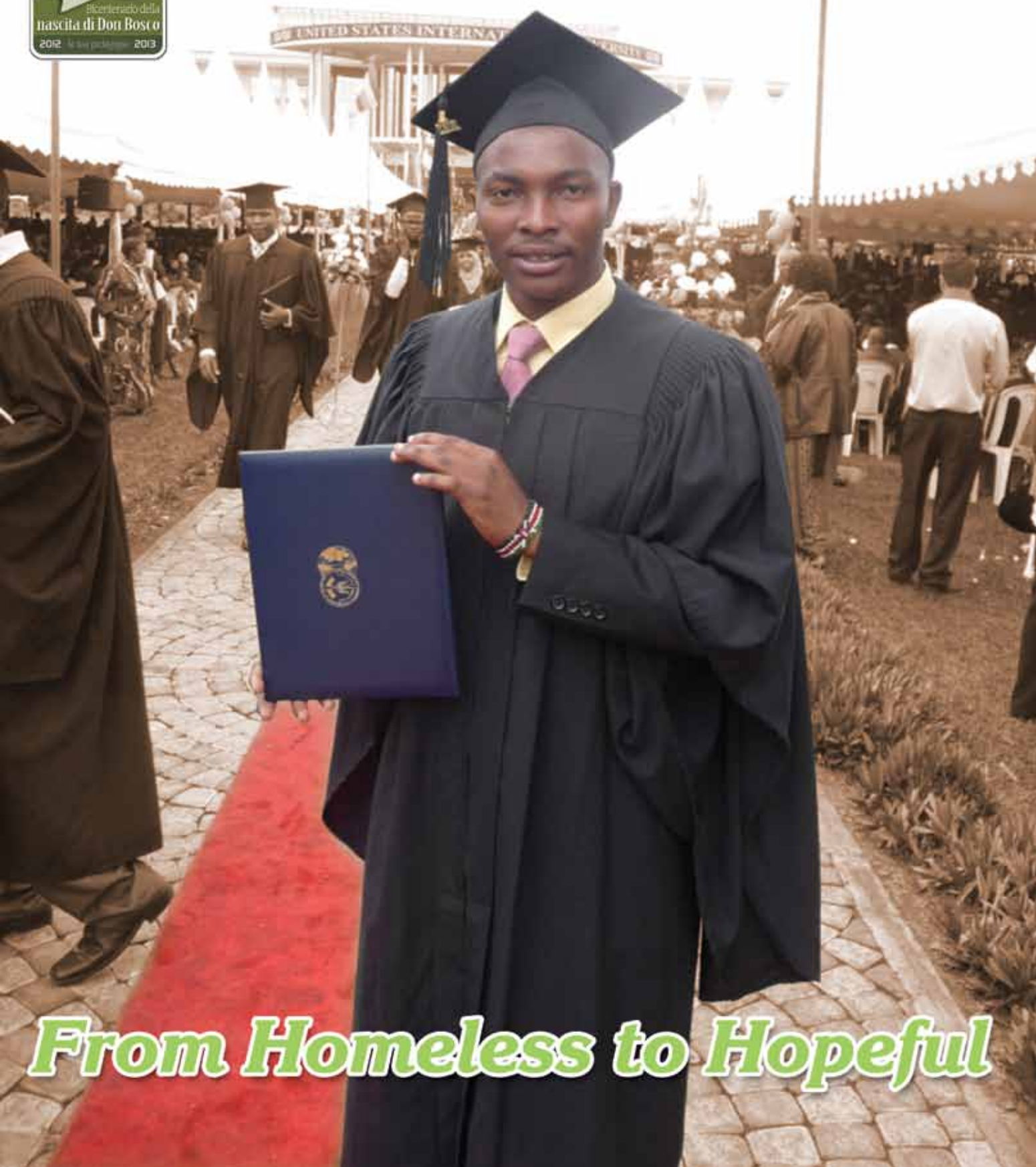


DON BOSCO EASTERN AFRICA

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO PUBLICATION

SALESIAN FAMILY BULLETIN
4TH QUARTER, OCTOBER 2012



From Homeless to Hopeful



Members of the 143rd Salesian Missionary Expedition

«The traditional, long-accepted model of a division of the world into "Christian countries" and "mission lands", despite its conceptual clarity, is now seen as limited, overly simple and no longer applicable to the present situation, and thus, unable to be used as a reference in building today's Christian communities».

(Synod on the New Evangelisation. Lineamenta, 9)

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S Pietro NGUYEN TRONG NGHIA	VIE	Nigeria (AFW)			



Salesian Missionary Intention

Salesian Missionary Vocation: the 143rd Salesian Missionary Expedition

That the testimony of the new Salesian missionaries sent by the Rector Major in 2012 may inspire and foster, especially in the young Provinces, a renewed missionary impulse.

From the time of Don Bosco about 11,000 Salesians were sent from the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, Turin. The majority of the Salesians discover their missionary vocation ad gentes by meeting another Salesian missionary. The testimony of missionary life shared with young people, with the confreres is the most important contribution to missionary promotion. Let us pray that all Provinces may learn to use all the means of social communication to bring the experience of their missionaries to the attention of all (Salesian Bulletin, Provincial News, visits of missionaries to local communities, contribution to Cagliero11 or its distribution in the communities).



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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

We are in the second year of the preparation for the bi-centenary of Don Bosco's birth. The Rector Major gave us the guidelines for us to prepare for this great event. *In the first year of preparation from 16 August 2011 - 15 August 2012*, we were invited to "concentrate on a knowledge of Don Bosco's history and of his context, of Don Bosco as a person, of his experience of life and of his choices. In this second year we are invited to "a deeper study of Don Bosco's pedagogy; now this needs to become a programme to be put into practice in this second year of preparation for the celebration of the bicentenary." "Nowadays a deeper understanding is needed of *Salesian pedagogy*. In other words we need to study and apply that updated preventive system desired by Fr. Egidio Viganò... developing its great implicit principles, modernizing concepts, guidelines and interpretations so as to express the basic ideas in a modern manner: the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls; living faith, firm hope and pastoral charity; the good Christian and upright citizen; the threefold "cheerfulness, study and prayer"; the three "S" (in Italian): health, knowledge and holiness: piety, morality and culture; evangelization and civilization.

A lot of beautiful and pious thoughts are given to us to follow and to put into practice. When we reflect on the reality in which we live here in Africa particularly in the African cities, the situation is very pathetic. How much are we aware of the reality around us, and are sensitive to it in our style of living? Recently a well-researched three part series article, *Kenya's Slum Crisis*, on the slums of Nairobi, Kenya's capital, was published in Nation, one of Kenya's leading Newspapers, by its columnist Murithi Mutiga. In it he exposed the gruelling condition in which Nairobi's poor live. He wrote that Nairobi has 2.65 million slum dwellers who do not have a right to housing and sanitation which is enshrined in the constitution. He wrote that Nairobi has one of the most acute housing crises in the world. 60 percent of the city's population lives in slums, which occupy only five percent of the capital's land mass, according to UN Habitat. In this 'City in the Sun' about 318 households or about 1,177 people on average, occupy one acre in the slums, compared to two households per acre in the upmarket Runda estate, one of Nairobi's affluent areas or one per acre in Muthaiga another place where the high class live. According to the author Nairobi's massive urban housing crisis, is a ticking time bomb that could sow insanity.

This is the reality in which we live, we need to be sensitive to the plight of this huge number of people. The preparation for the General Chapter and our own Provincial Chapter has already begun and if these existential issues are not brought to the awareness of our day to day life - style we will not be living the legacy left by Don Bosco who lived and died for the needy young people. It is time to re-emerge from the cocoons in which we live with the excuse of lack of personnel and to move out to the needy and the deserving to bring alive Don Bosco's motto "Da mihi animas Ce terra tolle" and forge ahead into the new frontiers. This will be a gift to Don Bosco as he prepares his 200th birthday and we the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the congregation.

Sebastian Koladiyil

Coming to Know Don Bosco

For Don Bosco and for Salesians the Young are the Masters

The extraordinary tale which is the Salesian Family has its origin in a dream with the gospel flavour of Mark 9, 36-37: «Jesus took a little child, set him in front of them put his arms round him and said to them: "Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me welcomes the Father who sent me."».

The young are not only those "for whom we work", but an essential active force for the Salesian Family. Salesian history shows that working for poor and abandoned youth as the priority attracts God's blessing, is the source of charismatic and

Then he said: "I tell you solemnly unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."» (Matthew 18, 2-3). This may be a difficult expression to accept literally, especially by someone who on a daily basis is exasperated at having to live with little potential tyrants. Do children really have something to teach us?

Don Bosco learned from the young: certainly some of the features of the preventive system were the results of his familiarity with their world, of his sharing their lives, their feelings, their aspirations; certain significant features of Don Bosco's youth spirituality came from his personal knowledge of

they can teach their charges. Now and then perhaps they should ask themselves what they can learn from them.

The job of being an educator does not consist in an exhausting deluge of activities and things to be done, it is a spiritual journey: a succession of experiences which, little by little, reveal the profound significance of life and of the individual. And on this journey our guides are often the grubby little paws which have just left their indelible mark on the recent very expensive re-decorations of the Oratory.

And this is because it is they who are closest to the springs of life.

Being an educator is a school at which one learns more than one manages to teach: naturally, provided that one wants to. One soon discovers that watching youngsters is better than watching the television or looking up Google. It is much more instructive.

Here are some of the things that youngsters can teach us.

Development Never Stops

Youngsters "force" their educators to get to know themselves inside out: they have an extraordinary talent for undermining the established order and getting to the "heart of things." You can tell lies to adults with some hope of success: it is impossible to lie to a child. Children recognise emotions with an intensity and sensitivity far greater than ours and show them with total spontaneity.

This increases considerably in their educators a sense of responsibility, and the need for an ever greater capacity for self-control. It also greatly stimulates the mind. Living everyday with youngsters brings us face to face with choices, challenges, problems and difficulties. At every moment of the day the educator has to learn to respond promptly, generously, inventively.

Paying Attention

"Look!" Children want their teachers to be present. It is



religious fruitfulness, of vocational fruitfulness, of the regeneration of the fraternal spirit in communities and is the secret behind the freshness and the success of the works.

Don Bosco was challenged by God through the young: those shut up in the prisons of Turin, those he met on the streets, in the squares and in the fields on the outskirts of the city, those who came knocking at his door looking for food and shelter, those he met in the city schools where he was called to exercise his ministry.

«Jesus called a little child to him and set the child in front of them.

what makes youngsters tick, and his discovery of the heights which they can reach; certain characteristics of the charism of the Salesian spirit come precisely from their being in tune with the world of youth..

What the Children Teach Us

The job of being an educator can be either a life sentence to slavery and constant stress or an enjoyable voyage of discovery leading to personal enrichment and transformation. One of the things that makes the difference is the willingness to learn. Usually educators are thinking about what

not simply a matter of "being there": they want total undivided attention, without criticism or particular expectations: a presence that is heart-warming, which makes them feel important, makes them feel valued. Being present means being available: I am here, for you; with simple attention which does not intrude nor control but is just clearly there. We are close to them all, we don't make any distinctions by being more attentive to those we find more amenable.

Respect and patience

In real life children are never similar to what they were dreamed to be or expected to be. They rebel against those expectations which prevent them from growing up according to their own individuality. They all have their own pace, their own plans, their personal inclinations. Don Bosco used to say: «I leave the boys entirely free to do whatever

they like to do... Since people are happy doing only what they know they can do, I follow this principle so that all my pupils are not only working with industriousness, but they are working with love.» (MB, XVII, 64)

He used to tell his helpers: «Allow the pupils to express their ideas freely.» He insisted: «Listen to them. Let them say as much as they want.» And he was the first to lead by example: «Despite his many grave occupations, he was always ready to receive with fatherly affection those boys who sought a private talk with him. Moreover, he wanted them to be on very familiar terms with him, and he never complained of an occasional indiscretion...He left all free to ask questions, to complain, and to defend or excuse themselves He received them with the same respect he showed distinguished visitors, asking them to sit on the sofa while he sat at his desk and

listened very attentively as if what they told him was most important. At times he would stand and pace the room with them. When the interview was over, he would show them to the door, open it for them, and send them off, saying: "We shall always be friends, right?"» (BM, VI, 438-439).

Happiness and gratitude for life

Young people are the most important investment as far as fulfilment and personal happiness are concerned. They are sometimes quite hard work, but also a blessing. Life with the young can be exhausting, but what deep joy young people who grow up trusting with such total confidence can give! ■

Pascual Chávez Villanueva

The Salesians speak in the UNO

The Salesians speak in the UNO: empowering youth to change the society

For the Bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco (1815-2015), the Salesians have organized an event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to highlight the Salesian contribution to the work of the UN throughout the world. The Permanent Observer Mission

of the Holy See to the United Nations and the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations were generous partners in having this event take place.

"Empowering Youth to be Agents of Change in Eradicating Poverty" will feature Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, SDB, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa and President of Caritas Internationalis and Bro. Jean Paul Muller, SDB, Economist General of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

The event takes place on September 24, 2012 with the President of Honduras, Porfirio Pepe Lobo, and Archbishop Mamberti, the Holy See's secretary for Relations with States, the honored guests. Ambassador Elizabeth Flores of Honduras, Ambassador Jorge Valero of Venezuela and Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, the Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations will speak at the beginning of the event providing words of welcome and

introducing the theme. Ambassador Valero is an alumnus of a Salesian School in Venezuela and will also provide some reflections on his appreciation for the education he received there.

Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez, SDB and Bro. Jean Paul Muller, SDB will offer reflections on the empowerment of youth and creating an enabling environment for young people to contribute to the transformations of their societies from a Salesian perspective.

The event will be taped and will be made available to the communities in the near future. Missioni Don Bosco in Turin will be preparing the DVDs for distribution.

The Salesians are extremely grateful to Mr. Miguel Rimarachin, a UN staff member who has been a wonderful colleague over the years and who facilitated so many of the details of the event ■

ANS



Don Bosco With Us

His Visualizations of Salesian Presence in Africa (Eastern)



Don Bosco confided to Cagliari the promise he had made to God, himself, as also to Daniel Comboni and Charles Lavigerie: "Under the protection of the Pope," continued the ailing saint in his final sickness, *"You will go into Africa, you will cross the whole continent...have faith."* Friday night, April 9th 1886: during the night Don Bosco had a dream in which the 'maiden' told him, "... Establish your centre in the middle of Africa, and you will get an exact idea of how much the Salesians have to do." Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesians, dreamt of Project Africa if not as reality of his intention but as reality of his prophecy. He did not limit himself to wish it, but he saw it concretely in his repeated mystical experiences.

The focus of the missionary zeal of Don Bosco was mainly for the salvation of souls and the education of poor and less advantaged youth.

The Beginnings

1846 was a crucial year in the life of Fr John Bosco. He had already given up the comfortable offer to work for Marchioness Barolo's Refugio and made the radical option to be among the less privileged youth of Turin, moving from one place to another. People objected to the presence of his

noisy waifs and strays of society. The parish priests remonstrated: Let the young people be instructed in their own parishes. Even as Fr John Moretta asked Don Bosco to quit his Moretta house, the Philippi fields too became out of bounds by March. He had no where to gather them and it seemed everything was coming to an end...During the night he reminisced his vocational dream.

'Don Bosco', the voice of Francis Pinardi broke Don Bosco's musings, "Don Bosco, looking for a laboratory?" "Yes", replied Don Bosco, 'Yes, not Laboratory, but Oratory.' Pinardi mumbled, "lab-ora.... Lov-oratory", thinking of the people living upstairs and the inn close by. Eventually, with the help of Fr Cafasso, Fr Borel signed the hiring of the Pinardi shed at Valdocco, Turin. On Easter Sunday Don Bosco and his raucous crowd marched joyously to their new home. By then Fr Bosco was too strained and worn out. He fell ill. His mother Margaret and brother Joseph came rushing. They took him home to Becchi, Castelnuovo and began nursing him back. Even there his grateful young 'rascals' kept visiting him, trekking all the way from Turin and other places. In November he went back to the Pinardi shed at Valdocco accompanied by his Mother Margaret who cared for him as well as becoming 'mother' to hundreds of boys till the end of her life: 'Mama' Margherita.

Some time later the Great Capuchin missionary, Fr Guglielmo Massaia (born 1809) was ordained bishop. He was from Don Bosco's neighbouring village of Piva d'Asti, near Castelnuovo. The young bishop Guglielmo was sent to Ethiopia commissioned to establish an Apostolic Vicariate among the Galla (Oromo). He eventually became a Cardinal. We would like to believe that he held Don Bosco in great admiration and drew his attention to Project Africa.

Clarion Call from Africa

However, in the mind of Don Bosco, Project Africa had its beginning way back in September 4th 1864: the intrepid missionary Daniel Comboni, already the founder of two congregations, knocked at the door of Don Bosco and asked for Salesians while explaining to him his missionary plans for Africa. Earlier, Fr Comboni was in Rome to meet Pope Pius IX. The Pope had asked him to speak of his plans to Don Bosco/ Valdocco Community (MB VII, 825).

In 1868 the future Cardinal Charles Lavigerie and the founder of the Missionaries of Africa (MAfr / the White Fathers) requested Don Bosco to accept a group of young people (orphaned by a famine in the preceding year). Don Bosco accepted them in the oratory. The Archbishop and Primate of Africa requested for a Salesian foundation (MB IX 481).

Don Bosco (1871/ 1872) sees an immense plain surrounded by mountains and fierce looking crowds yet radiating nobility in their natural traditional attire and countenance . He believes to be identifying the Africans bordering the regions of Egypt. He connects



this vision with the visit Daniel Comboni paid him. (MBVII, 825; X 1267)

In 1875 Don Bosco attempted to identify the first Salesian missionaries: "Above all," he confided to his Salesians, "I gave thought to the Africans of Ethiopia and the regions adjoining Egypt" (MB X, 1267). It was only later Don Bosco was convinced of a different plan designed by Providence. [However, between 1871 and 1875 he did not remain indifferent to the missionary proposals that were enticing him to Nigrizia (MB XI, 408)]. In the same year he expressed the wish, "that the Salesians of the Nile and those of Congo will one day come together:

"What a memorable day that will be when the Salesian missionaries, sailing up the River Congo will meet their confreres coming up the Nile, shake hands praising the Lord!... When our missionaries will evangelize the various regions of Egypt and other places too, what a beautiful day that will be. I see that already in Africa!" (1875. MB XI 409ff)

In his 1876 dream Don Bosco saw a huge rock emerging in the midst of an endless plain. Don Bosco narrates:

"I climbed its top. Oh! What an immense vista caught my eyes... I saw the Africans and an endless stream of persons I did not know...

'Look, see,' said my guardian angel, 'you will not understand what I'll tell you, but what you



see is the harvest prepared for your Salesians, not only this century but also in the years to come; however, on certain conditions. See that you embody the words which will be your distinctive sign: Work and Temperance" (MB XII, 466).

A few months prior to his return to Khartoum and dying there, the great missionary Mgr. Daniel Comboni made a stopover at the Turin Valdocco Oratory as a guest of Don Bosco. It was 24 May 1880, and in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians solemn celebrations were taking place, "with the participation of some bishops, among whom was Bishop Comboni.

"The dauntless missionary of Nigrizia – one reads in the chronicles of those days – wished to honour the Virgin

Mother, and to preside over the morning and evening liturgy and celebrations. His imposing personality, long flowing beard, his thunderous voice resounding in the basilica and heard even outside in the square, roused in us the idea of a true desert hero." (No loud speakers those days).

"His head held high up, the Bishop was a splendid sight in the midst of the clergy in the vast presbytery; noble and generous were his sentiments that pervaded the whole assembly. Eager to honour a missionary of 25 years who did not spare himself on the hot sands of Africa and who could rightly be numbered among the courageous apostles of our times, nay as a martyr of the faith, priests and clerics became restless and surrounded him with joy. The young people and all the people were enraptured by the celebrant who was able to fulfil the very same rites among the most diverse and various tribes of the black Continent..."

Finding himself in such an atmosphere, Bishop Comboni was no less moved:

Bishop Comboni "showed visible joy", says the chronicler. He confided to us later that rarely did he celebrate a solemn Mass with such enthusiasm. Above all what a consoling thought for him to see so many clerics and altar boys at the altar, many of whom would become



missionaries and apostles, perhaps his collaborators in Africa itself. [...] For this grace he has prayed to the Lord... "We hope", concludes the chronicler of Valdocco 1880, "that the fervent prayer raised by Bishop Comboni to the throne of God and the Queen of the Apostles will be heard; and that Bishop Comboni and Don Bosco will be able to join hands as two conquerors..."

Once again the wind from Africa blew strongly towards Valdocco with the arrival of Bishop Francis Sogar who made a stop over at the Oratory on 14-15th November 1885. He had succeeded Bishop Comboni (Bishop of Khartoum on 10th October 1881) in 1882 as Vicar Apostolic of Central Africa. 'An admirer of Don Bosco', the Bishop listened attentively to certain details of Africa which Don Bosco had seen in a dream."

In May 1883 Don Bosco was in Paris holding a conference in the church of St Peter, very much frequented by the aristocracy of Paris. Cardinal Lavigerie appeared there unexpectedly, resplendent in purple. Climbing into the pulpit, without notes, he began to extol the educative mission of Don Bosco, supported by benefactors in Europe and America. At a certain point he exclaimed:

"Father of youth in Italy, come. I appeal to your heart which has already answered the voice of Europe and America; Africa which offers you its abandoned children, extends its arms wide open. Send your sons; we shall love them together, teaching them to bless the name of God..."

The assembly was stupefied and moved. At this unexpected request Don Bosco had to reply publicly in French:

"I must reply adequately to Your Eminence, but I do not possess your eloquence and I am unable to speak..."

Don Bosco continued to speak feebly and in poor French; but at a certain point Don Bosco amazed all: *I am in your hands, Eminence, to carry out in Africa all that Divine Providence would ask of*

NIGRIZIA (Africa)



Central Africa Vicariate under
+ Danile Comboni (1831-1881)

me. Yes, Your Eminence, remain convinced that if we are able to do something in Africa, the entire Salesian Family is at your disposal. I shall send my sons into Africa – Italian and French..." (MB XVI 252-255)

In January 31 1885, Don Bosco dreamt that he was in the midst of crowds which were singing: "Eviva, Trionfo!". Each crowd represented a nation or region of the continent.

At this point Don Bosco asked his guide: "those boys with a rugged skin, but so handsome and resplendent, who are they?" The guide replied, "They are the sons of Cam..." Don Bosco responded, 'Eviva Trionfo', his voice vibrating with joy, then, for a moment gasping and cutting short his words; in the end tears filled his eyes" (MB XVIII, 303-305)

In his earlier dream of 1886, the 'Dream Line' from Peking to Chile passing through the heart of Africa, he saw numerous missionary presences and Salesian works: "Your sons, the sons of your sons, and their sons again will do this ... Just let them steadfastly observe the Rules and keep the spirit of the Pious Society."

During the meeting of the Superior Council of the Salesians on 26th May 1886, Don Bosco intervened, "... this mission (African mission) forms part of my plans and is one of my dreams. If I were young, I would take along with me Father Michael Rua

and say, 'Come let us go to the Cape of Good Hope, to Nigrizia (Sudan), Khartoum, the Congo,... to Suakin...' we could establish a novitiate there by the Red Sea." In the meantime the Salesian presence spread in Italy, the Americas and Europe. (MB XVIII, 142 / BM XVIII, 367)).

Don Bosco celebrated his last Mass on 6th December 1887. One month before his death, Don Bosco had confided to Cagliero the promise he had made to God and to himself, besides Comboni and Lavigerie: "Under the protection and guidance of the Pope", the dying saint said, "you will go into Africa, you will traverse it and you will remain there... have faith" (MB XVIII, 489 / BM XVII, 414). These words uttered towards the end of his life, resounded like a deeply cherished desire. On January 31st 1888 Don Bosco died and was interred at Valsalice then considered being the outskirts of the city of Turin. His successor Michael Rua and others carried out his dream of Project Africa.

The dreams of Don Bosco unveiled his deep desire and love for Project Africa, if not in the realization of his intervention, but as a reality of his prophesies. He did not limit himself to wish it, but saw it concretely in his repeated mystical experiences.

Nothing was done for Africa until the end of 1896, when Don Rua, eight years after the death of Don Bosco, sent the first Salesians to



Alexandria and Cape Town and to Cairo in 1925. In 1906 missionaries went to Honduras, India and Macau.

Realization of Don Bosco's Dream

The General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1978 re-launched Project Africa targeting the expansion of the Salesian presence in the continent of Africa. Don E. Viganó set his heart on 'Project Africa' in a big way, inviting all the Salesian provinces to make a concerted effort to materialise 'Project Africa' to bring to fruition Don Bosco's vision and prophecy of Africa. Salesians from various provinces all over the world began their work in different countries of Africa. In 1980 the Superior Council in Rome requested the Salesian Provinces of India and the Turin Province to send missionaries to Eastern Africa – Kenya, Tanzania and the Sudan.

27th August 1980 marked the departure of 15 gallant and resolute missionaries from the different Indian Provinces from Mumbai for Rome to attend the orientation course from 1st to 30th Sept 1980. Receiving the Missionary Cross from Don E. Viganó on 28th Sept, the 15 intrepid missionaries branched out into Kenya, Tanzania and the Sudan. The Servant of God, His Eminence Maurice Cardinal Otunga of Nairobi warmly welcomed them: "Invade Africa with the Kingdom of God."

Earlier in 1980 the ICP province of Italy also sent missionaries to Siakago, Kenya. The Salesians from Poland started presences in Uganda in 1989.

In 1994 the Salesian presences in Kenya, the Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda were unified under one banner, the AFE (Eastern Africa Province).

In August 2005 Don Pascual Chavez visited Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda to celebrate the 25 years of the Salesian Presence in the Eastern Africa (AFE).

Within the Province of Eastern Africa, the Sudan has now become a Delegation. By July 2006 Uganda became a new jurisdiction along with Rwanda and Burundi.

The phenomenal growth and blessings test and challenge our commitment to holiness and fidelity to Don Bosco's Charism today, which alone will guarantee a meaningful Salesian presence in the years to come. Granted our insufficiencies and failures, after three decades of dedicated service to rejuvenate the African face of the Church, the Mother of our faith, we continue repeating

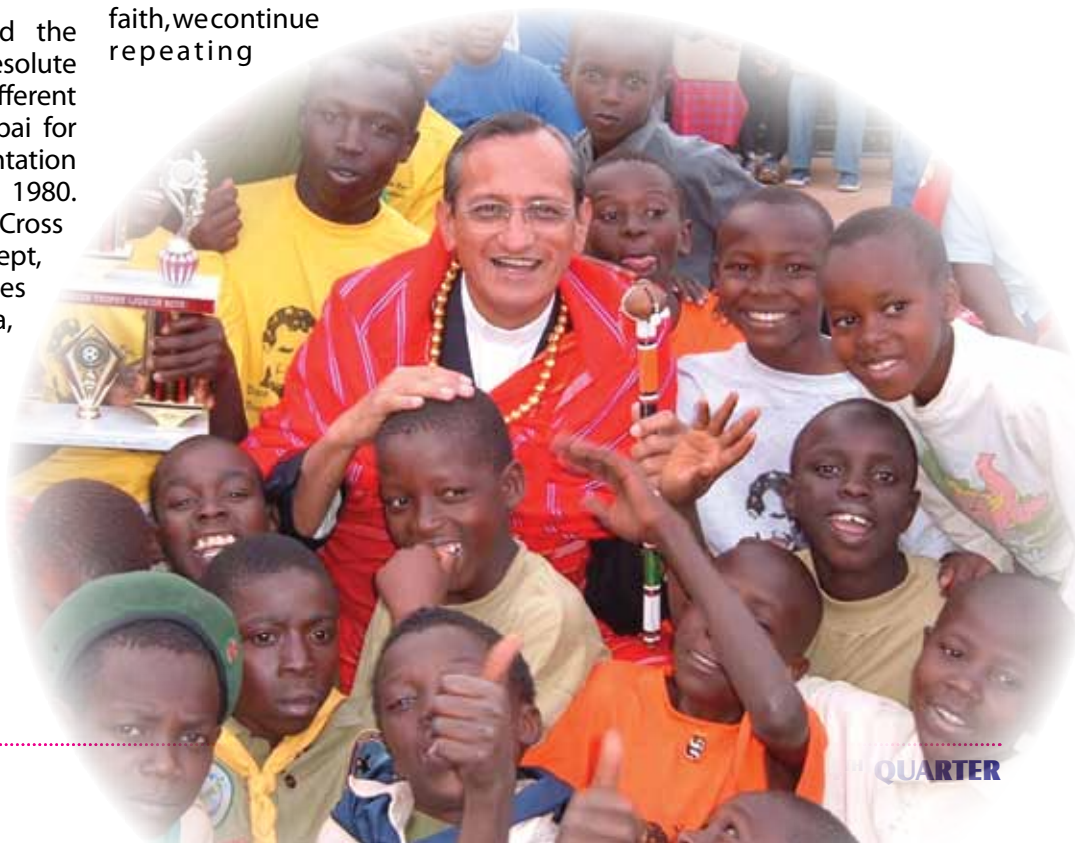
prayerfully Ps 125, "What marvels the Lord has done for us! Indeed we were glad. We do acknowledge Her powerful loving Hand in the origin and development of our mission."

Don Bosco said to his followers on 26th May 1886, "This mission (African mission) forms part of my plans and is one of my dreams. If I were young, I would take along with me Father Michael Rua and say, 'Come let us go...'" Don Bosco finally came to Africa.

On 1st December 2011 Don Bosco's relic landed at JKIA and was welcomed at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Upper Hill, Nairobi, his first home arrival into Africa. After 126 years the prophetic words become a reality filled with blessings for his spiritual sons and daughters and the people of Africa he prayed for and longed to see and to be with. **'Don Bosco among us'** become a grace-filled experience in the land of Kenya ever shimmering in a warm welcome, 'Don Bosco, Karibu Kwetu Kenya', remembering where it all began...■

**"From the hearts of your children,... the Rendille, the Samburu...
Lead them Lord
From darkness to light,
In Life and in Death Lord, abide with me."**

Vernal Paul Felix



Spiritual Accompaniment in the context of Salesian Youth Ministry

In this three part series Sahaya G. Selvam, SDB, explores the meaning and method of spiritual accompaniment. Here a 3-step model is proposed, and the first step is expounded.

The Presence of Listening

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.

The simple model proposes three steps in the process of accompaniment: listening, noticing the movement and deepening the movement. Movement here is to be understood as the working of God in the directee that attracts them to God. Each of these three steps calls for some particular skills on the part of the director. I will briefly describe the three steps here; they will be further developed in the next section. The first step is basic to any one-on-one helping relationship: a set of listening skills. This will include a body posture that is open, relaxed, and that shows concern towards the directee. It also consists of some relevant verbal feedback that furthers the narration. As the story is elaborated it is deepened by the considered-response of the director who mirrors back expressions and images expressed by the directee. This helps to identify the movement

in the heart of the directee. Identifying the movement calls for a spiritual skill of discernment. Once the movement has been picked up, and spontaneously confirmed by the directee, the director gently invites the directee to deepen it by getting in touch with the feelings that facilitate the perception of the working of God within the individual.

In a profound sense of respect for the process that God carries out in every person, spiritual accompaniment avoids giving into the temptation of using it for problem solving, or friendly correction, and even for spiritual instruction. However, in the early sessions, there might be some need to clarify what is spiritual accompaniment, to give instructions on methods of prayer, and to discuss some healthy images of God. These 'instructions' may be particularly necessary for young people, who might lack the ability – often the vocabulary – to articulate their experience of God. For best results and to honour the integrity of the process of spiritual accompaniment, whenever possible, these instructions could be given in the form of handouts or in workshops outside the spiritual accompaniment sessions. However, if the need arises these instructions could be carried out briefly within a session, while also being aware that teaching per se may not be part of spiritual accompaniment. Encouraging intellectual discussion within the sessions might act as an escape route for some directees who have difficulty with emotional processing of God-experience. The sections below will offer some suggestions on how directees could be accompanied in exploring the emotional content of their God-experience.

Listening: Expression of Loving Kindness

Karen is a 28 year old teacher, trained to deal with children with special needs. She comes in for spiritual accompaniment. She speaks about her struggle at work. She trained to take up this job because she has "compassion for children with special needs." Of late, she feels she has lost her "compassion." Sometimes she thinks she takes her work too seriously. She says she is not given due acknowledgement for the difficult work she does. She feels increasingly tired. Some children tend to be violent and she is afraid "she might lose her patience with them."

In a counselling context, the counsellor might explore the situation more and help her see different possibilities that she is not able to see at the moment. In the therapeutic context, depending on the theoretical framework of the therapy, the therapist might want to explore with very tactful questions the origin of the fear of losing her



patience. The therapist might direct Karen to a way of thinking and behaving that makes her function well in her working environment. Spiritual accompaniment does not attempt to solve problems. To begin with, a spiritual director would stay with Karen in her anguish rather than giving her ready-made solutions. Giving solutions to the problem is being paternalistic. Staying with her in her anguish is compassion (loving-kindness). From this position of safety, spiritual accompaniment will attempt to explore what God is like for Karen, and what does that feel like for her.

Not all directees might be able to narrate their story as coherently as Karen has done. Particularly younger people might give a brief summary of their problem, assume that the director understands them, and ask for advice. Asking advice could be an expression of power-play in a context where the young directee sees the director as mature in age and as an expert with life and faith. It might be life-giving if the director resists the temptation to take advantage of the position of power to act paternalistic and provide some good advice. When a young person concludes the brief account of their situation with a request for advice, it is wise to invite them to deepen their narrative. Some of the 'traditional' skills in active listening become useful in facilitating the narration of the story. Here are some techniques in active listening. I also point out how they could be used in the context of spiritual accompaniment.

Body-language: The way the director is seated and conducts him/herself could express openness,

serenity and a sense of being grounded and settled. Simple non-verbal expressions of empathy, interest and presence might prompt the directee to continue their story even after some silence.

Mirroring: One expression of "being with" the speaker is to mirror their body language and key verbal expressions that suggest the underlying themes of the narrator's story. For best results, this has to be done spontaneously and even unconsciously. Mirroring is very effective when the speaker's last sentence or phrase summarises what they have said previously at length, and the listener just repeats that last phrase. This would invite the speaker to stay with that or explore it deeper.

Summarising: When the narration has been reasonably long, it is useful to provide a summary of the story as heard by the listener. Paraphrasing could be used. This has to be very provisional and open to correction by the speaker. Often when the speaker is about to conclude one part of their story they might give an unconscious signal to the listener through an expectant eye-contact. For example, in the story of Karen, there are two themes that could be picked up: compassion and fear of losing her patience. When the summary is offered, Karen might just prefer to say something more about one of the themes, or begin to integrate the two themes in her narrative.

Reflecting: This is yet another way of giving a summary that includes some tentative interpretation of feelings that the listener might have picked up. This helps to identify what seems important to the speaker. In

the case of Karen, reflection might focus on compassion and fear.

Silence: Sometimes it is wiser not to rush in with any verbal intervention in the pauses. Silence facilitates a contemplative atmosphere that is so important in the context of spiritual accompaniment. Silence would invite the speaker to pay attention to their inner processes during the session, and thus be open to the working of God.

Questions: When the director perceives that the story is more or less complete, in an attempt to take the process to a deeper level some questions may be asked. Questions target the emerging theme that is perceived by the director to be significant for the directee. It is interesting to note that in the story of Karen there is no mention of God... but there are spiritual terms like 'compassion'. The questions might just explore this theme, or invite her to see where God is in her story.

This stage in spiritual accompaniment is a tangible and most meaningful expression of Salesian presence. It calls for humility (putting away the expertise), patience (even when the story is not forthcoming) and deep respect for the individual (avoiding judgements and classifications). This approach in spiritual accompaniment could be a tangible expression of Don Bosco's injunction: "It is not enough to love the young but make them know you love them." Once the relationship of trust has been established it might be easier for the young person to get deeper into the self, and get in touch with God. A Salesian spiritual director, with a non-threatening presence, shepherds the movement of God in the heart of the young person. ■



Sahaya G. Selvam



Our Evergreen Novitiate

Evergreen? Well, Yes! You can say that. In the novitiate, a place of growth, harvest time and planting occur together during the very eventful weeks of August and early September. In these few weeks the "old" novices crown their year with their first religious profession, while overlapping with the new novices settling in. Among earlier events we must mention the enjoyable trip of the novices to Iringa and Mafinga, staying overnight in the Junior Seminary. Secondly the highly successful national Salesian event of the Don Bosco Quiz, held here July 21st. Almost all the communities of Tanzania participated in this entertaining, educative and very successful event. To accommodate and feed the 36 young contestants and accompanying Salesians was a remarkable achievement. Fr. Augustine Sellam and the novices ran the event very smoothly. Didia were the winners while second and third places went to Mafinga Seminary. About 150 local children also attended and were given lunch.

The profession retreat was given by our genial Fr. Paul Felix. Meanwhile the next group of novices arrived, joined soon by Fr. Brian Jerstice. He had unexpectedly received the "all clear" from eye-doctors in U.K.

to return to Africa and had been assigned to Morogoro. Besides Fr. Provincial and other distinguished guests we welcomed relatives of the outgoing novices. Some had travelled all the way from Kenya.

The Solemnity of The Assumption of Our Lady was the beautiful occasion for the renewals of temporary vows by three Brothers during Evening Prayer on Aug. 14th, the First Professions during the Mass on the 15th and the reception of the new novices during Evening Prayer I. Congratulations to Bros. Geoffrey Cheruiyoth, David Kariuki and Nicodemus Orioki who renewed their vows. The Mass was held in the open with many guests. The liturgy was enhanced by the assistance of the parish choir, musicians and young dancers from the oratorians and nearby Padre Pio School. These joined with us in producing a fine celebration. Fr. Provincial spoke eloquently of the significance of the event for the Salesian Society, for the Church in East Africa, for the families and for the young candidates themselves. Twelve novices had begun the novitiate and happily all twelve made their profession. There were six from Tanzania, three from Kenya, two from Sri Lanka and one from Ethiopia. We congratulate them and their families, along with Fr. Michael and his colleagues. It was

another small miracle of organization that so many were fed so well and so efficiently in the fine meal which followed. The new novices had of course worked very hard to assist in all the preparations. In a simple but moving ceremony in the evening they were officially received into the novitiate. They are twelve again, seven from Tanzania and five from Kenya.

Sadly, just as we were about to start classes, Fr. Michael received the very sad news of the death of his dear mother. He was away in India for over two weeks. Fortunately the outgoing Fr. Augustine Kharmuti, now assigned to Kakuma, was still here to help us over this difficult time. We thank him for his great work here over the last two years and wish him every success in his new task. One of the weeks was taken up by the opening retreat, ably preached by Fr. Joseph Pulikkal. During the retreat we were easily able to accommodate also a three day meeting of S.D.B. community Youth Delegates and young leaders from Tanzania, led by Fr. Augustine Sellam, proving the value of this house as a centre. The adventures of the new novices we reserve to the next edition. ■

Fr. Brian Jerstice

The Transmission of the Salesian Charism in East Africa, after the Heart of Jesus

For some time now, we have come to underscore the mystical aspect of Salesian life, and rightly so. It is actually one of the key aspects of the upcoming GC 27. However, as it is also the case with other fundamental aspects of life, it has been more rhetoric than anything else. A mystic has to be considered as a person whose identity is deeply rooted for example, according to Neuman, in the first love of God. Allow me to quote at length Neuman in this regard:

"If there is any focus that the Christian leader of the future will need, it is the discipline of dwelling in the presence of the One who keeps asking us, 'Do you love me? Do you love me? Do you love me?' It is the discipline of contemplative prayer. Through contemplative prayer we can keep ourselves from being pulled from one urgent issue to another and from becoming strangers to our own and God's heart. Contemplative prayer keeps us home, rooted and safe, even when we are on the road, moving from place to place, and often surrounded by sounds of violence and war. Contemplative prayer deepens in us the knowledge that we are already free, that we have already found a place to dwell, that we already belong to God, even though everything and everyone around us keeps suggesting the opposite."

Salesians as the contemplatives in action have to take the aspect of the communion with God seriously. When this aspect is overlooked we become power seekers, desire to be relevant, and popular, and ultimately these become the determinants of ministry, leading to a celebrity mentality, lacking depth in what we endeavour to be. Being relevant seen from the professional realm alone kills the prophetic arm, thus popularity and power are seen as the ingredients of an effective ministry. However, the truth is, these are not callings but temptations to be avoided as Neuman says.

One area that can be of help in understanding the transmission of the Salesian Charism and the Love of Christ is the field of Aesthetics. We will see that proper aesthetic experience humbles, and leads one to be at the service of the calling that that experience elicits.

The Acquisition of the Aesthetic State of Mind

In other words the readiness to be possessed by the object of Beauty, which in our case is Christ Jesus, the suffering servant prefigured in Isaiah in the words; "Just as there were many who were astonished at him, so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals – so

he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate." (Isaiah, 52: 14 – 15). In order for us to act on the calling before us, we need to be affected by the perception that comes from the object of our faith. In Aesthetics, the unit of any aesthetic experience is the aesthetic object, the one saturated with meaning and value. This object is the originator of meaning and value, given the fact that, it is the aesthetic objects that elicit the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic object and experiencing of that object involves perception, i.e. the interpretation of the sense experiences. In perception we have the contributions from both the physical object and the perceiving self. It is the perception that gives rise to aesthetic object cum aesthetic experience. I am getting involved in this type of discourse because, I fall in love with Christ, He has to be our aesthetic object, which presupposes proper perception, leading to a life changing experience that is the result of that "seeing." It is in the Lonerganian terms like what is happening when one claims to believe??

The Encounter With Christ

From the foregoing we need to undergo, a conversion having a theology that understands that faith has to create experience, and that experience for us is the aesthetic experience acquired from the "seeing" of the servant who dies a criminal death. In order to go deeper into this subject allow me to delve into Neuman's idea of the discipline of Theology today. That we need to think theologically so that we allow ourselves to discern critically where we are being led. However, the danger today is raising the psychological or sociological questions framed in scriptural



terms. Theological thinking is the thinking with the MIND of Christ, who though was in the form of God did not count equality with God as a thing to cling on. It is becoming really hard for us Salesians in East Africa, at least from "my seeing" to find the MIND of Christ in our ministry. This is because, we have taken on the NGOs mentality framing it in Charismatic terms!!! To have the Mind of Christ, in living our Charism in this part of the world we need to undergo conversion mentioned above, in order to discern from moment to moment how God is acting in the history of this part of the world. Having this Christ-experience as Salesians, we will be the signs and carriers and dispensers of Christ's goods here in East Africa. However, at times, the easiest route given our rudimentary experience of Christ, we have become elements of fatalism, defeatism, accidentalism that simply makes people believe the statistics of death minus any hope!!! Hence, we live in these countries as foreigners and even at times as tourists who came for sight seeing!!! The thoughts of Timothy Radcliffe, on being Missionary seems appropriate: "However, being a missionary is not so much what one does, but who one is. "Being present to the other – living on the lines of fracture – implies a transformation of who I am. In being with and for that other person I discover a new identity." Thus, being sent means a dying to the one who was!!! We discover who we are by being close to those who are farthest away. "The missionary is not a tourist. The tourist can go to exotic places, take photographs, enjoy the food and the views, and go back home proudly bearing T-shirts. The missionary is only a sign of the Kingdom in staying there. As one of my brethren said, "You do not only unpack your bags, you throw your bags away."

To be Servants of the Truth

In aesthetics, the aesthetic experience is the offshoot of perception, intense seeing and an affirmation of the truth of the object. This is the aesthetic experience, which when properly acquired

is not a tool of manipulation. Fr. Timothy challenges the world to be the preachers of the Kingdom; we must still reflect on how to be bearers of the truth that overcomes divisions and unites. This is with the understanding that God's truth consecrates, makes holy, it transforms...The temptation in the world is to make the truth something that we possess, our property. "We wrap it up in few formulas. We try to master it. And this is not surprising in a society which is dedicated to private property. Like everything else in the world, the truth has become something that you can possess." Our undoing in living the Charism in this part of the world, has been to some degree, our all knowing attitude, and lack of humility, hence our poor showing in the partnering with others to forge a united front on issues. We better understand that God's truth cannot be owned. It is a gift that cannot be mastered... "It breaks open all our attempts to trap it in our words. It bursts open our little ideologies. The word of God is truth that searches and probes us. It is a two-edged sword."

The question at the end of the day, is: Which "Jesus" appeals to you more; the one crucified between two brigands or the one between two/more candles??? Which one elicits in you the aesthetic sense and ultimately the aesthetic experience and judgement? We have to become irrelevant, vulnerable and humble, and then we will be open to the promptings of the spirit, ready to learn, hence ready to be affected by

the aesthetic experience yielding the aesthetic object/judgement that we will give to the young through our charism. Neuman cautions: "The Christian leaders of the future have to be theologians, persons who know the heart of God and are trained through prayer, study, and careful analysis to manifest the divine element of God's saving work in the midst of the many seemingly random events of their time." Professionalism alone is handicapped; we need to be prophetic i.e. the Consecration aspect is the foundation. The power of transmitting our Charism lies in kenosis; this is where the authority of Christ is found:

Through kenosis, and only through kenosis, is it possible to become all things to all people; this is the only way to be at home in a strange land, the only way to love people who belong to other civilizations. Through kenosis one is open to others. Kenosis grants us the capacity to accept strong personal ties and demanding encounters. It is the precondition for dialogue and inculturation. (RICHARD, L., *Christ, the Self-Emptying of God*, 1997) ■



Mulongo Alexius
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A BOY WITH

FEBRUARY 1827. A QUIET EVENING IN THE BOSCO KITCHEN AT BECCHI - A VILLAGE WITH A FEW HOUSES ON A HILLOCK CALLED MONFERRATO IN PIEDMONT. THE FAMILY SETTLES DOWN TO SUPPER...

PUT IT AWAY OR I'LL THROW THAT BOOK INTO THE FIRE!

TONY, PLEASE, JOHNNY WORKS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. IF HE WANTS TO READ AFTER THAT WHY DO YOU MIND?

OF COURSE I MIND. WE HAVE TO DO ALL THE WORK. WE HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE ON STUDY. I'VE GROWN TALL AND STRONG AND I NEVER NEEDED BOOKS FOR THAT.

...OH YES, AND HE'S VERY STRONG AND DOES A LOT! DOESN'T HE JOE?

YOU'RE A CHEEKY LITTLE BRAT!

NO! TONY! LEAVE HIM ALONE! HE'S ONLY ELEVEN!

EVEN OUR ASS HASN'T BEEN TO SCHOOL... HE TOO HASN'T STUDIED

MARGARET IS ONCE MORE HELPLESS AT ANTHONY'S OUTRAGE AGAINST JOHNNY... AND JOHNNY QUICK WIT GETS HIM INTO TROUBLE AGAIN.

A DREAM

The Story of Don Bosco



Bosco Boys and Girls In England



Angels Charity, is a British NGO founded with a purpose of fighting poverty through the power of music. Angels success enforces its vision to give as many talented children worldwide the chance to perform in the UK and beyond - realizing children's potential, whilst wholeheartedly being committed to improving the lives of deprived children from the children's communities. Angels firmly believe that **every child** - not least the voiceless and forgotten - has an important message to share

and that by working together we can make a difference. Angels is a leader and pioneer of working collaboratively on stage with UK children in special community concerts and school workshops. Learning and working together, forming greater understanding and sharing cultures has a profound and lasting effect on both those performing and spectating.

It is this Angles Charity which gave our children this golden opportunity to show case their talents in the U.K. The ten day tour

included a mixture of performances and workshops at venues and schools across southern and South Eastern England, including some collaborative performances with UK children. As the days approached the children were so excited; it was their first time boarding a plane, flying and a trip to England. They captured the English audience and kept them glued to their seats as they danced to the African drum beats with their tireless energy. "An unforgettable experience of a life time", "a dream come true" that is how the children described their experience. They had opportunities to dance and play with the children in UK and visited many places in London.

My Experience in England: An Experience of a Life Time

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Clare and Ms. Hope together with their friends for giving us this golden opportunity to express our talents. I also would like to thank Fr. Sebastian and our teachers because they worked their level best to make sure we go to England. At



Don Bosco Didia

Thank you Dear Benefactors

The community of Don Bosco Didia is speechless as we received various gifts from our benefactors in the past few months. The late Mzee Jasani of happy memory through *the Sterling Trust* he founded, donated a brand new tractor (New Holland 55) in the last week of August 2012. It is our hope that the tractor would help us to improve our farming as Don Bosco Didia is an agriculture biased school. A big thank you to the trustees: Mr. Bharat Thaker, Mr. Shashi Shah and Ms. Gisela for their understanding and support.

The Sean Devereux Foundation too has been supporting various projects of ours in the past few years. In the



first I could not believe that I would board a flight. When the day came for us to go to England, I was filled with anxiety because it was the first time to board a plane. When the journey commenced, I felt like I was dreaming. I came to realize that I was not dreaming when we arrived in England. Everyone was happy and we felt overwhelmed with joy. I felt like it was a dream come true. We were given a warm welcome and we truly felt at home. The people were really generous. We spent most of our time with children, performing some dances and playing together with them. They were very kind, outgoing and were happy to make friends with us. Our performances were excellent and the people loved the shows. They supported us in various ways. In fact we were very delighted because they appreciated our performances. Our efforts did not come to a losing end, but it bore much fruits. We loved England, the people and the environment. The weather was fair and we felt comfortable with it. The capital city London, is a beautiful city. It was indeed a wonderful experience worth the effort. When the day came for us to come back to Kenya we were very sad. This was an experience of a life time.

Immaculate Nduku

A Dream Come True

It was a day full of excitement and surprise as we approached the day of departure. I could not believe my eyes as we departed for the Kenyatta International Airport and I felt I was dreaming. I never dreamt that I, Kevin Wakoli would be flying to England at this stage of my life. The seat in the flight made us comfortable and made me realize that it is true, I was flying to England. As we landed in Heathrow International Airport I was surprised to see the British people welcoming us and greetings us with big smiles. As we came out of the airport Ms. Clare and her cooperators were waiting for us and were happy to welcome us. We boarded the bus and started our journey towards Reading, Douai Abbey. Our eyes were wide open with wonder looking at the beautiful roads, skyscrapers, and the scenery. We met a lot of our age mates and shared our talents with them. It was really a dream come true. I thank Fr. Sebastian, the teachers and all the members of the Angels Charity for giving us this chance to board a plane, fly and visit England. ■

Kevin Wakoli



past few months we were able to improve the health of our students due to the malaria prevention spray the Foundation had been sponsoring. We just opened a new study hall for our girls at Notre Dame sponsored by *Sean Devereux Foundation*. The infirmary of our students partially sponsored by SDF is also in progress. A special word of thanks goes to Mr. & Mrs. Lion, the Trustees of Sean Devereux Foundation.

With our school fees alone we are unable to do much developmental activities in the school. The contribution from our benefactors is of great importance. We are very grateful to the above mentioned Trusts and all the others who are supporting us. God bless you! ■

The Experience of a Volunteer

Bosco Boys Langata: The Place of Many Blessings

My name is Tina. I spent one year of my life with boys from the street, we call them Bosco Boys. The experience was beyond my expectation. Why? Because of the boys, because, despite their limitations and difficulties, they derive their joy in whichever way possible for them. They can give you what you will never expect from them. They will give you lessons for true life.

When I came, I brought along some nice ideas; how I will work in this house, how I will teach them to become good boys, how I will show them the correct things, which are necessary for life. I thought of how to slowly, *"pole pole,"* change their minds and attitudes to become better kids. Great was my surprise when I realized, that instead of me bringing change to them they

changed me. I learned that every moment, it was necessary to listen to them, and when they were stubborn I had to learn how to be patient. I learned to understand them even when they were hurting. I had to know my limits. I learned who I was. During my life in Bosco Boys I got answers to the many questions I had. These answers one cannot get from school, or seminary, from books or from wise people. In this place I was challenged.

It reminds me of the words of Robert Fulghum: "My own movement of thought is not meant to be a straight point-to-point, linear line of march, but a horizontal exploration from one area of interest to another. There is no ultimate destination - no finish line to cross, no final conclusion to be reached. It's the way I feel about dancing - you move around a lot, not to get somewhere, but to be somewhere in time." Such was

my life at Bosco Boys. Just to be. I did not do anything big for these kids, I did not build the school, or playground, or anything else. I just sewed their clothes, I sat with them on the field and listened to them. We did not do any big things or had any big intention to reach big goals. We just existed. We were ourselves and we learnt how to live our little weirdness.

**"Don't worry that
children never listen
to you;
worry that they are
always watching you."**

Robert Fulghum



Sufferings are Blessings!!!

"How God can let so much evil happen???"

In some critical situations of our life, many of us may have raised this question to God. When we have sufferings after sufferings we used to put many "Why?" questions to God. Many times we fail to accept the pains and sufferings as it is and we blame God for letting that happen in our life. But when God sends us something good, we welcome it and praise his name. Why can't we do the same when he sends us trouble? If our praise remains only at the time of blessings, then what kind of faith do we have? Actually the purpose of sufferings is to prove whether our faith is genuine. When we move through the painful situations our faith is being tested, so that it may endure.

When we have troubles, then be happy and praise God for the same, because then we are moving a step closer to God. Sufferings are the most beautiful gifts from



God. When we accept them whole heartedly then it will turn in to blessings. A great reward is kept for us in heaven. But if we still continue to challenge and question God for our troubles, the sufferings will remain as sufferings. God will not answer our questions, but surely he will respond to our faith. So smile at your pains. Be glad and joyful even

during times of disaster. For God, the Lord is our strength. So thank and praise Him in all our pains, sickness and sufferings. Thus win all trials of sufferings by our faith■

Dhanya Vincent

(Jesus Youth volunteer, Don Bosco Mission Tonj, South Sudan)

Criticism — Who Needs It?

There is a famous story told about the great Gautama Buddha.

One day, while preaching, The Buddha was interrupted by an angry man, who began showering him with a string of rather abusive words. The Buddha waited calmly for his critic to finish, and then asked him, "Tell me dear sir, if a man offered a gift to another but the gift was declined, to whom would the gift then belong?" "To the one who offered it," the man replied. "Well then," Buddha declared, "I decline to accept your gift of abuse and request that you keep it for yourself."

This small little story reflects, in entirety, the message of this article. All of us are sure to have faced criticism in one form or another in our lives. In reacting to criticism about ourselves, each of us behaves differently:

Sometimes we feel bad about it,
Sometimes we cry,
Sometimes we are very angry,
Sometimes we try to hide,
Sometimes we feel like hitting back,
Sometimes we brood and think,
But few are the people who forget it in a blink!

The Buddha was one of the few people who smiled and faced criticism boldly. If we take a look at the different religions of the world, we will notice, that all prophets initially faced extremely harsh criticism about their work. This is also the case with many national leaders, business monarchs, and the likes. In more ways than one, their ability to accept and deal with criticism is what shows their greatness.

To bear defeat with dignity, to accept criticism with poise, to receive honors with humility - these are marks of maturity and graciousness■ **Anonymous**

Collected by Fr. Shyjan, SDB

Glorious Episodes

SUDAN DELEGATION

The expectation of a child keeps hope alive. His eventual arrival brings delight to the mother and fills the entire community with sentiments of joy and solidarity. The occasion is further enhanced as God fulfils hopes exceedingly, beyond expectations. Such was the atmosphere and feeling experienced recently in Saint Josephine Bakhita Delegation (comprising Sudan and South Sudan).

The 4th of September 2012 witnessed three events, two of which are especially a cause of great joy for the entire Salesian Congregation. These events were: the blessing of the pre-novitate house, the entrustment of the pre-novices and the installation of Fr Jacob Thelekkadan as rector. The events took place in Juba, the state capital of the newly born Republic of South Sudan.

The Salesians have been present in the Sudan (North and South) for almost thirty years. Political instability resulted in the separation of the Sudan Delegation from AFE in 2008. The long period of war and its impact in terms of human displacement contributed to the delay in the consolidation and expansion of the Salesian mission. Nevertheless, throughout those



times, even under the threat of death, the Salesians remained with the people, especially the youth, offering a variety of services. With the independence of the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011 and the positive outlook of its government and citizens towards the church, greater horizons are opening up for the flourishing of the Salesian vocation and mission here.

The pre-novitate community is the first formally erected formation house in the delegation. Before the blessing of the house by Fr Dominic Padinjareparambil, the delegate superior Fr Ferrington Poobalarayen expressed thanks to the Rector Major and his General Council for granting the approval of

erection of the pre-novitate house. He also conveyed thanks to the benefactors whose support made the construction possible. The pioneering batch of pre-novices is composed of five young, energetic and promising South Sudanese. Providentially, each of them comes from a different ethnic group -- a symbolic manifestation of the bond of unity among the people of South Sudan.

The media carry many one-sided and uncritical reports of war and conflict here. This article, on the other hand, seeks to present an often untold story -- the story of the great things God is doing here. The pre-novitate is only one small revelation of the human and spiritual horizons of the blessed people of South Sudan. May God bless South Sudan! ■

Isaac Eibozele Okoh



Give Me Souls Take Away the Rest... DON Bosco Says Even Today!!

From the Eyes and the Ears of a Salesian Sister Novice...

As a saying goes, anything that is well planned goes well..... So it happened in Dagoretti /Mutuini from 15th to 31st August 2012. The VIDES Volunteers, Sisters and Novices as well as some lay assistants had a great time with children from age 5 to 16. The Camp was based on the theme: **Knowing and following Christ the Good Shepherd in imitation of Don Bosco.**

The main activities in a VIDES Camp involves giving academic remedial boost to the young people, moral formation, creative work, educative games and general good interaction. Programs begin with joyous animation as and good morning thought which opens the rest of the program. This year, the ministry of education asked all form of academic work done away with during the holiday and thus we had to take off the remedial work for the children. This did not take away the flavour of the camp. Children would start streaming into the compound as early as 7 am though we could begin our program at 10.30 am until 4.45 pm.

The young were taught about the good shepherd, all the qualities of a good shepherd and how they could be good shepherds following Jesus in imitation of our father St. John Bosco. One day within the camp was set aside for Charity work. The young people brought a lot of joy in the neighbourhood as they went in groups to visit the sick and elderly people and those who are in dire need of support.

They brought simple but important foodstuffs, water and on reaching the homes they could assist in sweeping compounds, gathering firewood for the needy people etc. In return they received blessings and prayers from those people who were visited. A very serene atmosphere existed throughout the camp. The closing program was jointly held in Mutuini where over 800 children and young gathered to share what they had learnt and experienced throughout the camp. They did so in various ways such as songs, dance, drama etc. We were honored by



the presence of the Mutuini chief and the two assistant chiefs who addressed the participants and were deeply impressed by the work done in the camp.

They acknowledged that it was totally a community based event and encouraged more initiatives of the same nature to be organised often. When the camping program was over, none wanted to leave. The young experienced the great love of those who animated them and the animators all felt a reciprocal appreciation from the young.

A good shepherd leads by example!!



Sr. Adeline
FMA Novice

From the Eyes and Ears of the Young!

With joy we express our thanks to the organisers of the VIDES camp 2012 which took place in Mutuini and Dagoretti. We remember how the children and young people (we included) from Mutuini and Dagoretti enjoyed every activity in the camp. Time passed so fast that we were asking the organisers to prolong it. We were happy to

receive the VIDES Kenya, Vides UK Volunteers, The Sisters and Novices and our teachers as well.

We interacted with them freely, learnt a lot from them about following Christ the good shepherd. We had fun in games and did a lot of creative works. Everyday day we had a chance to develop our talents in a special way. We will not forget the charity work exercise we carried out in the neighbourhood. We were so happy especially to know that as young people we can do much to help the needy members of our society. This opened our understanding more and we were able to see how we could be shepherds of others even at our tender age.

Terry, Paula and Abigail
Pupils at Mutuini Educational Centre.

Further Comments by the Volunteers who did the first Experience in the Camp!

It has been a wonderful experience to share joy, happiness, God's love and above all a successful 2012 camp. Meeting young people to nurture with knowledge and talents was a great pleasure to me. May God sustain us all through and may the VIDES Kenya spirit grow more and more. From the bottom of my heart THANKS to all the organizers. You are wonderful people!!

Paul Waweru.
Murang'a Teachers Training College

Being my first time to animate vides camp 2012, I can summarize the whole experience as fantastic, excellent and great! Meeting and sharing with the children and young people was the most enriching experience I had. Working closely with the Salesian Sisters was just an amazing and fulfilling experience. It was a wonderful and great opportunity for me to spend my time with the children and all the animators in the camp. Sincerely I learnt a lot and I really appreciate it so much.

Despite giving out I do admit that the platform provided me with lots of experience very paramount

About Vides Kenya

VIDES KENYA is a not for profit organisation whose vision is to promote education leading to development in those places where young people are most at risk. This is achieved through providing training in salesian ideals and methods to young men and women who wish to volunteer their time and talents for the good of the disadvantaged people of the society especially the young.

The mission of VIDES KENYA is to form Volunteers and outreach programmes for children and youth especially the most vulnerable.

children. Volunteers are trained in different skills and abilities so that their service to the young may be competent and professional. Training also includes a spiritual component so as to realise the volunteers motto: "Reach in to reach out"

VIDES KENYA aims at providing positive educational experiences for children and the young people which aim to combat negative tendencies prevalent in the society. It also provides opportunities and training to young people who are interested in offering Voluntary services. Other aims are: to provide holistic education for development, providing experiences which keep



to my future career. Now that I am just a second year student at the University, it is my great pleasure to admit that for the rest of my life I will care for the young. VIDES is the best group and place to be.

I extend my gratitude to benefactors and the volunteers who supported the camp by their presence and financial aid. May you all keep this Spirit and let us do more.

Philemon Kiprono
Kenyatta university student

I am a UK VIDES volunteer and travelled to Kenya for the 1st time to partake in the Vides Kenya summer camp. The camp in Kenya is very different from the UK camps. I loved every second of the experience and will definitely be returning in the future. The children are so loving and willing to learn! They especially loved the UK songs and games. I have gained a lot from the experience - new friends and huge boost in confidence. I will never forget VIDES Kenya summer camp 2012.

Erin – VIDES UK

VIDES KENYA had its beginning in Kenya through a volunteer of VIDES UK who was doing Voluntary work in Kenya. She mobilized some nine Kenyans to join a group of VIDES UK who were coming to run a camp for children in Namanga in August 2000. From that experience the Kenyan young people saw they had a lot to offer. Slowly their own movement began to take shape with its own identity and organization.

The inspiration of VIDES Kenya comes from the priest and educator St. John Bosco who identified the problems experienced by young people and intervened with many initiatives aimed at giving a sense of hope and dignity to young people at risk.

The main focus of VIDES Kenya are the young people and children who live in places of cultural, social, economic and spiritual deprivation. Salesian communities and local parishes benefit from the VIDES activities.

All those desiring to join VIDES Kenya are required to undergo a series of training weekends designed to prepare the Volunteers to have positive attitudes when dealing with the young and

children and youth off the streets and welcome them instead into a friendly environment where Christian values are proposed and lived, bringing Catholic youth together to strengthen their faith commitment and bringing a sense of unity within diverse cultural settings.

The major activities carried out by the Volunteers are; Organising local projects targeting especially areas of social deprivation, individual involvement at parish levels, running formation camps for the youth and children in collaboration with VIDES UK, providing support for activities offered by the salesian communities throughout Kenya, Training and formation weekends, outreach for recruitment and training of new volunteers fundraising and mobilising communities to support activities for children and youth. Volunteers taking a commitment to serve the young.

Sr. Laurenzia FMA
VIDES KENYA Formation Delegate



THE ANNUAL CULTURAL DAY AT UTUME

The Annual Cultural day: Bosco(seniors) Meet and Savio (Juniors) Meet took place at Don Bosco Utume in the month of October, 2012. The number of the participants keep on increasing with years. This year saw an addition of two centres that is St. Paul's University Chapel, Forest View Academy and Mukuru-Pipeline besides the usual ones. These events have become for us the real moments for evangelization having realized that during the Cultural days majority of youth take part.

This year all the activities were geared towards the Rector Major's Strenna for the coming year; "Rejoice in the Lord always....." (Phil.4:4) which was the theme of the day. The major challenge we the organizers face at times is the collision of the programs with those of the Diocese or deanery which "rob" the youth away from our events. All in all, there was no reason for alarm since we all belong to the same family and above all the local Church has to be given the first priority.

Bye, Adieu, Ciao, Kwaheri Tangaza College

Tangaza College which is a Theological Centre for Religious, though currently many secular institutes are attached to it, opened its doors to the first group

of students in the year 1986. The pioneers of Tangaza College were only three "giant" congregations; Consolata, Salesians of Don Bosco and Spiritans.

As per now, the corporate members of the Tangaza College Consortium are about twenty two in number. The College has grown tremendously over the past twenty five years with the number of students keep on increasing. Tangaza too has contributed a great deal in the Church and society at large with her members (Alumni) occupying various influential positions.

The salesians of Don Bosco theology students, particularly, the Utume Brothers who have undergone their theological studies in Tangaza for several years, are about to "call it a day" come the end of this year 2012 when the "Benjamins" (the last born of Utume brothers in Tangaza) will be "hanging up their theological boots" and eventually bid farewell to Tangaza. It is sweet and sour news to the SDBs since they will now be able to concentrate and improve their newly established theological centre-Utume and also at the same time sour news since they will miss the international exposure which they have been enjoying in Tangaza.

Most of the Tangaza family members are not happy with the

news considering the wealth of creativity which the salesians have contributed in most of the college activities. Some of the students went as far as seeking the opinion of other students whether they were happy with the departure of the salesians. They asked: "Well as many as for this opinion say 'I', "Well as many as this opinion say 'Nay.'" The "I" got it and so they declared: OPERATION LINDA (DEFEND) SALESIANS FROM DEPARTING."

For sure, the salesians have registered good reputation in Tangaza in many areas; be it sports, leadership, academics, teaching among others. They have excelled in these areas and above all their presence in the college could always be felt due to their cheerfulness. Congrats to all the Salesians; young and old for the best record you have shown in Tangaza. As we bid farewell to Tangaza, we hold on heads high.

The Final "Yes" in Utume: Perpetual Profession

During the month of August, 2012, the Utume community with the entire people of God who were present, witnessed the "Final Yes" of the nine Salesian confreres. Cheers of joy and the continuous claps rented the air as each of them was welcomed with the "I welcome you as a confrere with perpetual vows." Many came from all walks of life including their family members to grace the occasion. Tears of joy could not be hidden in their faces as they assured the entire congregation that they were in the society to stay.

"Don Bosco you have taken away my heart," was a catching phrase of most of the professed members. Those who professed were; Muli L, Malietso G, Onyiego B, Njue F, Kariuki P, Mutechura P, Owuor Erick, Bisonga Dand Nduati D.

Benn Agunga - Utume

My Life History From Street to University

My name is Patrick Ngugi Gichuhi. I was born in a very humble family in 1986. I am the first born in a family of six children that comprises of three brothers and two sisters. Unfortunately not all my parents are alive. My father passed away in the year 2009 after being separated from us for seventeen years. My mother is still alive and taking care of my younger sister who is in Form I and my younger brother who is Standard six. She is the most dedicated mother I know having taken care of us all single handedly without ever getting married again. She is my role model.

For me as I was growing up in life was good. I had a nice family that cared for me and my siblings. More importantly I had big dreams of being an important person in society. Surprisingly I had a dream of being a senator at a time when Kenya had never even imagined aligning its political dispositions in such a manner as the new constitution stipulates. Any way my point was that I had dreams like any kid out there who had a family that can make his/her dream come true. However, all these dreams were to be shattered in years that followed.

In the year 1991 just a year after my younger sister was born, my parents separated. It was not clear for what reason but later I found out, that they were fighting a lot because my dad did a job of selling marijuana. This kept him away from the family a lot since he spent most of the time locked up in prison than taking care of his family. My mother had reached a point of no return after a series of effort to persuade on my dad to leave the business and do something else didn't work. My mother left us all in 1991. I had just arrived from school (by then I was in Standard two), to find out that everything at home was in a mess and my mother nowhere to be found. Since my mother kept on disappearing from us whenever they had a fight, I didn't see any difference between the disappearing of 1991 and any



other that had happened before. I didn't realize that this was a major separation that meant this would never get together again. My dad tried putting on with us for a short-while but he couldn't manage and he decided to take us all to our rural home in Nyeri. By this time I had left school and I was just taking care of my siblings.

Nyeri was not a welcoming home for us. My dad was not in good terms with the extended family from my mother's side. Instead of taking us straight to the house of my grandfather, he dumped us in an urban city near Nyeri called Kiganjo. Since I was the eldest he gave me the responsibility of taking care of the siblings and finding my relatives. The only thing he did to help was to leave me with an album that had our family photos and he fled. That's was how I remembered my dad for at least 10 years. By this time it was already dark, and people began to wonder about us and started asking questions where we came from, who was our mother or father and what we were doing at such a place at that time of the hour. Luckily enough when they checked at album I was carrying, they recognized my mother, which automatically led to the finding of my grandfather. That's how we ended up in my rural home in Nyeri

which to my surprise was not a welcoming heaven for us. Instead it became a living hell. There was a lot of mistreatment from my relatives in Nyeri. They didn't take us as their own and instead saw us as a burden to them. After a series of mistreatment my brothers and I decided to run away from there. We didn't even know where to go or whom to go to. After a discussion we decided one of my brothers was to remain behind and take care of my younger sisters. So in 1992 my younger brother and I, ran away from Nyeri and walked for approximately 100 kilometer from Nyeri Kiganjo to Nyeri Karatina. We decided to dwell there roaming around and finding left over food from hotels and the market around. After a few days a Good Samaritan mother came to our aid after seeing us for some days in the street. She became friendly and started giving us food in the street. After telling her where we came from (Kawangware) she took us to a police station and asked the police to help us reach Nairobi. The next morning the police helped us board a bus for Nairobi and from there we became street boys.

We could not go to Kawangware because we knew my dad would kill us if he ever saw us around, and so we decided to hustle in

the street, find food in the street through begging and we slept in the street. We stayed in the street begging for money to buy food and sleeping in the cold for two years. In 1995 we got arrested and we were charged as being parking boys. We were remanded at Kabete children's home for almost a year until Don Bosco came to our rescue. After the prosecutor saw that nobody was coming to claim us, he got concerned and asked me what I wanted of us. I had listened to some boys in the remand talking of a place called Don Bosco where children could go to school, get nice food and clothes, and without hesitation I said I wanted to be taken to Don Bosco.

In the year 1996 I was chosen among the first group to be taken to government schools from Don Bosco Kariua after my outstanding performance in class. I joined

Murang'a Road Primary school in Nairobi as a standard 3 pupil. I was later to get transferred to St Mary's Primary school in Karen where I completed my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. After that I joined Kikuyu Day Secondary School and completed my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. In 2008 I joined Nairobi Institute of Business Studies where I did my Diploma in Business and Management. And in 2009 I got a scholarship to join the United State International University courtesy of the Catholic Scholarship Program of East Africa. Through God's grace I graduated with a bachelor degree in International Business Administration major with a bias in Finance, second class upper division.

I give my sincere gratitude to the Salesians of Don Bosco for their effort and determination in assisting young people like me to transform our lives. I also cannot forget all the

benefactors, well wishers who also made any contributions to see me succeed in life. Most importantly I cannot forget our good Lord Jesus Christ who has made this success story a reality.

"At the end we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received how much money we have made how many great things we have done. We will be judged by 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was homeless and you took me in.'" ■

"Hunger not only for bread- but hungry for love. Naked not only for clothing - but naked for human dignity and respect. Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks – but homeless because of rejection."
Mother Teresa

Patrick Gichuhi Ngugi

SYM Making a Difference in the Lives of the Young

Being a member of the Salesian Youth Movement is quite rewarding. Though I have been in the Mutuini oratory for many years, I joined the SYM group in the year 2010. I was attracted by the way, I saw the Sisters interacting and forming the young people in good ways. I also saw that those who were members of this movement were always happy and doing their duties especially in the oratory very well. Their behavior in and out of the oratory was admirable. I developed great interest in knowing more about the Movement. I got the chance and Sisters were kind enough to begin afresh with me as well as with some new members who had joined along with me.

We are involved in many activities such as Charity work, recollection, animation of the camps and oratory groups; exchange programs with other SYM members all what makes me enjoy and celebrate my youthfulness. Every Saturday we meet in the oratory. We pray, play and learn. We share many things concerning life and

I learnt many things from the introduction and since then I have been very consistent in the meetings. I am one of the SYM leaders and occasionally we go to Don Bosco Utume for the Meetings of those units

within Nairobi. All what I hear and see still inspires me and I feel great renewal always. SYM has changed me in these two years. I was glad to participate in the 2011 SYM Forum. I had never had such an experience before. I learnt many things about life. My strong desire is to live all the elements of Salesian Youth Spirituality, which characterizes all the members of this Movement. I am happy to have a link with many young people within the Salesian world. ■

Angela Mwara

SYM Member - Mutuini





A SPIRITUAL OLYMPICS

From the 3rd to the 5th of August, Form Four and Three students at our school Loreto High School Limuru had the privilege of attending yet another spiritual retreat at our school. The theme of this retreat was "A Spiritual Olympics".

We realized that in many ways our lives can be compared to Olympics. In this case for example, those preparing to take part in the Olympics undergo extensive training. In the same way, our lives are a test, we become better by undergoing some extensive training and the difference is that unlike Usain Bolt and the other athletes, for most of us, the training we go through is spiritual. The same way those preparing for Olympics are restricted to a specific diet, we as Christians should also restrict ourselves to those things that benefit our spirituality and enable us to win the ultimate prize - heaven.

In addition to this indispensable lesson, we learnt the value of forgiveness. We learnt that in forgiving, we let a captive free and that this captive is ourselves. Yes,

forgiveness is the virtue of the strong. This lesson was driven home by an inspiring film documentary about Immaculee' Ilibagiza whose family had been brutally murdered during the Rwandan genocide but she forgave the murderers despite the heartache that they had subjected her to.

Another vital life lesson that we learnt was the power of dreams. This is what pushes those people competing for the gold medal in the Olympics to give their all and make many sacrifices. The power of a dream cannot be overemphasized as this is what makes those who are successful today. A good example was derived from a touching clip about a boy named Emmanuel who was auditioning for the X factor. Many of us could not hold back our tears as we watched the video clip of this approximately 17-year-old boy who had been found in the middle of a war zone in Iraq by his adoptive mother. Perhaps as a result of the war his hands and legs had been poorly formed making him shorter than the average teenager. Despite the fact that he did not

This is what pushes those people competing for the gold medal in the Olympics to give their all and make many sacrifices. The power of a dream cannot be overemphasized as this is what makes those who are successful today.

even have 5 fingers on his hand as most of us do, he pushed through and dared to do the unthinkable. He believed in himself and went for the auditions. In the same spirit we too should look past all setbacks and forge our own paths to achieve our dreams.

It was a wonderful 3-day retreat and I am sure that the students of Loreto High School Limuru who attended this retreat had a lot to share with other people.■

Rhoda Kemuma



Africa, the Church Is With You

Cardinal Rylko: Africa, the Church Is With You

President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity Closes Congress in Cameroon

A real and proper “epiphany of the Church in Africa,” is how Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, described the success of the Pan-African Congress of the Laity, held in Yaounde, Cameroon last Tuesday.

“We discovered its numerous spiritual resources, its great religious and human vitality and the vigorous missionary dynamism of its laity,” said the cardinal in the closing address of the continental congress, organized by the dicastery he heads.

Moreover, Cardinal Rylko stressed the fact that the formation of mature laity is not a privilege but rather a right and a duty in the Church. The cardinal also stressed that it is a matter of extreme urgency, and that the Church in Africa can rely on its many charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit to give hope to those in need. He said one example, in particular, are the ecclesial movements, which he described as a “source of great missionary dynamism, and to the parishes, real schools of Christian life.”

“Africa is in extreme need of this kind of laity. To be witnesses of Christ at the heart of the world is not an easy task, as much courage is required to go against the current, given the prevailing cultural tendencies and, if one is to be in consonance with the Lord’s example, as a sign of contradiction,” he added.

The Polish prelate also exhorted the Catholic laity to defend the dignity of human life reminding that such inalienable rights cannot be changed by any individual, group, authority or State because it is a supreme right that comes from God.

Entrusted to the African Catholic laity, Cardinal Rylko said, is the task to “build the Kingdom of God in the world in which it lives, that is, in the family, in work, in the economy, in public life, in politics and in culture.”

The risks, he continued, are represented particularly by the phenomenon of “depreciation of politics,” which the cardinal described as a consequence “of incompetence, arrogance and widespread corruption,” which make the political class lose its credibility.

“However, despite its limitations and weaknesses, politics continues to be an important component of civic life in the democratic system. Hence, criticism and denunciation of evils and abuses is not enough. Imposed on today’s laity is the urgent task to discover the right and duty of active and responsible participation,” Cardinal Rylko said.

After encouraging “all Christians of Africa who suffer because of religious intolerance, hatred and violence,” the cardinal concluded the Pan-African Congress with the following words: “To all those who suffer we wish to say: you are not alone and abandoned! Christ is with you! The Church is with you!” ■

Zenit

Pope: Mary Is Queen - Our Sister Who Helps Us, Loves Us

Benedict XVI dedicated one of the Wednesday audience to a reflection on the feast of the Queenship of Mary, considering what her queenship means and what it means for us.

After noting some of the history of the feast, the Pope explained how Mary’s queenship is due to her “unique association to her Son, both during her earthly journey as well as in heavenly glory.”

But is this queenship just a title, the Holy Father asked. “It is a consequence of her being united with her Son, of her being in heaven, i.e. in communion with God. She participates in God’s responsibilities over the world and in God’s love for the world,” he explained.

Power and riches is not the type of royalty belonging to Jesus and Mary, the Pontiff added.

Just as Jesus is king on the cross, so Mary is queen in service to humanity, he said.

“The kingship of Jesus has nothing to do with that which belongs to the powerful of the earth,” the Pope reflected. “He is a king who serves his servants; he showed this throughout his life. And the same is true for Mary. She is queen in God’s service to humanity. She is the queen of love, who lives out her gift of self to God in order to enter into His plan of salvation for man.”

Mary is a queen who helps us, Benedict affirmed. “She is queen precisely by loving us, by helping us in every one of our needs; she is our sister, a humble handmaid.”

Zenit



Counting down to the 50th anniversary of Vatican Council II

Some thoughts on the most significant moments in Vatican Council II.

One of the most important events in the modern history of the Catholic church will soon reach a historical milestone. On Oct. 11, the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council will be celebrated by the Church throughout the world.

On Oct. 11, 1962, Blessed Pope John XXIII confidently threw open the windows of the Church, trusting that the Holy Spirit would blow through it with a fresh breeze of renewal.

During this worldwide ecumenical council — the 21st in the history of the church — over 2,500 bishops approved 16 documents designed to enliven Catholic spirituality, and make the church far more relevant to the modern world.

The most important of these documents, in my opinion, is *Gaudium et Spes* ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"). It insists that the Catholic Church must be at the service of all humanity, especially those most in need.



Its very first words powerfully proclaim this theme: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

As a step in this direction, "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel." We are then called to strengthen those aspects

that conform to Christ's teachings, and to change those elements that do not.

The world's Catholic bishops insisted that the Church — "the people of God" — cannot show any bias in protecting the lives and dignity of human beings. As one of Vatican II's active participants Archbishop Karol Wojtyla would later declare — as Pope John Paul II — "We are all really responsible for all." ■

Salesian involvement in the digital continent



Just a few weeks following release of the iBreviary app with the Salesian Proper in an iOS version, the Android and Kindle versions are now available.

As previously indicated, but some weeks earlier than anticipated, the well-known Pro Terra Sancta iBreviary with Salesian Proper is now available for android-based gadgets. It will shortly be available for the Kindle e-book reader.

The Social Communication Department has seen to this, in collaboration with Fr Paolo Padrini, who thought up the idea of the iBreviary initially. The Salesian version is one of the initiatives for the Bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth (1815-2015) and confirms

Salesian involvement in the digital continent.

Anyone with an Android phone can update or download the app from Google play, and choose the Salesian Liturgical Proper from the setup menu. The Kindle store is expected to have its version of the same available in the coming days.

The iBreviary with Salesian Proper is currently available in Italian, English and French and in autumn it is expected that the Spanish version too will be ready. ■

ANS



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FURTHER INFORMATION

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SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

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St John Bosco



St Mary Mazzarello

Would you like to join us?
Je, unapenda kujiunga nasi?

Boys please contact:

Vocation Director
P.O. Box 27754,
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Nairobi, Kenya.

Nchini TANZANIA, wasiliana na:
Vocation Director
P.O. Box 32770
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Girls please contact

Vocation Promoter
P.O. Box 57712,
00200 City Square, Nairobi.

Vocation Promoter
P.O. Box 2556, Kigali, Rwanda.

Vocation Promoter
P.O. Box 7648
Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.

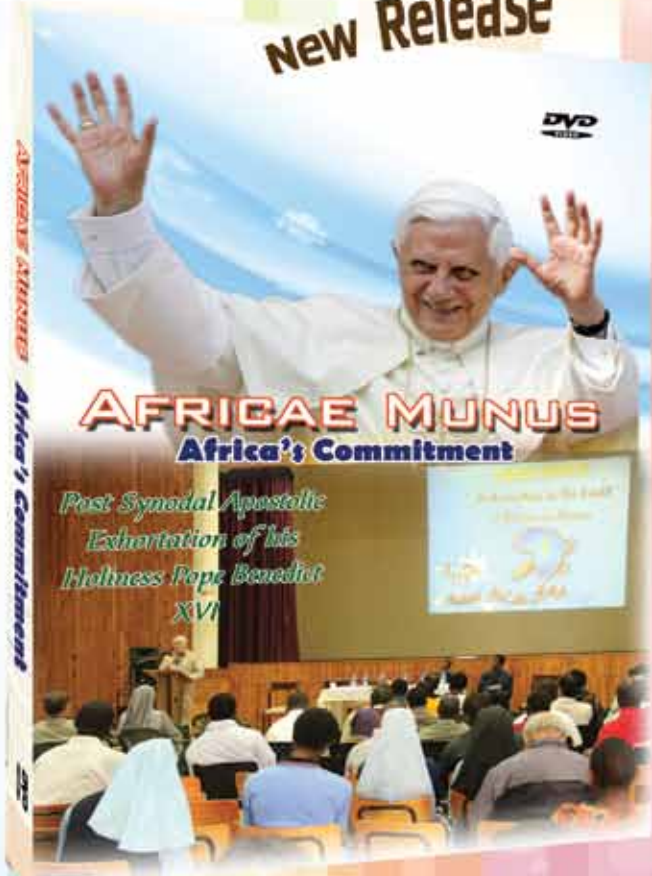
*Kuwasindikiza vijana ili wawe wakristu wazuri na raia wema.
Accompanying young people towards becoming good Christians and honest citizens.*



Journeying with the young...



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