



# Salesian Missions

# World Bulletin

Spring 2009

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

## Amid Rising Political Tensions In Madagascar, Salesians Stand Ready To Serve

Earlier this year, violence erupted in the capital city of Madagascar when approximately 20,000 people looted and burned structures throughout Antananarivo.

Since then, the situation has deteriorated even more. While the number of casualties remains unclear, dozens of people have died – many of whom were burned or trampled during widespread looting. Police presence is notably absent, and rioting mobs have stripped the supermarkets bare.

Sadly, those suffering most are the families and children already burdened with the challenges of poverty and despair.

“I’m afraid to go out,” explains a desperate widow with seven children. “During the day the square is clogged with angry people, and during the night the looters come out. But the children and I have run out of food. I really don’t know what to do.”



The Salesians – who first established a mission in Madagascar in 1993 – have been watching the situation closely. In addition to broadcasting updates, eleven different communities across the island are poised to offer emergency assistance if and when necessary.

As always, the doors of

Salesian schools, churches and other mission buildings are wide open for any families, adults and children seeking amnesty.

This should offer some comfort to the island’s citizens, as the Salesians have a long history of organizing urgent humanitarian aid in Madagascar.

As recently as March 2007, the Bemaneviky Mission sheltered more than 200,000 people who were forced from their homes by Cyclone Inalala – helping to procure medical assistance, clean water, and basic food before assisting in extensive reconstruction efforts.

Should the political situation improve, the Salesians will continue to focus on the plight of the nation’s poor – who are facing increasingly difficult circumstances due to the global economic crisis.

“Regardless of their needs, we will be here for the people of Madagascar,” says Fr. Erminio De Santis, Provincial.

## This Month’s Child



Name: Bhanu  
Age: 9 Years Old  
Home: New Delhi, India

Barefoot, dirty, and dressed in rags, young Bhanu would seek daily refuge from the slums – and a chance to steal some food – in the railway stations and marketplaces around New Delhi.

Every night, he wandered unsupervised, exposed to the violence of the streets and the dangers of drugs. Bhanu longed for a different life, but with no access to formal education, he lacked other options.

It seemed inevitable that he would remain trapped in a cruel cycle of poverty. But everything changed when Bhanu encountered a street worker from Don Bosco Ashalayam – a Salesian

organization that reaches out to abandoned and neglected youth in India.

The worker brought Bhanu to a place where – for the first time – he had a clean bed, a secure home, and a chance to regain his lost childhood.

Today, Bhanu’s future looks bright indeed. He has begun his primary education at the shelter school, and is excited by the possibility of learning a vocational trade when he’s older. If past successes are any indication, Bhanu has an excellent chance of someday living independently – far outside the slums of New Delhi – with a family of his own.

## This Month’s Call For Prayer

Although times are tough here and abroad, we still have countless opportunities to improve conditions for those struggling to make it through each day. Please pray that our missionaries continue to receive the support they need to ease the pain and suffering of the children and families they serve.



# Monthly Missions Report...

## In Italy...

In Rome – like most other major cities – young people often turn to drugs as a way to escape boredom, lack of opportunity and abuse. But all too often, the results are the same: A downward-spiraling addiction that robs kids of a bright and productive future.

To combat this growing problem, four Salesian Centers are joining forces and creating, for the first time, an interdisciplinary approach to drug education as well as addiction prevention and recovery programs. The overarching goal is to better understand the reasons for – and risks of – this behavior, and to create increased awareness of the problem so that it can be more effectively addressed.

The Salesians are confident that these efforts will save numerous young people from the perils and suffering associated with drug and alcohol addiction.



## In Lebanon...



Three years ago, the Second Lebanon War killed over a thousand civilians and left close to a million homeless. Torn from their families – with their schools destroyed – children were left with little hope for the future.

In response to this crisis, the Salesians opened the doors of Don Bosco Technique in El Fidar to 20 boys and girls from some of the worst-hit areas. Just two short years later, these 20 students – all of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds – have completed an intensive vocational training program and received their diplomas.

Inspired by this success, the Salesians are embarking on additional programs that will empower Lebanon's most vulnerable youth to overcome adversity – while teaching them valuable skills for a future of self-sufficiency, cultural tolerance and promise.

## In Poland...

Thanks to their involvement with “Youth for the World” – the Salesian Missionary Volunteer Service in Krakow – an enthusiastic group of Polish citizens have helped build a new four-room elementary school in Biharamulo, Tanzania – and also assisted in training the local educators who will be teaching at the school.



In Zambia, two additional volunteers supervised the construction of a new sports complex at the Salesian Center in Kabwe, one of the poorest areas of the country.

“We have truly helped contribute to a better future for these children,” says Agnes, a physiotherapist who worked on the sports center in Kabwe. “I’m so grateful for the opportunity the Salesians provided to be part of this immensely rewarding experience. Their work is so important.”

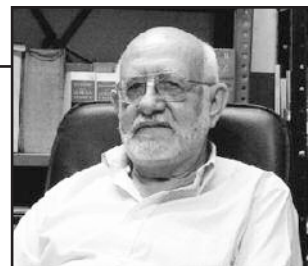
## Missionary of the Month: Fr. Alejandro Moreno

Recently, CECODAP – a non-governmental child advocacy group in Venezuela – awarded its prestigious Rafael Ángel García prize to Fr. Alejandro Moreno. Fr. Moreno accepted the honor during an official ceremony attended by many dignitaries.

Established in memory of a prominent Venezuelan journalist, the Rafael Ángel García prize honors those individuals, organi-

zations and initiatives that – through tireless commitment to the cause – promote the human rights of children and adolescents around the globe.

Fr. Moreno, a sociologist and director of the Centre for Popular Research in Caracas, was recognized for his years of dedicated research that has “significantly contributed to a better understanding of the situation of



the family in Venezuela, [as well as] the roots of violence and other societal problems.”

Our heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to Fr. Moreno for this important work.

## Brighter Days Ahead

Dear Friend,

With Spring in full bloom and Summer around the corner, we are reminded that brighter days are ahead.

But in a figurative way, we know that there are many dark clouds looming overhead. Our own country's economic crisis – combined with unthinkable suffering around the world – can challenge our faith and diminish our hope.

Please let me assure you that amidst the hopelessness and despair, there are many reasons for optimism.

With your kindness and generosity, we are making great strides in our efforts to provide needy children and families with the helping hand they need to lead better lives. And we have countless opportunities to do even more with your continued support.



Thank you so much for making a difference during these difficult times ... and please remember, brighter days are indeed ahead.

May God bless you and your loved ones!

*Fr. Mark Hyde, sdb*



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