



HATIGAON TIDINGS

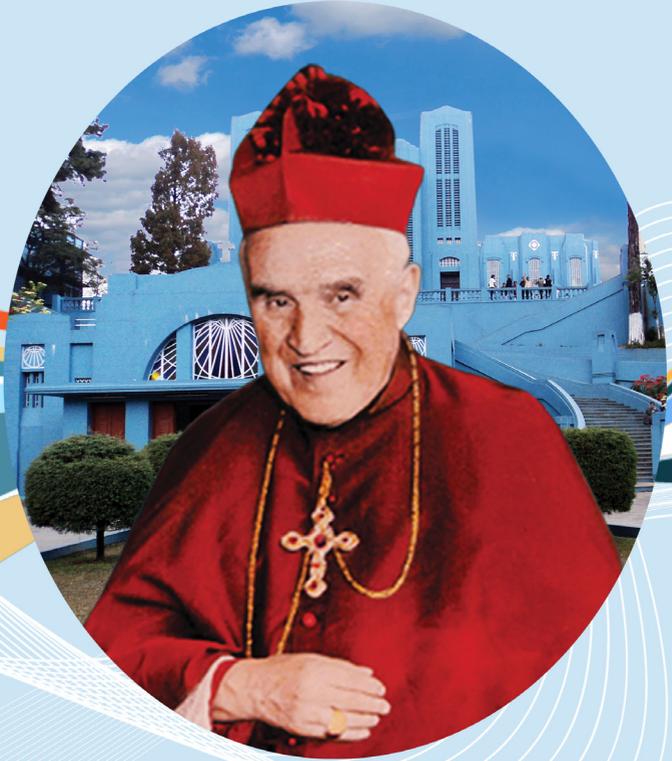
MSMHC GENERALATE - LITTLE FLOWER CONVENT, HATIGAON



Vol. 15.1

January - April 2016

Bishop Ferrando Declared Venerable



Servant of God, Bishop Stephen Ferrando, the Founder of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC), has been declared Venerable by Pope Francis on 3 March 2016. The occasion brought great joy and delight to the entire Catholic Church, especially the Church in Northeast India and the Congregation of MSMHC. Receiving the status of the venerable marks noteworthy as it ascertains the Church's approval of Bishop Ferrando's sanctity and heroic virtues.

The Salesian Congregation (SDB) initiated the Cause in 1997 in collaboration with the MSMHC. There were two diocesan processes, one in Shillong and the other in Genova. The process at Shillong was officially

inaugurated by Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, Archbishop of Shillong on 3 October 2003. The one at Genova was initiated on 27 May 2006. Both the processes were concluded together in Shillong on 13 August 2006 at the presence of the Local Ordinary and the Postulator General. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints declared the process valid on 17 October 2008 and began their own evaluation.

The postulation compiled the Positio for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and submitted it upon its completion in 2012. On 5 March 2015 the theologians advising the Congregation approved his life and virtues, while the Congregation itself met on 23 February 2016 and also approved the cause's continuation. It

received papal approval on 3 March 2016 and Pope Francis declared him as Venerable.

Bishop Ferrando remains as an inspiration for all, especially the people of the Northeast region. He was a humble instrument of God to make known his love and mercy to everyone. His life and works were characterized by absolute trust in God, filial devotion, ardent love, humble submission, serene joy and warm hospitality. His humility, simplicity and love for the poor spurred many to come to know and accept Christian faith. He made many monuments to honour the Almighty. His great affection to Mary Help of Christians urged him to spread devotion to her. He loved Don Bosco and loved to live his ways.



FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

A Missionary with Passion

“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” (Mt 28, 19).

Bishop Ferrando was certainly a convinced disciple of the risen Lord who took to heart the missionary mandate of his Master who entrusted to his weak and fragile disciples the responsibility of continuing his universal mission of making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Anyone who knew Bishop Stephen Ferrando personally would admit the fact that he was primarily a Missionary.

Missionary identity outshined in Stephen Ferrando right from the early age

The missionary identity outshined in Stephen Ferrando right from the early years of his religious and priestly formation. He knew well ‘why’ he opted to be a Salesian Missionary, amidst many other possibilities that sprung open to the young, strong, adventurous and vibrant son of Rosseglione, Genova. Brought up in a missionary environment as a student, witnessing the moving scenes of the periodical missionary expeditions, and listening to the passionate narrations of missionary adventures of the early missionaries, Stephen’s young heart resonated with a corresponding thirst and an ardent longing to identify himself with those veteran missionaries in imitation of Jesus the missionary of the Father.

As young Stephen grew, his missionary ideal grew along with

him, that in 1914, when he was in practical training at Borgo San Martino, his major superiors asked him about his preference for the future apostolate and he wrote in bold letters, “MISSIONARY.” The clarity of his writing was indeed a vivid expression of the conviction which matured in him over the years of the process of his growth and development and in particular his religious formation. As in the life of every growing being, there were many distracting and stifling factors which could have stolen or even crushed ‘the missionary passion’ in the heart of young Stephen, but what seemed to have kept him focussed on the ideal of his life was nothing other than his spirit of prayer and childlike confidence in God, his filial love for Mary Help of Christians and his love, openness and closeness to his superiors.

He always nurtured and sustained his missionary identity throughout his life: in poverty and prosperity, in glory and in humiliation, in success and in failure, in health and in sickness, and in youth and in old age. His identification with Jesus the Missionary of the Father was so real and total that he was able to say with great conviction: “Now I am not a missionary who ‘goes’ but who ‘is’ that is who carries the mystery of Christ within” He often insisted on the importance of having a deeper missionary identity.

He nurtured and sustained his missionary identity throughout his life

“We need to have a missionary heart. There are many missionaries who never go out to the missions, but are true missionaries at heart. At the



same time there are many, out in the missions, who are not missionaries at heart. They have gone for their own interest and not for passion for souls.” The constancy of his missionary spirit was indeed laudable.

He always had a missionary heart which made him a missionary round the clock, whether indoors or out in the missions he was aware of his identity and mission. It implies that without being ‘a missionary within’ it is useless to do the work of a missionary, it would be a mere game of words or chattering noise’. Following the footsteps of our holy father and founder, let us revamp our missionary call and be filled with missionary zeal.

May we turn to Mary, the spouse of the Holy Spirit so that she may teach us the art of nurturing in our hearts the missionary passion as she did with the apostles who had been reduced to a ‘passionless’ existence and complete loss of focus after the death of their master. Let us stay with Mary in the upper room of our interiority and allow the Spirit of God to re-melt us, re-mould us and re-shape us into true missionaries after the heart of our founder and who patiently and painstakingly learnt the art of identifying himself with his Master. This is my wish and prayer for all of us as we prepare ourselves for the feast of Pentecost.

Sr. Philomena Mathew
Superior General



Thanksgiving Day at Hatigaon

The MSMHC Generalate at Hatigaon had a day of thanksgiving for Venerable Stephen Ferrando, their Founder on 4 April 2016. It was followed by the announcement of Pope Francis on 3 March, declaring the Servant of God, Bishop Ferrando as Venerable.

The highlight of the occasion was the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Most Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, concelebrated by around 25 priests from various parishes and intuitions in Guwahati.

In his homily, Archbishop shared his own experience of being with Bishop Ferrando and described him as a pastor who loved to be with his people. He said, “Bishop Ferrando was a man of prayer and he inspired others to pray. Following his Master Jesus, he led his flock from the front that he was always found going ahead of time to the villages for the celebration of the Holy Mass. He never waited for others to gather and prepare people for the Mass, but had his

way of being with them.” Archbishop also said that he was transparent in his demeanour and lived a simple life.

The introduction to the Holy Eucharist by Sr. Jancy Joseph, the Secretary General presented a compilation of the life and mission of Bishop Ferrando and the process of the Cause initiated and carried out by the Congregation and the Church. She acknowledged the great role played by the Postulator, Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General along with many others, especially the Salesian Postulator, Don Pierluigi Cameroni SDB in Rome.

The Mass with the melodious singing by the Novices from Mary Immaculate Novitiate, Shillong and the presence of a number of religious from nearby institutions added to the solemnity of the occasion.

After the Holy Eucharist the assembly gathered before the decorated portrait of venerable Stephen Ferrando for a floral tribute. Archbishop John

Moolachira offered a bouquet of flower while Fr. Guillermo Basañes, General Councillor for the Salesian Missions and Fr. V.M. Thomas, the Provincial of Salesian Province, Guwahati offered lighted candles. It was followed by floral tribute by Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General, major superiors and everyone present.

Sr. Philomena Mathew thanked everyone present for their presence and prayers and invited Fr. Guillermo Basañes to address the gathering. He congratulated the congregation for taking ahead the cause of canonization of Bishop Ferrando with persistent efforts and constant prayers. Presenting a special table cloth prepared by the indigenous people of Paraguay, he reminded Sr. Philomena Mathew about the need to reach out to the people there by opening MSMHC mission centres. Fr. V.M. Thomas also expressed his appreciation to MSMHC for having the founder raised to the rank of the venerable.





Seminar at Salesianum Rome

The first ever seminar on the promotion of the causes of beatification and canonization of the Salesian Family was held at the Generalate of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Rome, from 6 to 10 April. About 120 members comprised of experts and representatives of all the groups of the Salesian Family participated in the seminar. From the MSMHC Congregation, Sr. Philomena Mathew, Superior General and Sr. Jane Francis, General Councillor along with Sr. Martha D' Rosario and Sr. Rosita Joseph from Italy attended.

Clarifying the objectives of the seminar the Postulator General, Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni SDB stated that the seminar aims to enhance the spiritual, pastoral and educational heritage of holiness born of Don Bosco; to offer guidelines and best practices for promoting the causes of candidates for canonized sainthood in the Salesian Family; to help in investigating and following up alleged miracles; and to understand the true meaning and purpose of a canonization process. His presentation gave a clear view on the state of the causes of the Blesseds and Saints of the Salesian Family and gave an explicit invitation to greater attention and effort in this area.

Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the causes of Saints, led the participants to understand the pastoral and spiritual



relevance of the causes of Saints, solid pillars of the Church and tangible expressions of God's goodness in the heart of the world.

Stressing on matters related to the theology of holiness and the methods and best practices of the causes of canonization Fr. Andrea Bozzolo, dean and professor of theology at Turin-Crocetta spoke on the dynamics of grace in the lives of the saints, and Dr. Maria Ludovica Zanet, collaborator of the Postulator, on the requirements of "demonstrable holiness". There was also input by the two officials of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Mons. Robert Sarno and Mons. Michele Prattichizzo, on the scientific and theological elements necessary to verify an alleged miracle, and the administrative aspects related to the causes of Saints, in accordance with criteria of transparency and solidarity.

On the final day while addressing

the assembly, the Rector Major, Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime drew attention to the idea expressed in the Strenna of this year and stressed on the need of gaining a deeper knowledge on the spiritual lives of the brothers and sisters who have travelled the adventure of the Spirit with Jesus. He said, "It is a strong call to study deeply the spiritual lives of these brothers and sisters. It is not enough to know their life and works, we have to go deeper, to discover their spiritual wealth, the specific ways in which they were conformed to Jesus Christ and lived their membership of the Church and of the Salesian Family."

The seminar gave emphasis on the need for spiritual and pastoral mobilization of the whole Salesian Family, of all the friends and admirers of Don Bosco and his charism to make them all aware of the rediscovery of the heroes of the Family.



Farewell and Welcome at Bethel

Bethel Prayer Centre at Barapani had a day of gratitude on 8 February, organised jointly by the Generalate and Ferrando Institute of Spirituality (FIS) to bid farewell to Mary Thomas, the Superior and Sr. Celestina Lakra and to welcome the newly appointed Superior Sr. Laila Thomas, and the new member Sr. Emilda Maring.

Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General along with her team, members from Hatigaon and FIS, priests and religious from neighbouring communities and a few close associates were present for the thanksgiving service in the evening. Fr. Wilfred SJ presided over the thanksgiving Eucharist along with a number of concelebrants.

At the start of the Holy Mass, Sr. Philomena Mathew briefly introduced the purpose of gathering and placed on record her deep appreciation for the contributions made by Sr. Mary Thomas during the past nine years



of life spent at Bethel. She also thanked Sr. Celestina Lakra for her generous service of past two years and welcomed Sr. Laila Thomas and Sr. Emilda Maring. The liturgy was made meaningful with the melodious singing of students from FIS.

At the end of the liturgy, Sr. Mary Thadavanal, the former Superior General gave a short vote of thanks expressing her gratitude for the cheerful service of Sr. Mary and for the many sacrifices she made during the initial years of Bethel.

Followed by the Holy Mass was a short felicitation programme to thank the outgoing members and

to welcome the new members. Sr. Jane Francis, General Councillor for Education spoke on behalf of the gathering, while Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General along with Sr. Christine Mynsong, General Councillor for Evangelization, Sr. Ancilla Jose, Economer General, Sr. Mary Thadavanal, Former Superior General and Sr. Philo Simon, Superior of Hatigaon felicitated the Sisters with bouquets of flowers and gifts.

At the end of the programme, Sr. Mary Thomas expressed her gratitude to God and everyone for their cooperation and support.

Intensive Training in Western Music

Music goes beyond boundaries ... it brings joy and cheer, adding life to the mission. In view of encouraging the inborn talents of the sisters, MSMHC Generalate arranged a music course at

Hatigaon from 12 to 24 January. Fifteen MSMHC Sisters from various centres of different provinces underwent two weeks of intensive training in Western Music by Sr. Mary Gracelet PDDM from Bangalore.

The course rightly helped even those who have never studied music academically. It introduced them to

the theory of music, providing them with the skills needed to read and write Western music notation, as well as to understand, analyse, and listen.

This methodical course provided the basis for the further study of music both from a theoretical and practical point of view. It was profitable not only to recognize one's talent, but also to learn how to use music as a means of evangelization and prayer. One of the participants, Sr. Alphonsa David said, "The training was of great help as they got to learn music notes which is essential for getting correct melody of the songs." Added to this, Sr. Emavati Kerketta said, "It will certainly help to bring in unity and oneness as everyone will be following correct tune with the use of music note."





Editorial

A call to journey a path of Love

Family is the foundation of society. Progress and wellbeing of the families are to be seen as most important to bring steady advancement to the society. But, today the pattern of family life is changing as there is a visible difference noted in its structure of the household. There seems to be no more an era of large families or joint families in which there was possibility for sharing and interaction with more persons. Studies show that low birth rate and high degree of childlessness are factors that contribute to the decline of large families. Nevertheless, what is alarming most is the heightened individualism and growing selfishness, leading to perplexing situation, unhealthy competition, division and alienation. Modern individualism brings negative consequences not only on the individual but on family and society. As the families are undergoing sweeping change, it is also seen grappling with stress and strain. With the receding of family morals and values that guided the past, family remains as one of the crucial issue of today.

Pope Francis, like his predecessor Pope John Paul II has placed matters concerning family at the centre of his pontificate, for he knows the significance of family as 'domestic Church'. The present trend of the families drifting away from many of its good values and practices have been studied and discussed at various forums within the Church. Pope's persistence and determination to work for the revival of families have been the driving force in bringing changes in the system and outlook of people around. The last two Synods were on family and it focussed on the pastoral challenges to the family in the context of evangelization. The post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) is the result of the two Synods called by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015. It's effort is to see that the people of God abides in the truth that liberates. It underlines the importance of family's role in the realisation of human society and the Church, and points out the complex reality of family life. It provides spiritual insights and practical wisdom for those living family life, draws attention to the disheartening situation and expresses the need for revival and calls for mercy and pastoral discernment.

Pope Francis' appeal for all is to live a life of love, letting the other experience the unconditional love of the Father. It is a call to journey a path of Love.

Sr. Shiji James

TITBITS

BONDING OF THE PAST AND PRESENT



Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General along with the former Mothers General - Mary Rose Thapa, Elizabeth Packumala and Mary Thadavanal during a meeting at Hatigaon on 20 February.

STUDENTS OF FIS DEFEND MASTER'S THESIS



The second year students of Ferrando Institute of Spirituality (FIS) poses with their thesis after the defence on 19 March.

NEW MEMBER FOR SOUTH SUDAN MISSION



Sr. Prema Tirkey from Kolkata Province joins the community of South Sudan on 26 April, 2016.

HONOURING DON BOSCO



Novices of Hatigaon stage a short programme on 31 January in honour of Don Bosco.

Updating programme for Formators

Considering the importance of formation programme of the Congregation, Sr. Nancy Augustine, General Councillor for Formation called for a five-day updating programme for the formators of various stages of formation from 22-26 April at Hatigaon. Sr. Mary Thadavanal, the former Superior General was the main resource person for the programme.

Taking stock of the present day situation and its dominating influence on individuals Sr. Mary Thadavanal spoke on the need of giving emphasis on psycho-spiritual integration. The art of getting in touch with one's feelings, ways of releasing ones feelings and emotions, dealing with losses in life and the art of listening were some of the ways proposed to the formators.

Stating 'love' as the core of human being, and which remains as the single purpose of religious life Sr. Mary Thadavanal pointed out that, the duty of a formator is to draw the formees to God's love as deep as possible.



She said, "Loving oneself is another important aspect in order to become personally integrated, socially involved in the lives of people, emotionally balanced, intellectually well informed, spiritually alive in touch with God and to become more aware of the soul's thirst for God."

Sr. Mary Perunilam, the Assistant General and Sr. Nancy Augustine, the General Councillor for Formation had sessions with the formators on the last day. Sr. Mary Perunilam shared from the lived experiences as well as quoted from the Constitution. She emphasized

on giving focus to Jesus in formation and insisted on guiding the formees to centre their thoughts always in Jesus. She also said, "Ability to live in diverse group, true spirit of mission, deep spiritual life and personal sanctification are essential elements to be cultivated by the formees."

Defining formation as self-transformation, Sr. Nancy Augustine said, "Quest for God, spirit of generosity, apostolic availability, sound motivation and inner freedom are the psycho-spiritual requires for self-transformation."

Animation Programme for New Animators

The newly appointed animators of the communities had an animation programme from 9 to 15 April at Hatigaon. The programme began on 9 evening with an hour of adoration organised by Sr. Mary Perunilam, the Assistant General. She reflected with the group the attitude of Jesus towards service as described in the Gospel of St. Luke (22:24-27). The group drew inspiration from Jesus who showed the perfect way of leadership which gave emphasis to service other than gaining recognition and status.

During the goodnight talk on the first day, Sr. Mary Perunilam spoke to the new animators about the purpose of the programme and gave them some important points taken from the memento of Don Bosco to Don Rua, the successor of Don Bosco when he was appointed as the leader of the new community at Muravello. The memento had some important points for the leaders to practice in their daily life and it focused on the need to become good leaders who lead by examples.

The programme comprised of input sessions by different persons on chosen topics. The session by Sr. Mary Perunilam was based on the reflection of Pope Francis about the virtues necessary for leaders of religious communities. She also reminded them

of their responsibilities as mentioned in the Constitutions of the Congregation.

Sr. Christine Mynsong, General Councillor for Evangelization spoke about 'Evangelizing Community'. She explained evangelization as a process of seeking to spread the Gospel message throughout the world. She said that, "community is a place where we live and share the faith." Underlining the influence it can have on the people, she stated that our community need to be animated by love, influenced by love and radiant with love of God.

Explaining animation and accompaniment as part and parcel in religious life, Sr. Jancy Joseph, Secretary General, reflected with the group on 'Animation and Spiritual Accompaniment in Religious Life'.



Sr. Mary Thadavanal, during the two days' sessions guided the group to understand God's plan and His interventions in each one's life. She highlighted the importance of having deeply spiritual leaders in the community who can influence the lives of others positively.

Fr. Rony Mukkuzhy from Divine Retreat Centre, Khetri in his talk laid stress on the need to have strong personal life, credibility and authority which come from God. He said, "The essential qualities required for an animator is acquired through personal prayer and relationship with God. An animator should lead others to a personal encounter with God." He made clear to them the meaning of authority drawing inspiration from the Bible passages that mentions about authority.

On the final day there were sessions on the nitty-gritties of community



living by Sr. Nancy Augustine, General Councillor for Formation and Sr. Mary Perunilam, Assistant General. Sr. Shiji James through her presentation underlined the need of setting up proper archives for each community and its upkeep. She also explained about the importance of writing chronicles with

clarity and precision. In the last session, Sr. Monica Mathew from Ferrando Holistic Centre for Su Jok Therapy, Guwahati enlightened the group on how to experience the love of God through human hands. She explained about the holistic healing that can be brought about through human hands.

Exposure Programme to Tamulpur Village

Faith Exposure Programme of the year organized by the Archdiocese of Guwahati was held at St. Xavier's Church, Tamulpur from 18 to 23 January, 2016. The theme of the programme was "Be merciful just as the Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). It had the participation of fathers and sisters from various parishes, religious institutions and those undergoing

formation programme of different stages.

MSMHC Sisters from various communities and Novices from Hatigaon and Tinsukia participated in the event. The programme was combined of both input sessions and practical experiences. It had incorporated enriching sessions by some of the selected individuals who had experiential knowledge of missionary work, family visits in small groups and get-together to share the experiences at the end of each day. Commenting on the input sessions, one of the participants said, "Listening

to the lived experiences of great missionaries taught me that I need to become a missionary in the heart first. I also learnt that an exemplary life can speak louder than the preaching."

The programme helped the participants to understand the need of the hour and the importance of carrying out the primary mission of the Church. It broadened their outlook and instilled in them love for the mission and enthusiasm to reach out. They affirmed that desire, determination and prayer are the keys to the success of missionary work and a missionary is one who experienced Christ personally.

Encountering the real life situations of people in the villages taught them lessons of life. One of the participants said, "The people in the villages are communitarian, looking for the common good. Every missionary should learn to read the mind of the people and their needs." Another said, "In the mission field all what I need is genuine love for people and their wellbeing without expecting a return for any of my good work among them."



NEWS FROM OVERSEAS



Rossiglione Remembers their Cherished Son

The people of Rossiglione, Genova, Italy, celebrated the proclamation of the Decree of Venerability on Bishop Stephen Ferrando SDB, on 16 April 2016. The honour was conferred on the Servant of God, on 3 March 2016, by Pope Francis.

It was a day to acclaim that Bishop Ferrando's sanctity was built on the rich Christian traditions of his hometown. The nine years he lived with his parents (1895-1904), near and dear ones were momentous years that shaped his future course of life. His steadfast faith in God and vocation was firmly founded on the unwavering faith and relentless hope of his parents. On the occasion, they remembered his own words, "From my family I have received a rich heritage, great love of God and Madonna, spirit of sacrifice and a temperament inclined for joy." Piety and goodness, gentleness and patience were the hallmarks of his life from nascent years. Rossiglione, has made substantial contribution in promoting his Salesian vocation. The

outstanding qualities of the people of Rossiglione that guided his life are: the exemplary faith, simplicity and spontaneity, devotion and piety, hard work and spirit of sacrifice and concern for others. The uniqueness of the Christian community makes Rossiglione a beautiful and welcoming town that makes them worthy of their ancestors in whose footsteps they walk daily.

The Holy Eucharist on the occasion was held at the Parish Church of Rossiglione, St. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr. It was presided over by the Archbishop of Turin, Mons. Cesare Nosiglia, and con-celebrated by the Bishop of Acqui, Mons. Pier Giorgio Micchiardi, the Postulator General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Don Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, and many other priests who collaborate with the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians in the Italian Delegation. Besides a large number of faithful and the relatives of Bishop Ferrando, Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior

General of the MSMHC, Sr. Jane Francis, the General Councillor, Sr. Martha D' Rosario, the Delegate Superior, the Sisters of the delegation and many well-wishers were present for the Eucharistic celebration.

After the Holy Mass, there was a get together in the parish hall to honour Bishop Ferrando. Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Superior General presented a documentary on the life of Bishop Ferrando. The Postulator General, Don Cameroni, spoke on the heroic virtues of Bishop Ferrando that made him outstanding in his sanctity in the Church. Sr. Rosita Joseph spoke about Bishop Ferrando as the son of Rossiglione, highlighting the perennial and reciprocal affection which Bishop Ferrando and the people share for all time.

The day was specially graced by the heavenly presence of Bishop Ferrando in the hearts of all, a day in which the people of Rossiglione praised God for their valiant and saintly son.



Day of Altar Servers, Italy



Italy keeps every 25 April as the day of Altar servers. This year was the 79th year of the celebration. Joining the entire country, the Diocese of Acqui Terme celebrated the feast of the Altar servers, gathering around 300 children from various parts of the Diocese. Sr. Mary Grace and Sr. Bindu Vincent accompanied the children and participated in the Holy Mass, cultural programme and singing competitions. The children won many prizes, enjoyed the day and returned with beaming faces.

Don Bosco's Day with Rector Major, Ethiopia



The MSMHC at Ethiopia had the solemn celebration on the feast of Don Bosco with the Rector Major, Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime and the Salesian communities at Zoway. To mark the day, there was a celebration of Holy Eucharist followed by fellowship meal and various competitions.

The Rector Major had separate meeting with the youth group, the Salesian confreres and the members of the Salesian family. During the Salesian family meeting he talked about the importance of being the members

of salesian family, communion with oneself and with others. He said, "Community without communion is meaningless. Our life should reflect our communion and love and it should attract the young people to come to us." He also exhorted them to have devotion to Mary Help of Christians and said, "She should be the centre point of our life and we should spread devotion to her far and wide." He appreciated the presence of MSMHC at Ethiopia and said, "The MSMHC is a great gift to the Church and to the Salesian Family."

Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel Visits Meki

On 13 March the MSMHC at Ethiopia had the privilege of welcoming Cardinal Berhaneyesus D. Souraphiel. He had come to Meki to make a short visit to Gighessa Parish which was burned and looted by the locals. After his visits to the spot and other communities, he came to the MSMHC Convent and the community had the privilege of welcoming him for dinner along with all the priests of the vicariate and sisters.

They were also blessed to have eight sisters belonging to different



congregations, who had come to make their annual retreat. As it was the last day of the retreat they too joined the fellowship meal. The Apostolic Nuncio

to Ethiopia also had come along with Cardinal to Meki but did not join for dinner as he had to go to Addis for an urgent work.

New Scholastic Year Commences Swaziland

The new scholastic year began with excitement, new energy and new enthusiasm in 26 January. Bosco Pre-school has admitted 106 children for the year. Sr. Susan Soren, the Head Mistress along with the teachers welcomed the kids assuring them an enriching time during the year.



World Sick Day Celebrated Hope House

World Sick Day was celebrated in Hope House, Swaziland on 11 February, organized by Sr. Elsa Joseph. Special prayer was organized and Fr. Tim Wren, the new Rector of Salesian Community at Manzini was invited to anoint the sick and pray for them. Sr. Susan Soren from the community addressed the inmates of the Hope Houses and spoke to them about Our Lady of Lourdes and explained about Our Blessed Mother's apparition to St. Bernadette.

Animation Programme for YAC



Sr. Dimaya Amdep and Sr. Susan Soren conducted a day's programme for the YAC members of Gebeni and surrounding villages on 3 April. The group was given inputs on different topics such as traditions of Catholic

Church, Year of Divine Mercy, importance of cultivating the virtue of purity and values of life.

Fr. Joseph Nguyen SDB, the Spiritual Director of YAC celebrated Holy Mass and showed them a power point on the 'Resurrection of Jesus'. After the Holy Mass there were cultural programme and lunch.

This year being the Year of Mercy, Sr. Dimaya encouraged the YAC to carry out some works of mercy, such as visiting the sick and praying for them, giving food to the poor and needy etc. The YAC members of Ntondozi and Gebeni villages informed that they visited few families and sick people. They also collected money, bought food and fed the hungry and poor.



Women's Seminar South Sudan

One day seminar was organized on 5 March for the women of Jakamenth and Chiir which is 85 kilometer away from the mission. The seminar began with a brief note of welcome to the women participants who numbered around 250. They were then guided for a prayer session which was comprised of reconciliation, praise and worship. After that Sr. Shanty Antony gave talk on the role of mothers in bringing peace and harmony at home and in the society. Emphasizing the year of Mercy, she



called all mothers to set examples and take lead in bringing peace, especially in the families.

The second session was by Sr. Dona Lyngdoh. She made the session

interesting by conducting a quiz competition on Mary. She also took a session on Mary's role in the Church. The day's programme ended with Rosary and Holy Mass.



Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) or ‘The Joy of Love’ published on 8 April, 2016 draws attention on love in the family. It affirms the Church’s teaching that stable families are the building blocks of a healthy society and a place where children learn to love, respect and interact with others. It also warns against idealizing the many challenges facing family life, urging Catholics to care for, rather than condemning all those



whose lives do not reflect the teaching of the Church. In particular the document focuses on the need for “personal and pastoral discernment” for individuals, recognizing that “neither the Synod, nor this Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases”.

Pope begins his reflections with the Holy Scriptures, which unfolds as a meditation on Psalm 128 (which appears in the Jewish wedding liturgy as well as that of Christian marriages). Speaking about the experiences and challenges of families, Pope Francis notes that rampant individualism makes it difficult today for a person to give oneself generously to another (cf. AL 33). Here is an interesting picture of the situation: “The fear of loneliness and the desire for stability and fidelity exist side by side with a growing fear of entrapment in a relationship that could hamper the achievement of one’s personal goals” (AL 34).

Amoris Laetitia does not focus on the so-called “nuclear” family” because it is very much aware of the family as a wider

THE JOY OF LOVE

*Apostolic Exhortation on
Love in the Family*

network of many relationships. The spirituality of the sacrament of marriage has a deeply social character (cf. AL 187). And within this social dimension the Pope particularly emphasizes the specific role of the relationship between youth and the elderly, as well as the relationship between brothers and sisters as a training ground for relating with others.

Pope deals with various pastoral perspectives that are aimed at forming solid and fruitful families according to God’s plan. He expresses the need of imparting training for ordained

ministers to deal with the complex problems currently facing families (cf. AL 202).

The exhortation also includes an invitation to mercy and pastoral discernment in situations that do not fully match what the Lord proposes. The Pope uses three very important verbs: guiding, discerning and integrating, which are fundamental in addressing fragile, complex or irregular situations. He emphasizes the need for gradualness in pastoral care; the

importance of discernment; norms and mitigating circumstances in pastoral discernment; and finally what the Pope calls the “logic of pastoral mercy”

With regard to the spirituality of care, consolation and incentive, Pope teaches that “all family life is a ‘shepherding’ in mercy. Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others” (AL 322). It is a profound “spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them” (AL 323).

In the final paragraph the Pope affirms: “No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love ... All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families, and every family must feel this constant impulse. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us” (AL 325).

(Excerpts from the document of Vatican Radio)