



Salesian Missions

# World Bulletin

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

## A War-Torn Village In Sudan Gains New Hope Thanks To The Perseverance Of The Salesians

The village of Tonj lays in ruins, isolated from the rest of Sudan – and the world – following 20 years of bloodshed and violence between the government and the rebels.

The families who remained and survived are suffering enormously.

A large portion of essential relief supplies, like food and medicine, cannot be delivered because roads leading to Tonj have been destroyed. Only helicopters can access this devastated area.

To add further pain and hardship, the village has been decimated through a series of bombings meant to wipe out the rebels hiding in the surrounding areas. Only a wall here and there remain from what once were hospitals, schools, homes and businesses, and daily life in Tonj has been forever changed.

On the surface, the scene is one of utter destruction,



despair and helplessness.

But slowly emerging from the proverbial ashes is a sense of renewed hope and optimism for the future.

Leading the way to what is looking to be a miraculous – albeit difficult – rebirth of a community are a group of dedicated Salesian missionaries.

During the war, our Salesian Center in Tonj was forced to shut down after one of our missionaries was captured by guerrillas and held prisoner for a year and a half.

However, three years ago, we reopened our doors and the healing process began. Since

then, we have made remarkable strides!

Although much rebuilding needs to be done – and a great deal of suffering still exists – signs of hope are clearly visible in the makeshift classrooms set up by the Salesians.

Here, teenagers sit alongside six- and seven-year-old children as they all get an elementary education for the first time in their lives.

Without any formal government in Tonj, the citizens are also looking to Salesians like Father James Pulickal of our Sacred Heart of Jesus parish as promoters of stability and harmony within their village.

The challenges of such a significant undertaking are huge. But the Salesians have already endured many obstacles and are inspired by the substantial progress made so far – and the tremendous promise ahead.

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## This Month's Children

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Name: "Doriya" Children  
Ages: 13-18 Years Old  
Home: Bujumbura, Burundi  
(Africa)

There are 29 of them – and they range in age from 13 to 18. These boys are young in years, but aged and hardened in their minds and hearts.

You see, they have spent the better part of their childhood as "Doriya" – the name given to young soldiers fighting a violent and bloody war in Burundi.

Today, these children are finally free, having recently been released in the presence of representatives from the United Nations.

What may seem like cause for celebration, however, is actually a traumatic adjustment made worse

by severe emotional scars, distrust and fear.

Those who have one will finally go home, and to their parents if they are still alive. But many of them have nowhere to go.

Fortunately, they will be welcomed with open arms by the Salesians, thanks to a special rehabilitation program made possible by caring friends like you. The precious lives of many former child soldiers can now be resurrected through love, support, counseling and schooling, and healthy recreation and team building sports.

## This Month's Call For Prayer

*The holiday season can be a difficult time for those who are lonely, forgotten or in need. Please pray that children everywhere and their families will have something special to be thankful for ... and that they will experience the joy and hope that make childhood so special.*



# Monthly Missions Report...

## In Asia...



"It will go down as one of the saddest days in the lives of thousands of people in South and South East Asia," reported Salesians on the scene of the devastating tidal wave that claimed more than 68,000 lives on December 26, 2004.

Following the enormous tragedy, the Salesians – along with the Red Cross – responded immediately with emergency relief. Several Salesian buildings were transformed into shelters for those left homeless by the disaster.

Although the Salesians have many facilities nearby, none were damaged. As a result, our missionaries have been able to focus on helping the victims.

The rebuilding process will be long and difficult. In the meantime, Salesian Provincial of Tiruchy Father James Theophilus is urging friends to pray for the dead and their loved ones, and try in any way possible to come to the aid of those struck by this tragedy.

## In Taiwan...

Every December, children at the Salesian Technical School in Tainan, Taiwan, celebrate "Salesian Day" with songs and performances.

You see, these children have been excluded from attending public school because of their learning disabilities. And, their families are too poor to pay for a specialized private education.

But thanks to the Salesian School, which was recently renovated, hundreds of needy children are getting the chance to gain knowledge, acquire skills and build confidence in their own abilities to succeed in life.

Your generosity makes such accomplishments possible. And, it gives many children around the world a reason to celebrate!



## In Kosovo...



The Don Bosco Center in Kosovo has been so successful that the government there is looking to use it as a model for the planning and implementation of similar programs.

Fr. Izidor Lukic reports that government officials have been learning how the Salesians operate the Center, which provides vocational training to young people so they can obtain good jobs.

"They interviewed us, the teachers, and the students, as well as former students who have successfully found work," adds Fr. Izidor.

Although the government has been researching other vocational training centers, they were so impressed with the Salesian program that they have indicated it will serve as the government's model ... an honor, indeed, owed in part to good friends like you.

## Missionaries of the Month: Salesian Volunteers Roula and Gianni

Roula has a university degree in nursing and Gianni holds a PhD in Chemistry. With these credentials, they can easily lead financially prosperous lives.

But this couple yearned for something more meaningful.

So, they left everything behind and set out for Cambodia, where they landed as volunteers at the Don Bosco Center in the town of Poipet.

The Center features a boarding school and provides free meals to more than 200

children every day.

Upon their arrival, Roula and Gianni were immediately overwhelmed by the cruel realities of their new hometown: exploited and abandoned children, poverty, prostitution, AIDS, drugs and crime.

Yet their desire to help others in need was only strengthened by this harsh awakening.

In her new position, Roula finds herself fulfilling many roles for the children who live at the Center: mother, nurse and cook.

Gianni devotes much of his time teaching courses to the youngsters and playing sports with them.

The humble couple's rewards are not wealth or fame. Instead, they come from the warmth, smiles and gratitude that exude from the children.

Roula and Gianni are just two examples of everyday people who have become outstanding missionaries because they are compelled by love and compassion.

## The Resurrection of Life

The pain and suffering endured by Jesus Christ, and His glorious Resurrection, are powerful images that embody the true meaning of life.

As we prepare for the Lenten season, we should be enlightened that each one of us possesses the power to resurrect the lives of our brothers and sisters in need.

Every day, we are witness to the amazing transformation that occurs when a struggling child is

given the love, support and opportunities necessary to grow and thrive.

We have seen thousands of children on the brink of self-destruction or death, whose lives have been resurrected into happy, productive and caring human beings ... because friends like you chose to make a difference.

As Salesians, we are blessed by your generosity and inspired by your kindness. You have our



deepest appreciation.  
May God bless you.

*Brother Emile*

