



THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SALESIAN FAMILY

DON BOSCO TODAY

Giving Hope to Haiti



DON BOSCO

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Editorial »

This Issue of *Don Bosco Today* is devoted mainly to Haiti.

Decades of poverty, environmental degradation, violence and instability left Haiti as one of the poorest countries in the world – 80 per cent of Haitians lived under the poverty line. On 12th January 2010 the earthquake in Haiti caused massive devastation and loss. The media

coverage at the time brought graphic scenes of the tragedy into our own homes. People from all over the world sent in donations, our own provincial appeal has already realised £60,000.

A crisis, such as this earthquake, forces us to examine the priorities in our lives and, as Salesians, it makes us evaluate the essential elements of our work for young people. When everything has been taken away from young people, what can we offer them, how can we help them? The articles in this issue are by Salesians and Salesian Sisters who were in Haiti, at the time, or soon after the earthquake. There is quite a detailed account of the visit to Haiti of our Rector Major, Fr Chávez. On the 25th of January I received a reflection on the question many people were asking, *Where was God when the earthquake hit Haiti?* It was written by Fr Ronald Rolheiser, a well-known writer. I was impressed by his words and asked him for permission to publish them.

We cannot begin to imagine the trauma experienced by the young people of Haiti. However the following was posted on the internet by a Haitian schoolgirl just after the earthquake:

Yesterday I received a tweet asking me details on what I saw...

I saw my school; three stories high, become a two metre-high pile of debris.

I saw people running in the streets, praying, but the ground continued shaking from time to time, and their prayers didn't stop.

I saw a lady on a motorcycle; she had a little girl leaning on her, with her face covered. The lady said she didn't know where to take the child because the hospital was totally destroyed.

I saw people running covered in dust, running from their houses which had fallen down.

I saw a refugee camps, as they are on TV, people praying, people alive but not really...

I saw a baby half dead, covered in Band-Aids.

I saw over a hundred people in three little tents, and thousands on the ground outside.

I saw a friend, at the cemetery, burying his little cousin.

I saw a pickup truck filled with corpses.

I saw my teacher walking to the cemetery behind the car where his wife's dead body was.

There are now thousands of young people in Haiti, who have seen similar things. We have fed them, clothed them, housed them; now we need to educate them with loving kindness, and bring hope to Haiti.

Tony Bailey SDB

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The early days after the earthquake



Before the Earthquake

The Salesians began working in Haiti in 1936 and just ten years later, Bro Hubert Sanon was the first professed Haitian Salesian Brother. Since then Salesian work in Haiti developed under the difficult circumstances of that country. »

Until the earthquake the Salesians ran some of the finest educational and social work institutions in Haiti. The first sad news we received from Haiti, Brother Hubert Sanon had died in the earthquake, at the age eighty five. But two hundred youngsters were also in the building and many of these were feared dead. Two young Salesians were at the University at the time and had not been located.

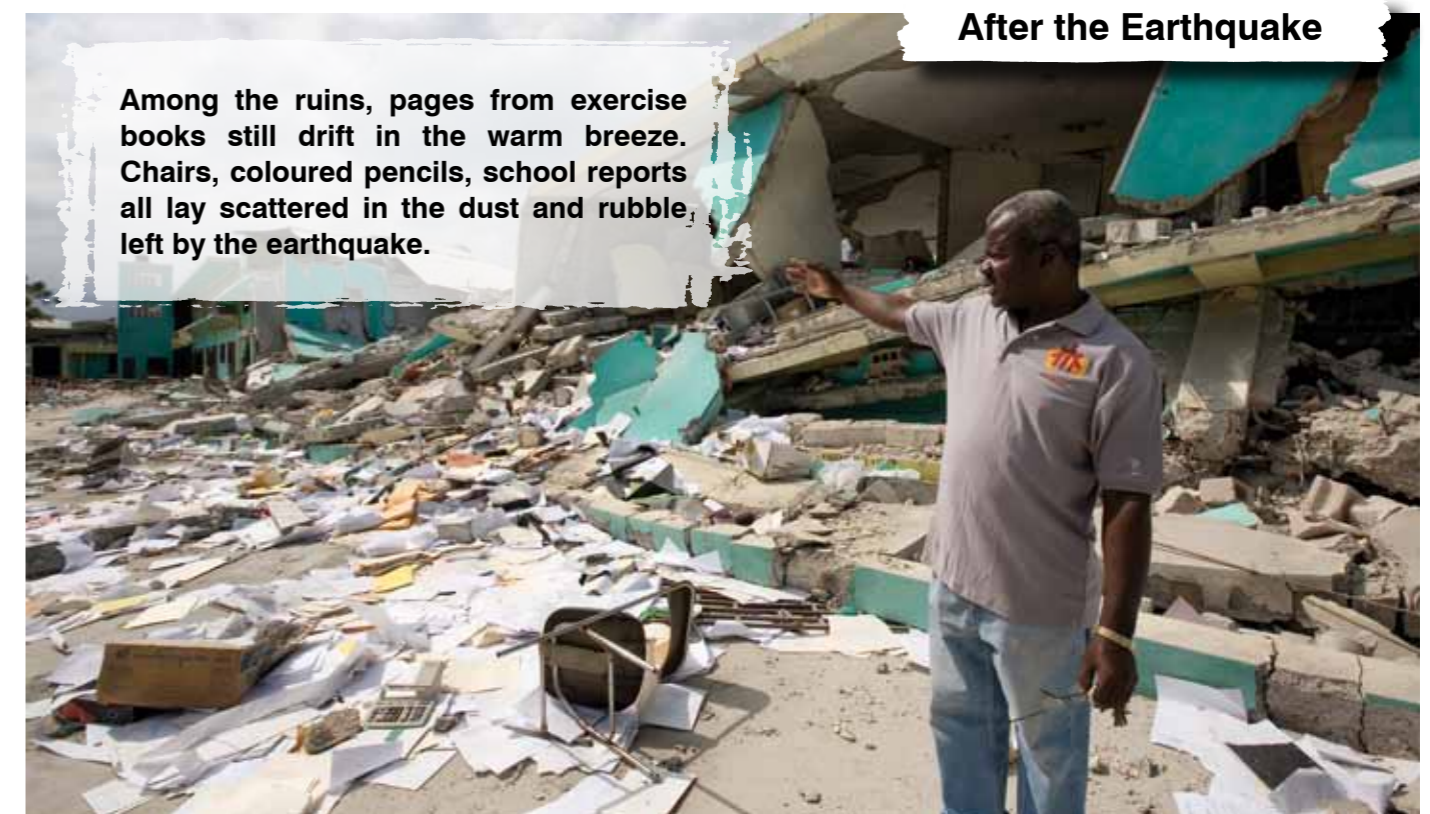
Sister Elizabeth Corsino, from the Salesian Sisters community of Barahona in the Dominican Republic, together with Sister Angela Michelon went to Port-au-Prince during the early days. When they arrived in the Haitian capital, the scene that opened before their eyes was truly dramatic. They reached the house of the Sisters and saw that they were preparing food for the local people and for the resident children entrusted to them. The Salesian Sisters, who were in Port-au-Prince, could not get any news about their own families. Communication was impossible. The Sisters and children were sleeping in the open; the children on makeshift bedding, the Sisters on chairs, ready to help the homeless who might arrive during the night. Meanwhile the Salesian Sisters of Santo Domingo were organizing a campaign to bring in light mattresses. The Sisters, though they had very little sleep themselves, were taking in nearby families for the night so that all could sleep safely and that no one would remain alone. Four of the seven sisters had stayed in the Pétiion-Ville community, which was the house hardest hit by the earthquake; the elderly had been transferred to the provincial house, which was more secure.

The section of the provincial house where the residents lived had completely collapsed, and the 40 girls, who normally lived there, were with the others in the open air. Sister Elizabeth said, *The Sisters feel they have the strong protection of Mary Help of Christians, their faith and serenity is so evident. Even though they are fearful that the tremors might continue, they still have hope. They are seeking to give this hope to others. We will probably have to raze the house, but the sisters and the students are all right. During our return trip, we saw lines of people who were looking for their loved ones or who were moving to leave the city. On their faces I saw dignity in their suffering. The suffering faces that I saw were also faces of hope. Even our sisters carry sorrow in their hearts, but they succeed in showing that they have hope and share the few possessions that they have. There is fear of rioting and problems, but there is hope that the international organizations that are arriving on the island can support the people with their help. A great problem is the crowds of people at the border with Santo Domingo, where people are trying to escape.*

The situation at ENAM (École Nationale des Arts et Métiers) remains disastrous. With no heavy-lifting equipment available, no international teams are able to gain access to either the living or the dead under the

rubble. The area has also been subject to looting. Huge support is coming in from around the Salesian world. Even some of the tiniest Salesian presences in mission areas have wanted to do their bit, with what little they have. We know that some 200 (it will be impossible for a long time to come to know a real figure) of students between the ages of 5-17 have perished or at least are missing presumed dead at ENAM, the School of Arts and Trades, right in the heart of the city. Those who died and whose bodies have been located at these places, including Salesian Brother Sanon, have been buried in a common grave near the school. Among the ruins, pages from exercise books still drift in the warm breeze. Chairs, coloured pencils, school reports all lay scattered in the dust and rubble left by the earthquake.

Our limited facilities are housing 3,500 refugees and emergency plans are already in place for the thousands of others seeking our help. An eleven-truck Salesian relief convoy, escorted by troops from the Dominican Republic, has already reached Port-au-Prince. Fr Mark Hyde, Director of Salesian Missions in New Rochelle, USA, is currently in Port-au-Prince. News is reaching us, of various other initiatives from other NGOs which are either Salesian or directly connected.



After the Earthquake

Among the ruins, pages from exercise books still drift in the warm breeze. Chairs, coloured pencils, school reports all lay scattered in the dust and rubble, left by the earthquake.



Life is born amid the rubble

The testimony of Sister Vilma Tallone FMA

I have been in Haiti since February 4th and thanks to the help of Sister Marie Claire, provincial of Haiti, I have been able to travel across the city of Port-au-Prince in all directions at several times. We say *travel across the city*, but in reality, it is a mass of ruins everywhere. »

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, in Thorland, we have two houses, one of which is the novitiate. There were once 48 schools in this area, today only four are useable, among which is our own. Going along the streets, we meet a multitude of tired, nervous people, who move like a river in search of food, trying to locate the place of distribution, keeping their eyes fixed on the trucks that could be transporting food and supplies. There is a real struggle for survival, because the help arriving is infinitely inferior to the need and distribution is not well organized.

Tent cities have grown up spontaneously in the few available spaces: squares, gardens, courtyards, and they give the impression of refugee camps after a mass exodus. Practically no one sleeps in a house; after 7 pm it becomes impossible to circulate through the streets because the people set up their tents there: sheets and covers of every kind. I travelled with an anguished heart, often in silence. At every corner there are signs of the drama. We go up a side street, opened only a few days ago: all the houses have collapsed. I listen to Sister Marie Claire who observes: *There are still people buried here, there was once a certain religious community in this area, there used to be a church here. Wealthy homes, palaces and hovels, all are now levelled and there are no more differences. Those who had more have, in general, lost more.* The poor dare to crawl over the heaps of ruins, some to recover pieces of metal from crumbled columns, material, the remains of mattresses, some, perhaps, looking for hidden treasures, but no one takes the trouble to protect their mouth or their hands.

Our houses, that have the space and are not in danger of collapsing, welcome thousands of people. There are



7000 at Thorland, but in the evening at least a thousand more slip between the tents and sleep on the grass. Everyone says that *it is the best organized tent city in the area.* The strong hand of Sister Ancey and the other Sisters organise the interminable line of people, where cleanliness is perfect and one doesn't smell the stench, despite the mass of humanity living with few sanitary facilities.

Thank God, our two houses and the large primary and secondary school did not suffer damages and perhaps will be able to open the doors not only to our students but to others. In the house nearby, the Salesians welcome about 5000 refugees and have two clinics. Sadly, their houses have been ruined and therefore organization is more difficult.

The house of *Mary Help of Christians*, our first house in Port-au-Prince that recently celebrated 75 years of foundation, has been badly damaged with the loss of the large chapel, a classroom block, a building under

construction and probably the Sisters' house. At least 600 people are living there in tents; among them is the parish priest. The garden serves as his parish office and this is also the distribution centre for a very poor neighbourhood. In this area food distribution is not available from the relief organizations; therefore it is carried out only because of the ingenuity of Sister Silvia, who puts pressure on the authorities so as to be able to feed the people. *The Sisters' tent is in the middle of the other tents*, says Sister Silvia, *as a sign of solidarity.*

Approximately 600 families have found a space in the courtyard of our community at *Cité militaire*, where the buildings are fairly good, but the new classrooms, being built, did not survive the quake and are crumbling. Given the position of the house and the availability of rooms, it has become a collection centre for the aid sent directly from the Sisters, especially from Santo Domingo but also from Puerto Rico and then sorted in our communities and in those of the Salesians. The community of *Cité soleil*, in a very difficult slum neighbourhood, has no place



These are signs of life that continue, like the red flowers that spring up in the rubble, flowers of the colour of blood because Haiti is living its Good Friday now, but knows how to await its Resurrection.

to accept anyone, except families in very great need, because the school buildings constitute a danger. *Petion Ville* (a suburb of Port-au-Prince) was hardest hit with the collapse of the Sisters' house and the great damage suffered in the large school for 2000 students and it must be demolished. Three Sisters were in the house when the earthquake struck, among whom was Sister Mathilde, who although wounded, was saved, thanks to two young men from the school who courageously leaped into the debris to help her to escape. Groups of children, teachers and other Sisters were still in school, but miraculously escaped from the falling debris.

The Provincial House held firm, though some sections will need repairs. It has become a real point of reference not only for the people of the neighbourhood who profit from the distributions organized by the Sisters, but also for the Sisters of other congregations. A Sister who had been imprisoned in the rubble and was seriously wounded was welcomed into our house and cared for.



The Rector Major appeals to all Salesians

Rome 18th January 2010

Dear Salesians »

I know that over these days all of you have followed the great drama of Haiti attentively and with compassion. The earthquake on the 12th January was inconceivably powerful and has sown death and destruction. There are very many amongst the dead, millions without a home and we can add to that the complete destabilisation of a country which already lacked real structures of Government. For us Salesians, the most serious losses are, obviously, the loss of human life: the lives of so many of our young people, of children (around 500) and of three of our confreres.

The earthquake has destroyed practically all of our works in Port-au-Prince. The Provincial House was seriously damaged and is uninhabitable for all practical purposes. The Technical School, ENAM, has been totally destroyed. The Petites Ecoles of Fr Bohnen has collapsed. The Lakay Street Childrens' Home has been destroyed. The Postnovitiate and Study Centre (of Philosophy, also for other Congregations) is completely uninhabitable and must be razed to the ground. The Thorland Centre has been half destroyed: the areas which accommodated the confreres and youth groups has collapsed. The school at Petion Ville is seriously damaged. We need to add to this the damage sustained by the houses belonging to the Salesian Sisters.

Our confreres in Haiti have been sorely tried, and undoubtedly they are looking to us. They are calling for the help and support which will allow Don Bosco to continue his work in this country and which will give them, too, a sign of hope for continuing their journey as Salesians. For days now they have been living in the open, along with thousands of other people. We are extremely grateful to the Santo Domingo Province which

has proven itself a good neighbour and has arranged for timely distribution of food and prime necessities, and by bringing over a confrere who was seriously injured.

This letter of mine is intended to be a heartfelt and, at the same time, strong appeal for solidarity from around the Salesian Congregation. As everyone tends to a sick member in the family, we too, moved by immense compassion would like to take on the burden of this extraordinary need and come to the practical help for this small Vice Province now so severely tried.

I would like to tell you of my joy at seeing that our poorest provinces (from Africa, Asia and the Americas) have been those to respond fastest and most spontaneously to this appeal for solidarity.

So I am inviting all Provinces and Salesian Houses around the world to send significant help for our confreres in a state of absolute need. After the initial emergency (food, water, temporary arrangements...) we need to think of a rebuilding plan which will require a lot of energy and resources. So I am turning to you and even more insistently, to provinces with greater resources. In Don Bosco's name I assure you that the Lord will bless this act of charity of yours. Be generous, then, even if it means that some particular project needs to be put on hold for a while!

My dear confreres, our Father Don Bosco, I believe, would put his trust in us at this time to be radical and have total trust in Providence. This is why, in Don Bosco's name, I make this request on behalf of our poorest brothers!

They will be grateful for whatever you can do. May God bless you.

Fr Pascual Chávez SDB (Rector Major)

MY DONATION TO THE HAITI APPEAL

Please find enclosed my donation of

Name _____

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The Bear Facts



Hello Children,

Winter is almost over but we had lots of "winter fun" as well as one or two accidents here in Darkwood Forest.

We've been skating on Lake Glass, sledging in the park and snowballing at school: one snowball hit Mr. Owl, the Head Teacher. Harold Hare threw it but don't tell anyone; it's a secret! He ran off extremely quickly! Molly Magpie went skiing in Switzerland, high up in the Alps. She thinks she's practising for the Winter Olympics!

I got a Christmas card from my Uncle Polo, the Polar Bear. He lives in Canada. He's out every day catching salmon which he eats for dinner.....and tea.....and, er, breakfast as well, actually!

We've been doing some lessons in First-Aid at school and they've been very useful. Cate Cat came off a sledge and cut her head. We'd been taught to fold a clean cloth and press it down on the cut to slow the bleeding. Rio wrote her a poem to make her feel better:

'Cate fell off a sled,
And her head bled,
So she went to bed.'

I'm not sure it helped a lot.

COMPETITION RESULT: Autumn 2009

The words in the Discovering Africa competition were: Desert; Kenya; Tribe(s); Nile; Equator; Hot/Heat; Jungle; Snake; Lion; Spear; Safari; Accra; Hut; Coconut and Tanzania.



The winning entries came from Hannah Siney from Wigan and John Greene from Glastonbury.


Bosco Bear



DANCING ON ICE

SNOW GOOD:

It was a cold winter's morning. Bosco Bear peeped out of his cave; "F-f-f-freezing Februarys," he shivered.

Suddenly he heard singing: 
'Oh what a beautiful morning,
Oh what a beautiful day.....'

Molly Magpie, Suzi Squirrel, Graham Greyhound and Rio Rabbit were coming up the road, wrapped in winter woollies.

"We're going skating," said Graham. "Shake a leg Bosco!"

"Snow good," commented Bosco.

"Yes. Snow is very good," replied Graham, cheerfully.

"No, no. I said it's no good," chattered Bosco!

"I've been watching Dancing on Ice," said Rio, "and I think I could do it. Torvill and Dean aren't that good. I could jump up; do 3 twists in mid-air and land on one leg."

Rio's friends laughed. "We'll get an ambulance ready," said Molly.

A TRIPLE SPIN:

The dazzling mirror of Lake Glass was completely frozen over. It looked like an ice-rink.

"I got some new red skates for Christmas," boasted Rio. "If you all hold hands and skate round behind me we'll be fine."

"Is the ice thick enough?" wondered Bosco. He wasn't sure at all.

Off they went. It was good fun, whizzing along and trying to do a 'figure of eight'.

"Now for my triple spin!" announced Rio. He set off on his own; went faster and faster; leapt in the air; twisted round; landed andfell through the ice!

"Aaaaagh," screamed Rio! "HEL-L-L-L-L-P!"

RESCUE:

"Leave the ice!" Bosco ordered the others. "Don't go near Rio or you'll fall in too. Graham; run as fast as you can and buy a rope from Mrs Job's shop." Graham set off like Usain Bolt.

"Help. Help." Rio was frightened. "I'm c-c-c-cold."

"Hang in there Rio," urged Bosco. "One minute and we'll get you out."

Graham hurtled back; Bosco threw

the rope: Rio caught it. All of the friends held on to each other and, slowly, pulled Rio out of the icy water, across the frozen lake, and onto the bank. Well rescued!

ICE CREAM:

"We must keep him warm," said Molly.

'Nurse' Suzi shot off for a towel, some dry clothes and a blanket. Bosco ran home and made some hot soup.

"What did you think when you fell through the ice?" asked Molly.

"Ice cream," replied Rio.

"Pardon?" said Molly.

"Even you can't have been thinking of food when you were nearly drowning!"

"No, no. Not 'ice cream'. I thought if I scream the others will save me!"

Everyone now realised that 'Dancing on Ice' was not a good idea at all.



SAFETY FIRST

You must look after your amazing body. It carries you around!

In the time it takes you to read the words Safety First, about 300 million cells in your body have died and have been replaced by new ones. Wow!

It's very important for children to play out. Bumps and bruises will always happen, but if you think about what you're going to do it's possible to have adventures to enjoy new experiences, to be more independent AND to be safe at the same time.

Here are my top safety tips:

- Try to stay cool if you see an accident, but get adult help, as quickly as possible. It is always the best thing to do.
- Keep off ice. Don't risk getting hurt yourself! That won't help anyone.
- Be very careful in the kitchen. This is where 9 out of 10 accidents happen at home.
- Be mega-careful of boiling water, hot ovens and sharp knives.
- Protect younger children who don't see danger.
- Don't mess about when crossing roads. Some children think it's cool to walk slowly across a road even if a car is coming. IT'S NOT!
- Be careful near water. Even those who can swim sometimes get into difficulties.
- But you must have fun. You should play out, run around, go cycling, go to swimming pools and do lots of other activities: and, at the same time, keep yourself safe.



COMPETITION:

"YOU'RE A POET AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT!"

Perhaps you can write a better poem than Rio's? I'm sure you can. Write a poem, of no more than 12 lines, about WINTER.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Please send to Don Bosco Publications:
Thornleigh House, Sharples Park, Bolton BL1 6PQ

12th February - Haiti Remembers



The terrible earthquake which occurred on the 12th January changed the face of Haiti forever and took over 200,000 lives. »

30 days after the earthquake on the 12th February, a day of mourning was observed, a day of fasting and prayer for the victims. It was promoted by the Government and supported by various religious and civic bodies. Life in the devastated city came to a stand-still. Even the local markets, set up after the quake and with very few provisions, were deserted.

People dressed in white congregated near the churches which were unfit to enter. A Mass was celebrated in the square near the devastated cathedral. Hymns and prayers filled the streets and in some places drowned out all other city noises. At the end, with great dignity, the people who were fortunate still to have a home went home, others returned to their tents, if they had been lucky enough to get one, or in the poorer districts to the remaining hovels.

From above, Port-au-Prince seems a city like so many others. Closer to the ground one begins to make out the grey piles of rubble and the multi-coloured official tent-sites or those improvised with any kind of material available.

The removal of the rubble is still progressing, and will certainly require much more time. The ruins of houses, government buildings, and monuments all seem to tell their own story of suffering, sorrow and the agony of those who have found death under them, or have lost loved ones because of them or have seen destroyed with them what little they had. Countless stories are told of those who by chance, coincidence or good fortune died or survived.

A large city, a huge tragedy, an impressive rescue and relief operation which, in spite of the commitment and non-stop work of those engaged, does not seem to have reached all the corners of Port-au-Prince. A country which seemed not to notice the recent global economic crisis - only because it had been living with it for years!

Haiti ought to be at the heart of the world for a long time! Perhaps the other countries, especially those in the developed west, should stop every 12th day of the month to remember these people.

Should you wish to make a donation please use the form on page 8.

A Mass was celebrated in the square near the devastated cathedral.





Joy and sorrow, dismay and hope marked the first day of the visit of Fr Pascual Chávez to Haiti. To the Salesians and the youngsters he said, *Our purpose is, first of all, to give hope to Haiti.* »

The Rector Major had arrived in the evening of 11th February at the airport in Santo Domingo. He was welcomed by the Provincial of the Dominican Republic, Fr Vichtor Pichardo who, on the 12th February, accompanied the Rector Major to the capital of Haiti in a helicopter. Thirty days after the earthquake, the ninth successor of Don Bosco, arriving at Port-au-Prince, saw from above the vast areas of devastation.

The helicopter landed in the grounds of the Embassy of the Dominican Republic, the embassy itself had been ruined by the earthquake. He was met by the new superior, Fr Sylvain Ducange, as well as the Provincial of the Salesian Sisters in Haiti, Sister Marie Claire. The Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to Haiti, who introduced himself as a Salesian past pupil, also accompanied them.

The first stop was at Pétiyon Ville. Here the youngsters welcomed Fr Chávez with joyful songs and a traditional dance. Fr Ducange said, in his welcoming address, *As sons of Don Bosco, cheerfulness is our attitude, and we are moved by a spirit of optimism as we believe in the re-birth of Haitian people and in the re-founding of the Salesian charism in our country.* In his reply, the Rector Major once again expressed how he himself and the whole Salesian Family were close to them, full of hope: *Before thinking of re-building the walls it is necessary to give hope to the people and to the young.*

He then visited the Salesian places most affected by the earthquake, both regarding the buildings and the loss of life. Accompanying the group was Fr Mark Hyde, from the New Rochelle Salesian Missions Office, who had already been in Haiti for several days coordinating relief

efforts. At the *Ecole Nationale des Arts et Métiers* (ENAM), they visited the various halls of the school and noting the damage and destruction, the Rector Major stopped for a few moments of silent prayer at the place where 12 Salesian pupils were buried. Much greater and much deeper was his emotion in front of the piles of rubble which still cover the bodies of about 150 youngsters.



The silence in the courtyard filled with rubble made more heart-rending the exclamation: *How is it possible! Young people just starting out on life!* The Rector Major spoke to the Italian civil defence and fire service workers who are removing the debris of ENAM, stressing the significance and the sacred character of the place.

However, life has not stopped in ENAM. The youngsters and the staff welcomed Fr Chávez in a short ceremony with songs and an address. *We must now look to the future; it is up to you to give hope to Haiti,* the Rector Major told them. At the end, the youngsters gave Fr Chávez

an oil painting. It was here that the Rector Major met an Italian delegation led by Naval Captain Gianluigi Reversi, Commander of the aircraft carrier *Cavour* from the Italian contingent in Haiti. The spokesman of the press office of the group said, *We wanted to work with the Salesians because we have seen, also here, their commitment to the young and to the poor.*

Since the Salesian parish of Cité Soleil, has been rendered unfit for use by the earthquake, the reception camps were set up at Drouillard, and the headquarters of the Vice Province were visited next. In spite of the pain in seeing how deep the wounds suffered by the Salesian centres, Fr Chávez never failed to bring hope and a spirit of optimism. Fr Ducange, who on the 30th January was installed as the new Superior of the Vice Province of Haiti, often repeated, *We are very pleased with the visit of the Rector Major and we are conscious of the closeness of the whole Congregation. This encourages us to go ahead and to overcome all the difficulties!*

Early in the afternoon Fr Chávez walked through the streets to see the places in the city most affected by the earthquake. Looking at the ruins of the Cathedral, he said to those with him: *God is walking through these streets telling us that he is on the side of those who are suffering, those still under the rubble, those who have seen reduced to dust the little they had managed to achieve in their whole lives.*

The last stop was *Fleuriot*, the post-novitiate house of formation for various religious orders present in Haiti, it was completely out of action. *We must rebuild for the formation of our Salesians and in order to continue to offer this service of formation to the local church,* was the encouraging proposal of the Rector Major.

Much greater and much deeper was his emotion in front of the piles of rubble which still cover the bodies of about 150 youngsters. The silence in the courtyard filled with rubble made more heart-rending the exclamation: *How is it possible! Young people just starting out on life!*





Where is God in the countless tragedies that happen in our world? Where is God when bad things happen to good people? Where was God during the holocaust? These are timeless questions and, taken together, constitute what is often called the theodicy question, the question of God and human suffering.

Every so often this question hits us with a particular poignancy, as it did recently with the earthquake in Haiti. More than one hundred thousand people died, thousands were injured, hundreds of thousands were made homeless, thousands more faced the possibility of disease from lack of proper water, food, housing, and hygiene, its capital city was almost completely destroyed, and virtually everyone in the country lost loved ones. And all of this happened to one of the poorest nations in the world - and to a people who have a deep faith in God.

Where is God in all this? How does one find a faith perspective within which to understand this? Not easily.

When we search scripture for answers, we find that neither the Jewish scriptures nor Jesus try to tackle the question philosophically, namely, in the type of way that Christian and Jewish apologetic writers have tried to answer it. Scripture and Jesus, instead, do two things: First, they place suffering and tragedy into a larger perspective within which God is understood more as redeeming suffering rather than as rescuing us from it. Second, they assure us that God is with us, a fellow-sufferer, in any tragedy.

For example, anyone who follows the daily readings for the Church's liturgy, cannot have failed to notice, that on the very day after the earthquake, there was a haunting parallel between what happened in Haiti and what was described in that day's first reading taken from the Book of Samuel. Here is an excerpt from the liturgy the day after the earthquake:

“So where was God in all of this?”

So the people went to Shiloh, and brought with them the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark of the Covenant. When the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was brought into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the whole earth resounded. And with that faith and confidence, Israel marched into battle, but Israel was defeated, and everyone fled, each to his own house. There was a great slaughter and thirty thousand of her foot-soldiers fell. The ark of the covenant was captured; and the two sons of Eli died.

One doesn't have to strain the imagination to write a haunting parallel:

So the people of Haiti practised their Christian faith with piety and confidence. They went to their churches, received the Eucharist, and lit vigil candles to their God.

And they trusted that their God would protect them. But there came a great earthquake. Hundreds of thousands of its people died, its great buildings were all levelled, all its churches were destroyed, its beloved cathedral fell to the ground, and the Archbishop was killed.

So where was God in all of this?

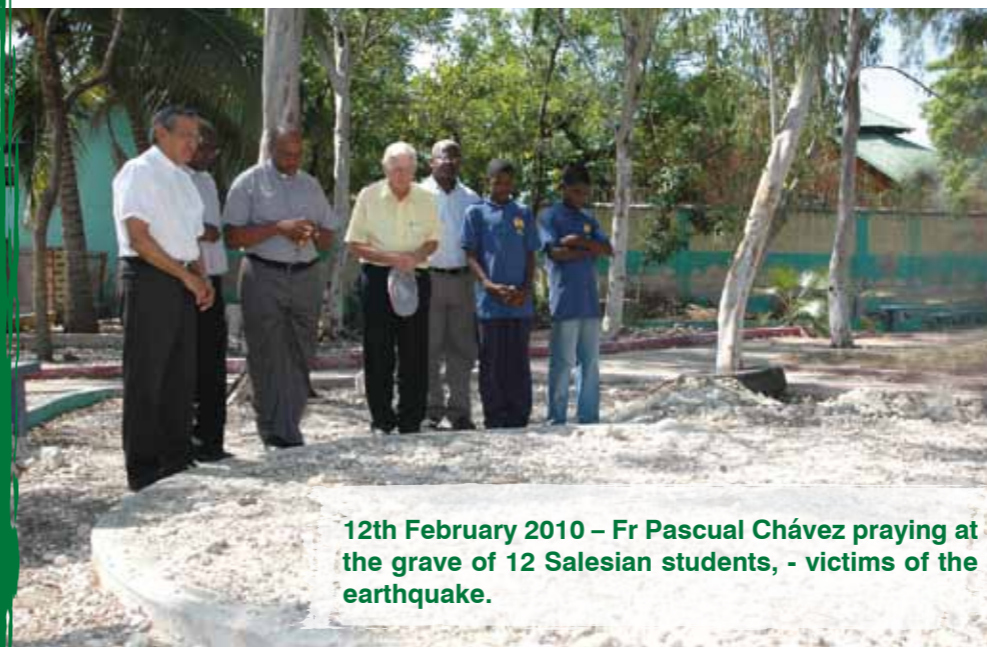
The Book of Samuel doesn't try to write an apologetics to explain what happened that day when a people who had just celebrated its faith and confidence in God were utterly crushed in battle. It doesn't try to explain where God was when this happened. It simply continues to tell its story and, eventually, we see how God redeems a tragedy from which he didn't rescue its victims. It also makes clear that God was with the people of Israel, even as they were being routed.

Jesus gives us essentially the same perspective: When his friend, Lazarus, lay dying, he didn't rush to his side to rescue him. He waited until Lazarus was dead and only then went to his home. He was met there by the sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, who each asked him the painful question: *Where were you when our brother was dying? Why didn't you come and cure him?*

Jesus, for his part, doesn't meet their question head-on. Instead he simply asks: *Where have you put him?* They answer: *Come, we'll show you!* They take him to the grave and when Jesus sees the tomb and drinks in their grief, he sits down and begins to cry. He enters and shares their grief. Only afterwards does he raise up the body of his dead friend.

Where was God when the earthquake hit Haiti?

He was weeping with its people, grieving outside its mass graves, sitting in sadness beside its collapsed buildings. He was there, though he provided no Hollywood or Superman-type rescue. Moreover we can be sure he will redeem what was lost. In God's time, eventually, not a single life or single dream that died in Haiti will remain unredeemed. *In the end, all will be well and every manner of being will be well.*



12th February 2010 – Fr Pascual Chávez praying at the grave of 12 Salesian students, - victims of the earthquake.

Ronald Rolheiser OMI

Sister Hilary Terrett FMA



(1943-2010)

In Don Bosco's Letter from Rome it is stated that the children must not only be loved but that they must know they are loved. It was this ability to love and show that love to her little pupils that made Sister Hilary the gifted and successful Salesian teacher that she was for over forty years, teaching in the infant classes at Chertsey, Farnborough, Colne and Battersea.

Born in a London air-raid shelter during the War, it was as a boarder with the FMA at Chertsey that she came to know the Salesian spirit. Her school described her as *pleasant, good and prayerful child, always willing to help*. During school holidays, in fact, she would often give a hand in the local London home of the Little Sisters of the Poor as a Marian aide. It was to the FMA life, though, that her thoughts turned and, while still at school, she entered the aspirantate at Sandgates, Chertsey. Having made her noviciate at Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames, she took her first vows there in 1963.

A year later, Hilary began teacher training at Digby Stuart College, Roehampton, in the infant/junior age groups. There she developed what was to be a strength throughout her life, her ability to relate in a friendly and sympathetic way to the young. She was a capable and

conscientious teacher, with bright classrooms and well-prepared lessons. A colleague remarked that it was, above all, her gentleness and patience with the young, particularly the special needs children that earned her the love of the children themselves and the appreciation of staff and parents who recognised her genuine desire to help their children. One of the highlights of her teaching career was receiving the *Teacher of the Year* award for the south-east region in 1995.

Hilary will be remembered as a Salesian Sister who never stinted herself in her dedication to the children under her care; she taught all her life, retiring through ill health in 2004 but continuing to work with children in a voluntary capacity until last summer, when the illness which had dogged her for many years worsened, forcing her to withdraw from her varied activities.

Over the years, she had been a committed Girl Guide leader, a role she described as *very exciting and rewarding work*, a parish catechist, a member of the children's liturgy team and a community bursar. In any spare time she had, she enjoyed keeping up with the latest trends in the Church, and the local community and culture. To the end of her life, she maintained a sense of childlike delight in God's creation, particularly the birds and fox cubs she observed in Battersea and Streatham.

She is mourned not only by her remaining brother, her nieces and nephews, and her Sisters in the province, particularly those of her community in Streatham, but also by the friends she had made over the years. For Hilary, friends were friends for life.

Although terminally ill, her death came suddenly on 5th January this year.

May she now receive the reward of her labours – *Well done, good and faithful Hilary, enter into the joy of your Lord*.

Sister Mary Treacy FMA

Fr Michael Power SDB



Michael was baptised in St Joseph's church in Glasgow. He was professed as a Salesian in 1949. Michael studied Theology in Melchet Court, Hampshire. During his studies for the priesthood there were some dark clouds looming and times of great sorrow.

First, he lost his mother; then within a short space of time, also his father. After that second loss, an uncle of Michael told him that he would take the place of his father, and his home would be Michael's home. But in a third, bitter blow, this uncle also died. It's a tribute to the depth of his faith and his courage that he could come back yet again, resume his studies, and find peace of mind. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1959. After ordination Michael went to Farnborough where he remained for 10 years before taking up his first major post as Rector at Shrigley from 1970 to 1976. Michael eventually came to Scotland for two years, to promote vocations and renew contacts with Salesian Cooperators. During this time he told me he visited an area of Glasgow called Easterhouse, and he said with great emphasis: *That's where we Salesians ought to be*. It would be ten years before his words became a reality.

The sudden death of Fr Fairclough led to Michael being called upon to take up his second major post of responsibility, this time as Provincial Bursar. It was a post he was to hold for eight years. Michael set up a Finance Committee, and we are still benefiting from their professional and practical advice; he also set up a fund for the missions, and for the elderly Salesians. So it's thanks to his work that we now have two residences, one in the north and the other in the south of England for elderly Salesians. We have much reason then to be grateful to Michael for this great work of administration.

Michael came back to Scotland in 1987, still nurturing the dream he told me about nine years before, and so a year later saw him as Parish Priest in St Benedict's, Easterhouse. For Michael, it was the beginning of parish ministry that would go on for the next 21 years. Michael brought into parish ministry not only the wealth of experience acquired over the years, but more importantly the fruit of his own deep, personal faith and closeness

to God. He brought his natural, easy manner of relating to people, and a spirit of optimism and joy that must have uplifted many hearts. Five parishes were blessed with Michael's presence and ministry: in addition to St Benedict's, they were St Mary Magdalene and St Stephen's in Mitchell's Plain, South Africa, St Richards in Liverpool, and finally the parish of St John Bosco in Robertsham, near Johannesburg.

Fr Canice Dooley, who worked with Michael in his last parish, said - *Michael's life gave great joy to so many. He loved life and he knew how precious the gift of life is, and he made it his business to honour other people's lives, to give them dignity and to uplift the lives of the many poor, the marginalised, the elderly and sick, and in a special way the young, to whom he gave the greater part of his life of service as a Salesian. By his life, he proved that it is possible to work, pray, play, minister, and serve, together, in unity, in mutual respect - not just get along and put up with each other, but to give witness to harmonious community living*.

A few hours before Michael died: when Fr Canice anointed him, as the prayers ended Michael said: *Now I'm ready for the journey*. Later, they prayed the Rosary, and as they came to the end of the prayer *Hail, Holy Queen* and said the words *O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary*, Michael breathed his last. What a beautiful moment to go to God – in the company of Mary, who had been close to Michael all through his life.

Fr Robert Coupe SDB



1929 – 2009

