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*"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)*

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item 396

### where angels wings are repaired

Those, who think that pain doesn't bother angels, are wrong. They too suffer. The fact that rheumatism is not annoying them does not mean that they do not feel pain....there is pain, and they have to take shelter under their lowered wings. And there is thunder and lightning in heaven because of their weeping...baby's tears ...

Night parties, drunken fighting ... as if their knees were being hugged by their wings, sitting in the corner of a room, which will never be their 'own'.



In such moments angels cannot cry. They have to become invisible, dream of being able to forget ... because if their quiet whimpering draws attention, someone will breathe alcohol on them, force them to run barefoot through the snow to buy cigarettes, and then they will be beaten until bruised with the leather belt of a mother's lover.

Four years ago a Pallottine community in Ukraine, initiated by Fr Paul Goray sac, decided to allocate a section of their monastery to such children - thus creating 'a place where angels' wings are repaired'. As soon as that

first step had been taken, the Lord began to act: the local government ‘opened their eyes’, people who were willing to sacrifice their time and money appeared ...



In no time we managed to not only find the capital to repair that section of what was actually a part a medieval monastery – lying vacant for 200 yrs waiting for its former masters (the monks had been expelled during the reign of Empress Catherine) – but also managed to create a real home for 10 angels: *Veronika, Mykhailo, Ivanna, Oleksandr, Liudmyla, Maryna, Viktor, Igor, Maksym, Mykhailo*.

Continuing to trust in the Lord, we are waiting with quiet hope for a moment when children's hearts will grow, scars will be healed and, as angels, they will rise in prayer to God to thank Him for the fact that, despite their whimperings and their unintelligible words in the corner of the room, He heard their prayers.

He sent those who repair damaged children’s wings.

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14.02.16  
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item 397

## **memories of a misionary [II]**

**Germany – Uruguay – Argentina – Italy**

After my time in India (7 years) I had difficulty settling back again into life in Germany, so I tried to discover some way to depart again for one or other mission country. I even offered to go to a new mission area in the north-eastern part of Brazil!



But, in vain. My superiors told me that I should now remain in **Germany** and do mission work there. At the time we had a team of priests who gave popular mission in the parishes. I was assigned to them. This popular mission, or parish renewal activity, was to become my main occupation for the next 16 years. The team reached out to about 70 parishes in southern Germany and Austria.

Our target group was not so much the more scattered population [impossible within the space of 2 weeks] but rather the nucleus of each parish community, trying to give them courage and joy in their faith. Many had become insecure and the great majority did little to reinforce their faith since the catechism classes of their youth. Thus these weeks, often very demanding and strenuous, were another kind of mission, but with great depth.

When in 2001 our team was dissolved, I saw a new chance to go out once more “mare adentro” (into the sea). I was to cross the Atlantic, to **Uruguay** in South America. Warmly welcomed by our confreres I began my activity in our parish in Durazno in the interior. Again another culture and another way of life.

The parish structure was similar to those in India with widely scattered stations, which sometimes could be visited only once a month. Mass was often celebrated in the open or in simple private houses. Some people, mainly children, often came on horse-back.

My Spanish was not very good, as I was already over 60 years old. So after one year I went to the capital, Montevideo, where I had more contact with German-speaking people. And then, in 2007, when there was a vacancy in the German community in Buenos Aires, I asked for a transfer to **Argentina**.

What began already in Montevideo became still more intensive in Buenos Aires, pastoral work in a mega-city with its huge and mostly miserable suburbs. Again another field of apostolate! Many live there without valid papers, in makeshift shelters, having emigrated from poorer regions and surrounding countries like Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru. They are often disappointed and frustrated in their hope for a better life. The consequence is a lot of misery, more and more drugs, rising criminality and too many weapons. Every day one or another is killed. But, as usually happens, where there is great misery and hardship there is also great readiness to help and personal involvement.

We had occasional contact with our Archbishop, then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, who in 2013 was surprisingly elected pope. What he is now preaching to people all over the world, he has lived himself already. He has a great simplicity – whenever possible he used public transport instead of nice cars. He has a closeness to people and their needs – even as pope he inquired personally about one of our priests in difficulties. And he has a deep union with God and, stemming from this, a great empathy with all persons of good will, not least through interdenominational and interreligious dialogue.

Thus it was a touching surprise when our General Superior, Fr Jacob Nampudakam, asked me if I would like to come to Rome to look after visitors at the tomb of our founder St Vincent Pallotti in our church San Salvatore in Onda and to be close to Pope Francis. What an honour to work in the centre of our Pallottine community!



Still I requested a time of reflection. At age 75 to have to move once more, to accept a new task, to learn a new language, needs careful consideration. After a second request I finally accepted.

And now I am in Rome, in the heart of our community and am happy about meeting so many visitors from all over the world, especially in this *Holy Year of Mercy*.

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