

Salesian Missions

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SALESIAN SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTMAS 2017



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR 29 YEARS



If we just sat and thought out how we would expect God to come to this earth, we would generally agree that it would be with trumpeting splendor, flashes of light, thunder, and in the midst of them all full panoplied the glory of Divinity. But this is because we come in our pride and judge power by greatness. Because human pride had to be broken, the angels were given a "sign:" a "*Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.*"

Since He came to save us from our guilt, and not to manifest His Power – that will come at the end of the world – He was bearing the only cross a Babe can bear: poverty and the limiting swaddling bands of our humanity. To be our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Emmanuel, He must enflesh Himself in the very race He came to save, and not with one man or woman, or a few men or women, but with humanity. He must go down to the very rock from which we were hewn and put on our nature – not in it's decorated,



ornamental form – but as it is in the humblest and weakest. If He had come in any other form, He would have misled us concerning the purpose of His coming, namely, "*to save us from our sins.*" The poor now could not say He does not know what it is to be homeless. The lowly could now not say He does not know what it is to be despised. The ignorant could not say He does not know what it is to be childlike. He took on every form of humiliation of which our frustrated humanity was capable, in order to show us how to struggle through the darkness into the light.

To some it may be an unreasonable tax upon faith to see a Babe in a manger, but it is actually a sign of God's condescension to human weakness. If He had come in power and glory, it would not have been a sign, just as it would be no sign or proof that the sun was in the heavens to see it shining at mid-day. If there is to be a sign it must be contrary to what we would expect. But the sun that is eclipsed is a sign. And so is the God wrapped in swaddling clothes. *Bishop Fulton J Sheen*



SALESIAN MISSIONS WISHES ALL OUR READERS, DONORS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES A VERY BLESSED AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS. MAY THE BEAUTY AND THE PROMISE OF THAT SILENT, HOLY NIGHT FILL YOUR HEARTS WITH PEACE AND HAPPINESS.





FINAL MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING PROVINCIAL



Don Bosco was a happy saint who spread joy wherever he went. In his little manual of Christian formation, called the *Companion of Youth*, he wrote: "One lie with which the devil usually distances young people from virtuous living, is to make them believe that faith is boring. The Evil One tries to make young people believe that to serve the Lord will entail a boring life far from any amusement and

pleasure. It is not so, dear young people. I want to teach you a Christian method of life, which is at the same time joyful and happy, pointing you to what are the true amusements and the true pleasures. Such, in fact, is your purpose – to serve the Lord and to be always joyful." Don Bosco's optimism wasn't naive. He knew well the weakness of human nature but he was also convinced about the graces which assist us when, with faith in God, we trust in Divine Providence. Among all the sports, music, drama and games, he sprinkled time for prayer, sacraments and devotions. Don Bosco combined faith and fun in a way attractive to young people. He chose as his model Saint Francis de Sales, an outstanding example of being both down-to-earth yet putting God first in one's life.

He insisted that Salesian places should always generate an environment of joy. He was disappointed towards the end of his life when he saw certain Salesians not committed to assisting the youngsters in their charge to grow happy and holy. In his *Letter from Rome* of 1884,

he reprimands the Salesians for abandoning this first principle in connecting with the young people, and then proclaims to the youth: "I have only one desire, that of seeing you happy now and for all eternity." Don Bosco repeats this to every young person and their family today.

In this last message that I write as provincial, I take the opportunity to wish you all a blessed CHRISTmas and a great start to 2018. This is a season of hope and joy. Not just of merry parties, but of special spiritual significance and renewal of our spirits, as we take some rest after the stresses of the year and make time to celebrate with our families.

I cannot end without expressing my gratitude to Denise Hards, the Editor of the Spotlight and head of the Mission Office here in Southern Africa for many years. And also a big THANK YOU to all readers for being agents of *divine providence*! Be assured of our daily prayers for all our benefactors.

Father Francois Dufour sdb



SOME EVENTS FROM THE PAST MONTHS

AD MULTOS ANNOS!



We rejoiced to celebrate **Father Robert Gore's** golden jubilee and awarded him a well-deserved "Boscar". There are a total of 14 current living AFM confreres who have been awarded it! That's more than one in five members of our vice-province! It is a reason to feel a sense of pride among us, and it enhances our credibility as faithful lifelong servants of the Lord.



Father George Menampampil or just plain M.C. George, (which is his nickname), is the Co-Ordinator of Salesian Mission offices in Rome. He paid a flying visit to the Provincial House in Booyens, and left us with the thought-provoking information, about how kind and generous the people are in India!



The Indian Salesian Missionary **Father Tom Uzhunnalil**, seized in Yemen on 4 March 2016, was released on 12 September 2017. Liberation and consignment took place through a humanitarian operator, who worked closely with the Sultanate of Oman, and thanks also to Pope Francis's personal commitment and influence. Fr Tom was kidnapped by a commando of armed men during an attack on the House of Missionaries of Charity in Aden, Yemen, where 16 people were killed, including 4 Religious. On the Indian Missionary's fate, however, there had been no reliable news for quite some time. Near Easter 2016, there were uncontrollable rumours spreading about the will of his kidnappers to kill Fr Tom by crucifying the Salesian on Good Friday. Fr Tom's name was never forgotten in prayer by his Salesian confrere from around the

world, nor by the Salesian Family and Missionaries Sisters of Charity. After more than 18 months, the news made headlines, "Father Tom has been released!" His face is emaciated and his body has been tried, but he is now at peace. Father Angel Artime, the Rector Major, declared that, "Fr Tom is a testimony of faith for the world, for the Church and for the young."



**SPREADING LOVE, PEACE AND HAPPINESS AT
SALESIAN INSTITUTE, CAPE TOWN**



Margaret Simons with her class at Learn to Live (Picture right)



Learn to Live First Sports Day took place at the end of September at the Greenpoint Park Stadium in Cape Town. This was not your traditional sports day, but a day filled with activities that created a sense of purpose and most important, lots of FUN. The Sports Day forms part of the nurturing environment created at the school for

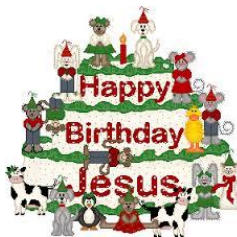
learners in assisting with their development and learning and creating a balanced life. The School term ended on a high, and the learners agreed, that next year will be even bigger and better. *Frieda Pehlivan*



**GRADUATION
AT DON BOSCO
EDUCATIONAL
CENTRE**



**FIRST HOLY
COMMUNIONS
AT
ROBERTSHAM**



**MISSION
SUNDAY IN
BOOYSENS**



Dear Friends

It is Christmas once again and we are as usual caught up in the rush of things material – presents to be bought, cards to be sent, 'phone calls, whatsapps and emails, and quick visits to those who help us during the year.



Christmas is also a time of trial and tribulation, of sadness and despair for a lot of us. Many will be lonely because of the loss of a loved one. Many are without a roof over their heads or a plate of food to eat. Suicides are rife over the Christmas period and many families suffer much.

Memories are shared at Christmas time – happy and painful – we are getting older whilst we watch the children have fun and enjoy their presents. Christmas should be a time of Peace, Love and Joy. It should be a time when we turn to the Christ Child in the manger and humbly ask His Blessing. It should be a time for pausing to appreciate the good will of others. And it should be a time for sharing. It should be a time for turning to God in prayer and thanking Him for all the blessings He has bestowed on us during this year.

Pope Francis declared 18 November as **WORLD DAY FOR THE POOR**. What did we do on that day to help the poor? If nothing, can we donate something now while we still have the chance?

As we come to the end of the year I must say a **VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU** to **FATHER FRANCOIS DUFOUR**, the outgoing Provincial, who has guided me through the last 11 years with kindness and a wonderful show of transparency. My thanks also to you, one and all, who have assisted us with your prayers, donations, encouragement, kindness and loyalty. We are sincerely grateful to you. Thank you to all those donors who remain anonymous, to all our monthly donors and to all those who give us that generous providential windfall every now and then. As I always say, there is no donation too big or too small. They are all the same in God's eyes. This Christmas, don't forget Our Blessed Lady. It was she who gave us our Saviour, Jesus. Cherish the silence of the crib and I pray that you will all have a blessed, happy Christmas. Lastly I ask you please, to pray for me. **Much love Denise Hards**

CHUCKLE: Bill and his wife Blanche went to the state fair every year, and every year Bill would say, "Blanche, I'd like to ride in that helicopter. "Blanche always replied, "I know, Bill, but that helicopter ride is fifty Rand, and fifty Rand is fifty Rand!"

One year Bill and Blanche went to the fair, and Bill said, "Blanche, I'm 80 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance "To this, Blanche replied, "Bill that helicopter ride is fifty Rand, and fifty Rand is fifty Rand." The pilot overheard the couple and said, "Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a cent! But if you say one word it's fifty Rand. "Bill and Blanche agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks, but still not a word... When they landed, the pilot turned to Bill and said, "By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed! " Bill replied, " Well, to tell you the truth I almost said something when Blanche fell out, but you know, fifty Rand is fifty Rand! "

JACKSONS DRIFT – LERATO SCHOOL



Sister Helen Hartnett FMA, promotes an assistance program for families with children who have recently settled in the new settlements on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The children being hosted come from extremely poor families, attend lessons to the third grade, and receive a daily meal. Since the ground is not suitable for the construction of buildings, containers have been set up as classrooms, a cafeteria, and bathrooms, including donations from Hindu and Muslim groups, who also provide students with uniforms, books and food. The locals themselves police over the structure, keeping it safe from theft, vandalism and violence.



SR MARTHA FMA WITH HER GRADE 3 CLASS AT DON BOSCO CENTRE



2 ENTHUSIAST ENTREPRENEURS FROM MAPUTSOE LESOTHO



Stirling Scholes
(with his Dad) plays the bagpipes for the SA Irish regiment. He is the son of Bob and Mary, and the grandson of John and Agnes Collins, RIP. Both are past parishioners of Robertsham .



SEND US A PHOTO OF YOUR LOVED ONES INVOLVED IN SALESIAN WORKS AND WE WILL PUBLISH IT.



CHRISTMAS WISDOM, LIGHT AND TRUTH LIE HIDDEN IN THIS CHILD

DONATIONS ARE MADE TO THESE SALESIAN PROJECTS

CAPE TOWN:

Salesian Institute Youth Projects

GAUTENG:

Walkerville and Ennerdale

Bosco Youth Programs

Don Bosco Educational Centre

FORMATION of future Salesians and Vocation promotion.

LESOTHO:

Maputsoe and Maseru

Oratory and Youth Ministry

SWAZILAND:

Manzini and Malkerns

Partial Bursaries to needy scholars and Oratory

FEAST DAYS

- 08 Dec Immaculate Conception
- 25 Dec Nativity of Our Lord
- 31 Dec Holy Family
- 01 Jan Mary Mother of God
- 07 Jan Epiphany
- 08 Jan Baptism of Our Lord
- 24 Jan St Francis de Sales
- 31 Jan St John Bosco
- 02 Feb Presentation of Our Lord
- 14 Feb Ash Wednesday
- 17 Mar St Patrick
- 19 Mar St Joseph
- 24 Mar Annunciation

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Perhaps you would like to leave something to Salesian Missions in your Will.

An enquiry can be made and the necessary form can be sent to you.

Tel: 27 (0) 11 476 8315
We would be extremely grateful.

Kindly fill in your Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email

Please pass this on to a friend if you don't need it!



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YES! I want to support the Salesian work with needy youth!

I enclose my gift of:

R120 R175 R200 Other R.....

will be made by (please tick)

Cheque Debit Order Direct deposit*

Cheques payable to **Salesian Missions**

Please debit my bank account with R.....

Monthly Once only

Type of account: Cheque Transmission

Name of account holder:

Bank:Branch Code:

Branch name:

Account number:

Signature:

***STANDARD BANK CLAREMONT 025109
A/C NUMBER 07 256 1572**