

## LEARNING FOCUS 4: Modern witnesses to the power of the Holy Spirit.

### CONTENT

There were many witnesses to the Good News of the Gospel in the early days of the Church. In today's world, there are those who, with the power of the Holy Spirit, are prepared to be witnesses to God's love.

Let's read the story of Mrs Maricho, a modern missionary.

#### **Mrs. Maricho is a witness**

Mrs. Maricho is a modern missionary, who grew up in the capital city of the Philippines, Manila. She had a good job in the city, but she wasn't completely happy. She remembered that, as a young girl, she had been part of an organisation called Mission Together, and she remembered its motto of '*Children helping Children*'. As an adult, she thought about this a lot and decided that she still wanted to help children. So, she gave up her job, trained as a teacher, and moved to an island called Natandol where many of the children needed help.

On the island, you will often see children and women around, but not many men. Some of the men have travelled overseas to work, while others are fishermen and are out at sea during the day. The island is very green, with lots of trees, so the people can grow some fruit, but not enough for everyone. There is no electricity or fresh water supply on Natandol. Men from the island go by boat to the neighbouring island to collect water, and it is then shared around the island by a man on a bike.

There is the school on the island where the children have all of their lessons. Mrs. Maricho is the only teacher and there is only one classroom. The children attend school in shifts. Around 600 children go to school here, so they have lessons for about forty at a time. There are three shifts per day (7.30- 10.30, 11:00-1:00, 2:00-5:00) and each child might only attend one shift per week.

A group of missionary Sisters helped Mrs. Maricho to set up the school. Mrs. Maricho and the children make everything in the school themselves, from their toys to the posters on the classroom walls. The toys are often made from rubbish the children find on the island. It might not have many resources, but before Mrs. Maricho came to the island, there was no school at all. Mrs. Maricho gave up everything she had to help others and is truly an inspirational person.

### SOME KEY QUESTIONS

- Q Discuss the words 'modern witness'. What do you understand by this?
- Q What impressed you most about Mrs. Maricho?
- Q How is she a witness?
- Q What would be the most difficult thing Mrs. Maricho would have to cope with?

Q What do you think gives Mrs Maricho her courage?

## Activity

- Do you know any modern witnesses? Write a report on their work and what makes them a modern witness. How are their actions shaping lives?