

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

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Dear Co-missioners,

Eugene O'Neill, a famous American playwright once wrote, "Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is the glue." Isn't that what Christmas is all about? We are all broken people and Jesus came to earth to glue us back together again.

A child was born in the poverty of Bethlehem. But that child wrapped in swaddling clothes and held in the embrace of his loving mother, is the Most High God, the Word became Flesh, our flesh. This is the mystery celebrated on that Holy Night, the Silent Night when God became one of us, so that we can be with him and become like him. He touched the hearts and transformed the lives of sinners. He cured the lame and the lepers. Finally he gave up his life for the people who also hated him. After three years of witness to the love of the Father, while hanging on the cross, he revealed to the world that truly he is the Son of God and the Light of the world. No one can deny the brokenness in all of us. Yet we are not bad people. All we need is a little bit of the glue of God's love. Let us continue to light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love and become Christ-like to all.

May I wish God's blessings for every family and those that support and sustain our missions throughout the world, for a blessed Christmas and for a grace-filled Year 2017.



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Fr. Philip

In 1937 five La Salette missionaries from the United States went to south-western Myanmar (Burma) to establish a mission. In 1976 the military regime enforced restrictions on foreign missionaries and the La Salette missionaries had to leave the country. In 2005 five native Myanmar La Salette missionaries who studied in the Philippines went back to Myanmar to reestablish our mission. Once again the La Salette mission began to grow.

In 2012, seventy-five years after the first arrival of the La Salette missionaries in the country, locally trained La Salette brothers made their first profession. Currently there are six La Salette brothers studying theology at the Major Seminary in Yangon. Hopefully the future will bring ordinations to the priesthood in Myanmar. A newly constructed novitiate house is home to five novices. The year 2017 will mark the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the first La Salette missionaries as well as twelve years of reestablishment of the mission in Myanmar. It is hoped that this occasion will be celebrated with the profession of the five novices. The La Salettes in Myanmar would then increase to twenty-four; thirteen priests and eleven temporarily professed brothers. With this increase hope is given to expanding the La Salette presence in Myanmar.



The only theology seminary in Myanmar is located in Yangon and it is overcrowded. Seminarians from religious congregations live at their own formation houses though they are welcomed in the seminary for their studies. By May 2017 there will be eight La Salette seminarians in the house. Rent in Yangon is very expensive. Most of the houses are designed for family use and it is a challenge to make room for prayer, study, and recreation. Another challenge is the need to look for a different house every year due to yearly contracts made and increase in rent. Yangon is one of the most expensive places in Asia, if not worldwide, to purchase property. It is not affordable to purchase a house near the seminary. Buying a house on the outskirts of the city accessible by car to the seminary is still a financial challenge.

Bishop Alexander invited the La Salette missionaries to establish a La Salette shrine in the Diocese of Prome. This is one of the few dioceses that does not have a Marian shrine and it is where the first American La Salette missionaries began their mission. Land has been acquired and now the challenge is to be able to build a residence and begin work to establish the shrine in order to make Mary's message of reconciliation known to all the world. (By Philip Naw Aung, MS, Myanmar District Superior)



Novices from left to right: 1. Raymond, 2. Raphael, 3. Bernard, 4. Gernal and 5. Mario Oscar.

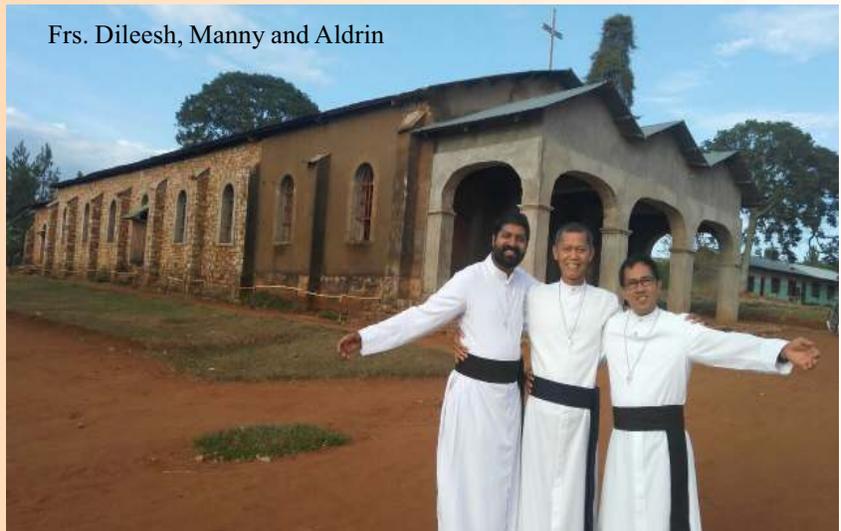


Fr. Silvano

TANZANIA: A NEW LA SALETTE MISSION IS BORN!

On July 17, 2016, the Superior General of the La Salette Missionaries Very Rev. Fr. Silvano Marisa, MS and the La Salette Vicar General, Fr. Adilson Schio, MS along with the Ordinary of the Diocese of Bukoba, Tanzania, the Auxiliary Bishop of Bukoba and three La Salette priests were welcomed by a dozen diocesan priests and three thousand enthusiastic faithful for Mass marking the beginning of a La Salette presence in Bukoba, Tanzania.

To escape the scorching sun they gathered under temporary tents in front of the covered outdoor altar constructed for the occasion. During the Mass, which lasted about four and a half hours, 197 children were baptized by the missionaries and twelve couples celebrated their wedding. At the end of the celebration the Bishop blessed and enthroned a statue of Our Lady of La Salette and announced that this new parish will be under the patronage of Our Lady of La Salette. The festivities continued with lunch followed by songs and dances typical of the region. Many gifts were given to our missionaries including seven small goats an dozen chickens, some rabbits and a gas stove. It was a joyous celebration in conjunction with the commemoration of the 170th anniversary of the Apparition at La Salette and the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis. The three La Salette priests who are pioneers in this new mission are Fr. Manuel dela Cruz, MS and Fr. Aldrin Cenizal , MS from the Phillipines and Fr Dileesh Poriamvelil, MS from India. Their new residence was constructed by the parishioners and is modest but welcoming. It has electricity but initially lacks running water. There is a common parlor and dining room and a small kitchen. Each priest has a private room and adjacent study. The Congregation of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette is grateful to these men who have responded to the call of the Superior General to establish this new La Salette presence in the Diocese of Bukoba. Fr. Silvano said, "They have the sacred task of announcing the Gospel of Jesus and making known Mary's message of reconciliation, hope and mercy."



Frs. Dileesh, Manny and Aldrin



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