



World Bulletin

Summer 2020

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

Salesian Missionaries on the Front Lines

When news of the novel coronavirus first began to break in January, our missionaries around the world were ready to respond.

Drawing on more than a century and a half’s experience of living through wars, disasters, disease, and other emergencies, these dedicated men and women knew exactly what needed to be done. They immediately mobilized locally tailored efforts to address pressing needs: delivering education and prevention campaigns; soap and sanitation supplies; life-saving masks; health kits for orphans; food for families; and much more.

“Our missionaries truly are front-line workers in their own communities,” says Father Gus Baek, Director of Salesian Missions. “In times of crisis especially, they provide essential goods and services to those who stand to suffer the most.”



In some instances, participants in Salesian-run training programs are producing the goods, so that health care workers facing critical shortages can deliver their services. In early April, pupils at Don Bosco Technical College in Mandaluyong, Philippines pivoted toward manufacturing open-source ventilators for area hospitals in desperate need. And in collaboration with local partners, students at the Salesian Polytechnic University of Ecuador are using 3D printers to design and produce

face shields for medical personnel.

In many other instances, missionaries have been providing direct relief to those disproportionately affected by the hardships of mandatory confinement and border closings.

Throughout India, missionaries have already provided 23,000 people – including street children, poor families, stranded migrants, and those who have lost their jobs – with much-needed provision kits. In Vietnam, they have so far distributed one month’s worth of food to 7,360 vulnerable residents. And in Ethiopia, missionaries are supplying water to those living in the slums of Addis Ababa so they can prevent the spread of coronavirus through proper hygiene.

“These examples truly represent a mere fraction of our missionaries’ ongoing COVID-19 efforts,” says Fr. Gus. “I’m so grateful for our generous friends who make this all possible.”

This Month’s Child



Name: Daniel
Age: 17 Years Old
Home: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Daniel’s parents never meant to abandon him. Sadly, while fleeing from Goma to Bukavo to escape armed rebels, their beloved 10-year-old son was lost in the chaos.

That was in 2012. Today, thanks to Salesian missionaries at the Don Bosco Center in Bukavo, Daniel has been happily reunited with his family in Kenya.

Things easily could have gone the other way. Living on the streets of Bukavo, Daniel seemed destined to scavenge in order to survive. Then, a friend told him

about the Salesian center, and everything changed.

At Don Bosco Bukavo, Daniel received shelter, meals, education, and literacy training. In April 2019, he also joined the center’s first cohort of boys participating in a special family reunification program. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The little boy once feared dead by his parents now attends a carpentry course at Don Bosco Boys’ Town in Nairobi, and eagerly anticipates a stable, bright future surrounded by love.

This Month’s Call For Prayer

During these uncertain and challenging times, please pray that faith, hope and compassion provide strength to those who are struggling and suffering the most. Together, united in prayer and love, we will persevere.



Monthly Missions Report...

In Bolivia...



Nearly 30 years ago, Father Ottavio Sabbadin launched Proyecto Don Bosco in Santa Cruz. Today, the program provides comprehensive rehabilitation, education, and vocational training programs to marginalized youth in desperate need of social inclusion and employment opportunities.

Such opportunities are more important now than ever. Bolivia is South America's poorest country, and only 7 percent of rural school-age children make it through 8th grade. Many migrate to the city in search of better opportunities, only to land on the streets where bad habits often prove hard to resist.

At the Don Bosco Project, those who are ready discover safe shelter, nutritious meals, and access to psychologists, social workers, healthcare staff, and teachers who collaborate to address the children's needs. Currently, close to 2,000 youth are building brighter futures for themselves, thanks to "Papa Ottavio!"

In New Guinea...

In a country where the deck is stacked against youth, students like Daniel are beating the odds.

Here, close to 25% of children are unable to attend school; 50% of adults are illiterate; and nearly 40% percent of the country's population lives on less than \$1.25 per day. Salesian missionaries at Don Bosco Technical School in Gabutu are determined to permanently break this cycle of poverty.

In courses such as maintenance fitting and machinery, students receive relevant education matched to local needs, which positions them for meaningful employment. They also learn "soft" skills such as punctuality and task management to support their success on the job long-term.

Daniel is a shining example of that success. Once, he sold betel nut on the streets; today, he leads a technical team for an Australia-based engineering company.



In DRC...

At the Don Bosco Vocational Center near Brazzaville, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, poor girls and young women are "sewing" the seeds for a brighter future.



In response to persistent gender inequalities, which are rooted in educational and employment disparities, Salesian missionaries recently launched a dressmaking program for single mothers and young women who previously left school. Courses include cutting and sewing; in addition, the first 35 participants are learning entrepreneurial skills and will receive small business start-up support once they graduate.

Opportunities like these are particularly crucial in a country where more than half of the population lives in poverty. When women can learn and support themselves with employment-ready skills, they can move themselves, their families, and society forward.

Missionary of the Month: Brother Francis Nhat

Francis Nhat is the first Salesian brother to serve in Pakistan – and he intends not to be the last. In fact, by maintaining a visible presence and setting a positive example, he hopes to inspire others to join him: especially from among the local population.

These aspirations have precedent. While awaiting ordination in his home country of Vietnam, Bro. Francis made a lasting impression

on Thomas Hui, then a novice. "One day, [Bro. Francis] shared with us about his mission in South Sudan," Fr. Thomas recalls. "My heart was touched and I said to myself, 'I will be a missionary!'"

Counting the Blessed Artemide Zatti (known for his commitment to the sick) and the Blessed Steven Sandor (a youth minister, WWII correspondent, and martyr) as his role models,



Bro. Francis finds great joy in being a missionary and in accompanying the young. His Salesian charism will undoubtedly help grow a delegation that has been present in Pakistan for 20 years.

Hope Amid Crisis

Dear Friends,

Since the beginning of the year, we here at Salesian Missions have focused significant attention on the global COVID-19 pandemic – with good reason. It's a crisis that affects us all ... most especially those already suffering. As you'll read about in our cover story, our missionaries have responded to unexpected and often profound need with self-assurance and creativity.

At the same time – and just as

important – these missionaries continue to do the invaluable work they've always done to address poverty, poor health, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and more, in over 130 countries around the world.

In an unprecedented time like this, I strongly believe it's important to seek signs of hope and to celebrate success. It's in this spirit today that I introduce you to the



latest edition of our *World Bulletin*. May you find joy in the knowledge that you help make this hope possible around the world!

With sincere gratitude,

Fr. Gus Baek

Fr. Gus Baek, S.D.B.



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