

SALVATORIANS TODAY

Witnessing to
missionary life





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Society of the Divine Savior



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Edited by:

Milton Zonta, SDS

Published By:

Society of the Divine Saviour
Salvatorians, Carmelaram P.O.
Bangalore - 560 035
Karnataka, India

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Society of the Divine Saviour

Printed at:

Matha Prints, Bangalore
Ph: 080 - 2684 0026, 4131 0081
mathaprints@gmail.com

“Review the individual nations, countries,
and languages of the globe and see
how much there is to do for
the honor of God
and the salvation of people”
“Fly like an eagle around the globe
and proclaim the word of God”
(Fr Jordan – SD 1/63; 182)

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Introduction

► Missionaries in their own words!

It is with great joy that I present this small book with testimony of Salvatorian missionary life. The total giving of oneself to the missionary cause is an incalculable treasure in our Salvatorian history. From the first seeds planted in northeast India, the names of Salvatorians who kept alive the apostolic ardor of Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan are many. They went out to meet diverse peoples and cultures to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom.

In this publication, we want to let the Salvatorian Missionaries who work on the frontiers speak for themselves. Since it would not be possible to hear all of them, we tried to give a small sample, gathering the words of at least one representative from each region and missionary reality. However, we want to pay homage to ALL Salvatorians who cross borders to go meet God and their brothers and sisters. They are a living expression of

the wealth and vitality of our charism. While we are a small entity, we are certain Salvatorian Consecrated Life will continue to show the vigor of its charism in the life of all those who volunteer to bear witness to God's love to all everywhere. We owe a great deal to the Salvatorian Missionaries of the past, of today, and always.

The preface of this little book, "*Witnesses of Missionary Life*," includes a statement from our Superior General, Father Andrew Urbanski, sds, to whom we are most grateful for his ongoing missionary zeal. Following in alphabetical order, we find the words, spirituality and actions of Salvatorians who affirm that life has meaning when it is offered up to others. At the end of the text, we offer a guide for prayer and reflection to the communities, on the theme of the Salvatorian missionary dimension. May the individual reading and community reflection on this content bring a new missionary vigor into many hearts.

To all who collaborated in this effort, especially Father Piet P. Cuijpers, sds, we express our deepest gratitude for their total support in the accomplishment of this work. Assisted and inspired by the Spirit of God in every geographical and cultural place, we want to look to the future with our same ongoing dream, guided by the encouraging words of our founder, "...*continue doing what is good, working with all your forces for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Forward! Courage!*" (cf. DSS X, no. 1112).

Milton Zonta, sds
June, 2009

Foreword

► Dear Confreres,

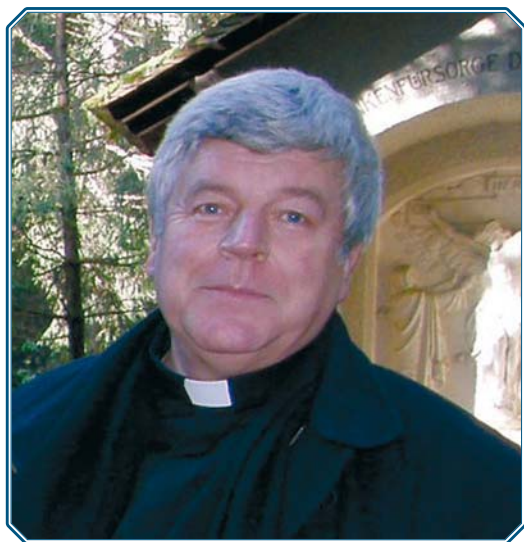
I know how each one of us is busy with his apostolate. In spite of that the majority of confreres invited by the generalate to share a testimony of Salvatorian life and mission have responded positively. We are immensely grateful to them. I read these testimonies with great interest and amazement. I noticed in them a profound richness of Salvatorian spirituality, truly Jordanian apostolic zeal, faithfulness to our charism, growth in a personal relationship with our Venerable Founder, diversity in apostolic works, a variety of ways which have led our confreres to discover their Salvatorian vocation and to live our mission, a uniqueness in each Salvatorian life history, a spirit of sacrifice, and most of all a love for our Founder and our religious Society. I am convinced that this sharing of Salvatorian testimony of life and mission will bring abundant spiritual fruits and will be enriching, encouraging and animating to every Salvatorian. I thank our confreres

for their daily Salvatorian life and mission, quite often not much known to the majority of our members.

I thank Fr. Milton Zonta for this precious initiative and patience in encouraging members to write these testimonies in spite of their extremely busy apostolic life. I also wish to share with you a simple testimony of my Salvatorian life and mission.

► Mission Inspiration

My favorite quotation is from St. John's Gospel 3.16: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not die but have eternal life.”* A Christian education and formation in my family and the parish community led me to know more and love more Jesus, our Savior. If He died for me so



I should also live and die for Him and our brothers and sisters whom he loves, because in Him is fullness of life, in him we will have eternal life. As a young boy I read some books about missionaries who had long beards, worked with poor people and quite often laid down their lives for Jesus. One dream was fulfilled because I had a long beard for sometime doing my missionary work in Tanzania but the second one is not yet fulfilled.

Especially St. Damian de Veuster, who died on Molokai Island working among the lepers, made a big impression on me. I always dreamed of praying at his grave and later this dream was fulfilled in the following way: thirty-six years ago I completed an English course of three months in Great Britain, flew for 5 pounds as a student of foreign language to Madrid, took a train from Madrid to Rome, and finally flew to Tanzania. I was alone with two suitcases on my travel to Rome via Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland. It was during this trip that I had the opportunity to pray at the grave of St. Damian de Veuster in Louvain, Belgium.

At the age of 16 I met the first Salvatorian in my life, Father Alfons Slusarczyk, the founder of the Institute of the Missionaries of Christ and of Fatima celebrations in the whole area of Trzebinia. It was he who told me that Salvatorians have missions and therefore I joined our Society in 1963. During the initial formation I learned about Father Jordan and still continue to learn about him and continue to grow in my personal love and veneration to him. After philosophy in Bagno, forced military service of two years in the communist army, and theology studies in Krakow, I worked one year in a parish and then left for the mission in Tanzania where I worked until 16 years ago

when the Society called me to ministry on the Generalate, first as the vicar general and general mission secretary, and later as the superior general.

► Mission Support

My present ministry as superior general is described in our Rules. Animation and governing of our Society are



the main tasks and involve many meetings, visitations, and individual talks, not only with our members but quite often with members of the Church hierarchy and other guests. Quite often I have to address our international meetings and represent our international leadership in various situations. Please do not think that we do not have to face some problems: we face them quite often. We are happy when the units develop well but at the present time we face various difficulties, including financial, and I am always sad when I receive a request from a member for an indult of dispensation from our vows. I am assisted in my work by the general council, which is quite international. I have full trust in my consultors and each one of them has specific areas of responsibility, as well as the task of being the liaison with specific units of the Society. They do very well. Being faithful to my missionary vocation, I try my best to help the present General Mission Secretary and Vicar General, Fr. Piet Cuijpers, in his obligations, especially by looking for new mission personnel, making contacts with some foundations on his behalf, and collaborating with him in mission animation.

I hope that after my service on the generalate, if I still have good health, I will go back to Tanzania from where I was called to my present ministry. I stay approximately 70 % of my time in our Motherhouse community. I try to participate in the spiritual, communal, and apostolic activities of our community. When I am in Rome we have generalate meetings and often there are international meetings. I always try to find time to talk to our visiting members, so when you come you can count on it.

We also face the great danger of losing a balance between our numerous administrative tasks and the

spiritual life. I experience this dilemma quiet often. Sometimes I feel that my “batteries” have worn down. In addition to the normal ways of charging my batteries (the Holy Eucharist, liturgy of hours, monthly and annual retreats), I sometimes listen to the conferences of Fr. Krzysztof Wons on various spiritual themes and read the spiritual diary of our Founder and other publications about him. The awareness of the physical closeness of the remains of our Founder to my room, where I work and live, is a great help to charge my batteries. Also my awareness that I am his 10th successor is always a great challenge for me: I do not want him to be disappointed with me.

I try my best to develop his Society and I have grown in the last years in the conviction that we must grow, not only in numbers, but especially in the quality of our Salvatorians life and ministry. When we Salvatorian are faithful and radical followers of Christ and truthful to our charism, we will be good missionaries, promoters of vocations, formators, and pastors of our flocks. To be Salvatorian today means to me to be credible and radical followers of Christ and faithful followers of the charism of our Founder. I pray for our deceased confreres who offered their lives for our Society and I encourage present and future Salvatorians to be faithful to Father Jordan and to our mission of salvation.

Your Confrere in the Divine Savior,
Fr. Andrew Urbanski, SDS

Fr. Adam Kwiatkowski, SDS

Fr. Adam Kwiatkowski, was born on December 25, 1967, in Głuszyca Poland.

He made his first profession on September 8, 1988, and was ordained a priest on May 28, 1994.

He is member of the Polish Province and is a missionary in Braslaw, Byelorussia.



"O Lord, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!

...What are humans that you are mindful of them, mere mortals that you care for them?"

(Psalm 8: 2a. 5)

► Mission Inspiration

The words of Psalm 8 I have quoted above inspired a Polish spiritual author to write a song for the youth, with its lyrics based on the Psalm in question. At the time when I was a youngster that song gained a significant popularity. We would frequently sing it during our Oasis movement meetings or at the Salvatorian vocational retreats in which I participated, and it was precisely because of that song that the words of Psalm 8 appealed to my heart so strongly.

Personally, I consider my vocation to the priesthood and to the religious life in the Society of the Divine Savior an undeserved gift I have received from God the Father. I have always associated such a vocation with the fact that God the Father loves the persons whom he has called and that he knows all the good and bad sides of their lives. The vocation is the choice made by God, the Father, about a particular person, one among many others in the world. In this way, God calls individuals that do not come

from one nation only or from one continent, but from all countries and corners of the world.

My awareness of the love of God, the Father, who has called me, and the conviction of my sinfulness became the ground for worship and adoration of the Lord I developed in my heart. Similar worship and adoration must have been born in the heart of the inspired author who expressed his wonder by means of the question: “What are humans that you are mindful of them?” Thus the words of Psalm 8 became my deepest Biblical inspiration, and that was why I decided to have them printed on the holy picture souvenir issued to commemorate my First Mass. For the same reason, I sometimes paraphrase them asking the following question: *What is Adam, a Salvatorian and priest, that you are mindful of him, o Lord? What is Adam that you are mindful of him while he is following the way of his Salvatorian vocation?* Whenever I pray with the words of Psalm 8, I also express my gratitude to God for the grace of vocation to minister as a missionary in Belarus.

► Missionary in Braslaw, Belarus

The Salvatorian community in Braslaw, Belarus, ministers at the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. By the decision of Bp Vladislav Blin, Ordinary of Vitebsk, the church in Braslaw was raised to the rank of the main sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Diocese of Vitebsk, which was created by the Servant of God Pope John Paul II in 1999. In the current year, we are celebrating the jubilee of the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Diocese. One of our

numerous tokens of gratitude towards God for the current jubilee was the decision of Bp Vladislav Blin to start the preparations for the crowning of the effigy of the Mother of God in Braslaw with Papal crowns. The crowning celebration will take place on August 22, 2009. The preparations for it are multidirectional. My personal contribution embraces the ministry of giving parish retreats on the Blessed Virgin Mary. The purpose of the retreat is to deepen the worship of the Mother of God and to prepare the faithful of the Diocese for the ceremony of the crowning of her effigy. I find this particular ministry a great honor, as well as a new experience. I owe this honor to Bp. Vladislav Blin, who has entrusted conducting these retreats to me. The novelty of the experience I have mentioned consists in the fact that during my ministry in Poland, which I continued for twelve years, I preached parish retreat only twice. Another new thing for me is that I will be preaching this Marian retreat in the Belarusian language, not to mention the fact that Church life looks different in the Diocese of Vitebsk than it does in Polish dioceses.

Thus, with the words of Psalm 8, I also sing my gratitude to God, the Father, for this particular missionary ministry I have been given, namely, preaching retreats on the Mother of the Savior.

The second dimension of my ministry is spiritual care for the sick. In April the previous year, the authorities of the city of Braslaw agreed to the opening of a chapel in the district hospital in Braslaw. This decision demonstrated particular kindness of the city government to the Catholics, because it was the first time that opening

a chapel and celebration of the Holy Mass were allowed in a hospital within the district of Vitebsk. In response to the decision of the city government, the Bishop of Vitebsk issued a decree in which he established the hospital Chapel, with St. Luke the Evangelist and Our Lady of Sharp Gate as its saint patrons, in which the Eucharist could be stored. Subsequently, Fr. Leszek Witwicki, SDS, parish priest in Braslaw entrusted me with ministry to the sick in the Hospital of Braslaw. Currently, the Holy Mass is celebrated there on Sundays and on Church feast days. I also serve in the chapel administering the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation and of Anointing the Sick. My duty is also to visit the sick offering sacramental ministry in the resuscitation ward, as well as in the other hospital rooms.

Another place where I provide ministry to the sick is the home for the disabled and veterans of the second world war in Braslaw. There is a small chapel there, and although the Eucharist cannot be stored in that place, the Holy Mass is celebrated once a week, as well as on holiday days and on Church feasts. The chapel is the place where the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick, as well as that of Penance and Reconciliation, is administered. The Eucharist is then taken to the bedbound patients in their rooms. This year, a priestly visit to the rooms of the patients was held for the first time, and it had been approved of by the Director of this nursing home. The pastoral visit was part of the consecration of the building ceremony.

My missionary ministry to the sick embraces also those parishioners who are homebound. On each first Thursday and Friday of the month, I visit over thirty persons providing them with the sacramental ministry.



Among them are also men and young people. I also visit the sick in cases of emergency, when a person is threatened with death, gravely sick or in for an operation.

„O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth!” (Psalm 8: 1), because your servant, priest, can do his ministry in the Braslaw Hospital and in the home for the disabled, and he can visit the sick in their homes. Only ten years ago it would have been either forbidden or hampered.

The third aspect of my missionary ministry in Belarus consists in organizing holiday trips to Poland for children and youth from Braslaw. This work is accomplished with the help of the Salvatorian Department for Foreign Missions. So far, two such trips have been organized and forty young people from the Braslaw parish participated in them. Common trips of this kind provide an opportunity for us to get to know these young people better. It is

also important that the parents of the children who take part in the trips are involved in them. Such involvement makes also the adults feel closer to one another. When their children are away, a prayerful bond is created: the children pray for their parents, while the parents pray for a happy holiday for their sons and daughters.

While ministering in Poland, I would frequently organize summer holidays for children and youth. Despite the numerous difficulties concerning the preparation and the supervision of the children's stay away from their homes, this kind of service would always bring a lot of joy and smiles on their faces.

„O LORD, our Lord...” (Ps 8: 1), I thank you for having allowed your servant to minister to the youth and children during his missionary activity in Belarus.

► Why I am missionary...

At the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000, I took part for the first time in an Ignatian retreat, which was held at the Salvatorian Center for Spiritual Formation in Krakow. My participation in a retreat lived through in absolute silence and involving individual spiritual direction enkindled in my life a new enthusiasm to follow the way of the Salvatorian vocation, and it helped me discover God acting through the words of the Gospel with which the Church, the Mother, nourishes her children through the daily Eucharist. Another fruit of that experience was the desire and the decision to participate every year in a retreat lived through in absolute silence and involving individual spiritual direction. Since 1999, I have not

abode by my decision on two occasions only, when I took part in Salvatorian retreats instead.

In 2006, at the beginning of the Holy Week, Father Provincial Jan Folkert, SDS, suggested that I should take up a missionary ministry in Belarus. Earlier that year, in February, I participated in a *Lectio Divina* retreat at the Center for Spiritual Formation in Krakow. One of the graces I received owing to that retreat was a greater openness and readiness to follow the will of God. That particular grace was of immense help to me, and I was supported by it in my decision, as well in as in the positive reply I gave to the will of God, the Father, conveyed to me by Father Provincial. A certain conversation may serve as a confirmation of the fact that my participation in the



retreat in question was so helpful to me. My confrere who had been ordained to the presbyterate together with me asked me before I left for Belarus: "What inspired you, what made you decide to take up a missionary ministry in Belarus, what made you accept it"? Until this day, I can remember what I said in answer. I told him: "Had I not taken part in the retreat, I would have not given the positive answer. My participation in that retreat gave me the spiritual strength and the inner peace indispensable to make the «yes» decision."

I still abide by my retreat resolution "to participate every year in a retreat lived through in absolute silence and involving individual spiritual direction." Despite the long (over 1000 km) distance between Braslaw in Belarus and Krakow in Poland, every year I take the effort to participate in a retreat that involves absolute silence and individual spiritual direction. I have an inner conviction that taking part in this form of retreat is for me like charging my spiritual batteries. Should I not follow my desire to participate in retreats, I would have lost my enthusiasm for the missionary ministry.

My missionary service in Belarus is closely related to the activity of the late Fr. Stefan Prekurat, a Salvatorian, who was the Rector of the Major Salvatorian Seminary in Bagno near Wrocław and lecturer of Liturgics there at the time I was a seminarian. In 1990, after the fall of communism and the advent of the so-called perestroika, Fr. Stefan Prekurat, SDS, received a consent from the former Soviet authorities to take up a missionary ministry in Belarus. It is noteworthy that he was among the first Polish priests who crossed the Eastern border of Poland in order to provide the missionary ministry in the former

Soviet Union. He served in Belarus from 1990 to 1997. He started as parish priest in Verchviedvinsk (where he ministered from 1990 to 1992), and then, until his death, he was parish priest in Braslaw. He died on 6 January 1997, while continuing his missionary service in the parish church in Braslaw. He was buried in the Salvatorian Grave in Krakow.

When I was an acolyte and then neo-presbyter, God, the Lord, gave me the grace of helping Fr. Stefan Prekurat, SDS, in his missionary service in the parish of Braslaw in Belarus. I did my diaconal pastoral practice in Braslaw under his direction before I was ordained to the presbyterate. I went to Belarus as a missionary help four times in all. Thanks to my contact with Fr. Stefan Prekurat, SDS, which started at the beginning of my studies for the priesthood, later I was able to offer in the presence of Fr. Julian Bednarz, SDS, who was then the Rector of the seminary, my personal readiness and willingness to go to Belarus, when a request for help had come from Braslaw. Then, during my four stays in the parish of Braslaw, I had the opportunity to experience Father Prekurat's fatherly care and to witness his enormous commitment, as well as the missionary zeal he radiated. All those facts contributed to the birth of a missionary vocation in my heart.

I consider my current missionary ministry in Belarus as a continuation of the work the late Fr. Stefan Prekurat, SDS, which he started with such deep commitment and dedication. Whenever I visit Krakow, I go to the "Salvator" cemetery, where the earthly remains of the first Salvatorian missionary in Belarus are buried in the Salvatorian Grave. I pray for the grace of eternal life for

my late Confrere, as well as for a further growth of the Salvatorian missionary ministry in Belarus.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

In the Communist period, The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Braslaw, Belarus, where I currently continue my missionary ministry, was closed only from 1952 to 1954. Except for that period, one priest was allowed to reside in the parish and do the pastoral duties, yet in a limited way. Religious life, though, was absolutely forbidden during the Communist period. The religious or nuns were not allowed to wear the habit. No institute or congregation could be officially registered by the State. As a result of this situation – which continued for many years – very few of the faithful have preserved in their consciousness the fact that there is also religious life in the Church of Christ.

To me, personally, “being a Salvatorian on a mission today means” communicating to the faithful that I am a priest who is also a member of the religious Society of the Divine Savior. It means explaining to them the essence of religious life. It also means giving them a living example of religious life by wearing the habit, by making every effort to remain faithful to our Salvatorian rules and by creating a Salvatorian community.

“*Being a Salvatorian on a mission today means*” also making the faithful find out about the person, life, and activity of the Servant of God Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. In this respect, I have good news: a young married couple from our parish community have

inquired about the possibility of creating lay Salvatorians in Braslaw.

“Being a Salvatorian on a mission today means” also persisting in prayer before God, in the spirit of Father Jordan. My testimony to the religious life is very short and it embraces only three years. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Fr. Andrzej Urbanśki, SDS, the General of our Society, for having noticed my ministry and turned to me, on behalf of the Generalate, to provide this testimony.

Fr. Agustín Van Baelen, SDS

Fr. Agustín Van Baelen, born May 25, 1971 in Lommel, Limburg – Belgium.

First profession on September 23, 1990, ordained a priest December 10, 1997.

Member of the Belgium Province and a missionary in Caracas, Venezuela.



*Jesus touched the bier ... and said: “Young man, I say to you, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.” (Lk 7, 14-15)
“You give them something to eat.”
(Lk 9, 13; Mt. 14,16; Mk 6,37)*

► Mission Inspiration

Jesus touched the bier ... and said: "Young man, I say to you, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." (Lk 7, 14-15). This passage from the Gospel of Luke is close to the core of my faith. It clearly shows that death, desperation, darkness do not have the last word but rather life, hope and light do. Jesus Christ is my light. He gives me life and new perspectives and I feel invited to give witness to this reality. I feel called to help to find new perspectives, particularly for those people who have lost all hope or courage to continue. Thanks to God I have experienced this in my own life and in the life of those who the Lord has entrusted to me. It is marvelous, for example, to see young people – who formerly lived on the street and experimented with drugs – who have now found a place to live, undertake serious studies and think of having a family. On the one hand, I thank God for allowing me to be an instrument of His compassion, and on the other hand, I am grateful for these experiences which help and support me to continue, even in moments of difficulty.

“You give them something to eat.” Jesus is the one who nourishes me and gives me the Word to nourish others. His Word he gives us to share, to form community around Him. We cannot simply wait that God solves all problems; Jesus counts on our community, on me in fact, so that his message be known and lived to the utmost in order to build the Kingdom of God.

► Missionary in Caracas

My apostolic life is quite varied and consists of different aspects. First of all and due to the request of my confreres, I serve as coordinator of the Salvatorian communities in Venezuela. Together we try to figure out the path we Salvatorians should follow today in this culture, taking into account our charism and mission and the specific needs. My major task is not so much to direct but rather to search for ways to follow so that the Lord and his Son Jesus Christ become known through our communities and our work.

Secondly, another important task – since the founding of *Casa Hogar* – is to accompany abandoned children and adolescents and street children. I share this task with a group of volunteers, among them Salvatorian lay people. The profound experience of poverty, misery and abandonment of children and defenseless adolescents in the area where I carried out my pastoral work, made me suggest to the Salvatorian community to set up a home for these children. After a time of discernment and after investigating if certain people would be willing to participate in this project, we began and despite difficulties we now are helping 16 children so that they may have a



better future. Since last year this project has been extended to include adolescents who come from the first *Casa Hogar “El Encuentro”*. They now live in a house called “*El Timón*”, together with a stable Christian family that helps them to take the helm (*el timón*) of their life into their own hands. In other words, these young people have to work while they study and are learning to fend for themselves little by little. It is very interesting for me to see how these young people come out of a situation marked by darkness, difficulties and death, and are now striving to succeed, feeling called to live, and are acquiring new perspectives!

Thirdly, I also serve as coordinator of our educational institutes in the poorest barrios of Caracas. The Salvatorians, since their arrival in Venezuela in 1957, have constructed schools and have worked in them. I am very

happy that three years ago – acting upon a request by the people –, we have also started with high schools. This initiative gives young people, who live in precarious and difficult situations, a chance to study, get formal training, and have a better future.

But my pastoral work is not exclusively of a social nature. As a priest I collaborate in another part of the barrio as well where there is much poverty, need and violence. Annually we prepare – thanks to the enormous support of a group of catechists – some 350 children and adolescents for First Communion and Confirmation. There is much life and a very much alive faith in our barrios and it is by the grace of God that we can minister to these thirsting people. Of course, the continuous confrontation with violence and death, particularly among young people, sometimes makes one feel disappointed and disillusioned. But in those moments it is important to be able to count



on my Salvatorian confreres I live, share and pray with. It is thanks to my confreres that I hear the voice of the Lord who also says, don't despair, get back on your feet, arise Agustin! I am calling you to life. I count on you to spread the Good News that life will persevere.

► Why am I a missionary ...?

As I described above, three points are essential for me: personal and community prayer, my Salvatorian confreres with whom I share and live, and my service as such to the community and the people. Those are the places where the Lord speaks to me, where I feel His closeness and support and at the same time a strong invitation to consecrate myself to Him, who is the foundation and the meaning of my life.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

To be a Salvatorian in mission today means to give what one has received. To nourish people at the spiritual and the material sense, just as Jesus did. Injustice cannot leave us indifferent if we really believe that Jesus wanted to install the Kingdom and that we are called to follow this mission. To be a Salvatorian in mission today means to lift up the people, help them to get back on their feet, to extend a hand in the name of Jesus, so that the people may be able to reintegrate, to feel that they count, to taste true life. A Salvatorian acts based upon his relation with Jesus, the Savior, and he does so in community, counting on the daily support of his confreres.

Fr. Andrzej Kusiak, SDS

Fr. Andrzej Kusiak, was born on February 04, 1965, in Oborniki Sl. Poland.

He made his first profession on October 25, 1987, and was ordained a priest on May 29, 1993.

He is member of the Polish Province and was missionary in Mayotte (France, a part of the Comoros). From Mid-2009 he works in Mexico.



“Do whatever he tells you” (John: 2,6)

► Mission Inspiration

The words of the Mother of Jesus, "*Do whatever he tells you*" (J: 2,6), said to the servers in Cana, evoke the trust and hope I find in Christ. These words also strengthen my choices and decisions, which, however, are not always easy. Time and again, I had an opportunity to find out that one must not fear truth and that in order to "do whatever Christ tells us" we must live through truth and we must live in truth. It was precisely here, in Mayotte, that I came to the realization that I need to adhere to the truth that my life in its entirety belongs to Christ. Whenever I depart from Christ, striving to endear myself to people around me, the joy is short-lived, I experience failures in my priestly life, and I end up engulfed in sadness. But the moment I return to Him with all my heart, the joy of living among other people returns together with daily successes. Yet it also happens that people come to attack me when I try to convey to them the truth that comes from Christ. Again, sadness

engulfs me on such occasions, but it is not long-lasting, as I find hope and strength kneeling with Christ.

I cannot imagine what my life would be like without the words of the Mother of Christ, “Do whatever he tells you.” These words make me feel secure and safe. No one can hurt me or harm me when Christ is my teacher and guide.

► Missionary in the Comoros

It is my sixth year of service in the Catholic Mission in Mayotte, which is part of the Apostolic Administration of the Comoros. 97% of the population of Mayotte are Muslim, most of them Shiites. Generally speaking, the relations with the local inhabitants are good. Moreover, Islam in the island is rather moderate, without hostility towards the believers of other religions. In Mayotte, it is still important whether you believe in God or not. However, due to the impact of French lay attitudes, the number of non-believers is gradually growing and syncretism enters the lives of the Maoris.

As a priest and a missionary, I do all the possible jobs to assist my parishioners, first of all being their priest, but also a Biblical scholar, a psychologist, a family counselor, a treasurer, a secretary, a cook, a postmaster, a gardener, a dishwasher, a driver and a taxi-driver. I really cannot think of an activity one can perform while working in a mission that I do not do. My parishioners are a multinational community of about 600 people, among them those of Malagasy nationality, Africans, Antillean Creoles and Creoles from the Isle of Réunion, as well as some French from Europe. I estimate that there are about 6000 Christians in the island, most of them Catholics.

I derive tremendous satisfaction from my work in the church in Mayotte, which also greatly enriches me. The reason is, among others, the cultural and ethnic diversity of the local people, manifested in the “two-colour rainbow” of skin colour: black and white. A necessary task I undertake together with Fr. Bienvenu is to combine the rites, traditions and customs into a harmonious whole, in particular during the Eucharist liturgy. It is not always easy to comprehend and reconcile all the needs of the faithful from different corners of the world. Yet what we manage to accomplish corresponds to the idea: “United together, with respect for what makes us different.” Thus the Holy Mass is usually lively and joyous, with beautiful singing in French, Malagasy and Kinya Rwanda, incorporating animation and African dances.

Our pastoral life consists in continuous re-evangelization. We catechise about 140 children within our parish. Every year, we also prepare school children, as well as adults, for Baptism, about 14 persons a year.

Mayotte is an island where many Catholics stay temporarily. They are mostly engineers, teachers, medical doctors, lawyers and entrepreneurs. In my opinion, most of those arriving in Mayotte are “economic refugees,” among them a number Africans who want to break loose from poverty and a majority of French people from Europe and the Antilles who come here to earn “big money”. Teachers, for instance, in their second year of employment, receive a bonus for each month of work paid to them at the end of their stay in the island.

The reason for the above digression is that the facts I have described influence the number of persons taking part in the preparation for the Baptism of babies and for

the marriage of adults. We have baptized about 200 babies in the island so far and we have blessed 11 marriages since 2003. I cannot certainly give the exact number of those taking part in the preparation for Baptism or for marriage outside the borders of Mayotte. Let me only state that most Baptisms and marriages take place outside the parish, in the neighbouring Isle of Réunion, or in Europe, where the families of those people want to celebrate with them these important moments in their lives.

In the island we had baptised one person, but soon afterwards we lost contact with him. Thoma was expelled from Mayotte, because he did not have his identity card, and was put in prison in his native island. Recently, however, we managed to get in touch with him again, and we know that his case is coming on for trial soon. This year there are three men getting prepared for Baptism. Their formation is slow and it is carried on with prudence, since it often happens that the candidates are motivated by gain or by the prospect of assistance in getting the permission to stay in the island. I can sadly confirm that there have already been cases of neophytes from Mayotte in the Protestant community who left the Evangelic Church, because the material help had ended and they were expected to show involvement in the community.

The program of ongoing evangelization includes also a monthly formation of acolytes and lectors. Additionally, once in a semester, the formation of catechists takes place. This year, together with Fr. Bienvenu, we have started to organize committees in the Pastoral Board that help us in all the fields of activity within the parish.

In our parish, pastoral activity consists in welcoming everyone and in listening to them as they speak to us not



only about their material poverty, but also about the moral one, in particular about the poverty in their marital lives, in the relations between the spouses and in those in the family, in the relations between the parents and their adolescent or already adult children. One should be a psychologist to offer them advice, but these people expect us to be messengers of the Word of God and men of prayer above all. They often ask us to pray for them or to show them exemplary prayers so that they could say them in situations of poverty, crisis or conflict. They also ask us to pray for them when they feel the bad intentions of those who wish them unhappiness and pain have harmed them (in Islam it is permitted to beg the unhappiness of one's enemy).

To conclude my pastoral reflection I want to write a few words about the refugees from Africa, in particular about those who flee from Rwanda. They regularly arrive in our parish, and currently their number has reached about 30% of the parish community. These days, the Secours Catholique takes care of them in many respects, providing psychological counselling, as well as material and administrative help. The Secours Catholique is the main organization to provide organized help for them so that they could legalize their stay in Mayotte. After they have obtained their identity cards, most of them leave and go to stay in France. The first years of my stay in Mayotte were also devoted to refugees. My assistance consisted in finding places to stay for them and for that purpose I used the help of their countrymen who were already staying in the island. It was not always easy due to the belief of both Hutu and Tutsi that they have been harmed by the other tribe. Sometimes the refugees were forced to stay spend some nights in the small church chapel.

While helping the refugees, I would also ask them to help at the parish. I entrusted cleaning the church and gardening to them, and so I was able to pay their electricity and water bills. Occasionally, I would also contribute to their rent. Since the time the Secours Catholique showed a deeper commitment to the problem of the refugees, I have stopped certain activities, in particular the refugees' work in the garden, which is considered by the "big ones of this world" as slavery and favoring illegal immigration.

Dear confreres, let me ask you at this point to pray for the souls of the mothers and children who every year get drowned in the waters of the Mozambique Channel trying to get to Mayotte in motor boats called *kwasa*

kwasa in order to start new lives there. Every year there are about 560 of them. Let us not forget to thank God for the life of Bernadette, who ran away from a cloister on fire in Rwanda, managed to escape death and crossed the Indian Ocean in order to reach us. Let us thank God for the lives of the men and women who have endured deep anguish and are now striving to forgive their oppressors and start new lives. Let the life of Balancina be an example to us all: She narrowly escaped from Rwanda and arrived in Mayotte with eleven children, six of them hers own, and the other five found by her in the flames of war. Today, she lives in France together with all those children, who either go to school or work there. So do about 50 Rwandese and Burundian people who one day knocked at the door of our mission.

► Why I am a missionary...

Why do I stay on the mission? What makes me endure? I believe this is what Christ wants. At moments of doubt I hear his words: Stay, because they are “like sheep without a shepherd.” (Mt 9:36) I don’t know why I do it, but I tell Jesus: It was you who wanted me to come here, please give me strength, so that I can endure. And with his help the strength returns. A proof? In my family there were many people who would claim, “He will not endure. He will soon be back.” And I have been staying in Mayotte for six years now.

How do I charge the battery of my missionary life? I do it kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. For three years now, I have been also doing a retreat in the Isle of Réunion. And of course the Word of God helps me. In



it, I find love, strength and hope, as well as the belief that with God one can gain the ability to love and to forgive.

This last question is difficult. I will tell you the truth. I don't feel there is fire, but rather a small flame in my heart, just like the small Jesus in Bethlehem. I receive this flame of Divine truth and love from the vulnerable Jesus, and I try, with all my heart, soul and body, to share this truth and this love with others. Sometimes a fire starts burning, a fire that purifies us, that „warms up” our strength to preach the love and goodness of God to other people and to share this love and this goodness with those people. On other occasions only a small flame remains. I merely carry it, protect it and guard it. It is him, Christ, who makes this small flame first change into the fire of the truth of the Word of God and then make the way. I simply endure and I never regret the fact that I endure for the sake of Christ. He is my joy.

► To me, being a Salvatorian on a mission today means...

...staying 10.000 kilometres away from my Province, in a place where one can very easily forget how to implement decisions taken by the Society.

...feeling abandoned in the Comoro Islands, and wondering what I am doing here as a Salvatorian, considering my relations with my native Province, my Society. Such reflection comes to my mind whenever I hear that there are no candidates willing to continue the work of Father Jordan in the Comoros.

...finding a living contact with the Generalate and living through the problems of the Generalate, in particular when I happen to be staying in Rome during my travels and holidays.

...appreciating all the news from the Generalate and from my Province, and attempting to live it through, even if there comes the thought: "You are just a passive member of your Province". Sometimes I feel like a prisoner, staying in the name of Christ where I am now, but one who is happy having received a packet of precious news from his closest ones.

...cherishing deep hope that I still manage to follow faithfully the ideas of Father Jordan and to implement them in practical life.

...experiencing our Salvatorian identity so that I can show others that we live in the light of the teaching and love of Christ.

a – speaking about Father Jordan to others and saying the prayer for his beatification on the following days: December 8, February 11, Feast of

the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes, and May 13, Feast of Our Lady of Fatima (everyone who visits our church can receive a postcard with the life of Father Jordan and a prayer for his beatification). In the presbytery, we also have portraits of our Founder.

b – wearing the habit during major Church and State celebrations, and being proud to put the SDS letters after my name whenever I sign it. I am happy to be a Salvatorian and proud of being one.

c – yet the most important thing is to preach our Founder’s universalism both “in season” and “out of season.” Here, in Mayotte, we have many opportunities for it due to the mixture of race, culture, custom and religion (with the predominance of Islam). The material and moral poverty are an appeal to us and I dare not allow myself a moment’s rest as long as there is one person on earth who does not know Christ and does not love Him. I believe that the Comoros and Mayotte are an extraordinarily good area to implement Father Jordan’s universalism.

Fr. Artan Seli, SDS

Fr. Artan Seli, was born on May 26, 1975, in Fushekruje, Kruja – Albania.

He made his first profession on September 08, 1998, and was ordained a priest on May 22, 2004.

He is member of the Polish Province and a missionary in Shkoder, Albany.



“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor” (Lk 4: 18a)

► Mission Inspiration

On the holy picture souvenir of my First Mass, I had the following words printed: „The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor.” (Lk 4:18a) I chose those words, as they had appealed to me in a particular way. When I was a seminarian, I would very often return to those words of the Lord Jesus Christ, as I saw a great need to bring the Good News precisely to the poor in my country, which was itself poor in faith. I wanted the Good News to be known and transmitted there. I was living in that country, in a country from which the Church had been eradicated, I had grown up there and I saw how badly it needed re-evangelization. I felt the need to preach the Good News, but I also wanted to take the responsibility and follow the missionary vocation to go and be active.

► Missionary in Albania

My work consists mainly in pastoral care in the parish, which is populated also by Muslims. The parish has got three churches, and there are about five hundred Catholic families in all. Each church offers catecheses and preparation for the Holy Sacraments. Care is taken of the altar boys; vocational action is systematically carried out among them. Also the youth can find something for themselves in our churches: catecheses, services, trips to youth meetings in Poland. Our Salvatorian presence in Albania enriches the Church in this country. It is possible that the future will welcome native vocations to the Society of the Divine Saviour as interest in joining the Salvatorians can be seen among young boys.





One of the difficulties we encounter in our pastoral activity is religious indifference characteristic of middle-aged people who were growing up deprived of sacramental life. Another difficulty is the small number of priests. In consequence, the territory on which each of us serves is rather spacious: we have to commute to a number of churches and take care of the religious and sacramental lives of the faithful there.

Apart from doing my daily pastoral duties, I contribute to the diocesan life. I have been nominated the Dean of the Deanery by the Archbishop; I am also responsible for the religious life of the consecrated persons in the Diocese. Periodically, I give lectures on Christology in the Catechetical Institute of the Diocese,

and I am host of a program block on Radio Mary. In this, I cooperate with Br. Tomasz Górny, SDS.

► Why I am missionary...

Despite all these difficulties and the hard work I must do I still experience in my life the presence of the words I once put on my souvenir holy picture. Prayer, Eucharist, adoration, retreat and religious reflection days help me fulfil my duties and minister to the faithful and to the Church. A great help is certainly provided by my community, where I find support and assistance.

The important personality that I find close to me and that enkindles the missionary spirit in me is our



venerable Founder. To us, his spiritual sons, among whom I also belong, he left an enormous deposit of wisdom and responsibility for those who have not known or loved the Saviour of the world yet.

► **For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...**

...never to rest. Do my best to go and minister using all the possible ways and all my capabilities. Never to let any human being live without Christ, without knowing his Gospel.

Fr. Bernard D. Green, SDS

Fr. Bernard D. Green, was born on February 22, 1940, in Bilbrook, Staffordshire, England

He made his first profession on September 8, 1963, and was ordained a priest on September 8, 1973, in Stoke-on-Trent, England

He is member of the United States Province and is a missionary in Tempe, Arizona, USA.



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:19-20)

► Biblical Inspiration

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:19-2). This biblical phrase is significant for me because, in 1962, when I joined the Salvatorians, I was intensely concerned to help people understand the depth of our faith. From the first moment I encountered Francis Jordan and the Salvatorians, I resonated with Francis Jordan’s vision and the simple religious life that he made possible. This has been the guiding thread of my life and my ministry as a Salvatorian ever since: I teach the Catholic faith because, like Jordan, I see that faith as essential to the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of humanity. My journey has led me to minister in a parish, complete a degree in psychology, be a chaplain in a nursing home, work as a therapist for priests, teach in a major seminary, research how to integrate faith with modern psychotherapeutic approaches, and 10 years on

mission to the Apache Indians of the South West (seeking to integrate our faith into the Native American Culture).

► **Current ministry: Institute for the Study of Catholic Faith and Life**

During the 10 years of my ministry to the Apaches was born the notion of The Institute for the Study of Catholic Faith and Life. The Salvatorian sister with whom I was ministering, Darlene Pienschke, and I came to see the need for an organization dedicated to the Salvatorian ideal of teaching the faith to adult Catholics. So, together, we developed a structure, a rationale and a methodology for such an institute. The opportunity to put this idea into practice came when I was invited to join the staff of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Tempe, Arizona. The pastor gave me the freedom, as Associate Pastor, to implement this institute. Approximately 500 adults have been through our programs and by their own account, have benefited from them.

Together with Sister Darlene and our now many lay collaborators, I continue this work to this day, still, hopefully, carrying out the vision of Fr. Jordan. I will continue in this work until health or age tells me differently.

► **Keeping the fire alive**

I am continually renewed in my commitment to it as a Salvatorian project through reflection and prayer on the scriptures, the distress caused by the effects of the ideology of secularism on people and the example of our

Holy Father, Pope Benedict, in his efforts to promote the faith in a secularized world.

Jordan would have rejoiced in this Pope, not only because he comes from the same part of the world, but because they share the same mind and heart about what is needed. Jordan saw the dangers that have now come to full expression and acted to respond to them by the creation of the Society. Benedict is committed to dealing with them in our day and age. Hence, Salvatorians remain essential to the mission of the Church for the salvation of humanity. It is this that keeps me on fire and fuels my work with the Institute. I want to do what I can as a disciple of Jordan to contribute to this vital mission.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

... being possessed by the same zeal for spreading the faith that Fr. Francis Jordan and Fr. Bernard Lüthen



had. They were both convinced of the need to teach, defend and spread the Catholic faith in a secular world by all ways and means, and, together, they created the Society to accomplish this. The ideology of secularism was developing and spreading in Germany and they knew of its dangers from personal experience. Both saw the teaching of the faith to children, but especially to adults, as essential to counteract it. Jordan sought to create a group totally dedicated to exploring, teaching and promoting the faith through personal witness and education. Lüthen enthusiastically joined him in this.

We need more Lüthens. The need for such a group, following Jordan's vision, is even more necessary today given the widespread influence of secularism on our Western culture. It is destroying the faith and leading to the downfall of Western civilization as a whole. Pope Benedict is constantly warning us about its influence and urging us to combat it. Salvatorians should be at the forefront of this as was Bernard Leuthen. Jordan's zeal and vision has never been more needed. I consider myself to be a disciple of Lüthen in this.

Fr. Jean Bosco Kanund, SDS

Fr. Jean Bosco Kanund, *was born on September 13, 1972, in Likasi – Congo*

He made his first profession on September 29, 1996 and was ordained a priest on August, 2004.

He is member of the Congo Pro-Province and is a missionary in Hina, Cameroun.



“Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ”. (John 17: 3)

► Mission Inspiration

When the Salvatorians of the Democratic Republic of Congo Pro-province decided to begin a new apostolate in Cameroon, especially in Hina, it was a joy for all the Pro-province, mainly because it is a sign of growth for this young unit, which takes a risk to begin a new mission in a foreign country. "The one who doesn't risk has nothing," goes a saying in French.

Has the mission of the Church changed or does it remain the same? Is it a new era of mission today when we do not hear any more about evangelization and the witness of the Mission? The Salvatorian challenge to help everyone know Jesus, the one, true God: is it still relevant and a reality nowadays or is it outdated? The command and mission that Father Jordan entrusted to us as his spiritual children "to not rest content until all the people know, love and serve Jesus as the Savior": do all people know Jesus as the Savior?

In Hina people don't know Jesus as the Savior. It is an area which precisely needs our Salvatorian charism

and spirituality. And so I will speak about the Mission in Hina, our pastoral activity, our relationship with other faiths, and finally the challenges that face us.

► Missionary in North of Cameroon

1. Geographic situation – Hina mission is located at the extreme north of one of the provinces of Cameroon in the diocese of Maroua Mokolo. The mission is huge. In fact its boundaries are bigger than those of the local political administration. It has about 36,000 inhabitants.

The climate is generally hot. It has also the influence of the “harmattan,” a wind from the west, between February and December. There are two seasons: a dry one (summer) which goes from October to April and a rainy one from May to September. Seventy-five percent of the economy is agriculture (millet, cotton, peanuts, maize, sweet potato, cassava, sesame, sugar cane). Livestock farming represents 20% of the economy and the trade 5% of the economy. People are quite poor.

2. Brief history of the mission – Hina mission didn't begin with the Salvatorians. The pioneers in this hard corner of the Cameroon are the Oblates (OMI). Father Didon was appointed in Mokolo December, 17, 1948. He received his letter of appointment for Hin-Manja on April, 7, 1949. Father Bastard, OMI, was Father Didon's companion.

In November 1949, Hina was functioning as a third autonomous mission after Mokolo and Maroua. On January 6, 1950, Bishop Yves Plumey visited the young mission. These missionaries constructed some buildings in stone: a school, a dispensary and their own home.

By November 8, 1950, Hina had already been closed, because all the Fathers were then living in Mokolo until October 20, 1951. In my opinion, a mission requires a permanence of people, it is very important. The mission restarted, once more, in the 70s.

What are the problems which stopped this Mission, which was already prospering, from evolving? The Oblates don't give a clear answer to this question. Why or for which reason? They alone know because we can't find anywhere else a clear explanation.



The sages of the village have told me that:” *Father, the actual situation of Hina mission could be explained by a miserable event which is at the origin of the closing of this young Mission, a sorcery story. How? The son of a man who*

was working for the mission died mysteriously. And all of them suspected an old woman of the village to have killed him with witchcraft. They beat her tragically. And it was the cook-carpenter of the fathers who was accused of being the instigator of the killing of the old woman.

The fathers naturally defended their man. The problem got out of control and difficult to deal with. At the time, the French administration was made up of freemasons, who were anti-clergy. They took the opportunity to give a hard time to the Catholic Church. The two priests had to go to Maroua. Bishop Yves received the assurance of the administration that the problem of the fathers would be resolved without any problem. But after his departure, the fathers were jailed for twenty four hours. And so the Mission of Hina remained a long time without any permanent missionary presence.” What is happening now could be considered the first evangelization.

In 1996 Father Bartholomew Binia, a diocesan priest from the Democratic Republic of Congo, arrived in Hina. He received the mission from the bishop Philippe: *”Go to that hard corner and breathe new life into it. Manage by yourself.”*

Father Binia was a great worker. He did a lot of things for this Mission. Nine years later he was called to work in France where he’s still living. A few years later after Father Binia’s departure, the Salvatorians arrive in Hina: Father Elie Mputu, Father Jean-Bosco Kanund, and Father Pierre Banza, all of them young missionaries.

Father Elie Mputu arrived first. After a while, Father Jean-Bosco arrived on August 13, 2007. Unfortunately, very shortly after Jean-Bosco had arrived, Fr. Elie needed to return to Congo. It was painful for Jean-Bosco to be

alone in this new and difficult place without knowing neither people nor the tribal language (Foufoulde). Everything was new, even the house!

Father Jean-Bosco didn't know whether he should stay or go back home. After having meditated and reflected on our Salvatorian sense of mission, he decided to remain in Hina. He took the time needed to learn the Mission, motivated by a love for the Society and the desire to help the people in their moral and religious poverty.

► Why I am missionary...

1. Hina, Missionary land – concerning religion, the extreme North of Cameroon, especially Hina, is still unevangelized, compared with other regions. Here we really find pagans in the real sense of the word. From a survey it appears that the largest number of people are the pagan, followed by Muslims then by Christians, both Catholics and Protestants. It was once thought that there were more Muslims than pagans, but the truth is that the majority are pagan. It is fairly easy to convert these pagans for the growth of the Church. It is not easy to convert Muslims without a powerful pastoral program.

2. Catechism – There is a diocesan guideline which gives direction to teaching catechism. It plans a year of pre-catechumen and three years of catechumen. The catechism is provided in each community by catechists. At the beginning of each catechetical year, the latter are formed in workshops. We ourselves teach catechism to the children. There are also some guidelines from each parish for accepting a candidate for baptism. For us catechism is the foundation for understanding Christian life. The

lessons must be well prepared by the catechist and well assimilated by the candidate.

There are a lot of adults without baptism. Their catechism is adapted and often given by a couple. If so, we do take the opportunity to give the instructions for marriage. This is difficult because in this culture a man has two or three women officially and many more unofficially. Therefore, there is a special catechism for this as well as a pastoral for couples and families.

3. Pastoral for couples and families – nowadays many men and women are preoccupied not only for the future of their families and their children but also for their education. And the consequence is they live with fear and without hope.

The big challenge for the Church lies in the pastoral for couples and families in order to raise the level of Christian life of the parents. Parents are urged to pay attention to the education of their children. The families are urged not to remain in isolation but are linked to the Church. They are urged to support each other so that they can grow in following the way of Jesus. Any Christian couple I accepted into this pastoral, but those who are not married in the Church are expected to do so in the future.

We talk to them about everything: Christian life, social life, economics, politics, and so on. The couples also share their own experiences as couples and families, their joys and pains. The experiences and witnesses are edifying. Occasionally we meet with the couples and their children together first to let them be together and have fun, but also to help parents who might be authoritarian talk to their children. This pastoral is one way to carry our evangelization, that is, help the people to know Christ.

4. Pastoral for women – The pastoral for women is taken seriously in our Mission. Its aim is to inform and form women in all human dimensions. Women meet every week to discuss and share about a theme, for example, how to overcome malnutrition of children, how to make such things as Vaseline or soap, how to cook, how to protect against malaria. They also learn hand-embroidery, knitting and how to educate children. They have some well programmed workshops. The priest is very involved in all that concerns women.

Christian women suffer a lot and don't blossom because the culture is so strongly influenced by Muslims. Our task is to help them understand that they are as valuable not only as the Muslims but as the men, that they have the right to rest as human beings. Sometimes it is hard for them to understand that. One woman said to me: "Father, as women, we are at the same level as camels, not as human beings. And our role is to stay in the kitchen and work for the men. What can we do!" We have a lot of work to do in this area!

5. Ladies of charity – This is another group of ladies in our parish who have the goal to work each day for those who have nothing. They help orphans, strangers, or other women in difficult situations. They meet every Sunday after Mass and visit other people.

The parish priest is a member and is involved in this group in order to encourage them to go ahead. He intervenes when there are problems. This group is made up only of Christian women.

6. Literacy tuition – Hina is in a part of the Cameroon that does not have good schools. We form teachers so that older persons who didn't go to school

have the opportunity to learn to read, write and count and even to speak a little bit of French.

We have a lot of women and catechists who receive this formation. The teachers are supported by the diocese in term of their wages. But there are some problems from time to time because of the lack of teachers or because the Muslims see it as a means of converting people to Catholicism.

7. Youth movement – Hina Mission has a lot of children and young people. They are our hope for the future. We supervise the group of “creative Christian youth” (CCY). These young people willingly participate in all the organized workshops in the parish. They organize recollections, discussions on some topics, talks and religious concerts.

These young people are very committed and active but they lack the means to organize themselves. Some of them belong to the parish choir. We organize regularly some excursions, evening prayers.

One of the priests is in charge of promoting vocations. He also leads the vocation group which meets every Thursday. There are eight boys but no girls.

The “world cup” is a movement for children between the ages of 6 and 15 which functions very well. The youngsters meet every Sunday after Mass and Friday. They have workshops at both the diocesan and parish level. In their sessions they have themes like love, acting for a better future, techniques of expression, child psychology, how to lead a meeting, good manners, conversion, and so on.

8. Sare effata – Sare effata is a boarding school for young people either in primary or secondary school, males and females, who live far away from the school in

Hina. We welcome children from all religions. It is a good apostolate but it demands money and patience.

9. Nursery school Mater Salvatoris and primary school – In our nursery and primary school, we also supervise and teach Muslim children, thus having the opportunity to talk to their parents. The school is an effective tool of evangelization in Hina because we have contact with all sorts of people. The message gets through easily to the children.

10. Relation with other religious confessions – We have good relations with the two communities in the area, Baptists and evangelists. Sometimes in our boarding school, we also invite one of their ministers for prayer.

Relationships are OK with the Muslims. They come to the parish, to our nursery and primary school. We visit them also in their homes. We have good neighborhood relations. These Muslims are not so aggressive and some seem not to know why they are Muslim. Until now there are no sects in our Mission.

11. Challenges to take up

To promote vibrant community

To promote women

To promote schools and youth pastorals

To evangelize by witness of life in this Muslims area.

To catechize and dialog with the pagans.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

The mission that the Lord entrusted us, day after day, is not an easy mission to accomplish, especially in

a place like Hina with its pagans and Muslims. But with the Lord's grace, we will hold on and go ahead because He gives us not only with Mission but also the spiritual means which help us to accomplish our work: prayer, meditation and love for the people among whom we now work; without this our mission would become a burden and the consequence would be giving up.

Hina is a school of patience, courage and mainly perseverance. It is difficult but it is not good to be afraid and to doubt. Fear and doubt can easily destroy any Mission.

Fr. Hubert Kranz, SDS

Fr. Hubert Kranz was born on August 18, 1967, in Eberhardzell, Baden/Württemberg, Germany.

He made his first profession on October 8, 1989, and was ordained a priest on June 29, 1996.

He is member of the German Province and is a missionary in the East Asian Foundation.



*“Without cost you have received,
without cost you are to give.” (Matthew 10,8)*

► Mission inspiration

I do not have a favorite bible quote, but some time ago a word of the Lord popped up, that makes a lot of sense to me: “*Without cost you have received, without cost you are to give.*” (Matthew 10,8) We find this word in the context of the mission sending of the apostles in the gospel according to Matthew. Jesus is sending out the Twelve without any material security; only with the mission to proclaim the kingdom of God.

Fr. Jordan picks up that word, too. He wrote it down in his Spiritual Diary (I/86) shortly before his priestly ordination. At that time Fr. Jordan faced an uncertain future. The political situation did not allow him to become a parish priest in his home diocese. And he was able to cover the costs for his studies only with the help of others.

We may ask now, what the apostles and Fr. Jordan have received, what they should give generously. Both of them, the apostles and Fr. Jordan, started their mission empty-handed. They face great tasks, but with

empty pockets. Our, respectively my, situation in the new foundations is also somehow like that. Financially we totally depend on foreign aid and yet face great tasks. In this situation I also ask myself, what I have received, which I may give generously.

If I look at my own life, I may make myself aware, that a lot was given to me. I could grow up in orderly, healthy circumstances. My siblings and I myself are healthy, we had access to higher education and we have work.

If I take a look now at the local circumstances here, I hardly remember one family, which matches with these criteria: a) Orderly family situation; b) Health; c) Education and d) Work

Indeed, I have received a lot. There were innumerable people along the way, who helped me to become the person who I am now. Now it is up to me, also to become a companion and a helper for those people, who live in broken families, who cannot afford health care and education and who have no opportunity to earn their livelihood. To proclaim Jesus Christ as the savior of the world materializes also in being a companion for the people along the way in Christian charity.

Then this Bible quote has also a liberating effect. If I further interpret that word, I may also say, that I don't need to give more, than was given to me. I do not need to overburden myself due to exaggerated ideals, or I do not need to play a hero, which in fact I am not.

► Missionary in East Asian Foundation

My first and foremost assignment is being a formator for philosophy and theology students of the

East Asian Foundation. At present I am responsible for 5 students from Sri Lanka, 5 from China, 12 from Vietnam and 5 from the Philippines. In this regard I am also the superior of the Father Jordan Formation House in Talon, Amadeo, Philippines. And, as we know, the superior has to take care of everything. That means administration, maintenance work and gardening are also a part of my duties. I am also the contact person to the respective universities, where our brothers are enrolled.

Then there is the situation of our local parish of Amadeo. Our parish consists of ca. 30000 parishioners with one diocesan priest as a parish priest. We Salvatorians live in the village of Talon, which is 5km from the town of Amadeo and the parish church. Because of this situation I am the one who is doing most of the spiritual and sacramental services in our village and upon request also in the parish and other places.

I am also a board member of the association of the Religious in our diocese. That means I also cooperate with other congregations and keep contact to our diocese.

Our place is next to Tagaytay, which is famous for retreat and formation houses. Most of these houses are run by sisters. From that side we also receive many requests for masses, confessions and recollections.

As years pass on, we have also developed more and more apostolates in our own house. Our students are already doing a good job in that regard. If we consider, that we are a mere formation house, we have already achieved a lot. We take care of the local choir and the altar boys. Every summer vacation we have summer class for the local children. Occasionally we have recollection for the people of our village or the school graduates. Our most recent project is

the “Father-Jordan-Youth”. We organized a youth group, which is not parish youth, but really Salvatorian youth. I think, that is quite unique in the Salvatorian world. If not, I would be happy to hear about that.

I am also dealing with all the people who solicit help from us. All kinds of requests I come to hear. Most of these are about financial help for medicine, medical treatment and school expenses. At the moment we have also more than 20 scholars, whose school expenses we balance completely or partially to give them a chance to complete their school graduation. That’s also my duty to look after the scholars.

My tasks are very varied and until now I cannot complain about boredom.

► Why I am missionary...

I am not so sure, if ministering “in mission” is really more difficult than ministering in the home province. For example, in my case I would say, that it is much more nerve-racking to teach in a school in Munich, than to work with Asian candidates for priesthood. I think, it depends a lot on the person and on the concrete apostolate, if one experiences his apostolate as difficult or not. One will also find many different ministries in the mission countries. Some will be quite easy to handle, whereas others are highly challenging. Therefore I do not agree with the general statement, that ministering in the mission is more difficult than ministering in the home province.

My motivation to continue is first of all, that I can cope with my present assignment and I feel very



comfortable with it. It is a task, that makes a lot of sense, because it is directed towards future and it contains a lot of perspectives for the future. It is fascinating to experience how the development of the church in Asia, the development of our society and my personal biography go hand in hand with each other. So I am not doing something extravagant, but I may experience myself as a part of a greater whole. I experience a lot of affirmation from the side of the congregation, from my folks at home and from the local people here. At last I can say with gratitude, that I found a place and an assignment, where I am happy. One would not easily give up such a thing. That means also motivation.

There are also several answers to the question, how I “recharge my batteries”. First of all, I would like

to mention the work itself. There are so many beautiful experiences, which are already energizing as such. It is not that way, that the work is only sucking your energy, but you will also get back a lot from it.

The comradeship among the confreres means also a lot to me. At the end the confreres are the only people in the world who can really understand you, because we are in the same life situation. If this communication does not work, you will feel lonely in your community very fast or you will search for your satisfaction somewhere else outside of the community.

As a third point, I would like to mention gardening. It became my hobby in the last few years and it serves as a kind of physical balance, since I am doing virtually no sports. Our garden in Talon is more than half a hectare. There is a lot to do and to design. It is fascinating to observe how things are growing and shooting up in the tropics. I also find it exciting to raise tropical fruits, which one usually only knows from the supermarket, like for example banana, pineapple, papaya, mango, cacao, coffee or pepper. Or fruits, which we usually do not know at all, like for example guyabano, lanzones, guava, santol, jackfruit and dragon fruit.

From time to time I also like to make some music. I am playing the guitar and the organ.

The home vacation gives also a good push forward each time, because I meet a lot of people, who show great interest and give good support. That's much better than swimming in the Maledives or skiing in the Rocky Mountains.

Last but not least I'd like to mention the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. That is the place, where I especially

become aware, that everything depends on God's grace and not so much on my own efforts and plans. Each time I become aware of this dependency, I am fulfilled with gratitude towards God and with a feeling of security. I am grateful, that God holds and guides my life. I am grateful, that I am experiencing so many beautiful things and that I can contribute to the building-up of our mission.

I am not sure, if I am allowed to apply the image of "fire for the mission" to myself, because I do not consider myself as a very enthusiastic person. But the experience and the belief, that God guides me and uses me as his instrument, fulfills me with joy and allows me to proceed on this way.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means ...

To be a blessed person, who has the opportunity to be a part of a great work and to experience church as something really exciting.

To be a messenger between the cultures and the different local churches.

To raise the awareness, that everybody can be a missionary, never mind where he/she is on earth and what assignment he/she has.

Fr. Ignacy Antoni Pawlus, SDS

Fr. Ignacy Antoni Pawlus, was born on September 16, 1943, in Jasienica k. Bielska-Białej, Poland

He made his first profession on August 15, 1964, and was ordained a priest on June 14, 1970

He is member of the Poland Province and is a missionary in the Kaliningrad, Russia.



*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel.
It is the power of God for the salvation of
everyone who believes.” (Rom 1:16)*

► Mission Inspiration

“**F**or I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” (Rom 1:16). I had these words of St. Paul’s printed on the holy picture souvenir of my ordination and First Mass, as well as on the one issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of my ordination. I consider these words the motto of my priestly life continued within the Salvatorian Family.

I had chosen those words a few weeks before I was ordained in the Missionary Priests Church in Stradom, Krakow, on June 14, 1970. I needed to have a big stamp made with the text to be printed on the holy pictures that were to be souvenirs of my First Mass. I remember trying to find such a text in the Holy Scripture. I was then living in the old cloister in Zakrzówek, Krakow, and my confreres Andrzej Urbanski, Józef Musioł, Franciszek Rumiński and Eugeniusz Reśliński were helping me in it. I cannot explain really why my heart clung so fast to those few simple words of the Apostle of the Nations. Today I

have no doubts that such was the wish of the Holy Spirit. The words of St. Paul were most appropriate in the social context in which I was going to be ordained, and at the same time concisely expressed what I wanted to do in the Church as a priest and a Salvatorian.

In the year of my ordination it seemed as though communism was still strong in Poland. The communist party activists considered the Church as the primary target of attack. In those times making a career for oneself was possible only on condition that one joined the communist party. It was precisely the reason why many friends of mine had become party members and lost a living contact with Christ and his Church. It was then that St. Paul made me realize that one must never be ashamed of Christ or of his Gospel; on the contrary, one must remain faithful to him regardless of the circumstances. Moreover, I did see the sense of my own mission in St. Paul's words. Indeed, "being not ashamed" means preaching Christ's Gospel courageously and competently, both at the right and at the wrong time. Before I was called by the Lord to join the Salvatorians, I had intended to become a teacher of Polish. I felt it was a job I could do well, as I liked to explain things to people. When I was a novice, we would often talk about our religious future, and I sensed that preaching the Gospel was precisely the apostolate "for me." Astonishingly, that youthful intention of mine corresponded to the ideals of Father Jordan, to whom the word *docete* indicated the will of God as much as a moral imperative to follow, also an imperative to follow for his spiritual sons. While in the novitiate, I would ponder what form of preaching I could possibly undertake, and I found out that I could serve in the missionary apostolate and by giving parish retreats.

Only when I entered seminary, did I become incurably «infected» with the «virus of russophilism.»

► Missionary in Kaliningrad

Before I describe my ministry, I must make an important statement. Formally speaking, I am not a missionary, as Russia is considered a missionary country neither by the Holy See nor by the Russian Orthodox Church. Words such as “mission” or “missionary” are associated there with the practice of proselytizing undertaken by foreign missionaries on the canonical territory of the Orthodox Church. This peculiarity originates from the ambiguity of Russia itself. Back in the 19th century, the poet Tyutchev wrote that Russia can neither be comprehended by the human reason nor measured by the archine. Russia must be simply believed in.

I have been staying in Russia since 1991. For a period of fifteen years I worked in Eastern Siberia. For almost two years I ministered as the only Catholic priest working in Eastern Siberia and in the Far East. Since March 21, 2006, I have been serving in Kaliningrad.

What was I occupied with during my fifteen years long stay in Siberia and elsewhere? First of all, on September 15, 1991, I was appointed parish priest at the Assumption Parish in Irkutsk by Bp. Jozef Werth from Novyy Sibirsk, the first Apostolic Administrator for the Catholics in the eastern part of the Russian Federation, who also obligated me to create parish structures in the enormous territory stretching from Krasnoyarsk to Vladivostok. For that reason, the Salvatorians have had their share in the pioneering work on the revival of Church

life in the towns of Irkutsk, Angarsk, Usolye-Sibirskoye, Brack, Slyudyanka, Krasnoyarsk, Ulan-Ude, Chita and Vladivostok, as well as in the villages of Viershina, Maysk and Pichtinsk in the district of Irkutsk.

At that time pastoral work consisted essentially in finding the dispersed Catholics, in spreading germs of parish community and in satisfying the spiritual needs of the particular communities through regular pastoral visits. Their primary purpose was to provide religious education for the faithful and to prepare them for the sacraments and for administering them, as well as to visit the sick and their families at Christmas time. Additionally, town parishes tended to become charity centers in time.

Due to the long distance between Irkutsk and the pastoral centers entrusted to the care of Salvatorians, we had to use all the possible means of transportation, sometimes we traveled by plane, and sometimes we rode in a horse driven cart or in a sleigh.

The core of the parish communities that came into being in Eastern Siberia was Catholics with German and Polish roots. Other nationalities were in minority. It was only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that Armenian Catholics from Georgia who arrived in Siberia in order to find better living conditions started to attend church services. Due to the multinational character of the Siberian parishes the first language of the liturgy was Russian. As we wanted to respect the right of the national minorities to pray in their own languages, we would celebrate the Holy Mass also in German, in Polish and sometimes in Lithuanian. Occasionally the Armenians would mark their presence at the liturgy by taking part in the prayer of the faithful and by saying the Lord's Prayer in their native language.



The number of parishioners in particular parishes in Siberia varies depending on the place in question. In the villages and small towns there are usually a few dozen of them in a single parish, while in the big cities the number can reach a few hundred.

While ministering as parish priest in Irkutsk I had the opportunity to cooperate directly with other confreres from the Salvatorian Family (Fr. Dariusz Kubica, Fr. Dariusz Kopiec, Fr. Tadeusz Dobrowolski

and Fr. Dariusz Kozbial) and with some diocesan priests (Fr. Wojciech Drozdowicz from Warsaw and Fr. Miloš Krakovsky from Spiš, Slovakia), as well as with the Sisters of Bethany (s. Bernadeta, s. Bozena, s. Dorota and s. Wioletta). It was owing to their help that, with every year, the Irkutsk Parish and the Deanery for which I was responsible gradually quickened their pace of growth despite the numerous obstacles that we encountered on our way. In the case of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary Parish in Irkutsk, the biggest difficulty lay in that the parish church, taken over by the State in 1938, had become an organ music hall in 1978. The Catholics were merely granted the right to celebrate the Holy Mass there on Sundays and on Church holidays, while two small rooms were assigned as a paid chapel and a paid religious education room. The price for renting those rooms was growing every year. During the final two years of my ministry as parish priest there it reached the sum of 10000 roubles a month, an equivalent of five hundred dollars. While it might seem an insignificant sum of money if judged by the European standards, in Irkutsk, where the Sunday collections would amount to 300-500 roubles, it was exorbitant. Additionally, the price of petrol started to go up too, and so our pastoral trips became very costly. The foreign financial aid that we received through the Bishop covered only part of our expenses. It was only thanks to the kindness and generosity of American Salvatorians that the Irkutsk Parish survived that difficult time. For many consecutive years they would give me the opportunity to come to them in order to offer retreats and deliver Sunday homilies. In that way the material and financial needs of the parish and its branches were provided for.

It is a known fact that all the pioneers have the assistance of the Holy Spirit and that they show a special enthusiasm with which they approach their work and which spreads onto the people who make up the parish community. Therefore, despite the difficult conditions in which our pastoral work took place, the religiosity and the number of Catholics in Irkutsk were growing gradually. It was one of the reasons why Irkutsk was the second city in the Asiatic part of the Russian Federation in which Bp. Jerzy Mazur began his dynamic, yet unfortunately short-lived activity. At first he ministered as Auxiliary Bishop to the Apostolic Administrator in Novyy Sibirsk, but later he was appointed by Pope John Paul II the new Apostolic Administrator of Eastern Siberia, and then became the Ordinary Bishop of the Diocese of St. Joseph in Irkutsk. It seems that together with his departure at the beginning of April 2002 the Church life in the Diocese as if came to a standstill. It is understandable. As long as there were two bishops in Russia, each of them was best in his field. When the number of bishops grew, people knew them by their fruits, and thus the ground for comparisons and appraisals arose. Thus Cyryl Klimowicz, the new Ordinary Bishop of Irkutsk, faced the difficult task of enlivening the Diocese of St. Joseph, which came to a standstill while awaiting the return of Bp Jerzy Mazur for a year.

Since March 21, 2006, I have been working in Kaliningrad. Such a name was given to the famous city of Koenigsberg after the second world war. It is commonly recognized that the Kaliningrad Oblast is the biggest center of Catholics in Russia. They are the people who settled in that area after the war, having left the nearby republics of the USSR. Yet the number of those who

were baptized in the Catholic Church, but do not practise their religion is bigger than the number of practising Catholics. Such is the post-communist heritage, which is accompanied by rising material expectations and by a weakening of interest in religious values.

In Kaliningrad, there are currently two parishes: The Holy Family Parish and St. Adalbert Parish. Taking into consideration the nationality of the parishioners and the language used in the liturgy, the former parish is referred to as the Russian-Lithuanian one and the latter as the Russian-Polish one.

My place of work is St. Adalbert Parish. St. Adalbert was a missionary who arrived in Eastern Prussia at the end of the 10th century and suffered a martyr's death there. Owing to its name, St. Adalbert Parish became the heir to the oldest Catholic parish of the old Königsberg. Unfortunately, the old St. Adalbert Church did not survive. The new church is situated outside the old city area. This is a truly new church, as it was consecrated in the year 2001. In my estimation, our parish community numbers 1500 practising Catholics.

In our apostolic team, there are four priests (Fr. Jerzy Steckiewicz, Parish Priest; Fr. Michail Bushujev, Curate; Fr. Piotr Fidermak, curate; and Fr. Ignacy Pawlus, SDS), three Nazareth Sisters (s. Jeremia, s. Nikodema and s. Rosamaria) and three lay catechists. Each of us has his or her own apostolic task and strives to perform it as skillfully as possible, helping one another if need be. Some of us, for instance, must sometimes temporarily leave Russia due to the problems concerning the Russian visa. In such cases we take over the duties of the person who was forced to leave.

On Sunday we celebrate the Holy Mass six times (three times in Russian, twice in Polish and one time in German). On weekdays, a morning and evening Mass is celebrated. Before each Mass an “Eucharistic Hour” takes place. Confession is offered before the Mass and on demand. The children and the youth are provided with religious education by the Sisters and by the lay catechists. The priests carry on individual or group preparation of adults for the Holy Sacraments, and their duties include also visitation of the sick, assisting in funerals, pastoral visits and work in the parish office.

Among my duties are also some activities I enjoy very much, namely leading the Fatima services between May and October, publishing a monthly parish magazine (8 pages of A/4 format), pastoral care of families, activities in the discussion club, as well as submitting articles to the local newspaper entitled *Juristy i Niedwizymost* twice a month. Apart from that, I give parish retreats and retreats for priests. Every year, I organize spring and autumn “spiritual workshops.”

As a Salvatorian, I am member of the Elblag community, which I occasionally visit. I cannot do it more frequently, because each trip involves having two new stamps in my passport, and therefore there are fewer and fewer blank pages in it.

► Why I am missionary...

I have an unshakeable certainty that the Savior wants me to be in Russia. As long as I have sufficient health and strength, I shall serve Him among the Russian Catholics. My batteries are charged very simply: I sit in

the chapel in front of the Holy Sacrament and I speak to the “Great Chief”!

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

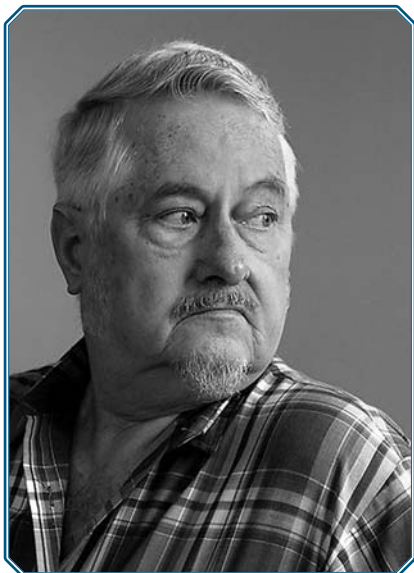
“Being a Salvatorian who works on a mission today means to me *relying on the help of the Divine Savior rather than on my own abilities or good ideas. It means being happy with the accomplishments of my confreres and never considering everything has been done. It means never disturbing anybody in his life or work. It means being willing to help without counting for being thanked. Being able to admit my own mistakes and my dubious convictions. Showing my Salvatorian identity not so much with the habit I wear, but rather with the way of living and the way of being...*”

Br. James Leo Rieden, SDS

Br. James Leo Rieden, was born on December 6, 1935 in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, USA.

He made his first profession on March 19, 1952.

He is a member of the USA Province and is a missionary in the East Asian Foundation.



“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”
(Mt 25,40)

► Mission Inspiration

My favorite scripture passage has changed with time and place and with further reading and meditation. I once used the quote: “if this happens in the green wood, what will happen in the dry?” Or another favorite was from the psalms: “One thing I have asked, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” If I have to name one quote that has nudged me over many years it would be from Matthew 25: “...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me (vs. 35-36)... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (vs. 40)

This passage seems to be the one by which we will all be judged: the so called “separation of the sheep from the goats.” And it is perhaps so many years spent in third and fourth world countries that has made me aware of the hungry, the thirsty etc. There is always this frustration

at my inability to do something on a larger scale or world wide basis to change the lives of the people I find in poverty, so ministry for me seems to take on a one person at a time approach.

► Missionary in South East Asia

I was called out of retirement and asked if I would consider a new mission in the Philippines, and after a Lent spent in prayer and discernment I agreed to accept the offer. Numerous phone calls and e-mails to people with experience prepared me for this new ministry. “Just what does an old timer in residence” do in a new mission assignment?? Here in the Philippines we have a new and young community with members coming from many countries of south east Asia.? Most need a year in school in an intense English program to prepare them to enter our major seminary and begin their classes in philosophy. While I do not teach these classes, I am available afternoons and evenings for reading, pronunciation drills, and assistance with class work for the coming day. English is our common language and the students are discouraged from using their own language so that they may master the new language. Even meal time becomes an opportunity to learn and use new vocabulary.

The second aspect of my ministry is the presence in the community of someone who has been a religious for many years and can share his experiences with the new members. Stories are a great part of teaching and perhaps the example of the lived religious life is one of the best teachers! Newcomers have the opportunity to participate in the spiritual and liturgical life of the community with

others who have lived it for many years. Having two or three professed members in a formation house also allows for the sharing of ideas, planning, and mutual support.

► Why I am a missionary...

It is a joy to be part of a young and growing community. The spirit of the young people fills me with hope as I watch them experience the call to religious life for the first time and accept Fr. Jordan in their lives. Their enthusiasm inspires and enlivens me. Most of them come from a culture where elders are not looked upon as a burden, but as a blessing: the wisdom figures, the keepers of traditions, the tellers of the stories. And I



hope I do not bore them with my stories when I begin one of my “there was this old brother who once...” or “when I was a young student we did...” And they humor me when I try to sing along with them in their own languages, be it Chinese or Vietnamese, and I hum rather than attempt to wrap my tongue around the tonal aspects of their language.

I have been able to continue my interest in bonsai and soon after arriving found a club that made me feel most welcome. We meet weekly and I am enjoying the opportunity to study under two masters the art of tropical bonsai culture. It is much different than the traditions used with the trees from a temperate climate. Another joy has been the opportunity for me to explore the culture of a new part of the world where so many cultures meet and each one has contributed to make up the Filipino culture. There are elements from China, Indonesia, Spain and India, and yes, even from the USA, which was a presence in this part of the world for many years, the common use of English being a result of this. A trip to the markets and bazaars opens up so many new worlds for me. It is hard to absorb it all, but I always come back home with something to share, if it is only a story, or perhaps an new and exotic (to me) fruit or vegetable.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

For me to be a Salvatorian in mission means to strive to keep the fire, the vision alive. I see these young men from many different countries imbued with the spirit of Fr. Jordan and ready to become missionaries themselves,

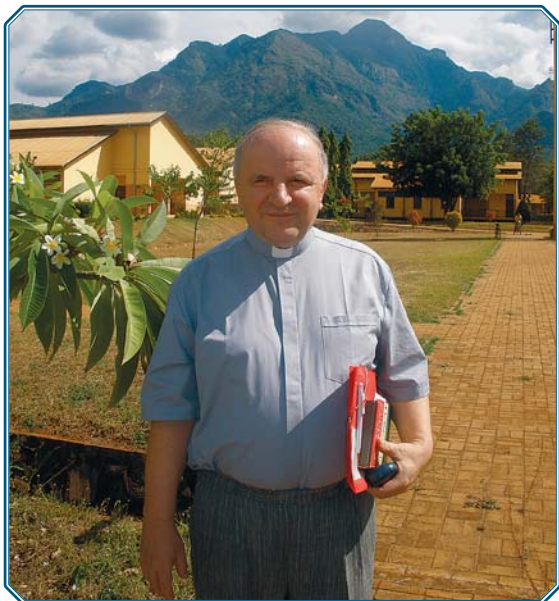
in their own homelands, or to go on mission themselves. The quote so often used by Fr. Jordan “that all may know the Savior” is what inspires me, and I hope those with whom I live and work, to seek to spread the gospel and its social message to those parts of the world yet untouched by the message brought by Jesus.

Fr. Julian Bednarz SDS

Fr. Julian Bednarz, was born on January 1st 1951 in Węciórka k. Myślenic, Poland.

He made his first profession on August 15th 1967 and was ordained a priest on April 17th 1977.

He is member of the Polish Province and is a missionary in Salvatorian Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Morogoro, Tanzania.



*“... and leaving everything behind,
he got up and followed him.” (Luke 5, 28)*

► Mission Inspiration

My favorite biblical text is Luke 5, 28: “And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him.” This verse comes from the description of the call of Levi (Matthew). Similar verses can also be found in Mark: “he got up and followed him” (2, 14) and Matthew: “he got up and followed him” (9, 9). As we see there is omitted however a significant detail, i.e. that in response to Jesus’ call “Follow me!” Levi “left everything.”

To leave everything, get up and follow Him has happened not just once, at the beginning of my way of Salvatorian vocation, when helped by other people I heard the call of Our Savior: “Follow me!” I believe that later, already as a “grown up” Salvatorian, I faced the necessity of “leaving everything” several times while asked by my superiors or when they already made decision. In the spirit of faith I consider each one of those decisions a new form of Christ’s call: “Follow me!” Responding to those decisions I had to relinquish for many years the moment of undertaking missionary work. On another

occasion I had to leave work in the field of formation of young Salvatorians in order to coordinate this formation on international level, but without daily contact with confreres in this stage of religious life. “To leave everything” also meant to leave or at least to go far away from the well known circle of friends and collaborators in one place and then to make new friends somewhere else, sometimes even in another country or on another continent. To leave everything, get up and follow Him was for me a very “Salvatorian” text since Father Jordan desired his sons to be universal and to trust in Divine Providence. The universalism I see in this text, first of all as readiness to undertake apostolic work wherever the superiors wish to send me and second: as vocation to be ready to accept whatever kind of work they will consider necessary in a given time and place and possible for me to undertake. Thanks to God’s Providence during my initial formation and later on in apostolic work I have met quite a lot of good and zealous Salvatorians, who helped me to develop in my vocation and through their gifts, involvement and readiness in collaboration they helped me to fulfill my apostolic tasks as best as I was able to. It was so in Poland, in Rome and in Morogoro and it is so also today, while again I am in Morogoro. I believe it will be so in the future, too.

To leave everything, get up and follow Him also inspires me to a certain personal form of practice of the spirit of religious poverty. In the beginning of the third year of my temporary religious profession I was called to serve in army for two years. After I had arrived to the barracks I had to change my civil clothes and wear uniform, I was given a place in the barracks (that is a place in the lecture hall and at the lunchroom, and a bed in the

bedroom). Besides that I received a gun and a backpack with the most necessary things. So I lived for two years not owning anything more than I wore and could carry on a given day in my backpack. And even those things were not mine, but belonged to the “Motherland,” which let me use them, while I was serving the country. Already before I was released from the army I realized, that what was possible in serving the nation, should also be possible in service of Our Savior. As a soldier of Christ I am called by Him to take no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. Although the beginnings were not easy, finally I got used to “owning” only what was most necessary and could be carried in the journey sack. I believe, that owning just what is essential and



avoiding unnecessary shopping, makes easier, on every level of my religious life and Salvatorian ministry, such immediate “leaving everything, getting up and following Him” wherever He wishes to send me through decision of my superiors.

► Missionary in Tanzania

My apostolic work can be described as missionary and academic work. It is a missionary work because of the place, since I work at the Salvatorian Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Morogoro, Tanzania. But at the same time it is an academic work, since I am lecturer and do academic research about the history of Catholic missions with emphasis on the Salvatorian ones.

At the Institute I work with Salvatorians and religious belonging to the neighboring formation houses as well as with people employed by the Institute (including priests, religious sisters and laity). This academic year (2008/2009) the Salvatorians, members of the Staff Community in Morogoro, are more numerous than guests-lecturers of the community. We hope that one day the number of the Salvatorians employed at our Institute will increase.

Together with other lecturers and assisting staff I work mostly in the field of intellectual formation of native candidates to the Priesthood, coming from diverse orders and congregations, which send them to our Institute and a number of religious brothers and sisters, who also attend lectures in philosophy and theology together with the candidates to the Priesthood, or study other subjects offered at the Institute. This academic year (2008/2009)

we have about 270 students. Most of them, especially students of philosophy, are Tanzanians, although theology students coming from neighboring African countries or from India make up even 20-30 % at some courses. Students of theology from India prepare themselves not only for ordination, but also for the future missionary work in Africa. We have now 27 Salvatorians studying at our Institute (including two from the Republic of Congo).

Since two years my basic form of apostolic work in Morogoro consists of preparing and giving lectures, and evaluating students on the basis of their semester assignments, mid-semester written test and written final exam. In general I have ten to thirteen lecture hours per semester. Topics cover social and human sciences (for ex. History and Culture of Islam, History of Civilizations, Social Anthropology) - further ecumenism, pneumatology and non-Christian religions. Besides that from time to time I prepare and give conferences on themes regarding the history and charism of our Society for our SDS-scholastics. I am also spiritual director of two students from another formation house. Asked by the chief editor of the "Salwator" monthly magazine published by the Polish Province of the Salvatorians in 2008 I began writing brief articles on missiology and missiography.

My apostolic ministry in Morogoro has a weekly and yearly rhythm. In the first case it regards obviously our daily timetable. My day begins at 6 a.m. and ends between 10 and 11 p.m. About 6.30 a.m. I begin my morning prayers, which conclude with a concelebrated Holy Mass. The time from 8.30 a.m. until 12.45 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. until 4 p.m. is dedicated for the lectures.

I have no lectures on Saturday, since they are given only in Swahili language. During the morning or afternoon hours, when I do not lecture, I prepare lectures, correct students' assignments or study documents regarding history of our missions, especially in China/Shawu. The rest of the day is dedicated to additional prayer-time, recreation and reading. I dedicate much more time to prayer and recreation on Sunday and on feast days. Personally I always liked very much the systematic pace of work, prayer and recreation and I am glad, that I have this possibility also here, in Morogoro Staff Community.

And my ministry in the mentioned above "annual rhythm" is as follows: in Morogoro I work from the beginning of September until almost the end of April that is during two consecutive semesters. Then I go to Europe, where I dedicate two months for academic work in archives or university libraries. In July and August (since 1987) I work during vacation in pastoral ministry.

► In order to "recharge my batteries"...

Up to this day I officially worked about five months (since February 11th until June 30th 1986) in parish pastoral ministry. Later on, when I was assigned to academic work at the Theological Academy in Warsaw, I did a part-time work as a chaplain of the community of sisters in a little town near Warsaw. In other times I volunteered for pastoral ministry, especially on weekends, and sometimes I also gave parish retreats.

But since 1987 I began work during vacation substituting priests in parishes, first in Germany in Mogunze Diocese and then also in France, in Quimper

Diocese in Brittany. The local pastor in Germany was very grateful for my ministry and so he urged me to come again. As years were going by the parishioners and successive pastors got used to my vacation visits. Of course during vacation in a parish there is much less work than normal. The responsibilities are limited to the sacramental ministry and two hours daily at the office. It is similar in France. The only difference is, that the Eucharist is always in the morning and instead of duty hours at the parish office I visit the sick at the hospital or at the House for Seniors.

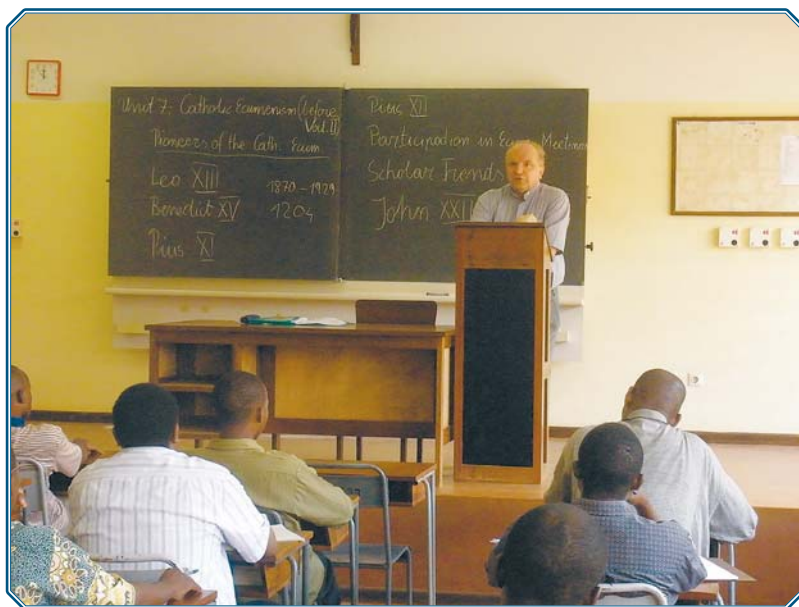
Someone could ask me though, when I find time to “recharge my batteries,” to take rest, since I replace others during summer vacations? To this question I can respond, that such as in the past the Sunday pastoral ministry or series of spiritual retreats consisted for me the way of recreation, of focusing attention on something different than studying lecture notes and obligatory readings, so today the change of place, continent, climate, surroundings is for me the way of recreation. During about these sixty days each day I have a lot of free time, which I dedicate to reading theological or scientific news, to taking walk in the forest of Odenwald in Hessa, Germany or along the rocky, almost desolate seashore of Brittany, France, when I can contemplate whispering wind and waves of the Atlantic Ocean striking granite rocks at the tide. For me it is also time for prayer and reading contemporary literature. It is also the time to visit befriended families that invite me for dinner at their homes or at favorite restaurants, often with beautiful view on green hills and flowery meadows. Moreover on summer evenings in July and August I like to watch the starry sky above Europe and count “shooting stars.” Before

returning to Morogoro from vacation, for few days I visit Zermatt in the Swiss Alps, to enjoy the cog railway trip on Gornergrat and the view of Matterhorn, “my most beautiful” mount in Alps, which captivated me already thirty years ago. It looks most beautiful when showered with rays of the rising or declining sun. Whenever I have a chance to be there and when the weather is nice, for me it is an experience similar to the one of Peter, Jacob and John at Mount Tabor. Then in silence I go down to the valley and to the airport to return to the place, which now I can call “my” home, “my” community, keeping in mind and heart the will of returning there again another year, to enjoy the view of “my mountain.”

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

For me to be a Salvatorian conscious of one’s own mission means to be continuously ready to hear and follow our Savior’s call, whenever He calls “Come follow Me!” I can hear Him calling, while noticing the signs of times. It can be expressed by appointments or official decisions of representatives of the Church, superiors or even by requests of the faithful, who are the people of God and are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Then as a Salvatorian conscious of my vocation to universal ministry in service of our Savior and His Kingdom, I should always be ready to “leave everything” and immediately “get up and follow Him”, whenever and wherever He calls me.

For me to realize today our Salvatorian mission means also to be open to undertake new apostolic tasks, which in a given place and time superiors consider more



fruitful forms of preaching the faith in the One God and witnessing to Jesus Christ, the only Savior, sent by the Father. At the same time I firmly trust, that entrusting me with such tasks, my superiors will wisely take into account my human talents and limits.

For me to be today conscious of my Salvatorian mission means also to be really interested in apostolic works of the entire Salvatorian Family, wherever its members live. It also means to study with attention our heritage, i.e. the life and work of Father Jordan, the charism and the history of the Society. My particular interest I focus on studying the missionary activity of Father Jordan and the history of our missions in the past and today. I discover that God has sent us many zealous missionaries

but their achievements are not remembered anymore, but a few. Their example of Salvatorian apostolic zeal and numerous sacrifices, made while faithfully serving Our Savior, can encourage at least some confreres from today's Salvatorian generation to follow their steps.

Fr. Miguel Grobben, SDS

Fr. Miguel Grobben, was born on January 14, 1938, in Neerpelt, Limburg, Belgium.

He made his first profession on September 8, 1958, and was ordained a priest on June 29, 1964.

He is member of the Belgium Province and is a missionary in Caracas - Venezuela.



“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord”. (Luke 4,18)

► Mission Inspiration

“**T**he Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke,4,18). This Biblical quote inspires me because it is by letting myself being guided by the Divine Savior that I feel identified with His mission. The mission of every Salvatorian is to announce the Gospel by all means, by preaching the Gospel and its spirituality through education and catechism. It is also an invitation to put it into practice through works of liberation, health, teaching, opting for the poor and for the youth, as well as a commitment for justice and peace.

► Missionary in Caracas

I will talk about the ministry I worked on until last September (2008). On that date there was a change in my apostolic ministry.

In 1977 the Community proposed that I buy a small house with Fr. José Craet, from where we could serve two different villages. José was already serving in the *Divino Niño* Chapel in the neighborhood of *Niño Jesús*, which is north of the house we bought and I was to start my ministry in the neighborhoods of *Vista Hermosa* and *Nuevo Horizonte* that are in the most southern part of the neighborhood.

We lived “in” the neighborhood, in the midst of the people and lived like them. At noon we used to go home to have lunch with all the Community of *El Amparo*. The inhabitants of *Vista Hermosa* and *Nuevo Horizonte* were and still are very poor. I celebrated the Sunday Mass in a classroom in three different schools. Before I arrived in



the neighborhood there was already a community of the Sisters of the Guardian Angel. Some other missionaries from the North American Congregation Maryknoll arrived in the same place with some priests and lay people. With them and the sisters we were able to form a pastoral team and worked with the Christian communities there, using the theology of liberation.

Few years later, the construction of the community house – with a chapel and rooms at the service of the people – became a reality. Some of the rooms were built to give some workshops for adults. It was also a place where the sisters could give courses for young people and adults.

Trying to solve one the greatest needs of the neighborhood, we built *La Casa de la Salud*, a place where we could look after the elderly. On the building's top floor the elderly have a home where they can come and spend the day. Working jointly with a healthcare center that is in front of the house, we started providing several medical services to the population, such as general medical service, dentistry, laboratory, x rays, endoscopies for gastrointestinal problems, etc. We also tried to improve the housing situation of many poor families by changing the roof sheets to protect them from the rain and by changing the earth floor of some houses for a cement one.

Once a month the poorest families or the neediest ones came to the parish; we listened to them and tried to help them solve some of their problems. We also helped, as much as possible, two educational centers for children who were not in the regular educational system. In all these works we lived, prayed and served the poorest according to the mission of Jesus, as expressed in Lk.4, 18.

► Why I am missionary...

I do believe that it is in community life where I recharge my batteries. And I say this because in times of crisis, that I have been through time and time again, I felt I was almost living away from the community. By community life I understand all that characterizes a Salvatorian community: praying together, eating together, going on outings together, as well as the retreats, dialogues, etc.

Who motivates me? It is said: POOR PEOPLE EVANGELIZE US. And I have many examples of people that encourage me to move on. I am thinking of Juan Beda González for example. He is my age. I met him when I first arrived in Venezuela and I also met his parents and his family while he was working in a small business that he sued to have on his property. One evening he was robbed and got shot in the back. He spent a year in the hospital and after that was sent home a “paralytic” for life. He lives alone and for forty years he has passed from the bed to the wheelchair and from the wheelchair to bed. He almost never goes out. I visit him very often, at least once a week, and he is the one who encourages me when I feel tired and in despair because of the situation of poverty and violence we see in the neighborhood. He never moans in spite of all his pains. He always conveys joy and happiness and is also a man of faith. There are other examples of families and committed people in the Church and in other social works that inspire me to continue in the mission.

I also feel encouraged by the Savior, Jesus Christ, and by His Mother, Mary. She, in her prayer “*the Magnificat*,” introduces God to us as the God of the poor and humble ones.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

...to be part of the Salvatorian Family, to thank God for our Founder. It means to be part of the local and universal Church. It is belonging to the Salvatorian community in which I live. It is identifying oneself with the “mission of Jesus” according to the “Salvatorian” way



and putting it into practice with all the means that the Spirit inspires. It is living with great joy and simplicity and being an apostle in the style of Jesus, that is, someone who gives himself in service to others.

Fr. Paulus Wey, SDS

Fr. Paulus Wey, was born on April 28, 1938, in Gunzwil, Sursee, Switzerland.

He made his first profession on December 8, 1959, and was ordained a priest on June 28, 1964.

He is member of the Swiss Province and is a missionary in the Congo Missionary Pro-Province.



“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you” (Mt 28:16-20).

► Mission Inspiration

The above biblical account which more than any other has inspired me is Matthew 28: 16-20. *“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.”* I have two older brothers who are missionaries in Zimbabwe. The first one is a builder of churches, schools, hospitals and dams. The second one is a Bethlehem priest, parish priest and missionary of villages.

► Missionary in Ntita Mission

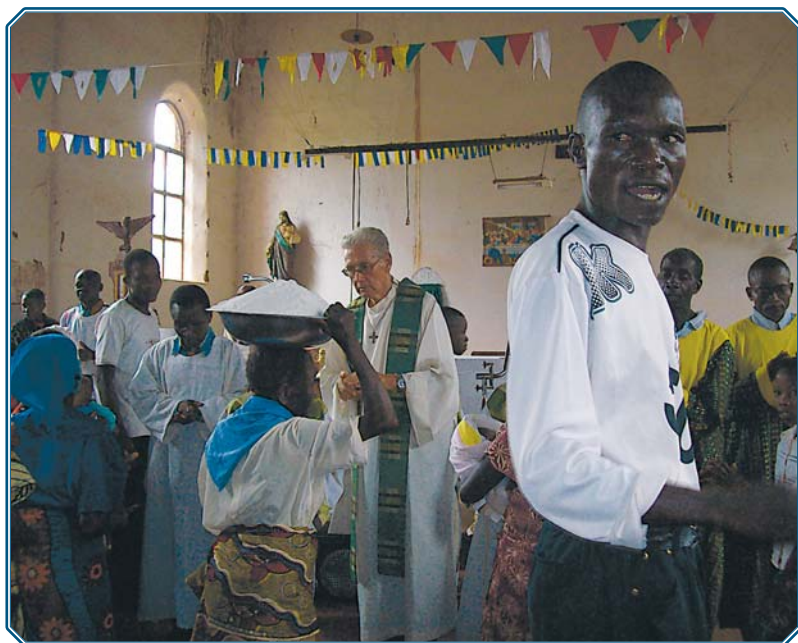
My vocation is to announce the Good News to every inhabitant of the area entrusted to me, Kapanga. It is bush, half the size of Switzerland with one hundred twenty villages; when I first arrived only twenty had a Christian Community and ten a school.

In collaboration with pastoral lay people and the Legion of Mary in each village, I have been able to add in a

few years a hundred new communities, baptize thousands and thousands of new Christians, build new chapels in the bush, and increase the number of schools.

Each village has its own chapel, a large number in long-standing materials (metal sheets and cement). And each village has one or two catechists, a community parish council, a Legion of Mary group, and a choir for liturgical songs.

I visit village by village for one or two months; afterwards I go back to the community which is located at the central Mission called Ntita. I'm fed and accommodated by the Christians. According to the community size, I stay for one or two or even five days.



Once a year catechumens and babies are baptized and marriages are blessed.

I visit schools and teachers and at night choirs sing around the fire. Also, I meet with the council and, of course, the Legion of Mary group.

► Why I am missionary...

After fifteen years in Kapanga, I was appointed parish priest at Sandoa to replace Fr Cyrille, who was ill, in order to build a new parish church in the city of Sandoa. Later another area of the bush around Sandoa with ninety-five villages was entrusted to me. Nine years later, I returned to Kapanga to take responsibility once again for the villages I used to minister to. I have never grown tired of visiting the communities. Even now, at 70 years old, I'm doing the same pastoral work.

I can work at my own pace, extend or shorten trips, and go back to the central Mission Ntita for two or three weeks rest.

The welcome in the villages is warm and full of joy. It gives me courage and strength. Pastoral lay people have diplomas from higher studies in Lubumbashi and they are a great help. They visit villages while I'm away or absent. The same with the catechists who are formed in our catechetical centre in Ntita.

During my stay at the Mission in Ntita, I share my life with the other confreres. I teach some courses to the postulants (our future Salvatorian confreres) and to the catechists who meet at some sessions organized by the catechetical center. If possible, we have a recollection each month together with the Salvatorian sisters.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

According to our Salvatorian charism, we are a universal and apostolic Society. Therefore, we are open to all countries and cultures. There is no priority or exclusion of any country. We are already well rooted in the Congo Missionary Pro-Province with a large number of indigenous vocations. Therefore, we are not dying as in European Provinces but growing up. Young people are taking over and they are well formed and motivated. For example: SANDOA, KALAMBA, MANIKA, etc., are totally in the hands of Congolese confreres. KAPANGA still has three expatriates but two of them are retired. The other two are Fr Martin (Dutch) who is 80 years old and Fr Jaak (Belgium) who is 60 years old and completely active in the parish and in building new churches.

Therefore, to be a Salvatorian in mission today is to prepare the handover to the members of the young Provinces and to remain open to new tasks. We are planning to go to Cameroun (2nd foundation), to Mozambique, to Comoros, etc.

The number of benefactors in Europe has fallen to almost zero. We are using the proceeds from the sale of old seminaries (in Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Austria) for the formation of our young. What will happen when all these sources of income are used up? May God provide!!

Father Paulo José Floriani, SDS

Fr. Paulo José Floriani, sds was born on August 18, 1972, in Jaraguá do Sul, SC, Brazil.

He made his first profession on January 16, 1994, and was ordained a priest on June, 26, 1999.

He is member of the Brazilian Province and is a missionary in Mozambique.



“You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last;” (John 15:16)

► Mission Inspiration

“**Y**ou did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last;” (John 15:16). Through the spirituality that pervades the Gospel of John, the experience of being closely united to the Savior and nourished by his project and his testimony, sends us out to make known this same witness to the whole world. We freely give that which we receive, certain that the Lord makes us capable for this service. This mission seeks to offer to all human beings the possibility of participating in the eternal life offered by Jesus, life that transforms us and makes us able to bear the fruits of love. These fruits last and lead to “a new heaven and a new earth.” It is worthwhile to spend our life and lose it in this experience and this service, placing all our trust in the loving providence of the Creator.

► Missionary in Chókwè, Mozambique

I am now working in Mozambique, in the District of Chókwè, Province of Gaza, in the Diocese of Xai Xai,

an area of mission for the Brazilian Salvatorian Province. We are responsible for two parishes here, Imaculada Conceição of Chókwè and Nossa Senhora Rainha do Mundo of Chilembene. The area of mission is comprised of 36 communities and various places where the faithful meet for reading the Word of God and to have the experience of a ministerial Church.

After the independence of this country, a former Portuguese colony, the Church was persecuted and marginalized, because it was considered to be linked to the colonial regime. It revived after this experience, based on its search to be a Church with a more Mozambican face, structured through lay ministries. Our mission is centered on helping to train leaders who can assume the tasks of being Church, collaborating with the growth of this ministerial model and with the consolidation of a new society. Thus, besides the Sacraments, we devote our efforts to training for the different services in the daily life of the communities: liturgy, catechism, youth groups, and preparing ministers of the Eucharistic, of Hope and of the Word, community animators, among others.

We cannot forget that we are in a new country, with its own culture and history. Our journey is rather recent among the people. Thus, we are still learning the best way to be a presence and to collaborate, based on our charism in this particular place. Given this perspective, we are trying to move forward, united with the Salvatorian Sisters who are working here in the Diocese of Chimoio.

Together, we want to be a Salvatorian presence in this country and find ways to strengthen the Salvatorian Family in Mozambique. We are studying how best to begin the formation of Lay Salvatorians, so that we can

learn with our Mozambican brothers and sisters the best means to collaborate with this Church.

As in so many places in the world, the greatest difficulty we encounter centers on the available human resources. We are few and the fields are very large. As in the Gospel, we continue to ask the Lord of the harvest to send more workers for the harvest. In the area where we are located, there is a former Catechism Center inactive for some time. We hope that one day, based on our strength and the meaning of our charism, we can serve the local Church and the People of God who are here in this place, fulfilling the important task of forming free Christians who are aware of their mission in the Church and in society. We still lack the arms and minds who want



to collaborate in building and making this project work, as well as those for the formation that already exists. We encourage youth in a particular way, to enter this experience, because certainly they will be enriched and will give a new meaning to the religious consecration they embrace. It is worthwhile to live this experience and to grow in the universal dimension of our Christian faith and our Salvatorian mission!

If we are always more nourished by the mission spirit that stirred the heart of our Founder, we surely will breathe in the new air and our Lord will give us new vocations, to help us carry forward in history this gift we receive from calling ourselves Salvatorians, taking on and living our vocation and mission today.

► Why I am a missionary...

Living in mission is to receive the beauty and the depth of our experience of meeting Jesus the Savior. He invites us to live with him, to put aside our false securities and learn to live from the insecurity of the journey, where we do not always find a place to lay our head. We encounter many surprises on the road that make us rethink our presence in the world and our comprehension of God. From these encounters, our Lord teaches us about the Kingdom, about the way we can collaborate with the Creator in his work. Thus, we grow as disciples and in the following of Jesus the Savior, inspiring us to witness to him.

So, for me, having the privilege of missionary experience beyond borders is to enter into the insecurity of the journey. It is certainly an unparalleled school for

personal growth. It prepares us to be capable of dealing with our mistakes and to learn from them. It invites us to look more for Jesus and to deepen our relationship with him. It asks more real prayer of us, and meetings with the Master. It sends us on an adventure of trusting fully in the loving Providence of God, because often he acts when we most need him, like a generous mother. We are nourished by the Spirit and by a life-giving breath that gives meaning for living. We seek to inhabit and be nourished by this spirit that keeps us firm and strong in this experience, generating deep happiness in being able to live this gift, liberating us from those ties that can hold us back from experiencing the freedom of the sons of God, as the Apostle Paul expresses.



Having the experience of mission is breaking geographical barriers and those preconceptions that inhabit our awareness to embrace the universality of our religious life. We then perceive ourselves as guests in someone's house, open to hearing and seeking to be understood, in the certainty that other people are also our brothers/sisters in faith and on the journey. We plunge into other possibilities for living this faith and confronting other realities. In all of this, can the battery remain depleted? Not at all, it will always be fully charged.

Can there be a more compelling project for those who follow, seeking to drink of the apostolic dynamic, as Father Jordan proposes? I want to use this opportunity once more to encourage all to embrace with heart and mind, lovingly and permanently, the cause of mission. Let us open the doors and windows of our Provinces and of our lives to this possibility. Surely that will help us to grow and to strengthen our journey as Salvatorians.

Who knows, perhaps one day we may grow in inter-provincial collaboration, enriched by the gift of diversity. Mission lands help us to see how this closeness can be healthy and transform us into sources of Christian witness. We have every possibility for growth in this way, and sometimes we waste energy when we should be masters of the ability to join forces as a way of being and living Christianity. May our good God, our Savior, illumine and strengthen us on this journey, so that we can take new steps and be new forms of presence in mission territories, witnessing to the goodness and the love of God, our Savior, in all the ways and means that his love inspires in us.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

For me, being a Salvatorian in mission means to have the possibility of creating anew our charism at each moment and in each place, being a sign of the meaning that sends us to live as Christians in the world today! It is to have the privilege of witnessing the love of God, our Savior, to all human beings, joining together for one cause: collaborating in the building of a new time and a new world, more just and fraternal. It is believing in human beings, in the same way God believes in us, calls and invites us to proclaim his Word. It means to collaborate in the formation of leaders who will continue the good work of the Kingdom in all the corners of the earth. It is a way of living religious consecration in a deep way as well as our vocation as religious in the Church and in the world today.

Fr. Peter Kordor Nengnong, SDS

Fr. Peter Kordor Nengnong, was born on June 23, 1976, in Shillong, India.

He made his first profession on May 1, 1996, and was ordained a priest on December 21, 2002.

He is member of the Indian Region and is a missionary in the Northeast India.



“My Grace is sufficient for you” (2Cor 12,9).

► Mission Inspiration

My favorite quotation from the bible is taken from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians that says “*My Grace is sufficient for you*” (2Cor 12:9). Prior to my ordination frankly speaking I did not have any favorite passage from the Bible but on the eve of my ordination some one rang up to me and enquired about my favorite biblical theme to be written for my ordination. I was blank since I did not have one. I replied that they can choose anything. The next day as I climbed the stairs towards the stage I saw in front of the altar written in big letters the quotation “*My Grace is sufficient for you*”. I was not so much influenced by those words at that time since my mind was preoccupied with other parts of the mass. As days went by those words started to haunt my mind and heart. I was perplexed, why these words are after me? To me they were just ordinary biblical words with a simple connotation. I tried to move on as if nothing happened. But one fine day two years after my ordination one of my friends presented me with a small glass frame on my

birthday. To my great astonishment I saw those words within the glass frame. I could not believe my eyes all the more because this friend of mine was not present at my ordination ceremony. From then on this passage became part of me and my daily activities.

Today I can say that I derive much strength, courage, energy, endeavor, peace and happiness from this passage. I hear from these words a strong deep voice constantly reminding me to continue with my mission. They are not mere words of consolation to me. For me these words are a command to go and accomplish God's work assisted undoubtedly by His grace. It is not just a verbal sending but an ever present accompaniment of God in my life which I carry on with His grace. This accompaniment of God and His grace becomes the core of every action. God's grace is an old promise yet very new in its action. It comes to the shore of human life like waves upon waves. This passage gives me the understanding that all our activities are not in vain because of God's grace and presence.

In short this passage constantly reminds me that I'm not alone in my life as a religious. His commanding voice to go and proclaim the Saviour and His ever presence in this mission is felt and experienced every moment. His grace and His ever presence make me to want no more and lack nothing. In fact, they are truly sufficient, sufficient to accomplish His mission here on earth.

► Missionary in Northeast India

After my ordination I was sent to Laitkynsew, one of the oldest mission stations of the Catholic Church in North East India. This village lies between Cherrapunjee



and Mawsynram the two wettest places on earth, 6000 ft above sea level. The mission was started by Salvatorians in 1897. After their departure from the mission in 1915 due to the First World War, the mission was left without pastors. In 2004 on 25th January the mission was once again reopened as a full fledged Parish by His Grace Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, Archbishop of Shillong. This new Parish under the patronage of the Apostles Peter and Paul consists of 48 villages and has a population of 6780 Catholics. Some villages are located on high mountains, others in deep down vallies, and few others along the border with Bangladesh. Few villages are accessible with vehicles while others are reached on foot. In general people are poor; 80% of them are farmers and depends much on nature for their livelihood.

One thing I must sincerely acknowledge is that in our Parish a single person can't do much in view of huge mission field and its demands. Far flung villages, high mountains, steep vallies, inaccessible roads and bad weather make our mission work even more difficult to accomplish. Hence to make our work easier and faster, the following are the people with whom I'm working.

Fr. Alex SDS, Assistant Parish Priest, who helps me a lot in village touring and family visiting, administering the various sacraments to the faithful.

The sisters who are appointed to look after the parish records, teaching catechism to the children, preparing the people to receive the sacraments, visiting families and looking after the parish church's sacristy.

We have the head catechists; the whole parish is divided into sub districts, each consisting of more than 8 villages. The sub districts are headed by a head catechist, who makes a regular visits to the villages under his charge and bring the report to the parish at the beginning of each month. He is paid by the parish and half of the payment comes from the diocese. He is chosen by the parish priest and appointed by the bishop. He accompanies the priest to villages and performs the rites of burial and baptism in case of emergency or in the absence of a priest. He is the direct link between the sub-district and the pastor in all Church matters.

The catechists or Church leaders: they are chosen by the faithful and appointed by the pastor for a period of 3 years. They are the head of the local village Church. They help in the day to day life of the Church like the Sunday services, the family prayers, and the annual feast of the village church. They see to the collection of the

church whether in money or in goods. They see that the church in their village functions well and smoothly. They act as a link between the faithful and the priest through the head catechists. It is a voluntary job and they gather once in a month at the priests residence for a monthly Mass and meeting.

The Pious Societies: The pious societies too give a lot of helping hand to the parish by grouping themselves into men, women and youth; it is a much easier and faster way to implement any work in the parish whether in the spiritual or social life of the people.

The pastoral Council: this is the core team in the parish. It is the back bone of the parish I can say. The members are elected as well as chosen. They help in the planning work as well as execution of various activities. They help the pastor to bring out the needs and wants of the parish at the same time point to the dangers and problems that exist within the parish.

The Commission: It is not possible for a single person to handle the various works of the parish. Hence commissions are created to make thing easier and better. We have the planning commission the finance commission, the education commission, the sports and cultural commission, and the pastoral commission. All these commissions are the real heads and hands of the parish in their respective fields.

Along with the above mentioned persons and groups, there are numerous others who are involved in the parish work in their own capacity and generosity. Their contribution is immense and uncountable. Our parish consists of the two tribe of North East, the Khasis and the Garos. The first are the local people, settled in the hilly

region. They own the land and live by cultivating their land. The Garos are migrants from Bangladesh; being Christians, they find difficult to live in a Muslim country. So they occupy the plain land along the border area. They do not own the land but work as daily labourers to earn their living. Each community has a different language, customs, traditions, way of life, but profess one faith. They count almost 50% each in the Catholic population in the Parish. Along with Catholics other denominations and religious are residing side by side. We have Protestants, Hindus, Muslims, Animist and other traditional religions as well. The people are poor in their pocket but rich in their hearts and faith.

Generally speaking I can say that there is no other joy and happiness than constantly ministering to the people of God because that in itself is the payment for the work. Of course there are ups and downs because ministers as well as the people are mere human beings, yet this life is worth living for because it is worth dying for. Every time I plunge into new adventures, I find myself knowing very little with much left untouched and unknown. It is a life totally different from other professional lives. In ministerial life not only are you called, but you have to live according to that call and the payment is not in cash, but peace and joy. It is a life unchanged by circumstances. It is a life where profession and actual life merge together and are inseparable.

► Why I am missionary...

I must agree that while ministerial life is a joyful and happy life it is also a challenging life. Public relation is not an easy job: we may win right and loose left, finish one

part but leave a hundred parts to be done, today success tomorrow failure, one group agrees other doesn't. It is a mission, so to say, with many ups and downs. It pushes you front and drags you back, it raises you up and pulls you down. At times prayer is something like *"Thank you, Lord, for this life you have called me to"*; at other times *"Why have I chosen this life? Why waste my life in this ways?"* Yet I tell you above all these mix feelings there is a strong urge from within that say *"move on, I'm there for you, as you work for me."* (2Cor 12:9). And I believe that this is that special grace residing in every called person. And as long as this grace exists in ones heart there'll be no regret or turning back, what ever may be the situation. There'll be no second thought to this kind of life. The thought of me being 'called' and 'sent' shakes off all the doubtful feelings from within and difficulties encountered from without; instead it gives hope courage, strength and longing to continue. Rechargeable battery always (when down) are always recharged from another source that has the main power. So too I believe and experience that, when down, I charge my battery from the main power i.e. God. There were times when I looked up to him in prayers. There were times when I turned to my friends and said "Hello". There were times when I just sat back on my chair and said "Lord I'm tired". Sometimes people ask me "Father, you are walking up and down all these mountains, moving from one village to the next, are you not tired?" I say, "No, in fact I was not, but after reaching the village, when I find little response or no response at all from them, then I get damn tired and in fact I was. Here experience that, when God sends us on difficult missions he also provides us with strong, well charged batteries. So recharge is not always needed.

If God has called me, I believe he also travels with me towards the fulfillment of his mission. He is the one who is responsible for keeping ablaze that fire within me. Even amidst difficulties and challenges, that fire is very much alive because of the joy and happiness I experience. The longing to accomplish the mission activities surpasses all difficult elements that stand in its way. I know that I have only one thing in my life to do and that is to continue the mission of Christ here on earth and that understanding keeps and protects always that fire of love within me.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means to live and work for the Church through a Salvatorian way of life i.e. proclaiming the good news to others by using all the ways and means according to the signs of the times. To have a spirit of universality for all people, to find express, and proclaim that Jesus is Lord in and through my daily ministerial life, to share with my confreres the richness of God's Grace through my way of living. The vows I professed and the Salvatorian charism I received urge me to continue the salvific work of Christ in and through the Salvatorian way of life. It is in the mission fields that the spirit of the Founder is most expressed, lived and proclaimed. Whenever I travel through the so called border areas, my heart yearns and longs like the Founder that the people I meet and come in contact with may come to know and accept the Saviour. It is my humble and simple way of fulfilling the vision of the

Founder. This means not only reaching and crossing the geographical border but most of all reaching and crossing the human hearts and souls so that the faith and love of the Saviour is shared with others.

Br. Philip Isaku Iruru, SDS

Br. Philip Isaku Iruru, was born on May 03, 1967 in Kijereshi, Bunda District, Tanzania

He made his first profession on December 8, 1987.

He is a member of the Mission of Pro-Province of Tanzânia and is a missionary in Moroni, Comoros.



“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet, not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” (1 Cor. 15:10).

► Mission Inspiration

The biblical quotation I always have been fond of is the following: (1 Cor. 15:10) “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet, not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” For me, that means that everything we do, we do by the grace of God who created us, and it is not I who is working, but God through me with his grace.

► Missionary in Ngazidga

I am responsible of a dispensary of Caritas in Moroni, the capital of Ngazidga, the biggest island of the archipelago of Comoros, in Mbéni, the northern town of the same island, and in Mohéli, the smallest island. There are consultations every day. Male and female native nurses work with me for daily health care. In Moroni, we also have a small hospital where we take care of children who have serious troubles with nutrition and burned people. In the villages, people



mostly use small paraffin heaters. As children are very often left without surveillance, they fall in pans with boiling water or food, or even directly into the fire.

I am also responsible for the collaboration between the three centres, the organization of the pharmacy and the laboratory where native people are working. I am a brother, not a priest. I took my first vows in Tanzania, Namiungo, on December 8th, 1987, and my perpetual vows in the same place on December 8th, 1993.

► Why I am missionary...

People of Comoros have to accept me as I am, and that is not always so easy. At the beginning, they could not accept that a black man was not Muslim, and that he could be in authority on native people. At



present, there is no problem anymore on that level. Prayer is of great help to continue working for anyone, to be open for rich people, but mostly for the poor. It helps me to load up the batteries. The community and personal prayer keeps the blazing fire of mission burning in me. I also tell the people that they should not thank me, but that they should be thankful to the Catholic Mission organizing the charitable works.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

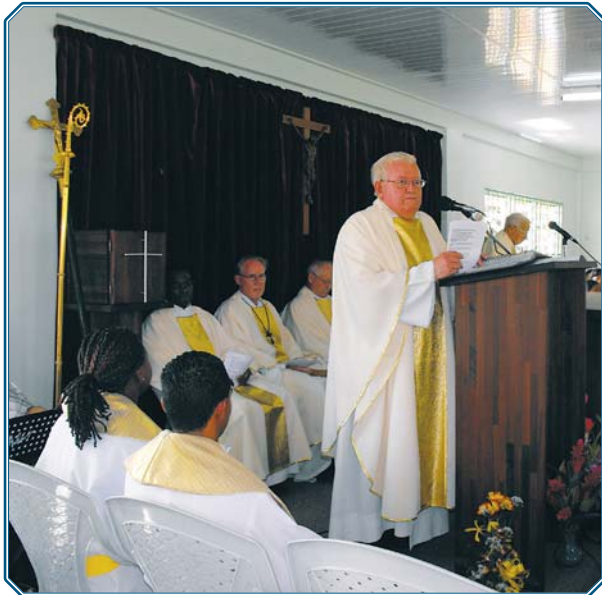
For me, being a Salvatorian today means leaving my country and my family to announce the Good News through my life, my actions, my work and my commitment towards the poorest.

Fr. René Geyskens, SDS

Fr. René Geyskens, was born on March 20, 1941, in Ellikom, Limburg, Belgium

He made his first profession on January 6, 1962, and was ordained a priest on July 11, 1981

He is member of the Belgium Province and is a missionary in Suriname.



“You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.” (Jo 15,16).

► Mission Inspiration

I chose, John 15,16: “You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.” This is also the text in the booklet of my priestly ordination.

When I see my past history this text does not need any explanation. For me it has always been the source of strength to place all of my work and all of my being into God’s hands with full confidence in God. And thus, the text can be continued: “Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

► Missionary in Paramaribo-Suriname

As a student I prayed much for being able to become a priest, but my studies did not go so well, especially as far as the Latin and Greek languages were concerned. During my final year I was told that becoming a priest was not meant for me, and the suggestion was that I could become a brother and work on the farm in Hamont. As I liked manual work I spent 15 years working gladly in farming.

In the beginning I was a nice little brother leading a very secluded life until I threw open the doors to get more into contact with people and with the world. But I have to mention that I had made an agreement with God for him to watch over me. This covenant has always been very important in my life. Apparently I had opened the doors too wide so that the superiors asked me: “What are your plans?” At that moment it did not seem appropriate to me, but I replied that I had always wanted to become a priest, but that somehow it did not now seem appropriate. The superiors answered: “Well, then do it!” However, nobody believed in it, and I myself wasn’t so sure either. But looking back I see that God believed in it.

I started looking around and found a possibility with the Centrum Priesteropleiding Rijpere Leeftijd (Center for the formation of priests with a late vocation). This was a very interesting formation. For the first four years you continue in your usual life and work. In Hamont a successor had come for the farm so that I could go to our major seminary in Heverlee (Leuven). There, I worked in a factory for three years, while attending the Center for the formation of priests in Antwerpen over the weekends.

After four years I was asked to do an internship and because I chose the missions and because I am not good at languages, I spent this time of practical training two other students in Suriname, South America, where Dutch is the official language. After this time of practical experience I finished my studies within one year and was ordained priest by Monsignore Zichem, bishop of Paramaribo-Suriname, in my home country of Belgium at the age of 40. One of my confreres who spent the time of practical training in Suriname with me had died in the meantime and the other one had to return to Belgium for

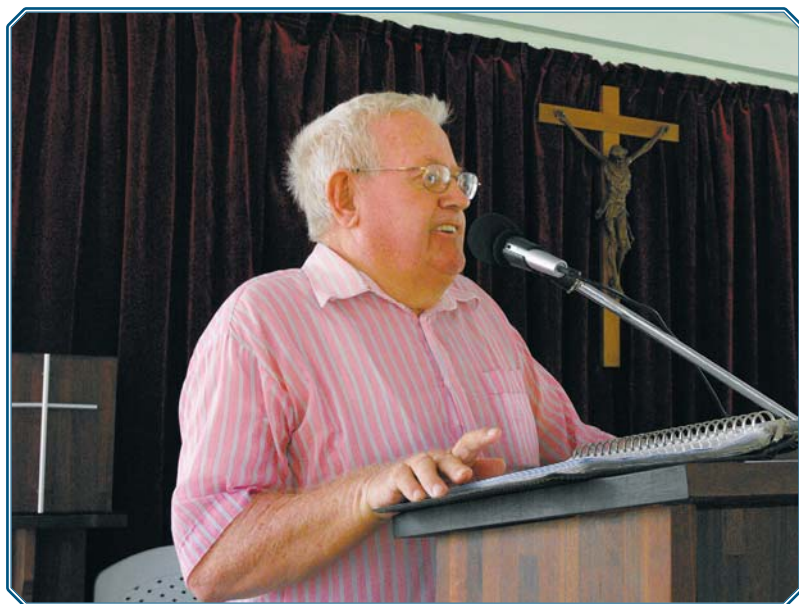
health reasons. This is, in short, my past history, which I personally find very important.

► I am missionary because...

On January 8, 2009 it will already be 30 years since I am here in Suriname. It was obviously not to be expected for a Salvatorian to go into mission on his own, but it is God who decides. For it turned out well: my two Salvatorian confreres Father Jozef and Father Gerard visited me in 1985. Then, Father Gerard came here in 1988 and Father Jozef in 1993. Together we three confreres have now spent 65 years in Suriname.

Together we try to share our Salvatorian spirituality by proclaiming the Gospel and by working for humane living conditions for all people entrusted to our care. Bear in mind that all the major religions (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism) are present in Suriname.





Our work mainly consists in pastoral care in parishes. As for me I work in four parishes outside the capital city of Paramaribo, and my two confreres look after four parishes within the city. We closely cooperate with the lay and give them more and more responsibilities and leadership in the pastoral ministry, because we have few vocations in Suriname. There are about 90,000 Catholics. We turn our attention especially towards the young people. We feel strongly supported by the lay. I know that many people are praying for me and this gives me strength. When my prayerlife was insufficient at times I always felt carried by great trust in God and I know that he guides me and directs my way. This great trust in God is nourished again and again by entrusting myself to

the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has always given me the strength to persevere and he guided me when I was in need and committed everything to him. I hope and trust that this strength will always be the driving force of my life.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

In order to give expression to my being Salvatorian I named my latest building project, a new church, after the Divine Savior. This church was dedicated on October 12, 2008, in the presence of about 450 people. Our work will certainly be continued. The seed we have sown will certainly bear fruit and will hopefully be continued by Salvatorians as well.

Fr. Jaime Santiago Pérex Mendaza, SDS

Fr. Jaime Santiago Pérex Mendaza, was born on February 19, 1959, in Bilbao, Spain.

He made his first profession on October 12, 1979, and was ordained a priest on December 8, 1984.

He is a member of the Spanish Pro-vine and he is a missionary in the San Marcos Diocese – Guatemala.



“And eternal life is this: to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17,3).

► Mission Inspiration

In the first place, for me, the phrase, “*And eternal life is this: to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*” (Jn 17, 3), in a certain way summarizes the whole life, mission and aspiration or aim of Jesus; it is another way of naming the Kingdom of God.

In the second place, it is one of the phrases which inspired the Charism given to Jordan, and thus it is a way to be in harmony with the Charism, vision and mission of the Founder and of the Congregation.

In the third place, considering the present situation of the world and of the countries where I have worked (Venezuela, Ecuador, Guatemala), this phrase is what best describes missionary work: the world will only be able to get out of the present situation of injustice, oppression, racism, discrimination... on the day when it will know (in the Biblical profound, experiential sense) God and put in practice the Gospel preached by Jesus. This is the missionary-evangelizing task: God loves the world and wants to save it through Jesus Christ; God loves us and wants to save us

through Jesus Christ. And God and Jesus Christ count on us for this mission, to make the world more human, more divine, so that the world and our lives respond to the plan of the Trinitarian God. Then, we will have the same life of God: eternal life, we will be fully sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters to one another.

► Missionary in San Marcos Diocese

Since June 2002 I have been working, as a member of the Spanish Pro-province of Salvatorians, in the Diocese of San Marcos (Guatemala). The Salvatorian community in San Marcos is “mixed,” that is, it is formed by two religious and, at present three lay missionaries (1 lay man and 2 lay women). In this context, apostolic life presents various aspects: toward the laity who form the community; toward the ten communities which we have to take care of (Unión de Aldeas-Corpus Christi); and at diocesan level, the formation of lay pastoral agents.

With the lay Salvatorian missionaries, we share moments of spirituality, of prayer, of life, of celebration, of apostolic work...

Unión de Aldeas-Corpus Christi is a group of 10 villages located in the ‘marquense’ highlands. In the juridical sense we are not a Parish but we depend on San Marcos, even though, we have our own Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Financial Council and in practice function totally independently from the Parish – the Cathedral of San Marcos. Just like any other Parish we have our own services of worship, Sacraments and of formation-animation of Pastoral Agents. Fundamentally, my apostolic work in this field is the formation-animation of

the different ministries and pastoral work present in the Parish: ministers of the Word, ministers of the Eucharist, ministers for the sick, ministers for pastoral work and Confirmation with children, Family Pastoral ministry, Preparation for Baptism, Vocation Pastoral Ministry... At present I also work in the formation of the Parish Social Pastoral Team. Attention to the Parish also demands the coordination of the Pastoral Council and, in general, the animation of the whole life of the Parish.

On the diocesan level I work in the Diocesan Center for Formation, and this is my main pastoral work. The objective of this Center is to enable, on the diocesan level, the different lay pastoral agents who will work in the Parishes later.

The Diocese is divided into three geographical regions which are completely different from one another (the highlands, the valley and costa-boca, the coast) which



are used also for pastoral regions. The Center adapts its courses according to the geographical and pastoral situation with its particular characteristics of those attending. Throughout the year, the Team of Formation of the Center, formed by two Franciscan Sisters and me, gives courses for each one of the regions. The courses for the Valley Region and for the Highlands Region are held in a building which belongs to the Diocese, situated in San Marcos (where the office is located) and the courses for Costa-boca are held in San Pablo, in a parochial center.

The courses are divided into two levels (1st and 2nd) and each level consists of 4 courses: Anthropology I, Bible I, The God revealed in Jesus Christ and Church History for the first level; Anthropology II, Bible II, Jesus Christ in the Gospels and Ecclesiology for the second level.

In Anthropology we try to make them know and to be proud of their Mayan roots (after centuries of discrimination and racism), and that they may see that it is possible to nourish their roots with the Catholic faith. In the Bible, we teach them to handle and use it, and give them knowledge and interpretation of the Bible; we aim to deepen the image of God and of Jesus Christ in the courses dedicated to this theme; and we end with the courses on the Church. In this way we cover the three areas: the truth about God-Jesus Christ, the truth about man and the truth about the Church. Logically, these courses go beyond mere academic formation, since it is not only a question of instruction but of formation. Together with instruction, at the same time, the spirituality of pastoral agents, the sense of service, and the problems which the communities are living are also considered to see how we can respond to them, criteria which can or should be taken

into account when judging a situation... These courses are supported by some pamphlets or leaflets elaborated by the Center of Formation. Even though this is the work of the team, the majority of the weight of the work of elaboration falls on me.

These courses can be given in the Parishes if the Parish priests ask for them and have a sufficient number of agents to be prepared. In this case the Team of Formation goes to the corresponding Parish.

The two levels of Formation are complemented by what we call *'follow-up' courses*. There are two 'follow-up courses' a year and the agents who have completed the two levels of formation participate in them. These courses, basically, consist in current themes such as socio-political-economic (Treaty of Free Trade, Mining, and hydroelectric power stations, Social Pastoral Ministry...) current ecclesial themes (Document of Aparecida...), or deepening the study of the Bible (St. Paul, Apocalypses). These courses are given in the Center of Formation in San Marcos only. I also have to prepare the material for these courses.

There are other courses which are also the competence of the Team of Formation, that is, courses for Diocesan Preachers, that is, persons who are officially authorized to preach.

These courses also have two levels, of four encounters each. The courses given are: Introduction to Sacred Scripture, Evangelization and Communication, Evangelization and Catechesis, Introduction to the Dei Verbum, Social Teaching of the Church and Homiletics Practice. These courses are also complemented by a follow-up of two retreats a year for those who are already

preachers, in order to deepen their spirituality as a Preacher. A retreat is given only for preachers; there is another retreat to which wives and husbands are invited to participate as couples. The courses and retreats for Preachers are held in the Center of San Marcos.

And in addition to this pastoral work I participate in the following: the National Commission of Catechesis as a representative for this area of the Diocese of San Marcos, the Diocesan Council of Pastoral Ministry for the last four years, and in the recently established Diocesan Commission of Formation.

► Why I am a missionary...

My reasons to continue are the following: the example of the Master (“he did not even have time to eat”, but he always took care of the people); the apostolic zeal of Jordan (always moving ahead in spite of being nervous, tired and the difficulties which he would meet) and the words of the Founder (as long as there is a person who does not know Jesus Christ, you cannot allow yourself a minute of rest); the attitude of the people, hungry for God, tremendously religious, receptive, welcoming, hard-working, sons and daughters of God, who deserve respect and a more dignified life.

How do I charge the batteries? With moments of personal and community prayer, community days of recollection, annual Spiritual Exercises, community meetings and activities, meetings for the clergy and moments of relaxation (walking, swimming...).

The missionary has to be a person of utopia, of a firm and unshakeable faith and hope, while at the same

time keeping his feet on the ground: the Kingdom of God is possible and is already a reality. For this Jesus has promised his permanent presence: I am with you; I have overcome the world; anyone who perseveres will conquer..." The mission is based more on grace than on our forces and qualities; the Savior is Jesus, not we. We point out, direct and orient the people toward Him. On the other hand, we have to have open eyes to see the tiny presence of the Kingdom in small achievements, small victories, small progresses which, together with the people, we are achieving and which are signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God in our midst and in our history. Prayer, meditation, contemplation, action and the "patience of the sower" are essential tools in this work.

► For me to be a Salvatorian in mission today means...

To make known the true God and the One He has sent, Jesus Christ, manifesting to the people, by our attitudes and witness the goodness and mercy of God toward all of us.

Fr. Sebastian Korczak, SDS

Fr. Sebastian Korczak, was born on March 25, 1974, in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

He made his first profession on September 08, 1994, and was ordained a priest on May 26, 2000.

He is member of the Polish Province and a missionary in *Campeche, Mexico*.



“Lord, my heart is not proud; nor are my eyes haughty. I do not busy myself with great matters, with things too sublime for me. Rather, I have stilled my soul, hushed it like a weaned child. Like a weaned child on its mother’s lap, so is my soul within me.” (Ps 131)

► Mission Inspiration

Psalm 131: *"Lord, my heart is not proud; nor are my eyes haughty. I do not busy myself with great matters, with things too sublime for me. Rather, I have stilled my soul, hushed it like a weaned child. Like a weaned child on its mother's lap, so is my soul within me."*

The above passage has guided me since the beginning of my religious life and it has heartened me enormously at difficult times. It continuously inspires my ever growing trust in God, in which I follow the Venerable Father Francis Jordan. It positively invites me to spiritual childhood. The passage in question does not communicate an infantile, shallow experience of faith, but a complete and trusting devotion to God, putting faith in his love that is as tender as the love of a mother. Such an attitude involves humility, it is a complete antithesis of arrogance or hubris, and it excludes the pursuit of what goes beyond our human possibilities. In the words of the Psalmist, I find the advice that one should not seek what does not belong to Jesus, what is not His. They also

offer a strong encouragement that I should discover what has been given to me, proportionally to my capabilities. Haughty eyes are incapable of perceiving the Savior's humility. During the fourteen years of my religious life I have repeatedly experienced how restless the heart of a religious person can become once it is not made silent, once its desires are not overcome. Only in the bosom of the Father can a Salvatorian heart, restless by nature, become quiet, so that it can preach the Savior "until it rests", in every place and at every time. Only when the Salvatorian knows that he is fulfilling this mission can he accomplish an inner peace.

► Missionary in Campeche

The place where I am serving is the newly created Foundation in Mexico, in the northern part of this country, needy in many respects. On September 8, the day the Foundation was started, I was appointed Director of the Diocesan "Mendoza" Institute and entrusted with the duty to take care of 750 children and youth coming from the entire state of Campeche. I also serve as parish priest in San Jose Obrero parish and I am superior of the newly created Foundation of the Polish Province in Mexico. The work I do is multifarious. The daily ministry in the Institute consists in coordinating the jobs and the schooling duties. The students come from various social classes, but generally the school enjoys a high prestige. My work in the parish in turn provides an encounter with human poverty, and it is frequently physical work. In response to our request, the local Bishop entrusted us with a poor, but lively parish, one in need of formative



support. Thus, after we do our daily duties concerning the work in the school, together with another confrere, we concentrate on parish formation ministry. Currently, there are nineteen evangelization groups active in the parish. It comprises seven missionary chapels, where the Sunday Eucharist is celebrated and the sacraments are administered, and where we assist, as much as we can, in the formative coordination of the groups. Our living conditions are very modest and our lifestyle does not differ from that of our parishioners. It is a great joy that more and more people identify themselves with the Salvatorians. Responding to the frequent requests for making the charism of the Salvatorian Family known, we started the formation of a group of lay associates

which, we hope, will soon become the first group of Lay Salvatorians in Mexico. The monthly Eucharist offered for our benefactors and associates of the Society has demonstrated that the zeal to make the Salvatorian Charism known should be continued. For a few weeks now, lectures on Dogmatic Theology have been given in the Diocesan Seminary, and next year they will be given also in the University of Campeche.

► Why I am missionary...

Prayer is certainly a source of inspiration for me, it motivates me and helps me support the fire of missionary zeal. I mean both community prayer and personal



prayer before the Holy Sacrament, which is exhibited in our parish Chapel twenty four hours a day. Seeing a great love for the adoration of the Holy Sacrament in our parishioners, we also feel the desire to adore it and “charge our batteries” through being close to Jesus. Also our frequent encounters with the needs of the local people contribute to our zeal. Once in the street, one immediately meets the needy. The Salvatorian parish is very big and it comprises thirty five thousand faithful who come mostly from poor social classes, being descendants of the Maya tribes. Their formation is frequently very poor too, but they show an enormous desire to encounter the Savior. Our formation work in the school consists in part in meeting the daily needs of the children and youth, who are frequently longing for an encounter with God, yet seeking it gropingly and superficially. The daily celebration of the Eucharist we introduced has brought the students closer to the Church. Formation work was started also among the parents of our students in the form of courses and retreats based on the Founder’s *Spiritual Diary*. Also the lectures given in the seminary confirm the need for formation and for shaping the attitudes of future priests in the Diocese of Campeche.

► To me, being a Salvatorian on a mission today means...

To a missionary, the crucial truth is that Christ is the Missionary of God and that the message he gives us is that being a missionary means dedicating oneself. People can recognize that the attitude of a missionary is genuine once they see that he is truly dedicated. When

they see him truly committed to them, when they notice that he loves them and that he did not come to them to seek his own satisfaction, but shows genuine dedication so that he can become a gift from Christ himself, they will soon appreciate it. Our Founder would often repeat: “to all”, “by all means” and “with your entire selves.” Each Salvatorian missionary should be imbued with such a desire. So far, my missionary experience has not been extensive. Yet, much as I am still learning to be a missionary, I have realized that the basic condition is to “dedicate oneself fully, to offer oneself to others in order to serve everyone”.

Salvatorian, your life is mission!

- Community celebrative meeting



► Community celebrative meeting

Instructions – To prepare for this celebrative meeting, it is important to read all the written testimony in this book. We suggest that the meeting be done in an atmosphere of prayer, choosing some symbols that recall the Salvatorian missionary testimonies (Bible, globe, candle, sandals, a missionary phrase or a phrase from Jordan...). Where possible, prepare a crown with 5 candles (green, red, yellow, white and blue) representing the continents. These candles can be lit, bringing to mind the missionary work of Salvatorians around the world. This is a gesture of accompaniment in prayer, of solidarity, of the profound roots of our missionary vocation.

► Opening prayer

– Invoking the light of the Holy Spirit (prayer or song).

From our history¹

Reader 1 – “As we know the MISSION really occupied much of Jordan’s thought. Two sentences of the Gospel were a source of inspiration for him: “*go and make disciples of all nations*,” and “*that they may know You, the one true God*.” Jordan wanted to work with all forces in the task of evangelization and dedicated all his talents to do this.

Reader 2 – His own weaknesses, lack of experience, lack of organization... these did not dishearten him. He had within him a fire with which he wanted to enkindle the entire world, especially those who did not know Christ and his message of salvation. Even before the foundation, Jordan is called “sacerdotem missionarium” (missionary priest) (DSS IV, pg. 27) in a letter of recommendation from Cardinal Hergenröther; at his first meeting with Luther he was also presented as a missionary priest (SGG pg. 25). And the title of our first magazine was “Der Missionär.”

Reader 3 – This is how the purpose of the Society was formulated for the foundation on December 8, 1881: “*The Apostolic Teaching Society has as its purpose to help propagate, defend and revive, in the spirit of the apostles, the Catholic faith in all countries around the world.*”

Reader 1 – The fact that Propaganda Fide entrusted a mission to Jordan in Assam only 8 years after the foundation of the Society was evidence of great confidence; the fact that Jordan agreed to launch

1. MEIJL, Fr, Peter van - “*Our Founder, a Prophet*“, Retreat conferences addressed to Salvatorian Missionaries in Congo, in 1982.

into a project of such magnitude shows the depth of his missionary zeal.

Reader 2 – On January 17, 1880, in his farewell speech to the first Salvatorian missionaries departing for Assam, the Founder said to the community: *“Two feelings fill our hearts today: pain and joy. It is painful when we think of our dear confreres leaving us. But we are filled with joy when we remember that they are leaving to announce in Asia, the cradle of civilization, Christ crucified. Through our confreres, the first to be sent on mission by our Society, the peace, the good news of the gospel will be brought to these people. This joy must far outweigh our pain...”*

Reader 3 – The founder finished with these words: *“Always remain united with us your brothers...”*

Reflection:

1. Do you think that the way we live Salvatorian religious life today is consistent with the inheritance we have received from Fr. Jordan?
2. What is the mission that we Salvatorians must take up?

Guided by the Word of God who sends us

The Word of God is light (Psalm 119), but for this light to give light it is essential that we have ears and hearts open to receive it. Let us reflect on some texts from the Bible and our Salvatorian Mission Statement that call us to mission. Let us read slowly and attentively.

Reader 1 – “...**God** called to Moses from a burning bush. ‘Moses, Moses!’ he said. ‘*Here I am,*’ he answered...”

So now I am sending you to Pharaoh, for you are to bring my people, the **Israelites**, out of Egypt.” (Ex 3)

All – *“I then heard the voice of the Lord saying: ‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I, send me.’” (Is 6, 8)*

Reader 2 – “The **spirit** of the **Lord** is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the **good** news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord.” (Lu 4, 18-19)

All – *“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor 9,16)*

Reader 3 – “We Salvatorians are called to follow Jesus Christ, the Divine Savior, by living as community within the universal Church for apostolic service.” (SDS – GS/1995)

All – *“This mission compels us to share our call to be apostles with people from all walks of life.” (SDS – GS/1995.*

Reader 1 – “As with our Founder, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, we proclaim to all people the salvation which has appeared in Jesus Christ, so that by the lives we live and in our apostolic activities.” (SDS – GS/1995)

All – *“...that all may come ‘to know You, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ (John 17:3), and have life in all its fullness.” (SDS - GS/1995)*

Reader 2 – “We are ready to serve all people everywhere, by all ways and means which the love of Christ inspires.” (SDS - GS/1995)

Reader 3 – “We trust in God’s loving providence in discerning and courageously responding to the particular signs of the times in each place and age.” (SDS – GS/1995)

All – “*We Salvatorians seek to fulfil our mission by being one with those we serve, manifesting to the world the goodness and kindness of God our Savior.*” (SDS – GS/1995)

(A few moments of silence...)

► Reflecting on the word of the missionaries

Reader 1 – The mission of Jesus is wide, without borders, passing through all places and moments of history, by means of the witness of the missionaries. We are just a small part in this section of the vineyard of the Lord. There are many Salvatorians working in the missions who give a powerful witness that has no bounds. The Salvatorian missionaries fill us with joy and hope. Through their witness missionaries inject new life and more hope and communion in our communities.

Reader 2 – At this time let us share the impressions, feelings and insights that have come to us while we were reading the words and experiences of our Salvatorian missionaries. The questions below may help us:

Comment:

What points (gifts, charisms, challenges, joys...) most caught your attention as you were reading?

Share:

In order to support our Salvatorian missionaries, what should we do concretely (daily prayer for the

missions, collections to help the missions, send a card to a missionary...)?

Remember:

Each one can say out loud the name of a Salvatorian whose life is a living sign of our Salvatorian missionary charism. Please explain why.

► Celebrating the theme of the mission

Reader 3 – Everyone through his vocation is called to work with zeal and generosity in the vineyard of the Lord. (Mt 20.4) In communion with all Salvatorians who are living a missionary life - as signs of life and salvation - in the most diverse situations and cultures, let us present, in the form of a prayer, all that we have discovered in sharing this text:

With a sentence or a symbol, express the insights that you have had in this encounter that you wish to keep in your heart and live day to day.

Take a moment of prayer for missionaries past and present (by name) prayers for the missionaries of yesterday and today (remember names), starting with those whose testimonies we have read. After each prayer, we repeat the refrain: **“Lord, show us the way to lead all to you. And, with your grace, save all.”**

Conclude with the Our Father and with this prayer of Jordan (SD II, 12):

O Lord, You Know,
You Know, I cannot express it!

I can do all things in You.
O God, O Almighty One,
O Immensity, O Jesus,
You, for souls, for the Church of God,
All, O Father, all
All, O God, all,
O Jesus, all,
O Savior of the world,
I desire most ardently to save all!
Oh, save souls!
Oh save souls!
I beg and implore you, save souls!
Cost what it may, save souls!

Milton Zonta, sds

Rome – January/2009

"I am the angel of God the Most High,
who sent me to preach to you all the
words of eternal life"
(Fr. Jordan – SD/I 181)

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