



PROVIDENCE LOVE IN ACTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE BANGALORE SALESIAN MISSION - 2024

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MESSAGE



Fr. Francis Joseph
Vattukulam SDB

Dear Friends,

In the early hours of 30th July, 2024, as the world slept, three small unsuspecting hamlets in the hillsides of Wayanad, Kerala state, India, witnessed a catastrophic event of a treacherous landslide caused by torrential rains. Chooralmala, Mundakkai and Attamala, the three villages faced the fury of the roaring waters and rocks that came crashing down smattering everything in its wake. The once thriving landscape was reduced to a valley of death and destruction. Nearly 500 people, countless animals, vegetation and property were buried or washed away.

The Staff and students of our Don Bosco College, Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad, sprang into action, providing aid and relief to the victims, bravely navigating treacherous terrain to reach the affected areas.

Working with the District authorities, the team offered psychological support to the traumatized victims by door-to-door counseling. A contingent of 92 students was deployed across 37 camps to manage camp activities and address immediate needs, while 10 students rendered their assistance in administrative works. Rehabilitation efforts consisted also in distributing kits to tribal families, to students, to widows and to sick people, customized according to their need.

While reading through the Gospel according to Luke 6:10, we come across a situation where Jesus asks a man who had a withered hand and He said to him: "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. I then felt that one way to "restore ourselves completely" is by stretching out our hands towards the needy and those in distress. Let us not be indifferent and cold. May we have a heart and hands that heed the cry of the poor, needy and in distress.

I wish you health, happiness and God's blessings.





RECTOR MAJOR OF THE SALESIANS MADE CARDINAL

On July 9th 2023 Pope Francis appointed Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, Don Bosco's 10th successor, a Cardinal. He is the 20th Cardinal from the Salesian Congregation. He is the first cleric made a Cardinal while heading a religious order. As we congratulate him, let us pray that his ministry be fruitful and effective.

YOURS ALONE, JESUS!

24th of May 2024 brought showers of blessing to our mission as we were blessed with 12 young men who professed, "Yours alone, Jesus," by committing themselves to give their lives to Jesus in the way of Don Bosco. After an intensive preparation lasting one year, they have resolved to say YES to Jesus. When many of their friends left from the seminary, they responded positively to the question of Jesus: "Do you also want to go away?" They have wholeheartedly answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6:68). As we pray for more vocations, let us pray for them that they may be firmly resolved in their commitment.



PERPETUAL PROFESSION



The Bangalore Mission was blessed this year with eight seminarians who made their Perpetual Profession in May 2024. These eight young men committed themselves to belong to the Lord Jesus totally and forever by professing the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. It was a reiteration of what St Paul said: "...nothing can separate me from the love of Christ" (Rom 8:38-39). Theirs was a definitive NO to the world and its attractions. They gave their FIAT like the Blessed Virgin Mary in the month of May dedicated to her. These young men can now confidently join in chorus with St John Paul II to say, "Totus Tuus." May they find themselves belonging totally to the Lord and His Mother.

NEW PRIESTS OF THE BANGALORE MISSION

When we plant anything, what brings us satisfaction is when it bears fruit. God blessed Don Bosco Missions Bangalore with eight New Priests this year. It is after about 15 years of training that these young men were ordained Priests. We thank the Lord for His bountiful mercy that we are blessed with so many vocations even at this time when the challenges are greater and the charms are less in following the Lord. It is also a time to thank the Lord for the many people who have sponsored their training period. May the Lord bless and reward you for your generosity. These Priests will be remembering you in their daily prayers in gratitude for your prayers and assistance.





ABHISURYA

As a child of 8 or 9 years Abhisurya ran away from his grandmother's house and ended up at the Majestic bus stand. He was rescued from the bus stand and brought to Yuvodaya in 2005. When he underwent counselling in Yuvodaya, he expressed his desire to study. He said that he was not able to go to school in his grandmother's house and was forced into child labour. Seeing his interest in studies he was admitted in BOSCO Mane where he did the bridge course and was later sent to BOSCO Vikas for formal education. After completing his SSLC he was sent to BOSCO Sumanahalli and enrolled for pre-university education. On completing PUC, he expressed his desire to take up a job and live independently. He worked for Dream A Dream NGO for a few days as a personality development trainer and later worked as a football coach in various places. Presently he works as a coach in BBSS Academy. Abhisurya got married one and a half years back and is now happily settled. He says that BOSCO is his home and that the fathers and the staff at BOSCO have shaped his life and made him what he is today. He also shared his plans of associating with BOSCO by coaching the youth, organizing exposure visits, and travelling to different places with the youth of the centre.



SONIA

Sonia is 23 years old and works currently as a beautician. She has no parents. She has two brothers – one is differently abled and Sonia does not know the whereabouts of her other brother. Rescued from the streets by a social worker, Sonia was initially placed in the Government Girls Home. After a few years, her uncle took over her custody and sent her to Hyderabad where she was put to work as a housemaid. Unable to bear the torture at work, she ran away from there. She was then referred to BOSCO Rainbow Home by CWC (Child Welfare Committee). Sonia completed her schooling from Rainbow Home and was transferred to BOSCO Vatsalya Bhavan for further studies. In Vatsalya Bhavan, she was enrolled for the Beautician course, and after completing the course, she was taken as an intern in one of the Lakme outlets. She now stays in a PG accommodation, and fends for herself with dignity. She says that she owes her new life to BOSCO, as she feels that it was the atmosphere, encouragement and love she found in BOSCO that transformed her life.



NEELA M.

Neela M., 23 years old, is an orphan. Although initially she had her mother doing odd jobs to make a living, she was spotted standing all alone on the road at night. She was rescued by a social worker and she was taken to the Government Girls Home where she did her schooling till class 9. She was later referred to BOSCO Rainbow Home by CWC, in July 2015. After completing her SSLC, she was placed in BOSCO Vatsalya Bhavan for higher studies. She was interested in studying commerce and was enrolled for B.Com. After completing her degree, she got a job with IDFC First Bank. Now she has learned to stand on her own feet and live life with courage and strength. She is grateful to BOSCO for the timely help she received and is always ready to help other children like her.

WAYANAD DISASTER & THE MISSIONS' RESPONSE



IMMEDIATE REHABILITATION SUPPORT

Following government guidelines and the request made to NGOs to provide immediate material help, the Salesian Missions Bangalore, extended their support, through BREADS* and the Don Bosco College, Sulthan Bathery, by distributing essential furniture items and household goods to those who were shifted to rented homes.

Psycho-social Support Activities Volunteering and

In partnership with the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP), Door to Door counselling was conducted by the Social Work Department and the BREADS team to promote a sense of calm. A Teachers Training Session, a children-centered programme, called *Kuttiyidam*, to comfort children, along with the Kerala Association of Professional Social Work (KAPS) and the District Child Protection (DCP) unit were organized. The District Authorities were assisted in Data Entry and Record Keeping. A Help Desk was also set up for coordination purposes and referral services.

*BREADS is the official NGO & Development Agency of the Bangalore Mission.



FUTURE PLANS FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE DISASTER

Disaster Preparedness: BREADS in collaboration with NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences), is planning to organise workshops by experts, on 'What to do when a calamity strikes' for better disaster preparedness.

Psychological support: Professionals are hired to carry out home counselling and a 'counselling centre' is set up at Don Bosco College.

Special assistance to Children: We are intending to support the affected children, with the help of generous people, by providing educational support, children-centered events, group activities and counselling.

Short and Long-term rehabilitation: We are currently focussing on specific needs for short-term rehabilitation especially for families which have not yet received aid from any quarters. The government has also requested NGO cooperation in long-term rehabilitation efforts, particularly in house construction. We are actively exploring the possibilities to raise resources to assist the government in this regard.

Celebration of Onam Festival: Onam, the Harvest Festival of Kerala, celebrated irrespective of religion, race or region, is a joyful celebration of ten days with singing, dancing and country sports. Houses are decorated with flowers and it culminates with a traditional sumptuous vegetarian meal (*sadya*) served on a banana leaf. A message of hope was relayed to the survivors on 11th September with the celebration of Onam festival.



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Please think of the Don Bosco Mission when you make your will!