



# World Bulletin

Spring 2018

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

## Healing the Deep Scars of War

They promise daily meals, a place to sleep, and the security of “family.” Instead, the paramilitary groups fighting Colombia’s decades-long civil war have stripped the innocence, dignity and rights of thousands of vulnerable children.

According to official estimates, as many as 250,000 girls and boys under the age of 18 forcibly serve as armed combatants in war-torn countries around the world. In Colombia, especially, the problem is particularly acute: since 1964, tens of thousands of them have been recruited and trained to fight. Inexpensive to feed and easy to manipulate, they make perfect soldiers: compelled to fulfill some of the most brutal roles of violent conflict.

Widespread poverty and the lingering effects of the country’s drug wars routinely tear families apart – leaving far too many children homeless and alone. Compared to the violence, hunger and despair they experience on



the streets, joining the army sounds like a dream.

At *Ciudad Don Bosco* in Medellin, Salesian missionaries are determined to help these girls and boys reclaim their youth, and futures, through a targeted program focused on social reintegration.

Catalina was just 13 years old when she began carrying, and using, a machine gun. Manuel was even younger – around eight or nine – when he did the same. Within a heart-breaking short period of time, the atrocities they witnessed, and endured, forever wounded their psyches. Fortunately, both

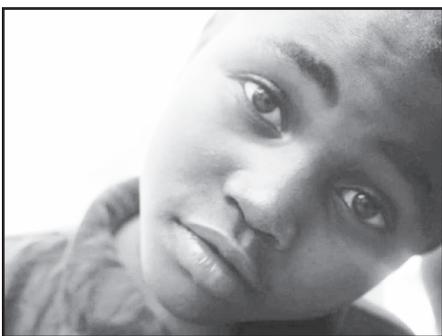
children have discovered refuge at *Ciudad Don Bosco’s* “Specialized Protection House – Building Dreams” project.

Children enter “Building Dreams” through an official referral process. Once there, they progress through a holistic program that provides psychological assistance, interpersonal skills development, basic education, and advanced training to prepare them for long-term employment. Missionaries also offer family reconciliation support for those who seek it – and job placement opportunities at partner companies in the area. The program has already helped return more than 2,000 youth to normal lives.

Looking forward, missionaries hope the program will become unnecessary as Colombia’s government negotiates to end the war. Until then, they will continue to help boys and girls recover their lost childhoods, with the loving support they need.

Learn more at: [SalesianMissions.org/patio13](http://SalesianMissions.org/patio13)

## This Month’s Child



Name: Joseph  
Age: Unknown  
Home: Lubumbashi  
D.R. Congo

One day, young Joseph wandered from his home in Lubumbashi, in the Democratic Republic of Congo ... and never returned. But divine intervention, and an older boy who discovered him alone on the streets, brought him to a Salesian-run shelter for homeless youth called Bakanja Ville.

Joseph was not well when he arrived: a badly infected leg wound meant he couldn’t walk, and his intellectual disabilities – coupled with severe epilepsy – prevented him from communicating with staff. The only word

he knew was “Mwambui,” the local term for a mother with twins.

Still, social workers scoured the city in search of his family while Joseph received medical care and recovered. They had nearly given up when a newcomer to the center recognized Joseph. Finally, he and his mother – who had thought Joseph was dead – were happily reunited!

Where would Joseph be today had he not arrived at Bakanja Ville? Thankfully, this precious young boy will never have to find out.

## This Month’s Call For Prayer

Spring is a season of renewal and growth. Please pray that the children, families and communities touched by your generosity are instilled with renewed hope and faith that the days, weeks and months ahead will be brighter.



# Monthly Missions Report...

## In Burkina Faso...

Salesian missionaries have launched a new program to help girls and young women learn the skills they need to pull themselves out of poverty.

The Women's Promotion Center, located in the central city of Kouba, represents one phase of a long-term, comprehensive project. It will ultimately comprise a nursery school, primary and secondary schools, a girls' shelter, a sports complex and community gathering space. Once completed, the center will offer professional training in catering, tailoring, information technology and hair dressing. Students may also access literacy courses, job placement support, and opportunities to develop the soft skills necessary to thrive in the workplace.

Salesian Missionaries expect construction for the center to be completed within a year. In the meantime, its first training course, in horticultural techniques, has already launched with more than 100 enthusiastic enrollees.



## In Madagascar...



Deforestation is a critical issue in Madagascar, where "slash-and-burn" agricultural practices have significantly thinned the country's woodlands.

Recognizing the negative results of deforestation, Fr. Bepi Miele intends to address it – with an innovative project that will benefit both the environment, and the youth and families whom he serves.

In partnership with several area sawmills, students at the Salesian-run vocational training center in Fianarantsoa will compress the mills' byproducts into briquettes that can be used for fuel. Fr. Bepi hopes that the briquettes, which are cheaper and burn cleaner than coal, will help save local families money... as well as move them toward more sustainable heating and cooking methods.

The project is a win-win: students will learn marketable skills; and proceeds from selling the briquettes will directly support educational programs for impoverished youth. *Learn more at: [SalesianMissions.org/Madagascar](http://SalesianMissions.org/Madagascar)*

## In Syria...

To help address the devastating effects of Syria's ongoing war, Salesian missionaries in Damascus are helping area youth learn marketable skills and find long-term work to support themselves and their families.

Because Syria's educational system is nationalized, missionaries do not operate schools of their own. Instead, they offer meaningful counseling and financial assistance – helping to cover the tuition and fees associated with vocational training and university courses.



During the past year alone, 25 students have enrolled in information technology programs, and 20 are attending college, thanks to generous benefactors and the administrative assistance of the Salesians. Additionally, six young adults have been able to purchase the tools and equipment they need to start small businesses in hairdressing, catering, baking and more.

It's a meaningful long-term investment in their future, and the future of the country. *Learn more at: [SalesianMissions.org/Syria](http://SalesianMissions.org/Syria)*

## Missionary of the Month: Fr. Wladislaw (Ladislaw) Klinicki

He once spent five years imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Ladislau Klinicki celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Salesian priest.

Despite an inauspicious start – he was a young seminarian when the German army arbitrarily arrested him in 1942 – Fr. Ladislau's decades of faithful service have been steeped in joyful piety. Known for his devotion to Saint Faustina Kowalska (like she,

Ladislaw was born in Poland), he especially shines in the ministry of confession: a role he first assumed while serving as chaplain to Salesian aspirants in Lavrinhas, Brazil. Today, he remains committed to sharing God's forgiveness with all who seek it.

"Fr. Ladislau pours into the souls of penitents, the balm of divine mercy," say his confreres.

Now 103 years old, Fr. Ladislau ranks as the second-



oldest living Salesian. At his anniversary celebration, attendees received a medal of Merciful Jesus and a copy of his memoir, *One Step from Death*, that details his harrowing experiences during WWII.

## Cultivating Brighter Futures

Dear Friend,

St. Paul says, "... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (5 Cor 5:17).

Writing to you just after Easter, and at the dawn of Spring, these words particularly resonate. From the warbling birds to the blooming trees, a spirit of rebirth surrounds us – reminding us that Jesus triumphantly rose to give us new

life and new hope.

Today, I invite you to rejoice and celebrate with us: because your kindness truly helps our missionaries resurrect the spirits of those in need around the world. In this issue of our World Bulletin, you can read some examples of their work – and see, first-hand, how the "old has gone," and a new, brighter future has emerged in its place.



Thank you for being such an integral part of our life-giving mission. Together, we will continue to sew the seeds of positive change! May God Bless You!

*Fr. Mark Hyde, SDB*



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