

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

Vol 22-2019#4

Dear Co-missioners,

The La Salette Congregation accepted the invitation of the Bishop of Bukoba Catholic Diocese of Tanzania to start the La Salette presence in Tanzania. Thus the first La Salette mission was established on July 16, 2016 with the arrival of the first three missionaries, Fr. Manuel dela Cruz, MS, Fr. Dileesh Porianvelil, MS and Fr. Aldrin Cenizal, MS. The decision to open the mission in Tanzania was a response to the call of the Blessed Mother to “make her message of reconciliation, prayer, penance and zeal for the Word of God known to all God’s people”.

The mission in Tanzania is the fourth country on the African continent where the missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette are present. The other countries are Angola, Namibia and Madagascar. The latest addition of our mission in Mozambique makes the fifth country on the African continent. The parish is known as Our Lady of La Salette parish with two far-flung mission stations. At present, the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette is the only religious congregation administering a parish in the diocese of Bukoba and the missionaries are challenged to strengthen Marian spirituality in the evangelization of the people they are entrusted with. Fr. Manny dela Cruz, MS has sent me an update on the newly established parish and mission after three years of its foundation. Kudos to our pioneer missionaries.



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Too Young to Die...

I will never forget the day I have to bury a primary school student in one of the poor villages of Rutete Parish. She is one of those deceased who have gone ahead of us due to poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, abuse and negligence from those who are supposed to help them. Others died of AIDS, malaria, alcoholism, malnutrition and the like. I hope and pray that the rest of us in the parish will live longer and enjoy the fullness of life (John 10:10). The fact is: whatever happens to our parishioners affect us!



Fr. Manny

Rutete Parish is one of the 39 parishes in the Bukoba Diocese, Tanzania in East Africa. The parish is administered by three religious priests of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. Fr. Dileesh (36 years old from India), Fr. Aldrin (39 years old from the Philippines), and myself (62 years old from the Philippines) started serving our mission on September 17, 2016. The parish is small and poor but the people are very supportive and generous. At present, it is mainly supported by generous donors outside Africa.

Like any other Church's missions, life in the parish is tough and challenging. The people are poor farmers. They mainly depend on rain to cultivate their crops. The year we arrived, there was no rain for at least three months. The parishioners had to fetch water for themselves and for us from a spring. I experienced taking a bath using three liters of water and recycle it to flush the toilet. Last year we put up bore well (deep well) but the supply of electricity is on and off. Four months ago, we experienced brown-out for



three weeks. If there is no supply of water and electricity, our farmers will continue to suffer from poor harvest and depression. There is a small clinic in the district but not adequately provided with the needed facilities.



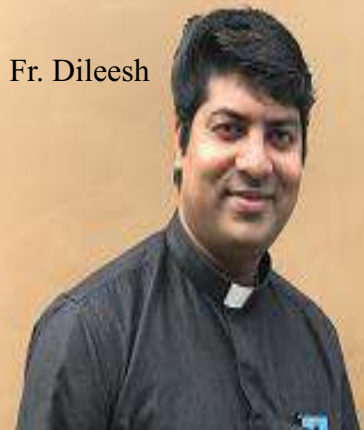
Malaria is common. My mosquito net is never folded unless it needs cleaning. Fr. Dileesh and Fr. Aldrin had to be hospitalized due to malaria-related disease. I thank God for protecting me but I have to take extra care of myself.

Most of the children do not receive proper care and assistance.

Some of them die prematurely. Twins were baptized immediately after birth for fear that they may die sooner. Breastfeeding is common but some mothers lack proper diet and hygiene. Some children are left to themselves because mothers used to cultivate the farm. Many times, as we make our regular village visitations, I saw toddlers crawling in the dirt, eating bananas mired in mud!

We continue to journey with our people. We are almost done replacing the roof of the old church in order to provide space for prayer and worship to God. We say Masses in the villages regularly, at least once a month. Most of the time, we had to walk to reach far-flung villages. Road are too narrow or muddy for vehicles to pass. Spiritual help is extended but bodily needs must not be neglected. We got exhausted but recharged by the love and smiles and warm hospitality of the villagers. Some cannot go to church, especially the elderly and the sick. Needless to say, we find joy bringing the Sacraments and the word of God to them (Joy of the Gospel). We cannot do it alone. We profusely thank those who continue to support us. We are still filled with passion and love for the mission, our mission because of the unconditional support we had received. We desire to make a difference in the life of our less fortunate brothers and sisters in Africa especially the children... one of them might become a good leader of Africa, if he/she does not die young! Actually one of them said: "I want to become a Pope!"

Fr. Dileesh





Fr. Aldrin

As of now we are receiving inquiries about the opening of seminary/formation for candidates who wanted to join the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette although we have not made any announcement yet. The community is still in the discernment process and planning on the possibility of starting recruitment of candidates from Tanzania. The Bishops, clergy, and religious of the diocese are excited for the possibility of opening a formation for our candidates. They expressed their willingness to support and help us once we are ready. The news about the new mission here in Tanzania had reached many ears through different media. Probably the Blessed Mother had prepared the way to spread her message to the people in this part of Africa. We continue to rely on the help of God and generous people like you. On behalf of Fr. Dileesh and Fr. Aldrin, thank you very much.



Fr. Manuel dela Cruz, MS
Local Superior and Pastor



You could continue your support of our Missions by including them in your will.
Should you wish to do so, our legal title is:
North American La Salette Mission Center, Inc.