

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

Vol 17-2014 #2

Dear Co-missioners,

Pope Francis issued the mission statement for his papacy outlining how the Catholic Church and the papacy itself must be reformed to create a more missionary and merciful church that seeks out the poor and oppressed. "Mission" he notes, "is key to ministry." A Church that does not go out of itself, sooner or later sickens from the stale air of closed rooms." Pope Francis went on to concede that at times, in going out the Church risks running into accidents. He added "I prefer a thousand times over a Church of accidents than a sick Church. " Pastoral ministry should always be missionary and the ministers must be courageous evangelizers not afraid to go out 'into the deep', the outskirts of existence, to bring the 'sweet and comforting joy' of faith to people today. *"I offer each step for some missionary thinking that somewhere far away one of them is worn out by apostolic labors and to lessen their fatigue I offer mine to God". St. Theresa of Lisieux.*

Missionaries of La Salette is an international religious Congregation that serves over 27 countries around the globe. It is my privilege to present to you our Provincial Superior, Very Rev. Skip Negley, MS and the experience of his first visit to India. Fr. Jeremy Morais, MS from Madagascar sent a note of gratitude which also I would like to share with you in this issue.



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Very Rev. Skip Negley, MS

The flights from Boston to Paris to Bangalore totaled nearly twenty hours, with a brief layover in the Paris airport. The first day I enjoyed the blessings of welcome and hospitality along with a few extra hours of rest before the annual Assembly of our La Salette Matha Province. The Assembly is hosted in January in their large community residence, Provincial Administration center and the Formation House. January is the nicest season with springtime temperatures. There is, however, an abundance of mosquitoes in the evenings.

I was asked to give a reflection and two conferences to open the Assembly. I would say that almost 90% of their members were present. Several priests remained in Australia and India and a few are studying in language programs in preparation for future ministry outside the Province — two for Germany and two for North America. The Assembly lasted another two and a half days with reports and dialogue concerning future ministries, growing formation programs, and their international role in our congregation. The group is composed of clergy and natural divisions are three: (1) the original Indian La Salettes who first went to the Philippines to begin their formation; (2) the group of priests who studied in both the Philippines and their initial formation programs in India; (3) a significant number of young and zealous priests whose entire formation experiences were in India. These younger religious confreres have an enthusiasm which gives a lively spirit to all their socials and discussions. One night we hosted their custom of celebrating a Christmas dinner and a very lively and humorous gift exchange. Their deep fraternity and communal solidarity is always evident, whether in Assembly, prayer and liturgy, meals or the competitive basketball games on their court property. The priests lost to the philosophy student seminarians again this year in a much anticipated game.

We would all be encouraged by the profound spirit of prayer and the beautiful manner in which our Indian Salette brothers celebrate the liturgy. Most, if not all of our Indian religious, are bi-ritual in the Latin Rite and the Syro-Malabar Rite. I came to understand that the former rite traces its origin to St. Francis Xavier

and the missionaries from Portugal while the latter rite is the earliest presence of Christianity in the State of Kerala and India, dating from 52 A.D. with the arrival of the Apostle, St. Thomas. Just yesterday we toured the site and the famous shrine where St. Thomas first arrived in Kerala from Jerusalem to begin the Christianization of this Hindu culture.

The La Salette community and seminarians in Bangalore and the Province members celebrate the Latin Mass each day during the Assembly but when in their home apostolates they celebrate the Syro-Malabar liturgy with the local Christians of Kerala. Along with Morning and Evening Prayer in common, we had a rosary each night with the seminarians and a Holy Hour during the mid-break of the Assembly .



The hospitality of our Indian confreres is exemplary as we find in so many of our communities and ministries throughout the world. For those who have visited the Indian Province of La Salette Matha this comes as no surprise. The Provincial, Fr Roy Parayil, and the members of his Council/Administration and the Assembly were most

welcoming and friendly. They took the time to inquire and learn more about our North American Province, its members, and our ministries and future. Many of those from India hold fond memories of their summers spent with us in Mission Appeals through the LSMC in St. Louis. They continue to ask about specific confreres and apostolates with which they have become familiar.

I had the privilege to visit the homes and families of several La Salettes in our ministries, including the those of Frs. Benny Thomas, Cyriac, and William, along with the home of the Provincial, Fr. Roy. I also had some time to tour many of the apostolates and religious communities of La Salette Matha Province, as well as the scenic/historic sites of Bangalore and Kerala.



Fr. Skip with Fr. Benny & Family

Much more could be shared in this communique but I wanted you to have a brief update and understanding of the blessings of our congregation and its rich presence, ministry and membership in the La Salette Matha Province. The Lord has blessed these missionaries of reconciliation and the Church of India, as they make known Mary's message of La Salette with zeal and hope.

MADAGASCAR

The Bishop of Morondava, Madagascar, Bishop Raharilamboniaina Marie Fabien has made Catholic education and schools a priority. He has opened many new schools and has begun to



University Buildings

build a Catholic University in Morondava that will help serve students who could not afford the cost of travel and education away from home. Studies have begun for paramedics to work in isolated regions, teachers for schools in the bush areas and training to develop for computer and office skills. Through the generosity of the Italian Conference of Catholic Bishops five buildings are completed and there are plans to add three more. La Salette Missionary, Fr. Jeremy Morais, Pastor of the Cathedral and Finance Administrator of the Diocese is overseeing the construction of this educational endeavor



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.