

CAGLIERO11



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«Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation»

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Dear confreres – missionaries of the young, and dear friends of the Salesian missions!

In July and August in lots of provinces we have summer holidays, with plenty of opportunities for school camps, faith experiences, enjoyment and even missionary experiences. The mission volunteer movement in many forms is a youth ministry offered by now in many provinces.

We know of the experience of some mission groups from Latin America, Asia which involve their members every week, or month in mission work in villages in areas not reached by priests – helping especially with catechesis and first evangelisation.

We know of the experiences of mission groups from Latin America who bring their members during important liturgical moments (Holy Week, Christmas) into the favelas of the huge cities or amongst native groups in the Amazonia for explicit mission work. We know the the three week mission experience, preceded by a month of preparation during the school year – as happens in some provinces in Europe or East Asia.

We also know about the experiences of the young volunteer missionaries in their own country, as happens in some Latin American provinces like Ecuador. Here, each year around two hundred young people leave for 12 months work in various parts of the country – in the Amazon forests, in the communities in the Cordillera, along the coast, or amongst street children – and they fully share the life of the Salesians. Other provinces also send their volunteers out of the country.

We also know about other experiences of volunteers who offer their professional training on behalf of certain development projects (like JTM – Spain, VIS – Italy, COMIDE – Belgium etc).

We know of other groups of the Salesian Family who are explicitly missionary and who send lay members, married couples, or others, after making a missionary promise –for some years, and some even for life, in mission countries.

So then here are various kinds of mission volunteer work. What is important, is a formation curriculum before, during and after these experiences. It is my hope that in your province too this missionary formation of the young will be kept alive. We hope to bring the experiences in the South American Continent to the attention of the whole Salesian Family in 2011 with the theme for the Mission Day being 'Forming young missionaries'.

I hope you will find a chance for abundant apostolic results, being close to the young, and with the heart of Don Bosco – the missionary

Fr. Václav Klement, SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

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«That young confreres working in North African countries will daily discover the patience and courage to witness to the Christian faith in joy and enthusiasm»

In North African countries - Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt some 30 confreres live and work, involved especially in educational work of schools, with almost exclusively Muslim students, and offering pastoral service to very few foreign Catholics. We are talking of a very significant presence which demands almost absolute free gift of daily service.

The most beautiful gift I have received from the young

I remember, 2007 in the Parish of St Dominic Savio, Bellflower, USA when I first expressed the wish to be a volunteer with orphans in Ecuador. I have now been working 8 months in Guayaquil. I believe that I have found my passion in life. If I had to choose an important moment in my life, it would be this experience.

This experience has changed my perception of the world. It has opened my eyes to the reality of poverty, hunger and situations found in developing countries. This experience has opened my eyes and has been an inspiration for me to be a better person.

At the beginning I was afraid of the new country, far from family and friends, but once I saw these kids all inhibitions disappeared. I didn't believe when people told me how this experience would change my life I had no idea how right they were. Seeing an innocent child on the footpath changes your life and is a blessing when that youngster takes the decision to come back to the Oratory with you. I have the feeling that I not only brought Vince or Eric, but I brought God!

Every day spent here is a gift from God. It has helped me understand what love for Him is all about, and I am extremely grateful for this. The most important thing I have learned here is not to maintain for sure that the things we have, that "thing" could be shoes, a bowl of rice or parents. Unfortunately I had regarded all these things with certainty. A year ago my life was on a downhill ride, and I had no motivation for either school or work. Now I am leaving Ecuador with a new outlook on life and a new desire and new motivation to continue helping others. This new motivation growing in my heart is the best gift I could have received from the kids, and it is something that money could never buy.

So, where do I see myself in ten years time? I see myself making a difference in the world and helping others, perhaps not in Ecuador, but I hope as a fireman! I thank all the Salesian Brothers and Priests who are praying for me and who believed in me throughout all this. They have helped me to be the person I am today.

John Garcia, 18 years old

Missionaries amongst the Muslims



Don Václav Klement e Don José Miguel Núñez, Consigliere per la regione Europa Ovest, con i giovani del Centro di Formazione Professionale "Assabil", Marocco.

«... We are here because we are missionaries, because we have a faith to share, Good News to make known. Certainly our mission is above all witness. A witness to the faith that animates us, to the hope that sustains us and the love we receive from God and which we want to share with everyone.

I don't feel personally frustrated because there are few Christians or because there are few conversions to our Faith. I am convinced that we are here to 'sow' not to 'reap'. We sow through prayer, silent prayer, through teaching in our own or government schools, or by our presence in hospitals and clinics... by sharing our lives with people who live here.

Missionary activity cannot certainly be measured by the those registered for sacraments or other measures

like that. Only God can measure it. Only He one day can tell us: I was hungry for hope, for a fraternal world, for friendship, love, Good News, God ... and you came to me ... Then someone will say: "But when did we give you hope? When did we offer you a kind Word? When did we tell you the truth about un God as love? When did we help you hope in a more fraternal world?" And then Jesus will tell us: "Every time you did this for these little ones, for these people living in a difficult land, you did it for me". This is why I think the Bishop or priest working here should never feel deluded because there is no great pastoral ministry. He is called to give witness, through his life and activity to give a reflection of that Light which illuminates every human being...

... What is important is not gathering the fruits but throwing out the seeds of the Gospel which will one day bear fruit ... Mission remains "mission" even in Muslim countries. We missionaries however need glasses that only faith can provide, to be able to see and believe that our activity is meaningful and can leaven the bread that is the world».

Bishop George Bertin

*Bishop of Djibuti e Apostolic Administrator of Mogadishu
(Popoli e Missione, March 2009, p. 52-53 – quoted with permission)*