

Sudan Delegation Circular – 8
19.01.2008

Dear confreres,

The month of January is special for all the Salesian Family! On 22nd we celebrate the feast of Bl. Laura Vicuna, the spiritual flower of Chile/Argentina, who offered herself to the Lord for her mother's conversion. Through her life of sickness and mortifications, accepted with happiness and joy, she wonderfully teaches everyone how to grow in holiness through the pains, difficulties and sufferings of every day life. On 24th we celebrate the feast of our patron, St. Francis de Sales. Don Bosco drew his inspiration from the apostolate, the loving kindness and the humanism of St. Francis de Sales and thus chose him as the patron of the Salesian Society. May his fidelity and availability to the service of the Church make of us her committed and zealous children! And on 31st we celebrate the feast of our Father and Founder Don Bosco. May this feast help us to realize more fully the return to Don Bosco that the GC 26 invites us to and to carry out the mission entrusted to us with genuine love and sincere devotion!

Prayer for stability, reconciliation and peace in Kenya

All of us are aware of what has been happening in these recent weeks in Kenya. The post-election period has been one of instability, insecurity and suffering in many parts of Kenya. Many have been killed in violent clashes and confrontations. The political and religious leaders of the world have been requesting and wishing the people of Kenya to live in the spirit of reconciliation and mutual acceptance and respect! We continue to pray for the leaders and people of Kenya that they truly be instruments of peace to each other and live in love and harmony!

Thank you Brs. Ignatius, Sudhir, Shyjan and David

During the Christmas holidays, our students of theology – clerics Ignatius Fernandes, Sudhir Parmar, David Tulimelli and Shyjan Chemmarappallil have been rendering their valuable services in the SDB communities of Wau, El Obeid and Tonj respectively! The members of these communities have expressed their great appreciation for the selfless and many services they rendered in these communities! On behalf of the Delegation I wish to say 'THANK YOU' to each one of them!

Expressing 'Thanks' to Fr. Ferrington and the SDB community of Wau

As per the calendar of the Delegation, on 31st December 2007 there took place in Wau the meeting of the Practical Trainees. This was followed by the meeting for the Rectors/In Charge on 1st & 2nd January 2008. And finally there was the annual retreat from 2nd evening to 7th January. All the three Practical Trainees were present for their meeting while for the meeting of Rectors/In Charge they were five with the exception of Fr. Labila Placido from El Obeid. I was indeed happy to have attended both these meetings and I must say that the participants were sincerely happy and grateful to have attended the same! They were truly held in an atmosphere of cordiality and brotherly sharing. The spiritual inputs were indeed beneficial and

appropriate! For the annual retreat there were seven Salesians and one Salesian Sister (Sr. Gracy Adichirayil).

The two meetings as well as the retreat were animated by **Fr. Ferrington Poobalarayen**. He made the meetings alive and active. The sharing of his experiences as a Salesian made these meetings more personal and profitable. The retreat talks were very inspiring and thought-provoking. There reigned a spiritual atmosphere all throughout the retreat. **Thank YOU dear Fr. Ferrington** for having come to Wau to animate these meetings and the retreat! Your coming to Wau was truly a home-coming! The faithful of Wau were thrilled at your visit. The participants of the two meetings and the retreat were very privileged to have you. Thanks for your spirit of availability and dedication!

The Salesian Community of Wau consisting of Frs. Ernest, Mathew and Br. Baron together with the clerics Ignatius and Sudhir, made hospitality their motto and thus went out of their way to make everyone (those attending the meetings and the retreatants) feel at home. Their readiness to serve and the friendly atmosphere of the community added to the joy and happiness of the meetings and the retreat. I take this opportunity to thank the community of Wau including clerics Ignatius and Sudhir for their spirit of selfless service and readiness to help in all situations!

Your contribution to GC-26

The GC-26 is just a month away! I am sure that all of us are praying for its success and for the blessings that it will bring into our own community and individual lives as Salesians. May I remind you that if you have any personal or community contributions to make and if you have not send the same to the moderator of the General Chapter, you could send them to me at your earliest convenience!

In this context I would like to inform each one of you that I would be leaving for Rome to attend the GC-26 on 19th February 2008. I hope to return to the Sudan on 29th April. On 3rd February I will be going to Nairobi along with Fr. Provincial who will then be in Khartoum to take part in the provincial council meeting to be held there.

A volunteer from South Africa

God has blessed the Delegation with yet another volunteer in the person of Mr. Paul Jackson. He is an accountant by profession and gave up his job to be at the service of the poor. He had been working with the Salesians in South Africa in the programme 'Love Matters' that tries to educate the young to mature love.

He will form part of the PDO team of the Delegation and help its director, Fr. George Madathett, in the field of accounting as well as animate the various SDB communities in the same. He also wishes to help out the communities when possible in the animation programmes of the Youth.

On behalf of the Delegation I express my sincere gratitude to Paul Jackson for his spirit of generosity and humility in the service of the poor especially the poor youth of the Sudan! We wish God's abundant blessings on him, his mission of service and on all his dear ones!

The gift of another missionary to the Sudan

Three days ago our Councillor for the Missions, Rev. Fr. Francis Alencherry, wrote to me saying that he is gifting to the Sudan yet another missionary. He is deacon Francis Nguyen Duc Nhat who is at present in the Philippines doing his fourth year of theology. He will be ordained this July/August. He will attend the course for the missionaries in Rome and then come to the Sudan in the first week of October.

We thank Rev. Fr. Rector Major and Rev. Fr. Francis Alencherry for this precious gift! And we extend a hearty and warm welcome to deacon Francis Nguyen Duc Nhat to the Sudan!

Welcome to Fr. Provincial

Fr. Joseph Pulikkal, our Provincial will do the canonical visitation of the SDB communities of North Sudan from 27th January to 1st February, 2008. The Delegation Council will have its meeting with Fr. Provincial on 2nd February. We welcome him to the Sudan once again particularly to the North. The following is the time-table set by him for the canonical visitation:

1.	26.01.08	Saturday	Arrival	Arrives from Nairobi to Khartoum in the evening
2.	27.01.08 to 29.01.08	Sunday	Don Bosco El Obeid	Arrives from Khartoum by bus in the afternoon
3.	29.01.08 to 30.01.08	Tuesday	St. Joseph's Parish	Arrives from El Obeid by bus in the afternoon
4.	31.01.08 to 01.02.08	Thursday	St. Joseph's VTC	Arrives from the Parish in the morning
5.	02.02.08	Saturday	Delegation Council meeting	Leaves in the night for Nairobi

The feast of our Father – Don Bosco – and our Patroness – St. Bakhita

On 31st January all of us will be celebrating with joy and gratitude the feast of our Father and Founder, Don Bosco. May I take this occasion to wish each one of you a fruitful, joyous and blessed feast! May this feast make us more proud of being 'SONS' of Don Bosco by carrying out the mission entrusted to us with Don Bosco's heart, hands, eyes- in short by being other Don BoscOs!

The feast of Don Bosco is introducing us to another great feast! The feast of our Patroness, St. Josephine Bakhita! She is yet another giant of holiness – a holiness nourished by humility, faithfulness to God's will and doing everything for the glory of God. She discovered the will of God for her through the sufferings of her slavery. She saw that her being snatched away from her dear ones and her home-country was the way God wanted to reveal Himself to her and become her loving Father. As she realized this truth, she was grateful and happy to be what she was and where she was. Her surrender to God's will was total and constant. May our Patroness, St. Josephine Bakhita teach us all to surrender ourselves completely to

God's plan and design for each one of us! May we be able to find happiness and contentment in fulfilling this plan and thus grow steadily but surely in holiness!

I am sure that all our communities will celebrate on **Friday, 8th February** the feast of our Patroness with great solemnity and devotion! May St. Bakhita send the gift of lasting peace to the Sudan!

Conclusion

The GC-26 invites us to 'return to Don Bosco'. The salesian month of January with the feasts of Bl. Laura Vicuna, St. Francis de Sales, our Patron and Don Bosco, our Father and Founder gives us the occasion to put into practice this 'returning to Don Bosco'. All of us have ample opportunities in these days to demonstrate how effectively we are returning to the mind and thinking of Don Bosco. The salesian call that we live with zeal and commitment, the salesian atmosphere of joy and mutual respect that we create in our communities and the constant process of growing in holiness will indeed show that we are trying to 'return to Don Bosco'.

Through the salesian Strenna of 2008: 'Let us educate with the heart of Don Bosco, for the integrated development of the life of the young, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, promoting their rights', we are once again invited by our Rector Major to continue the mission of Jesus in the Don Bosco way. The words of Jesus: 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing' (Lk 4,21) are being constantly fulfilled through us everyday in our committed, persevering and faithful realization of the salesian mission entrusted to us wherever we work.

May the active and joyful celebration of the feast of our Father and Founder help all of us to be like him and live out our salesian call with great joy and happiness!

I wish you all a very happy feast of Don Bosco!

Yours affectionately,

Fr. Jacob Thelekkadan sdb.
The Delegate