



## Welcome Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS



NORTH AMERICAN  
**LaSalette**  
MISSION CENTER

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The La Salette Mission Center welcomes Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS as the new Executive Director as of August 22, 2023.



Fr. Jeremy was born in Stirling, Nova Scotia, Canada to French Acadian parents from the Province of New Brunswick. He is the fourth of six children. Growing up, he and all his brothers were altar servers and the missionary priests made a deep

impression on his life. He joined the La Salette Missionaries and completed his theological studies at St. Francis School of Pastoral Ministry in Milwaukee, Wisconsin where he received his Master of Divinity degree. On May 22, 1981 he was ordained to the priesthood at St. John Cathedral in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette.

Fr. Jeremy shares with us his calling as a foreign missionary and his acceptance of this special ministry:

“My name is Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS. I am a member of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. Throughout my seminary training to the ordination of priesthood I sensed a deep calling from God to serve as a missionary. After ordination I requested to go to the missions, however I was asked to serve as vocational director of my Province and treasurer of our local religious community for six years in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On October 1, 1987 I received my mission

cross and departed to serve as a missionary on the Island of Madagascar where I have been working for the past thirty six years.

Knowing the importance of the annual appeals to support our missionary endeavors, I used part of my vacation time to help out the Mission Center. I know from my own experience how much this ministry in the USA has helped and continue to help our missionaries in the various countries that we serve.

On August 22, 2023 I had begun my new journey as a missionary. Even though my mind and heart reside in my adoptive country (Madagascar), I have decided to accept the request of the Provincial of the Mary, Mother of the Americas to serve as Executive Director of the North American La Salette Mission Center here in St. Louis, Missouri.

I am grateful to Fr. Thomas for taking the time to help me learn the everyday functioning of the Mis-



sion Center. I want to thank all our benefactors for their continued support which makes it possible to sustain our pastoral efforts. The Lord will bless you generously for your sacrifices and generosity for those less fortunate in the mission lands.



# VISION & MISSION

Dear Co-missioners,

There is a saying "be patient with yourself". All things will work out for the best if we put our lives into God's hands. I believe that this saying is indispensable for all who serve as missionaries.

Mission life can be both joyful and difficult. On the one hand, there is the experience of joy in giving and receiving. On the other hand, we carry the cross of inconveniences and suffering. It is in accepting both that makes our missionary life fruitful in our service to God's people.

I have accepted the direction of the Provincial to be of service to the mission office. Even though I am very familiar with doing mission appeals over the many years, I still have much to learn. I need to be patient with myself, placing all in God's hands. I believe all will turn out for the best in our service to the mission.

I have lived in the same community with Bishop Donald Pelletier who has served over 60 years as a La Salette missionary in Madagascar. His unexpected death, it left an empty space in my heart.

I dedicate my first newsletter in his memory. I hope his life and dedicated service as a La Salette Missionary will inspire you to continue your journey as Co-missionaries.

With gratitude of your love and support,

*Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS.*



## A Living Memory of Hope



Donald L. Pelletier was born on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1931, ordained to the Priesthood on October 28<sup>th</sup> 1956, and consecrated as Bishop on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000. He served 66 years as a La Salette Missionary, the first priest to be sent to Madagascar from the newly formed Province of Mary Queen in St. Louis, MO. Father Donald left by ship for Madagascar during October of 1958, traveling through the Suez Canal and along the East African Coast, arriving in Morondava the month of December.

To be a successful missionary one must be able to speak the native language. By May of 1959, Father Donald was fluent enough to be handed the keys to the Jeep and told to go out into the "bush" (sparsely inhabited territory) for two weeks to visit ten Churches. Father Donald stated, "I had two young men to show me the way, and all fears and anxieties were dispelled when I experienced the warmth and joy of the receptions given me in various villages!" Missionaries experience that the bush (villages) of Madagascar does not offer the conveniences of home as we know it, "Oh yes, I had to deal with mosquitoes, rats, and dirt; I had to learn to shower with only a bucket of water; I had to exit early in the morning to find a remote area where I could squat and go to the bathroom. All this brought back memories of camping days. But the

*uniqueness I experienced was the great peace that came from being with the people and trying out my hesitant Malagasy. I guess all (missionaries) went through the same initiation. I was well equipped with a camp bed, a water filter, and a Mass kit. I felt I would soon convert the entire world!",* stated Bishop Donald L. Pelletier, MS. He was the first missionary to speak with the natives and as a result of his 66 years of service, many villagers are now Catholic.



Today the La Salette missionaries have built churches, schools, and medical stations throughout Madagascar to serve the People.

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Bishop Donald arrived at the La Salette Shrine in Enfield, NH and within a few hours a tragic and fatal car accident occurred as he was walking across a two lane road towards the Shrine. We lost our beloved Bishop of Madagascar.

As I think back about of our time together in Madagascar and reflect on his thoughts, it became crystal clear as to how we can honor him. While we were in Madagascar, whenever Bishop Donald encountered a child not in school he would

ask, "Why aren't you in school?" Very often, the reply would be, "Because there is no school for me to go to!"

With the love, support, generosity, and much effort given by so many... a school was built in his memory. One of Bishop's greatest assets was his ability to involve others. He had a wonderful way of talking naturally and from the heart that endeared him to everyone. Bishop Donald's kind and gentle demeanor came through in collaborative fund raising ideas and conversations. Bishop's spirit lives on. There were several bake sales held in the back of the chapel during Saturday night liturgies, a concert in the cafeteria, ceramic bowls being sold, and generous donations by Shrine supporters and family. The support given by so many is proof of how much he was loved.



Madagascar is ranked as the 5<sup>th</sup> poorest country in the world and when "school is in session", it is a big deal. Through the efforts and generosity of so many, the \$20,000 needed to build the school had been raised.

The cement building covered by a metal roof provides two classrooms, desks for the children and teacher, a chalk board spanning the entire length of the wall, books, and basic school supplies.

***Children of Andika sur Mer, a small fishing village located in the "bush" of Madagascar are now students.***



What a glorious ending to this "broken hearted mission story". In reality it is not an ending. It has turned into a glorious continuation of a missionary life well lived and loved by all.

The La Salette Mission Center supports over 20 mission countries and chose to bring light to the recent mission efforts in memory of Bishop Pelletier. To support the missions, mail in a donation to the La Salette Mission Center at 4650 S. Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63111 or visit [www.lsmc.org](http://www.lsmc.org) and click donate. If your gift is for the Donald L. Pelletier School, make a note on your donation.