longest coastline in the world. Most of the islands are mountainous and are covered in tropical rain forests. Because the Philippines is located on the western edge of the Pacific Ocean's so-called Ring of Fire (known for its heavy volcanic and seismic activity) about 20 earthquakes a day are registered in the country. Most are too weak to be felt.

Most Filipinos live where the best farmlands lie in the country: northwest and southcentral Luzon and the island of Cebu. (see map) One-eighth of the entire national population lives in Manila.

## MCA in The Philippines

Last summer, Michael Gotuaco, Missionary Childhood Coordinator for the Archdiocese of San Francisco visited some of our projects in his home country of the Philippines. In Quezon City, he met Zandra, Mercy, Beth, and Rachelle who reside at the Saint Vincent de Paul Shelter for Girls.



The shelter's mission is to provide a home-life environment for girls between the ages of six and twelve. These young girls are all from very poor families, many of them have been neglected and need help with the very basics of life—a safe place to live, good nutrition, and education. Right now, the shelter is full—they are caring for twelve girls. Although the shelter itself needs



physical care, (Look to the left to see where the roof needs repair) all the girls receive

love and care from the Sisters who run the home.



Recently, Missionary Childhood members donated \$2,000 to the Sisters to help with maintenance at the shelter.



At the Little Magdalene Day Care Center, also known as “Happy

Land” in the barangay (village) where it is located, Michael arrived just in time to see lunch being prepared and served to the happy, well-cared for children at the center.

The children bring their own empty lunchboxes to school—they are filled with bread to take home to their families.



If you go to Google Maps and enter the day-care's address: 105 Capulong Street, Manila you will see the street view of the neighborhood where these children live.

The Sister Handmaids of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul also run elementary schools where students are members of the Missionary (Holy) Childhood Association! Say hello to the first graders of the Giovanni Battista Leonardi School in Quezon City—your partners in mission!

