

**Salesian Missions**  
 Trading under the name of  
 Salesians of Don Bosco  
 Box 3209 North Riding 2162  
 66 Nelson Road Booyens  
 Johannesburg 2091  
 Tel: 27 (0) 11 476 8315  
 Cell: 27 72 299 2809  
 missionoffice@bucknet.co.za  
 www.salesianmissions.co.za

# SALESIAN SPOTLIGHT

## E-NEWS CHRISTMAS 2024

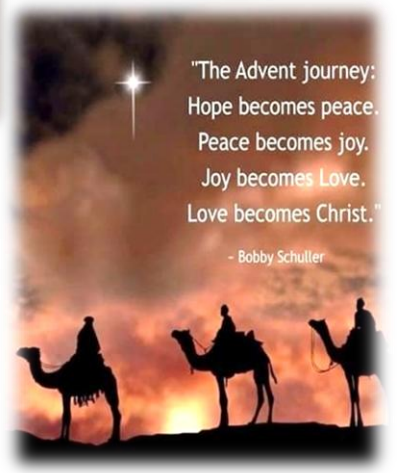


OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR 35 YEARS

*Dear Friends* what is the true meaning of Christmas? "It has been said before that many times a baby has become a king, but only one time has a king become a baby.

In all of the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, it's very easy for us to lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. Let us take some time to reflect on the beauty and the gift that we have, every day throughout the year in Jesus Christ. Let us remember that even though we fail and we fall and we don't deserve any of the blessings that we receive through His Grace, His love for us is so astounding and so profoundly immeasurable that through His Mercy we are saved.

So how can we share this blessing? How can we share this gift? According to the Venerable Fulton Sheen, "the role of people to God is that of mirror to light, echo to voice." So, let us then echo His Voice of Love and mirror His Light of kindness and compassion and truth. If truth needs to be declared, let's declare it with love. If unrest exists, let us face it with compassion and kindness. If people are hurting, afraid, lost, let us show them the love the Father first showed us through our patience, kindness, generosity, and gentleness. If we are rejected, we can brush the dust from our shoes and move on. Joseph and Mary were turned away at the Inn, but God had a stable waiting for them. We may well have to search for a stable some day. Our Lord deserves our worship, no doubt, but He isn't great because we make Him so. He is Who is, even without our love and devotion. Yet He came to us out of His Love for us first. No other historical 'god' has ever claimed that. Let us reflect upon this when we come into His Presence this Christmas and ask Him to help us to love as He loves today and for all the days to come."



"The Advent journey:  
 Hope becomes peace.  
 Peace becomes joy.  
 Joy becomes Love.  
 Love becomes Christ."  
 - Bobby Schuller

### FEAST DAYS - DECEMBER 2024 -

03  St. Francis Xavier	06  St. Nicholas	07  St. Ambrose	09  The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
10  Our Lady of Loreto	12  Our Lady of Guadalupe	13  St. Lucy	14  St. John of the Cross
26  St. Stephen	 The Nativity of the Lord		28  The Holy Innocents
27  St. John			29  The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

- EYES**  
They contain images so small that they are only visible with modern technology.
- LOOSE HAIR**  
An Aztec sign of virginity.
- 46 STARS**  
Form constellations that were seen from Mexico in the year of the apparition.
- HANDS**  
United in prayer. One appears darker and the other lighter to symbolize the unity of races.
- BELT**  
A symbol of maternity. The Virgin Mary is pregnant.
- FLOWERS OF NAHUI OLLIN**  
The greatest Nahuatl symbol and represents the presence of God.
- MOON**  
She appears between day and night. Mexiccoco means "in the center of the moon."
- RAYS**  
They symbolize the sun, an Aztec deity. They are brightest near her womb where she carries the child.
- ANGEL**  
With wings of quetzal, peccan and macaw. It joins the tunic that symbolizes the earth, with the mantle of the sky.

The Apparition still remained silent, but the little girl again spoke, "O my Lady, I beg of you, will you have the goodness to tell me who you are and what is your name?"

The Lady had her hands joined but at this last entreaty of the child she disjoined them and hung her beautiful rosary upon her right arm. Then she lowered her arms, joined her hands again very fervently, and looking up to heaven pronounced these words.

**"I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION"**

The Blessed Virgin Mary to St Bernadette Soubirous

This month we celebrated, amongst others, the feasts of the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Both of these, are feasts of enormous importance.

If we want it to be Christmas, the Birth of Jesus, and of peace, let us look to Bethlehem and contemplate the face of the Child who is born for us! And in that small and innocent face, let us see the faces of all those children who, everywhere in the world, long for peace. POPE ST JOHN PAUL II

# MAY THE PEACE AND LOVE OF THE CHRIST CHILD



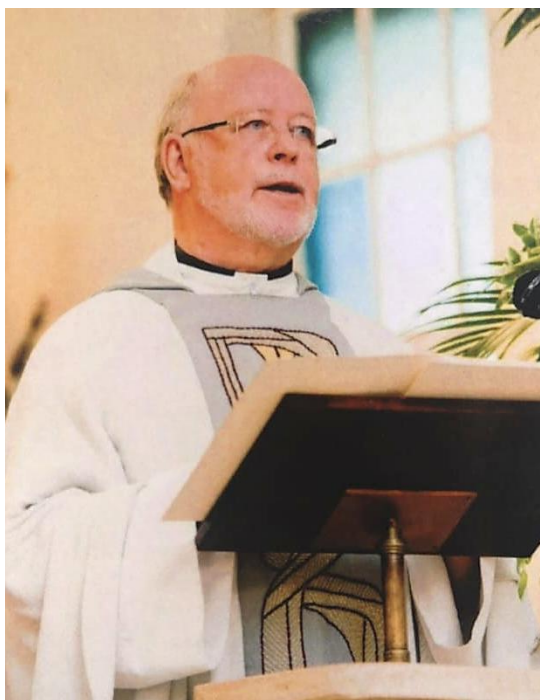
## BE WITH ALL OUR PRIESTS, SISTERS, BROTHERS, DONORS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES.

“Remember that He was laid in a manger and His companions were beasts. That is our hope, our joy, our peace, our merry Christmas. Suppose any of us who are just creatures, just people, certainly began to be children of God, so that the Divine Nature began to pulsate within us. So that we were lifted up by offering our human nature as Mary offered the first human nature. So that we could in a way be united with the Divine Person. So that His truth with all that great wisdom, would begin to flood our mind and that His will and His love would begin to possess us and would begin to impregnate and suffuse itself over every single love that we had. Oh..... if that ever came to pass, and it does come to pass, that would be the meaning of Christmas.”

**A HAPPY AND HOLY CHRISTMAS WITH EVERY BLESSING  
IN THE NEW YEAR, IS THE WISH, WITH SINCERE THANKS,  
FROM DENISE, SALESIAN MISSIONS AND ALL THE  
CHILDREN IN OUR PROJECTS**



# Lansdowne - Cape Town - continues to celebrate



**Golden Jubilee of Priestly Ordination  
Edmund O'Neill SDB  
7<sup>th</sup> December 1974 - 2024**



*First Holy  
Communions  
Our Lady Help  
of Christians  
Lansdowne*



This statue was erected to commemorate and give thanks for a Centenary of Salesian presence in Lansdowne.  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
Feast of the Immaculate Conception



**Veronica and Stephen Young** have been keeping the Sunday Market going since 2015, selling homemade baked loaves of bread, pies, cookies and hertzoggies to the parishioners. The proceeds of their hard work goes to the SVDP, the poor and help with teas for funerals.



The Don Bosco choir of Our Lady Help of Christians in Lansdowne with Fr Jeff Johnson, at their recommitment service on Sunday 17th November 2024.

# SALESIAN INSTITUTE



## St Luke's Primary school in Maputsoe, Lesotho

The Good morning talk with the assembly prayers is important in the Don Bosco preventive system of education

Nativity Play  
And  
one wonderful day with the  
Learn to Live Youth at the  
end of 2024



## *First Holy Communion at All Saints Parish Ennerdale*



## BOOYSENS, CHAPEL OF ST JOHN BOSCO

opened a new liturgical year with a renewed  
commitment of all who serve the community on  
the First Sunday of Advent

## Christmas

Wisdom, Light and Truth  
lie hidden in this Child





# SOUTH AFRICA'S MISSION ANIMATION TEAM ORGANISES A WORKSHOP FOR NEW MISSIONARIES TOWARDS A VOCATION CULTURE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



On 11 and 12 December, for the first time the Mission Animation team in the Southern Africa Vice-Province (AFM) led an introductory workshop for new missionaries who arrived during the past year.

With the good involvement of all ten participants, during the eight sessions the newly arrived Salesians from 8 countries (Zambia, Malawi, Nigeria, the Philippines, Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo and Chad) were able to learn about the AFM Vice-Province, its culture, history and the overall intercultural

dynamics of daily life and mission. Two of them were sent by the Rector Major, while five Practical Trainees and a new priest were sent to AFM by their respective Superiors from five other African Provinces.

They were also able to learn about the Don Bosco Youth Centre in Johannesburg and the Love Matters programme, currently underway for 80 young people from different Catholic parishes in the province of Gauteng and Lesotho.

Eight Salesians in the AFM Vice-Province were involved as facilitators in the following sessions: Intercultural relations; Motivations at the beginning of a new mission; Interpersonal sharing; Getting to



know the cultures of South Africa, Lesotho and eSwatini; watching the film about Mandela "Long Walk to Freedom"; Orientations on arriving in AFM, Knowledge of the 130 years of Salesian history of AFM.

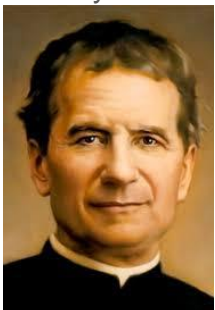
One of the newly arrived missionaries told how this workshop was "very enriching and encouraging" and how it "served to open our eyes to different aspects of the Vice-Province". After this workshop, each new missionary continues to deepen their knowledge of local cultures, history and above all to study the language.



After these two days,

the Practical Trainees will continue the workshop, which will focus on Vocational Animation and will be coordinated by Fr Chris Rychcik. The workshop will end with Sunday Animation in four different parishes of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg.

**Father Vaclav Klement, AFM Provincial.**



**Don Bosco believed that God created a path for people to follow to secure their eternal salvation. He also believed that people should follow their vocation promptly and safeguard it jealously. He also created an environment at the Oratory where young people could develop their talents, learn to live in community, and discover their vocation.**





Margaret Occhiena was born on 1 April 1788 in Capriglio, in the province of Asti, sixth of ten children. The same day she was baptised in the parish church. Her parents were farmers with sincere Christian sentiments. From a young age Margaret was a great worker. Time and commitments did not give her the opportunity to study, but her love for prayer enriched her with the wisdom that is not found in books.

For ten years her life merged with that of her son and with the beginnings of Salesian work: she was Don Bosco's first and foremost co-worker; she became the maternal element of the preventive system; she was, without knowing it, a "cofounder" of the Salesian Family.

The Feast day of Venerable Mamma Margaret is celebrated on 25 November.

## PRAYERS PLEASE



- For all Readers, Donors and Friends of the Spotlight.
- For those who have been retrenched.
- For starving children and families, the world over.
- For all women who are used and abused.
- For children who suffer at the hands of abusive adults.
- For the protection of Our Blessed Mother and Her Son.
- For an end to corruption in our Government.
- For our dedicated Priests, Brothers and Religious.
- For all those who will be lonely this Christmas.
- For all those who have gone before us. May they rest in peace.
- For the sweet blessing of rain for our farmers

**Let our prayer rise like incense before you, Lord, so that we may come in humility and purity to celebrate the mystery of your Son's incarnation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

As we come to the end of this year I would like to thank all of you wonderful people who have helped us so generously during this year. Thank you for your loyalty, your support and most especially for your prayers. Without you we would not be able to function. Know that I will remember you all in prayer at the crib. I ask the good Lord and His Blessed Mother to heal the broken people, make the sick well again and restore happiness to those in despair. Most especially may He comfort the lonely and those who are mourning the loss of a loved one. May He give you all the courage that you require to continue on life's journey and may He bring PEACE to all of us in this crazy world. And as I remember you in prayer I ask that you would please pray for me. God bless and reward each and every one of you. Happy Christmas and every grace and blessing in the New Year. Much love. Denise Hards

### 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.



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e-mail: [missionoffice@bucknet.co.za](mailto:missionoffice@bucknet.co.za)

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

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Monthly  Once only

Type of account:  Cheque  Savings

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Chuckle: A husband and wife were driving through Bertsham. As they approached Vereeniging, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband asked the blonde waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are, very slowly?" She leaned over the counter and said, "Burr-gerrr Kiiing."