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newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



Publication of the missions sector for SDB communities and friends of the salesian mission



Dear friends,

The Congregation of the **Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco** (V.S.D.B) is a diocesan Congregation founded in 1983 at Madonna Convent, Nongkseh, Upper Shillong Meghalaya, India, by late Mgr. Hubert D’Rosario SDB, DD, the then Archbishop of Shillong-Guwahati.

The Motto of the Congregation is **“Go, Disciple”** (Mt 28:19). The main purpose for which the Congregation was founded is to reach out to the poor and needy and to bring the message of love to all, particularly the youth in rural and neglected urban areas.

I believe it is very important to look into our own charism and mission from time to time and evaluate ourselves on how we live rather than what we do to be relevant in carrying out God’s mission. It is a grace for SF members to have received this **passion for pastoral care**.

May we continue to be radical like our model mother Mary in the service of the Lord!

■ Mabel Dhar, VSDB
Superior General

Incarnated for our Salvation!

The Creed we recite every Sunday resounds in a special way as we approach Christmas: “For us and for our salvation he ... was incarnate of the Virgin Mary”. Salvation is neither about improving oneself, nor full self-realisation, nor wellness, nor economic well-being nor peaceful coexistence among peoples. Salvation is **complete union with the Blessed Trinity** which has a name and a face: Jesus Christ. As the “one mediator between God and humanity” (1Tm 2:5-6), Jesus is The Way who fully restores our friendship with God. But it does not end there. Salvation is a living relationship with God which is born in faith, expressed concretely in Baptism, founded on grace, sustained by hope, and which develops throughout our lives by acts of charity and bears fruit in glory.

Our salvation **is always God’s initiative**. We do not earn or deserve it. God acts first and stirs our hearts to respond to him, but we have the freedom to accept or reject his invitation. The gift of salvation, like human friendship, involves making a series of choices to love, over the long term which requires our cooperation so that we can once again live and love as Jesus lived and loved. Jesus Christ, the sole mediator and way of salvation (Acts 4:12) is present in his body, the Church. Thus, the Church is a necessary means through which we receive salvation.

What about those to who have never heard of Jesus Christ nor the gospel, nor the Church? Whatever is good and true in cultures, peoples, science, technology and movements are ‘seeds of the Word’ (AG 11), reflections of **‘a ray of that Truth which enlightens all’** (NA 2). Thus, God in his love and mercy, makes his grace available to those who, through no fault of their own, have never had the opportunity to either know Jesus Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and strive in their daily life to do God’s will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience (LG 16).

The Holy Spirit offers them the possibility to be in touched with Christ’s Paschal Mystery **“in ways known to God”** (GS 22; AG 17) and be saved by the Saviour they don’t know, but who loves them just as much. Inversely, this does not relieve us of our mission to share the gospel with them. We who have received the gift of salvation make our own Jesus’ gaze, burning with love which embraces all his people to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (EG 1, 264, 268).

■ Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- Do I strive to grow daily in God’s friendship?
- How do I live our mission to share the gospel message?



"CHICOS DE LA CALLE": SALESIANS AND VOLUNTEERS AMONG STREET CHILDREN



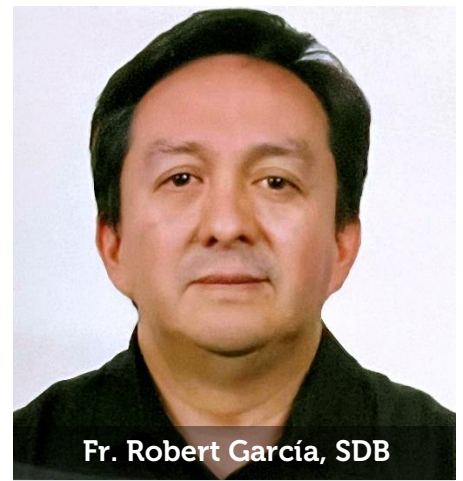
Dear Fr Robert, you are the director of the Salesian work in Esmeraldas where you work with street children. How do you help these young people to meet their needs?

Lack of access to basic education, health, food, human development and training triggers other types of problems such as dropping out of or falling behind in school, family breakdown, homelessness, child abuse and joining criminal gangs. Therefore, it is imperative that, as Salesians, we offer an adequate and quality response to this social reality. The Salesian Foundation 'Chicos de la Calle', in Esmeraldas, has been working with children and adolescents from marginalised neighbourhoods for over 27 years. We have two reference centres as daily oratories, where we reach out to 400 children.

The Salesian community and foundation have taken it as their institutional policy to offer an alternative and quality educational service in the face of the great unmet need and demand for education. Thank be to God, we have the financial support of the Province and its institutions, which covers the largest percentage of the budget, a small part from local governments and another small part from foreign funding. Within this institutional framework, we develop all our educational action through the methodology of Don Bosco's Preventive System.

Ecuador is known for its work with volunteers. To what extent are volunteers involved in working with disadvantaged young people in your province?

The contribution of volunteers (national and international) enables us to achieve the pastoral objectives of the foundation. They are young people who strive to give something more to others and to the Lord; they are young people who want to live their vocation of service intensely through voluntary work. Every year, four young people come to live in the community to work alongside the Salesians and lay collaborators for this vulnerable population. Don Bosco's dream becomes reality in Esmeraldas through the Salesians who, together with educators and volunteers, work for a world in conformity with God's will. The Salesian Project's educational proposal in this city is a moving testimony to the transformative capacity of education and faith. In a world full of challenges and exclusion, the dedication and love of our patron continue to inspire and remind us that every child and adolescent deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential and build a future full of hope and opportunity.



Fr. Robert García, SDB

He has held numerous roles in the Province of Ecuador (ECU), such as Vocation Animator, **PDMA** and in-charge of Voluntary work, Delegate for Youth Pastoral and **Vice Provincial**. He is currently Provincial Councillor and Director of the Salesian Street Children **Project in Esmeraldas**.



Highlights on disability

Source: World Health Organization, March

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- An estimated **1.3 billion** people suffer from significant disabilities. This represents **16%** of the world's population, or **1 in 6** people.
- Some people with disabilities die up to **20 years** earlier than those without disabilities.
- People with disabilities often suffer violence and prejudice, and encounter obstacles in accessing health care. For example, people with disabilities find transport **15 times more difficult** and inaccessible than people without disabilities.



**DECEMBER
SALESIAN
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INTENTION**

For persons with disabilities

For FMA and SDB with disabilities in Ecuador

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

[Prayer intention of Pope Francis]

ECUADOR

