



This year our Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, in line with the Holy Father and the whole Church, aims to reflect on the theme of the family. "**We are Family**", is the statement that opens the Strenna 2017: *the family as a place of Life, the family as a school of Life and Love*.

#### MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

A short while ago, Pope Francis wrote a message to all the young people of the world in which he said: "I do not fear.... A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change, and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit, who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master." Hence, my invitation is a call to us adults to stand beside them, believe in them, trust in them, and pray for them – for those whose faith is alive, as well as for those who are seeking or simply feel lost. God never abandons any of his sons or daughters.

Be happy! *Father Angel, Rector Major*

#### DAMASCUS – SYRIA

To our Canadian Benefactors, thank you for your donations. The Salesians of Don Bosco in Syria have been able to successfully organize and carry out an incredible number of support and

recreational therapy activities for over 1000 kids who attend the youth Centre of Damascus daily. We are so grateful for your help!



#### LIBREVILLE - GABON

Thank you for the help given to our pastoral service at Libreville. It beholds me to tell you how much your help has brought joy to the hearts of



the people we serve. Thank you again for your trust and your support. May all our benefactors be assured of our prayers. In the community's name, may God bless you.

*Father Roland Mintsu, SDB Superior and Parish Pastor*

## KOLKATA – INDIA

Father Mathew George Kariapuram, SDB expresses that the community of Bagar in Kolkata – India, is very appreciative of the help and support given to them through the Don Bosco Mission Office in Canada. “For the past two and a



half years, I have been reaching out to the people of Bagar who make a living by scavenging on the garbage dumped by the municipal corporation.

With the donations we received, I have been able to

cover the Nutritional expenses of 150 babies and their mothers as well as carry out renovations of 20 community toilets in the slum. I was also able to cover medical and hospital expenses for a few sick people and for providing 29 sewing machines to the second batch of young women who completed their training. I take this opportunity to thank you very much for all the help and support given to me. I acknowledge with gratitude the role played by the Canadian Don Bosco Mission Office in this humble apostolate at the service of God and to His poor.

## GHANA - WEST AFRICA



*Singing group - Don Bosco Youth Centre Matadi - Monrovia*

The Don Bosco Mission Office, Canada was able to support the ongoing needs of the Sean Devereux Don Bosco Youth because of your generosity. The

Centre was founded in 1991 to cater to former child soldiers (who were victims of the war) and other young people in the capital city of Liberia, Monrovia. The activities at the Youth Centre were intended to help the children recover from the effects of the war and to rehabilitate them into society.

The Youth Centre is situated among some of the poorest residents of Monrovia, as most of its inhabitants are petty traders while many others are jobless. Unemployment and illiteracy are endemic. Most of the youth from Matadi come from families that can only afford a single meal a day. There is poor and inadequate housing system. Most of the rooms are crowded, with parents sharing a room with their children, and children sharing rooms with many other children. There is no electricity supply in Matadi. During the night people live in darkness as many cannot afford a generator. The family ties of some of these youth are weak, fragile, and almost non-existent. All this leaves the young people confused, hopeless and disillusioned about life. The Sean Devereaux Don Bosco Youth Centre is where many of them call home. The Centre receives over five hundred youth daily. These youth come to the Centre for their educative and recreational activities and for counseling. Here they acquire many skills. Thank you to our benefactors for making this possible.

## MONGOLIA - REBUILDING AFTER FIRE -



Sr. Choi Sookyong Teresa, FMA is forever grateful for the help she has received in helping rebuild her little house in Darkhan. Unfortunately the Convent burnt down caused by a leakage of

electricity. The fire started around 4:30 AM while 3 sisters were still asleep. With the help of policemen, the three sisters were able to escape safely but suffered from the side effects of trauma. "Our house structure was not fully burnt, but the inside of the house was unusable. The severe damages were in the kitchen, and small parlour where we had some activities for the youth. Our kitchen was multipurpose. We used it as a kitchen, dining hall and community room. Everything here was totally gone. Due to the fire, our FMA community in Darkhan was dissolved. The damage caused by the fire was serious and we were very much encouraged by your fraternal solidarity in helping us rebuild our Convent".

### ETHIOPIA



This year the Youth Centre in collaboration with Fr. Tino Dusi, SDB, the instructors of the college and their students carried out a program that was proposed by our church leaders on "Human Trafficking". It was important to illustrate the serious danger of "Human Trafficking" which for many ends in abuse, exploitation and even death. Animators of the Youth Centre helped spread leaflets amongst the people of Macalle and in other neighboring schools.

### TIJUANA – MEXICO "INSPIRATIONAL STORIES"

The following articles written by Fr. Michael Pace, SDB who was the Pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Etobicoke, Ontario and was currently in Tijuana as a Missionary Priest. These are very interesting reflections that are worth sharing:

***Struggle to get the kids to Mass on Sunday?***  
*Today I watched as a mom brought her special*

*needs child to Our Lady of Guadalupe church for the feast of Don Bosco. They started from the little blue house at the bottom of the hill. They climbed all the way to the top. Where she could, mom pushed her adolescent son in the wheelchair. Where she couldn't, she lifted him out of the chair and accompanied him up the steep, uneven path. He rested against the railing while mom went back to fetch the chair before tackling the next stretch. Most of which is steps. The ramp, where it exists, is the retaining wall of the draining ditch. The boy wanted to keep walking, as he could, before getting into the chair for the last stretch up. I greeted them. The boy walked by me oblivious. His mom called him back to shake my hand and return my greeting. Then he got in the chair and mom pushed him up the last stretch. The whole trek took nearly 30 minutes. When I offered to help, mom graciously declined. She said her son is used to only her and carrying the chair is her exercise. What an inspiration!*

*Desayunador Salesiano. One Centre, many services. In addition to meals, a clean bed, and showers, the Desayunador offers medical care,*



*friendship, psychological counselling, sewing lessons, haircuts, laundry, computer lessons, recreation, clothing, an immigration office right next door, and yes, pastoral care. In as much as possible, it is Don Bosco's oratory: a home, school, church and playground.*

*Outside the Desayunador Salesiano, new Haitians keep arriving daily. Inside, the routine is familiar but not necessarily easier. Men, and even a few children, sleep outside because all our indoor accommodations are full. It is safer and warmer*

*outside in our yard than in the streets, and of course it's free. Inside, our various services are offered to Mexican and Haitian migrants alike. The ladies spend patient, prolonged periods of time doing each other's hair and tending to the children. There are lots of medical concerns - skin infections, late term pregnancy issues, fever... Through it all the mood is generally positive and cheerful. Thank you for all your help! Fr. Michael Pace, SDB*

### REBUILDING PHASE IN HAITI



The emergency phase of recovery from Hurricane Matthew, which struck Haiti in October 2016, is over. Although the context is very difficult, it is the time to start rebuilding. According to official data, the hurricane caused 548 deaths, 438 injured, and 128 missing. In addition, there were landslides and floods, damage to bridges, roads, and buildings, water access problems, and damage to electricity services. Here are some statistics: •2.1 million people were affected, of whom 894,000 were children. •Approximately 141,000 displaced people are living in hundreds of temporary structures. •69% of the population of the South and Grand'Anse department have inadequate food supplies. •About 800,000 people need food assistance. •In the South department, 90% of homes were destroyed or severely damaged. (ANS - Port-au-Prince, Haiti – February 20) Don Bosco Mission Office wishes to thank all Benefactors for their very generous donations that we received for our Campaign for Haiti.

### AN UPDATE ON FR. TOM

We ask for your continued prayers for the safe release of Fr. Tom who was kidnapped in Yemen of March 4, 2016. The All India Catholic Union (AICU), the largest lay Catholic organization in India, is calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi



to use his influence and that of his government to negotiate with the countries of the Middle East to free Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil, Meanwhile, in Kochi, even 60 tiny tots dressed as the Infant Jesus have written to Mr. Modi and sought his intervention for a prompt release of Fr. Tom. The children of Kochi, four to five years old, belong to Sacred Heart church at Kumbalangi near Kochi. They handed over letters handwritten in Hindi, English, or Malayalam to their local member of Parliament, who was present at the function. The children were helped by their parents and parish priests in writing the letters, Church sources said. The M.P. said he would deliver the letters to the prime minister as soon as possible. "We ask for your personal intervention and assistance to ensure that he will return home as soon as possible and in complete safety. We hope and pray that you will support us." The lay association recognizes that "the surroundings are much more complex than other cases of kidnapping of Indians in Afghanistan. According to Catholics, "given the difficult situation in the region, we believe that the government of India, with its enormous capacity of influence and good relations in many Middle Eastern countries, is best placed to ensure effective intervention for the release of Fr. Tom from his captivity." In conclusion, Mr. Da Cunha says, "We call ... upon the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to take all necessary measures to ensure [Fr. Tom's] safety and freedom." (ANS – New Delhi - February 14) Sources: Manorama Online, AsiaNews

*Our team wishes to thank you for making a vital difference in the lives of those in need around the globe!*

### Father Luc P. Lantagne, SDB

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