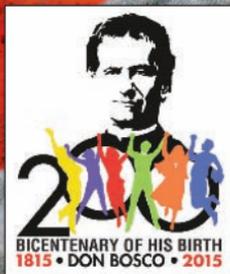


Summer/Fall 2015

SALESIAN®

Pray for Nepal



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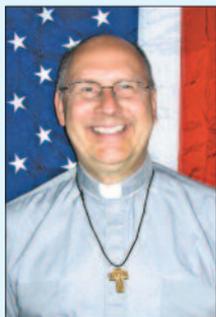
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Letter from the Editor



Dear Friend and Partner in Mission!

“Before you came, I was different. When you came, I saw you always smiling. From that moment, I learned how to smile too.”

These are the words of young Henry Alex, a boy whose life was transformed by one of our Salesian Lay Missioners serving in the village of Maridi, South Sudan. When I read them, I was immediately reminded of the wisdom of Saint John Bosco, who once observed, “You can do nothing with children unless you win their confidence and love by bringing them into touch with yourself, by breaking through all the hindrances that keep them at a distance.”

As you will read in the following pages, this wisdom beats through our hearts and brings our mission to life in more than 130 countries around the globe – countries where countless precious children are hindered by unimaginable hardship.

Whether it’s caring for the orphans of Ebola in West Africa (p.5), educating the innocent children of war in Syria (p.21), or teaching at-risk youth to discover social harmony through music in El Salvador (p.25), we are working to win the confidence and love of such children – so that we can break the barriers of distance, and help them build brighter futures.

Sometimes, all this takes is a simple smile. You may read more about Henry Alex, and the impact of a smile, on page 9.

Thank you for making our mission your mission. I am grateful for your support, and will keep you and your loved ones always in our prayers. May God bless you!

Sincerely,

Fr. Mark Hyde, S.D.B

P.S. Throughout the pages of this magazine, you’ll discover a number of ways you can continue to demonstrate your compassion for the world’s most impoverished children and families. Whether it’s assisting with our disaster relief efforts in earthquake-ravaged Nepal, memorializing a loved one through our chapel-building program, multiplying your generosity 14 times with our Loaves and Fishes appeal, or making a planned gift that leaves a legacy of love for generations to come, your kindness will make a huge difference in the lives of those who need it most. Thanks so much for caring.

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A **SALESIAN MISSIONS CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY** not only helps poor children all over the world, but it can provide the donor/annuitant with a very attractive stream of income for life. For example, with a gift of \$10,000, an individual, age 75 will receive a rate of 5.8%; at age 80, the rate is 6.8%, and at age 90, the rate is 9.0%.

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SUM/FALL
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SIERRA LEONE: Sharing Responsibility for Ebola Orphans



Thanks to the vigilance of health officials, volunteers and local residents, the virus has finally been brought under control. But the innocent orphans remaining need our help.

Late last year, as the Ebola crisis was raging in West Africa, a parallel “epidemic” was emerging: one that stigmatized little girls and boys who lost one or both parents to the disease. Ostracized by society due to fear and misunderstanding, these innocent orphans had nowhere to turn – and could easily have become Ebola’s tragic legacy.

“From the beginning, we have been deeply concerned about the futures of the children who manage to survive this brutal epidemic,” says Father Mark Hyde, director of Salesian Missions. “We have been called to

take an active role in their rescue, rehabilitation and ultimate reintegration into society – and are slowly beginning to see the positive results of these efforts.”

In Freetown, Sierra Leone – where Salesian missionaries built a special care center for Ebola orphans – 120 children receive health care, psychological therapy, educational opportunities and the chance to process the trauma of their experiences through music, dance and other activities.

“We were already known to the government of Sierra Leone for the work we do for child soldiers,” says Father Jorge Crisafulli, provincial of the Salesian missionaries in West Africa. “They asked for our help also in this situation. We thought there would be about thirty or forty children, but after the first month we realized that the numbers were much larger.”

Thus, Salesian missionaries – led by Brother Lothar Wagner, director of Don Bosco Fambul in Freetown – converted an empty school into an orphanage. Immediately, they instituted best-practice medical intake



Ebola orphans enjoy a nutritious meal during a classroom break at the Salesian Shelter.

procedures to ensure the children entered, and remained, Ebola-free. All newly-arriving orphans remained in quarantine for 21 days, closely monitored by nurses who had survived the virus. Additionally, children outside of quarantine were taught to follow strict rules for hand washing and personal hygiene to minimize potential exposure. No child or staff member has fallen ill.

Meeting the children’s basic needs comprises just one part of their care, which is based on holistic principles. “Children have a deep longing for encounter and relationships and this was



abruptly unsettled by their parents' deaths and their own stigmatization," says Bro. Wagner. "What is important to them is the support necessary to heal their trauma, move past the stigma, and begin the process of reuniting them with their extended families."

In many circumstances, reunification efforts are proving to be challenging, as the children's relatives have refused to accept and care for them.

"The extended family does not want them, because they want to keep the land of the dead parents," says Fr. Crisafulli. "So they refuse. They accuse the child of being a witch, and blame the child for his parents' death. It is a gross injustice, and one we intend to remedy. We have already organized advocacy programs to defend the children's rights, so that they may have a future."

Successfully realizing this future, says Bro. Wagner, will require a sense of

shared responsibility for the orphans of Ebola. "Health not only means the lack of disease and infirmity but also includes social well-being," he asserts. "We need psychologists, therapists and social workers to help the traumatized children and adolescents. It is the young people who are expected to shape Sierra Leone's reconstruction, so we must attend to their full recovery first. ♥"

Grateful children hold meals of fortified rice and supplies. They were acquired and shipped to Sierra Leone by Salesian Missions of New Rochelle and "Stop Hunger Now."



Share the Joy of Christmas and the New Year ...

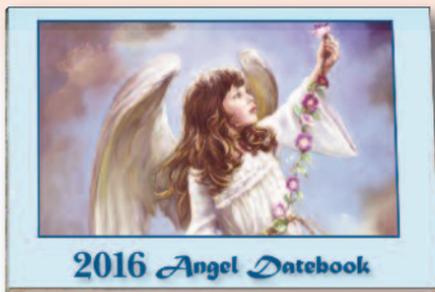
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Notes From the Field:



**A personal account
by Salesian Lay Missioner, (SLM)
GRACE LOEFFLER**

Mission Accomplished!



Grace and her good friend, Henry Alex.

I've been away from my little African village for a pretty long time now. To get specific, it's been a year. This anniversary of sorts drew me mentally and emotionally back to Manguo village in Maridi, South Sudan and into the arms and smiles of countless children in a way that I found to be unexpectedly overwhelming. It hit me hard. The intensity of those memories seemed to demand to be shared.

About a month ago the impossible happened: I made contact with one of the children I worked with in South Sudan. You can't imagine how much I've missed those kids or how often I've dwelt in memories of them since I said goodbye. Photos of them hanging in my

apartment, long phone calls with my mission partners recalling tender memories, silly videos on replay, the comfort of my little brother jokingly calling me “Sista Grace” around the house. When Henry Alex suddenly popped up on my Facebook under “People You May Know,” I’m pretty sure my heart stopped for a second. I have not had any communication



Happy times with the children of Manguo village!

with any of the South Sudanese since the day I left them. None of those kids have electricity at home, let alone internet access. Henry apparently became the exception when he moved away for school. He was a kid that was active in every parish and school function during my time there, was always eager to share his heart with me, and his family having become my second family away from home. Contact with Henry of all children was one of the most precious and exciting ways to reach back into that life which I cherish and sorely miss.

So, I sent Henry a Facebook message. As I wrote, all I could

think about was this teenage boy sobbing into my shoulder on that horrible morning when I said goodbye to my African village probably forever. Henry stirs a long list of memories – leading games at parish picnics, hours of studying together before finals. Henry would regularly pick the fattest passion fruit in his garden and bring it for me after school. Calling him one of my best friends would not be an overstatement.

Not only did Henry respond to my message, but his brief words were piercing. I will loosely quote him, so the grammar and vocabulary choices don’t distract



*A few “special friends”
from South Sudan that
Grace will never forget.*

from the message. What he shared was this:

“Missing you so much! I pray for you daily.

There is one thing you taught me that I will never forget in my life.

Before you came, I was different. When you came, I saw you always smiling. From that moment, I learned how to smile too.

Thank you for that.

I’m glad we are able to talk with each other, my heart was longing for it. Send my greetings to all of your relatives and friends. God bless you!”

Inexpressible joy. If there is a single way for me to summarize my personal mission when I left for Africa, and in my life both before and after, it was just this – that I could radiate the joy of Christ through simply being my genuine self, that His love would be evidenced by my smile. I didn’t have anything extraordinary to offer those people. I only wanted them to



know that they are loved. I prayed for it every day while I was there and have prayed that same prayer every day since. God is faithful, and my prayers were answered. If no one else, just one person, sweet Henry, was impacted by that love of God through me.

Mission Accomplished.

So what now? I spent a long time battling with purpose and fulfillment after departing from an experience that was saturated in it. It was easy

to return to my home routine, but it immediately proved impossible to live the simplistic life I once had. Becoming a pediatric nurse was a new opportunity to love in that intentional way again, and my life has been beautifully unfolding since my return. I have been blessed and am so grateful.

In the sadness of moving on, I find incredible hope in Henry's words, as they express everything I want and desire, everything I am capable of and called to in this life. Every Christian is called to be a missionary – we are called to spread love wherever we

go, no matter the physical location. I have tremendous peace and solace in this truth, and I challenge every single one of you who ever reads these words to embrace and live that call, wherever you are now and wherever you may go in life. You make a difference. ♥

“Let us love, since that is all our hearts were made for.”

– St. Therese of Lisieux

God bless!
Grace

The **Salesian Lay Missioners** is a faith-based volunteer program that offers a unique opportunity to serve the poor children of the world. We sponsor domestic and international placements and require a 1 or 2 year commitment.

If you would like more information about this life-changing program, please write to:

Salesian Lay Missioners
Attn: Adam Rudin
2 Lefevre Lane
New Rochelle NY 10801-5710

Or visit our website at:

www.SalesianLayMissioners.org

or email us at: slm@salesianmissions.org



You can be part of a modern-day Loaves and Fishes miracle!

Every \$1 = \$14



Several organizations have partnered with Salesian Missions because they have tons (*literally!*) of essential items that they want to donate free of charge... but they need our help to get them in the hands of poor children and families who need them the most. **THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN!**

We can pack a large container – about the size of a tractor-trailer truck – with \$70,000 worth of donated food, medicine, clothing or school supplies. But we need your help to pay the \$5,000 overseas shipping cost.

Simply put, every \$1 you give enables us to ship \$14 worth of life-changing – and life-saving – supplies!

What's more, your generosity will be a testament to the Loaves and Fishes miracle when Jesus multiplied seven loaves of bread and a few small fish into enough food to feed four thousand people!

So much is at stake. Thank you for whatever you can give today!

MAKE A SECURE DONATION ONLINE AT WWW.SALESIANMISSIONS.ORG/MULTIPLY

YES! I want to be part of this modern-day Loaves & Fishes miracle!

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Enclosed is my gift that will multiply 14X! \$10 \$15 \$25 \$ _____

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Salesians In the U.S. And Canada

In 1897 the first Salesian missionaries (Priests & Brothers) settled in California. Salesian Sisters soon followed, arriving in New Jersey in 1908. Being a missionary in the U.S. at the time was difficult and challenging – but the good works progressed.

Today over 450 professed Salesian Priests, Brothers and Sisters are present in the United States and Canada. Salesian Provinces based in Haledon NJ, New Rochelle NY, San Antonio TX, San Francisco CA, and Montreal, Canada serve thousands of young and poor throughout both countries. Their ministries encompass day care centers, elementary and high schools, formation houses, religious education centers, parishes, summer camps, development offices and youth centers. Thankfully, the spirit and joy of Don Bosco is still alive today in the U.S. and Canada!

Salesian Missions, New Rochelle NY

We are your hands reaching out to the poor around the globe

Since 1947 – quietly, and from behind the scenes – the Salesian Missions Office in New Rochelle has been supporting the work of our missionaries in more than 130 countries around the globe.

“From the beginning, our purpose has been threefold,” says director Father Mark Hyde. “First and foremost, to raise funds to assist the nearly 30,000 Salesian priests, brothers, sisters and novices who serve the poorest of the poor. Second, we work to promote the principles of Saint ‘Don’ Bosco – reason, kindness and religion. And, we strive to build awareness of the Salesian religious order itself, which is the second largest in the Catholic Church.”



Salesian Missions Office, New Rochelle NY

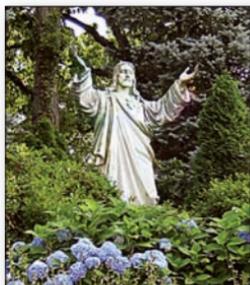
To these ends, our dedicated, passionate staff direct their time and talents. These are just a few of the many programs that are managed at Salesian Missions, New Rochelle NY:

RAISING SUPPORT AND AWARENESS

The mission office staff communicates by mail, telephone and online with thousands of Americans across the country. We ask for support as we educate the public about Salesian orphanages, hospitals and health clinics, primary and secondary schools, vocational and technical training programs, adult education centers and much more.

“These life-saving works are the focus of Salesian Missions, and are largely possible due to the love, compassion and generosity of our donors in the United States,” says Fr. Mark. “We are so grateful for their selfless support.”

Of the significant funds raised and distributed to global mission programs each year, perhaps the most visible are those related to disaster relief. “Often, in times of humanitarian crises, our Salesian missionaries are not only among the first to respond – but also command a leadership role in organizing and executing overall relief efforts,” says Fr. Mark. “This is



(left) Statue of Jesus opposite our main entrance.

(below) Our office Chapel where Mass is offered each week for staff and friends.



because they are already on the ground, living and working in the communities in which they serve.”

Thus, when disaster strikes one of these communities – as it did in 2010 with the earthquake in Haiti, in 2013 with the super-typhoon in the Philippines, and most recently with the earthquake in Nepal – the Salesian Missions Office immediately launches an emergency appeal to support in-country relief and reconstruction efforts. To date, more than \$100,000 has been raised for Nepal – where the “Don Bosco Relief Team” has already collected and distributed more than 100 tons of aid

materials to 30,000 victims in 19 different villages, and is now transitioning into medium-term aid and reconstruction of homes.

CHAPEL BUILDING PROGRAM

In order to further the spirit of Don Bosco, the Salesian Missions Office has prioritized building chapels in underdeveloped countries around the globe. These chapels, funded by individuals and organizations wishing to memorialize a loved one, are built by our missionaries and the people they serve in some of the most remote areas of the world. Once complete, they offer a place to convene, reflect, and learn about the Salesian values that guide our work. To date, designated gifts



A big "THANKS" to the generous donor who funded this chapel through our Salesian Chapel Program. (See pg. 24)

The distribution of healthy, fortified rice meals is coordinated by Salesian Missions for children and their families in times of critical need.



have funded the construction of more than 850 chapels.

MISSIONARY COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Each summer, from June through August, the Salesian Missions Office sponsors a special group of Salesian priests who travel from their individual countries to parishes across the United States. During their extensive visit, these missionaries build awareness of the Salesian order through sharing personal and inspiring stories of their work on behalf of marginalized youth and families around the globe.

"The work of these missionaries – and everything we do here in New Rochelle to support them – is only possible with the caring compassion of our friends here at home," concludes Fr. Mark. "For more than 60 years, we have been reaching out on their behalf to comfort and guide the world's abandoned, forgotten and destitute." ♥

Wheels for Cambodia!

In Cambodia – despite recent advances that have raised the standard of living for a significant percentage of its people – challenges to a secure economic future remain.

Close to 15 million people are poor or “near-poor,” defined as living on less than \$2.30 per day. And, lack of educational opportunities for rural and at-risk youth means that countless children fall through the cracks – vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation and abuse. Without meaningful intervention, these boys and girls become trapped in the cycle of generational poverty.

To help counter this reality, the *Don Bosco Children’s Fund*, based in the city of Kep, grants scholarships to such youth.

Joseph Sinnott, graduating senior from Salesian High School in New Rochelle, NY, was determined to help them succeed.

After learning that many scholarship recipients live great distances from school and are therefore at risk of dropping out, Joseph sprang into action. He collected and refurbished used bicycles from family, friends and fellow parishioners as part of his Eagle Scout project. The Salesian Office in New Rochelle shipped the bikes, and associated parts, to Don Bosco Kep this past spring. As a result, close to 40 Cambodian youth now have a reliable method of getting to school. ♥



Joseph (center, middle) with his boy scout helpers.



The bikes are ready to be shipped!

Follow

YOUR PATH →



It may lead you to join the Salesian Family – as a Priest, Brother, Sister, Cooperator, Lay Missioner or Volunteer!

DON BOSCO founded a religious congregation in the Catholic Church – to launch new approaches and new initiatives for the education of youth. He called this religious order the **SALESIAN SOCIETY** which is now present in over 130 countries.

SalesianVocation.org – Your portal to Salesian consecrated vocations in Canada, the USA and Puerto Rico.

BoscoYoung.org – Your portal to different service opportunities that exist within the Salesian Family in the USA and Canada.

SalesianCooperators.org – Your portal to the Salesian Cooperators in the USA and Canada.

Salesian Snapshots

... a scrapbook of stories
from around the Salesian world

COLOMBIA: Decent jobs for young people

The Don Bosco Training Center in Armenia, Colombia is offering bright futures to young students! In 2014, more than 250 young people graduated with degrees in technical fields. For 2015 the goal is to train even more students between the ages of 17 and 24 to mark the Bicentenary Year of Don Bosco's birth.

Classes currently offered are cooking, hairdressing, welding and tourism operations. Courses for accounting assistant and laboratory technician are expected to be added soon.

Fr. Jairo Gallo, director of the school, encourages institutions, private companies and individual



The school offers classes that lead to jobs and a means of support for local students.

donors to participate in this project. "This training offers great opportunities to get a decent job – for themselves and for their families," he noted. The next project planned for the center is the addition of six laboratories offering even more training opportunities while also considering the labor market and needs of the community.

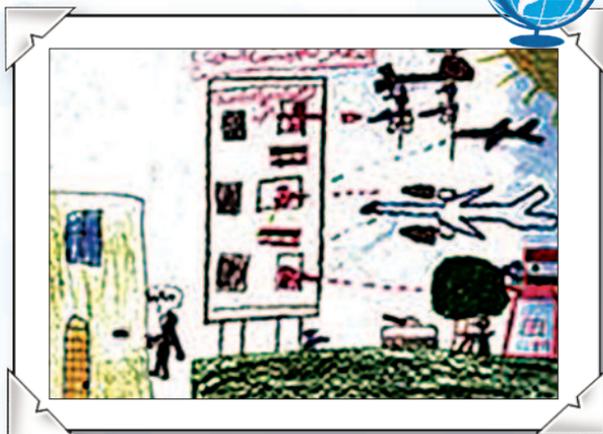


SYRIA: "The young give us courage and strength"

Nearly four years after the outbreak of war, the situation in Aleppo, Syria continues to be one of grave insecurity and instability. Four Salesians in the community carry on with regular activities – catechism, groups, formation meetings for university students, sports and games. Every Friday about 300 boys and girls from elementary school through high school attend catechism classes.

This past spring, this previously safe area was hit by five mortars – three of which fell within fifty meters of the school. Nine civilians were killed, including four students, and more than thirty-five people were injured. The Salesians, however, continue to help the children and families in need, with distribution of food, economic aid and education.

In Syria the absence of young



This Syrian child's drawing clearly shows the terror of war. The Salesians will not abandon them.

people between the ages of 20 and 30 is noticeable. They leave the country to look for a job, for safety and a life of dignity. It is very sad, because a country cannot grow without the presence of its young people.

With all these difficulties, it might seem that hope is lost, but not so. The young people who are still here continue to live their lives with great strength, courage and the will to live. They continue to go to college, study and come to the oratory, helping out in the various activities. Their presence gives the Salesians courage and strength to carry on.

Nigeria: A New Salesian School!

The Salesian missionary presence in the Diocese of Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria, is experiencing a very rich and hope-filled period – from a Salesian point of view. Trusting in Divine Providence and with the help of benefactors, the Salesians

are planning to open a vocational school for the benefit of local youth. Here is a report by Fr. Italo Spagnolo, SDB, the priest in charge of the mission:

“Here too we celebrated Don Bosco in a solemn manner in our little village. We were joined by the youth and people of the area. Even the bishop came in the evening and enjoyed our songs, sketches and a bit of dinner!

“Everything is going well, thank God. The bulldozer did its work in December with the hot sun beating down! At the beginning of February we marked out



The footprint of the new school was lovingly marked out in cement.

the property. It is a beautiful piece of land. Some say it is not big enough for a technical school. We will see! We are planning a two-story classroom, a dormitory and also a residence for the community.

“While we hope for some generous benefactors, we are going ahead with great confidence. In the meantime, we are not leaving the land idle. We have dug a well, plowed a few acres and began to sow. The first rains have begun and we are told that, if all goes well, the corn we plant now will be ready for harvesting shortly.

“Thank God, my health is



excellent. I am experiencing a period of countless spiritual graces, rich in deep inner joy and everything Salesian. Join me in giving thanks to the Lord.”

HAITI: New Youth Center



The new Salesian Youth Center offers a broad range of subjects to eager Haitian students.

In early 2010 – shortly after a devastating earthquake shook Haiti to its core – Salesian Missions was determined to raise funds for the construction of the Salesian Youth Center at the Polytechnique Don Bosco (*aka DB Tech*) in Fort Liberté. Five years later, that promise has been realized – thanks to the remarkable generosity of our many friends.

First opened in 2002, the center offers a broad range of formal and informal educational programs for local youth. It offers agricultural, vocational/technical education school programs, and includes radio/television stations.

It also houses one of the country's only nursing schools.

Plans are also in the works to construct a health clinic on or near the campus. It will provide more than 160 nursing students with the practical training they need, without having to travel great distances.

Salesian Missions was given the ongoing task of leading the worldwide Salesian effort in Haiti for recovery and reconstruction. Fr. Mark Hyde, director of Salesian Missions, has traveled to Haiti multiple times and oversees the various projects. ♥

What was once sticks and straw...

Millions of people throughout Africa, Central and South America, India and Asia are celebrating Mass and worshipping God in the most primitive conditions. Salesian missionaries are in desperate need of funds to build simple and decent houses of worship.

You can have a Memorial Chapel built in honor of your favorite saint and dedicate it to anyone you wish – living or deceased. What a wonderful way to remember a loved one – and help the Lord's most impoverished followers.

EACH CHAPEL IS A UNIQUE DESIGN THAT REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IT SERVES.

You can make an individual gift to build a Memorial Chapel, or groups or organizations can pool their donations. If you wish, you can also specify in your will that a chapel be erected in your honor or for anyone you choose.

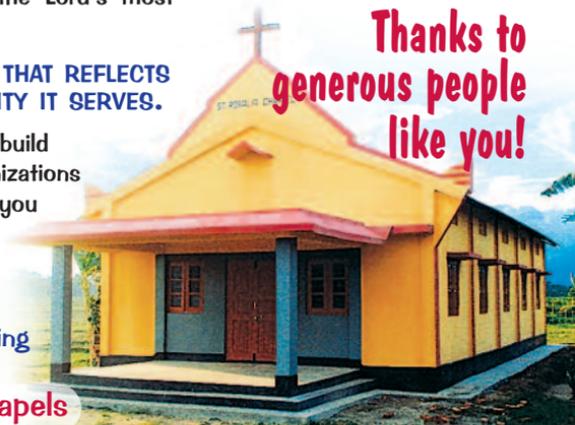
Read more about our Chapel Building Program by visiting us online at:

www.salesianmissions.org/chapels



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Thanks to
generous people
like you!



Enclosed is my gift of \$16,000.00 to build a Village Memorial Chapel.

Enclosed is my gift of \$21,000.00 to build a Memorial Chapel in a remote and difficult area.

Enclosed is my gift of \$26,000.00 to build a Memorial Chapel in the most far removed and neglected area.

SUM/FALL 2015

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Don Bosco Symphony Orchestra: From the Street to the Stage



Close to 35 percent of El Salvador's population lives in poverty, according to the World Bank. Youth in El Salvador are confronted not only with poverty, but with instability, high levels of violence and inadequate access to educational opportunities. Despite ranking high for economic indicators, the need for practical education in El Salvador is more important than ever with 12 percent of youth ages 15 to 24 unemployed and 41 percent underemployed.

To address the rising rates of youth violence, the Salesians, together with other benefactors, provide a creative road to success for nearly 1,000 youth who live in the most crime-ridden areas of El Salvador. *The Don Bosco Youth Symphonic Orchestra* offers an alternative to becoming involved in the conflict and violence. The orchestra started last year in San Salvador, the country's capital, and is run by the Salesians and financed by a grant administered by the World Bank.

Salesian Father Jose Maria Moratalla Escudero, known as "Father Pepe,"



130 talented young people from the poorest and most violent neighborhoods of San Salvador performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. this past fall.

runs the orchestra and is president of the Salvadoran Education and Work Foundation. Bryan Cea, the 25-year-old orchestra director, came from the same background as most of his students – growing up in the local area surrounded by poverty and violence.

Harmony through music

Youth in the program range in age from 8 to 20 and are students at various public schools in San Salvador. About 470 youth take part in the music program, with 220 of them in the symphony orchestra and 250 in the choir.

Existing school rivalries and conflicts are left behind when students enter the orchestra program located at *Don Bosco Industrial Polygon*, a Salesian-run cooperative that offers job

training, employment and education. Here, differences are put aside and the young people live and work together peacefully.

The orchestra has become very important to San Salvador and its surrounding communities as a peaceful learning alternative for youth who have grown accustomed to violence.

“So this music project is fantastic because it keeps kids occupied all day long. First during school





hours and later during their free time, giving them the chance to freely be in an environment where they can get the kind of music classes that most interest them,” said Fr. Pepe in a recent Catholic News Agency article about the program.

According to the same article, youth in the program explain that the orchestra has kept them away from violence. Carlos Palma (20), a violinist, notes that this project helps the country and allows him to grow from a cultural point of view. Madelin Morales (15), a flautist, says that being part of the orchestra has helped her immeasurably because she has made great strides in her studies and has gained a better perspective on life.



Traveling to perform

The orchestra program grows and improves with each passing year. Instructors at a conservatory in Spain are discussing coming to El Salvador to offer training to new instructors. Last November,

the symphonic orchestra traveled to Washington, D.C. to perform in concerts at the Kennedy Center and other venues. The orchestra is also planning on writing, composing and performing an ambitious musical with close to 3,000 actors. This is truly a remarkable accomplishment.

“Let’s say it’s a gigantic explosion of a vitality that seemed to be dormant in the children, teens and young people of El Salvador and that, thanks to this project, is being awakened!” exclaimed Fr. Pepe. ♥

To view and hear a wonderful performance by the orchestra and choir, visit:
www.salesianmissions.org/elsalvador

ETHIOPIA: New life thanks to the Bosco Children Project

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a new orientation center called “Come and See” serves approximately 30 boys who lived on the street.

The center is part of the Salesian-run Bosco Children Project, which specifically serves some of the most disadvantaged young boys in the city (*other Salesian projects serve homeless and orphaned girls*). Rapid urbanization and rural migration have contributed to increasing food insecurity, poor housing options and lack of economic opportunity for countless youth. In fact, according to UNICEF, an estimated 100,000 children are homeless and living in gutters, under bridges, in drainage ditches or worse. Many rely on petty theft in order to survive, and turn to “solvent abuse”—*sniffing glue*—to erase the horror of their daily existence.

The Bosco Children Project was borne to assist these children. On its main campus, eight dormitories offer safe shelter to as many as 160 boys overnight. And, at any given time, the project offers nutritious meals, structured play, basic education and technical training opportunities, and study spaces to as many as 200 youth – who thrive in the supportive, family-like



Fr. Angelo Regazzo and other Salesians search the streets at night for homeless boys. With gentle kindness, they offer them a way out of their despair.



Learning a trade instills pride in these boys and can lead to a self-supporting future.

atmosphere they so sorely lack otherwise.

“Come and See” is an outreach initiative that aims to introduce more street children to the opportunities available to them through the Bosco Children Project. Each day, the boys



are picked up by bus and taken to the center, where lessons in reading and writing are interspersed with sports, light chores, and life-skills classes including social morality, personal hygiene, professional conduct and more. At the conclusion of this introduction – usually after one or two months – the child may choose to enter a more formal program where he completes his basic education and learns a trade.

At all times, staff respects the autonomy and free will of the boys, and there is never any pressure for a particular child to “sign on.” Should he decide to continue with the Bosco Children Project, however, he begins a journey to a brighter future in a place that fully supports his basic needs, educational path and training for a future profession.

For the next three years, he will live in the hostel while he attends regular academic classes, learns a trade and prepares to enter the workforce as a productive, mature member of society. On occasion, some boys express a desire to reunite with their families. In such instances, Salesian missionaries work to facilitate this, and to ensure that the students will continue going to school in their villages. The Bosco Children Project pays their tuition.

Already, the project is yielding positive results: among the first class of “Come and See” participants, eight are attending a university and are top performers. These were street children who could neither read nor write! ❤

Count Your Blessings - Grant a Wish!

The Salesians work in over 130 countries. Just imagine, then, how many of our missionaries write to tell us of their hopes and dreams, trials and successes. Maybe, as you count your blessings, you could grant a wish. God bless you! Fr. Mark



WISHES OF THE MONTH

- **Soothe the fragile spirits of Ebola orphans.** Ostracized by society due to fear, and turned away by their relatives out of greed, these precious little girls and boys have nowhere to turn. Your generosity ensures that our missionaries in Sierra Leone can help as many orphans as possible to heal their trauma, overcome their stigma, and find loving homes. *See pg. 5.*
- **Empower impoverished youth to learn a trade and secure decent employment.** The Don Bosco Training Center in Colombia prepares 250 at-risk youth for in-demand careers. With your support, even more students can participate in courses that will help them build brighter futures. *See pg. 20.*
- **Rescue a child from gang violence in El Salvador.** Youth in San Salvador face many obstacles. The Don Bosco Youth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus convenes young people between the ages of 8 and 20, who live in areas controlled by two prominent rival gangs, to teach them tolerance, cooperation and peace through music. Friends like you make this work possible. *See pg. 25.*
- **Give street children in Ethiopia a new life.** In Addis Ababa, thousands of impoverished girls and boys live in gutters, under bridges, in drainage ditches or worse. Please help Father Angelo Regazzo reach out to these youth, and offer them a way out of their despair. *See pg. 28.*

GRANT A WISH REPLY FORM

SUM/FALL 2015

YES, I want to help make a wish come true for Salesians and the poor children and families they serve. I am enclosing my donation of:

\$7 \$10 \$25 Other \$ _____ for the life-saving works featured in this magazine and all the other Salesian programs that benefit the needy.

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