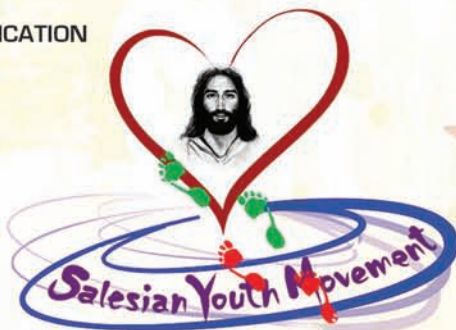


DON BOSCO

EASTERN AFRICA

SALESIAN FAMILY BULLETIN
1ST QUARTER, FEBRUARY 2014

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO PUBLICATION



Lord Increase our Faith

DBYES Formation Programmes

Dates	Title of Programme	Contents
11 – 14 May 2014	Theology for Pastoral Ministry Focus: Church documents of the recent years	Post-synodal documents of the past five years Encyclicals on Love, Faith, & Hope Africæ Munus YouCat
14 – 17 May 2014	Catechetical Training Focus: Adolescent Catechetics	General Directory of Catechesis Adolescent Catechetics in a Parish context Catechetics in a School Context Youth Liturgy
17 – 20 May 2014	Introduction to Spiritual Accompaniment	Listening Skills Methods of prayer A model of Spiritual Accompaniment Introduction to discernment Some practice sessions
20 – 23 May 2014	Digital Communicator – Media update* * Please bring your laptop and digital camera	Getting the maximum out of your laptops Publishing Parish Newsletter Effective PowerPoint presentations Efficient use of Digital Cameras Voice training for preachers
23 – 26 May 2014	Youth Ministry - Train the Trainer Scaffoldings Manual	Free copy of the Manual: Scaffoldings Methods of systematically training young people in Christian lifespills



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Tel: 0202025591; 0706349971; 0789479761

**Book before
30 April 2014**

Jesus Experience

- A weekend retreat for young people (aged between 18 and 30); every 4th weekend of the month; from Friday 5pm to Sunday 2pm.
- The reflections, liturgy and personal activities follow a 7 step model of Christian life journey.
- The whole weekend of silence!!!.

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- A day to celebrate faith - every first Sunday of the month; from 9.30am to 4pm.
- Open to all youth, particularly those in boarding schools.
- Praise & Worship; Reflections and discussions on faith matters; Confessions, Animated Eucharistic celebration; Packed lunch; Entertainment.

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- Any time, any duration as per need.
- Meeting with the director for 60 minutes every day.
- Retreats are inspired by the Salesian spirituality of finding God in daily life.
- Open to religious and lay people. Special rates offered for lay people.



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From the **EDITOR**

He is in our backyard

I spent last Christmas (2013) in Kakuma Refugee camp which is located in Turkana District part of the north western region of Kenya. This camp, one of the largest in the world serves refugees who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries due to war or persecution. (pg. 36) As I write this there are 138,814 officially registered and thousands of other unregistered refugees are there. Many more are flocking to Kakuma from the war torn South Sudan.

The reality I witnessed, the life I saw of the refugees living there, was truly a call for a reality check on the self-complacent life we live ignoring the fact that such people do exist. I had chances to mingle with hundreds of malnourished children who were always hungry, young able bodied men walking around having nothing to do, people who are in need of everything, young people and children who know only the camp because they were born in the camp and others born as their parents were on the run from the persecution of their home countries. I also listened to the stories of survival, courage and determination. I saw young volunteers who walk kilometres to various parts of the camp in the scorching sun to organize games and to teach catechism to children. What an ideal place for Salesians to bring alive our charism. Being Christmas the churches were packed and I saw choirs from different nationalities singing and the people totally lost in calling on God, forgetting at least for a moment all their pain of being a refugee. They contemplated on the reality of Jesus who was a refugee himself in Egypt in his early days. And I looked for baby Jesus among the newly born children there, who were many, and I found them, many like Jesus who had no proper place, to be born. In Bethlehem it was cold but in Kakuma it was very hot and dusty, but Jesus was there, being born, suffering and moving from one place to another, lacking a safe environment, proper food etc. but he was there. Jesus was there. And I wondered, we look for Jesus everywhere, in the cribs, in the big churches but we fail to look for him in our backyard...

One of the outstanding event that took place in the Salesian province of Eastern Africa was the SYM Youth Forum. Statements such as "Young people do not like to pray" was proved wrong by what was witnessed during the days of SYM from 16th to 22nd Dec. 2014. It was wonderful to see the joy and happiness being celebrated by the young during the moments of cultural expressions, games and free time and it was wonderful to witness how they spent their quite moments of reflections, prayer time, Mass and how majority of the youth celebrated the moments of reconciliation. No, the young people love to pray and spent time living their faith in a joyful manner. The experiences written by few clearly shows that those days of intense living of their faith was a way they proved all the sceptics that young people are not religious. In his message to the forum Rector Major Fr. Pascual Chávez told the members of SYM that "He wants us to share His joy, His love, His beauty. Believing is about life, and life to the full and Faith is a journey of love, received and offered".

We need to walk with our young people not only during those few days of celebration of faith but it is more important to accompany them during the ordinary moments of day to day life.

Sebastian Koladiyil

Mary, a Mother for Every Day

SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY



She took me gently by the hand

I have a most beautiful and tender memory from my childhood. I was about nine or ten years old when I had a dream. It was a dream that left an indelible mark upon my life. I saw a bunch of boys engrossed in their play; after some time went by, their play degenerated into a furious fight: fists were flying, and there was kicking, swearing, and even blasphemies. I went on the attack. Then a majestic *Gentleman* interrupted me, to point out to me a much better way of making these boys behave better. Then suddenly a splendid *Lady* appeared, warm and lovely: she gestured that I should approach her. Since I was so confused by this rapid sequence of scenes, she took me by the hand. This delicate gesture of motherly kindness won me over completely. I can assure you, very simply, that I've never let go of that hand; and I'll always cling tightly to it, until I die.

When I came into the world...

Even as a child I soaked in the Marian religious and devotional atmosphere of the time. Mary was at home among us. I'm well aware that a good Salesian wrote of me, "Mary was everywhere around him." It gave me pleasure to read that statement because it really was so. Families recited the Rosary daily, every evening. The *Angelus* divided up our days precisely, at six in the morning, at noon, and at six in the evening. I learned from my mother to venerate and to celebrate the Madonna through the popular devotions of the places where I lived: Our Lady of the Rosary, Our Lady of the Castle in Castelnuovo, Our Lady of the Steps and Our Lady of Grace in Chieri, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Consolation. She had so many ways of holding my hand!

I still remember the last night before I entered the seminary at Chieri. In our humble little house at Becchi, my mother was packing up my gear. She chose that moment for an important disclosure, a mother-son secret: "*Dear Johnny, when you came into*

this world, I dedicated you to the Blessed Virgin; when you began your studies, I recommended that you be devoted to this Mother of ours; now I recommend that you be entirely hers." My holy mother knew that infant mortality was frightfully high in those times, as much in the hovels of the poor as in the palace of the king. "I dedicated you" meant: I entrusted you to Mary, I offered you to her, you belong to her! It was a trusting act of handing me over to the Mother who can do everything. *"We hope for much from someone who can do much":* many times I told others what I heard so often from my mother. So, whenever I was among the boys, I would hand on to them the same devotional style: not as a habit for holy days, something you do just on Sunday, but as a daily, familiar meeting with Mary, who is our mother every day!

The Immaculate Help of Christians: it's she who has done everything

There was a very specific devotion, solid, rather bare-bones, never fickle, without sentimentality. I constantly reminded the boys: *"Mary wants action and not appearance."* Hence my insistence: *"To be close to the Madonna you must honor her Son."* I presented Mary to them as the one who brings us to Jesus. I summarized everything as *"flee whatever is evil, and do what is good out of love for Mary."* What's more practical and specific than this?

Two certainties sustained me.

First of all, I persisted in presenting Mary as the Immaculate. There were historical reasons, such as the definition of that dogma in 1854, and then, as if to confirm it, the apparitions at Lourdes in 1858. There were important dates. In my little experience I could hardly forget December 8, 1841, when that providential encounter with Bartholomew Garelli happened. Forty-five years later, while I was boarding the train from Spain for my return to Turin, I remembered that encounter with emotion and gratitude: *"All the blessings showered upon us by heaven are the fruit of that first Hail Mary said with fervor and the right intention."*

There were also pastoral reasons: from my contacts with youthful vulnerability, I knew very well the tremendous need that my boys had of fixing their gaze on Mary, the one *full of grace*, and of receiving from her an inviting message of purity and holiness, so as to be able to live in the joy of knowing they were God's sons.

At Valdocco in 1854 I dealt with Dominic Savio, that marvelous boy who proposed for himself the goal of being made into *"a beautiful suit for the Lord."* With him other youths (almost all of them future Salesians!) were part of the *Immaculate Conception Sodality*, which





became a precious leaven of good among their companions. In their Rule they proposed to *“master every obstacle and to be firm in our resolutions, strict with ourselves, loving toward our neighbor, and exact in everything.”* Thanks to them, a new path of youthful holiness was opened up.

Then, with the passing of years, as I perceived that the faith was lessening also among common people, I realized that it had become ever more urgent to spread devotion to the Madonna under the title of Help of Christians, she who lends her hand, she who helps us, she who never loses sight of us, she who keeps us united with the Church. I wasn't the inventor of devotion to the Help of Christians; what I was, was her staunch, tireless promoter. I explained to my first Salesians: *“It's no longer the lukewarm who need to be set on fire, sinners who must be converted, innocent people who must be safeguarded; rather, it's the Catholic Church herself who is being attacked.”*

I remember, even if a shiver of fear runs over me still today, the morning on which I began the excavations for building the beautiful shrine dedicated to her. With all solemnity, I emptied my miserable little purse into the hands of the contractor: all that came out were eight measly copper pennies, my down payment. But I was certain: *“In her I've put all my trust.”* That same morning some letters that I'd written the previous night were still lying on my desk; we didn't even have money in the house to buy postage stamps! The Madonna would be my *“treasurer.”* I can assure you: she proved to be a top-notch treasurer!

When I managed to finish the construction, I could tell the faithful who gathered there: *“Do you see that church? Mary built it, I'd say, by working miracles.”*

Now and at the hour of the our death

Salesian scholars who have written so much about me with such love, with care and precision, are aware that in the last prayers I made on my deathbed, it wasn't the now-customary invocation *Mary Help of Christians* that flowed from my lips, but the supplication: *Mother, Mary most holy, Mary, Mary.* Was this my inadvertence? No! There's certainly an explanation.

At the end of my life, in the final gasps of my agony, I was at last able **to understand everything**. I wanted to die just like the little child of that dream 62 years earlier. With the Madonna who took me gently by the hand, while I murmured: *“O Mother ... Mother ... open for me the gates of paradise.”*

Holiness is for all

Among the many things I have written, you will search in vain for my spiritual diary, a description of my intimate journey, or an autobiography in which people might see my spirituality. It was not my style. Maybe because of that natural reserve which is typical of country people, or more likely because of the formation I received, I never felt like opening up. I preferred to keep in my heart the memory of so many experiences, struggles and apostolic achievements, rather than express them in public. For this reason, you will not find in my books and in my conversations or confidences any evidence of my personal relationship with God and his mystery.

My experience with the Lord

I was not born a saint. I tell you that directly and in all simplicity. I struggled a lot to be faithful to the Lord, and to live up to my Christian commitments. I can assure you, it was not always easy. Saints have to become saints, little by little. Nobody has yet invented an instrument that measures holiness. Everything is grace, the collaboration of the creature with the Creator. And grace is beyond human control, because it is a gift from God.

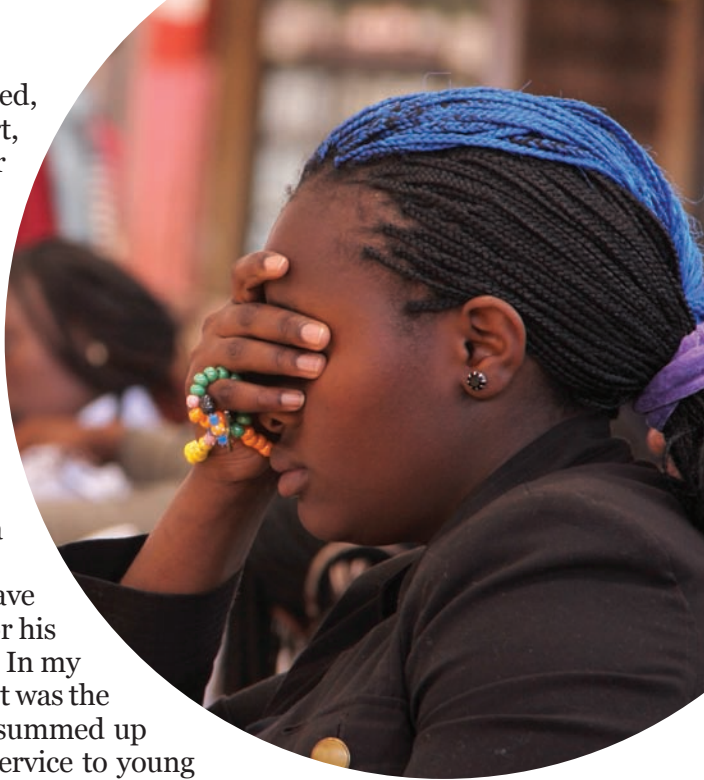
I've always been an optimist by nature and out of personal conviction. I was never careless, much less naive. For me, life has always been, and continues to be, a wise and demanding teacher. I knew that it entails challenges and is never without difficulty or trial.

So that you can understand the ideal I had in my heart, I am going to write down now some reflections I had when I was about to enter the seminary in Chieri. I was 20 years old at the time! I was no longer a kid or a naive teenager dreamer ... "My life as it had been up to then, needed to be radically reformed. I had not been



bad up to that, but I was dissipated, boastful, busy in games and sport, jumping, amusements and other similar things that made me happy at the time, but did not satisfy my heart.” For her part, my mother - despite the intense emotion she felt when she saw me dressed in a cassock – said to me very clearly: “You have the garment of a priest. Remember that it is not the dress that honours your state. It is the practice of virtue. I would rather have a poor farmer for a son than a priest who neglects his duties.”

In all humility and sincerity, I have always tried to serve God and work for his glory. Believe me, this is not a cliché. In my time that was a real life programme. It was the secret of my relationship with God, summed up in a phrase that also explained my service to young people. I really believed in it, you know. I was convinced, and experience confirmed it for me day after day, that the young people I met in the bars and on the streets of Turin, in the prisons, or employed by inhuman masters, really needed a helping hand, someone to take care of them, look after them, and lead them away from their bad habits to a better way of life. The dream I had at Becchi when I was nine or ten years old continued to pound my mind and my heart. I became convinced that only a holy priest totally committed to God would be able to offer them security and confidence, a full sense of life, joy in their hearts and, above all, hope. That’s the conclusion I reached - holiness would be the best gift I could give them.



When I met St Francis de Sales

Obviously, I did not meet him in person - I was born 250 years after him! There was one of his books in circulation in Piedmont at the time. I read it and found there a sentence that struck me and became the programme of my priestly life. I remember reading, “It is a mistake, or rather a heresy, to try to banish the devout life from the military, from the mechanic’s workshop, the court of princes or the home of married people ... Wherever we are we can and must aspire to a perfect life.” That became my goal! I tried to live it and offer it to my boys. It demanded courage! Speaking of holiness (yes, I did use that word!) to those boys seemed to most people an impossible task, but I believed in it. And I can say with conviction that to be holy is a wonderful ideal, and it’s not difficult! Our friendship and fidelity to the Lord will one day be rewarded. I presented holiness as a vocation, something beautiful and attractive, but I also explained that it was demanding. It required sacrifice and renunciation. Practical holiness means fulfilling your daily duties well and living in friendship with the good God who made us all friends. This was a way of holiness that made young people apostles of their companions with friendliness and simplicity.

I called it “the holiness of everyday life”. Then I added a feature that I have always considered fundamental: it had to be a joyful holiness, which attracts us to what is good, that fascinates us and makes us “saviours of other young people”.

Almost blocked in the Vatican...

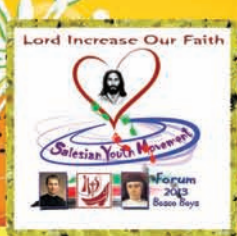
At that time I felt I was already in heaven. I knew that here on the earth people were talking about an issue that, in my opinion, never existed! Given the immense amount of work and worries that beset me, some people were convinced that I did not have the time to pray. They began to ask, “When does Don Bosco pray?” The question could not be evaded. Indeed it merited a response. They discovered then a secret that I always thought did not need to be shouted to the four winds: the whole of my life was a prayer, because I prayed life! I taught this programme to my Salesians and I recommended it to young people as well. Spending hours in the confessional was prayer. So was writing dozens of letters late at night in the flickering light of a candle, going up and down the endless marble steps of the many houses I visited, having a friendly chat with the boys in the yard, celebrating Mass, gazing into the face of Mary Help of Christians... all this was prayer! Prayer was living in God’s presence, as I had learned as a boy from my good Mother. For me, prayer was abandoning myself in total confidence to God’s Providence. But teaching young people a trade, finding a job for many young men so that they could always be “good Christians and honest citizens” – this was also prayer. I prayed when I gave the farewell kiss to the first missionaries departing for Argentina, when I visited the Pope, when I welcomed bishops who had been driven from their diocese, when I wrote one of the many books of the Catholic Readings, when I multiplied the loaves in the basket or the hosts at the time of communion, when I was travelling from Turin to Barcelona or Paris to find the money needed to build the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome, or the money that was needed to spread the Gospel in the Argentine pampas. I was always going full swing, but my heart was always in intimacy with the Lord.



A Young Saint for Young People

I have said it many times: I was called for young people, especially those who were most in need of love and hope. They have always been the reason for my being and my actions. But I did not want them for myself. A priest, a very dear friend of mine, once said: “As a mother nourishes herself in order to nourish her child, Don Bosco nourished himself with God, to be able to nourish the rest of us.” With all humility, I assure you that I see myself in these simple but true words. I wanted the young people to be my friends because I passionately wanted them to become friends of God. When one is a friend of God, one is on the way of holiness!

PASCUAL CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA



SYM Forum 2013

A WELLSPRING OF FAITH, LOVE AND VOCATIONS

The Salesian Youth movement (SYM) is a vast movement of young people who live the Salesian Youth spirituality. It was founded on the centenary of the death of St. John Bosco, the founder of the Salesian family. This was in 1988. Don Bosco's passion for education of the poorest young people motivated him into founding this family. He lived in the 19th century and his spirituality and pedagogy is lived until today all over the world.

SYM comprises groups and associations which accept the Salesian Youth spirituality and pedagogy. While retaining their autonomy in organizational and operational terms, they guarantee a high quality educational presence in the new forms of socialization of young people animating them to have a meaningful experience of church life. As a movement of young people, SYM brings together young people from different backgrounds, those who are far from the church and those for whom spirituality is barely a seed and those who explicitly and consciously taken upon themselves the Salesian proposal and apostolic commitment.

One particular purpose of the movement is to form Good Christians and Honest citizens, formed at school of the Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, co- foundress of the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco.

SYM is not just one group like a club or a sodality but it comprises of all the groups within the local community. It does not comprise of all the students in a Salesian school or members of a youth centre. The large masses of young people in our settings are invited to join freely one or two groups. The groups can be apostolic groups (sodalities or Vyama vya kitume), interest groups such as clubs (music, sports drama etc) or other established groups such as Young Christian students (YCS), scouts etc. It is not an administrative structure like house system, student's council but it is a free movement for faith formation where an explicit proposal is made towards HOLINESS.



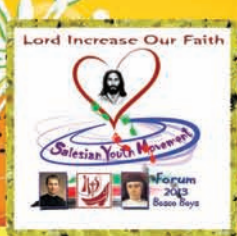
In our Salesian province of Eastern Africa (AFE) which comprises of Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan, the SYM forum is held once in two years. The preparations for the SYM Forum which was held in Bosco Boys in December 2013 began in the middle of the year. The first meeting was held at Laura Vicuna community Makuyu. In this meeting, grounds were laid and the team members organized themselves into four main commissions. These commissions were: General coordination commission, Food, accommodation and transport Commission, Liturgy and commission, Finance commission. Each commission had a specific role to play prior to the forum and within the forum. There were 9 Salesians (Priests: Fr. Benn, Fr. Vincent, Fr. Richard, Fr. Lawrence, Fr. Njoroge and Fr. Nyaga, Deacons: Dn Robertson, Deacon Fred and Dn Muli Leonard) 11 Salesian Sisters, (Sr. Placida, Sr. Caroline, Sr. Letizia, Sr. Marta, Sr. Mary, Sr. Laurenzia, Sr. Veronica, Sr. Irene, Sr. Jacqueline, Sr. Sarah and Sr. Juliet). We had two representatives from Bosco Boys Kuwinda who worked very hard: Kevin Juma, and Kevin Otieno Juma. The main Coordinators were Fr. Benn and Sr. Placida. When Sr. Placida moved to the new FMA mission at Karare, Sr. Laurenzia took up this responsibility and worked closely with Fr. Benn in the overall coordination of commission. Every commission had to work very hard and every time we gathered for meeting, reports were given and incase a need arose, support was given to the concerned commission.

The main theme of the forum was “**Lord Increase our Faith**” taken from the gospel of Luke as a way of helping the young people experience deeply their relationship with God in the midst of this changing world. It was also a way of creatively concluding the year of faith in step with the mother church. Formation material on the theme were distributed to all the centers as a way of preparing the young for this week long encounter. In addition to the formation sessions, the young were to prepare a cultural presentation and an item based on the theme of the day. Each day of the forum had a specific theme which guided all moments of encounter and sharing. Speakers lay and religious were invited to give the input. Eucharistic celebration was given priority and each group was given a chance to animate in creative ways. Prayer moments were given more emphasis and quiet times were treasured throughout the forum.

There were 19 groups represented in the Salesian Youth Movement 2013 forum totaling to about 420.(Kakuma, Korr, Embu SDB, Embu FMA, Makuyu SDB, Makuyu Laura Vicuna, Makuyu Mazzarello, Upper hill, Nzaikoni, Bosco Boys, Boys Town, DBYES, Don Bosco Utume, Don Bosco Upanga Tanzania, Dagoretti FMA, Mutuini FMA, Siakago FMA, Hurlingham FMA, and VIDES Volunteers. Adding the animators and those who accompanied the youth, the number was 500 plus. There were also aspirants, Postulants, Pre Novices, professed Sisters and Salesians. The collaboration between these groups, animators and the organizers was paramount and that facilitated the success of the forum.

Great support was received from the communities through food contribution, sending the buses to be used during the forum, facilitating talks, accommodation and offering grounds for the forum activities. For all this the organizing team is so grateful to all and especially to the communities of Bosco Boys Kuwinda/Langata, DBYES and Boys Town where accommodation was offered throughout. Don Bosco Utume and DBYES offered us hospitality for two days when the young people had sports and a day of reconciliation. Within the forum; the benefactors who managed to come were thanked. Others were reached by phone and appreciation cards. Before the forum concluded, the young were given a chance to express themselves in an evaluation which will be looked into by the organizers for the way forward.

***Rev. Fr. Benn Agunga SDB and Sr. Laurenzia Ndwigah FMA
NATIONAL YOUTH DELEGATES***



Salesian Youth Movement

SYM - A Life Changing Experience



Stepping by Faith.

The SYM forum was a different experience all together. The presence of many young people gathered together as a community of 'witnesses of faith' aroused in me endless sparks of joy. I learnt a lot to do with our Christian faith and more so as a youth. It is when faith permeates every aspect of our lives that we truly live Christ-like life.

As the hope of today, young people should not be seasonal Christians but proactive in proclaiming and witnessing Christ to the world. Knowledge about our Christian faith is paramount. Faith is a precious gift we receive from God and through baptism we get the key to the gateway to life in the spirit having been freed from the original sin.

As young people, we should always partake of the Eucharist, for in doing so, we experience the real life of Christ. We receive Christ who becomes part of our human body. In my life as a VIDES Kenya volunteer, I experienced a rather different encounter with the young people. While the majority of them yearned for spiritual formation in line with the theme, "Lord increase our faith", a few were easily taken adrift

and isolated in utopia. It seemed that to some people, following Jesus as our good example is just another Christian 'phrase'. I realized it is important to bear the right knowledge so that we can live and share generously and meaningfully to others.

The forum could not have been meaningful without the day of Reconciliation. It was my joy and the joy of many to bring us together, uniting us as a community healed and renewed in his immense love. Having been commissioned during the final Mass, I can simply say that the forum was a meeting to journey together as members of the Salesian Youth Movement, stepping and walking in faith proclaiming the real Christ who lives in our hearts. With great joy and optimism we did sing, shine and shared love with others. VIVA! VIVA! SYM. FOREVER IN CHRIST TILL PARADISE!



Bernard Ngigi
VIDES Kenya Volunteers' Leader

SYM: A Hub of Holy Vocations

I look back at the proceedings of the 2013 SYM Forum with joy, hope and admiration. The hardworking coordinators and organizers, the enthusiastic youth participants, the impressive and impactful program, the well prepared facilitators with soul searching presentations, the reflective prayer moments were among many other factors that kept time rolling into a 7 day charming forum with the young,



Salesian Youth Movement

SYM - A Life Changing Experience

among the young and for the young at Bosco Boys Kuwinda.

I went into this forum as an animator with the view of being an educative presence, yet this experience proved to me that the young themselves educated me into a deep reality of the dynamic issues surrounding their spiritual, psychosocial, physical, economic and other aspects of their life. This came up easily especially during the moments of group prayers, discussions and sharing, personal encounters but more inevitably during the informal interactions. In all this, I am proud to say that though the contemporary society is proposing an anti religious mentality, there are still many young people who are strong in faith and are convinced about Christ despite the various setbacks that come their way.

Core to my participation, was an opportunity to share my vocation story with the participants of this forum. Before this sharing I was wondering how relevant I would be to this digital generation that seems rather more interested and immersed in technology and other new forms of modern enticements such as materialism, consumerism, social media among others and would probably consider religious vocation as an otherwise analogue thinking. I was greatly mistaken..... To my big surprise, what came after were unending requests for personal chats and talks regarding youth challenges and vocation. From this, I discovered that many young people are enthusiastic about following Christ more closely as religious and priests. During these sharing's, discussions and interactions, I could make out that though expressed variably, the prime reason why some of these young people

felt attracted to this way of life is that it is all about sharing: giving freely what they've freely received. Also, what strongly manifested itself is that the life witness of the FMA's and SDB's in their respective centers is a catalyst towards vocation promotion. Kudos Rev. FMA's and SDB's: may our life always give glory to God, save souls and more so attract many others to the vineyard of the Lord. SYM is really a hub for Salesian vocations and other vocations in the Church. Long live SYM!!! Viva Viva SYM!!!

In a flash, this weeklong joyful celebration of our faith with the young expressed our deep seated heart's desire to rest always in the presence of the Lord. The biggest challenge now is to transform into concrete commitment our experience of the SYM.

I am grateful to all the young people present in this forum for making this event a spirit filled encounter!!!! Special thanks to our theme song writers, Sr. Carol Kalondu and Fr. Vincent Mokaya: Your thematic contribution kept the faith rocking!!!! A big congrats to our main coordinators, Fr. Benn and Sr. Laurenzia: Thumbs up, well done!!!! To all other FMA's and SDB's, novices, pre-novices, postulants and aspirants: May God reward you abundantly for your tireless contribution!!!!

Note worthy appreciation to Fr. Minja and the Bosco Boys Community:

Sr. Patricia Oyuga – FMA Novice



Message to the Salesian Youth Movement of AFE from the Rector Major



DIREZIONE GENERALE OPERE
DON BOSCO
Via della Pisana 1111 - 00163 Roma

“LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH!”

My dear friends, members of the Salesian Youth Movement of the Eastern African Province,

Loving greetings and best wishes for a joyful and fruitful Forum. Do not forget that the Lord is calling to you to become his collaborators to be incarnated in this world. He wants you all to be believers, as Mary.

The theme at the centre of your meeting is all about our relationship with God – a loving relationship with a loving God!

I would like to share with you three simple thoughts that might be of help to you in these days, but also after this experience.

When we ask our Lord to increase our faith, first of all we have to ask ourselves how was this challenge lived out by those whose life has been captured by God's beauty. And what we find is very simple: at a certain point in their journey there is a discovery that faith is about entering

into a friendly relationship which is enlightened by love and trust. Love and trust that God showers on those who accept to follow Him. All we have to do is to contemplate and let ourselves be overwhelmed by this gift, freely offered to each and everyone of us.

Secondly, what God asks from you and from me is something very simple, yet full of dignity: once you accept the call, rise to the occasion, that is, be an active believer. Jesus does not ask us to follow him simply to remain laid back, passive and inactive. On the contrary! Once he calls us, He wants us to share His joy, His love, His beauty. Believing is about life, and life to the full. There is no dull moment for those whose hearts have been touched by Jesus. We see it in Don Bosco, in Dominic Savio and in the life of all those whom we know have accepted to say 'yes' to Jesus.

Thirdly, once we accept that Jesus increases our faith, we have to acknowledge that faith is not a property



that is given to us, is not a gift that we hide in a safe place. Faith is not an experience of fear. Faith is a journey of love, received and offered. Faith is enriched by hope that opens up for us horizons as yet unknown and unexplored. Faith renders life a gift for oneself and for others.

In his letter *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis invites us to deepen this faith through the strength of the sacraments. Recalling the importance Don Bosco gave to the sacraments, Pope Francis writes: “the sacraments communicate an incarnate memory, linked to the times and places of our lives, linked to all our senses; in them the whole person is

afraid. In the first Oratory experience Don Bosco passed on his faith by creating a family environment where faith was handed on in a joyful way. The contact with faith-filled persons was like passing the light from one person to another, just as one candle is lighted from another. Despite our limitations and poverty, let us always be convinced that as we accept the rich seed of faith, caring for its growth, time will come when the seed becomes a great tree, capable of filling the hearts of so many young people with its fruit.

That heart is yours. The seed of faith is Jesus calling you. With joy and optimism let us follow Him!



engaged as a member of a living subject and part of a network of communitarian relationships... The awakening of faith is linked to the dawning of a new sacramental sense in our lives as human beings and as Christians, in which visible and material realities are seen to point beyond themselves to the mystery of the eternal” (*Lumen Fidei* no. 40).

In the name of Don Bosco, our Father and Teacher, I encourage you not to be

May God bless you ALL and have a love- and joy-filled Blessed Christmas!

Rome, 18th December 2013

Pascual Chávez V.

Fr. Pascual Chávez V, sdb
Rector Major

“Lord Increase our Faith”

We increase our faith by meeting Jesus Christ.

There are so many ways to meet Jesus as the book of Luke 22:17-20 tells us that we meet Jesus by receiving his body and blood in the Holy Eucharist.

Remember that when we go to receive the Holy Eucharist we are going to receive Jesus himself, so we have to prepare ourselves in so many ways otherwise we'll not be receiving Jesus but our own condemnation.

And for those who read the word of Lord, they must be prepared or prepare themselves for a good long time, for when they are pronouncing the word; it is Jesus himself who speaks to us through them.

To meet the King of kings is a special moment whereby we have to be dressed in a respective dress code and

behave well through following whatever is required be it praying, singing, standing up, responding...

Dear brothers and sisters it is by this way that the Lord will increase our faith

***Faraja Kahuta
Don Bosco Kakuma
Holy Cross Parish***



My Encounter with Christ in SYM Forum

Dear Christians, my experience in the forum of SYM has enlightened my heart with joy and happiness, especially in the sharing of prayers in groups and personal reflection in the word of the Lord.

It gave one the deepest desire to believe in Christ and commit myself to the spreading of the Good news of Christ in every moment of my time. Sharing of experiences also enriches our faith as young people.

In the SYM meeting I have learnt that Christ never want us to be alone He calls all sorts of people to be disciple despite the colour or occupations. From the story of Nelson Mandela of South Africa I learned that all we need to be with Christ is love, peace, reconciliation and justice. Christ never want us to be alone.

I personally learnt that with confidence I will not hesitate in spreading the Gospel to my people. I am not ashamed of witnessing Him in the morning, in the noontime and at all time. I carry Christ to my work, in my sleep and in my break (meals). He is a healing tablet to my soul the dose of my sickness. Therefore, we must believe and evangelize.

All our richness is God's gifts and blessings nothing comes alone and leadership is from above for he knew us before we are born. Therefore let us not worry but have the Lord as our redeemer. Finally Lord increase our faith.



***Andrew Sabit Abdalla &
Isaac Uyira Ubur***



Young people be a light that gathers different kinds of insects

What I am going to share with you is based on the current situation of the world, Africa and in particular the countries of South Sudan, Sudan, DRC, CAR, and many others where hatred has conquered the people.

It was quite amazing, as I was sitting in front of a burning bulb outside of a building to see how that mysterious light was gathering and attracting different kinds of insects in thousands. Moreover, as the insects were over-crowding, some of them died, others shook off their wings, and some remained with the light till morning. This made me think and I reflected on it what it could mean to you and I.

What is the lesson that can be drawn from this? The light is you and I who are young, Insects are different people you and I meet, those who died are the ones who find the youth whose light is not giving good examples and support, those that shook off their wings are the people who come with notions of divisions but find the youth who is light active and against division they came with, which help them to eliminate their differences of tribes, races, colour, and nations, and those that remained with the light one those who accepted one another regardless of differences.

It is true dear friends of Don Bosco (youth) to say that the aspect of keeping burning is lost in us especially like the situation in my mother country South Sudan where the youth find themselves victims of Tribalism and in surrounding countries where the religion becomes a challenge.

However, this should not be the case with us who are young in any situation. We find ourselves, be it in schools, churches, homes, and oratories which our father Don Bosco said to be the places where all are welcomed and make friends irrespective of race, colour, religion, and tribe.

A Dinka proverb says, “Aparak puol e ya Kueth raan eben,” which means, “A young person is a satisfaction for all people.” My dear young people we are not of our tribes or religion but for all nations. Keep your light burning and attractive for all people who are still in darkness of evil.

Macharanga Abraham Kuol Chol

“Don Bosco Between”

The presence of Don Bosco novitiate in Morogoro between the ridges of Mini Kilimanjaro and Ulugulu hills has reconciled these two great pillars which were ‘sleeping lions’ within these 5 years of the presence of Salesians in this magnificent, canonically erected Novitiate house in Kihonda. The environment which was sparsely populated with countable homes has slowly and gradually become an attractive village.

The road to the Novitiate house has now become the main path for so many young and old people within the vicinity of Ulugulu and Mini Kilimanjaro hills they are now true sons and daughters of Don Bosco and are now looking for the future with a lot of hope; they are ready to sharpen and shape their future. Some of these boys are orphans and some come from broken families and are forced to enter into child labour

due to impecunious family background before they came into contacts with the Salesians. They now can say “Don Bosco Nyumbani Kwetu”. A good number of them have been given a chance in either technical institutions or secondary schools and they have proved that they are academically fit. They are now ready to face life. They now say Don Bosco is a true ceramic who is unbreakable, unshakeable and ‘unbwogable’. He has made known to us the promising future.

What this generous attitude of the Novitiate community has done to these future leaders of our great nation Tanzania keeps on reminding me of an article in our constitution which our Novice Master Fr. Michael insisted on when we were tackling the vow of Poverty; The article 79: Solidarity with the poor.....the spirit of poverty leads us to be one with the poor and to love them in Christ. For this reason, we





occasion I asked one Muslim to tell me who Don Bosco was. He immediately said “he is a saint in heaven who is waiting for small children in order to rejoice with them”. Immediately tears of joy filled my eyes. Here at the parish oratory, young people are already attuned to the Salesian way of life. They are familiar with preventive system. It is clearly evident in their daily living that by the frugality of their lives and involving themselves in any act

of charity. What is so amusing is that Don Bosco’s presence in this region is five years old but the way it is perceived is as if his presence between these two great ridges is 30 years old. These two ridges are now no longer “sleeping lions” they are now grazing lambs.

Nov. Isaiah Otieno Mwangi.
Don Bosco Morogoro.

make every effort to stay close to them, to alleviate their needs, making our own their lawful aspirations for more and just human society.

In seeking and accepting help for the service of the needy, we imitate Don Bosco in his zeal and gratitude and like him we retain the freedom of the Gospel. Jesus tells us, “that whatever we have belong to the poor.....” They are really at home in our community and they feel loved and are given a listening ear, this has enabled them to grow morally upright.

We the Novices are given a chance every Sunday to meet young people in our oratories for apostolate. They comprise of home and parish oratory. Our oratories have really attracted young people Catholics, non-Catholic and Muslims. Here young people meet freely regardless of their faith and we slowly by slowly introduce them to Christianity for the beginners. One day, I was astonished to hear from one Muslim, reciting well Our Father and Hail Mary. This is encouraging. Another



Salesian Schools, Larvae for Vocations.

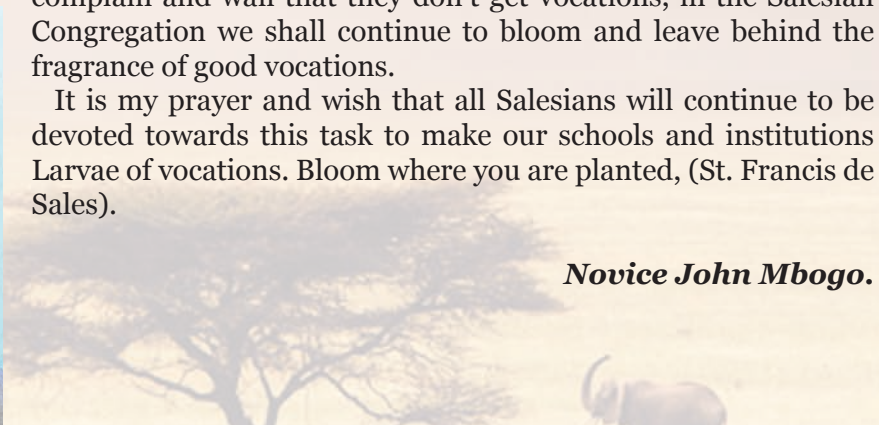
I happened to discuss with one of our Oratorians here in Morogoro about his vocation journey or his aspirations in the future. I knew that he was studying in another school which is run by another congregation. I posed a question to him whether he would join 'this' congregation since he has stayed with them for some time. To my surprise he told me that he wants to become a priest in future but he can't join that congregation. I was interested to know why he expressed such a negative remark. He had many reasons why he dared not to join and everyone has one reason or the other. On the other hand I was happy he told me he wants to be a Salesian. When I asked him again what attracts him to Salesian way, he told me that, Salesians are always available and good listeners. I was struck by these two qualities he mentioned.

Salesian availability encompasses many things. The assistance which every Salesian is entitled to give to the young people, listening to them and being attentive to their material, spiritual and psychological needs to mention just a few. Just as the young student was sharing with me, the young people are very sensitive towards the manner in which we conduct our activities, interactions, organizing events etc. These are the things which encourage or discourage vocations in our Salesian institutions. I thank the Salesians because they try their best to inculcate these values as much as possible. We have a relatively good number of students from Salesian schools who join the Formation in the Salesian Congregation. This is one positive aspect but still we need to work extra hard to encourage more to join us. The noblest and the best way to do this is through our own life example and making the young feel that we really love them.

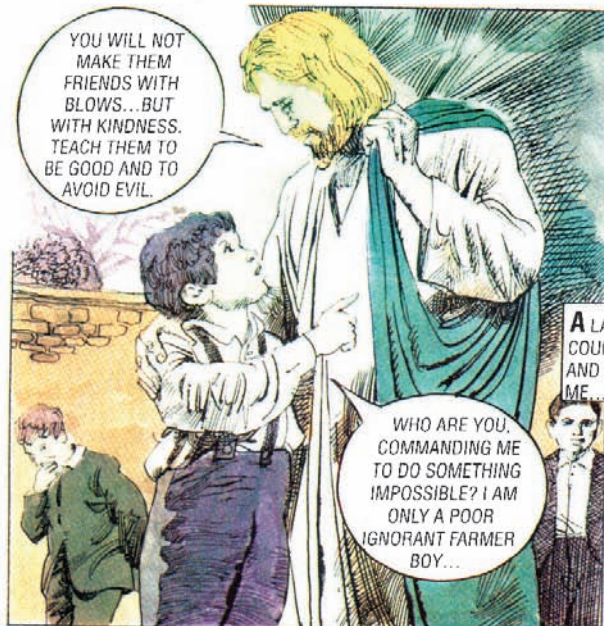
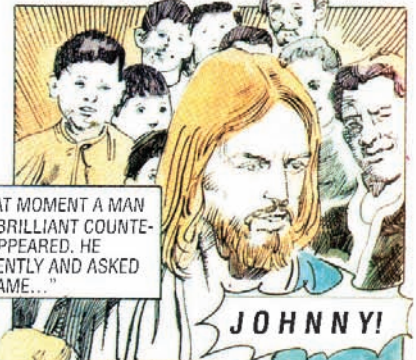
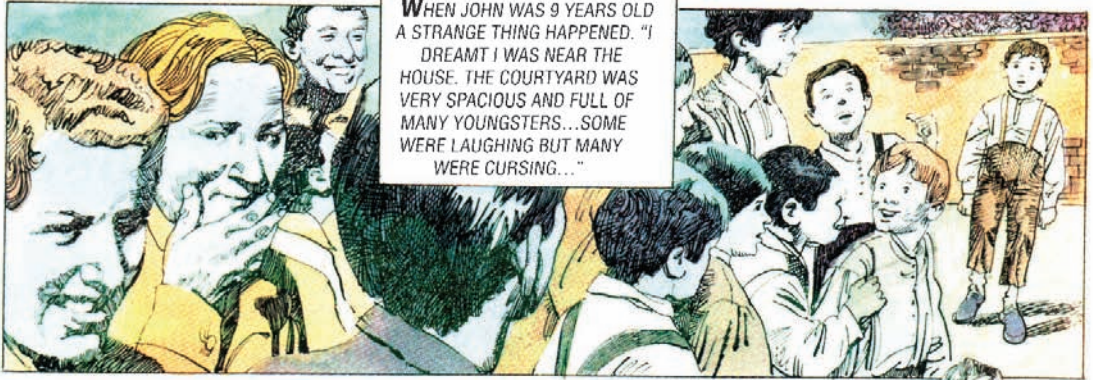
The General Chapter 25 article 48, speaks of a practical way in which small events take a lot of impulse and thrust in the young people in the field of vocation promotion, "bearing witness in communities to the vocation of a Salesian priest or brother in a visible, joyful and attractive manner, sharing with the young some aspect of our life, celebrations, friendship, meals, prayer, our history, plans and missionary interests"pg.53. I applaud and admire the wisdom of our 'fathers' in the congregation for this vision. When we all try to apply these two points above in our oratories, schools and wherever we are present, I am convinced that, when other Congregations complain and wail that they don't get vocations, in the Salesian Congregation we shall continue to bloom and leave behind the fragrance of good vocations.

It is my prayer and wish that all Salesians will continue to be devoted towards this task to make our schools and institutions Larvae of vocations. Bloom where you are planted, (St. Francis de Sales).

Novice John Mbogo.



A BOY WITH



A DREAM



A Gate of Hope in Gisenyi, Rwanda



When Patience Nyirahabufite joined the VTC of the Salesian Sisters in Gisenyi, Rwanda, she never dreamt of what the Lord had in store for her in the future. In 2010 she joined the first group of students in St. Mary Mazzarello Technical Secondary Technical School which specializes in Hotel Operations and completed her studies in 2012.

When the National Exam results came out, she was Number One in the whole country in the field of Hotel Operations. She was even recognized by the first lady, Mrs. Paul Kagame, and received a prize from her.

However, initially the story did not begin on such a positive note. Patience was an orphan from a poor, needy family left on her own. She lived close to the Sisters mission in Gisenyi and was already a young mother of two small children. It was evident that she was a bright promising, young woman with so much potential, but little hope of attaining anything worthwhile on her own. Befriending this young woman, the sisters assisted her in her studies. In her humility and simplicity she was truly grateful for the human and Christian formation she received in her Salesian education. This was evident in her availability to help others reach their goals just as she had done.

When she spoke at her graduation tears filled the eyes of those in attendance. In sharing her experience she told her listeners that she always focused on her vision to complete her education no matter the cost. Though her brother looked after her two children, it was a constant preoccupation for her. Realizing how much her children were in need, the Sisters gave Patience a job teaching in the school for one year. Accomplishing her work with commitment and enthusiasm, she was able to pay the school fees for her children.

Where is Patience now? She is at the university in Kigali studying Hotel Operations on a government sponsorship. After completing her studies, she would like to return to Gisenyi and teach in the Sisters' secondary school. God truly opened a "gate of hope" when Patience stepped on Salesian soil!

Sr. Virginia Bickford

Vatican tweets graffiti image of Superhero Pope Francis

A graffiti image of Pope Francis as superhero - flying through the air with his white cape billowing behind him which has appeared on a wall in the Borgo Pio district of Rome near St Peters, has been tweeted by the Vatican.

Speeding forwards with his fist raised, the heroic pontiff – crucifix swinging in the wind – carries his trademark black bag, with the word 'values' written across it, in Spanish, in white letters.

"We share with you a graffiti found in a Roman street near the Vatican," the Pontifical Council for Social Communications from the Holy See said on its official Twitter page.

Since the tweet, several more images have appeared across Rome.

Pope Francis is a keen Twitter user himself, regularly posting tweets on his own feeds in nine languages, which boast more than 10 million followers in total.

His message this afternoon reads: *'I cannot imagine a Christian who does not know how to smile. May we joyfully witness to our faith.'*

Source: Twitter/Pontifex



Friends of Don Bosco

“Never forget it: you are sons of Don Bosco”. These were the words Don Bosco was addressing to his past pupils when, in his old age, he met them for the annual gathering.

Then Don Bosco added: “I see that many of you are already bald, with white hair and with wrinkled furrowed forehead. You are not anymore the young people I loved so much; but I feel that now I love you much more than I was used to do at that time, because you are assuring me that what I taught you is strongly rooted in your hearts. Then I love you even more, because you are showing me that your heart is always with Don Bosco”.

It is because of this love that a group of past pupils of Don Bosco, mainly living in Nairobi, Ruiru and Thika etc. decided to gather together and call themselves “Friends of Don Bosco”.

Are we many? Well, in our regular meetings not so many, but already a good number of us have gathered and now we are in contact among ourselves. We have started knowing more people, meeting old companions and refreshing great memories and teachings we have received while in Don Bosco Schools.

We meet every last Sunday of the month in Don Bosco Upper Hill, in Nairobi. At 11 am we have our Eucharistic Celebration, followed by shared packed lunch, a short talk and a common exchange of experiences.

We commit to pray for each other, every time, selecting a special person to whom we want to direct our prayer for the entire month.

Those who have children are coming with them and the joy of being together becomes even bigger.

Every time we have to make a bit of sacrifice in moving ourselves from our usual places and activities, but when we leave Upper Hill, our heart is full of joy.

In our sharing we come to know that somebody got married, others have children, others are sick and some are trying to find a job. All of us have to struggle in some ways, but we feel stronger and encouraged by the presence of our “Friends”.

In this way we are able to understand better our own problems and we can try to help those who are in difficulties, mainly because of job.

Every time we learn something more about Don Bosco: something that will help us in our daily life, in our families, for our future.

Thinking about the love Don Bosco could express to young people and to us too, in spite of the fact that he was a poor peasant, convinces us that we can help each other and overcome together the difficulties we meet every day.

We too can become like Don Bosco and be in the society a valid presence by being “Good Christians and honest citizens” as he was used to recommend his young people.

You too can be a “Friend of Don Bosco”: it is enough to love Him and to be enthusiastic about his work among the young people of today. If you want, a chair is always free for you in our meetings. Come. You will not regret and for sure you will come again and again.

If you want to know more, contact:
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David Muoki Kivati, P.O. Box 18001-
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Fr. Felice Molino, P.O. Box 44854 –
00100 G.P.O. Nairobi
Tel. 0722149298

How an Orphan Became a Great Father

Don Bosco, 58 years old, receives the order from Pope Pius IX to write his own memories. He will write them addressed to his Salesians, with the prohibition to publish them: it must be for the family (the Salesians Congregation) too. 75 years later the Salesian will decide to publish them and the “Memories of the Oratory” will come to the knowledge of millions of people all over the world.

I freely write here what I read from the memories.

“I was born on the Feast of Mary: the Assumption. It was the year 1815. I saw the light in Murialdo, a small village in the town of Castelnuevo.

My father was Francis, and my mother Margaret. In that house we were 6: my parents, three children and my grandmother who, old and sickly, was living with us too.

I was not yet two years old when my father, a young and strong farmer, was assailed by a terrible fever. Nothing to do. In few days he left this world. He died on May 12, 1817, at 34.

That was the first remembrance of my life: everybody was leaving the room where my father was lying in his bed of death. I was there too, but I did not want to leave.

My mother asked me to go with her. If my father does not come, I will not come either. Poor son, you do not have a father anymore.

My mother started crying, took me by hand and we left the room. I was crying too, since the others were crying. I could not understand the terrible disgrace I was going through. I had become an orphan.”

58 year of age, Don Bosco will remember that very moment while he was not yet two years old. The death of the father was such a shock that he could not forget it, though he was only a very small child. Such a disgrace could have become a cause of great depression for all his life long.

But John, instead of bending over his own wound and crying over it, decided to take it positively.

- I am a poor orphan who decides to become the father of so many poor orphans.

Again and again in his life Don Bosco will be able to transform negative experiences into positive ones for the good of his young people. The love he could not enjoy on the lap of his father, he will decide to give to thousands, millions of young people.

Are you deprived of the love you were expecting? Are you longing for the caress, compassion and understanding of someone?

Why not decide to become the father/mother of those who precisely need your love? Think over it. Don Bosco could express his love today through you and through you become father and mother again and again.





A Salesian Cooperator... Why not?

“I was always in need of everybody”. These are words of Don Bosco.

He was open to everybody who could give him a hand for the salvation of soul and body of his young people. “The more we are, the more good we will do to the young”, Don Bosco used to say and this was his conviction.

At the very beginning of his work among the poor boys of the outskirt of the town of Turin, in the north of Italy, Don Bosco was practically alone and, thanks to his pastoral zeal, in a short time the young people, who were searching for him, became hundreds.

They were in need of material help, but even of love, affection and education. The majority had never been to school. They were at the mercy of their employers who would take advantage of their young age: many of them were starting to work as mason helpers, carpenters, chimney-sweepers, blacksmiths, as young as 6 years of age.

Many were not able to count the money they were getting for their work, less then less ask for their right to be respected.

The majority had never entered a school.

Many of them, going to Turin in search of a job, had lost contact with their Parish, did not go to catechism and were not frequenting Sacraments.

Don Bosco accepted and solicited immediately the help of many good people: they were priests, lawyers and members of parliament as well as simple young people and good mothers.

His mother, Mama Margaret, together with other women was the cooperator per excellence.

She dedicated the last ten years of her life totally to the young people of Don Bosco and among those boys she died, remembered and loved as a real mother to each one of them.

When Don Bosco thought about a Congregation, he thought about a group of people, religious and married who, together, would work for the goodness of the young people entrusted to them by Providence. Unfortunately Rome did not allow him to do what would be possible much later, after Vatican II. Even in this Don Bosco was ahead of his time.

Eventually he succeeded to have the Pius Association of the Salesian Cooperators approved in 1876. From then on the Cooperators increased in numbers and have been the long hand of the Salesians doing in the world what frequently the religious people, priest and sisters, cannot do.

Today the Cooperators are more than 30,000 all over the world.

Don Bosco needs them to enter in to the field of education taking care of millions of young people.

For Don Bosco the Cooperator is a good Christian who is living his Christian life with the zeal of Don Bosco himself, in the place he is.

In Upper Hill the cooperators are 30 in number. Many of them are working directly with the children and young people in the Parish with the Sunday School, Catechism classes animation of the daily liturgies, visit to our institutions in need, especially the one sheltering street children, helping sick people in the hospitals, etc.

All of them know well that their good example, wherever they are is a way of extending that good that Don Bosco wanted to do to the society.

Every Cooperator must be a Catholic, able to receive all the Sacraments of the Church.

She/he is committed to conduct an exemplary Christian life with the desire to announce Jesus to everybody and in a special way to the “poor abandoned youth”.

Don Bosco was seeing in the Cooperators those who would promote a greater pastoral work through the means of communication. At that time the best were good books. Today the means of communication are so many and so sophisticated. The Cooperators are able to make use of them to promote the education of the youth and their spiritual goodness.

In Upper Hill we have Cooperators who are professionals, others who are studying and some are retired. Every baptized person who is intending to live

his Christian life in a serious/joyful way can be a Salesians Cooperator, provided she/he is called by God, through Mary and Don Bosco.

Do you feel such a call?

Don't you think that much good could be done to the young people through your commitment?

We meet in the Don Bosco Parish in the Shrine every first Sunday of the month, at 9 am.

Why not contact us? You will not regret.

Don Bosco said that at his death his work among the young people would not suffer, because there would be the constant protection of Mary and the support of the Salesian Cooperators.

Working in almost 100 countries of the World, the Cooperators are participating in the great work of the Salesian Family and become a hope for millions of young people.

As Don Bosco we repeat: “We are always in need of everybody”, we need you, your experience, your good example and your “cooperation” to increase the good work of Don Bosco.

Welcome. A seat is ready for you in our monthly meeting, and a seat is ready for you in that special corner of paradise, where we will meet with Don Bosco and all his young people, in joy.

Cooperators in the World: 30,000

Centres of Cooperators in Kenya:

Siakago, Embu, Makuyu, Nzaikoni, Upper Hill, Dagoretti.

Responsible for East Africa: Mrs.

Rosanna Kathangu - rkathangu@gmail.com

- Tel. 0722607666

Responsible for Upper Hill: Ms. Anna

Clara - anneclarawanjiru@gmail.com

-Tel. 0721728724

Delegate for Cooperators: Fr. Felice

Molino. – felicemolino@donbosco.or.ke

– Tel. 0722149298

Peace-march by the Catholic Church in Juba on the anniversary of the Referendum

As the fighting and killing continued in South Sudan between the forces of the President Salva Kiir and his former Deputy Riek Machar and thousands of helpless people ran away to Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia seeking refuge and thousands became IDPS (Internally Displaced People) those left behind sought refuge in their faith and called on the Lord of peace to come in and reign in their midst.

On 9th January, the day on which the people of South Sudan said 'Yes' to an independent country with one voice, the faithful of the different parishes in the Archdiocese of Juba gathered with banners and posters in one of the sub-centres of the Cathedral parish, namely, the Assumption centre, about three kilometers from St. Theresa Cathedral, praying and singing peace, love and reconciliation asking God for the gift of true peace and security in South Sudan.

The peace-march had three STATIONS – FORGIVENESS, UNITY and LOVE. The Archbishop, Rt. Rev. Paolino Lukudu Loro at the start of the march delivered a very touching and inspiring talk during which he and many in the crowd wept. He read the episode from the book of Genesis about Cain killing his brother Abel. God asked Cain: "Where is your brother?"

The Archbishop with tears in his eyes asked the people gathered for the march, "Where is your brother? Where is your sister?" "Where is your brother and sister who before 15th December were coming to the different churches to



pray, some of whom many of us know, with whom we talked and shared ideas? Where are they now?” Certainly tears rolled down the cheeks of many of the Christians as the Archbishop asked these questions. All of us were aware that many of them are no more as they became the victims of the revengeful killings of the past days. And there are thousands living in camps in the South Sudan or elsewhere who would have wished to join us in prayer today but are unable to move out of their camps due to fear and trauma. The Archbishop said that each one of us is the cause of this sad situation, directly or indirectly. Our sinfulness and selfishness have brought us to this dangerous and sad plight.

The faithful prayed the special PRAYER FOR PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN, prepared specially for this occasion and marched towards the Cathedral singing and praying. The CROSS led the way as if to tell the people that the LOVE of Jesus on the Cross was inviting all the people towards forgiveness and unity.

When the procession reached the Cathedral compound, the Blessed Sacrament was brought solemnly to the middle of the compound as if to say that JESUS in the Blessed Sacrament was welcoming all to the Cathedral. The faithful were invited to empty their hearts of all that was evil and fill them instead with the LOVE and FORGIVENESS that JESUS gave. After the blessing, the CROSS and the BLESSED SACRAMENT led the faithful to the Cathedral church.

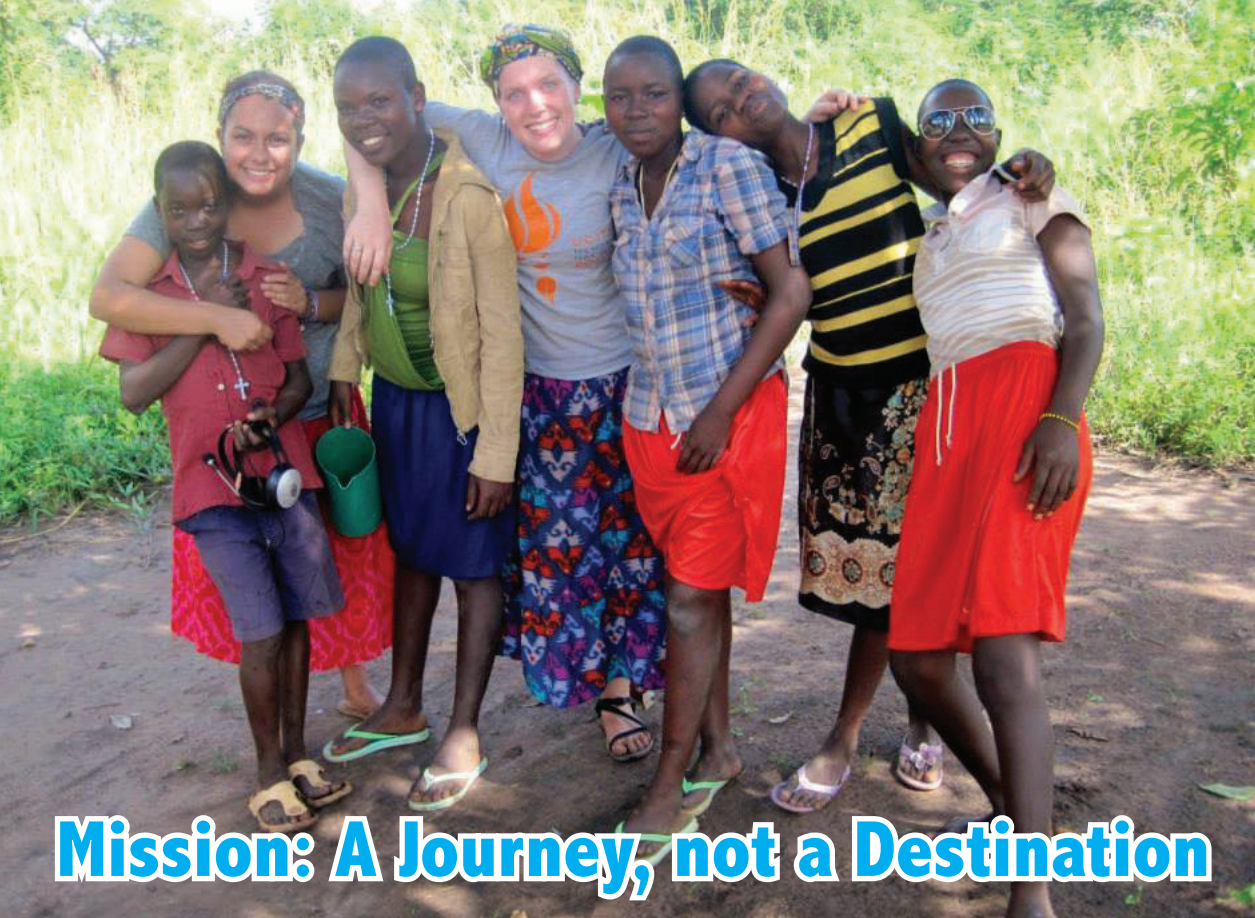
In the Cathedral there took place the solemn celebration of the Eucharist. During the prayer of the faithful, there were ten participants who came forward and prayed for the TEN STATES in South Sudan. After this prayer, while those who prayed held the one NATIONAL FLAG that was erected by the side of the altar, all the faithful joyously and zealously PRAYED (sang) the NATIONAL ANTHEM.

It was a wonderful celebration that brought forgiveness and peace to the hearts and lives of thousands present at the function.

May the voices of all in the South Sudan and others elsewhere rise up to God that He may expedite the gift of PEACE and SECURITY to this beloved young country – the SOUTH SUDAN!

Fr. Jacob Thelekkadan sdb





Mission: A Journey, not a Destination

On August 28th, 2013, we left our familiar lifestyles in America to embark on a new adventure as post-graduate missionaries in Maridi, South Sudan. After finishing university last year, Ariel, a psychology and social work double major, and I, Theresa, a registered nurse, felt called to dedicate the next year of our lives to doing God's will and serving His people.

We have been making South Sudan our home for five months now. As soon as we took our first steps onto the dusty, African soil, we felt right at home. Immediately, kids swarmed around us with their big brown eyes and bright smiles painted boldly on their faces. We knew at that moment that we were now part of a new family-the Salesian family, complete with over 500 sweet kids. We soon found ourselves in a routine that became our new "normal." Our days are filled with teaching in the primary school

and bandaging wounds and giving out medications in the hospital. These works are essential to the development and wellbeing of the children and community, but the impact is not found in the progress of their English or the treatment of their illnesses. The impact of this experience so far is found in our daily interactions with the children. The relationships that are fostered with the kids show them something intangible but more powerful than anything else: love. In simple gestures like made up handshakes, dancing and singing, hair braiding, and football matches, we love them. We show them that they are precious not only to us, but most importantly to God. Every evening as the sun sets, we sit and pray the rosary with children brimming with faith who five short months ago were strangers to us. But now they are our family, they are our kids. We have tried our best to



open our lives to these children, and they continuously flood our hearts with unconditional love.

As we approach the halfway point in our year of mission, we find ourselves in a different country, starting all over again while our lives and work in South Sudan is put on hold. We have been temporarily relocated to a Salesian community (Don Bosco YES) in Nairobi because of the current safety concerns in South Sudan. Even though we are physically in a different place, our hearts and minds are still very much in Maridi. Thoughts about the children, the Salesian community, and memories from our time there constantly push their way into the front of our minds. Our prayers are always for their safety and wellbeing as the country battles itself and its future remains unknown. As we struggle with a sense of helplessness and anxiety being away from our new found home, we rely more and more on each other and God for support. Although being away from our community has been a challenge, we are learning to place our worries and anxieties in God's hands and trust fully in His timing and His plan.

Although five months ago we had no idea that during this year of mission we would be temporarily relocated to a different mission site, we are finding comfort in the constant presence of Christ seen through the people surrounding us. We see Him in the welcoming community in Nairobi, in our friends and families at home who are praying for us and the people in South Sudan, and in our kids in Maridi who call us to tell us how much they miss and love us. Even though the future is uncertain, one thing remains constant: Christ's love and presence which alone sustains us.

Theresa kiblinger & Ariel Zarate

1ST QUARTER



The Best New Year Gift

Bosco Boys Summer Camp 2013/2014

“Way to holiness” this was the theme of the Bosco Boys’ 2013/2014 summer camp. Holiness is the way of doing what is right and willing to forgive those who have wronged you. Just like Don Bosco told the young boys that holiness is “doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way” this is what the coordinators and animators tried to teach the young children during the camp. It is very difficult for us to be completely perfect in whatever we do but if we believe that God is there with us we can truly grow in holiness. Holiness can be achieved when we minimize the unholy things we do and maximize the space for the holy things.

Being born poor does not mean it’s the end of everything. You may be poor financially but you are rich in faith. This is what I learnt after mingling with the Bosco Boys’ children during the camp. (I was assigned with the task of producing a video by BEAMS on the camp) Bosco boys is a project for children in need run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Every year-end in December holiday, the school management organizes a camp for these poor children to give them an opportunity to usher in the New Year in style and grow richer in faith. Being able to associate I learned a lot from them. I was inspired by the knowledge of faith these young children have.

According to the Bosco Boys project coordinator Fr. Luis Neville the camp was organized in order to bring these children together and help them live in unity different from the way they are used to. According to him they chose the theme “way to holiness” in order to teach these children that life does not only evolve around worldly pleasures and material things but also it is about God. Therefore the theme was to teach them to try to become divine. They started each day with the celebration of the Eucharist as one way to bring these children closer to God and learn how to appreciate God for his care and protection.

The children challenged me especially on the day of quiz. They know the Bible so well and very few gave incorrect answers. Not only were they asked biblical

questions but also general knowledge that would help them in their school syllabus. I could see the great passion in these children when answering the questions from the bible and also of those of the saints especially of their role model St. Don Bosco.

I had a chance to talk with these children and asked them to share with me their experience of the camp. They would say “Hii camp inabamba na ningependa iongezwe muda kiasi” (This camp is so lively and I would like it to be longer.) They said they learnt to forgive and would love to be addressed as “Your Holiness.” They enjoyed the activities that they carried out. They learnt and competed in the making of the crib. They had a chance to showcase their talents through dancing and acting. Having adoration gave them a chance to have moment of silence to talk to God. A way of moving interiorly and looking into their lives to know whether they are living according to the theme of the camp.

According to Bosco Boys’ Rector Fr. Joseph Minja, the camp was organized as a way to give the children the opportunity to start the New Year well and remove all the distractions they had at home during the holidays. He said he enjoyed mingling and playing with these children since he was able to learn a lot from them which he never did when he was young like them. This camp helped the youngsters to mingle with the elders without fear and all saw themselves as equal no matter the age. It was a good opportunity for behavior and character formation, a way to learn how to socialize and



live together. According to their Head Teacher Mr. Lawrence Maingi, it was a chance to teach them to have a positive outlook in life keeping in mind that most of these children have spent their lives in the streets or come from very poor families and slums.

I believe that just like I was inspired during this camp and learnt how to live holy, these children too learnt and through them we will have a better society. They will truly be good leaders of today, tomorrow and pass it on to the next generations.

Bravo to the organizers who planned the program so well and had included various activities that helped these young children get closer to God.

Beatrice Muya



A man with dark skin, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, stands outdoors. He is positioned on the left side of the frame, looking slightly to his right. Behind him is a large, leafy tree with a thick trunk. In the background, there are some buildings and a paved area. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

One Day I will tell My Story.

A story of survival

A story of undying will to survive when all hope is lost and God seems a planet away; the words of my story are words I never pronounce without pain and without respect, for the mystery of life is still a profound secret that I still find hard to understand.

I am born in a family of seven children, comprised of one girl and six boys, unfortunately due to the harsh realities of life in the slums one of my brother never made it to his first birthday, another one succumbed to a horrific fire that almost burnt down the whole slum, while the third one whom I really loved dearly got overwhelmed by crime and drugs so he took a rope and hanged life behind him; it's a grotesque picture still freshly painted in my mind of his lifeless body hanging in the air. We are now left three brothers and one sister plus our sickly single mother.

Honestly if I had a chance to choose life, I'd chose to be born as a prince in a castle because I wonder to myself everyday why nature condemned my family and I into abject poverty in the slums of Kawangware one of the two hundred slums in Nairobi.

In fact I detest remembering my childhood because surviving in the slums each day was a miracle, I remember the many angry fights in our single ramshackle room that used to serve all purposes including being a brothel at night and a chang'aa (strong illegal jet fuel like spirit liquor) joint during the day. This strong portion made men blind and many never make it to see another day. In the slums it does not matter when your time comes, others move on as if you never existed.

Since my tender age I have always had a strong desire and burning passion to live a better life and get an education, but then I lived as a destitute with my calm nature I served as the best peddler for bhang and God knows what else.

As I grew up I could no longer bear the slum life, the constant and regular battering from my ever drunk mother. I was living a life of horror and fear and these circumstances eventually forced me to flee from the slums and join my friends in the streets. It is at this point that the harsh reality of life hit me hard. Life as a street boy is like in the jungle. Survival is

for the fittest and so being in a gang is the cardinal rule for security and hustling for food and a base to rest at night.

Luckily garbage and dumpsites never failed to supply something for the stomach whether stale or rotting life had to go on. Out there you're a public enemy of the people everybody looks at you like you have horns and you're the devil himself, you can always tell the hatred and disgust written in their hearts through their eyes. That's when you remember you're a street boy and wish the earth could swallow you full. This is a terrible life, this fear excused our lack of hospitality and explains our beast like behaviors, terror mixed with confusion, fear turns to passion for lust, money and drugs, fright change into fury, as prudence does into rage. There is outburst of supreme terror whence springs of wrath change into street fights the many and deadly ones that I experienced, and nobody cares whether life has meaning in the streets.

I got lucky one day when I came by the Precious Blood Sisters in Riruta Kawangware who used to offer free lunch (githeri: a combination of maize and beans) to street boys and families. For such an offer I became a regular here and it's at this point that I met with the late Sr. Damiano (R.I.P) and Sr. Alice whose motherly love and care has never failed to show even at the brink of death. I always get that spark that keep me going, they taught me to pray and noticed my desire to learn, which took me to Bosco Boys Kuwinda a project by the Salesians of Don Bosco where I was rehabilitated and later chosen to join St. Mary's Primary school at Karen; I grabbed this begotten golden opportunity with my hands and legs to quest and quench my thirst for knowledge I'd be guilty not to mention Rev. Fr Babu Augustine SDB the Dir. of Bosco Boys then, in whose care I found





a dad and a friend; he used to call me professor and this instilled confidence in me and added my desire to excel in my studies.

I finished my Primary School in 2006 and proceeded to Don Bosco Embu High School, then to Dagoretti High School where I developed in length and breath and even took up a leadership position as the president of the student's council. I finished my High School in 2010 and from the bottom of my heart I will forever remain grateful to the former Director of Bosco Boys Rev. Fr. Sebastian Chirayath for giving me the opportunity to volunteer at home for one year as a computer teacher and an assistant for class eight candidates of 2011. Fr. Sebastian believed in my talent and ability and by grace of God he managed to secure for me a scholarship to the United States International University where I'm pursuing a Bachelor's degree in International Relations with a major in Foreign Policy and Diplomacy and a minor in Human Resource Management.

Were it not for the heights of sacrifice of the ever generous kind and loving hearts of the Salesians of Don Bosco, sponsors, benefactors especially Mr Bimal Kantaria and friends I would never have lived to this day, I have come to learn that the war of life is not won on paving stones, nor on joists nor on bits of iron but it is won on two heaps a heap of love and another heap of love.

I have given the slum and street life a heroic defeat mended by my tender compassionate approach that is discipline and fear of God. It has given me a dream for living a successful life.

I urge all the young people out there to go forward and gather a little courage to face the insurmountable mountains of problems before them and grab any opportunities to make their dreams come true for "Courage is not absence of fear, courage is going forward with a face of fear." *Abraham Lincoln.*

Peter Ndung'u

Education for Empowerment.



Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre, Kakuma Refugee camp.

Kakuma Refugee Camp is located in Turkana District part of the north western region of Kenya, 120 kilometres from Lodwar District Headquarters and 95 kilometres from the Lokichoggio Kenya-Sudan border. (Indicated by a black dot on the map.)

Kakuma Refugee Camp serves refugees who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries due to war or persecution. It was established in 1990 to serve Sudanese refugees, and has since expanded to serve refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda and other countries. According to the UNHCR statistics (December 2013), the registered camp population is 128,540.

Of this the biggest number falls within the age bracket of 18-59. As the Crisis in South Sudan continues a lot of people from there are flocking to Kakuma, the camp itself is stretched to its limits. As on 15th January 2014 new arrivals from South Sudan alone was about 8558 persons most of whom are children and women.

The local Kenyan population is largely comprised of nomadic pastoralists from the Turkana community who too are poor.

Kakuma Refugee Camp is administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR is assisted in its duties by a wide range of organizations, including World Food Program (WFP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Windle Trust Kenya (WTK), Film Aid International, and Salesians of Don Bosco in Kenya.

The camp falls under the jurisdiction of the Kenyan Government and the Department of Refugee Affairs. Since the adoption of the Kenya Refugee Act in 2007, a Camp Manager has been appointed to oversee camp affairs and liaison with humanitarian agencies. The Act paves the way for the Kenyan Government to eventually assume full management of Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Life in the semi-arid desert environment of Kakuma is rather challenging. The area has always been full of problems: dust storms, high temperatures, poisonous spiders,

snakes, and scorpions, outbreaks of malaria, cholera, and other hardships. The average daytime temperature is 40 degrees Celsius, or 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

Due to their legal situation and local environmental conditions, refugees are largely unable to support themselves with income-generating activities. The semi-arid climate of Kakuma is ill-suited to agriculture, while restrictions on employment deter refugee job-seeking. Those who work with NGOs receive a small incentive payment for their work, but incentive staff represent only a fraction of the refugee population.

The camp is a “small city” of thatched roof huts, tents, and mud abodes. Living inside the camp is equally prison and exile. Once admitted, refugees do not have the freedom to move about the country but are required to obtain Movement Passes from the UNHCR and Kenyan Government. Inside this small city at the edge of the desert, children are born, they age into adulthood and hope fades to resignation. In short it's more or less a kind of hostage life for

many refugees.

The Salesians of Don Bosco, a Catholic religious society, began its activities in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in 1991-1992. Over the years our work among the refugees grew and now we have a full-fledged technical centre with the trades like carpentry, masonry, welding, motor vehicle mechanic, plumbing, electrical, tailoring, dress making, computer, and secretarial courses. We also teach English and have a centre for providing training in Agriculture.

Today Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre, Kakuma (DBVTC) is the sole provider of formal technical education to the Refugees and the host community. The students undergo one year training and do the Kenya Government exam conducted by the Directorate of Industrial Training, and obtain a formal Government certificate as well as Don Bosco and UNHCR Certificates. These certificates are valued much by the refugees as they go back to their countries or when they get repatriated to Europe, America or Australia.

Don Bosco VTC had 3 technical training Centers and one agricultural training



centre in 2005 when the camp was full with over a 100,000 refugees. Thanks goes to UNHCR, Don Bosco Missions USA, various funding agencies, well-wishers and others who have supported Don Bosco VTC's contributed much to the education and empowerment of refugees at Kakuma. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 and the consequent reduction in the camp population due to repatriation and resettlement, the camp population came down to 20,000. The funds were cut and the services were reduced to the minimum as a result.

There was also the tool kit programme, which provided tools to the refugees who successfully completed the training at Don Bosco VTC and went back to Sudan. This programme also came to an end from 2007/2008.

It is not an exaggeration when we say that in the new Sudan, i.e. South, which gained independence from the north in 2011, among those who can speak English and do something towards nation building by way of starting small businesses or contributing to the labor market, a good number of them are those who passed through Don Bosco VTC's Kakuma. Some of them come back to Kenya, to Don Bosco Kakuma to look for labor force to join their business or industry and some come back to qualify themselves further.

In the Kakuma Refugee Camp, which today accommodates a population of over 128,000, which is more than its intended capacity, the need for education, both academic and technical is very acute. It is all the more urgent considering the fact that the majority of the refugees are young people who are keen on furthering their growth and development. Being refugees they do not have other options but to rely on UNHCR and the other agencies. But



the funding is minimum at the moment and the population is rapidly growing compared to the past. Don Bosco VTC too needs to expand and open up other centers and introduce new trades according to the present demand and the needs of the refugee population. So far about 15,000 students have passed through our centers. In 2012 over 2000 students were educated at Don Bosco VTC Kakuma. We hope to be of service to many more young people once we are able to have the necessary resources to open up the closed down centers and introduce new trades. We are very grateful to UNHCR and the other funding agencies for their continued support.

<http://kanere.org/about-kakuma-refugee-camp/>



Number of Pastoral Workers Killed in 2013 Nearly Doubles

Fides Releases Statistics on Religious Killed Worldwide

The number of pastoral workers killed in 2013 has almost doubled, indicating a climate of moral decline. This was the assessment given by Fides News Agency in releasing its annual list of pastoral care workers killed worldwide.

The agency stated that 22 pastoral workers, mostly priests, were killed in 2013, the last of which occurred on the night of New Years Eve where California priest, Fr. Eric Freed, was murdered in his residence.

The highest number of deaths occurred in Latin America, particularly in Colombia, where 7 priests were killed. 15 priests were killed in total in the Americas. In Africa, 3 pastoral workers were killed, 3 in Asia and 1 in Europe. Fides noted, however, that their list does not include missionaries *ad gentes* who have been killed, but rather “all pastoral care workers who died violent deaths.”

“We do not propose to use the term ‘martyrs’, if not in its etymological meaning of “witnesses” since it is up to the Church to judge their possible merits and also because of the scarcity of available information in most cases, with regard to their life and even the circumstances of their death,” the agency stated.

The agency also stated their concern for several pastoral care workers who have been kidnapped or disappeared in the world, most notably, in Syria and in the Republic of Congo.

On several occasions, Pope Francis has called for prayer for those who suffer for the faith. “Let us think about



our many Christian brothers and sisters who are suffering persecution for their faith. There are so many, perhaps more now than in past centuries,” the Holy Father said during his Angelus address on November 17th, 2013.

Fides stated that the majority of pastoral workers were killed in particularly violent attacks. Such attacks, the agency said, are “a sign of the climate of moral decline, economic and cultural poverty, which generates violence and disregard for human life.”

“They all lived in these human and social contexts, carrying out the mission of proclaiming the Gospel message without making sensational acts, but by witnessing their faith in the humility of daily life,” the agency stated.

Zenit

Film: 12 Years a Slave

January is Anti-Slavery month in the USA, and marks the release of a graphic new film: '12 Years a Slave' directed by Steve McQueen. Already nominated for nine Oscars, it is based on the true story of Solomon Northup, a black man who was kidnapped and forced into slavery. One of the few slaves to escape bondage in the United States, he published his memoirs in 1853 and went on to become a prominent figure in the abolitionist movement.



The beginning of this screen account portrays Northup, played by Chiwetel Ejiofor, living happily with his wife and children in a prosperous part of upstate New York, where he earns a good living as a carpenter and violin player. Befriended by two strangers one day, Northup is persuaded to take a short trip to Washington to perform as a musician there.

Soon the nightmare begins. Northup awakens from a drunken evening in chains, sold by his new 'friends' into slavery. His cell window is within view of Capital Hill. Stripped of his identity and now called 'Platt', he is shipped to New Orleans on a paddle steamer, with a group of other black men, women and children, where they are sold off to the highest bidder.

We see Platt's sense of disbelief and horror as he endures every possible abuse, beatings and whippings and witnesses the torture of his fellow prisoners. Particularly poignant is a woman separated from her children. She weeps unconsolably and the plantation owner's wife looks on sympathetically, saying: "poor woman - she'll soon forget them."

Platt's first owner, William Ford, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, is relatively kind, and enlists his help as an engineer and musician. But his overseer John (Paul Dano) becomes very resentful about this and after a bloody fight, Platt is sold to Edwin Epps (Michael Fassbender), a sadist who quotes scripture as justification for beating his slaves and raping the women among them.

What follows is a relentless assault on the senses, with scenes of rape, savage beatings, torture, hangings - sometimes set against beautiful pink skies, or scenes with the plantation owner's wife and sisters calmly strolling about on the verandah of their lovely house - somehow oblivious of the atrocities taking place in their front garden. The owners lead prayer services outdoors each Sunday. Platt is forced to play music for dances at neighbour's parties or on the slaves' day off - reminiscent of scenes in concentration camps - where I believe the Nazis would get Jewish prisoners to play and dance.

As the harrowing years pass, the future seems hopeless, until one day, very near the end of the film, Platt meets a Canadian stranger played by Brad Pitt, who he learns to trust.

It's a hard film to watch, but worth seeing. A salutary reminder that there are many more slaves in the world now, than there were when this story took place. And they are not all in faraway places.

**By: Siedlecka
ICN**

Without you we can do nothing!

From the testament of don Bosco to the benefactors: "Without your charity I could do nothing or very little. With your charity we cooperated with God to wipe many tears and save many souls".



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