



# World Bulletin

Winter 2017

Prepared Exclusively for Special Friends of Salesian Missions  
A Written Testimony Of How You Bring God-Saving Grace To A Troubled World

## Another World is Possible

“There is a gap today between what we say, and what we see.”

These are the words of Father Benjamin Dewitte Dubrana, a newly ordained Salesian priest serving in the Parisian suburb of Argenteuil, France. Pointing to the sensationalism of today’s media – whose narrative is mostly negative as it pertains to people of different races and creeds trying to live side by side. In contrast, Fr. Dubrana believes in the positive, a world where there is “unity in diversity.”

In fact, the direct lived experience of his students, nearly half of whom are Muslim, highlight this exactly.

Today, as the global community struggles to understand and address so much confusion and unrest around the world, Fr. Dubrana’s message is particularly timely. And its core tenet – open,



inclusive dialog, which hopefully leads to understanding and tolerance – is paramount to the Salesian charism in the more than 130 countries where we serve.

In Morocco, for example, there are Christians and Muslim teachers and students, teaching, learning and living in harmony.

Teachers at Don Bosco Kenitra have embraced the Salesian methodology and understand its value to themselves, and their students. Arabic professor Habhoud Mohamed proudly calls

himself a “Salesian Muslim,” and has even authored a book about Don Bosco in his native tongue, which many parents have read.

“The spirit of Don Bosco can exist among Jews, Christians and Muslims,” he says. “And by thinking and acting as Salesians, we are one.”

Which returns us to Fr. Dubrana. Wishing to further foster the unity he observes on the ground every day – and spread its message of peace – he has written, directed and produced a new music video called “Mercy.”\*

In it, children from all walks of life sing in harmony, reminding us that “nothing is more urgent than loving unconditionally.” Inspired by their Salesian experience, they demonstrate to all of us that another world is indeed possible.

Don Bosco would be proud.

\*To watch this inspiring video, visit: [www.salesianmissions.org/children-of-mercy](http://www.salesianmissions.org/children-of-mercy)

## This Month’s Child



Name: Hernand  
Age: 6 months  
Home: Antananarivo,  
Madagascar

His father abandoned the family when Hernand was just one month old. His mother Eliza is only 17, unemployed, and until recently lived on the streets.

Without meaningful intervention, Hernand’s future promises only one thing: the same suffocating poverty that traps nearly 82 percent of Madagascar’s youth in despair.

Fortunately, Hernand now benefits from services offered through the Salesian TAIZA project – a child’s-rights network present in each borough of Madagascar’s capital city. Here, young, impoverished mothers

and their babies can access social services, health education, peer support groups, literacy programs and more – free of charge.

“Since Hernand was born, I am part of the mother-child group,” says Eliza. “Especially in these early months, I have learned how to properly care for him, look after my own health, and have found real friends and support. I am so grateful for this program.”

Although Hernand will face many challenges ahead, he is now on the path toward a much brighter future, thanks to the Salesians.

## This Month’s Call For Prayer

During this period of global unrest, please pray that all God’s children – regardless of race, religion and gender – may live together in peace and harmony and be protected from senseless violence and hate.



# Monthly Missions Report...

## In East Timor...

Salesian sisters are working to improve the economic conditions, and futures, of women and girls in the district capital of Venilale.

This work is critically important, as the country continues to grapple with the root causes of its pervasive poverty: inadequate educational access, lack of employment opportunities and gender inequality, among others.

At the FMA (Salesian Sisters) Vocational High School, students who complete programs in catering, hotel management or tailoring now have opportunities for on-site apprenticeships that further sharpen their competencies while providing six months of paid employment. This real-world experience is invaluable in helping students find steady jobs after graduating.

“This is a young country; more than half our population is under the age of 19,” says Salesian Sister Joanna Goik. “If taught a valuable job skill, these young women can and will be a force in transforming the country, and their own lives.”



## In Romania...



The Salesian oratory in Constantina (known as “the Yellow House”) shines a warm beacon of hope into the darkest corners of this city’s streets, where impoverished youth – facing futures with few prospects – live a cold, harsh life.

For the past 20 years, staff has welcomed these vulnerable children into the warmth and safety of the center, guiding them toward activities and opportunities that uncover their innate talents: sports and recreation; arts and music; and, when ready, vocational training and employment assistance.

“We have become the hub of a network of trust among local families,” explains Father Sergio Bergamin. At the Yellow House, these families can also access after-school care and summer camps for their children, which help keep them off the streets and focused on achieving their full potential as contributing citizens of tomorrow.

## In Vietnam...

Thanks to a new Salesian bakery school, disabled youth in Ho Chi Minh City are learning to shape brighter futures, one loaf of bread at a time.

Envisioned by Francis Van Hoi, a past Salesian pupil, the school offers in-demand training to students who otherwise would have few opportunities for employment. Upon graduation, hundreds of top-rated restaurants and hotels will seek the expertise of these newly trained artisans.



“We always have a lot of requests from companies that rely on our training, because not only do we teach a job, but we serve the students in their entirety,” says Mr. Van Hoi. “They learn business protocol, personal presentation and soft skills, which are critical to any employee’s success.”

In a country where an estimated 1.7 million youth are living with a disability, this new bakery school truly offers the bread of new life, and hope.

## Missionary of the Month: Fr. Thomas Koshy

First called to his vocation at the age of 15, there was no going back for Thomas Koshy of Kerala, India once he entered the Salesians. Ordained in 1969, he has served in India ever since.

The poor have always been in his heart. But, Fr. Koshy’s passion to serve the most downtrodden of society truly ignited when he was a theology student. That is when he worked to release some of India’s bonded laborers from slavery.

In 1989, he went to Vijayawada where, at the invitation of the mayor, he established Don Bosco *Navajeenan Bala Bhaven* (“New Life Children’s Home”). Since then, he has devoted his life to girls and boys living on the streets.

“I consider love and loving kindness as the most important aspect in caring for these children,” Fr. Koshy says. Following this guiding principle, he and his



staff have helped more than 25,000 children get off the streets.

Recently, Fr. Koshy was appointed to the committee for India’s Care and Protection of Children Act – a true honor, and testament to his life’s work.

## Saying “No” to Violence

Dear Friend,

Syria. South Sudan. Myanmar. Iraq. Today, it seems, there is more violence and hatred than the world can bear.

Yet when I talk to our Salesian missionaries on the ground, I hear a more optimistic story. Among the diverse communities in which they serve, they report a common understanding and respect, fostered by Don Bosco’s message of love.

“Do away with insults, quarrels,

envy, revenge or bad will,” Don Bosco said. “This will prove that you love each other like brothers.”

Now more than ever, our missionaries remain firmly committed to modeling this message in their words, deeds and programs. They know, in their hearts, that their example will inspire today’s youth to lead future generations into a time of stability, and opportunity, for all.



Please know how grateful I am for your generous support. Together, we shine a bright light of hope for the men and women of tomorrow.

May God Bless You!

*Fr. Mark Hyde, sdb*

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