

EDITORIAL

# La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

Vol 18-2015# 2

*Dear Co-missioners,*

The Madagascar Province is animated and governed by a Provincial Superior assisted by his council. Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS, a member of that Province was recently recognized and was awarded with a medal of honor by the President of Madagascar for his outstanding service to the people in the Diocese of Morondava. Congratulations Fr. Jeremy!

The Argentina/Bolivia Region is animated and governed by a regional superior and his council, established by the North American Province as its region. Recently, the Region celebrated 50 years of service by the La Salette missionaries in the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Las Termas de Rio Hondo. Half a century of labor and pastoral work especially by the first three priests were fondly remembered and recognized. Fr. Robert Butler, MS, the Regional Superior sends us news of the celebration. What a great milestone!!!

The Myanmar District is established under a district superior and is directly under the Superior General and his council in Rome. The dream of a district is gradually to become a region and then a province someday. Fr. Philip Naw Aung, MS, the district superior wishes to share with us news about the latest ordination to priesthood in Myanmar.



**NORTH AMERICAN  
LA SALETTE  
MISSION CENTER**

4650 South Broadway  
Saint Louis, MO 63111-1398  
(314) 352-0064  
Fax (314) 352-3737  
e-mail: [lsmc2@charter.net](mailto:lsmc2@charter.net)  
Web site: [www.lsmc.org](http://www.lsmc.org)

# Province of Madagascar

Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS, has been working on the island of Madagascar for twenty-eight years. Twenty three of these years have been spent working in the remote areas Ankavandra, Antsalova and Ambatolahy in the Diocese of Morondava. He is currently serving in the Cathedral of Morondava as Cure (pastor). The cathedral is named Mary Queen after the former La Salette Province in the United States. The Bishop has asked Fr. Jeremy to open a new mission in Kimony, a fishing village 10 km from Morondava on the Mozambique Channel. Here, to make a living for their families, the fisherman go out on the Mozambique Channel in dug-out canoes to net fish. The majority of the villagers are still non-Christian, holding on to their ancestral customs. However they are open to evangelization. The village has many children who are learning their prayers and are now being catechized. Services are held every Sunday, with out exception. In the past Pentecostal groups have come to the village but didn't establish a permanent presence. The villagers, especially the children, are so happy every Sunday when, under a Kily tree, the tarp is spread where they sit and the altar table is prepared. The singing is beautiful and incredible to hear. Different organizations from the Cathedral take turns going with Fr. Jeremy to help with animation and catechizing. When they see Fr. Jeremy the children cry out "mompernay". Translated this means "he is our priest". Fr. Jeremy says "Opening this new post has brought much joy to my heart. I had been a *bush* priest for twenty-three years and now I am able to return to open a new bush church, a cathedral chapel mission, near Morondava. Here we are in the process of evangelization; of bringing the good news to those who do not know about Christ like St. Paul did in the Acts of the Apostles".



"We are still praying under the Kily tree in Kimony. However the village has given us a piece of land and it is our plan to build a small mission chapel. I would like to begin construction in August in the dry season because when the rain begins it is hard to get construction supplies to the village. The Bishop has asked that during the week the chapel be used as a school for the children, on Saturday for catechism and on Sunday for Mass. The approximate cost is \$7,000. Our thanks to the generous gift offered by a wonderful benefactor and friend. Since our people are simple fishermen struggling to feed and educate their children there is not much left for building. So I need to ask others, willing to make sacrifices, to help make this mission chapel under the

patronage of St. Reginald a reality". May the Lord bless you Fr. Jeremy as you continue to pray for and support the missionary endeavors of the Church in third world countries."

# Region of Argentina

Father Robert Butler, MS, Regional Superior of the Missionaries of La Salette, spoke before hundreds who had come to the Parish of Perpetual Help to honor the priests who have faithfully and fruitfully served during this period. He said: “Fifty years are not so many but are not so few. They are the years that we, the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette, have given to human and spiritual growth as we fulfill our mission starting from the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Las Termas de Rio Hondo” he pointed out.

He continued: “We have been able to build on the work of others like Father Bringas. Concretely we have contributed with our charism of reconciliation, always eliciting the participation and solidarity of the laity, who responded generously. This work in favor of the whole person is seen particularly with the Saint



Louis Gonzaga Athletic Club, the Basket Festival, and the Parish Secretariat for Human Rights and Social Ministries.” “We want to remember in a special way the first three Missionaries of La Salette who came to La Termas: Fathers John Bradford, Stephen Krisanda and James Weeks. They were young but already had pastoral experience and they dedicated themselves in the countryside as much as in the city.”

“All of them came to be loved very much by the people and the missionaries came to love them and devote themselves entirely to those to whom they had been sent, especially to the poorest. After them came many

After them came many Missionaries of La Salette with the same spirit of service and love for the people and they made their contribution.”

“Hopefully, we can continue indefinitely with this work of love. Pray for vocations to the Religious Life and Priestly Life. Encourage the youth who might be interested in discovering if God is calling them to this life and, why not, as Missionaries of La Salette.”

# District of Myanmar

In 1937 five American La Salette Missionaries went to Myanmar, then known as Burma. Their efforts in spreading God's Word and love were very successful and contributed to the establishment of the Diocese of Prome. But in 1976 missionary efforts in Myanmar had become so restricted that foreign missionaries had to leave the country and the future of La Salette Missionaries in Myanmar was uncertain.

Through the efforts of the only La Salette Myanmar priest, Fr. Bernard Taylor, MS, young candidates in Myanmar became interested in becoming La Salette Missionaries and began their formation in the province of Mary, Mother of Hope in the Philippines and were ordained in 2004. In 2005 five La Salette Missionaries returned to Myanmar from the Philippines to reestablish the La Salette mission

These Myanmar Missionaries were accepted in the Archdiocese of Mandalay and entrusted to care for the Shrine of Our Lady of the Holy

Chanthagone and four other small mission parishes nearby. This year marks ten years of renewed La Salette presence in Myanmar and is made special with the ordination of Fr. Nicholas Zaw Moe Aung, MS, on April 22 by Archbishop Nicholas Mamg Htang, DD. Fr. Nicholas' ordination brings to thirteen the number of



La Salette priests here.



Fr. Nicholas, MS, was one of six candidates recruited from the Diocese of Prome. He began his formation in the Philippines and continued his theology studies in Yangon Major Seminary in Myanmar. He is the first to complete formation in Myanmar.

The District of Myanmar has been blessed

with vocations. This year there is one third-year theology student and five first-year theology students. In total there are thirteen seminarians in different levels of formation. It is hoped that in the near future there will be more ordinations to continue to serving the needs of the people in the mission of the Church in Myanmar.



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