

THE MSC Message



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS



Ordination in Namibia Fr Gabriel Shikongo MSC

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Summer 2024

MSC Missions Office,
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www.mscomissions.ie

From the Director



Dear Friends,

Letter writing is fast becoming a lost art. A letter is supposed to be a written conversation between two people. My letter to you is also shared with many other friends and supporters of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It is kind of a family letter. I would love to meet you all and listen to your story and share our news with you, but a letter is the next best thing.

In Ireland it has been a very wet Spring. But the sad news of severe flash flooding and landslides in the Philippines is catastrophic. Some of those affected are now homeless in a place that is now unrecognisable. Our Mission Office in the Philippines would not have a lot of resources. The MSCs have triggered an emergency response to help these families as the numbers will continue to grow. People affected will need long term support from the MSC Centre for the Poor.

You will also read about baby *Lerato and three-year-old *Mpho who arrived at the Holy Family Centre in South Africa and also about two older girls who have gained qualifications from the local high school. They would not have such opportunity only for your help. Please keep these children in your prayers as we have a huge influence in their lives.

Another interesting story is about the MSC run vocational centre in a very remote part of Guatemala this project 40 years ago seemed doomed to failure but now generations of people have learned skills and gained qualifications and are very much part of the Church. Seeing the picture of those graduating in Business Studies is a credit to the local MSC and also to our friends worldwide who support this Centre.

Two MSC priests from India recently visited MSC Missions Office in Cork. India is now an independent Province. The Irish Province with your help has been involved in funding many projects in India. Frs. Darwin and Joshua both asked how they could repay Ireland. I asked that the MSCs of the Indian Province pray for our Mission friends who fund us to keep carrying the Word of the Lord to their places of work. On their behalf I thank you.

Please continue to read on as I close this letter to you. I leave you with my sincere thanks for your support and confidence in our work. I leave you with a prayer that the Lord may bless you and your family with health and happiness in His Presence.

Fr. John Fitzgerald MSC

Director of the MSC Missions Office



Pilgrimage to Camino de Santiago or
The Way of St James



Journey with us as we take on the Camino Inglés, Spain's Galician Region and help us raise funds to support MSC Missions



For more information on the trip and fundraising please call Mary at 021-454 6691 or email mary.morrish@mscmissions.ie
Visit: www.mscmissions.ie/camino-fundraising-event
Date: 29th July - 5th August 2024

Do you have a Will to give?

After you have taken care of your loved ones in your Will, it would be a great blessing to us if you would consider leaving a bequest to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. During our time on earth, we all have the power to touch lives and to make a difference You can continue to be a force for good in the world, even beyond your own lifetime. Your lasting legacy can be one of hope, as your gift will support our MSCs in their life-changing work in regions of real and desperate need around the world.

Please help us to pave the way for a brighter tomorrow.

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A new year at the Holy Family Care Centre

With the dawn of a new year, the team at the Holy Family Care Centre in Ofcolaco, South Africa, have hit the ground running. With more than 10 children joining the community at the centre in the space of a few days, the centre’s director Sr Sally Duigan writes, “The new year - and especially the school year - has got off to a very action-packed start!”

The Holy Family Care Centre has been providing care for young children who are very ill, often with HIV, for over 20 years. Many of these children have been orphaned or abandoned, and have nowhere else to go. Run by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, with the support of the MSCs, the centre can accommodate 70 children and is stretched to capacity with many children needing urgent care.

The team at Holy Family recently welcomed a new manager, Jeanette Joalane Lesise, affectionately known as JJ. “I never knew or even thought that I would ever leave the City of Gold, the hub of Gauteng to Ofcolaco,” writes JJ in an update on the Holy Family website. “Upon my appointment, a little 4 day old baby girl arrived at the centre, Lerato*. Three days later here at Holy Family Care Centre... I had my first experience of welcoming three-year-old Mpho. Well, Mpho* was temporarily placed with us and 4 days later his social worker fetched him to be placed with his relative who was willing to be his guardian. As for *Lerato, she will be raised here unless of course, through the mercy of God she is adopted or fostered.”

On January 24th, JJ attended the local high school, where a celebration took place for the Grade 12 class of 2023. Sr Sally tells us, “We are very proud of two of our girls, who just obtained their Grade 12 certificates. It is the first time we have had children in Grade 12 and we are very proud of them.”



Children arriving back to Holy Family centre from local School.



JJ at Graduation of Holy Family Centre Grade 12 Students.

Celebrating Easter with MSC communities.

It is with joyful hearts that we look back at a truly glorious celebration of Easter for some of our MSC communities at home and around the world.



Fr Roney, St Anthony’s Parish, Mozambique

Strengthened by the Easter hope that radiates its redeeming light over us all, from the Western Road in Cork to Mozambique, Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, and everywhere in between, we welcome and embrace the brighter days ahead, with every grace and blessing of the Sacred Heart to our mission friends everywhere, you were in our prayers this Easter season and throughout the year ahead.



MSC Formation community, Holy Spirit Parish, Fiji.



MSCs celebrating Easter in Indonesia



Fr John celebrating Easter Dawn Mass, Western Road.

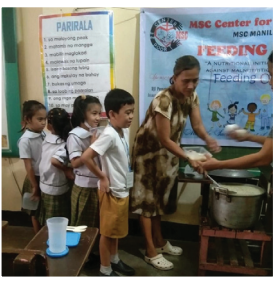


MSC Easter Celebrations Caloocan, Philippines.

Photos Mozambique via the Facebook page for MSC Mozambique, the Province of the Pacific Islands and the Philippines via the Facebook page for the MSC Province of the Pacific Islands

MSC Centre for the Poor Philippines

The MSC Centre for the Poor in the Philippines has launched the first phase of a feeding programme for vulnerable children in Libis Baesa, a highly populated region in the city of Calcooan.



First phase of feeding programme

The feeding programme will run for several months, the first stage took place over a six-week period throughout February and March, feeding 40 children in Libis Baesa Elementary School. The second phase of the programme will take place in April, in the regions of Libis Dulo and Reparo, and the third stage is planned for May, covering East Libis and Centro.

MSC Philippines shared these facebook photos from the programme, noting “Observe the joy on the faces of the children currently benefiting from the feeding program in Libis Baesa.”



Children in Libis Baesa Elementary School

The MSC Centre for the Poor is highly active in its ministry throughout several regions of the Philippines. Its core values centre on working together in harmony with the earth – nurturing our natural environment, while reaping its benefits in creating a sustainable lifestyle that will help poor and struggling families and communities to build the foundation for a brighter future. From agricultural programmes, to clean water projects, to plastic-free and zero-waste initiatives, the MSC Centre for the Poor encourages participants to develop the skills needed to create and maintain an improved quality of life for disadvantaged communities in both urban and rural areas.

The community at the Centre are also extremely responsive in terms of providing emergency aid where necessary, providing urgent care to survivors of the typhoons and tropical storms that frequently hit the country. From building and repairing homes to distributing emergency care packages, their outreach programmes provide practical and very necessary help to families and communities in real need; these photos of the Libis Baesa children receiving much-needed nourishment is a testament to the wonderful work they do at the most fundamental level.



MSC emergency response to flooding in the Philippines



Distributing the food

The MSC Mission Office in the Philippines have been working in rapid response with the MSC Centre for the Poor to issue essential emergency aid to several communities that have been critically affected by severe flooding in the Mindanao region.

The relief project aims to help as many families as possible who have been displaced by catastrophic flooding across the Mindanao area in late January/early February. Flash flooding has caused landslides and as yet untold destruction in this region and beyond, with the death toll climbing to the high teens in the days following

the disaster. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, while homes and business premises alike have been destroyed, with power outages and interruptions to the water supply also reported.

On February 5th, the MSC Centre for the Poor began distributing vital emergency relief aid to families impacted in Tagbina, in Surigao del Sur. With the emergency response team springing to immediate action, a total of 142 families have received urgent aid so far, as they attempt to recover from the devastation wreaked by the flood waters. The relief project is ongoing as the outreach team continue in their efforts to help families to repair and rebuild across different areas of the Mindanao region. visit www.mscomissions.ie to see more ...



All images via the Facebook page for the MSC Mission Office Philippines, Inc.

Guatemala - Centro Faustino Villanueva

Recent months have seen great activity at Centro Faustino Villanueva, the MSC-run vocational centre located in the rural region of San Agustín, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, they have great plans for the Future.

The centre is situated in an extremely remote area more than eight hours' drive from Guatemala City, the centre was founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1984 to bring opportunities for progression to adults from disadvantaged communities, and it has since grown into a large school for children that come from impoverished backgrounds or vulnerable family circumstances.

The community saw 2023 out in style with a graduation ceremony in November, celebrating students who had completed their course in Business Administration. Heralding new beginnings for the students the Facebook page for Centro Faustino Villanueva shared pictures with the caption, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams".

At the end of the month, the Villanueva community marked a special day honouring their country and culture, celebrating their language and showcasing traditional clothing and foods.

In 2024 we celebrate 40 years of service, this very special anniversary year is already off to a flying start! We look forward to seeing more great things from the staff and students and, as ever, we keep the community there in our prayers as they continue in their remarkable efforts to create new opportunities for employment and empowerment for young people in need.



2023 Business Administration
Graduates of Centro Faustino Villanueva



Showcasing traditional clothing.

Images Via the Facebook page for
Centro Faustino Villanueva

Celebrating New MSC Province in India

Previously the Indian Union, Saturday, March 16th saw the official erection of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart India as a formal Province. Fr Darwin Thateus MSC, who has been the Indian Union Superior since 2019, will continue to act as Provincial Leader until December of this year.

Celebrations on the day also included a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of MSC founder Fr Jules Chevalier, the Ordination to the Diaconate of three MSCs, and the official opening and blessing of the Chevalier Academy, a primary and secondary school at Bellandur Gate in Bangalor.

Congratulations Fr Darwin Thateus MSC, Provincial Leader of the newly erected Indian Province. The official opening and blessing of the Chevalier Academy in Bangalor. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have been active in their ministry in India for over 30 years, from training enthusiastic new MSCs to tending to those living in often unimaginable poverty in urban and rural shantytowns. Our MSC brothers have ministered to vulnerable communities living in the slums of Bangalor, have worked to educate thousands of local children at the Chevalier Academy in Dindigul, have helped survivors of severe flooding in Kerala, and maintain a dedicated formation house for new MSCs at Hridayala, or the Temple of the Heart, in Mysore.



The Irish Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart has an enduring relationship with our MSC brothers in India, with our mission friends and benefactors providing immeasurable support throughout the years, from helping MSC pre-novitiates on their missionary journey, to funding dedicated presbyteries in disadvantaged parishes, to facilitating desperately needed emergency aid. In 2022, the Irish Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart also helped MSCs in Coimbatore to raise funds to set up the Chevalier Centre for Change, a day-care centre for the elderly with the aim of "changing the lives of those who have little hope".

Pictures credited to Fr Tijo. & misacor.org.au

South Sudan A sign of things to come

The fact that these young children can come through the school gates every day, in a country that is largely at peace right now, is a gift.



Lunchtime



Student teachers start placement

Schools are always busy in South Sudan in February. The academic year here runs differently from Ireland and England, with our long holidays based around Christmas. So the back to school trials and tribulations begin in February. Students have to register for their studies, including paying their fees. Like home when parents have a number of children, this can be a substantial amount of money. Usually, the Catholic schools charge the equivalent of two bags of charcoal or just one chicken for the entire year. The underlying ethos is education is for everyone, but everyone should contribute something, insofar as they can. For Loreto, the fee includes a daily meal, their school books, treatment in our clinic (malaria is still around, and never, ever underestimate the number of plasters needed on any day as 1,300 children can get into a lot of mischief), and of course their studies.

In the Catholic University, education continues to flourish too. This is in large part due, to the generosity of our MSC benefactors, who have helped us fund the complete renovation of the library, as well as the purchase of blackboards and chairs for our lecture rooms. Just this morning I joined one of our students on his first visit to the school where he will have his teaching placement.

It's wonderful to see. Over the course of the next twelve weeks, he and his classmates will experience what teaching in secondary schools is really like. It will be a steep learning curve for them, as a classroom filled with fifty teenagers in the throes of teenage trials and tribulations as they can be a tough crowd to please. Increasingly though, the youth are seeing the value in education and the depth of their commitment is impressive. When our students graduate, they will be among the first trained teachers who have qualified from the Catholic University in Rumbek. It is a sign hopefully of things to come.



Primary school class



Student teacher correcting homework

(Pictures Paul Jeffries)

Sincere Thanks from Sacred Heart Sisters

Thanks to the wonderful response to our 2023 appeal, which raised funds to create separate classrooms in the existing school space, the work is already completed and our 2021 appeal for the elderly in Papua New Guinea.

In our 2023 World Projects Appeal, the Sisters asked for help in funding the development of classrooms at their school in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, West Africa. Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the Sisters in Ouagadougou have been working in the region since 2007 to help young children who would otherwise have no prospects of education and advancement. The demand for places at the school is overwhelming, and the Sisters strive to accommodate as many children as possible, which has led to severe issues with overcrowding in recent years.



From this to

this with your help

Caring for the elderly in Papua New Guinea

Sr Jenny shared photos from her recent visit to Port Moresby, in Papua New Guinea, where funds raised by our 2021 World Projects Appeal funded a laundry area in the Hartzler Centre, an aged-care facility for elderly OLSH Sisters and MSC missionary priests. Prior to the installation of the laundry room, the nurses at the centre had to carry the residents' dirty laundry through the dining room at the adjacent convent in order to reach the communal washing area, a significant hygiene issue throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and in subsequent years.



New laundry room, Hartzler centre

"The Sisters are deeply appreciative of the difference this has made to their lives," writes Sr Jenny. "Sincere thanks"

Fr Gabriel Shikongo MSC Ordination

Warmest congratulations to Fr Gabriel MSC, on his ordination to the priesthood on 17th June 2023. The Archbishop, Liborius Ndumbukuti Nashenda of Windhoek led the ordination ceremony, which took place in, Swakopmund, Namibia.

The ceremony at the Holy Rosary Parish in Swakopmund, also had local clergy and the Irish Provincial Superior at that time Fr Carl Tranter MSC in attendance.

A host of friends and family joined Fr Gabriel at this special time. Everybody involved was delighted to join the celebrations with Fr Gabriel his immensely proud parents, his family, plus extended family members, friends, and parishioners.

“This was a beautiful celebration,” wrote Fr Carl. “We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Fr Gabriel and blessings on his priestly ministry as he commences a life of missionary service as an MSC.”

On the morning following his ordination, Fr Gabriel celebrated his first Mass which was attended by a large congregation followed by a celebratory meal in his parents’ home. It truly was a special day.

Fr Gabriel Shikongo MSC, promised to support people who are going through difficulties, whatever their background. He would like to collaborate with other religious leaders to help maintain peace and harmony in the communities. By bringing these beliefs he hopes to spread hope and love as he starts his new ministry.

With every blessing to Fr Gabby MSC as he begins this new chapter of hope and faith as a Missionary of the Sacred Heart.

visit www.mscomissions.ie to read more

If you feel that you might have a calling to religious life, please contact
Fr Con O’Connell MSC
email: vocations@mscomissions.ie



Please cut here

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A Burse is a sum of money which is set up in honour of God, His Blessed Mother, or one of His servants. We have several Burses from which people can choose – a full list is available on request. The most popular Burses in recent years have been the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and St Padre Pio.

The money donated is invested, and the interest goes towards the education of our students to the priesthood. You are part of the great work they will do, in future years, in many lands. May God reward you for your kindness.

- Sacred Heart
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
- St Anthony
- St Padre Pio
- St Jude

