

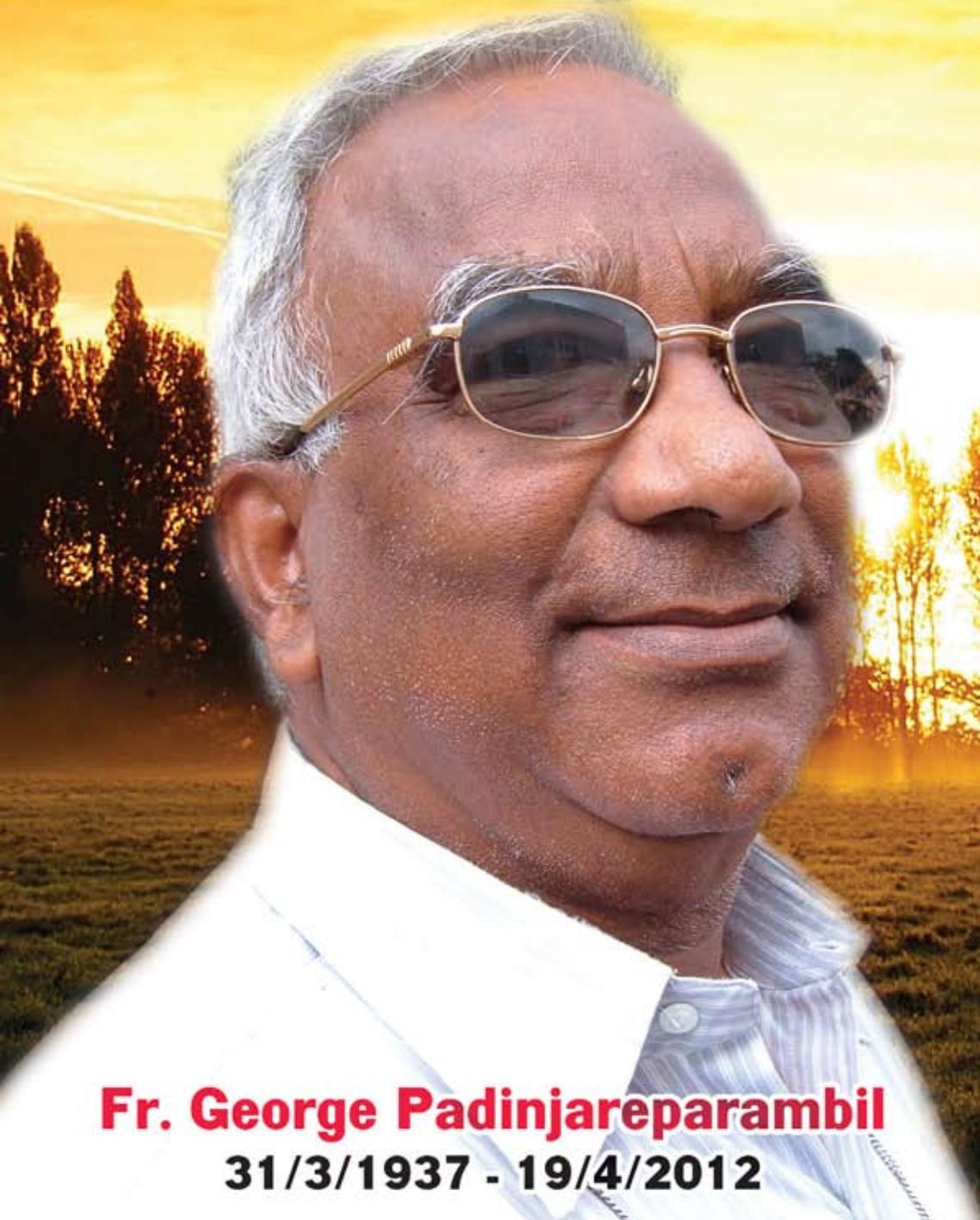
DON BOSCO EASTERN AFRICA

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO PUBLICATION

SALESIAN FAMILY BULLETIN
3RD QUARTER, JULY 2012



A Great Heart Stops Beating



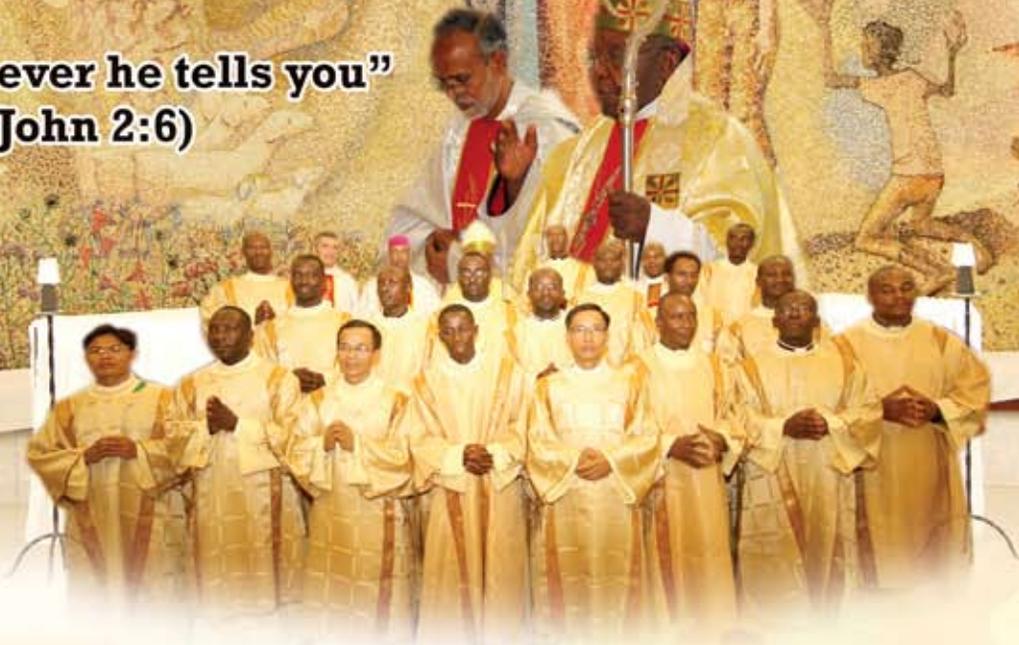
Fr. George Padinjareparambil

31/3/1937 - 19/4/2012

Diaconate Ordination

2012

**“Do whatever he tells you”
(John 2:6)**



Live Streaming (on line.tv)

BEAMS (Bosco Eastern Africa Multimedia Services} will be live streaming important events of the Salesian province of East Africa. Pay attention to the link published on Harambee Link and watch the events as they unfold.

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Bosco Eastern Africa Multimedia
Services [B.E.A.M.S.]
P.O. Box 2 - 00502, Karen -
Kenya.
E-mail: afebulletin@donboscoeastafrica.
org
www.dbafe.org

Photos Courtesy

B.E.A.M.S.

Printed by:

DON BOSCO PRINTING PRESS
P.O. Box 158 - 01020,
Makuyu, Kenya
E-mail: boscoprint@donbosco.or.ke



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The Salesian Bulletin was founded by St. John Bosco in 1877. 'Don Bosco Eastern Africa' is the Salesian Bulletin published by the Salesians of Don Bosco, Eastern Africa Province Nairobi, Kenya.

We welcome letters to the Editor. Send your comments and suggestions.

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From the

EDITOR

The candle has burned out

"Death is more universal than life, everyone dies but not everyone lives." A. Sachs. The Salesian province of Eastern Africa lost a pioneer, a die-hard missionary, Fr. George Padinjarapambil, affectionately known as Fr. PD, when the Lord called him in April. "...everyone dies but not everyone lives!" But Fr. PD today lives in the memory of many people with whom he worked and for whom he lived. Fr. PD was part of the first batch of missionaries who came from India to plant the charism of Don Bosco in East African soil. Of all the places that were given to the Salesians to start their missions, Fr. PD, was given the toughest, Korr, in the district of Marsabit in Western Kenya. He courageously took up the challenge built and brought up the mission educated hundreds of children. To the people of Korr he was a baba (father). A week after his death I met one of the girls who was educated by Fr. George in Nairobi, her first question was "Why did you not bring Fr. George's body to Korr to be buried? Fr. George himself wanted to be buried in Korr. Though he had to move away from Korr due to his ill health his spirit always remained in Korr and with its people. Fr. George truly left us a legacy which can be read in the many messages of condolences that were sent after his death which is published in this bulletin. Fr. George gave us a great example of hard work, resilience and self-sacrifice and his spirit lives on, in the province. "For certain is the death of the born and certain is the birth for the dead; therefore over the inevitable thou should not grieve." (Bhagavad Gita.) Let's not grieve over the death of Fr. PD but let's thank the Lord for the gift of Fr. PD to this province.

This bulletin carries two articles from the Rector Major which he usually writes to be published in the Salesian Bulletin worldwide. In the first article the RM tells us about the Salesian co-operator who is a Salesian in the world. This group was started by Don Bosco and further developed by Don Rua his first successor. In Don Bosco's words, "these Co-workers or Co-operators were always the support of the Pious Works which Divine Providence placed in our hands." In the second article the RM speaks about the importance of communication in order to educate and evangelize effectively. He speaks about Don Bosco's experience of growing up. As a young boy he was a great communicator drawing other boys to himself teaching them, repeating to them the sermon he heard in the Church, leading them to God. Don Bosco was a great story-teller, through them he drew hundreds to God. "He was a skillful, educational communicator, an effective preacher and lecturer... Don Bosco understood the importance of communication and of mobilizing public opinion".

In the month of May I was invited to celebrate the Mass for the feast of Mary Help of Christians in an Oratory run by the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB), a little known group, part of the salesian family, a Lay consecrated group of women. It was amazing to see how that center has become a home to the youth around the neighborhood. It was wonderful to see that every day the young people came there and made it their home, the animators mainly the VDBs totally in love with Don Bosco and his charism. Don Bosco was alive and was present there.

As we prepare to celebrate the bi-centenary of the birth of our Father we are invited to study him to know him better. Studying him is part of it and putting into practice his charism is more important. Let imitating him be the program as we prepare for this great event.

Sebastian Koladiyil

COMING TO KNOW DON BOSCO

THE IDEA OF THE COOPERATOR IN THE MIND OF DON BOSCO:

LEVELS OF BELONGING AND COMMITMENT TO AN ORIGINAL IDEA

«I always needed the help of everybody»

Don Bosco was never afraid to ask. In order to enter the seminary he went begging for the first time, the first of a long series throughout his life.

«All that remained now was to supply him with the clerical habit and accessories that his mother could not afford to provide. Fr Cinzano discussed this problem with some of his parishioners who eagerly agreed to help. Mr Sartoris supplied the cassock, Mayor Pescarmona the hat, the pastor gave him his own cape. Others donated a clerical collar, a biretta and a few pairs of socks while a good woman of the parish volunteered to take up a collection to buy him a pair of shoes. The good Lord will act thus again in later years. Through charitable people He will assist John in all his undertakings. We heard Don Bosco repeat more than once: - I always needed the help of everybody!» (*Biographical Memoirs I, 274-5*).

Don Bosco was never ashamed to beg.

At Toulon, in 1881, after a conference, «Don Bosco made the rounds of the church to take up a collection. As he did so, something out of the ordinary occurred. When he held out the plate to a workman, the latter rudely turned away. Don Bosco passed him by and softly said, "God bless you." The man then thrust his hand into his pocket and dropped the equivalent of five cents in the plate. Looking into his eyes, Don Bosco said, "May God reward you." The man repeated his gesture, this time giving ten cents. Thereupon Don Bosco told him. "My friend, God reward you even more!" On hearing this the man took out his purse and donated a franc. With a telling glance of tenderness Don Bosco moved on. As though drawn by a magnet, the man followed him through the church into the sacristy, and later even into the town, keeping after him until Don Bosco disappeared from view.» (*Biographical Memoirs XV, 45*).

The Don Bosco Cooperators

Before giving a name to his non-religious helpers Don Bosco hesitated for quite some time prior to deciding to settle on the name

«Salesian Cooperators», only after a long series of events.

The introduction to the text of the Regulations, published in Albenga in 1876, opens with the words : «To the Reader. No sooner had the Work of the Oratories begun in 1841 than some pious and zealous priests and lay people came to help in the cultivation of the copious harvest among the young people in danger. These Co-workers or Co-operators were always the support of the Pious Works which Divine Providence placed in our hands.» Not only Cooperators who have made their promise, but a vast network of cooperation, support, friendship, charitable donations ..., very well cared for. There is a need to recover this original idea of Don Bosco, developed by Don Rua and his successors, which made it possible for the Salesian work to spread throughout the world.

In recent years an attempt has been made to make the Cooperator better understood, appreciating more one of the aspects in Don Bosco's vision (that of the "external" Salesian.) Don Bosco had the idea of a re-organisation of Catholics in order to re-Christianise society; the idea of giving financial support to Salesian works; the idea of Catholic lay "voluntary service" in the pastoral area (teaching catechism, helping the parish clergy) or the social area (through education, assistance, training, safeguarding).

The things Don Bosco said in conferences and did himself clarified the nature, the forms and the significance of cooperation. He was addressing cooperators and benefactors, but also people engaged in various apostolates (autonomous or as part of Church-sponsored activities). *Practical forms of charity* constitute a large part of what he said and did, as he made appeals which were more and more insistent and demanding.

At a Formal Conference on 1 June 1885, Don Bosco declared: "To be



a Salesian Cooperator means to cooperate with other people in the support of a work, the purpose of which is to help Holy Church in her most immediate needs. By so doing, one helps to promote an undertaking warmly recommended by the Holy Father since it will educate the boys in virtue and guide them towards the sanctuary. Its main purpose is to educate the young who are today the target of evil people, and to promote the love of our religion in the midst of the world, in schools, in hospices, festive oratories, and the family circle and to promote also morals, prayer, approach to the Sacraments and so on."

In the XXI century

Approved by the Holy See on 9 May 1986, promulgated by the Rector Major Fr Egidio Viganò the following 24 May, the *New Regulations* define the renewed image of the Salesian Cooperator at the dawn of the XXI century, with regard to the identity, the spirit, the mission and the organisation of the Association.

«Cooperators are Catholics who living their faith within the framework of their own secular condition, draw their inspiration from Don Bosco's apostolic project: by committing themselves to the same mission among the young and poor in partnership and in a brotherly way; in close communion

with the other members of the Salesian Family; working for the good of the Church and of society; to the best of their ability.»

Those who drew up this article wanted to go back to Don Bosco's original intentions, according to which the Cooperators are real Salesians in the world, in other words Christians, lay people or priests, who without the ties of the religious vows, live their own call to holiness in the service of the young and the working classes according to the spirit of Don Bosco. Defined in this way Cooperators have three characteristics: Catholics, in the world and Salesian.

PASCUAL CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA

Communicating effectively in order to evangelise and educate

COMING TO KNOW DON BOSCO

Over since he was a boy John Bosco had the gift of being able to communicate effectively. A personal gift: fascination with words, the art of story-telling inherited from a rich ancient oral tradition, put at the service of the mission for an educative and pastoral purpose. Writing about himself as a boy surrounded by companions he says: « But it was to hear my stories that they flocked round me. They loved them to the point of folly. I drew on many sources for my anecdotes-sermons, catechism lessons, and stories I had read in *The Kings of France*, in *Wretched Guerino*, and in *Bertolo and Bertoldino*. When I appeared, my companions and even grown-ups would run to me in a crowd and clamour for a story from a fellow who scarcely understood what he had read. At times, along the road to Castelnuovo or in some field I would be surrounded by hundreds of people, anxious to hear what a poor child had to say. Apart from a good memory, I lacked any knowledge; but they seemed to think I was a great scholar in their midst. "In the kingdom of the blind,

the one-eyed man is king.» (*MO ed. 2011, p. 65-66*).

Having become a priest he was inundated by requests: «I am invited to go now here, now there to preach triduum, novenas or days of recollection, but I don't dare to move from here not knowing who to leave to look after the house. How much good we could do » he wrote to Fr Alasonatti in the early days of the Oratory.

Having so much to do with boys and young people, Don Bosco was a great story-teller.

His way of teaching was through stories, his spirituality was through stories, the training of his co-workers was through stories, the public information he gives about his plans and what he is doing is through stories. The subject matter of the stories is the Christian life as it is lived, the Word of God and the practical example of the saints, people's virtuous actions and their good deeds, the positive results obtained through the efforts in education and formation at the Oratory, the works achieved, his dreams and his ideals.

A TALENTED STRATEGIST

His pastoral activity consisted above all in speaking about the marvels worked by the Lord: DB speaks about the Bible as sacred "history", the story of God's saving work and his marvels among men, the story of the acts of fidelity and infidelity of his children. For him the Word of God is not simply a book but a word to be proclaimed, addressed to particular hearers, applied to life situations, "a guide on the road to heaven" (*Life of Dominic Savio, ed. 1859, p. 30*).

DB wrote a great deal. Not for the learned, but for the boys and the people, for the members of the Salesian Family. He wrote as a shepherd and Christian educator. He wanted to touch the hearts and minds in order to form and to inform, to sensitise and gather together. He wanted to convert, to encourage to be good, to open up wide horizons for the young, to arouse vocations and collaboration. He spreads ideas in relation to living a Christian life, with a view to social regeneration, the cultural and spiritual development of the young, through the press and by

word of mouth (from little talks to the boys and the Salesians, to Good Nights, to Saint Francis of Sales conferences, to charity sermons in the churches of Italy, France and Spain ...). His published writings have been collected in an anastatic edition of 38 volumes (distributed by the LAS Publishers).

He was also gifted in the organisation and in the strategies of communication. In an historical context of extremely rapid expansion of popular publishing and the spreading of ideas and styles of life alternative to the Christian ones. Don Bosco understood the importance of communication and of mobilising public opinion. He was not satisfied with being a writer of books to educate the young: he became a publisher (beginning with the successful series *Lecture Cattolice*), founder of a printing press and of publishing houses. He spurred on and encouraged Salesians, FMA, Cooperators and friends to become writers, authors of school books, journalists, playwrights and music composers. There was a time when Salesians became specialists in communication, well prepared culturally, competent in their own field on a par with any professional (intellectual skills and technical skills). They taught the Catholic world through their publishing houses: in their footsteps other Congregations followed, dedicated to the good press. The *Salesian Bulletin* was the model for hundreds of similar publications.

How much of this enormous and intelligent commitment remains? There is a danger of losing a passion, a skill, a practice and a culture. It is a tradition to be recovered and refreshed ; a series of skills to be reacquired, through suitable training courses and more prudent choices, by profiting from lay professionals and past pupils.

TO SALESIANS ON THE SPREADING OF GOOD BOOKS

I want to see you grow in zeal and in merit before God, every Day, and so I will not hesitate to suggest to you from time to time various means which I believe to be an improvement, so that your ministry will be more fruitful. Amongst



these, one that I want to warmly recommend to you, for the glory of God and the good of souls, is the **spreading of good books.**

Good books, spread amongst the people, are one of the active ways to preserve the kingdom of the Saviour in so many souls.

You can add that the book, even if on the one hand it does not have the power of the living word, on the other hand offers even greater advantages in certain circumstances. The good book can enter a house where the priest cannot, it is even tolerated by bad people as a gift or remembrance. No need to blush, offering it, no need to worry if it is neglected; when read it teaches truths calmly, if you don't like it it doesn't have to leave you bored, yet it leaves feelings of misgiving that sometimes spark a desire to know the truth. Meanwhile it is always ready to teach

How many the souls saved by good books, how many preserved from error, how many encouraged in doing good. The one who gives a good book might have no other merit than to awaken some thought of God, but has already gained an incomparable merit before God. And yet how much more is gained. A book in a family, if not read by the one to whom it was given or intended, is read by a son or daughter, by a friend or neighbour. A book in a village then

passes into the hands of a hundred people. God alone knows the good that a book produces in a city, in a travelling library, in a worker's club, in a hospital, given as a mark of friendship.

I ask and beseech you then not to neglect this most important part of our mission.

SAINT JOHN BOSCO

(Circular letter to Salesians on the spreading of good books, 19.03.1885)

PASCUAL CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA



A Great Heart Stops Beating

On April 19th, 2012 George Padinjareparambil went home to his creator. Fr. Gianni the Provincial of Eastern Africa Salesian province announced the news with the following words, "With sadness and bowing to the will of God, I announce to you the news of the passing away of Reverend Father George Padinjareparampil (1937-2012)".

Fr. PD George was called to the Lord on the morning of April 19, 2012 at 9.00 am (local time in India and 6.30 am Kenyan Time). Fr. George suffered a massive cardiac arrest while taking breakfast with his younger brother at home in Kanjirappally, Kottayam District in Kerala, India. Those present at the moment tried to reach the nearest

medical facility but then he died along the way as they were taking him to hospital.

Fr George was born on March 31, 1937 at Kanjirappally, Kottayam District in Kerala, India to Dominic Padinjareparambil and Elizabeth. Both father and mother are dead.

He took his elementary and intermediate studies at St Dominic's Primary School in Kanjirappally from 1941 to 1952. He then proceeded to the north eastern states of India where he took his high school studies at both Bandel (1953 - 1956) and Sonada (1956 - 1959) during which he also did his aspirantate programme.

At the completion of his aspirantate Fr. George then joined the novitiate at Sunnyside, Shillong on April 26, 1959 and made his first profession a year later on April 26, 1960 at Sunnyside in Shillong, India as a Salesian belonging to Gauhati Province. On May 24, 1965 he made his perpetual profession at Sonada. He was ordained a priest on December 20, 1969 at Ernakulam, Kerala in India.

From 1970 – 1973 he worked as a catechist at the aspirantate, Bandel India, from 1973 – 1975 he was the assistant parish priest at Kohima and in 1975 he was appointed as the parish priest at Tseminyu.

With the starting of Project Africa, following the 1978 General Chapter XXI and the three countries of Eastern Africa, Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania being entrusted to the Salesian Provinces of India, Fr. George was among the first Salesians to set foot on the Kenyan soil. Upon his arrival in Kenya in September 1980 he was assigned to Korr Mission of Marsabit diocese in the arid area of Northern Kenya. On May 24, 1981 the parish was formally handed over to the Salesians with Fr. Matthew Vadacherry as the parish priest and George as his assistant. Fr. George then took charge of Korr as a parish priest in 1982 and remained in the same place as Rector and parish priest until August 11, 1991 when he went to join Don Bosco Hall community in Berkley, USA for a one year course in Salesian Studies

Don't Quit!

**Quit I will, I was determined,
Of life and struggle I am tired;
Friends and foes I care not,
While away my time, I do a lot.**

**In the forest I took a walk
Ambling among the weeds n' twigs,
Murmuring against the Almighty,
If such a one ever exists!**

**A torrent of why-s and what-s flood
my mind,
Searching for an answer from this
mighty God,
Just one reason, one justification
Can He hold out for my satisfaction?**

**Look at all the mess we are in,
Who can fathom the agony and
pain?
And the fearful nights filled with
worry?
Is he blind to all this, so scary?**

**Out into the open I went,
To the chirping birds an ear I lent;
The luscious green ferns I admired,
And the bamboos swaying high up in
the wind.**

**A story of old across my mind
flashed,
Of the fern and the bamboo in the
forest;
While the one quickly springs up
and flowers,
The other sleeps in the mud for
years.**

**Taller by far the bamboo grows,
'cause it had struck deep its fibrous
roots,
While we thought that it was dead
Who fathomed life we see ever
would?**

**And so it is, a voice said to me,
When life is hard and going tough,
Hold fast and strike deep roots.
You will weather when the sea is
rough.**

Fr. George. 03.11.08



and Spirituality. It was while at Korr that he proved to be a man of hard work and of great perseverance as can be attested from Fr. Stephen Chemmalakuzhy, a one-time Provincial Superior of the vice-province and then Province of Eastern Africa, *"Fr. George is one of the founder members of Korr Mission. Loves to work in the difficult environs of Korr. In our present circumstance, he is the only person available. ..."*

Returning from Berkeley Fr. George worked in various places: Moshi Novitiate and Postnovitiate in Tanzania as administrator (1992 – 1993), Didia, Shinyanga in Tanzania, In-charge and pioneer of the mission (1993 – 1994), Upanga, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Procurator and house administrator (1994 – 1995), Mafinga Seminary in Tanzania, Administrator (1995 – 1996), Don Bosco Upper Hill, Nairobi in Kenya, Rector (1996 – 1997), Back to Korr as Rector and Parish Priest (1998 – 2000), Boys Town, Nairobi in Kenya, Satellite in Charge (2001), Treatment to India (2001), Bosco Boys Nairobi in Kenya, Director of the Prenovitiate programme (2002 – 2005), Boys Town (2005 – 2008), Moshi Novitiate and Post-novitiate in Tanzania (2008 – 2009), Morogoro Novitiate in Tanzania (2009 – 2010), Bosco Boys Nairobi in Kenya (2010 – 2012).

In the earlier years of his missionary life in Eastern Africa Fr. George enjoyed good health and was able to apply himself seriously to his work among the people. However, in 1994 he started showing signs of heart problems coupled with

hypertension. On June 25, 1994 he was operated for abdominal aorta in Madras. He had to remain with this condition until his death.

But it was in 2000 when he was diagnosed and found to be suffering from kidney problems, along with the heart and blood pressure issues. This made the superiors invite him to come out of Korr and work in Don Bosco Boys' Town close to medical facilities. This too also proved quite unbearable and Fr. George had to go to Bangalore for further medical attention. It turned out that he had to be operated on and strangely three surgeries had to be done in the same year 2001.

The life of Fr. George could be looked at as a beautiful mosaic creating a wonderful blending of gifts of both nature and grace. As a man he was solid in his convictions and he would go to any length towards achieving what he believed (in conscience) to be right, yet he was also so humble that he would always seek the permission of his superiors before undertaking any project. When the opinion of the superior conflicted with his he would always make his mind known, but then he would add "but I will do what you tell me out of obedience."

Fr. Simon Asira the Vice Provincial of the Salesian Province of Eastern Africa has this to say, "In my interactions with Fr. George I was enabled to witness how loving and compassionate he was towards the poor youth. He would literary do everything within his possibilities to make sure they had a decent

education, clothing and food! His presence in Korr has truly earned him the title of 'the desert father' not because of the traditional ascetic religious practices but rather because of the way he involved himself in the life of the people of the desert to the point that a great majority of them see in him 'a father.' Literary, hundreds of boys and girls have managed to get not just primary education, but more importantly, secondary, college and university education due to his determination and love. This is what being a Salesian in action is all about."

We have indeed lost a passionate missionary who lived his life for those he loved in God through Don Bosco. In his written will which he wrote on February 15, 2001 before proceeding to India for the multiple surgeries, among a number of things he wrote one of them stands out very clearly as one of the characteristic quality of his Salesian and Missionary spirit. He wrote: *"If it should happen that God wants to cut short my life and call me to Himself I willingly submit to His divine Will. My only request to my superiors is that if it is possible my mortal remains should be interred in Korr. ... I would like to be remembered as one who lived to die for his people and died to live among them forever."*

Many beautiful messages of condolences came immediately after the death of this great missionary. Some of them are given below:

"Very sorry to hear of this news. Be assured of my prayers - and our prayers here at the Pisana."

Julian Fox

"Pole sana ! May his soul rest in peace. He lived a fulfilled life, a great missionary indeed. God bless him."

Bennet Aranja

"It is sad indeed. We will pray for his eternal rest, for his family and the AFE Province. Tomorrow we will celebrate the Mass for this intention."

**Fr. Crisafulli Jorge,
Provincial of AFW.**

"Dear Fr. George Rest in peace! I've experienced his total dedication, even in times of health

problems, to the youth and his professionalism in teaching in Boys' Town; He will be remembered as an example of true missionary, not to mention how many people here in Korr remember his unforgotten contribution toward success of the mission here. Fr. George remember us when receiving your reward in heaven."

Fr. Waldemar Jonatowski

"When I lived with Fr. P.D. George in Tanzania (Moshi), I found him to be a caring person. Despite his poor health, he was a very resilient person. I personally found him a very friendly person. He had also a big concern for the poor youth especially those who had problems looking for money to pay school fees. May his soul rest in eternal peace."

Bishop Clement

reward him with eternal bliss and lasting life for his tireless zeal and commitment to Salesian Mission. Let us offer up our prayers and solidarity to his dear and near ones of the family."

Joe Prabu sdb

"I receive these sad and also Easter news while I'm fulfilling the Extraordinary Visitation in AGL. Thanks a lot for sharing your sorrow, and the sorrow of the whole AFE Province, for the departure of our beloved Fr. George PD. MAY HIS SALESIAN AND MISSIONARY SOUL REST IN PEACE. Amen.

Don Guillermo Basañes

"Mes condoléances au nom de la Province AFO. Nous prions pour que Dieu lui donne la récompense de ceux qui ont voulu donner leur vie à Lui et aux jeunes. En union de prières"

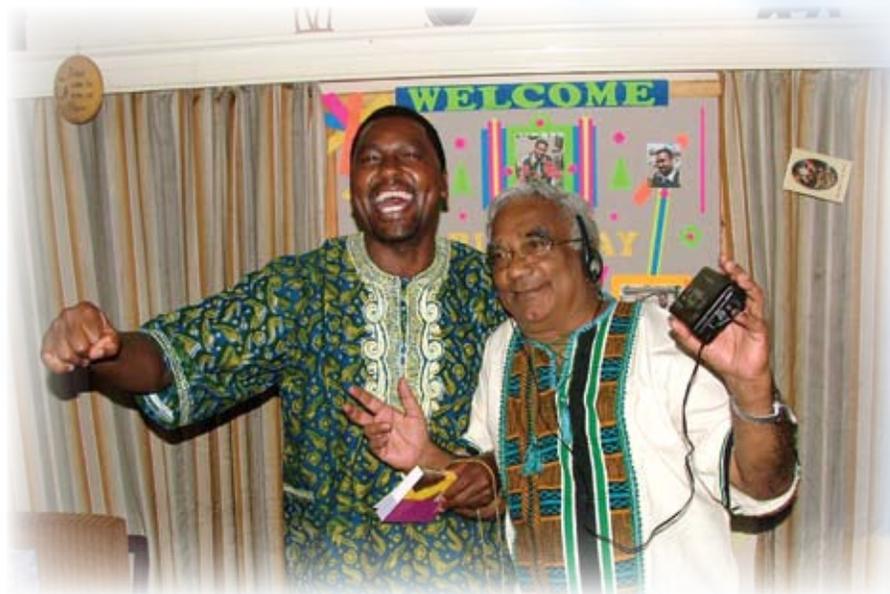
Faustino

"I was sorry to hear about the sudden death of Fr. George. I will surely pray for him, for his eternal rest with all our saints. My condolences to the family, especially Fr. Dominic and PT Jose."

"As I think of Fr. George, the picture that comes to my mind is his arrival at Upper Hill with his car from Korr. Tired, exhausted, full of stories to tell and errands to make in Town. Sometimes upset, but always taken up by the work he was doing for his people of Korr. He may have moved to other places, but his heart was in Korr."

Well, pioneers - like Fr. George - leave and go to other places as the Lord wishes, but they leave behind the fragrance of their love (sometimes demanding!): their lives, their ideals (Don Bosco, the youth, the poor) and their memory spurs us on in our vocation!"

Fr. Gianni Uboldi



"Pole Confreres, TIRELESS, TOUGH, TENDER HEARTED - that's what P.D. George was to me. May his soul rest in eternal TRANQUILITY!"

Fr. Tony Fernandes

"Dear Fr. George Rest in peace! Thanks for your dedicated life in our Province. You are no longer with us. God who gave you life also called you to His kingdom to reward you for everything that you have done in this world. Now you know what is there and what God wants from us - love and dedicated life in our vocation and mission. I am with you by prayer and gratitude for your life offered to Don Bosco. May he invite you to our salesian Paradise.

Whatever you have done good, may God accept it and any faults, human weakens with hot temper which brought some misunderstanding and problems forgive you inviting you to His kingdom. With prayer for your soul."

Fr. John

"My sincere and heartfelt condolences and prayerful wishes to the Provincial and all the confreres on the sad passing away of Fr. PD. George.

"In him we had in the Salesian Province, a great pioneer and a Salesian who believed in and practiced hard and dedicated work. Sympathies to his family and especially to his own SDB brothers. May he rest in peace."

"May Fr. P.D. George keep inspiring us to stay close to the path taken by Don Bosco and the early Salesian pioneers."

I Raj

"I am very sorry to hear the death of fr. George, I assure you of our prayers for his soul." With prayers

Fr. John Peter.

"I am saddened to hear of the demise of Fr. PD George. I express my heartfelt condolences and sympathy. I believe that God has purified his life through the painful moments experienced during his sickness. May the Almighty God

"We the Fathers and the inmates of the Bishop's House are saddened at the death of Fr. P.D. George. Some of us have met him but others have not. We pray his eternal repose. As the diocese we offer our heartfelt condolences to the Provincial and all the members of the Province and to his dear and near ones.

We will keep praying for him.

Archbishop John Moolachira Assam, India

On behalf of the Confreres of the Sudan Delegation I extend my sincere and heartfelt condolences. Fr PD George will be always a great inspiration to the AFE members and will be greatly remembered for his apostolic courage and missionary passion that he has left behind. It is difficult to cope up with his daring missionary drive and to steer ahead with doing good for the poor. His gift of Jesus as a priest to the people of Korr mission in particular has already produced great gifts in vocations and a strong christian culture around the mission. Thank you Father George PD.

"It is a moment of great trial for the family. All that we could say, which is so easy to us is, heartfelt condolences. I am sure you would definitely need words and gestures that would be more compatible to the intensity of sadness and sorrow that you and the family are going through at this time. We accompany you all with our affectionate prayers and assurance of our solidarity sharing the sadness of the demise of Fr. PD George. It's a loss to us as a province and congregation. I am sure your presence is of great consolation to the family as well to give more courage and faith to accept this loss. The spirit of Easter inspires us and takes us beyond our human capacity to understand. May the risen Jesus accompany you all and bring to the family the great

Christian courage to say YOUR WILL BE DONE and thank God for such a wonderful gift of the life of Fr. George PD, a great son of Don Bosco."

Fr. Ferrington SDB

"May God reward the late Fr. P.D. George for all his love and sacrifices on behalf of the people of Korr and other missions where he had been. May he intercede for us to be courageous, daring and self-sacrificing and loving missionaries like him."

"My close association with Fr. George was when I was sent to Korr in 1991 as a new priest. That time Fr. George was getting ready to go to the States for studies at Berkley. Of the many things he said and did, two things impressed me very much which I value and appreciate and try to follow. Fr. George told me/us to take care of the young and to invest in them as they are the future of the church and the Society. Second, Father had seen that teachers, people in the medical profession and others from down country found it difficult to serve the people of those arid and semi-arid areas and do justice to them. Hence he started educating the young people of the place by sending them to secondary schools, seminaries, teachers training colleges, nursing schools, technical schools etc. all over Kenya. He had the Africa Oggi to make sacrifices



and to collect funds for this noble endeavor. Today we reap the fruits of his vision and effort. Teachers, head-teachers, nurses, priests and professionals in various fields, from Korr serve the people of Korr and the wider area. May Fr. George enjoy the company of Our Father and founder Don Bosco and along with him and the multitude of the heavenly hosts sing the praises of God and continue to intercede for us mortals."

"It is with great sadness I received the news of the passing away of Fr. P.D. George. My sincere sympathy and heartfelt condolences and that of our confreres, to Fr. Gianni Rolandi and to all the confreres of AFE - especially to Fr. P.D. Dominic and Fr. P.T. Jose, on the passing away of Fr. P.D. George. I had met him briefly during the Team Visit in Nairobi. He did not look healthy and he spoke of going to India for some rest. The Lord felt that Fr. George had labored enough on this earth and called him to Himself.

Fr. George was a very hard working Salesian. When something had to be done, he would not rest. He would not make any fuss about his health. He always had an adventurous and pioneering spirit. He was ready to go and begin our work in Didia, though there was no one else free to go with him. It was evident that his ill health was brought on because he did not make any fuss about himself.

True, he appeared at times little tough. But he had an affectionate heart and any little kindness done for him was always appreciated. You could talk to him and he was always ready to obey.

I am sure he is with Jesus and from heaven he will be able to help us all



to imitate his spirit of hard-work and enthusiasm in our missionary endeavor. May the Lord comfort him with the joy of His presence forever."

Fr George Chalissery SDB

"I join with so many others who knew Fr. George PD in offering our deepest sympathy on his passing. MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE. My heartfelt condolences, in a special way, to Fr. Dominic PD, Fr. Johnny PD and Fr. Jose PT and the entire family. May you be consoled in Christ Jesus. Poleni sana.

Praying for all of you and especially for Fr. George's eternal rest.

Evans Jefferson sdb

"Ho saputo della morte di Padre George e ne sono rimasta molto colpita e addolorata. Grazie a lui ho conosciuto il mondo della solidarietà e dell'aiuto. E' stato un grande uomo e noi lo ricorderemo per sempre. Le sue azioni hanno fatto del bene a tante persone. Grazie Padre George".

Roberta Trillini

"It is with great shock that I received the news of the sudden passing away of Fr. P.D. George this morning. True we knew his condition was very serious and he could go at any time but it is still shocking. I had talked to him last on his birthday (31st March) while at Nairobi. I had the opportunity of living with Fr. George at Bosco Boys and Boys' Town for several years. But I had met him many years ago (may be in 1983 for the first time when I was an aspirant).

Certain aspects of Fr. P.D. touched me:

- 1) He had a great determination and willpower. It is his will power that made him live in spite of his illness. The fact he was our pioneer at Korr and Didia speaks for itself.
- 2) He assisted several students: He assisted several students with school fees through his sponsorships. So many students especially from Korr were able to go to university or

secondary schools because of Fr. George.

- 3) Though he could get angry quite fast he was able to forgive also fast. I know of several occasions when he would be upset with students whom he was sponsoring. But when they said sorry he would forgive them immediately and continue to assist them again.
- 4) He used his time so well: In the last ten years or so he was really sick. He could have said "I am sick and I need to rest", instead he kept himself busy farming, keeping chickens etc. I could see that there is a beautiful green house now at Bosco Boys because of Fr. George.
- 5) He was great company during picnics: I had gone for picnics with him several times. He was our chief chef during those picnics. He also had lot of jokes and interesting stories to keep us happy.

We at Don Bosco Didia are also grateful to him for being our founder. In those days when transport and communication were much more difficult. He lived here alone in a container and had serious attacks of malaria several times!

THANK YOU FR. GEORGE FOR THOSE SACRIFICES YOU MADE.

Together with all of you I pray for the repose of his soul, thank him for his friendship and inspiration. I also ask his forgiveness for the times I did not understand him sufficiently. I am sure he does not hold any grudge or hatred over anyone of us as he was quick to forgive. Rest in Peace dear Fr. George!

Fr. Babu Augustine

The funeral

In a moving emotional celebration the body of late Fr. George was laid to rest, in the Cathedral parish in his home town Kanjirapally. The body was brought home on 23rd Monday at 3.00pm. A vigil was kept the whole night and the final rite began the following morning at 9.00 am led by Fr. Dominic Padinjarapambil, his brother a salesian missionary in South Sudan. Then the body was taken in

procession to the parish church and the Eucharist was presided over by Fr. Johnny Padinjarapambil another brother of his, a salesian. Fr. Gianni Rolandi the provincial of Eastern Africa Salesian province preached after the gospel, and spoke about the legacy left by Fr. George, and challenged everyone to fill the gap left by him. The Bishop of Kanjirapally Rt. Rev. Bp. Mathew Arackal gave his message and presided over the final rites and the body was laid to rest at around 01.00pm.



DON BOSCO MOROGORO – The NOVITIATE



Many young people here in our locality have been leading a life of quiet desperation as a result of failures that has already occurred or a failure in prospect. Youngsters are frustrated either by a comparison in the immensity of the problems facing them with the feebleness of the resources for solving them or by lack of someone to love, someone who will love them sufficiently in return. However, some young people are attracted by seeing the Don Bosco building, the playground and an entrance with the inscription, “Baba, Rafiki na Mwalimu wa Vijana” (Father, Friend and Teacher of Youth) while others still remain very indifferent. It’s absurd that even our oratorians have been affiliating us with a certain company that supports and sponsors youngsters who are interested in games with others thinking that we’re a certain university with students from different countries. Conversely, with the coming of the relic of Don Bosco and the immense prior preparation for it the novices had done a great deal in catechizing these youngsters and more so disseminating them with who the real person of Don Bosco is. Now the fruits of this great visit of our father is seen with more

than 50 youngsters frequenting our community daily for games plus many different other organized activities. Just to mention a few:

Vocation Day; Prior to Vocation Sunday which was on 28th March on the Saturday before the Novices with the help of their Director had organized a vocation day in which about 50 boys and girls from the neighboring schools attended. The SMI sisters also came in to give a helping hand and they were able to meet the girls. Among many different themes that were elaborated on was the meaning of vocation, different vocations in the church, priesthood and religious life, and lastly vocation to Salesian life either as a priest or a lay coadjutor brother.

FEAST of DOMINIC SAVIO; this year the feast of Dominic Savio was on a Sunday and for this reason as a community we held our celebrations on the Saturday 5th May. It was another sanctifying moment for our Altar boys; 28 of them from Padre Pio and around 22 of them from our Parish St. Monica. The program began at 2pm with different inputs mainly on the life of St. Dominic Savio and other Youthful

saints-fruits of Salesian preventive system, Salesian sanctity, and youth spirituality among others. The climax of the day was the Dominic Savio quiz in which individual winners were rewarded and finally the friendly football match between the two groups of Altar boys. It was a very beautiful day for our altar boys to have a day of fun and think more of their way to holiness as a jovial path more than a dull and heavily packed daily routine.

MARIAN PROCESSION; as they say every person carries within his heart a blueprint of the one he loves and for us Mary being our first love and May being a month dedicated to her we had different physical and spiritual activities in her honor which reached its climax on 26th May. On this day we had a Marian procession from Padre Pio Catholic Secondary school to our community. The students, about 160 of them, sisters, novices and the Salesians joined in this colorful procession and with the statue of Mary Help of Christians held high all joined in the recitation of the Holy Rosary and singing of the Marian hymns. On reaching the community we had the Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Rector, Fr. Michael. Though devotional processions are not very common here with the Christians yet this was rather a unique moment to awaken the Marian devotion in our locality. None of this activity ended up as a mere activity but each one of them presented trustworthy hope and treasures to the youngsters that they will face the present, even if it is arduous, with extra spiritual strength.

Nov. Muchoki Robert

DO NOT SAY, 'I AM TOO YOUNG'



Dear friends I would like to share with you few of my reflections on the few events that took place recently in our community.

I came to realize that, many young people especially of our age are reluctant in listening to the voice of the Lord who calls them in the midst of many other voices. The world is now filled with sounds and voices of different kinds that some of them seem to be so attractive while others are too demanding.

These voices and sounds that tend to be confusing to many of us and become obstacles in saying "Yes" to the unique voice of God, who calls us to cast our nets in to the deep waters for a catch. Many of us don't respond as Peter did at the command of the Lord. He, who knew how to fish and where to fish, became obedient to the voice of

the Lord by lowering his net though with some doubts. The act of obedience to the voice of the Lord made Peter get a great number of fish.

Reaching the sea shore, Jesus invited him to come after him and with no doubt Peter left everything and followed him. In today's world many of us (young people) tend to ignore the voice of the Lord by saying 'I am too young' 'I am the only child', 'I have no vocation', or 'in my family history no one has ever become a religious or has ever thought of becoming one'. Some even ask if I join religious life what will I get. Many think only terms of material benefits.

We forget that we are God's creatures and as such He owns us and is able to do anything to us if we disobey his commandments. He reminds us in the book of prophet Jeremiah *"before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you"* (Jr. 1:5) this tells us clearly that we are just his creation.

What profit will we get if we gain the whole world and loose our soul? The wealth we think of accumulating whose will it be if the Lord calls us as we hear in the

parable of the rich fool? Have we ever thought of the return that we can give to God for the blessings of every kind which we have received? Some of us act as Tobias did when the Lord calls us to follow Him by saying, *"I do not know the way at all"*. How will we find the way if we are not ready to look for it? Let's follow his father's advice who told him *"Go and find someone to be your guide"* (Tobit 5:2-4).

There are so many guides in this world but how do we know who is the genuine guide for us? The book of *Sirach* tells us about whom we should associate with as it says, *"Every counselor points out a way, but some counsel ways of their own; be on the alert when one proffers advice, find out first all what he wants, instead, associate with a religious man, most of all pray to God to set your feet in the path of truth"* (Sirach 37:7-18)

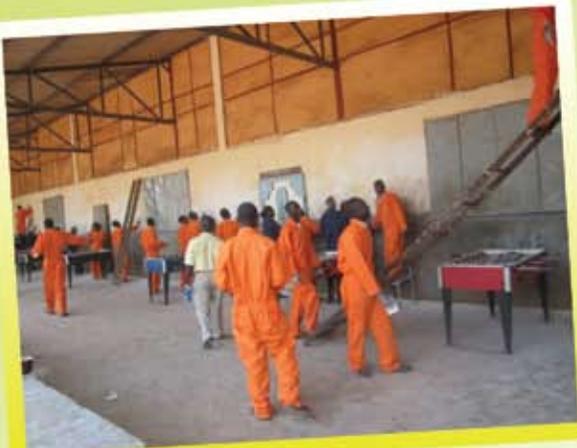
Blessed John Paul II also reminds us; *"Young people, if you hear the Lord's call, do not reject it! Dare to become part of the great movements of Holiness which renowned saints have launched in their following of Christ. Cultivate the ideals proper to your age, but readily accept God's plan for you if he invites you to seek Holiness. Admire all God's works in the world, but be ready to fix your eyes on the things destined never to pass away."*

As a young man I appeal to all young people, to heed to this special call from the Lord if He turns to you and bid you to follow Him. He invites us by telling us that we should never say "I am too young." The time is right for us to say "Yes" to His call. Follow Him with generosity whichever walk of life He is calling you although call to Consecrated life is the crown of all vocations. The Lord reminds us that *"not all can accept this word, but only those to whom it is granted"* (Mt 19:11), say not "I am too young".

Nov. Wagi Felix Francis



Don Bosco – Wau – South Sudan – UPDATES 2012



The two countries of the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan have been in the news in these days. For us in the town of Wau, the tensions that have risen have brought new hardships to the people. Wau being nearer to the North, most of the things needed for the people were coming from the North. Now the borders are closed, things coming from Kenya or Uganda via road through Juba to Wau are extremely costly. With the close of the oil wells and the North refusing the use of their pipeline to export any oil, urgently needed foreign currency is not coming. Thus in the town of Wau, it is difficult to get petrol. The storage of Diesel is getting used very quickly. With the shortage of foreign currency, things coming from Uganda or Kenya are becoming rarer. To make things worse, the airport of Wau is closed since March for maintenance and repair works.

For our DBVTC, materials needed for the workshops are just not available! And yet DBVTC opened as usual in the first week of March 2012. At present it has over 350 students. Something unusual that has happened this scholastic year is the request of UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) to make awareness among the youth in Wau about technical formation with the idea of creating job opportunities. Thus DBVTC has been giving two weeks technical training to more than 150 youth (boys and girls) of Wau.

UNMIS (United Nations Mission Organization) has been requesting the use of DBVTC hall and premises for entrepreneurship training. Many young men and women have been taking advantage of this facility! UNICEF has been encouraging and requesting the Salesians to do more for the Bosco Boys (Street Boys) by way of technical formation. Thus some of the street-kids have already been enrolled in the carpentry and masonry workshops receiving training along with other regular students.

Jacob Thelekkadan sdb



Remember to Remember!!!!

Memories keep us alive; memories give meaning to our lives. The greatest gift of all, the Eucharist, was given to us with a command "Do it in remembrance of Me." Memory is inevitable in human life. Most of us live in the memory of the past. We remember the good old friends we had, good old days we had, good old times we had, etc. It is often said that we forget to live in the present but always like to swing back to our old experiences and ruminate them.

There is a famous story about two friends; One day they were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an

argument; and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, he wrote in the sand: "Today my best friend slapped me in the face."

What do we remember most in our lives; our hurts or our blessings?

We do not appreciate people enough when they are around with us. The day they are gone we are flooded with good memories of them. We remember all the good things he/she spoke to us, all the good things he/she did, etc. It is often noticed that when a person dies his popularity increases. What surprises me always is that the same people who find fault with someone will be the

one most affected by the vacuum created by that person. Often good memories resurface only when our dear ones are no more. If a dead person could hear what others speak about him at the funeral he would be definitely surprised and even doubt whether they are speaking about himself.

We remember with love our beloved confrere Fr. P.D George. In this issue of the Salesian Bulletin you will find many wonderful things being said about him by many people. All is fine, and he would be happy to know that his confreres and friends still remember him with love and affection. My last visit to

Fr. P.D George was few days before his departure to India for treatment and rest. I did not know it would be our last meeting. It was a light moment where we joked and laughed a lot. So the final picture which remains fresh in my mind is his laughter and jokes. Let me live with that memory.

As I put the title of this little sharing; "remember to remember" we need to remember how we remember people, places, experiences, etc. Memory is a great gift. We realize its worth only when we lose it. People with Alzheimer's sickness suffer greatly because they cannot remember anything.

I had an interesting dream a couple of months ago. In that dream I saw my own funeral. It was a real surprise for me to see the responses and reactions of people. All the wonderful things people were enumerating, the sadness and deep sense of loss many felt, etc. I saw many whom I never even expected to come for my last rites. Many of them have made great sacrifices to be able to reach on time. This dream made me realize that there are many people who love and care for us but silently at the background.

Often when we go through difficult moments in our lives we do not realize there are many people who care for us. We need to remember that we are not alone in this journey. It is also important to remember that we are remembered in the hearts and minds of many people on a daily basis. Many of them will not be able to let you know that they love and care but the truth of the matter is that we are loved and cared for.

So let us remember to remember that we are remembered as we remember our dear and near ones day in and day out.

**Fr. Shyjan C. Job, SDB
Don Bosco Mission Tonj**



They kept on walking, until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the marsh and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: "Today my best friend saved my life."

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "after I hurt you, you wrote in the

Don Bosco Choir Retreat Experience

Sunday 24th March 2012 saw the transformation of members of the Don Bosco Choir, from the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Upper Hill, Nairobi. I am not sure about the number of members transformed; but of one I am sure – my thanks especially to Fr. Sebastian, popularly known as Fr. Seba.

We were warmly received at DBYES, the Retreat venue, by Fr. Seba. Soon after the opening worship, Fr. Seba took the floor. So eager was he to share the good news, that before the organisers could provide the administrative details of the Retreat, Fr. had begun his sharing. He was briefly interrupted for the admin details, and when he began speaking, I hang on to every word he said. His delivery was to the point, woven with facts and a great sense of humour. He made it very clear that the choir had a great responsibility in the liturgical celebration, and members' conduct should be exemplary, setting an example to the faithful.

From Fr. Seba's presentation, it was clear to me that the need for spiritual and liturgical formation for choir members cannot be over-emphasised. In addition, he left no doubt in anyone's mind that serving as a choir member was a higher calling, and indeed a privilege. I was challenged, and I was affirmed at the same time.

Fr. took us through the celebration of Mass; from the introductory rite, liturgy of the Word, Eucharist and conclusion. This was done with amazing clarity, simple easy to understand language and, very appropriate humour. Throughout his presentation, Fr. Seba encouraged participation by asking if there were any questions, and kept checking that we were on the same page.

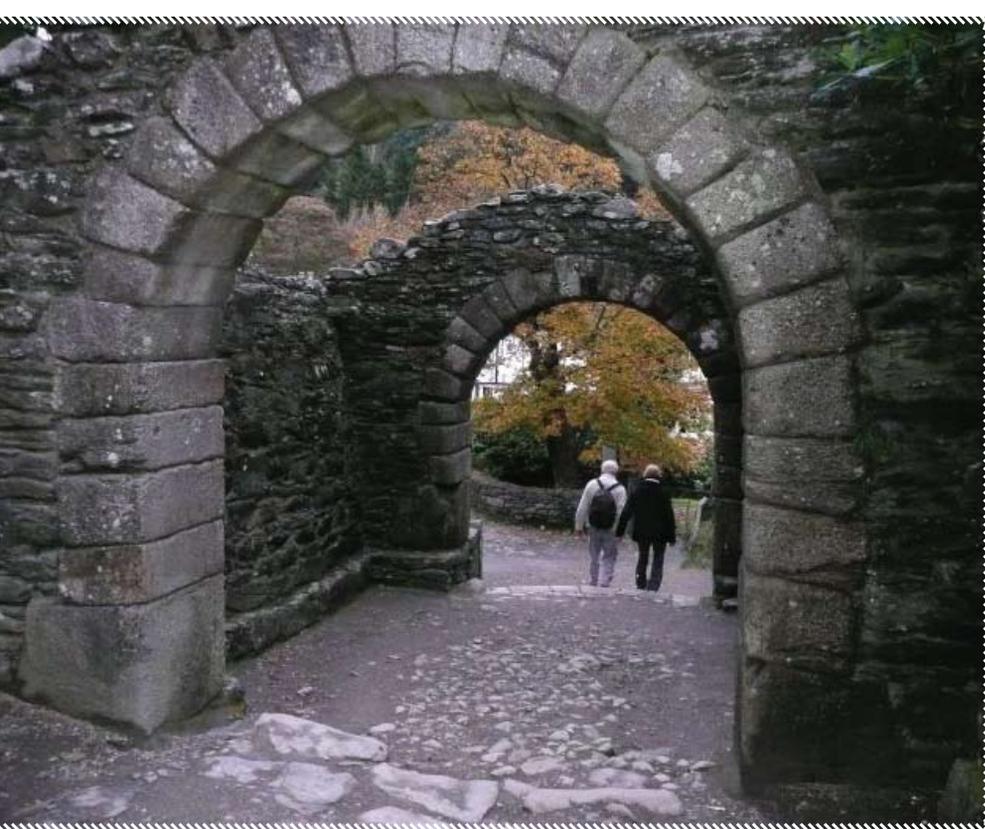
I saw another side of Fr. Seba when he found me outside during tea break, and he was concerned that I had not taken tea, urging me to go get myself a cup. A small question on his part perhaps, but the gesture meant so much to me!

Fr. Seba, that concern and your gentle nature did not go unnoticed! After Mass towards the end of the day, Fr. Seba had a gift for each choir member present; a rosary! He is generous too! Before parting we were assembled for a group photo, and guess who the official photographer was: Fr. Seba. Fr. clearly has many talents, and I was blessed to be a beneficiary of his sharing, kindness, gentleness and happy spirit!

If I say I was enriched by the Retreat, this would be a gross understatement, yet I cannot think of the words to describe the experience. The icing on the cake was the celebration of Mass. Our own Fr. Mathew was the main Celebrant, and as usual, was quite on point. To Fr. Seba and Fr. Mathew, thank you for taking time to be with us. To my fellow choir members, the work has just begun. To the leaders in the choir, congratulations for a well organised retreat!

Njeri Makonnen





Spiritual Accompaniment in the context of Salesian Youth Ministry

Part 1: The Unnamed Companion on the Road

In this three part series Sahaya G. Selvam, SDB, explores the meaning and method of spiritual accompaniment.

Not long ago, I was participating in a training programme in Spiritual Accompaniment. For my prayer one morning, I chose the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). During my many years of priesthood and active youth ministry I have used this text as a model of youth ministry. I have always considered the youth minister as one who joins the two young people on the road, listens to their stories, enlightens their mind and heart, and finally enables them experience Jesus as the Risen Lord. No wonder, that story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus has also become so much part of the Salesian narrative.

That morning during my training programme, however, as I began

to meditate on that story using the Ignatian method of contemplative imagination, I saw myself as the unnamed companion of Cleopas (Lk 24:18).

The air seemed dusty and gloomy. We walked towards the setting sun. It was quiet and lonely. As I was walking together with Cleopas my heart was heavy. I was silent as he continued to ruminate aloud about the events of the weekend. I got a sense of what that story meant for him. I empathised with him. I knew he reminded me of the heaviness in my own heart. (The memory of that prayer moment seems so fresh that I feel the need to change the verb tense.) On that dusty, hazy road we see a person walking ahead of us. He seems to know where he is going. At one point we catch up with him and want to go past him. But I see he wants to join us. Soon enough, I realise, he is walking along with Cleopas leaving me on the other side. I am aware of the stranger's presence but do not remember looking at his

face. Without appearing forceful he enters our company and begins to enquire about the subject of our conversation. We end up telling him all about the events of the weekend and even more. He responds to us. I do not remember the details of what he said, but it all seemed to make sense. The stranger seems wise, serene, and compassionate. At one point, I look up at the face of Cleo and I notice his face lit up. I become aware of my own heart – I am at peace too.

We reach a fork on the road. We want to go straight to Emmaus, but the stranger takes the diversion. We reluctantly continue our journey to Emmaus. I feel relaxed. The sun is setting. Suddenly the sky is colourful. I hear the distant birds settle down for the evening. My heart is not heavy anymore. I look at Cleo and ask him how he felt about the stranger. He is lost for words and mutters, "I felt my heart burn within me!" Suddenly I become aware that the process is not complete. As I listen to Cleo, I turn my gaze at the direction of the stranger. The silhouette of that graceful figure could still be seen against the golden rays of the setting sun. "Do you think we should invite him?" I suggest. Next thing I see is Cleo running after him, stretching out his hand towards him as he calls out to him. The stranger turns around gently, and Cleo asks him hesitatingly, "Why don't you stay with us. It is getting dark." He obliges and moves towards me. I am excited that the stranger had obliged. We are beginning to enjoy his company yet again – and more intimately.

In the context of the training, I saw the prayer moment as being very significant in my ministry of spiritual accompaniment. My role as a 'spiritual director' consists in being the unnamed companion on the road to Emmaus. As I accompany someone on their faith journey, I need to recognise that Jesus is present in this journey, even if they come with the story of confusion and despair. Amidst the strands of their story, which perhaps in some way could resemble my own, I need to recognise the uniqueness of their story and to honour it. Gently I propose if they might want to invite Jesus into their lives, converse with him, get in touch with their feelings and deepen their own experience.

This ministry then offers me the possibility of deepening my own personal experience of God in Jesus.

In this article, I would like to introduce a model of spiritual accompaniment. In the next two articles in this series, I will consider its link to the Salesian educative system, and to evaluate its possible use in accompanying young people on their spiritual journey. The focus here is the application of spiritual accompaniment in the context of Salesian youth ministry. I will rely much on the Ignatian tradition. It is not within the scope of this article to explore the tradition of spiritual direction within the spirituality of St Francis de Sales. In that sense, the use of the word, 'Salesian' just carries the connotation of how youth ministry is carried out following the style of Don Bosco. The target readership of this reflection is members of the Salesian Family, therefore, it assumes some understanding of the Salesian educative system, but it assumes no prior knowledge on spiritual accompaniment. By extension, the article could have some useful insights for anyone involved in youth ministry even outside the Salesian context.

What is spiritual accompaniment?

Spiritual direction or spiritual accompaniment could be understood in various ways depending on different theologies and spiritual traditions. The expression, 'spiritual direction' seems to suggest that the 'spiritual director' is a type of a guru who knows exactly where the

'directees' should proceed to, and directs them to that end. Spiritual accompaniment, as it is explored in this article, alludes to the reality that it is the Spirit who directs, and the spiritual director is only a companion who facilitates the discernment. Most of the contemporary literature uses the terms, 'spiritual direction' and 'spiritual accompaniment' interchangeably. I will refer to the process as 'spiritual accompaniment', the one who offers this service as 'spiritual director', and the one who receives as 'the directee'. It would seem idealistic to think that the spiritual director has no agenda at all. As it will emerge in the following reflection, the director does have an agenda, namely, to help the directees to recognise the presence of God in their lives and to foster an intimacy with God. However, the directors are not as 'directive' about the *outcome* of the accompaniment as they are of the *process*. The director cannot determine the nature and timing of the directee's relationship with God. In this context, it may be helpful to recall what St Ignatius of Loyola writes in his 'annotations' that serve as guidelines for offering the Spiritual Exercises. Annotation 15 could be extended to the context of spiritual accompaniment: "So, he who is giving the Exercises should not turn to one side or the other, but standing in the centre like a balance, leave the Creator to act immediately with the creature, the creature with its creator and Lord."

Spiritual accompaniment is quite different from counselling, psychotherapy, spiritual conversation,

or the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. Spiritual accompaniment is a one-to-one helping relationship that has God-experience of the directee at the heart of the process. A contemporary definition by Barry and Connolly captures this meaningfully: "Christian spiritual direction, then, [is] help given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."

Though spiritual accompaniment is different from other helping relationships it carries very similar terms of confidentiality: what is said is not to be discussed by the director outside that space. I am not pointing out to confidentiality in terms of time, as is the case in confession, because it may be necessary to recall what was said in a previous session if the directee has regular sessions of spiritual accompaniment. For the purposes of confidentiality, it is important to consciously mark the beginning and end of a spiritual accompaniment session. Box 1 presents the structure of a simple model of spiritual accompaniment.

Box 1: A simple model of spiritual accompaniment

Listening

To allow the person to tell their story, that could be related to a particular experience in life and/or prayer.

Noticing the movement

To pick up the implicit and explicit images, expressions, moments, feelings which seem significant for the person, and to help them identify the movement that underpins their faith story.

Fostering the movement

To invite the person to see if they identify with the perceived movement, and then to facilitate the process of exploring, valuing and deepening that movement with an openness to the Spirit.



DON BOSCO UTUME BREAKS THE RECORD ONCE AGAIN DIACONATE ORDINATION



All in all it was a wonderful evening with almost the entire people present "informing their faces of the occasion by their endless smiles." Kubuya Dominique on behalf of all the newly ordained; Benn, Raphael, Ajah, Berhane, Tung, Habamungu, Vincent, Peace, Donatus, Libby, Jos, Nzeli, Obi, Philip, Edwin and Turay expressed his sentiments of joy and appreciation to God, His Lordship, Parents, Utume fraternity under Fr. Pullikal and Fr. Neville, well-wishers and all present for their continued support to them till they have been able to embrace the altar of the Lord.

Benn Agunga- Utume

If at all there is a way of inserting Don Bosco Utume's name in the "Guinness Congregation's Record," then this year was the opportune moment for that. Why?? (You may ask me this)

On the 12th May, 2012 at around three o'clock, the much awaited long procession from the Sacristy of the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians began *enroute* to the main Church. The reason for this historic procession was none other than the diaconate ordination of the eighteen Salesian "brothers" who had waited for that day for a couple of months and days. I could see the lips of all the eighteen of them, I included shaking a bit,..... probably they were singing silently the famous Easter chorus..." *This is the day that the Lord has made for them to be ordained.....*"

It was one of the biggest diaconate ordination ever witnessed not only in the recent years but since the birth of the "New Utume." It wasn't big only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of nationalities with Nigeria "as usual" being at the forefront followed by Sierra Leone, Vietnam, DR Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia in that order.

The Celebration which most people were skeptical of its end owing to the number of the ordinands,

was presided over by our Salesian family friend His Lordship John Njenga, the Archbishop Emeritus of Mombasa. Contrary also to the expectations of many, the Shrine was full to its capacity with a sea of people of God from all walks of life. His Lordship had difficulty during mass owing to his health and age but all in all everything ended well and on time. God's blessings for that marvelous occasion could never go unnoticed and as a result, Upper hill Shrine and its environs received a little shower of rain.

"MUTHEMBI WAITU" LAWRENCE WAMBUA ORDAINED A PRIEST

Lawrence Wambua Kituku was ordained a "Muthembi" (Priest in a Kamba dialect) on the 19th May, 2012; a week after the diaconate ordination of the Utume Brothers in the same venue; the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Upperhill by the same Bishop, His Lordship John Njenga except the choir which was a wonderful one from Nzaikoni at around noon.

Many who attended the celebration were from Nzaikoni





the gift of Fr. Wambua as a priest. We the Salesians of Don Bosco thank the Lord abundantly for adding a shepherd into our pastoral vineyard.

After that, Fr. Lawrence had a chain of thanksgiving Masses right from the following day starting from his own Parish Nzaikoni, his home, Kaewa his outstation among others. Fr. Lawrence is currently at Don Bosco Mission, Korr for his first assignment as a priest. He is both an Assistant Parish Priest and Administrator. May God bless *Muthembi Lawrence* in his priestly endeavours of serving the entire people of God and especially the people of Korr, Marsabit .

Parish which is Fr. Wambua's home parish. The Salesians too were present in numbers especially the Rectors who a week prior to the ordination, had their annual Rectors' meeting. Tears of joy could be seen rolling down Fr. Wambua and his parents' faces as they moved down the aisles sandwiched between the liturgical dancers in front and the Bishop and the concelebrants at the back.

It was a wonderful celebration punctuated by "*vigelegeles*" from all corners of the congregation. All that could be heard at the end of the mass was "*Muthembi Waitu, Tumtungie Ngai Muvea*" (Our Priest, thanks be to God) from the Christians who were thanking the Lord joyfully for

Benn Agunga- Nzaikoni



This is the day that the Lord has made for them to be ordained.....”

**Facebook:
almost a nation**

If it were an independent nation, Facebook would be in third place after China and India in terms of population. It would be a superpower at world level which could aspire to a permanent seat on UN Security Council.

The Wall Street Journal has published some data on the population of the social network founded by Mark Zuckerberg. On 31st March this year, Facebook had 901 million users active during the month, 33% higher than the 680 million on 31st March 2011. The data was obtained from documentation provided to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in view of the launch of the social network on the Stock Exchange.

Facebook has a population three times greater than that of the United States. Compared with the two superpowers on the planet in a demographic, but also an economic sense, Facebook has 300 million citizens less than India and about 400 million less than China. The data sent to the SEC show a constant increase in the number of users. During 2011 Facebook saw a growth of 72 million users (11.9%) in the first quarter, of 59 million (8.7%) in the second, 61 million (8.2%) in the third and 45 million (5.6%) in the fourth quarter. In the first quarter of 2012 the increase was 56 million (6.6%).

These figures, from just one social network, demonstrate how the 'digital continent', without geographical borders, has a real existence. The world of commerce is well aware of this: the launch of Facebook on the stock exchange was welcomed with enthusiasm.



Jesus taught them as one having Authority (2)

The Dynamics of the Salesian Charism founded on the Love of Christ...

Introduction

This is the second part of our reflection on the living of the Salesian Charism in East Africa. In this reflection as I did promise in the last issue, I would like to play the technical balancing act of Competency cum Relevance versus Irrelevance cum Vulnerability as the mode of following and living the ministry of Jesus in today's world. In one of the celebrated maxims of Don Bosco, we have **"We should not only love the young but they should know that they are loved."** **Jesus in the discourse on the Good Shepherd theme, I know my own and my own know me...**

According to Henry J. M. Nouwen, the mystery of Ministry today lies in the making of our limited and actually conditional love as the path to the unconditional love. I quote; **"[...] we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God."** In this reflection, the issue is; **are we vulnerable enough to be the dispensers of Christ's love to the young?** Lack of vulnerability will lead to self-tailored ways and projects that may have nothing to do with the servant following

and leadership of Christ. Hence, in this reflection I would like to base myself with the following seeming contraries:

- Competence versus incompetence and vulnerability
- Relevance/popularity versus irrelevance and openness
- Humility as a mark of the dispensers of God's riches versus arrogance cum show off mentality...

The Dynamics of the Salesian Charism and Love for Christ

In the art of blacksmithing, in the Luhya understanding taken as "bubasi" or "burumbi", or even taken further than blacksmithing to the area of initiation (circumcision), "bukhebi", the common characteristic among all these trades is that one was initiated into it, through apprenticeship so that slowly but surely one became possessed with that spirit of blacksmithing or bukhebi. And because of this the one that possesses the gift always understood that it is a gift, actually un-merited gift that humbles the possessor who becomes actually a servant, dispensing the fruits of that gift. Among the Bukusu sub-tribe of the Luhya community, the circumcisers of the boys i.e. the surgeons or in Kiluhya "Bakhebi" were not taught in school, but the

one was confirmed into it when he showed that the particular spirit of the trade dwelt in him/her. This was evident during the circumcision season or before when the one possessed by the particular trade was seen shaking or trembling literally. In such events, the person was inducted into the trade through the giving of the tools of the trade, and then there followed a period of apprenticeship with one of the masters of the trade. One learnt the trade by being with the master, started by carrying the tools of the trade, then graduated to being may be an assistant of the master.

The Salesians of Don Bosco, are called or rather exist to be **the sign, bearers, of the love of God made concrete in Christ Jesus, then in Don Bosco and us today to the young.** In other words we exist to give Christ to the world of the young. The Salesian Christology is "youthcentric", i.e. we are the ministers/servants of the gospel of Christ Jesus to the young. "The signs and bearers of the love of God for the young." As I already stated before, and immortally known, you cannot give what you do not have. Like the apprenticeship in *bubasi*, *bukhebi*, in order for one to be such, one needs to possess the spirit of the trade not merely the technics. We are an active congregation, but not meant fundamentally to



lack the contemplative aspects. At times, given the hollow, disjointed formation in Salesiana, we have come across as not more than the entertainers of the young!!!

In the Salesian formation, what we need in Eastern Africa is a systematic orientation and formation into Salesian values; the process where the young man systematically is inserted into the Salesian CHARISM leading to interiorization of the Salesian values. However, this presupposes immersion in the life of the Gospel. It is evident that so far, we have given to the young men who join us either ideals or concepts to be repeated from the intellectual level without depth, where what we know is DON BOSCO SAID, DID etc, however, the spirit behind what he said and did is what is relevant to us today not necessary how he did it. The question is, How does one acquire the Salesian spirit?

Like the example of apprenticeship, their modus operandi however, primitive it may seem, but it gives us a hint of how the process of interiorization ought to be taken. Hence, the idea in the apprenticeship is never the number of years or the certification in terms of papers, but in so far as the master is there, he is to be consulted. And the measure here is in terms of the values that one is internalizing; exhibiting; ready to defend and live for and by. What Nouwen says in regard to spirituality can very much be applied to us, he says: **“When spirituality becomes spiritualization, life in the body becomes carnality.”** The body is seen in negative terms, and even a hindrance. In relation to our case, the moment we spiritualize the Salesian spirit, we end up forgetting or doing away with the concretization aspect of the charism in space, time and place. And here is where interiorization is killed, and the transmission of the Charism greatly suffers. Nouwen goes on; “Christian leaders are called to live the incarnation, that is, to live in the body – not only in their own bodies but also in the corporate body of the community, and to discover there the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

On the aspect of interiorization of the Charism, for us Salesians the



model of Jesus the Good Shepherd; made concrete in the Preventive system of education remains the valid criterion for assessing our assimilation of being the signs and bearers of the Love of God for the young. The preventive system as a pastoral model, calls for visionaries in the wider sense of the word which encompasses reading and interpreting the world of the young, and forming policies in line with what we interpret. This has to be done in relation to the circumstances that we find ourselves *hic et nunc*.

In the early Old Testament, the prophet was seen as a “seer”, denoting a sense of being visionary, being able to see the way God sees, and also interpreting the covenant of the Lord. Our challenge today, is to be Professionals as well as Prophets!!! If we become only Professionals, then we may fall into the Pharisaic mode where interpretation of the signs of the times will become wanting or rather questionable. This is where the great challenge lies to be competent as well as to live as incompetent men, given the openness and the mission given is not ours, but the Lord’s. The understanding that our professionalism calls us to be prophetic hence always vulnerable!!! Remember, proper Professionalism leads to more and more vulnerability, and greater understanding of what it means to bear prophetic witness in the case of a religious. We become carriers of the message in earthen vessels, i.e. fragile. This is because, the mystery

of ministry as we pointed out, is that we are ourselves **wounded healers!!!** Making our own limited and very conditional love the pathway for the unlimited and the unconditional love of God.

However, the world categories of power have entered seriously into our journey of knowing or following Jesus the Good Shepherd. In this regard, Nouwen gives us a very interesting picture, he says: “The temptation to consider power an apt instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel is the greatest of all.” There is simply lot of rationalization about having power and using it in the service of God and fellow human beings. This type of rationalization on power accounts for some of the regrettable moments in the history of the church like crusades, inquisitions, enslavement etc. One of the greatest hindrances to the unalloyed journey of cultivating the singleness of purpose in our province is power and manipulation. In our case, it seems, easier to invest in the structures than people!!! This may not be out of the norm given that, it is easier to be God so to say than to love God; it is easier to control people than to love people and it is easier to own life than to love life!!! Are we vulnerable enough to be professionals and yet prophetic in humility for the surpassing greatness of encountering Christ Jesus our ruler?

(To be continued in the next issue)

Mulongo Alexius

Missionary Sisters of Precious Blood Begins General Chapter

The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood officially opened their General Chapter with a mass celebrated by His Eminence John Cardinal Njue at the Salesians of Don Bosco Youth Educational Services (DBYES) Karen, Nairobi Kenya. The theme of the General Chapter, which takes place every 5 years, is 'You Are My Witnesses in the Power of the Spirit.'

In his homily, the Cardinal advised the sisters to deepen their relationship with God so that they may always remember that they were called to mission in various parts of the world. "On an occasion like this, you are challenged to go in depth and see your mission as a congregation and how it can be made better in order to leave a good legacy," said Cardinal Njue.

Sr. Ingeborg Müller, the General Superior of the congregation welcomed the sisters to the assembly. She said they are looking forward to reclaiming their missionary spirit



and identity and establishing new missions and outreaches in areas yet to receive the Gospel. "We are here because of internalization and how we can transform ourselves into an inter-cultural community. We want to look at what it means to form young people in the novitiate and postulancy for the task of being missionaries," said Sr. Müller.

Sr. Müller hopes that by the end of the Assembly, the sisters will be renewed in heart and spirit so that they can be truthful missionaries.

There are 42 sisters from different parts of the world where the congregation works attending the Chapter.

The General Assembly runs from June 18 until July 18.

Showers of blessings to Sr. Ancy Jacob, New Provincial Superior of SMI EAP

When an attitude of gratitude becomes our life's beatitude, experience becomes joyful, history becomes eventful, and life becomes meaningful... That's what happened on 22nd January 2012 at SMI Morogoro, Provincial House, as our dear Sr. Ancy Jacob was installed as the third Provincial Superior of Sisters of Mary Immaculate, East African Province. We were privileged to have the Thuruthimattam, Superior General from India to Sr. Ancy Jacob during the Holy Eucharist presided Provincial Superior of Eastern African Province. all our communities of the Province. The presence sisters, well wishers and friends added inspiration with prayerful wishes, blessings and smiles for Ancy had been serving the Province for the last implored God's manifold blessings upon her Holy Spirit and to empower her to animate We, the members of the Province pledged support.

On this occasion we also expressed to our dear Sr. Dina Vellamaruthunkal Superior for her selfless services Tanzania, very specially during the Superior of EAP. We wished her in her new responsibility as First General. It was a memorable day



our gracious presence of our dear Sr. Lisette grace the occasion. Sr. Lisette installed over by Rev. Fr. Gianni Rolandi SDB, the Many of our sisters were present from of many priests, religious brothers, to the occasion. The day was filled the person of our dear Sr. Ancy. Sr. 21 years in various capacities. We asking Abba Father to fill her with the our Province in the coming six years. our full cooperation and prayerful

our gratitude and appreciation the out-going Provincial during the past 11 years in last five years as Provincial God's abundant blessings Councillor of the Superior for the entire Province.

Juba a Land of Blessings

The Salesian Family in Juba is presently growing like a strong healthy tree with many branches and fruits.

The 'return' to Juba at the end of 2006 soon after the 2005 peace agreement and official set up of the Sudan delegation has implanted into the heart of this growing city the Salesian Spirit.

PLURALITY

With the complex reality of a new city in a new country, the number of people from different parts of the world and for different interest that move about the streets and use the roads of Juba urgently needs a regular updated data. While the population and international dimensions of Juba are not the only prominent indicators of the richness of Juba; this large number of professional international organizations and business seeking experts from Asia, Europe, North America and other parts of Africa moving about daily with their Land-cruisers and logos and sign boards and staff quarters, do mark the face of Juba. That is why one can truly call Juba a Toyota-town or Land-cruiser city

SALESIAN COMPOUND

The Salesian family in Gumbo (2 km from the famous Juba bridge of the Nile), has contributed in her own significant way to the blessings of Juba. The new complex of the Salesian family compound has an ideal set up for a youth-city. Beginning with the Church at the entrance and youth centre, one can move along to the Salesian residence on the right and in the opposite direction, the residence of the Caritas sisters of Jesus founded by Don Cimatti in Japan. Next to the SDB residence is the project and Development office, Sudan delegation offices and some guest rooms. As you continue to move along the main avenue in the compound you will get to the compound of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. These *Mazarellas*, have in a very short time of about 1 year so transformed the entire area not only by the structure of the compound but most especially by the Family and women ministry that they carry out in the parish

and town that has seen to a very rapid response of the families and children frequenting the youth centre and daily oratory.

At the end of the avenue, you will get to the school section of the primary school compound to your right and Vocational training centre on your left and the Don Bosco Senior Secondary School (DBSSS) in the middle facing the Pre-school. Every morning it's a *blessing* to see children, with different uniforms, adolescents coming in groups and young boys and girls with different sizes of bags and steps coming to the Salesian mission for education. The different members of staff for these different schools dedicating their lives and putting their skills into the service of the young ones, gives a true picture of the Family atmosphere most needed for a good social and Christian formation for the people of South Sudan.

FORMATION HOUSE

With the beginning of the pre-novitate orientation programme on the 1st of June 2012 the formation house and team in the community now joins the other 12 religious congregations in the city with their various vocation promotion initiatives and superiors of congregations based in Juba. This blessing of the formation house comes to fortify the vocation animation that has been going on in the parishes with the vocation camps and much more in the numerous primary schools and secondary schools in the city. The first groups of 6 salesian pre-novices are from different tribes in South Sudan and 5 of them are past pupils of the Don Bosco Secondary school Tonj and have completed their aspirantate programme while residing in the hostel (boarding) in the Tonj mission. With the new secondary school in Juba and keeping to the same animation style there is a possibility of steady growth of the formation house in Juba.

YOUNG PEOPLE

There are more than 10 different youth groups of various activities in the church, school and youth centre that gather daily for music, prayer meetings, games, practices



etc.. The youth office is animated by a joint team of representatives of the members of the Salesian family and each youth group leader is part of the animating committee. The monthly calendar of the youth centre is drawn from the annual Educative Pastoral Plan (EPP) made by the Educative pastoral community (EPC a representation of a the groups of the entire mission in all its dimension).

WOMEN

The women promotion took a step higher in their achievement with the full commitment of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA). Their activities with the mothers group (legion of Mary) and other young girls in the parish has increased in recent times. The weekly skill training of the women and workshops of various issues of family, health and Religion is getting very good response and impact in the domestic homes.

COLLABORATION

The SDB, FMA and CARITAS collaboration in ministry, witness and planning is the obvious secret behind the *blessings* of Juba that the Salesian family is contributing to Juba. This will be the most clear example that will influence the young Salesians in the formation house and could also be the secret to improve the animation of the so many Salesian past pupils from different communities in the interior, from the East African community, refugee camps, and other countries. The same could be applied to the salesian cooperators, old and new. This is another blessing in this land of Juba that could be obtained.

Salesian Bulletin: 135 year old and it doesn't show



"135 years old, the Salesian Bulletin has preserved an amazing vitality. This is all due to the one who invented it, someone with an astonishing, clear view of the future. "These are the words with which Fr. Bruno Ferrero, director of the Italian Salesian Bulletin (SB), introduced his address during the meeting of the Directors of the SB across the world. It was a presentation which laid out its history, purpose and above all its identity. We publish a summary.

Don Bosco was a born communicator. Of his very nature he was irrepresible. He adjusted himself via communication, became more up to date in his ideas, invented ways to teach. He showed that he had understood industrial civilization, which he was an enemy of in principle. And like all great communicators, he experienced fear but also made others fearful. That same effect continues 125 years later.

It all begins with a broadsheet with the unlikely title *Bibliofilo Cattolico* (Catholic Booklover), which he changed then into *Bolletino Salesiano*. The word *Bolletino*, according to the dictionary, means "an official publication saying something of a public nature". It has noble origins. The word comes from "bolla", the seal or stamp used for public writings and solemn kinds of documents. Papal Bulls – if that helps. It is still employed for practical purposes: medical bulletins, war bulletins. It points to something practical in style, without too many frills, managerial in nature. This is why Don Bosco liked it.

The first official number of the Salesian Bulletin opens with a letter from Don Bosco: "To the Salesian Cooperators. Our regulations, good and deserving Cooperators, prescribe a monthly Bulletin that would be published in due course to keep you informed of things that have been done or are yet to be done to obtain the aims which we have agreed to achieve. We are now fulfilling a common desire, so that everyone can carry out his work in unity of spirit and unanimously direct our efforts to a single purpose: The glory of God, the good of civil society. To this end we judge that a Bulletin will help you, one that has been printed now for some years in our print shop in Turin and which will be printed in future from the St. Vincent's Refuge in Sampierdarena. This Bulletin will tell you about:

1. Things that the members or their Directors choose to offer for the general and particular good of associates who follow the practical rules of the Cooperators.
2. Expounding facts that are fruitful for members and can serve as an example for others. So, things that have happened, or we have heard about or read: so long as they are linked to the good of humanity and religion; news and letters from Missionaries working for the faith in Asia Australia and especially those from Salesians spread throughout South America amongst wild tribes: all this is appropriate material for us.

3. Communications, notices of various kinds, works we are proposing; books and maxims which should be spread around, will make up a third of the Bulletin.

"Don Bosco never excluded anyone." – Fr. Ferrero clarified – This is why the Bulletin is addressed to all friends of Don Bosco and those who, if they got to know him would be his friends. One might think of a series of concentric circles rippling out from the centre using the most effective method of all: a handing on of the word."

Fr. Pietro Stella in one of his publications wrote: "One could say that the SB, the many circular letters sent out ... determined how the world discovered Don Bosco, this extraordinary man. Up until 1874 the Salesians were just a regionally based Congregation. After that date, especially after the 1880s, Don Bosco more frequently took on boys who were recommended by clergy or laity, requests multiplied to open houses in various cities and countries." (Stella, Don Bosco, 1968).

"According to Don Bosco's insights, the Salesian Bulletin is not a simple list of news events, but shows the spirit of the Congregation by telling about deeds and works, more than by spreading speculative ideas. It offers a reading of contemporary reality from a Salesian point of view and accepts the provocations of the world of the young and of the Church in view of a more comprehensive educational and pastoral project." said Fr. Ferrero.





A Salesian digital generation?

Interesting results are arriving from research carried out by the Catholic University of Milan's Centre for Research in Education for Media and Information Technology (CREMIT) and the Department of Institutions and Society of the University of Perugia on behalf of the Italian Association of Catholic Webmasters. The research concerns the use of Facebook by priests, religious and seminarians. Although it is limited to the Italian context, the enquiry is surely indicative of the situation in wider society, in the Church, and, in our case, in the Salesian context.

The research carried out by CREMIT shows that 20% of diocesan priests and of male religious have a profile on Facebook. This is higher than that of Italian citizens in general. The percentage rises to 59.7% for seminarians, a clear sign of the greater use of such sites by younger generations.

From the first findings a numerical difference is appearing between male and female religious. Is this a gender-based digital divide? Or is it simply related to the different types of work they do? Differences are also emerging between the north and the south of Italy: in this case the south appears to be more digitised than the north, which

seems less inclined to use social and interactive media.

"The first results of this research make us understand the importance of initial and ongoing formation for Salesians", commented Fr Filiberto Gonzalez, General Councillor for Social Communications. "Following the Year of the Priest, Pope Benedict XVI dedicated his message for the XLIV World Day of Prayer for Social Communications to priests, inviting them to be pastors in the digital world and let their consecrated heart shine through."

The Pope was inviting priests to use new media in an appropriate and competent way, learnt during their formation, and to give themselves a solid theological preparation and a sound priestly spirituality.

"The digital world presents us with new challenges", explained Fr Gonzalez. "It's not just a matter of surfing the web or being able to read something on a screen; it's about approaching the situation with new hermeneutic criteria and discovering novel methods of pastoral activity. Our mission to young people, in education and evangelisation, can only take advantage from this if we enter it in the style of 'Salesian Assistance', with the pastoral heart of Don Bosco."

South Korea - Olympic Champion funding a school in Southern Sudan

Kim Yu-na, the Olympic and World Figure Ice-Skating Champion, has given a donation to the Salesians to open a school in Southern Sudan. In the new African State the Salesians are intending to build many new elementary schools.

On 2 June, Kim Yu-na visited the Salesian Provincial House in Seoul and met Fr Vincenzo Donati and Bro Giacomo Comino, both Salesian missionaries in Southern Sudan. She gave them 70 millions of South-Korean won, (about 47,000 euro) personally financing the building of one of these schools.

"I had a chance to visit Togo a year ago as part of efforts to win support for Korea's bid for the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang and I felt the need to help out children there," Kim told them. "I want to offer what little support I can," she added.

Fr Donati thanked her profusely and said one of the schools to be built in Southern Sudan will be named after Kim and asked the athlete to come visit the school after it is completed.

Kim Yu-na became a Catholic convert in 2008, taking the Christian name Stella. She has made other generous donations before: in October 2009 her published gifts amounted to about 2,5 million euro.

Fr Donati and Bro Comino, who had both dedicated about twenty years as missionaries in South Korea, returned there to seek support for the missionary work in Southern Sudan. "We will make use of our Salesian experience," – explained Bro Comino – "and then we will put the schools at the disposal of the dioceses, with responsibility to look after the buildings and find teachers."

The project in Southern Sudan is for the building of just elementary schools. Fr Gianni Rolandi, Superior of the East Africa Province (AFE), including Southern Sudan told the MISNA Agency the reason: "This choice is the result of there being an almost total lack of infrastructure in Southern Sudan, an independent country scarcely a year old where the wounds of civil war are still open: one can only begin by building the foundations."





The Salesian Bulletin in the World

On the occasion of the international meeting of the Directors of the Salesian Bulletin (SB), some data were presented on the characteristics of the review at world level. The analysis provided some significant statistics and brought to light some of the challenges facing everyone.

The research is the fruit of work carried out before the meeting by the Department of Social Communication and by the editing body of the BS. It gathered data from 51 editions – almost the complete range of the SB in the world.

At the continental level, the editions of the SB increase where the Salesian presences are more recent or are still in a stage of expansion (Africa, Asia and Oceania), while they remain stable in the countries where the presence is historically rooted (America and Europe). In this connection the publications in new languages make an entry, such as Vietnamese, Tetum, Kannada... (in oriental countries), and French (spoken in many African countries) is on the increase. Spanish counts

the greatest number of editions, followed by English. Some are bilingual or trilingual.

About half the editions are bi-monthly, about ten are monthly, while the remainder have a lower frequency of 2-3 editions a year.

Also the circulation varies significantly, from a few thousand, for the most recently founded editions, to over 4 million annually for the Italian SB, founded by Don Bosco himself. The grand total of the circulation of the SB over the whole world is estimated to be over 8,5 million copies a year.

The contents on offer are varied and balanced, ranging from Salesian Spirituality to the young, from education to missions, from international reflections to local situations... The rainbow of readers is equally colourful, showing that, by and large, The SBs succeed in suiting the tastes of all age ranges.

At the same time the analysis reveals several challenges and questions of general application. The distribution of the SBs, for example, is carried out in most

cases by the Salesians themselves. In this connection it is imperative to motivate external members of the Congregation – members of the ever increasing Salesian Family – to become involved in the promotion of the SB. This is even more necessary given that more and more often the SB is published in digital, and in some cases only in digital.

Presence on the internet is certainly another of the challenges. At present, the very great majority of the SBs are on the internet, but the presence is almost always static. The aim is to encourage a migration towards a more interactive presence, through social networking, and secondly, towards the adoption of the latest standards of the semantic web.

Other sensitive topics arising from the analysis were: the manner of presenting the monthly letter which the Rector Major writes expressly for the SB; the presence of advertising; the need to move from the idea of a "factotum editor" to that of an editorial team.

Sacrament of Confession Threatened by Irish Legislation Prelates, Priests Affirm Resolve to Protect Inviolable Seal

Last Wednesday the Irish Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Alan Shatter, announced the publication of a bill related to the protection of children regarding sexual abuse.

The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012 "is one element of a suite of legislation to protect children and vulnerable adults to which the Government is committed," according to the government's press release on the matter.

Under the proposed legislation it will be a criminal offence to withhold information on sexual offences committed against a child or a vulnerable person.

The proposal has caused an outcry because of concerns that the obligation to report this information will include matters confessed in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, thus obliging priests to break the seal of confession.

"The seal of the confessional is inviolable as far as I am concerned, and that's the end of the matter," declared Bishop Raymond Field, an auxiliary bishop of Dublin, in comments reported in the Irish Independent the following day.

Even the Association of Catholic Priests, which is noted for its liberal position on a variety of doctrinal issues, came out against the proposal: "I certainly wouldn't be willing to break the seal of confession for anyone," said Father Sean McDonagh of the Association, according to the Irish Independent.

There is some confusion, however, on whether the bill will actually oblige priests to break the seal of confession. An April 26 article published in the Irish Times said that the Justice ministry was not able to confirm on Wednesday night whether priests would be obliged to report to police offences that they become aware of when hearing confessions.

Nevertheless, in comments reported by the Irish Times last Friday the Justice minister said that the new law would compel priests to disclose information obtained in confession. He also said that complaints by the Church over this issue were a "diversion" from the Church's failure to adequately report abuse committed by priests.

The bill will be introduced into the Irish parliament in a few weeks time.

ZENIT



The General Assembly of the United Nations decided that 20 June should be World Refugee Day, as a sign of solidarity with Africa, the continent with the largest number of refugees in the world. At Salesian level, the Salesian Mission Office in Madrid has launched an appeal for help for refugees in Kenya: "Kakuma is more than full."

"The refugee camp in Kakuma is more than full at present" is the message from the Salesian Mission Office in Madrid quoting the words of Fr Philip Sajan a Salesian missionary working in central Kenya. The Kakuma camp is in the north of the country and houses over 96,000 people. About 50% are refugees from Somalia, "but the numbers are increasing of those coming from Southern Sudan, because of the problems there, and from Burundi".

Salesian missionaries have been working in Kakuma for a number of years. Here in addition to the more urgent needs they are also looking for long term solutions, and are providing training and literacy courses for the refugees. "About half of them are under 18 years of age and it is necessary to keep their hopes up." Fr Sajan continues. "Many are interested in English and computer studies, but we can't help all of them for shortage of means. We need more space for training, new computers and other material. Then there are over 200 children

who go to school and they need exercise books and other school materials".

On World Refugee Day the Madrid Mission Office reminds us that in the world there are over 44 million people living far from their homes, the figure for the last 15 years according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). In recent times there are over 300,000 refugees from the north of Mali; 2 million escaping from natural disasters as well as the 1,200 and 1,500 who every month escape from the paramilitary groups in Colombia in Ecuador.

Other official figures indicate that 80% of the refugees are from poor countries and 75% go to neighbouring countries. 50% of the refugees being cared for by UNHCR at present are Afghans or Iracheni and half the total of refugees in the world— about 22 millions — are under 25 years of age.

Nowadays many countries are responding to this situation and making it better known: though marches, conferences, campaigns, university meeting, among NGO, public debates, photographic exhibitions and other media programmes mobilising public opinion about the pain and suffering of the refugees.

ANS

No Future for Humanity Without Family, Says Pope

Reiterates Call Made in Milan for Protection of Sunday as Day of Rest

Benedict XVI says the future of humanity absolutely depends on the family, which he says is humanity's "principle patrimony," the "community of life and love which God Himself has willed for man and for woman."

The Pope offered his reflections on family life at today's general audience, as he reviewed his trip last weekend to Milan for the 7th World Meeting of Families.

"It is within the family that we experience for the first time that the human person is not created to live enclosed within himself, but in relationships with others; and it is in the family that the light of peace is first set aflame in our hearts so that it might illumine our world," he said.

The Holy Father recalled his address to the world of culture and education in Milan, which "allowed me to highlight the importance of legislation and the work of state institutions being ordered to the service and protection of the person in his various aspects, beginning with the right to life, the deliberate suppression of which can never be allowed, and the acknowledgement



of the proper identity of the family, founded on marriage between one man and one woman."

He also noted his question-and-answer session with families, which he said enabled him to "give a sign of the open dialogue that exists between families and the Church, between the world and the Church."

Benedict XVI emphasized his call for a defense of family time, "threatened by a kind of 'overbearance' of work commitments."

"Sunday," he said, "is the Lord's day and man's day, a day when everyone should be able to be free, free for family and free for God. In defending Sunday, we defend man's freedom!"

The Pope also recalled his appeal for Church communities that are more and more family oriented, and "capable of reflecting the beauty of the Most Holy Trinity and of evangelizing not only with words, but by radiating the strength of love lived, for love is the only force that can transform the world."

"The 'triad' of family, work and celebration [are] three dimensions of our lives that must find a harmonious equilibrium in order to build a society with a human face," he stated.

The Bishop of Rome said the World Meeting of Families was "an eloquent 'epiphany' of the family, which manifested itself in its variety of expressions but in the uniqueness of its essential identity: a communion of love, founded on marriage and called to be a sanctuary of life, a domestic Church, a cell of society."

"From Milan," he concluded, "a message of hope was sent out to all the world, substantiated by lived experience: it is possible and joyous, even if demanding, to live faithful love 'forever' which is open to life; it is possible to participate as a family in the mission of the Church and in the building up of society."

ZENIT

Scientists may have discovered date of Crucifixion

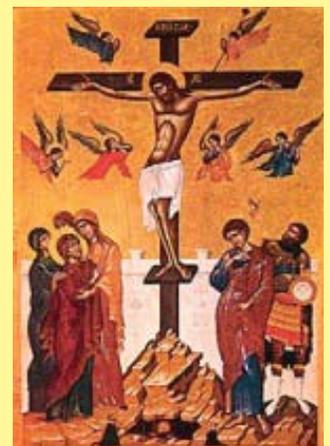
Geologists in Israel have discovered evidence confirming that there was an earthquake around the time of the Crucifixion of Jesus.

The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 27 says: "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open."

Geologist Jefferson Williams from Supersonic Geophysical and Markus Schwab and Achim Brauer from the German Research Centre for Geosciences, analyzed earthquake activity in the area near Jerusalem by studying rock and sand samples from the Ein Gedi Spa beach. Their research confirmed that two major earthquakes hit the area specified, one of which took place between 26 and 36 AD. The most likely date they say is: 3 April 33 AD.

Writing in the International Geology Review they say that the report of an earthquake in the Gospel could also be a "type of allegory," but the experience of an earthquake would be something people around the time of the Crucifixion would know about.

Three of the four Gospels also refer to three hours of darkness after the Crucifixion. This could be a description of a dust storm, the scientists say, and such a storm could have happened after a quake. Discovery Magazine reports that they are now analysing dust samples.



Dan Bergin

3RD QUARTER

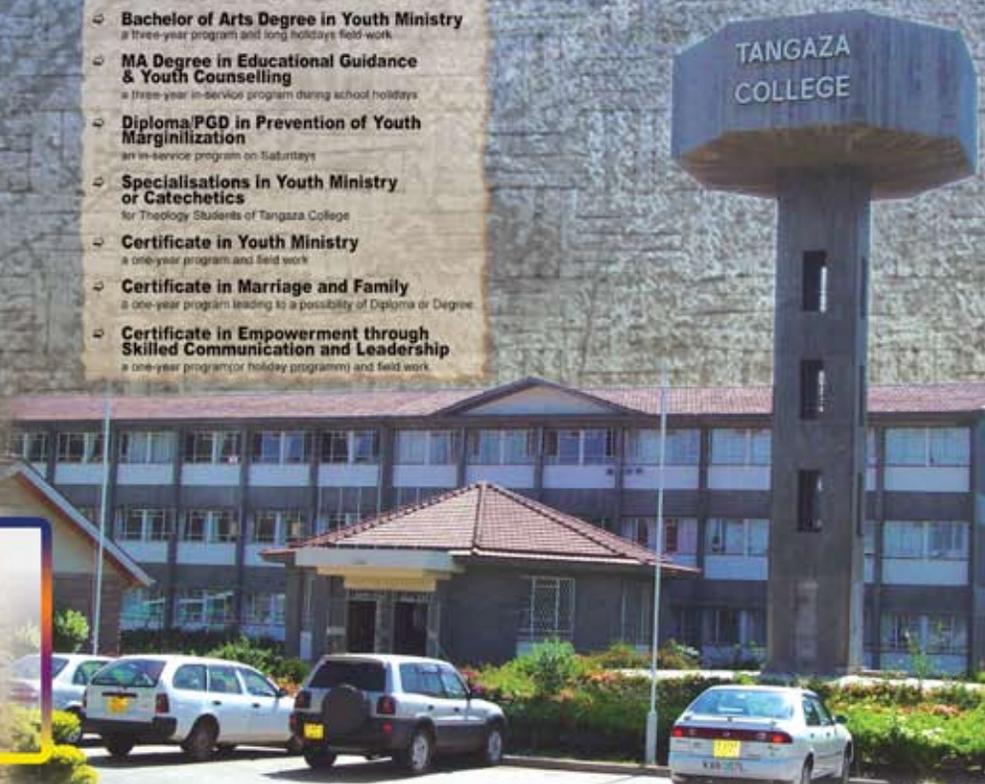


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