

# 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.

On October 15, 2013, an earthquake that registered 8.2 hit the province of Bohol (near Cebu on the map above). Official reports list over 220 people killed and almost 1,000 injured.

## MCA in The Philippines

More than 73,000 structures were damaged; 14,500 of them were totally destroyed. These included churches and schools as well as many homes.

Just three weeks later, on November 7, 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)



roared through the area, devastating an area just north of Bohol called Tacloban City. Over 10,000

people lost their lives. Thousands more lost everything they had.

Father Socrates Mesiona, National Director of the Missionary Childhood Association in the Philippines, made this plea at the time: "We continue to ask for prayer and also for you to provide assistance to our countrymen affected by Typhoon 'Yolanda'. By the grace of God, we express our sincere prayers to you for your response. Each one of you is our ally!"

At this time, life has begun to return to a more normal pace around the country thanks to prayers and sacrifices to many world wide organizations including the Missionary Childhood Association, one of our Church's four Pontifical Mission Societies.

As the National Director, Father Socrates has been busy trying to help the young ones in his charge return to "business as usual" through their membership in the Missionary Childhood Association. This includes running their regular faith formation and mission

education programs and visiting the various dioceses across his country. He encourages the MCA members that he visits with to think about other children who may be suffering around the world and need the help of MCA to get through their everyday lives.

Just recently, in the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, in the northern part of the country, Father Socrates helped to run a Missionary Childhood Camping Weekend for children of the local native tribes who belong to various area farming communities.



MCA members sing and dance at their Campout where they learned more about how much God loves them!

The Campout was a time for the MCA members to get to know each other, learn more about Jesus and their own responsibility to spread the Good News!

Last year, members of the Missionary Childhood Association from around the world sacrificed so that \$11,500 could be sent to help the children of the Diocese of San Jose. These funds will provide for the continued religious education of the local children.

**Missionary Childhood Association**

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