

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

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Dear Co-missioners,

As we make our way from Lent to Easter I would like to offer you some encouraging words from Pope Francis from his homily delivered on Easter of 2014. He said, "Our daily problems and worries can wrap us up in ourselves, in sadness and bitterness. Let the risen Lord enter into your life. Welcome him as a friend, with trust. He is life. If up until now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk. You will not be disappointed. If following him seems difficult, don't be afraid of. Be confident he is close to you. He is with you and will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do." Blessings for a Happy Easter to all of you.

Very Rev. Fr. Skip Negley, MS, Provincial Superior of the North American La Salette Province made an official visit to Argentina where our missionaries serve. I am grateful to Fr. Skip for sharing his beautiful experiences with us through this issue of our newsletter.

Good news!!! The Mission Center has a website that had been inactive for the past several years. That prompted me to initiate creating a new one, which we have recently launched. Please check out our new website. www.lsmc.org. Many thanks to Mr. Albert Cipolla of Friendswood, Texas, who has immensely helped in designing it.



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The parish centers of the Region of Argentina may be just names on the pages of the Province Directory but each has a unique quality and history. **Las Termas** is a beehive of pastoral ministry, catechesis, small base communities and a growing Catholic school apostolate, Primary and Secondary. The parish, named in honor of Our Lady of La Salette, extends throughout the campo into more than forty small capillas, or mission chapels, each with its own pastoral leadership team. Las Termas boasts of a faithful group of active laity known as the “La Salette Family.” This apostolate is served by Fr. Alfredo Velarde (Regional Vicar) and Fr. Fernando Altamiranda (Regional Councillor). Recently, at a small out-of-the-way public school, seven baptisms of infants and toddlers were celebrated in the presence of their family, teachers and students. Classes were interrupted so that the entire community could share in this sacramental moment and liturgy.

Fr. Alfredo Velarde & Fr. Fernando Altamiranda



Fr. Jose P.



La Banda is a separate parish well over a two-hour drive from Las Termas, in the Province of Santiago del Estero. “Fr. Jose P.” (Joseph Peethuruthel from La Salette Matha Province) is pastor, serving with Fr. Jose Daniel Centeno, pastoral colleague and Regional Vocation Director. Fr. Jose is now in the fourth year of his “on-loan” assignment from India and speaks excellent (and enviable) Spanish. This parish apostolate provides a very active

Caritas ministry, a ramshackle building with a series of small rooms to offer catechesis, to teach sewing, cooking and hair-cutting, etc., to host a soup kitchen and, most of all, to provide a small medical clinic for the barrio's inhabitants. La Banda serves some of the poorest members of the surrounding communities in tiny isolated capillas, with the simplest of liturgical furnishings and possessions. The homes are all too often wooden planks or cardboard walls and corrugated walls. Yet in meeting some of the local community leaders the pride and care of their mission chapels are truly humbling.

In the small city of **Santa Fe** at a parish entitled Our Lady of La Salette the Catholic community celebrated their 75th Anniversary of the parish with a lively Sunday liturgy and joyous afternoon almuerzo banquet. Fr. Marcelo Palacios is the pastor of this historic parish, living in community with Bro. Adrian Fernandez. These confreres serve one of the original La Salette foundations in Argentina, dating from 1939 when three La Salette Missionaries arrived from Poland to care for the many Polish immigrants.



Fr. Marcelo Palacios (left) & Fr. Robert Butler

The afternoon Anniversary Dinner offered proud speeches and toasts along with an excellent audio-video presentation of the historic arrival and the growth of this missionary apostolate in Argentina. Fr. Marcelo and Bro. Adrian could not have been more hospitable. Their many parish ministries include an active youth outreach, long-standing devotion to Our Lady of La Salette, programs in faith formation and catechesis, work with the poor, and special liturgies and charismatic healing services for the elderly and infirm.

Cordoba, according to a local guide, is the second largest city in Argentina with nearly three million inhabitants. The Regional House and the local parish of Our Lady of La Salette are situated in the Barrio Jofre Norte section of the city. The La Salette Formation Residence is a short drive from this neighborhood on the opposite side of this growing city and industrial center. Very near the city limits lies an expansive range of small mountains and hills. The campo region is abundant with agriculture and small farms, dating back to the influx of Italian immigrants from the 19th century. The Regional House is a well-constructed home located on a large and secure property which contains a soccer field and baseball field for many local sports enthusiasts in this barrio. The Casa Regional is a very welcoming religious community with guest house served by our confreres, Fr. Roberto (Bob) Butler, the Regional Superior, and Bro. Cruz Tejerina, a gifted gardener and popular local charismatic priest. Along the boundaries of this parish are many mission capillas (chapels) where Mass is celebrated on a rotating schedule. In most of the parish apostolates within our Region the numerous capillas offer the only opportunity for the parishioners to receive the Eucharist and share in the pastoral services and faith-life of Catholicism. This weekly ministry demands a great deal of time but the gifts of service and sacrifice on the part of our La Salette Missionaries are provided with unselfish generosity. The results are evident in the hearts, the faces and the growing faith-life of so many local parishioners.

In the words of His Holiness, +Blessed Paul VI in his historic encyclical POPULORUM PROGRESSIO

“True to the teaching and example of her divine Founder, who cited the preaching of the Gospel to the poor as a sign of His mission, the Church has never failed to foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings faith in Christ. . . .

. . . her missionaries have also promoted construction of hospitals, sanitariums, schools and universities. . . . Yet for all this, they did protect and promote indigenous institutions; and many of them pioneered in promoting the country’s material and cultural progress.

So We deem it fitting to praise those oft forgotten pioneers who were motivated by love for Christ, just as We honor their imitators and successors who today continue to put themselves at the generous and unselfish service of those to whom they preach the Gospel.”



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.