

# DON BOSCO

## EASTERN AFRICA

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO PUBLICATION

SALESIAN FAMILY BULLETIN  
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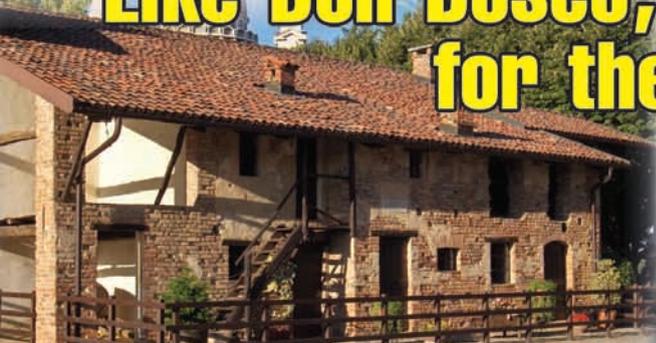


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16<sup>th</sup> August 1815 - 16<sup>th</sup> August 2015



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# From the EDITOR

## We need a Team of Stars and not a Star

Football world cup is over. The frenzy and the fever of the world cup is us behind for another four years. There were great matches and many unexpected out-comes. There were outstanding games. The final game between Argentina and Germany was a great match. Two minutes to the final whistle, the German machine scored the winning goal. It was not a surprise for many. The game was tightly fought, neck to neck, but I hope I won't be wrong to say that the team that deserved got the trophy.

But the most talked about match of the season was not the finals which was a great game but the historic semi-final between the Germans and Brazilians in which Brazil the five time world cup champions were beaten to ground with a 7-1 victory by Germany. It was a match like no other, it was not only a thriller but a pointer to many other realities that went into the preparation and the final display. There are many lessons that can be learned from that Semi-final between the host nation Brazil and Germany.

We can find an interesting statistics of that particular game itself. Brazil had 18 shots on target while Germany had 14. Brazil had 51 per cent ball possession while Germany had 49. Brazil had 7 corners while Germany had 5. Brazil had 13 shots on goal while Germany had 12. All these data favoured Brazil but it had a humiliating defeat in front of the home crowd. The mighty Brazilians, five time champions with an added advantage of playing in front of millions of adoring fans from their terrain, the pre-tournament favourites, were humiliated. They started well. It was "painful" to watch the captain, David Luiz, during the post-match interview sobbing and crying. What went wrong?

Perhaps the best analysis came from the English Foot baller Steven Gerrad who wrote on Twitter, "Brazil has Neymar, Argentina has Messi, Portugal has Ronaldo. Germany has a team." This truth remind till the end when Germany's team won the game, though everyone looked up to Argentina's hero Messi to take that winning shot, the last shot was taken by Germany's little known Mario Gotze.

For the Germans the victory did not come easily. It seems the current German team was a work in progress since 2002. Watching their game one could see the quality of the game, the passes that went from leg to leg and the confidence they showed.

It always take a team to win, as one of the writers in the Daily Nation put it, "would you rather a star in a team or a team of stars"? A question that calls all of us to reflect, because this question goes beyond football. No business, NGO, Religious organization even charity can be built around an individual or a weak team. For an organization to be success everyone needs to be a leader, and these leaders have to be led by leader himself. Looking at Germany one realizes that this country is a leader in many things, in auto industry, cosmetics, finance and it became a leading economy after a nearly total destruction of the Second World War! This requires long term planning, building the organization not just around an individual or ground a few successful endeavours but looking at the overall picture and being a team of leaders led by a leader himself and in addition having the alternatives. A good thing for all to imitate.

*Sebastian Koladiyil*

# THE MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR



## **MAY BEAUTY BE REBORN IN OUR WORLD EVERY DAY**

I gaze from this window that the *Salesian Bulletin* offers me every month and greet my Salesian brothers, all those who belong to our family spread throughout the world, and so many friends of Don Bosco who remain close to him and love him in our many Salesian houses.

The central thought of my message this time is the Salesian way of seeing things. How we see life, the world, and the young through Don Bosco's eyes is and must always be the vision of one who believes in the seeds of good and kindness that are in the heart of every individual, every youth, every father and mother.

To reinforce what I want to say and give it both light and shadow, let me begin my reflection with a page we find at various Internet sites, a page that's copied over and over. It describes our

age as one full of contradictions and paradoxes.

### **The text runs this way:**

*“The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but lower moral standards; wider highways but narrower viewpoints.*

*“We spend more but have less. We buy more but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences but less time.*

*“We have more degrees but less common sense, more knowledge but less judgment, more experts and still more problems, more medicine but less well-being.*

*“We drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up tired, read too little, watch too much TV, and pray too seldom.*

*“We've multiplied our possessions but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too little, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living but not*



*how to live. We've added years to our lives but not life to our years.*

*"We've gone to the moon and back but have trouble crossing the street to welcome a new neighbor. We've conquered outer space but not our interior space. We've done larger things but not better ones. We've cleaned the air but polluted our souls. We've mastered the atom but not our prejudices. We write more but learn less.*

*"We plan more but accomplish less. We've learned to rush but not to wait. We build bigger computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.*

*"These are times of fast food and slow digestion, big men and small character, huge profits and shallow relationships. These are times of two incomes and more divorce, fancier houses and broken homes. There's a lot in the window and nothing in the store."*

The text goes on along similar lines to describe the *paradoxes of our time*. I must admit that some of these contrasts are accurate. But what I want

to emphasize is that the only world that we have here on this earth is this one, not some imaginary world that we can yearn for nostalgically.

We have only the world in which we wake up every day, and the most courageous, serious, and profound attitude of a Christian and Salesian heart is to look at this reality with hopeful eyes, to discover all the positive signs hidden in it and transform them as much as possible.

This is a true *commandment* for our Salesian heart when it comes to the education and evangelization of the young.

When we're dealing with young men and women, our fundamental task is to work, with all the energy of our faith, so that the absolute value of individual persons and their inviolability should prevail; that value outranks every material good and every structure.

This strong conviction, put in today's language but with the *same passion for education that inspired Don Bosco*, allows us to look critically at all the situations in our world that are ethically inadmissible (like corruption, the exploitation of people, violence, fraud, abuse) and to make strong personal and communal choices to stand up against these ruthless mechanisms of manipulation.

It's natural that in the face of these realities we might sometimes feel overwhelmed by so much that's negative, by that part of life that disgusts us. But as believers we can't allow this to weaken our *hope*. On the contrary, we need to dare to announce more intensely that this is more than ever the hour of real hope! This doesn't mean closing our eyes to injustices, but opening our hearts, thanks to faith, to the God of Life who never goes out of



fashion or disappears in the distance, and immersing ourselves in daily life, firmly believing that we can help make it better.

This is possible thanks to the activity of the Risen Lord and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our history, a history of lights and shadows that's never beyond God's reach. In n. 276 of *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis says explicitly: "Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. Each day in our world beauty is born anew; it rises transformed through the storms of history."

And this is the certainty of our Faith: the Lord of History is active in our history, through the contribution of our own effort and mission as educators and evangelizers. We feel an intimate solidarity with this world of ours and

its history. Because for us—Salesians, Christian educators, parents who believe in education—to educate means to participate lovingly in the growth of every individual, in the building of his or her future.

Let our every step, here and now, truly be a sign of this vital task.

My heartfelt and sincere greetings,

**Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime,  
Rector Major**



# We are all born to SAVE – a personal testimony



“I could die tomorrow with two kidneys or I could live with the joy of seeing someone else live with my kidney”, was a thought that brought about a perspective change in the young Josephat Shilogile. On March 13, 2014, while the world celebrated World Kidney Day, he came generously forward to donate his left kidney to his ailing sister Leticia. The operation took place at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi.

Josephat Shilogile hails from a small village near Igunga, TZ, on the Shinyanga-Dodoma National Highway. He joined Don Bosco Secondary School – Didia as a Pre Form I student, from the institution’s initial pioneering years. Right from the start, he always excelled in his studies, doubled his talents, led from the forefront, and was

there to sacrifice his time and energy for his fellow companions. Being generous, at the cost of any sacrifice, was learnt early during his days at Don Bosco Didia.

Already in Form II, he was awarded with a scholarship, thanks to the then Mission Councillor Fr. Luciano Odorico sdb. This scholarship, in honour of the late Fr. Giuliano Menicagli sdb, was given by Prof. Otello Marchetti and the university students of Liceo Scientifico Statale. Sezione Classica Annesa – ‘A’, Italy. This scholarship saw him complete his studies at DB Didia in flying colours. Years down the line, the values

he learnt at Didia are here to stay. Today, he is a Standards Officer, at the Tanzania Bureau of Standards and an active member of the Don Bosco Past Pupils TZ.



More than 5000 kms away from home, in a foreign country, he lay in a bed of pain. His sister in an adjacent intensive care unit. The visit of Fr. Glenn Lowe sdb, his former headmaster at DB Didia brought untold comfort, consolation and hope. I guess, I can proudly say, “For the first time in Salesian history, both headmaster and a student meet together as kidney donors! Where there is true love, the colour of pain is gold.”

When I interviewed him in the hospital, his first words were one of gratitude. “Thank you God for the ‘Gift of life’, Through Him the kidney transplant surgery for my sister was successful. The recovery of my sister and I was speedy. Thanks to my Wife and Mother for accepting the process. My daughter Suzane and son Francis, and all my relatives for their patience. Am grateful to Fr. Glenn for his inspiration as he is a kidney donor himself, coordinating prayers and keeping all friends informed before and after operation, taking his time to travel from Mumbai to Delhi to stay with us for ten days in spite of his tight schedule. To Fr. George Quadros and Fr. Joe Prabhu in New Delhi for their spiritual and social help during my entire stay in Delhi. And finally to Fr. Swai, Fr. Mairura, Fr. Kulwa and Sr. Regina (OLA) for their prayers.”

An operation of this nature is no ordinary one. I wish to thank Dr (Prof). SN Mehta ably assisted by Dr. Mukesh who led the transplant team, all doctors and nurses, Mr. Vicky - Dr Mehta’s secretary, and all other medical staff at the hospital. This whole experience was more than just a physical one; it had to be supported with a lot of prayer. Thanks to DB Didia past pupils and DB past pupils in East Africa and India, and co-workers at Tanzania Bureau of Standards, who constantly sent SMSs and used social media to pray and wish me a speedy recovery. I knew I was not alone, and so was my sister too. Thanks to the young nurse Ms. Hukutula who was constantly at our side, and the many Tanzanian patients in the hospital too.

This is a lifetime experience! The anxiety is now gone and I can now renew my life with the gospel thought, ‘no greater love than to lay down one’s life for another’. I know many were more anxious and concerned than me. “Today, I can go back to my regular schedules and do the ordinary again. But, this experience is gonna make me different. I see things differently – from the gospel perspective!” he adds.

My one wish and prayer is only this; if you have an opportunity to save another life, don’t hesitate to come forward. We are all born to save.



***Fr. Glenford Lowe sdb***

# Crisis in Religious Freedom

## Three-quarters of World's Population Affected

“Religious freedom is human freedom,” stated U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, last Monday when he presented the International Religious Freedom Report for 2013.

We have a long journey ahead to achieve this freedom, he added, given that 75% of the world's population lives in countries that do not respect it.

Kerry emphasized that with the report the United States is “not arrogantly telling people what to believe.”

“We're asking for the universal value of tolerance, of the ability of people to have a respect for their own individuality and their own choices,” he explained.

The report stated that in 2013 the world experienced “the largest displacement of religious communities in recent memory.”

These events affected millions of people, including Christians, Muslims and Hindus, along with other religions.

Syria rated a special mention, where the report said, “the Christian presence is becoming a shadow of its former self.”

In the city of Homs, for example, the Christian community has gone from approximately 160,000 to barely 1,000.

Then, in the Central African Republic, civil strife and conflict between Christians and Muslims has caused at least 700 deaths and the displacement of more than a million people.

The threats to religious freedom took a number of forms, ranging from the criminalization of religious expression, prohibitions on conversions, blasphemy laws, and onerous registration laws for religious organizations.

## Not all bad

Not all the news was bad. The report mentioned some positive developments, such as after a Church bombing in Peshawar, Pakistan, members of the Muslim community formed human chains around churches during their services. The same happened in Egypt, with Muslims standing in front of a Catholic Church to protect it.

These examples, however, stood out as exceptions to the normal course of events and the report singled out a number of countries as particularly egregious offenders.

The list included North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, China and Cuba. In North Korea all religious activity is severely restricted and those who do not obey the laws are harshly treated, including the death penalty.

In Egypt, in the period August 14 -17 at least 42 churches were attacked, as well as schools, orphanages, and other Christian facilities. The report accused the government of failing to prevent, investigate, or prosecute crimes against religious minorities.

Authorities also generally refuse to recognize religious conversions on legal documents. And there is continued discrimination against religious minorities in public sector employment and positions in public universities.



In Pakistan, blasphemy laws are being used to discriminate against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and other religious groups.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 34 new cases were registered under the blasphemy laws during 2013. At least one death sentence for blasphemy was overturned during the year, but there were 17 people awaiting execution for blasphemy and at least 20 others were serving life sentences.

The authorities have condemned attacks against Shia Muslims and Christians, but the report stated, they “generally failed to take adequate steps to hold accountable those responsible for the attacks.”

As well, there were numerous reports of law enforcement agents abusing members of religious minorities and persons accused of blasphemy while they were in custody.

According to the penal code, freedom of speech is subject to “reasonable restrictions in the interest of the glory of Islam.”

## **Rigid controls**

In China the State Department accused the government of not respecting its international human rights commitments. In addition to rigid controls over activity by churches there are also restrictions on faith-based charities.

Catholic clergy continue to remain in detention, particularly in Hebei province, and there is continued harassment of unregistered bishops and priests.

Tajikistan is a country not normally in the headlines, but the report noted that it is the only country in the world in which the law prohibits persons under the age of 18 from participating in public religious activities. Moreover, Muslim women are effectively barred from attending mosques.

The ongoing conflict in Nigeria is well-known. According to the report, during 2013 the extremist Boko Haram group killed more than 1,000 people. Both Christian and Muslims were targeted, often during religious services or immediately afterward.

The federal government was ineffective in preventing or quelling the violence, the report noted, and only occasionally investigated, prosecuted, or punished those responsible.

Severe restriction on religious freedom continued last year in North Korea and those who had contact with foreign missionaries were subject to harsh penalties, including execution.

The report noted the difficulty in obtaining information about what is going on in the country, but reports by the South Korean media and independent groups all point to extreme controls over religious freedom, with an unknown number imprisoned and even executed for crimes such as possessing a Bible.

The report only covers events up to the end of 2013. Since then the events in the Middle East and parts of Africa have worsened, particularly in Iraq. Such reports as these provide valuable information, the question remains as to whether anything will be done to ensure a greater respect for religious freedom.





## 13<sup>th</sup> SIGNIS Catholic TV/Video producers seminar

The 13<sup>th</sup> SIGNIS Catholic TV/Video producers seminar took place in St. Petersburg, Russia from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June. His Excellency Bishop Nazary, Abbot of St. Trinity Alexander Nevsky, Laura, said the opening prayer and welcomed the participants to the meeting. In his inaugural address he said that he is happy that SIGNIS chose St. Petersburg, the cultural capital of Russia as the place of meeting. He expressed his regret that this seminar is taking place during the time of fasting in the Orthodox Church, which they observe strictly. The bishop added that during this period meat and fish are not eaten but vodka and wine are allowed. In a response the President of SIGNIS Gustavo Andujar thanked the Bishop

and gave him a gift of a bottle of whisky.

The Monastery of St. Trinity Alexander Nevsky is in the historical part of St. Petersburg and this place is visited by many tourists. The cemetery of the monastery is the resting place of many famous Russian artists, composers and other famous people such as Dostoevsky, Tchaikovsky, Suvorov and Borodin, just to mention a few.

This event coincided with the St. Petersburg Film Festival known as “the Festival of Festivals.” This is the biggest non-competitive festival of Russia which is one of the significant cultural events of the city of St. Petersburg. The SIGNIS participants totalling 38 from all the continents including four volunteers who also helped in the translations,

were housed at the Catholic Seminary in the city centre and the seminar itself took place at the Monastery of St. Trinity Alexander Nevsky, Laura of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After the introduction, welcome and few interventions the participants were given a tour of the monastery where everyone had an opportunity to witness an orthodox Mass.

Blogavest Media an Ecumenical production and distribution company, the host of the seminar, is housed at this monastery. This institution collaborates with Catholics in Russia and sets an example of how collaboration between different Churches is possible.

Two Salesians Fr. Ryska Leos from TV Noe, Czech Republic and Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil from BEAMS, Kenya (East Africa) were present for the Seminar.

Some of the outstanding events of the seminar in addition to the normal program of the seminar itself were Round Table with Alexandre Sokurov

a famous Russian Film producer, visit to museum of the Saviour on the Blood (Formally Church) and to Our Lady of Kazan Cathedral.

From Russia there were a group of film producers at the seminar who presented their films and showed, how through films they are trying to bring the good news message of good morals closer to the people.

Another attraction of the seminar was the participation of the SIGNIS members in the Festival of the Festivals. The participants had an opportunity to mingle and discuss various issues with different Russian and European film/documentary directors and producers. There was also a boat tour around the city of St. Petersburg known as the Venice of the north.

At the end of the seminar everyone expressed satisfaction that they were able to learn from each other and to network with other Catholic production centres.



# Salesian Cooperators' Congress at DBYES



Salesian Cooperators together with their local delegates attended the Salesian Cooperator Congress that took place in DBYES, Nairobi from 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014. There were about 50 participants from Kenya and Tanzania. Those were enriching days in many ways: getting to know other Cooperators and the life and work and problems of the Units, sharing opinions, exchanging ideas, expressing our hopes for the future, our need for greater commitment in our Christian and Salesian life, need for unity, for doing more for the young...

Talks and goodnights were given by several priests, sisters and Cooperators, which enriched our faith, sacramental life, love for Don Bosco, for the Salesian

Charism, for the Salesian Family, for the Cooperator Vocation. The main theme was on the family in the spirituality of Don Bosco. It was so wonderful that the suggestion was to increase the number of days of such seminars from three to five and to hold the next Congress in Tanzania! Congratulations and thanks to Fr. Felice, Sr. Marta Ndegi and to Rosanna Kathangu and her team and to all who attended! Cooperators and delegates, prepare to attend the next one as we live out each day what we generously received at the Cooperator Congress 2014!

**Sr. Susan Fernandes, FMA**

# Celebrating 10 Years of a Unique Initiative: the Institute of Youth Studies (IYS)

The Institute of Youth Studies celebrated its 10th anniversary with an Academic Symposium on 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at Tangaza University College Nairobi, Kenya. Sr. Chantal Mukase, the FMA Provincial of AFE Province, opened the Symposium stepping in for Fr. Gianni Rolandi, SDB Provincial who was attending the General Chapter in Italy. She presented the history of IYS from its very humble beginnings through its development over the years to the present time. She thanked all the Salesian Fathers, Brothers and Sisters who made this courageous adventure possible through commitment, hard work and sacrifice.

Following the introduction some alumni of IYS shared their experiences on the topic “Models of Youth Studies and Work”. They shared their lived experiences as Youth Workers following the completing of their studies at IYS and how this has had an impact in their own lives and in the community. The alumni who spoke were the following: Lawrence Maingi from Bosco Boys Kuwinda; Francis Ndolo working in CEFA; Jane Wanjiru from Child Peace Initiative, and Miriam Otieno.

On the second day there was a panel discussion on “Youth Studies: the Legitimacy of its Existence in Higher Learning Institutions”. Josephine Waweru, a lecturer at IYS, David Kitavi and George Kagwa responded to the questions of Why, What and How of Youth Studies. There was also the launching of Fr. Selvam Sahaya’s new book “Child and Youth in Kenya: Challenges and Potentialities”. Fr. Selvam is the Coordinator of the Master’s Program in Psychology at IYS. All the participants felt challenged and grateful for the experience lived during the two-day Symposium.

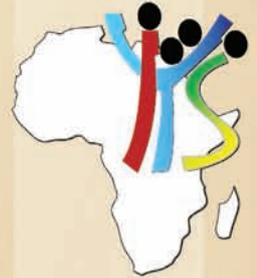
*Sr. Maria del Pilar Garcia, FMA*



# Institute of Youth Studies

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# YOUTH MINISTRY: A WAY TO HOLINESS

Lubanga Sam (not real names) has lived in the streets for at least five years. Having been abandoned by his parents in a slum, he does not even know their names. He was rescued from the streets by a charitable organisation and was helped to go to a primary school. Having lived a wavering life he could not push himself beyond Primary Five class. To stop him from becoming a street child again, he was brought to our Vocational Training Centre in Kamuli to earn a living. Being confined to a boarding with rules and following a routine programme of skill-training was almost impossible for Lubanga to follow. He frequently dodged classes, escaped from school, stole properties of other boys, and said numerous lies, often exhibited violent behaviour and several other crimes that would dismiss him from school if matters were taken seriously.

Now the question is how can we minister to this young person who has never experienced human love? How can we prepare him for future? More than anything else how can we make him a loveable human being who can learn to love God and others? This is a ministry to the whole person—body, mind, heart and soul.

Youth ministry—ministering to young people or rather ‘serving God in the young’ becomes a path to holiness when we believe that God is awaiting us in the young to offer us the grace of meeting with him and to dispose us to serve him in them, recognizing their dignity and educating them to the fullness of life. This is in the Father’s own vision of sending his Son into the world, ‘so that we may not perish but may have eternal life.’ And it is recognizing in the young, ‘Kingdom of God belongs to such as these’. Youth Ministry is an incarnation model of God becoming one of us.



In describing the stage of adolescence and youth, St. John Bosco, the patron of youth said, ‘that part of human society that is so fragile yet so rich in promise.’ Don Bosco (Father Bosco) as he is called is an outstanding educator of the youth. He understood well the precarious nature of the early stages of growth in life when the young person is tossed between being a child and an adult. A youngster is asked to be simple as a child and at the same time asked to behave as an adult in a mature way. At this moment the young person as well as the supervising adult is left confused.



Ministering to young people is being a Good Shepherd to them. The Shepherd image is a favourite representation that Jesus made for himself. He envisaged himself as a caring leader, concerned adult and sacrificing person. Don Bosco chose this image for himself and his followers who work for youth. In it he saw of his mission clearly: to reveal to young people the love of God for them. He understood the underlying principles of a pastoral style appropriate to this purpose – that of the Good Shepherd.

Those who have worked for youth in school, parish or other social setting even for a brief period will realize that youth ministry calls for lot of compassion—to be forgiving, sacrificing oneself, being exemplary, creative and innovative all the time. Humanly speaking, this way of life is possible only when the minister’s life is animated by a profound interior life oriented to the service of young people, a service that helps them to grow, making them agents of their own growth and maturity.

A youth minister is a sign and bearer of God’s love to the young, especially the youth who are poor, abandoned, those who find themselves in precarious situations of alcoholism, drug abuse, violence and various addictive behaviour. To reach out to

this part of the society needs not only lot of preparation but needs to be founded on a solid spirituality—a life given to God.

Youth ministry is all about showing our love and concern to the youth who are often desperately seeking them. Through our expressions of love we can help them to grow as mature persons—an integral growth that cares for physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth. This is pastoral charity that is an educative charity. It displays a passion for education, but also good judgement, common sense and balance, as well as affection and respect for adolescents and young people. This attitude is the result of the belief that every life, even the poorest, most complex and precarious, carries in itself the mysteries of the Spirit, the power of redemption and the seed of happiness.

We are often baffled by young people’s behaviour exhibited in bizarre dressing, weird hairstyle, uncanny words and movements. Through them young people want their presence felt and want others to “listen” to something that they want to communicate. It is all about giving them a forum for expression and communication.

Listening to others is a sacred ministry. Jesus, as a good shepherd listened to people who no one bothered to listen to. The Gospels are filled with examples of how Jesus reached out to people and patiently listened and cared for numerous individuals. Those moments of encounters left them changed persons in body and spirit. He was able to reach out to them because his own spirit was animated by deep sense of God, his Father and prayer.

Educative charity reflects the love that is able to create an educational relationship that helps the adolescent or young person to open up, to discover the richness of life, and grow. When education is given with faith in God and others, then young people grow with courage to face life with all its complexity. The charity and love of the educator becomes the way of communicating God’s love to them. It is fatherly and motherly wisdom that prepares them to face life.

Preparing young people for life cannot be a part time job or giving a part of life for them. It is life consuming. It is dedicating one’s life for them. It is offering one’s whole self. At the beginning of his priestly ministry among the young, Don Bosco said to his boys, “I have promised God that I would give my whole life for you... for you I work, for you I live and for you I am ready to give my life... it is enough for me to know that you are young to love you.”

Our words to young people cannot be emotional outbursts but ought to be words and actions of commitments coming from our life of dedication based on deep spirituality. Ministering to young people is founded on Gospel spirituality and makes the doer holy.

***Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB, Director,  
St. Joseph Vocational Training Centre, Kamuli.  
Email: arasuafrica@gmail.com.***



# “Who would have thought I would have been a missionary?”



In some sense of the word I was reminded that I *was* one, not because of the fact that I was baptised, nor by any ecclesiastical authority, but by the secular enforcements of the law of the State Government in India. I left Kenya, the country of my birth for India, in 1965 at the age of 18, soon after completing my GCEs. I began my training for the priesthood in the Salesian junior seminary of Don Bosco, Lonavla. In my mind I was to live a normal life of a pre-novice discerning my vocation to be a priest.

But being a foreigner, holding a British passport, studying in a religious institution, I was already categorised as a *missionary*, subject to regulations that would monitor my movements from one state of India to another. I would have to present myself to the local police,

should I want to go to another state. So began my *missionary vocation*. With my whereabouts carefully monitored, I went through the various stages of formation, passing through three different states before being ordained as a *missionary priest* in Mumbai, in 1977.

## **Project Africa**

In 1979, when the Rector Major, invited volunteers for Project Africa. I saw this as an opportunity to work as a priest in Kenya, my home country. Sadly, I was reminded by my confreres, that I was not going to Africa as a missionary but as one who was merely returning to his home country, Kenya. So the Provincial put things right and assigned me to the mission Parish in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania.

The start of my first missionary

journey, like that of St Paul, was almost shipwrecked by the local government authorities in India. I was not given the green light to *sail* with the first missionary expedition for Africa, my *boat* was firmly grounded, as my papers (those of a foreign missionary) were not in order. I was duly reminded of my predicament by the immigration officer, who told me very casually but sarcastically, *Not even your Jesus Christ can save you from this*. The Salesian Brother who was trying to facilitate my journey assured me that all would be well and I need only to whisper the words of Matthew's gospel, *you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved*. How right he was. That night I was able to join the rest of the group on the boat.

For the next few years in Tanzania, I enjoyed a most wonderful missionary experience. On several occasions when I visited the far-flung outstations of the parish I was assigned to. On any Sunday I could be celebrating Baptisms, First Communions and Marriages, all in one grand, colourful and vibrant service. Being *a missionary* meant touching the lives of young people by word and example; standing up for what they dreamed; gently but firmly guiding them along the paths they wanted to tread; exploring with them the many options that lay before them in their search for God in their lives. The new Provincial, in 1986, *de-missioned* me – I was to go *home* – to Kenya, where I was to work for almost twenty years.

## **Project Europe**

To prevent any further *burn-out* to my potential as serving as a missionary elsewhere, I returned to my home Province in India in 2009 and was

labelled as a FMA (Failed Missionary of Africa) but with a prospect of joining the GBR Province. My time spent in Goa, assisting youth in a school for alternative learning, helped me build up fresh energy.

When the Regional Superior for Asia visited Goa, he talked to the local confreres about Project Europe. He actually offered the bait and I snapped at it immediately and applied to be part of Project Europe. Strange enough, I was being reminded once again by the powers that be, that I was not going to Great Britain as part of Project Europe, but merely joining my family there, which I had left 34 years ago. I took that with a great spirit of resignation as I slowly began to understand that others could interpret your intentions and tell you what you did not want to hear. Then, instead of being assigned to a community in England, I was requested to go to Scotland, a totally new place for me. This was to be a missionary experience I had so much to learn from.

I have been in Easterhouse, Glasgow, for almost two years. The warmth and friendly nature of its people put me so much at ease, that even the severe winter I had to endure, did not deter my resolve to adjust to my new surroundings. Every now and then the people, with great concern for me, would be asking if I was doing OK. My reply was always, *I'm, ooh rite, nay bother*.

Chasing arrows? Recycling actually gives you a warm glow, it makes you satisfied in the knowledge that you are making a positive contribution to the world around you. So why don't you give it a go and get the same glow? That is what I have been telling myself in this new area of my *missionary land*.

**Fr Tony Fernandez SDB**

# A BOY WITH



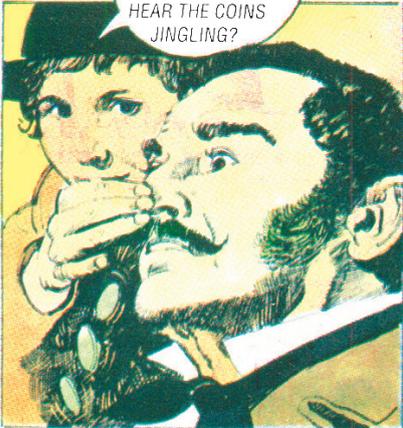
AT HOME HE PRACTICED LONG AND HARD ALL THE TRICKS HE HAD SEEN. AFTER SOME MONTHS, SOME EXPERIMENTS AND MANY TUMBLES... ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON...

MY FRIENDS, HERE YOU ARE ... THIS IS MY FIRST PERFORMANCE!

MR. THEODORE, LOOK AT YOUR NOSE! IT IS A TREASURE CHEST! HEAR THE COINS JINGLING?

MADAME, DON'T BE AFRAID, BUT THERE'S A LIVE CHICKEN IN YOUR BAG. I'LL TAKE IT OUT.

AND NOW LET ME PUT MY MAGIC WAND ASIDE. AND SINCE MANY OF YOU DIDN'T GO TO CHURCH THIS MORNING...



... I WILL REPEAT PART OF OUR DEAR PASTOR'S BEAUTIFUL SERMON FOR YOU.

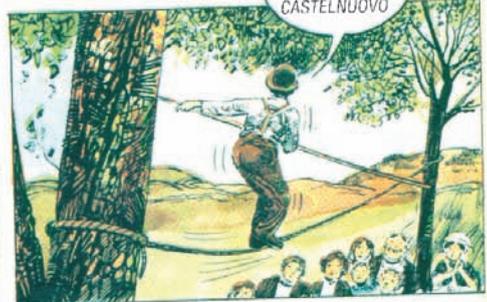
# A DREAM

IT WAS EASY TO RECALL MOST OF THE POINTS THAT THE PARISH PRIEST MADE. THAT WAS THE FEE THAT JOHNNY CHARGED ALL WHO ATTENDED. SMALL AND BIG ALL HAD TO PAY. THEY WERE MOST WILLING...

WHERE ARE YOU TWO GOING? I FEEL VERY SORRY FOR YOU. FORGIVE ME, BUT YOU'RE MISSING THE BEST PART OF THE SHOW AND YOU'RE GETTING IT FREE!

MY FRIENDS! IT'S MUCH EASIER THAN STROLLING TO CASTELNUOVO

AND NOW WITH YOUR KIND PERMISSION ALLOW ME TO TAKE A STROLL ON THE TIGHTROPE!

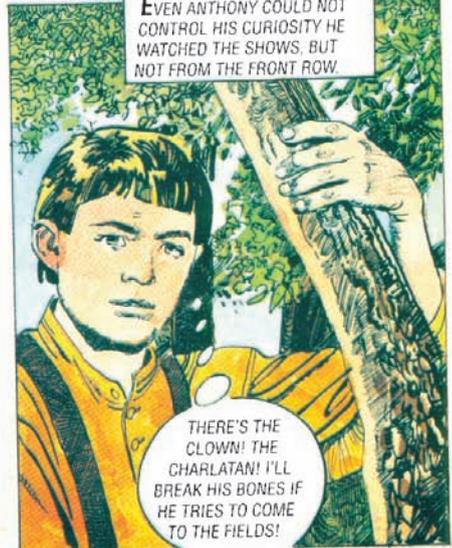


THE SILENCE WAS SUDDENLY BROKEN WITH ENTHUSIASTIC CHEERS OF APPRECIATION



**BRAVO!  
YEH!**

EVEN ANTHONY COULD NOT CONTROL HIS CURIOSITY HE WATCHED THE SHOWS, BUT NOT FROM THE FRONT ROW.



THERE'S THE CLOWN! THE CHARLATAN! I'LL BREAK HIS BONES IF HE TRIES TO COME TO THE FIELDS!

# Bicentenary of the Birth of Don Bosco

## Events and Calendar 2014 - 2015

### 1 . World Events

The calendar for the 2014-2015 Bicentenary includes events that will involve the congregation world-wide. They will be of different kinds. Some are addressed to specific individuals such as experts in history and pedagogy; others to groups such as the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement; the Salesian Family; Salesian Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops; and missionaries. There are also occasions intended for civil and religious authorities and the general public.

The events already planned will be held mostly in Turin, in Castelnuovo Don Bosco and in Rome. They include the following:

- 16 August , 2014 opening of the Bicentenary: Colle Don Bosco

- 28 September , 2014 Missionary Expedition and conferring of missionary cross: Turin
- 19-23 November 2014 International Historical Congress: Salesianum, Rome
- 15-18 January 2015 Salesian Spirituality Days: Salesianum, Rome
- 19-21 March 2015 International Pedagogy Congress: UPS, Rome
- 21-25 May 2015 Meeting of Salesian Bishops: Turin
- 06-09 August 2015 International Congress on Mary Help of Christians: Turin
- 11-16 August 2015 SYM Don Bosco 2015: Turin and Colle Don Bosco
- 16 August, 2015 Closing of Bicentenary: Colle Don Bosco

### 2 . Exposition of the Shroud in Turin

On the occasion of the Bicentenary and precisely because of the commemoration of the birth of Don Bosco, Archbishop Cesare Nosiglia, Archbishop of Turin, has announced that the Holy Shroud will be on display in Turin for 45 days between Easter and the end of the Bicentenary celebrations.

In reference to the time chosen for the display, the Archbishop explained: “The opening of the Exposition at Easter time leads us to reflect on the death and resurrection of the Lord. For believers, the Shroud, which was a death-shroud, becomes a witness that evokes very effectively the victory of the Lord of life.”





Archbishop Nosiglia added a further reflection on the extraordinary nature of this Exposition in 2015 on the occasion of the Bicentenary of the Birth of Don Bosco: “Coming in 2015, it connects with the Salesian Jubilee. This is an anniversary that means a lot for Turin and the surrounding area, because it is here we find the roots of the holiness of Don Bosco and the experience of the sons of Don Bosco.” The Exposition is an event distinct from the Salesian celebrations, but it is also closely connected in “a climate of fraternal and mutual cooperation.»

### **3 . Visit of Pope Francis**

For these two reasons, Pope Francis has been invited to Turin. Regarding his visit the Archbishop says: “We are confident that Pope Francis will come to pray before the sacred Linen and to honour St. John Bosco, setting a seal upon a remarkable year. The Holy Father has accepted our invitation and that of the Salesians, but for now no date has been fixed.”

### **4 . Expo 2015 Milan**

In the course of the Bicentenary year, from 1 May to 31 October, Expo 2015 will take place in Milan. The theme is “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life.” It is a global occasion in which the congregation will participate with thirty events from various parts of the Salesian world. It will be an opportunity for us to promote educational issues which are part of the commitment of the Congregation: Development Education, Global Citizenship, Volunteering, and Education and Human Rights. It will also offer an opportunity to approach the theme of EXPO from an educational perspective: nourish the body, nourish the mind, nourish life and nourish the planet.

### **5 . National Events**

Finally there will be national events in the various countries in which the Salesian Congregation is involved in educational and preventive activity, in the style of Don Bosco. These will involve mainly young people, the laity and the Salesian Family. In Italy in particular, the provinces, in coordination with each other, are planning events in the major cities.

The official start of the celebrations in Italy will be on Saturday, 24 January 2015 in Turin. This is the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron of the Salesian Congregation, which is officially entitled the Society of St. Francis de Sales.



# Being a Missionary Today

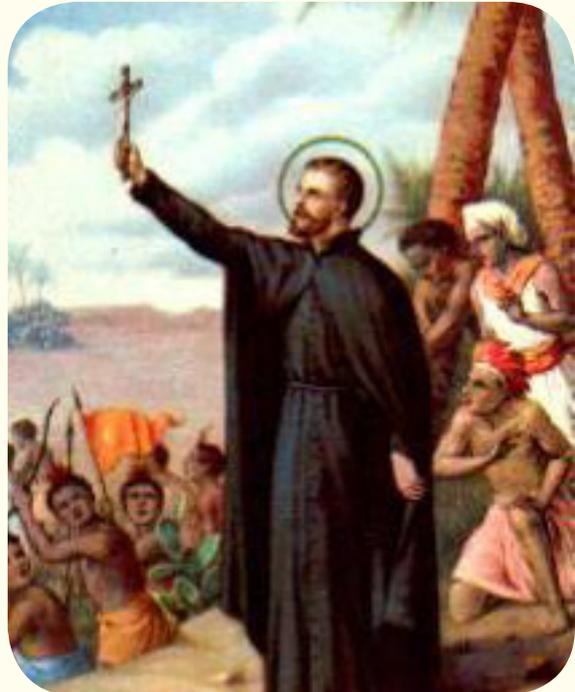
The gospel challenge found in Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” has changed the course of life in many people. Some of them are St. Francis Xavier, St. Daniel Comboni, St. Theresa of Lisieux, St. Damien of Molokai, and Bl. Theresa of Calcutta. They lived their missionary call uniquely, differing from each other significantly. But they were all missionaries in their own right.

They were all concerned about making disciples for Christ—people from all nations, teaching men and women values of the gospel and helping people to be in God’s fold. We always talk of the world that has become a little village due to media and other globalization trends. We witness the ever growing global trade and enormous movement of people and goods. In this global scene, it is possible to look at media as a “nation” and social communications as “people”. There is a particular kind of a culture that links people of the whole world into a large family of people. There is something homogeneous about it. Often times the global trends in production and consumption makes us fall into this culture consciously and unconsciously.

Church often talks of Christianizing this “culture”. The values of the gospel need to penetrate this culture and purify this culture where needed. It is a way of sanctifying and making the world godly. One of the major way of doing it is to Christianize the medium of human communication: the social communication. This too keeps growing day after day. The gadgets and the various means of social communication grows rapidly and are being revolutionalised by the latest technologies.

We as the Disciples of Christ and missionaries of the Church we need teach the media and help it to obey the commandments and the will of God. Missionary work has always been challenging enterprise of the Church and her saints; it was not easy for St. Francis Xavier to sail to India in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, St. Daniel Comboni going to evangelize the people of the Sudan in 19<sup>th</sup> century and for Mother Theresa to care for the poor in our times. As they were assured of Christ’s presence we too are assured of His presence in our own times.

Evangelizing the media is *Areopagus* (meaning, opportunity for giving testimony) of our times. It is an effective way of carrying the message of Christ to all people and the globalized culture as a whole. It is also a mission among the young people, as media is dominated and consumed largely by the young. It is an urgent activity to do, as media and technology grows at an unimaginable speed. As it is said, in most countries today a large proportion of people are spending a significant portion of their day looking at electronic screens—be it mobile phones, ipads, computers or television screens. This is where we need to take Christ to. This is where we need to chip in the message of the gospel. These electronic screens are the right platform to take the Kingdom values. As the Kingdom of God is close at hand, electronic screens are who always close at hand.



The great council of Vatican II took place over five decades ago. It aimed at renewal of the church in various pastoral practices. Though some question its success, we cannot deny its impact on the church. It brought about newness in liturgy, more involvement of lay people in church's life and mission, renewed understanding of religious life, to name a few. Perhaps today we need to revisit the deliberations of this council and re-read it in today's perspective and adapt it further in today's context. Though it showed lot of concern towards emerging churches of the developing world, the council was still Western in thinking.

We all agree that today the church is much more vibrant in Africa than in Europe. European Catholics only make 26% in the universal church and less than 23% are active in the traditional Christian countries of Europe in keeping the faith. It can be judged and evaluated by the participation of the faithful in liturgies and reception of the sacraments. Many speak of being "spiritual" and not "religious"; even some courageously say, "keep faith you will live, but religion will kill you". In sincere analysis rhetoric statements does not make serious sense. Perhaps we are afraid of challenges that our faith brings to our life.

## **We are called to Evangelizers**

By virtue of our baptism we are called to be evangelizers. We can be evangelizers in our homes, our places of study and work; we can be evangelizers among our peers, our fellow learners at school and with all those who share our work and business. We need not do ex-ordinary acts or heroic deeds to evangelize but by being a good Christian, and living an exemplary Christian life we can be evangelizers. Our Christ-like life is the best way of evangelization and effective in proclaiming Christ. Through our simplicity, humility, gentleness and little acts of love we proclaim Christ.

By being a faithful disciple we become an apostle; the task of an apostle is to make disciples for the Master. This is education that is experiential, personal, engaging and life-giving. Just like learning a language discipleship is mentoring people in the faith. A language is learnt in interaction with the community that speaks that language. When we have many friends who speak the same language we could learn that language faster and better.

## **Evangelizing Cultures**

Often Christian faith and life invites us to be counter cultural. We need to promote the Catholic way of life which is increasingly becoming alien in the secular world. We are asked to promote life amidst the culture of death, we are asked to pray for peace so as to avoid war when the powerful are advocating for war and military solutions, and we are to stand with the poor and the vulnerable when the world wants maximum profit in every commercial dealings. In the world of materialism and consumerism we are asked to be counter-cultural. We stand for Christ's own culture of love, friendship and reconciliation by being identified with the virtues of tenderness, compassion, forgiveness and sharing. These are often considered to be of the weak and the vulnerable.

This kind of evangelization could take place anywhere and everywhere, where there are people going about doing ordinary things of life. By being Christ-like we become evangelizers. We don't need to be eloquent in words or having a suitable position to do it, but we only need a heart to love it and courage to do it. St. Francis of Assisi summarized this kind of day to day evangelization in his pithy saying, "Preach always, when necessary use words."

# Vatican Debuts Official Logo and Prayer for WYD 2016 in Krakow

## Polish Creator of Logo Inspired After John Paul II's Canonization

The Vatican has released the official logo and prayer for the 2016 World Youth Day in Krakow.



In a press conference held this morning, Krakow's metropolitan archbishop, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, presented the logo and official prayer for the 31st World Youth Day.

Designed by Monika Rybczynska, 28, from Ostrzeszow, in mid-west Poland, the logo was created after the canonization of John Paul II. In her work, three elements are combined: the place of the celebration, its main protagonists, and its theme, which is a passage from Matthew's Gospel: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Moreover, the image is composed of a geographical outline of Poland, in which there is a cross, a symbol of Christ, the soul of World Youth Day.

Marking the position of Krakow on the map of Poland, a yellow circle symbolizes youth.

Recalling the image "Jesus, I trust in you," the flame of divine mercy emerges from the cross. The colors in the logo – blue, red and yellow – are the official colors of Krakow and its coat of arms.

During the press conference, the official prayer of World Youth Day 2016 was presented. The prayer, which entrusts humanity and the young to divine mercy, asks the Lord for the grace of a merciful heart, and for the intercession of Mary and St. John Paul II, patron of World Youth Day. (D.C.L.)

## Official Prayer for World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow Released

"God, merciful Father, in your Son, Jesus Christ, you have revealed your love and poured it out upon us in the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, We entrust to you today the destiny of the world and of every man and woman."

We entrust to you in a special way young people of every language, people and nation: guide and protect them as they walk the complex paths of the world today and give them the grace to reap abundant fruits from their experience of the Krakow World Youth Day.

Heavenly Father, grant that we may bear witness to your mercy. Teach us how to convey the faith to those in doubt, hope to those who are discouraged, love to those who feel indifferent, forgiveness to those who have done wrong and joy to those who are unhappy. Allow the spark of merciful love that you have enkindled within us become a fire that can transform hearts and renew the face of the earth.

Mary, Mother of Mercy, pray for us. Saint John Paul II, pray for us.

*ZENIT*

# Iraqi Archbishop: “My Diocese No Longer Exists”

Mosul’s Prelate Speaks as a Refugee  
Among Refugees

By Oliver Maksan of Aid to the Church in  
Need

“Ahlan wa sahlan. Welcome,” is Archbishop Amel Nona’s friendly greeting to an anxious-looking veiled woman who enters his office. He offers her a seat. “She has just come here to Tilkef from Mosul on foot with one of her sons seeking safety,” explains the Chaldean archbishop of Mosul, translating the agitated words of the Muslim woman. “There have been skirmishes between the government and the Sunni rebels. That’s why she fled.”

There are only three kilometres between Mosul and the Christian town of Tilkef. But they are now worlds apart since the Islamists conquered the town. “We welcome everybody here, be they Christian or Muslim,” Archbishop Nona says. “This is what our faith teaches us: to help everyone regardless of religion. God loves everyone. That’s why we should help all.”

The Church has opened its schools, kindergartens and community rooms not only to Christians, but also to Muslim families. In Alqosh, a Christian town about 20 kilometres from Mosul, they have taken in 150 Muslim families in addition to 500 Christian ones. In Tilkef more than 700 refugee families have been taken in, including Muslims. The town is bursting at the seams. Refugees have even been accommodated in a print shop for liturgical literature.

One father of five, Habib, recounts: “We left everything behind in Mosul. We were able to rescue the clothes we

are wearing, documents and a few bags from Mosul. That’s all that’s left.”

“I don’t know whether we will ever be able to go back there,” the Chaldean Catholic explains. He shrugs his shoulder. “And I don’t know what the future will bring.”

Archbishop Nona knows what the people are going through. He has become a refugee himself. When the jihadist terrorists of Islamic State of



Iraq and Syria (ISIS) took over Mosul weeks ago he and about 5,000 Christians fled from Iraq’s second largest town. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims have also attempted to find protection from the cruel holy warriors. Their number is estimated at about 450,000. Most of them have found refuge in the autonomous Kurdish areas.

“My diocese no longer exists. ISIS have taken it from me,” the archbishop says. At the present time, according to the prelate, three quarters of the approximately 10,000 members of his diocese are on the run. “I don’t know whether they will ever be able to return to Mosul.”

The mood of the people is correspondingly sombre. “There is no room for us Christians in the Middle East,” one woman says. She also fled from Mosul. She has four children. “Where are they supposed to go now? There’s nothing keeping us in Iraq any more. First the 2003 war. Then the subsequent confusion when we Christians became the target of fanatics. And now this. We want to get to the west as soon as possible.” But she has no illusions. “I know from relatives that it isn’t easy to start a new life there. But at least it’s safe. I don’t want my children to grow up in fear.”

The bishops are quite clear about what their flock think. At the synod which ended earlier this month they sought desperately for answers to the crisis which the advance of ISIS has sparked. “It’s not only the present refugee crisis,” Archbishop Nona says. “The problem is that because of the advance of ISIS and the tensions between Sunnis and Shiites, all Christians feel unsafe in Iraq.

They have lost their faith in a future here.”

At the same time the bloodletting suffered by Iraqi Christianity, a movement going back to the Apostle Thomas, is not new. Archbishop Nona reckons that more than 25,000 Chaldeans were living in Mosul alone prior to 2003, when the Americans came to topple Saddam Hussein. Before the current exodus this figure was just 5,000. In all, Iraqi Christianity has lost about two thirds of its previously 1.2 million adherents in ten years to the region and foreign countries in the west.

The bishops are now placing their hope in Kurdistan. This autonomous zone in the north of Iraq has for years become a refuge for Christians from turbulent parts of the country such as Mosul and Baghdad. It is here, the bishops believe, that they could find a new home.

*ZENIT*

## Harry Potter producer plans new film about Jesus

Harry Potter producer David Heyman has signed on to produce the film adaptation of Reza Aslan’s *Zealot*, which examines the life of Jesus through known historical fact. The book has been controversial among Christians for removing Jesus from a religious context and calling many aspects of the Bible into question. Lionsgate acquired the rights to the film adaptation in December. Heyman previously produced all eight instalments in the Harry Potter series, and is also set to produce wizarding spin-off *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* from a screenplay by JK Rowling, due in 2016. Aslan was famously featured in a car-crash promotional interview for *Zealot* on Fox News in July 2013, where he was repeatedly asked why he had written a book about Christianity when he is himself a Muslim.

Aslan stated his academic credentials as a scholar of religion many times, but found his motives continuously questioned by the Fox anchor. The interview went viral, receiving significant media attention and causing sales of the book to surge. Speaking in December, Lionsgate co-president Erik Feig said: “Reza Aslan has written a remarkable book that manages to bring the ancient world into contemporary relief and to make a timeless story very timely. We are excited to create this uniquely cinematic and immersive world for moviegoers to experience.” According to *Deadline*, James Schamus (*The Ice Storm*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) is writing the script.

*UCA News*

# Sudan confirms ban on church building

The Sudanese Minister for Guidance and Religious Endowments, Shalil Abdullah, reaffirmed on 12 July that the government will not issue permits for the building of new churches in Sudan.

The Minister, whose department oversees religious affairs in the country, stated that since South Sudan's secession, the existing Churches remaining in Sudan are sufficient for Sudan's Christian population. This is the second time that the Ministry for Guidance and Religious Endowments has confirmed the policy.

Since South Sudan seceded, the Christian community in Sudan has continued to face increased harassment from the government. Christians have been detained by the National Intelligence Security Services (NISS) and non-Sudanese Christians have been deported or refused entry into the country. Church buildings have been demolished often with less than 24 hours notice, and Church properties have been vandalised with impunity.

On 30 June, the Church of Christ in Thiba Al Hamyida in North Khartoum, which served a congregation of 430 members, was demolished while a mosque on the same plot of land was left standing. On 17 February, Sudanese authorities demolished and confiscated a 300-member Sudanese Church of Christ building in the Ombada area of Omudurman without prior notice. When authorities were questioned, they stated that the church was in a Muslim area.

On 11 July, The Catholic Bishop of the South Sudanese diocese of Tambura-Yambio, Mgr. Eduardo Hiiboro Kussala expressed his concern for the treatment of Christians in Sudan. He noted that although Christians are allowed to hold services, they are often treated like second class citizens. Speaking to Aid to the Church in Need he said: "Bishops and priests are not granted passports and they do not have legal status. They are able to leave the country but re-entry may be refused. Priests have already been expelled; and the bishops are condemned to remain silent."

Andy Dipper, Chief Operating Officer at Christian Solidarity Worldwide, said: "We are deeply concerned by Minister Shalil Abdullah's statement reaffirming the policy to deny new church permits. This policy, and the continued practice of demolishing and confiscating church land, constitutes a violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief, guaranteed in article 6 and 38 of Sudan's Interim Constitution as well as article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Sudan is signatory."



# Salesian Saints in July

In the month of July Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, Postulator General for the Causes of the Saints on the Salesian Family, reminds us about Blessed Maria Romero Meneses, of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA).

Born in Granada, Nicaragua, on 13 January 1902, she was the daughter of a Minister in the Republican Government, a very rich and generous man who however was cheated and found his economic situation permanently compromised. Maria, who had studied music, piano and violin, chose the path of religious life and became a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians. It seemed to her that the charism of Don Bosco had been created precisely to fulfil her holy aspirations.

Having made her perpetual profession she was sent to San José in Costa Rica, to teach the well-off young girls. However, she always sought out the “poor and abandoned children” like Don Bosco; and having been successful with those in the city, she went far and wide “to save souls.”

Like Don Bosco, choosing then from among her best pupils she formed disciples for the work of the oratories. She called them *the little missioneries* and they worked miracles. Even when she had to give up teaching she never stopped catechism with the little ones and the adults, even to her last breath. She developed “Social works” to the astonishment even of the Government. She even created a village for the poorest of the poor, providing each family with its own little house. She spread great devotion to Mary Help of Christians and had a church built for her in the centre of San José. Her great success was the result of her faith and of the collaboration of wealthy people won over to her cause after having experienced the effects of Marian devotion.

She was as active as she was a mystic: she lived in intimate union with God, as her days were filled with intense activity her heart remained with God. When she died a large number of little notes were found, brief messages addressed to heaven: for Jesus, for Mary, thoughts of spiritual communion, little poems about the beauty of creation and all God’s works.

She died on 7 July 1977. Today she leaves us this message: “Whoever wants to love God has to forget themselves and give themselves to Him without reserve. They have to immerse themselves in God like a stone thrown into the abyss”.



ANS

# Catholic Media Practitioners Meet

Catholic Media Practitioners have urged to be the Alternative Voice of the Church in order to bring changes in the society in accordance with the Gospel values.

Addressing Communication Coordinators and Radio personalities from all Kenyan Dioceses at Ukweli Pastoral Centre Kisumu, the Chairman of Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) - Commission for Social Communications, Rt. Rev Martin Kivuva, called on Catholic journalists to shape the nation by being the alternative voice.

Bishop Kivuva urged the communicators to encourage Kenyans to be good media practitioners since it is the business of the Catholic media to bring about the gospel values promulgated by Jesus Christ.

“We have to be different because the world is moving in different directions due to the emerging challenges,” said Bishop Kivuva.

He appealed to the communicators that they should be good men and women who can stand up to be counted in the midst of all the confusion which is being realized in the country.

He observed that Catholic Media need to highlight issues of good governance since some political leaders are not able to put into good use the monies



allocated for development in various counties but are instead fighting over power and resources.

He, however, urged the communicators to reach out to the poor and the underprivileged, adding that Catholic media has been able to accommodate all family members in their various programming.

Present at different times during the workshop were the Chairman of KCCB - Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and Archbishop of Kisumu, Most Rev. Zacchaeus Okoth, the Vice Chairman of KCCB - Commission for Social Communications, Rt. Rev. David Kamau, Secretary of Social communication AMECEA Secretariat Fr. Chrisantus Ndaga and more than 50 participants from all the Dioceses in Kenya.

*AMECEA News*

# Benedict XVI's Secretary Passes on Condolences to Pope After World Cup



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI did not watch the World Cup Final between Argentina and Germany on television but knew instantly what the final score was when he saw the expression on the face of his secretary, Archbishop George Gaenswein, the following morning.

The prefect of the Pontifical Household said he watched the match with the *Memores Domini* – consecrated women who assist Benedict XVI – and all of them rooted for Germany, although he said he felt sorry for the Argentines. “They played well but I think in the end Germany won deservedly,” he told Vatican Radio.

Germany beat Argentina by one goal at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, scored in the final minutes of extra time.

The German archbishop said he had invited Benedict XVI to watch the game which began at 9pm Rome time, but the Pope emeritus declined. “He thanked me but preferred to go to sleep,” he said.

“Of course, this morning I was going to tell him – but he had already seen my face which expressed a clear message.

Then I told him how it went and the result of the match.”

Archbishop Gaenswein said he hadn't seen Pope Francis but did pass on his “heartfelt condolences” to the Pontiff's secretary, Don Fabián Pedacchio Leaniz.

Asked about the many light-hearted and affectionate comments on social media regarding the two popes and the final, he said he had seen them and was “very glad, because you see how football has the power to unite.”

“And then we have seen many things that expressed in a joking way, sometimes in an ironic way, but in the end always in a nice, sincere way,” he said. “I think that this occasion has made it clear there is a nice harmony between the two popes.”

He underlined Pope Francis' emphasis on the importance of encounter that sport provides, especially if the match is positive. Asked about the “Pause for Peace” which the Vatican organized around the event, Archbishop Gaenswein said he was following “with great concern” the conflict in the Holy Land. But he said even if the situation has become “very worrying”, prayer is “very important” and the recent Invocation for Peace at the Vatican is “a sign and this sign must bear good fruit.”

He said sport, particularly soccer, is able to bring opposing sides together in a way politics cannot. The World Cup, he said, is an opportunity to “strengthen and appreciate” this reality.

**CISA**

# Wounded Healers

Our own experience with loneliness, depression, and fear can become a gift for others, especially when we have received good care. As long as our wounds are open and bleeding, we scare others away. But after someone has carefully tended to our wounds, they no longer frighten us or others.

When we experience the healing presence of another person, we can discover our own gifts of healing. Then our wounds allow us to enter into a deep solidarity with our wounded brothers and sisters.

To enter into solidarity with a suffering person does not mean that we have to talk with that person about our own suffering. Speaking about our own pain is seldom helpful for someone who is in pain. A wounded healer is someone who can listen to a person in pain without having to speak about his or her own wounds. When we have lived through a painful depression, we can listen with great attentiveness and love to a depressed friend without mentioning our experience. Mostly it is better not to direct a suffering person's attention to ourselves. We have to trust that our own bandaged wounds will allow us to listen to others with our whole beings. That is healing....

Nobody escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not "How can we hide our wounds?" so we don't have to be embarrassed, but "How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?" When our wounds cease to be a source of shame, and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.

Jesus is God's wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed. Jesus' suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others....

A Christian community is therefore a healing community not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for a new vision.

*Henri Nouwen, From The Wounded Healer (1972)*



# Shorter Life of Joe

Joseph was born in Liverpool on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2030. He was the eldest of four children. He is survived by two of them, Oonagh, Mother of three and myself, Dr Anne, of Hospice Africa. Father was a teacher and Mum, a House Mum as the wont in those days. Mum was deeply spiritual.

We lost our youngest brother, Bernard, at the age of 11 in 1948. He was a favourite with us all and his death after a short illness but due to cancer of the brain, touched us all. Bernard wanted to become a priest. from an early age, but Joe's call came later in his life. Both Joseph and I wondered did Bernard influence our choice of life paths? After finishing his secondary at St Edward's Christian Brothers, he completed his National service before searching for a suitable congregation. He then dedicated his life to the education of children and the broader development of youth in the teenage years. This took him literally and philosophically, up hill and down dales, all the while touching many lives, as reflected in the the many letters and messages that came to him in the 2 weeks before he died. I who had not been a part of most of this time, have been amazed at so many lives he has touched and brought to a closer relationship with God. Although his degree was in Maths and physics, his main taught subject was religious studies and its application to life today.

In retirement, Joseph who had always avoided hot weather, volunteered to come to the Salesians in Kenya to show the many young, called to this life, that it is possible to grow old as a Salesian and still be vibrant in the spirit of John Bosco, the founder. Sadly Kenya left him determined never to return, because Nairobi, living up to its name of "Nairobbery", resulted in the community living behind closed doors as it was dangerous, particularly to go out on one's own. Joseph was used to the freedom of the outdoors, where he could praise God and receive spiritual nourishment through the beauties and challenges of nature.

Joseph's confreres in the Salesians were closer to him in his years as a community member. He was not the easiest to get on with and did not suffer fools gladly, including me!! In fact some would think he did not wish you to get too close to him. But this changed dramatically in the last two weeks of his life when I got to know him better also, both on three visits to him and talking to him daily on skype from where ever I happened to be. He dreaded being a burden on anyone and confided he was more afraid of living than of dying once he was so dependent on others. I realised that much of his distancing of some in life was not to be a trouble to others!

He had kept his sicknesses very private always as not wanting to worry the family and friends. But once he realised he was dying and that he wanted to say Goodbye to so many, he allowed us to tell all and the messages and greetings came flooding in through the mobile phone, (which he still could not use except to answer) and through the mail. I was able to sit with him and discuss and explain the medical decisions being made in those weeks in hospital. Indeed he improved enough to get back to the community on Thursday 12th June. When I spoke to him that evening, he was dining with his community. But the following day he deteriorated. I was back in Uganda and on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> understood he was so ill, returned to arrive at the Hospice, midday of 17th. Thus I was with him then he died at 11.40pm that night, being cared for by a wonderful Hospice team. His Nieces, Jane and Paula were with him all afternoon and then his community came in and out to pray with him.

Joseph, I will miss you and your availability always to assist in the many challenges of my life. God grant you peace.

**Sr. Ann**  
**Fr. Joe's sister, a missionary in Uganda**

# Fr. Joseph Merriman, a great soul, goes to his father

Fr. Joseph Merriman, an English Salesian well known to many of us in East Africa, died recently in Farnborough, U.K., where he had been in retirement. He had been a Salesian for 62 years and a priest for 52 years. Although he spent only one of those fruitful years in East Africa, he is well remembered by all who came to know him, especially Utume and Bosco Boys, Nairobi. There, as in England, he was always called simply “Fr. Joe”, renowned for his rather peppery but engaging and lively character.

He had been born into a strongly catholic family in Liverpool and received a solidly catholic education. He had a sister, a religious, who worked (and is still highly active) in Uganda. However, It was during his two years of military service with the Royal Air Force that he decided to “fly higher” and dedicate his whole life to God, thinking seriously of a priestly vocation. He discovered in Don Bosco a way of life suited to his growing ambition to be at the service of youth. On his release from the armed forces he entered the novitiate and took his first vows in 1952.

For most of his Salesian career Fr. Joe was engaged in teaching, mostly mathematics and religion. He was highly regarded as an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher. At the same time he was generous and faithful in forms of pastoral and priestly ministry. For six fruitful years he was in charge of the parish of Sr. Dominic in Huyton,

Liverpool. He was never a keen sportsman, but he more than made up for this in a splendid way. He himself loved mountain walking, especially in the beautiful “Lake District” of North West England. Year after year he organized trips for youngsters to these places, helping them also to see God in the splendours of his creation. He even did the same for Italian boys in Italy. In this he shared the spirit of Don Bosco in his “Autumn Walks” from the Oratory of Turin.

During his short time in Kenya Fr. Joe served as confessor in the seminary of Utume, also regularly helping the students to check the English of the written assignments. Besides this he worked generously in «Bosco Boys», impressing all with his loving dedication. Fr. Babu reports that one of these needy boys adopted «Merriman as his second name!

Fr. Joe’s brief stay in Africa led him to an increased awareness of «Justice and Peace» issues. He became very active in this field. He issued regular bulletins and promoted various activities, such as petitioning of government authorities.

When ill health finally forced Fr. Joe to give up all activities he showed complete resignation to God’s will, even expressing his desire to «pass on» to the next life. He died on July 1st 2014, comforted by the support of his sister who had come from Uganda. May he rest in peace.

*Fr. Brian Jerstice*

# A Visit from the Goddess of Night

There are few more insightful studies into the spirituality of ageing than the late James Hillman's book, *The Force of Character*. Ironically Hillman was more critical of Christian spirituality than sympathetic to it; yet his brilliant insights into nature's design and intent offer perspectives on the spirituality of ageing that often eclipse what is found in explicitly Christian writings.

Hillman begins his book, a discourse on the nature of ageing, with a question: Why would nature design things so that, as humans, just as we reach the pinnacle of our maturity and finally get more of a genuine grip on our lives, our bodies begin to fall apart? Why do we suffer such a bevy of physical ailments as we age? Is this a cruel trick or does nature have a specific intent in mind when it does this? What might nature have in mind when the ailments and physical foibles of age begin to play some havoc with our days and nights?

He answers these questions with a metaphor: The best wines have to be aged and mellowed in cracked old barrels. This image of course needs little explication. We all know the difference between a mellow old wine and a tart young one that could still use some maturation. What we don't grasp as immediately is how that old wine became so mellow, what processes it had to endure to give up the sharp tang of its youth.

Thus, Hillman's metaphor speaks brilliantly: Our physical bodies are the containers within which our souls mellow and mature; and our souls mellow and mature more deeply when our bodies begin to show cracks than they do when we are physically strong and whole, akin to what John Updike wrote after undergoing a death-threatening illness. For Updike, there are some secrets that are hidden from health.

For Hillman there is a depth of maturity that is also hidden from health.

With that fundamental insight as his ground, Hillman then goes on in each chapter of the book to take up one aspect of aging, one aspect of the loss of the wholeness of our youth, and show how it is designed to help mellow and mature the soul. And since he is dealing with various lapses in our bodies and our health, we can expect that what follows will be pretty earthy and far from glamorous.

Thus, for instance, he begins one chapter with the question: Why does it happen that, as we age, we find it more difficult to sleep uninterrupted through the night but instead are awakened with the need to go to the bathroom and heed a call of nature? What is nature's wisdom and intent in that?

Hillman answers with another insightful analogy:



In monasteries, monks get up each night while it is still dark and do an exercise they call “Vigils”. If you asked them why they don’t do this prayer during the day so as to save themselves getting up in the middle of the night, they would tell you that this particular exercise can only be done at night, in the dark, in the



particular mood that the night brings. The night, the dark, and the more sombre angels this brings cannot be artificially replicated during the day, in the light. Light brings a sunnier mood and there are certain things we will not face in the light of day, but only when the dark besets us.

So what happens when our ageing bodies make us get up at night to heed nature’s call? We heed nature’s call but then often are unable to fall back into sleep immediately. Instead we lie in our beds trying to will ourselves back to sleep when something unwanted and unintended happens. We receive a visit from the mythical goddess of night, Nyx. She doesn’t come alone; she brings along her children: unresolved bitterness, lingering grudges, unwanted paranoia, frightening shadows, and a bevy of other dark spirits whom we can normally avoid and whom we refuse to face when the lights are on. But now, in the dark, unable to sleep, we must deal with them, and dealing with them, making our peace with Nyx and her children, helps mellow our souls and helps us grow to a deeper maturity.

Monks already know this and so, each night, they schedule a session with the goddess of night. They don’t call it that of course and might even be offended by the reference to their Vigil prayer as a visit with this mythical goddess, but their spiritual wisdom mirrors that of nature. Both nature and monks know that a certain work inside the soul can only be done in the darkness of night.

Monks have secrets worth knowing and nature eventually teaches them to us, whether we want the lesson or not. Nature eventually turns us all into monks: Our ageing bodies eventually become a monastic cell within which our souls deepen, mellow, and mature, like wines being seasoned in cracked old barrels.

***Ronald Rolheiser***

# Africa/Madagascar and Caribbean/ Pacific Don Bosco PDA/BTA Meeting

Salesians and Lay collaborators comprising of 45 members from the Planning and Development Office (PDOs) of 12 provinces, Vice Provinces and Circumscriptions in African/Madagascar, representatives from the region of two Caribbean Countries - Dominican Republic and Haiti, representatives from Don Bosco Mondo Germany, Via Don Bosco Belgium and VIS gathered at DBYES for a 4 day international meeting from 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

Fr. Americo Chaquise the Regional councilor for Africa/Madagascar, Fr. Gianni Rolandi, the provincial AFE, the General Councilors Fr. Fabio Attard (Councilor for Youth Pastoral) and Fr. Guilermo Basanes (Councilor for Missions) were present for this important meeting. Mr. Ivan Toscan from VIS guided the meeting throughout the first day. The discussions of the first day was focused on presentation of the PDO projects and the Bosco Tech Africa (BTA ) initiative.

The discussions outlined the importance of understanding the Salesian Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems in Africa and the importance of developing effective VET strategies in the strategic plan of the PDOs.

Mr. Pascal Annycke a Special Protection Expert from the UN presented the scope of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in creating informing employment for the youth in Africa. He noted that this sector which was for a long time termed as informal sector is now referred to as informal economy with about 80% youth in the developing world. It is a sector which has no form of social protection and many people of the youth who work in this sector rarely have access to water and



sanitation. With their low level of formal education, payment are normally very poor and generally, their skills are acquired at work. Technical Vocation Education and Training (TVET) therefore is a source of growth in informal economy and it is a system that invests in raising the level of skills of the young people and adults inside this economy

The representatives of Bosco Mondo and Via Don Bosco were also given a chance to present to the meeting their role of partnership in fostering TVET in Africa.

At the end of the meeting the following conclusions were drawn



## **BTA FINAL CONCLUSIONS IN SUMMARY**

- Create collaborative structures and mentalities.
- PDO to help BTA with capacity building of staff.
- Develop common programs on pedagogy, training, administration and staff targeting TVET
- Build up and develop TVET training centers
- Develop tools for a continuous training of TVET staff
- Share a common success stories.

## **PDO CONCLUSIONS IN SUMMARY**

- Help PDOs put in place tools and methods to manage their offices
- Build the capacities of PDO staff so that they could perform and do their work professionally
- Help PDO offices to come up with their strategic plan
- Train PDOs in how to conduct the needs assessment in the communities
- Work and support partnership in planning
- Three regions of PDOs were created and three regional coordinators/managers were appointed. The regions are divided as follows:
  - ❖ East Africa and South of Africa
  - ❖ West Africa, Haiti and the Caribbean
  - ❖ Central Africa with Madagascar, Mozambique and Angola
- Conduct trainings for the PDOs according to regions between August and September

***Eric Mairura***

# Man who has taken vow of poverty wins US\$ 259 million



A Tennessee man who took a vow of poverty as part of his membership with a religious organization, claimed the largest lottery prize in the state's history, worth \$259.8 million, last Thursday.

Roy Cockrum, known as Brother Roy for his service with The Society of Saint John the Evangelist, embraced the organization's rule of taking several vows in order to live a selfless life. Now that he has won the lottery, Cockrum intends to give a large portion of his money to charities and religious organizations. "I really believe the best way to prepare for this tsunami of cash has been to live under a vow of poverty for a number of years," said Cockrum in a statement, reports NBC affiliate WCYB news. "It gives great perspective ... I have no doubt that I am one of the luckiest people in the world. I am so grateful. I am so blessed." Cockrum, who will accept a lump sum payment of \$115 million, says his new job will be to ensure his money goes towards blessing others in need. In addition, Cockrum intends to use the majority of the money

to start a foundation that will support performing arts organizations across the country, after he gives ten percent of his total amount as tithes. During a press conference, Cockrum admitted that he did not have great expectations for his lottery ticket as he was taking care of his ailing mother the moment he first checked his ticket. "It's a hard thing to process; your brain doesn't want to believe it.

I was in a rush to take mom to a medical appointment when I first checked the ticket. I saw the Powerball match and three winning numbers and thought, 'Wow! \$500! You never win that much on Powerball.' I felt really lucky," said Cockrum. He added, "But then – wait a minute, wait a minute – there's another number, and finally I realized I hit the jackpot. It literally knocked me to my knees. My prayer was simple, 'Lord have Mercy!...' " Cockrum noted that he got up and put the winning ticket in his wallet and went about his day as he walked around the University of Tennessee Medical Center with his mother that morning, carrying the ticket for hours until he finally claimed the prize.

Having worked for 20 years as an actor and stage manager for theater and TV productions, Cockrum says he also plans to keep enough money for a pension fund. As part of his membership in the society, Cockrum also took a vow of lifelong celibacy and obedience. The society is an Episcopal organization and characterizes itself as a monastic experience.

*UCA News*

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