

# HOPE



Salvatorian Newsletter Spring 2022

## STARTING POINT

Hope should not perish in the heat of summer, go dormant in the fall, or freeze in the deep of winter. However, it seems that spring single-handedly gets so much of the credit for giving us hope and rejuvenating us physically and spiritually as our earth warms up and new growth takes root.

We remain in the midst of the Easter season until early June when Pentecost occurs. This season of sustained promise and hope in the Risen Savior serves as a daily reminder for us to nurture those planted virtues that brought us closer to God. Spring comes just when we need it. Easter told us Jesus forgives and loves us without end, but He knows us and that we may need cues to help us forge ahead, continue to forgive ourselves and continue to work on being our best selves. The resurrection has changed everything for us. I pray that you feel His presence in your life and let that spill over to those you love and meet each day.

*Bro. Silas, SDS*



## GREETINGS FROM TANZANIA

Our USA Tanzania Mission Director, Fr. John Tigatiga, SDS, traveled home this past December to visit family and get some quick updates on how the mission is doing in the area.

Most children in Tanzania are living in poverty. Urban families do not go to school, and in some cases, they spend their days on the streets, begging or selling small items. They often live in crowded houses, and the lack of money means that

they don't get enough nutritious food.

Through the parish schools in Tanzania, the Salvatorians ensure that the children in their communities receive an excellent education.

As we know, many children are naturally curious, but some do not know how to focus or use this curiosity. Kindergarten is a time for sparking

and directing a child's interest and natural love of learning. These schools offer an opportunity for kids to learn

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*Hello from students at the Mangaka Parish*



# PABLO PORTLAND

"I was incredibly struck by the kindness of the Salvatorian community at the high school I attended. That is truly what initially attracted me to discerning life as a Salvatorian religious brother," said Fr. Paul Portland, SDS. "I was called first to be a Salvatorian and later a priest."

Before he had accepted his calling to the priesthood, Fr. Paul had worked as a college English professor in the late 70s.

While teaching a college writing course, Fr. Paul was helping a student who had written a very personal story. As he was assisting her, she commented, "I wish you were my parish priest. It is so easy to talk to you." As simple as that sounds, it was the nudge he needed and a turning point that led him to discern priesthood as his vocation. After theology and ordination, he began serving in campus ministry while teaching English, working with young people in Pittsburgh and Kentucky for the next four years. His role as a faculty member gave him additional credibility with faculty members and allowed him to encourage their participation in retreats and their understanding of the potential effect they could have on these students.

His ministry changed, taking him to Wisconsin to serve in various leadership capacities for 15 years, including as Provincial Director for six years. During this time, one of his notable initiatives was to build up the Salvatorian Family

of religious priests, brothers, sisters, and lay men and women, all working together.



(top) Fr. Paul at a youth Mass in San Juan del Río, Querétaro, México.  
(bottom) Fr. Paul pictured in 1994 at the conclusion of his Provincial term.

He was off to Mexico next. He learned to speak Spanish fluently and immersed himself in Spanish ministry and culture for two years. "Maybe it was my Italian background," he said, "but the community and how we lived together during that time was a potent and familiar feeling for me."

Having learned Spanish, he returned to parish work in Arizona and Tennessee for eight years until he returned to Mexico, intending to establish a Salvatorian Community there. He also served as director of a retreat center receiving people from the USA. "We helped visitors understand how our lifestyle correlates with poverty for the people of Mexico," he said. "I was elected to serve on the Generalate in Rome, Italy, before the Salvatorian community came to fruition in Mexico."

In Rome, he served as Secretary and was the primary contact for English-speaking Salvatorians around the world. "I visited these different areas of Asia, not as a tourist, but living in tandem with the people. It was a wonderful way to experience the culture from the inside," he said. "What struck me was how 'Salvatorian' these places were, in the sense that they focused on the good of all people and on building community."

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After Rome, Fr. Paul was called back to the USA to serve in a formation role as director of candidates and as Pastor at St. Pius X parish in Wisconsin. Fr. Paul also serves on the provincial team.

Reminiscing, he said, "In my early days as a Salvatorian priest in Pittsburgh, I got lost one Sunday, going to say Mass at a parish for the first time. Since I was late, I didn't

introduce myself but simply started the Mass. While greeting parishioners in the vestibule after Mass, a visiting couple came up to say I reminded them of their priest back home in a Salvatorian-led parish in Arizona. Why? Because they felt they were part of what was going on, not observers. To me, that captures what Salvatorians are like around the world."

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## MODERN DISCERNMENT

Like many, we have learned to be resilient and creative during the pandemic. This resiliency holds true for our vocation recruitment process, led by Bobby Pantuso, SDS, since 2014.

We were not utilizing technology in those early days. Now, we have a presence on multiple social media platforms; we stream large Salvatorian events worldwide, and we've made video conferencing a central part of the discernment process.

The COVID pandemic pressed us to change our approach.

Initiating vocational discernment sessions via video chat during the pandemic allowed us to continue our vocation recruitment efforts. "In 2021, we needed to cancel two in-person retreats for men interested in exploring a Salvatorian vocation, due to various restrictions and emerging COVID variants," said Bobby. "Based on feedback received from men in discernment, we learned that shorter sessions with specific topics could be an easier way to digest the topics we needed to cover."

One of the men in discernment leads

the session with an opening prayer; the group prays together and takes time to reflect and react. Next, a guest speaker joins the zoom call to share specific expert-level subject matter. The guest speaker ends with a question-

and-answer dialogue. The concluding conversations turn to possible topics of interest for future meetings. "I'm trying to get them to guide me, as they are the discerners," said

Bobby. "The Salvatorian focus of these sessions is to make it about them, the discerners, and where they are in the process. It's my job to walk with them, not tell them what to do."

Typically, at any given time, we are engaging with several men at various stages of discerning what life as a Salvatorian would mean and if it would be a good fit for them. "The decision to join a religious order is huge," said Bobby. "The sessions encourage deeper connections for the men. If they ultimately become members of the Society, they will already have relationships with men who would be on the formation journey at the same time."

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*Fr. Paul Portland led part of a recent vocation Zoom conference.*

# SHIPPED

Though humanitarian containers continue to move slowly, our Salvatorian Mission Warehouse was able to ship the first two containers for 2022 to two different missions in Honduras in early March. These containers were packed to the brim with cracker sticks, chocolate bars, masks, wheelchairs, and other necessary medical supplies. "So many have benefited from your donations. Thank you very much for helping me to help those who have less," said Roque, our Honduras contact.

As trucks become available, we will ship to Haiti, Panama, the Philippines, Chile, and Ghana.

In 2021 we shipped 28 containers carrying nearly one million pounds of relief goods to ten countries with the help of 17 mission partners!



*Honduras container arrived*

## ... Tanzania

and practice the essential social, emotional, study and problem-solving skills that they will use throughout their schooling.

"Our Salvatorian missionaries remain genuinely convinced that a good education and access to health care are essential aspects of life," said Fr. Tigatiga. "As a result, many areas now have kindergarten and elementary schools within parishes, hospitals, or clinics."

Thanks to the Salvatorian Missionaries, the number of children attending schools has increased in many villages. However, there are some challenges facing most of these schools; they are not self-sustainable, and they experience shortages of teachers and school supplies. Therefore, the work we do to help pay teacher salaries and expenses is vital to the children from some of the poorest families in Tanzania.

## Please remember the Society of the Divine Savior in your will

A bequest is a wonderful way to support the mission and ministry of our Salvatorian Priests and Brothers, and is a testimony of your care and concern for them. Our legal name is "Society of the Divine Savior, Inc." and our taxpayer number (EIN) is 39-0806210.

### OUR MISSION

In the spirit of our founder, Blessed Francis Jordan, the Society of the Divine Savior was founded more than 130 years ago and is a Catholic religious community working to share the love and mercy of our Savior, Jesus Christ, through all possible means.

### SALVATORIANS

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Apostles for our times.