

AUXILIARIES OF THE MISSION



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MARY "MOTHER OF GOD"

Contemplation of the mystery of the Saviour's birth has led Christian people not only to invoke the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of Jesus, but also to recognize her as Mother of God.

This truth was already confirmed and perceived as belonging to the Church's heritage of faith from the early centuries of the Christian era, until it was solemnly proclaimed at the Council of Ephesus.

In the first Christian community, as the disciples became more aware that Jesus is the Son of God, it became ever clearer that Mary is the Theotokos, the Mother of God. This is a title which does not appear explicitly in the Gospel texts, but in them the "Mother of Jesus" is mentioned and it is affirmed that Jesus is God (Jn 20:28; cf. 5:18; 10:30, 33). Mary is in any case presented as the Mother of Emmanuel, which means "God with us."

Already in the third century, as can be deduced from an ancient written witness, the Christians of Egypt addressed this prayer to Mary: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all evil, O glorious and blessed Virgin" The expression Theotokos appears explicitly for the first time in this ancient witness. Devotion and theology refer more and more to this term, which had by now become part of the Church's patrimony of faith.

One can therefore understand the protest movement when Nestorius cast doubt on the correctness of the title "Mother of God". In fact, being inclined to hold that Mary was only the mother of the man Jesus, he maintained that "Mother of Christ" was the only doctrinally correct expression. Nestorius was led to make this error

by his difficulty in admitting the unity of Christ's person and by his erroneous interpretation of the distinction between the two natures—divine and human—present in him. In 431 the Council of Ephesus condemned his theses and, in affirming the subsistence of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Son, proclaimed Mary the Mother of God.



The expression Theotokos, which literally means, "she who has begotten God", can at first sight seem surprising; in fact it raises the question as to how it is possible for a human creature to give birth to God. The answer of the Church's faith is clear: Mary's divine motherhood refers only to the human begetting of the Son of God but not, however, to his divine birth. The Son of God was eternally begotten of God the Father, and is consubstantial with him. Mary, of course has no part in this eternal birth. However, the Son of God assumed our human nature 2,000 years ago and was conceived by and born of Mary.

In proclaiming Mary "Mother of God", the Church thus intends to affirm that she is the "Mother of the Incarnate Word, who is God". Her motherhood does not, therefore, extend to

all the Trinity, but only to the Second Person, the Son, who, in becoming incarnate took his human nature from her. Motherhood is a relationship of person to person: a mother is not only mother of the body or of the physical creature born of her womb, but of the person she begets. Thus having given birth, according to his human nature, to the person of Jesus, who is a divine person, Mary is the Mother of God.

Pope John Paul II *General Audience, November 27, 1996*

NEW BEGINNINGS, NEW HOPE

As we welcome the new calendar year of 2008, it is but fitting that we ask the guidance and intercession of Mary the Mother of God and our Mother too, to help us in all our endeavors so that all the things we do are in consonance with what Jesus would want us to achieve.

The month of January is also a busy month for us in the Salesian Family as we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis of Sales (24 January), the patron saint of the Salesians and the coming Solemnity of Don

Bosco on the 31st. We have a lot of things to thank our intercessors in heaven for bringing into completion all the work we do in behalf of the Salesian Missions.

Truly, the coming of the new year is an opportunity for new beginnings and a new hope inasmuch as we renew ourselves to intensify our efforts in mission animation.

We ask Mama Mary's guidance and Don Bosco's intercession so that we can all

realign our energies to an indefatigable activity that find its source in the "constant union with God" and in the unlimited confidence in Mary Help of Christians whom we acknowledge and consider to be the inspiration and support of all Salesian work.

A prosperous and Happy New Year to all!

Fr. Ting Miciano SDB

SMS TEXT MESSAGING THE SALESIAN MISSION ANIMATION WAY

The term SMS is frequently used in a non-technical sense to refer to the communication of *text messages* themselves. It has become the easiest and most affordable way of sending and receiving communication nowadays. Tapping on the idea of being able to network among peoples including the Salesians and its supporters, it was in the first quarter of the year 2007 that the Salesian Mission Animation Office had installed the SMS machine in order to intensify the drive of promoting

the advocacy of mission animation in the province.

The idea of adding text messaging to the work of evangelization is not something new. It is a way to be able to make use of the signs of the times in order to service the circle of Salesian communities and friends through timely text quotes about missionary endeavors, breaking news and bible quotes among others.

The SMS machine comes in a software device installed in the computer that keeps a data base of the cell phone numbers of the subscribers. We are sending out weekly text quotes for Smart and Globe subscribers. The SMS derives its benefit from the advantage point that it is the fastest form of communication that can be utilized.

We hope to be able to reach more peoples as the year 2008 unfolds and likewise share inspirational quotes



pertaining to the missions that will elicit fervor and volunteerism in foreign lands.

Lord, You called St John Bosco to be a teacher and father to the young. Fill us with love like his: may we give ourselves completely to your service and to the salvation of those entrusted to our care. Amen!

[From the Mass of St John Bosco - January 31]

SALESIAN MISSIONARY IN FOCUS

THE KISS OF CAMILLUS

Fr. John Aranda Cabrido, SDB



If one had to choose one moment – just one single moment – of his or her life to present before the Good Lord on Judgment Day, mine would certainly be the kiss of Camillus. There I found myself so totally incommunicado as one of only two priests in the enormous island of Normanby (yup "b"...in Papua New Guinea) with my brother priest some two-days walk away across high mountain jungles. I was there upon the invitation of Bishop Francesco Panfilo SDB to help the village of Kelologeia and its neighboring villages for the Christmas of 2002. I had earlier informed the people that I was willing to visit the sick and the elderly as long as they were prepared beforehand. So after an afternoon catechism, the local prayer leader Pita (or Peter) gently asked whether I was ready to visit Camillus. When I inquired where Camillus lived, Pita readily pointed up to the mountainside sheltering our mission station. "Just there," he said. Though still new to this land, I knew just there could easily be an understatement with treacherous implications. Nevertheless, I quickly packed the Eucharist, some vestments and a ritual book and invited a seminarian for extra support, and up the mountainside we went. The ascent was steep and, for a city slouch like me, it was an excruciating exercise; but Pita was jumping from rock to rock like a gazelle! After over half an hour of relentless ascent, we finally reached Camillus' mountain perch. I saw that his family had prepared meticulously for our coming. A home made mat woven from pandanus leaves lay before the hut, with freshly picked hibiscus bordering the mat with Camillus seated in middle. Camillus was thin, aged and blind but when he heard that we had arrived he mustered all his strength and tried to stand. Pita helped him up and led him towards me. That was when Camillus lunged at me, hugged me tightly and kissed me repeatedly. I tried initially to back off, more from embarrassment since I was by now swathed in perspiration and dripping like a faucet, but Camillus was weeping and would not let go. We had the service of the sick with confession and the Eucharist. We tried to stay a little while but the sun was soon to set and we still had our descent to make. On the way down, it

was Pita who was crying. When I inquired why, he simply answered "Father, you are the first." As it turned out, Camillus in healthier years was a village catechist and an indefatigable church worker. But during the past fifteen years he had been so sickly he could no longer go to the mission station. Many priests had passed by the station, time and time again, mainly for the Eucharist. "But Father," Pita explained, "you are the first to visit Camillus." I have visited many sick and elderly people since then. Just this December, after having mass at Gar and visiting the bed-ridden Benedicta, some Bosconians and I had to walk some 25-30 kilometers back to our home base in Illi. *Don Bosco's words to his missionaries continue to ring true, "Have a special predilection for the young, the sick and the elderly." I just hope the Lord will remember that suffocating hug and smacking kiss of Camillus.*

Ceferino is Blessed

Last 22nd of November 2007, **Ceferino Namuncura** was proclaimed Blessed. About 200,000 people took part at Chimpay in the beatification. He is a young Mapuche Indian, Salesian student and aspirant to the priesthood who died at 19 years of age in Rome, Italy in 1905. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone SDB, Secretary of State and Papal Delegate for this ceremony read the Pontifical Decree that numbered Ceferino among the Blessed, indicating the date of his liturgical memorial, **26 August**, the date of his birth.

At the end of the celebration, Fr Pascual Chávez paid his respects to the Mapuche people saying: "Today, Chimpay represents a land of saints because it has given us a Saint and a model for all the young people of the world. Many thanks to the Mapuche people!"