

Salesian Missions

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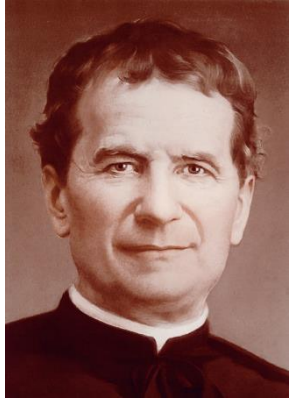
SALESIAN SPOTLIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2017



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR 28 YEARS

PAINTING OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS - BY THOMAS LORENZONE (1865-68)



The scene was imagined by Don Bosco who described it to the painter as a spectacle he had already seen. "Mary on high among choruses of angels, surrounded by the prophets and saints. On the ground, the symbols of Mary's great victories and the peoples of the world raising their hands towards her asking for help".

Lorenzone protested that painting such a picture would need a square and a church as large as the largest castle in Italy to house it. Don Bosco resigned himself to reducing the scale of his project, but Lorenzone still needed to hire the highest hall in Turin and started working on the scene. After three years, the great painting was hung in its place in the

almost completed Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin.

Don Bosco described it thus: "The Virgin stands out in a sea of light and majesty, surrounded by a horde of angels paying homage to her as their queen. With her right hand, she holds the sceptre, the symbol of her power, and with the left, the child Jesus with his arms opened wide, offering his grace and mercy to all who call on the mercy of his mother. Around and below Mary and Jesus are the Apostles and Evangelists in a state of ecstasy, exclaiming: 'Queen of Apostles, pray for us' as they contemplate the Holy Virgin in amazement. At the bottom of the picture, there is the city of Turin with the sanctuary of Valdocco in close up, with Superga in the background. The picture's special value is the religious ideal that makes a pious impression on whoever contemplates it". The painting is an effective representation of the title: "Mary, Mother of the Church", and a great lesson in Marian catechesis. Mary, being Mother of the Son of God, is the Queen of Heaven and earth - the whole Church, represented by the Apostles and saints acclaiming her as Mother and Help of Christians.



BENEATH THE MANTLE OF MARY

The Rector Major, Father Angel Fernandez Artime, says of Mary Help of Christians, "We are family and Mary help of Christians is our attentive and consoling mother. She took Don Bosco by the hand and takes ours also to guide us along the paths of this world.

Just the other day I was speaking with a young wife who is going through difficult times. We were speaking about faith and she said to me: "Certainly, I have faith, Father. I intend upon living with and by faith, and I can assure you that every morning when I wake up the first thing I do when I put my feet on the floor is to say my prayer to Mary Help of Christians." As you can imagine, my thoughts flew immediately to Don Bosco and the absolute trust he had in Mary Help of Christians. It was Don Bosco himself who said many times: "The best way to go to Jesus is through Mary," and also: "Mary has always been my guide. Whoever places his trust in her will never feel let down."



Italy – Theft and recovery of the relic of Don Bosco from Turin

The morning of 16 August 2017, on the 202th anniversary of Don Bosco's birth, was the date scheduled for the ceremony of relocating the Saint's relic which was stolen the night of 2 June, and recovered by the Carabinieri Police of Asti's Provincial Command the following 15 June. The famous relic, containing part of Don Bosco's brain, will return to its original place in the Basilica of Colle Don Bosco during an event that will be attended by Rector Major, and the military authorities who have contributed to the relic's recovery, with the event itself taking place within the meaningful framework of the closing day of the Salesian Youth Movement of Europe Meeting (SYM Confrontation 2017 August 11-16). Surrounded by his young people, Don Bosco returns home.





New Provincial Elect for the Salesians in Southern Africa **FR JOY SEBASTIAN THEKUMCHERIKUNNEL SDB**

He will succeed Fr Francois Dufour sdb, from the 1st January 2018.

Fr Francois has served in this capacity since January 2007.

Fr Joy was born in Kerala (South West India) on the 14th August 1958, as the 4th child of Devasia and Aley of the Thekumcherikunnel family, parents of 10 children, half of whom became religious and priests. The desire to go to the Missions grew in him during his novitiate year (1976 – 1977), after he saw 4 of his seniors, who had just professed, leave for the Assam Missions in North East India. With the help of the Novice Master and the permission of the provincial, his discernment led him to join the Salesian Province of Assam from his First profession on 24 May 1977.

In 1978, after the General Chapter, there was a call for volunteers to join the new venture of Project Africa, and he submitted his candidacy to the Superiors. The provincial refused, saying that Assam was already Mission territory, and he added that the Regional said they were looking for perpetually professed members for the African mission!

At the end of his four years of studies in theology, and his Ordination on the 01-01-1986, he again declared his availability to go to the Missions anywhere in the world. Once again the General Councillor for the missions, Fr Luc Van Looy, wrote back, telling him to be a good missionary right where he was.

For 15 years he served in the Province of Dimapur, in north east India, in various roles: as Administrator of the Provincial House, and then of the Post Novitiate, High School Headmaster, curate, in charge of a Non-Formal Vocational Training Centre. Then one day he was asked by a friend and senior confrere who was a missionary in Namibia, to come out to the African Missions as there was a dire need for priests. Fr Joy replied that Fr Van Looy had already refused him permission. But again, answering the mysterious call, he expressed his willingness to the Mission Councillor. By then Fr Odorico, the new Mission Councillor was looking to recruit 125 missionaries for the year 2000, and the 125th anniversary of the first Salesian Missionary Expedition. His Provincial heard from Fr Odorico that he had applied to go to the Missions *ad Gentes*, and that he would be added to this list of 125 if the provincial approved. This put him in a fix and he could not refuse.

Thus in 2000 Fr Joy left India and was sent to AFM (the province of Southern Africa, but not to Namibia!), and the AFM provincial assigned him to Lesotho! That is how he became a member of AFM province, and through the grace of God, he is still here 17 years later, and will be its leader, appointed for 6 years from January 2018!



Priestly Ordination of Christopher Sharpe



Christopher Sharpe was ordained on 15 July at St Joseph the Worker Parish in Bloemendal, Port Elizabeth. A wonderful occasion was had by all who attended the celebration. Twenty-one SDBs were able to make the trip to PE to be present for the ordination of **Fr Chris Sharpe** and the mass of thanksgiving on the next day. The Oratorian community welcomed us with great warmth and 30 priests, many religious, and an impressive number of lay people attended the ordination. The Bishop of Port Elizabeth diocese, Vincent Zungu OFM presided, and was very gracious staying for most of the day. On the following day



Father Sharpe celebrated his first Mass at St Rita's Church, Bethelsdorp, Port Elizabeth. He chose this beautiful little church because he was baptised there. The church was featured a few months ago in the Southern Cross for its beautiful artwork done by the late Fr. Goodwin.



Always remember that your present situation is not your final destination. The best is yet to come.



FATHER GEORGE GALLAGHER passed away on 7 July 2017. With the passing of our nonagenarian confrere, who has had such a good innings, the grief is alleviated. Fr George had retired over 10 years ago from active ministry, yet the numerous presence at his funeral of past parishioners and past-pupils even, bears testimony to their recognition for how he had touched many lives. The church of Mary Help of Christians, Lansdowne, was full for the funeral mass, presided by the Rector of the community, Fr Eddie, and concelebrated by Bishop Cawcutt and about 40 priests. None of Fr George's family were able to make the trip, but they were kept informed, and some had visited in January at the time of his 90th birthday.

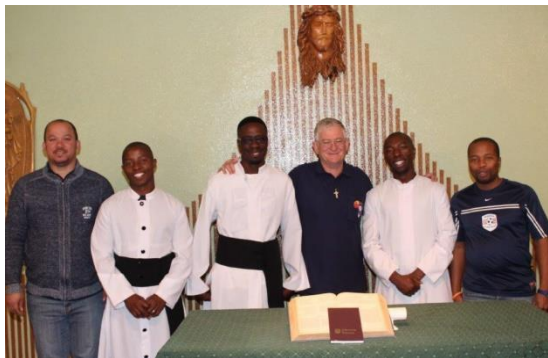
OUR CONDOLENCES go also to the following:

- Mrs Johnson, the mother of Fr Jeff Johnson.
 - Mrs Fihlo, the mother of Fr Mojelo Fihlo.
 - Mr Michalowski, the father of Fr Pawel Michalowski.
 - Fr Dino Miotto's brother-in-law.
 - Fr Francois Dufour's brother-in-law.
 - Kevin Melly, brother of Fr James Melly.
 - Kathleen, Joy and Denis Healy. Deacon Mike Nolan.
- And to all those whose anniversaries occur about this time. May their souls rest in peace.



THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL held its 200th meeting on 26 July at the Provincial House in Booyens. Quite a momentous occasion. Fr. Robert Gore has attended at least 80% of those meetings! From left to right. Fr Alberto Villalba, Bro. Clarence Watts, Fr Joy Sebastian, Fr Robert Gore and Fr Francois Dufour.

RENEWAL OF VOWS - SWAZILAND



A simple but joyful and meaningful ceremony was held in the renovated community chapel in Manzini. Nhlanhla, Mpilo and Nathi renewed their vows. Left to right: Fr Chris Sharpe, Cl. Nhlanhla Mazibuko, Cl. Mpilo Shabangu, Fr Francois Dufour, Cl. Nathi Lukhele and Cl. Raphael Bhembe.

PROFESSION RENEWALS – LESOTHO



Cl. Taolana Lithathane and Cl. Xolile Galata with Father Tumelo Pone after the renewal of their profession. Three and two years respectively.



Dear Friends
Once again we come to that time of the year when we celebrate all the Feast days of Our Blessed Lady. There have been many celebrations around the country to honour her. Apart from that we have said 'goodbye' to many friends, who have left us for

better pastures. This Spotlight is centered around Don Bosco, Our Lady and the many Priests, Brothers and Religious Sisters who work in the vineyard of the Lord. So much of their work goes unseen amongst the young people with whom we deal. In Africa, Salesians work from Cape Town to Cairo and beyond. We have celebrated over 100 years in the country and the Sisters have celebrated 50 years in Booyens. We are living in horrendous times and time is fleeting, so I feel that it is necessary to give praise where it is due.

Next year we will have a new Provincial, with new ideas, working with a somewhat diminishing community. We need your prayers for vocations so that we can help the young in our care to become better citizens. We also need your prayers for the distressing disintegration of our country. However we have the virtue of Hope and we have Our Lady beside us, so let us not lose heart. Let us cherish the memories that we have of the wonderful times that we had in the past. To the young I say, 'Live for today, live honourably, and live your lives to the full, so that you will be able to look back when you are old, and be grateful.'

To all the many donors who are so constantly loyal I say "Thank You." To our monthly donors, who have not had a letter from me as yet, we are immensely grateful to you. Remember as much as we need your prayers, we also need your donations. They are what keep our projects going. Sometimes we feel like the squirrel on the right, - that we are bothering you all the time. Please don't think that way. Help us when you can and we will be always grateful for your kindness and loyalty.

Pray for me as I do for you.

Much love and God bless. Denise Hards



CHUCKLE: A lawyer, who had a wife and 12 children, needed to move because his rental agreement was terminated by the owner who wanted to reoccupy the home. But he was having a lot of difficulty finding a new house. When he said he had 12 children, no one would rent a home to him because they felt that the children would destroy the place. He couldn't say he had no children, because he couldn't lie -- we all know lawyers cannot and do not lie. So he sent his wife for a walk to the cemetery with 11 of their children. He took the remaining one with him to see rental homes with the real estate agent. He loved one of the homes and the price was right -- the agent asked: "How many children do you have? He answered: "Twelve." The agent asked "Where are the others?" The lawyer, with his best courtroom sad look answered, "They're in the cemetery with their mother."
MORAL: It's not necessary to lie, one only needs to choose the right words... and don't forget, most politicians are lawyers.

ROBERTSHAM PARISHIONERS CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS



FAMILY, PLACE OF FORGIVENESS ...

There is no perfect family. We do not have perfect parents, we are not perfect, we do not marry a perfect person or have perfect children. We have complaints from each other. We disappoint each other. So there is no healthy marriage or healthy family without the exercise of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is vital to our emotional health and spiritual survival. Without forgiveness the family becomes an arena of conflict and a stronghold of hurt. Without forgiveness, the family becomes ill. Forgiveness is the a sepsis of the soul, the cleansing of the mind and the liberation of the heart. Whoever does not forgive does not have peace in the soul nor communion with God. Hurt is poison that intoxicates and kills. Keeping heartache in the heart is a self-destructive gesture. It's autophagy. Those who do not forgive are physically, emotionally and spiritually ill. That is why the family must be a place of life, not of death; Territory of cure and not of illness; Stage of forgiveness and not guilt. Forgiveness brings joy where sorrow has produced sadness; Healing, where sorrow has caused disease. Pope Francis

FEAST DAYS

- 08 Sept Birthday of Our Lady
- 14 Sept Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 Sept Our Lady of Sorrows
- 02 Oct Guardian Angels
- 04 Oct Francis of Assisi
- 07 Oct Our Lady of the Rosary
- 29 Oct Blessed Michael Rua SDB
- 01 Nov All Saints
- 02 Nov All Souls
- 26 Nov Christ the King

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

I always prefer to believe the best of everybody, it saves so much trouble.

~Rudyard Kipling~



The main station Malkerns gathered for three days convention to learn more about St. John Bosco, Venerable Stephen Ferrando, the life and Mission of the MSMHC and the SDB. It was days of learning through games, group works, drama, quiz etc. The youth gained a lot and requested to have more of this type of program.

MALKERNS - SWAZILAND

The YAC Convention was held in St. John Bosco Parish. It was organized by the MSMHC and other programs were conducted by Fr. Joseph Nguyen SDB the Spiritual Director of the YAC. The YAC from the outstations and the

FMA SISTERS - 50 YEARS OF EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE IN BOOYSENS - 2017



The Lord and His Mother will never let us say in vain: "Mary help of Christians pray for us." Don Bosco

SALESIAN MISSIONS

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