



# World Bulletin

Fall 2015

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

## Salesians Respond to Crisis in Syria

It is impossible to escape the heart-wrenching images circulated across the airwaves every day: men, women and often very small children fleeing the violence of war-torn Syria. Fleeing the country under the most challenging conditions, they seek asylum and a better life in the distant lands of Europe. Far too often, they don't make it. And those who do survive face the harsh reality of arrival in a region ill-equipped to accommodate them.

Statistics show that close to a half million Syrians alone have fled to Europe as of August 2015 – and that number continues to rise. Lacking the appropriate infrastructure to handle this growing tidal wave of humanity, some countries are closing their borders – further stranding thousands of desperate people and robbing them of all hope.

Heeding the call of Pope Francis, Salesian missionaries throughout Europe are working hard to assist these refugees in whatever way they can.



Our missionaries' initial response is to work with their local provinces, parishes and communities to identify ways to accept migrant families into their midst. The goal is to host as many families as possible, with a special emphasis on unaccompanied minors – youth who have fled their home countries on their own, or those who have been separated from their families during the journey.

Even before the current crisis in Europe – when violence first erupted in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East – Salesian mis-

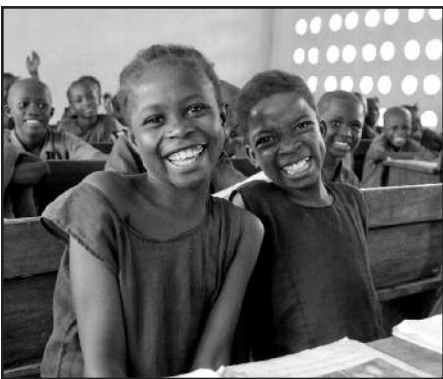
sionaries there and in Turkey were actively serving those affected by the unrest.

Despite threats to their own security, our missionaries remained – and continue to remain – in Aleppo, Damascus and Kafroun. There, they serve between 400 – 800 people each day at sites where refugees receive shelter, safety and medical assistance.

Salesians also offer technical skills training to assist refugee families in finding stable employment wherever they eventually settle. At the Don Bosco Center in Istanbul, Turkey, more than 400 Syrian refugees participate in English-language instruction, basic education and vocational training – as well as counseling services to help them overcome the trauma of their experience.

With you by our side, our Salesian missionaries will remain committed to providing the support needed to help ease the suffering.

## This Month's Children



Name: Fatmata & Samuel

Home: Freetown,  
Sierra Leone

It was a living nightmare. During the height of the Ebola crisis in West Africa, Fatmata and her brother Samuel watched helplessly as their parents suffered and died from the disease.

Newly orphaned, emotionally traumatized and sickened with Ebola themselves, the children fought to regain their health while relatives looted their family home. Worse, these same relatives refused to care for the children once they recovered – leaving them to languish in a local hospital with nowhere to turn.

That's when Fatmata remem-

bered the Don Bosco Fambul Child Line – a nationwide counseling hotline run by Salesian missionaries that had recently focused on crisis intervention services during the outbreak.

After dialing the hotline, a social worker connected Fatmata and Samuel to the Don Bosco Interim Care Center in Freetown.

Today, thanks to the care and efforts of the center's staff, the children have been reunited with caring and loving relatives that were located. Fatmata and Samuel now attend school and receive ongoing supportive services as needed.

## This Month's Call For Prayer

Please pray for all the children and families who have been forced to flee their homes because of war, violence and natural disaster. May these innocent victims find safe refuge and gain the strength and hope to rebuild their shattered lives.



### OUR SPECIAL WAYS OF THANKING YOU:

✝ Sign-up now at: [www.salesianmissions.org/Advent](http://www.salesianmissions.org/Advent) and receive free weekly inspirational Scripture passages and messages during the Advent Season.

✝ Go to [www.salesianmissions.org/pope](http://www.salesianmissions.org/pope) to receive our free, limited-edition Pope Francis commemorative prayer card... or call or write us to request it.

In the dark, frightening and chaotic hours of April 25, Nepal cried out for help – and many friends of Salesian Missions answered generously and from the bottom of their hearts.

In the first two weeks following the 7.8-magnitude earthquake, members of the Don Bosco Society in Kathmandu fanned out across the country – reaching more than 8,000 families comprising 30,000 people in 19 different villages.

Thanks to the immediate and overwhelming response to our Nepal Emergency Fund, these Salesian missionaries and volunteers were able to deliver more than 100 tons of critical humanitarian aid to victims in desperate need: medical supplies, clean water, food rations and tents for temporary shelter.

In recognition of these accomplishments – as well as the important work that remains to be done – we invite you to watch our new video, “Nepal is Calling,” at [www.salesianmissions.org/nepal-video](http://www.salesianmissions.org/nepal-video)



## In Myanmar...



In the aftermath of torrential rains and destructive floods caused by an unusually active summer monsoon season, Salesian missionaries are making a significant contribution to the country’s recovery.

The scale of devastation has been massive. More than one million people have been affected by the disaster.

Our missionaries immediately stepped in to remove road debris, clean mud from wells, repair sanitation systems and distribute medicines. They are now working with local authorities to plan and implement medium and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Future projects will include education and social development initiatives to help victims reclaim their lives and livelihoods. This is critical as almost all of the rice paddies are buried in mud.

While the road to recovery in Myanmar is long, it is one the Salesians are committed to traveling.

## In Cambodia...

In Cambodia’s smallest province, 30 impoverished children can now attend kindergarten thanks to the Salesians.

Opened in October 2014, the kindergarten is located on the greater Don Bosco Technical School campus in Kep – where marginalized youth can access basic, secondary and technical education opportunities. This newest early education program expands those opportunities to girls and boys, ages 3 to 6, who may never have gone to school otherwise.



Each day, kindergartners participate in English language lessons, learn basic math, and develop their social and physical skills through games, art and other activities.

The goal is to prepare them for successful entry into first grade and, ultimately, the continued professional training that can permanently lift them out of poverty.

The program is already so popular, there’s a waiting list!

## Missionary of the Month: Fr. Augstinus Jou Poma

*“What you received freely, give freely.” - Matthew 10:8*

These words have been the guiding principle of Fr. Poma’s vocation.

Born and raised in Indonesia, he developed, at a young age, a strong appreciation for the many missionary priests who served in his childhood parish and beyond. But it was the Salesians, especially, who captured his imagination and inspired his path.

“Their witness of faith and concern for the poor and simple youth made me dream that someday I could be a missionary priest like them,” he says.

Today, he serves among marginalized youth in Paraguay – where the challenges of learning Spanish and adopting cultures and traditions very different from his own leave him undaunted. He believes that since his home country has received so much



from Salesian missionaries, it is now his duty to give back.

“I think we should be witnesses with joy to the young, and love Christ and others, without borders,” he proclaims.

## Practicality and Compassion for Those in Need

*“The Salesian is practical, sees the problem, thinks about it and takes it in hand.”*

These are the recent words of Pope Francis, calling upon us to address the refugee crisis rapidly unfolding along Europe’s borders.

As you see in our lead story, we have been working in Syria and Turkey. It is our deep love and concern for the children and families

we have served – and our optimism for their future – that motivates us to continue assisting them. In fact, this is our guiding principle whenever and wherever impoverished youth and families seek our help.

Whether they have been displaced by conflict, victimized by natural disaster, threatened by rampant gang violence, or marginalized by lack of education, we will not stand idly by.



Rather, in the spirit of Don Bosco, we will be there – with real solutions that bring new hope.

I thank you for your friendship. Without you, we can do nothing. May God bless you!

*Fr. Mark Hyde, SDB*

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