



Salesian Missions

World Bulletin

Winter 2008

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

Flood Victims In Brazil Find Refuge And Hope In The Salesian Community

Starting last Fall, heavy rains have pummeled the coastal area of Santa Catarina, Brazil – creating a precarious softening of the soil that has culminated in a series of devastating mudslides. To date, more than 100 people have perished – many of them families and small children trapped in their homes by the disintegrating hillsides surrounding the villages.

In what is being called “the worst weather-related tragedy in Santa Catarina’s history,” continued widespread flooding has also blocked access to eight towns in the region – stranding more than 160,000 men, women and children without electricity, access to clean drinking water, and other crucial supplies. As many as 80,000 more victims have fled their homes, forced to rummage through abandoned stores for sustenance amid the floating carcasses of cows and other farm animals.



With few options to reach the stranded and homeless – officials must use helicopters and boats – the situation remains desperate.

Three Salesian communities in the area are leading the charge to shelter the storms’ refugees. In Itaji – one of the hardest-hit areas – the Salesian Institute is providing housing, food, and warm clothes to 900 victims.

Additionally, Parque Dom Bosco, on the outskirts of the city, is offering similar aid to 500 people, most of whom are families.

Our community in Joinville has also partnered with parishioners to provide warm, dry shelter for those who lost their homes.

Once the victims’ immediate needs are met, however, great challenges remain. The mudslides have flattened Santa Catarina’s homes, flooded their schools, compromised their natural gas pipeline, and trashed their places of business.

Officials estimate it will take nearly two years to rebuild the area’s basic infrastructure – leaving many families at risk as they struggle to obtain adequate housing and make a decent living.

Santa Catarina’s Salesian communities plan to actively participate in the area’s reconstruction. Your generous support will enable us to offer meaningful assistance to these families, easing them through a difficult transition into a future renewed with possibility and recovery.

This Month’s Child



Name: Zoe
Age: 7 Years Old
Home: Don Bosco Center,
Democratic Republic
of the Congo

Until recently, Zoe’s future looked grim. Forced from their rural home by political violence that claimed her father, her family fled, on foot, to the city of Goma – but not before the grueling journey took its toll.

Weakened by hunger and thirst, with nothing but the clothes on their backs, Zoe, her mother and younger brother barely made it to the city before her mother fell ill with cholera.

Fortunately for Zoe, her mother first sought refuge at the Don Bosco Centre in Goma-Ngangi – where our missionaries and volunteers opened their arms to the family. While Zoe’s mother

convalesces at the Salesian health center in Goma, Zoe and her brother are fed, clothed and safeguarded from further harm.

Additionally, Zoe participates in afternoon school classes and recreational activities, which help with her intellectual development and emotional well being. For these hours, at least, Zoe can revel in the experience of being a child.

While her future remains open, one thing is certain: For as long as she requires it, Zoe will remain among the Salesians, healthy, safe, and starting an educational journey sure to sustain her through many of life’s challenges.

This Month’s Call For Prayer

The number of children and families who need our help grows every day. Please pray that we will always have the financial resources and loyal support necessary to meet the incredible demand for our programs and services -- and that we can continue to improve the lives of those who are suffering.



Monthly Missions Report...

In Bosnia...

In the rural town of Zepce, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, young people face a barrage of daily challenges. Residual effects of the war mean that educational access is poor; and ethnic and cultural differences often erupt into violence. Lacking social support, many youths turn to alcohol and drugs for diversion.

However, the new Don Bosco Youth Center – opened by the Salesians in November – offers a place where more than 800 youths of various religious faiths can study, learn a trade, and engage in athletic and cultural activities in an environment that promotes mutual respect.

The Salesians hope to expand these services to as many Zepce youth as require them – providing, in the process, a model for peaceful co-existence and hope for the future to the rest of the young nation.



In New Guinea...



For many of Papua New Guinea's children, "school" has been little more than a dream.

Due to poor infrastructure and inadequate staffing, one of the few elementary schools in this region was forced to close in 2004 – leaving many youngsters with no options for an education. Without it, the children drift to more urban areas and can quickly get themselves into trouble.

Happily, this past year, the Salesians re-opened the Dominic Savio Primary School – now a permanent structure built with the help of the village people and which will serve over 250 children. It has already been nicknamed "The Miracle School" by the locals, who are overjoyed at the new opportunities it will afford their youngsters – and the prospects of an improved standard of living, both for themselves and future generations.

In The Philippines...

In 2003, the Salesians in the Philippines made a commitment to expand their reach by "going rural." With the country a predominantly agricultural one – and youth in these areas often the poorest – it was clear that building a support system centered on technical and vocational training could swing open the doors to a brighter future.



Today, three specialized training centers are teaching youngsters modern agricultural skills – as well as how to use and maintain light machinery that make tilling, planting and harvesting more efficient. The results are encouraging: Almost 60% of graduates succeed in finding employment, and 25% of graduates own and run their own farms. This success, in turn, breeds more hope among the rural communities, as the youth become agents for sustainable development.

Missionary of the Month: Bishop José Ramón Gurruchaga

Recently, Spain's Miranda Foundation recognized Bishop José Ramón Gurruchaga with its inaugural "Barakaldo Solidario-Antonio Miranda" award.

The award celebrates Bishop Gurruchaga's lifelong and selfless commitment to social assistance – which began in February, 1961 when he was ordained a Salesian priest and left his native Spain to become a missionary in Peru.

There, he enthusiastically lived the Salesian ideal of "helping others help themselves," working to educate the country's youth in order that they find decent employment and become contributing members of society.

In 1987, he was appointed Bishop of Huaraz, Peru – serving there and in Lurin until he retired in 2006.

Spanish journalist Almudena Cacho emceed the ceremony,



which Barakaldo's mayor and other local dignitaries attended. Congratulations, Bishop Gurruchaga – we're proud of you!

The Amazing Value Of A Dollar

Dear Friend,

During these economic times – when many families are doing everything possible to stretch the value of a dollar – I can confidently assure you that your gifts to Salesians Missions go incredibly far.

When you consider that it only takes a few dollars to feed a hungry child for a week, or purchase an entire outfit of clothing, or provide shelter and

care for a night, I think you will agree that it is money well spent.

It gives me great satisfaction to have this chance to share some of the amazing accomplishments made possible by your ongoing generosity.

No doubt, these are difficult times for everyone. That's why you have my sincerest appreciation for your unrelenting support and kindness. With you by our side, we will continue to



provide hope and opportunities to those who need it most. Thanks so much and may God Bless you!

Fr. Mark Hyde, SDB



Salesian Missions