

Salesian Mission Day 2025



150 **GIVE THANKS**
RETHINK
RELAUNCH

Salesian Mission Day 2025

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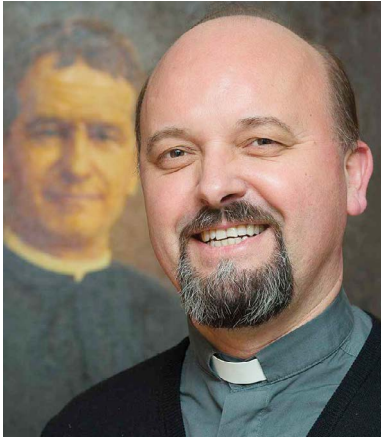
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GREETINGS from Fr. Stefano MARTOGLIO



During this year we have the gift of celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Salesian Congregation's first missionary expedition, undertaken by Don Bosco in 1875.

Celebrating this expedition means renewing the same spirit and asking the Lord for Don Bosco's mis-

sionary heart. This expedition, and all those that followed, are not just items of a chronology for us.

It is fidelity to the spirit of Don Bosco, in obedience to God's Gift, that has marked and continues to mark the growth in fidelity of the Salesian Congregation under the aegis and Dream of Don Bosco.

The celebration of a missionary anniversary is a renewal of the Fire of the Spirit that always pushes us beyond our visions, our certainties... it pushes us towards him, in readiness for what he is asking and will ask of us.

Without the missionary spirit there would be no Salesian Congregation, we would never have left 19th

century Piedmont, and no one would know the name and pastoral heart of Don Bosco beyond his homeland. This is true not only for Don Bosco, it is true for each of us.

God takes you beyond all your thoughts, desires and personal vision. Sustaining this spirit is faithfulness to God and to ourselves.

Celebration is always a form of renewal, bringing to the next generation what we ourselves have received, personally, institutionally and charismatically. It is not a theme for one year, in the succession of many themes. It is a generative theme, it is about what, as Salesians, as Salesian Family we are!

Within this spirit, this 150th is a blessing to discover in these 150 years endless stories of life, stories of faith that have achieved prodigious things. Stories perhaps, sometimes unknown, that must be celebrated, because they are the human chain between Don

Bosco and us... and from us onwards! Stories of faith that have been able to take the spirit and experience of Don Bosco's Valdocco to the most distant places, to the most diverse cultural contexts; thus giving our Congregation and the Salesian Family its present form.

This missionary anniversary has the faces of all those who have left in these 150 years to bring faith in God and the Salesian mission in education. God's faithfulness assures us that this is not the past, but the permanent condition of our Congregation.

Let us prepare to celebrate it together with the great desire in our hearts to be part of this magnificent history and this line-up, with faith in God and in the name of Don Bosco. Let each pass onto others what they have received from God, through others!

Fr. Stefano Martoglio SDB
Vicar



GIVE THANKS RETHINK RELAUNCH



150 GIVE THANKS
RETHINK
RELAUNCH

The theme of the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition

This year we remember 1875 long ago when the first missionary expedition set out!

The slogan chosen for the occasion helps us enter into this anniversary: Give thanks, rethink, relaunch.

Give Thanks: We give thanks to God for the gift of missionary vocation which enables the sons of Don Bosco today to reach out to poor and abandoned youth in 137 countries.

Rethink: This is an opportune occasion to

rethink and develop a renewed vision on the Salesian Missions in the light of new challenges and new perspectives which led to new missiological reflections.

Relaunch: We have not only a glorious history to remember and be grateful for, but also a great history still to be accomplished! We look to the future with missionary zeal and enthusiasm so that we may reach out to even more poor and abandoned youth.



Celebrations for 150th anniversary will be mainly at the Province level: each Province is invited to undertake a concrete missionary initiative internally or to significantly strengthen existing initiatives that will become permanent signs of this celebration.

At the congregational level, the Rector Major will preside over the missionary send-off on 11 November 2025 in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco. It is a celebration with which the Congregation renews its missionary commitment in front of Mary Help of Christians.

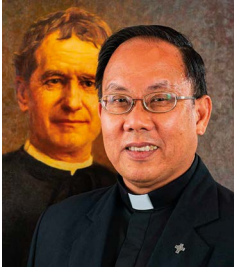
All the celebrations at different levels have a single goal: to keep the missionary spirit and enthusiasm alive in the Congregation, in order to promote greater missionary zeal and generosity among the Salesians and the entire EPC.

The logo that sums up the theme was produced by Martina Mončeková, from Czechia. It shows the world

globe washed by waves, that symbolize both courage and new challenges, but also dynamism and unrestrainedness. It is a growing dynamic which tends more and more towards new missionary horizons. Three red figures refer to the Salesian logo and to the fire of a renewed missionary enthusiasm. In the middle is a ship, a symbol of the first missionary expedition (1875). The picture shows us that the missionary spirit is not an individual fact, but a charismatic element left by Don Bosco to the Congregation and the entire Salesian Family. The shape of the wheel means unity and mutual connection. The logo is complemented by the three key words and the highlighted anniversary number “150”.

The logo may be used, but only in its official version without any alterations, to receive the logo in different languages and formats write to us at: cagliero11@sdb.org

The Missionary OPTION of Don Bosco



■
Fr. Alfred MARAVILLA SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

During the *Annual Conferences of Saint Francis de Sales*, on June 29, 1875, Don Bosco solemnly announced his decision to send his first group of Salesians to South America. “The Congregation was in its beginning and this was the first time that Don Bosco had discussed this matter in public.”¹ The Salesian historian, Fr. Eugene Ceria narrates that this was met with enthusiasm by the listeners: “Surprise, stupor, enthusiasm were the emotions which ran through

the listeners, and in the end erupted into joyous shouts... His hearers that day were given the license to dream the most fantastic dreams and imagine unlimited horizons. Their already grand ideas about Don Bosco and his work grew grander still. This truly was the beginning of a new phase of history for the Salesian Society.”²

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¹ *Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco* (MB) XI, 30.

² E. Ceria, *Annali della Società Salesiana*, I (Turin: SEI, 1941), 249.

Missionary Reawakening in the Church

Don Bosco was born when the Church was experiencing a reawakening of missionary fervour under Pope Gregory XVI. Bartolomeo Alberto Cappellari (1765-1846) was a Camaldolese monk who was appointed by Pope Leo XII prefect of the reestablished Congregation of the Propaganda Fide in 1814 and reorganised it in 1817. In 1825 he was created Cardinal. After the death of Pope Pius VIII, he was elected Pope on February 2, 1831, and took the name of Gregory XVI. He brought about a missionary reawakening in the Church and sent missionaries to Ethiopia, India, China, Burma, Oceania, and the indigenous peoples of North America.

In response to Pope Gregory XVI's missionary initiatives, a growing popular missionary reawakening developed in France. On May 3, 1822, the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* was established by Pauline Jaricot to sustain the work of missionaries. Pied-

mont's proximity to France, and being part of the Kingdom of Savoy, contributed to making the Archdiocese of Turin the centre for the spread of missionary enthusiasm, inviting the Piedmontese to help the missionaries. In 1838 Archbishop Fransoni wrote a pastoral letter endorsing the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* in the Archdiocese. Soon it was present in almost all parishes that raised funds to support the missions.

John Bosco lived in Piedmont during this vibrant missionary reawakening. Among the popular books in Piedmont were the *Edifying and Curious Letters* of Jesuit missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries published as revised editions in 1803, 1818 and 1824 and the *New Edifying Letters from the Missions of China and the East Indies* published between 1767 and 1820.³ During

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³ A. Favale, "Le Missioni Cattoliche nei Primordi della Congregazione Salesiana" in P. Scotti, *Missioni Salesiane. 1875-1975* (Roma: LAS, 1977), 17.



this period many missionary magazines were started to inform Europeans of the work of the missionaries. The most read among the missionary publications from France was the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*. Later Don Bosco even used materials from the *Annals* to compile his *Church History* in 1845 and 1870, and as resource material for *The Month of Mary* (1858) and the *Catholic Readings*. It is also important to note that Don Bosco was a friend of Canon Giuseppe Ortalda, the diocesan director of the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* from 1851 to 1880 and an active promoter of the missionary minor seminary which was situated in the compound of the Cottolengo Institute besides Valdocco.

In 1834 the shrine of the Consolata was entrusted to the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, a congregation founded by Venerable Pio Bruno Lanteri in Turin. In 1842 Pope

Gregory XVI erected the Apostolic Prefecture of Ava and Pegu in Burma and entrusted it to the Oblates. The missionary fervour it stirred up among the people also stirred up Don Bosco's missionary desire. It was Fr. Caffasso who helped him to discern that his work among the poor and abandoned immigrant youth of Turin was just as commendable and comparable to that in the foreign missions.⁴ "But the missionary spirit remained in him with the same intensity and inspired his vision, his apostolic thrust and his pastoral background: he was a missionary there in Turin."⁵

Pope Pius IX was elected in 1846. He continued the missionary impulse of Pope Gregory XVI by creating 33 apostolic vicariates, 15 prefectures, and 3 Delegations

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⁴ MB, II, 204-208

⁵ J.E. Vecchi, "Look around You, and See how the Fields are Ripe for Harvesting," in AGC 362, n.2.

Don Bosco juggler (Colle Don Bosco)



in missionary territories. In response to the requests of various bishops, he constituted a preparatory commission on the missions for the First Vatican Council. The Council's opening in 1869 was an occasion for Don Bosco to meet missionary bishops who visited his work in Valdocco like Daniel Comboni, Giuseppe Sadoc Alemany of San Francisco, and Bishops Luigi Moccagatta and Eligio Cosi from China. His visit to Rome from January 24 to February 22, 1870, while the Council was in session, certainly enabled him to meet other missionary bishops. Yet, during these years his main focus was the development of his work in Valdocco and the setting up of the Salesian Society.⁶

'Charisma Foundationis'

Already in his dream at nine, the Man told Johnny to show the youngsters "that sin is ugly and virtue beautiful". Later the Lady indicated to him his future work: "What you see happen to

these animals, you will have to do for My children". In fact, Johnny sought to learn some acrobatic trick so he could entertain his friends and, in between tricks, share the homily he had heard in Church the previous Sunday. In 1828 when he worked in the *Moglia Farm*, he frequented the parish of Moncucco and eventually, encouraged by the parish priest, Fr. Francesco Cottino, started a small festive oratory. By December 1830 he was able to start his formal studies in Castelnuovo d'Asti. To spare him from walking

⁶ C. Socol, "Don Bosco's Missionary Call and China" in *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* vol. 49, n. 2 (2006): 230-233; F. Peraza Leal, *Iniciación al Estudio de Don Bosco*, III (Quito: CSRFC, 2014) 350-352.



from Susambrino to Castelnuovo twice a day his uncle found Michael Occhiena found him a place to stay with John Roberto, a tailor and musician. Now over 15 years of age, he tried his best to help his classmates who were much younger than him with their schoolwork. In the sacraments, he found the strength to bear the humiliations of his teacher who considered him “cowherd of Becchi” and fight the temptations of ‘bad companions’ to skip class, gamble and steal. In Chieri for his secondary schooling, he founded the *Cheerfulness Society* in 1832 so that he could help his friends avoid bad activities and bring them to catechism and approach the sacraments.

Upon entering the seminary in Chieri in 1835, John became passionate about studying the languages of Scripture (Hebrew, Greek, Latin), the works of the Church Fathers, and theology. He saw study not as an end in itself but as a way to re-

sponsibly prepare himself for the evangelising mission of the priest. The *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* was widely circulated in the seminary in Chieri and the *Convitto Ecclesiastico* because Fr. Joseph Cafasso actively promoted the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith*. The *Biographical Memoires* narrate that the seminarian Bosco avidly read the *Annals*, which recount the struggles, sufferings and needs of missionaries to encourage the faithful to help them.⁷ Hence, it is no surprise that as a seminarian John Bosco developed the desire to be a missionary. During the process of beatification, Cardinal Cagliero testified that that he heard Don Bosco state several times that “he had always desired as a seminarian and as a priest to consecrate himself for the missions”⁸.

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⁷ MB, I, 238.

⁸ A. Favale, “Il Progetto Missionario di Don Bosco e i Suoi Presupposti Storico-Dottrinali”, in *Salesianum*, vol. 38, n. 4 (1976), 8.



The twenty-six-year-old Don Bosco was horrified after Fr. Joseph Cafasso brought him to visit the young people in the four prisons of Turin. The shock made him resolve to prevent youngsters from landing in prison. It was at this time that he adopted “*da mihi animas, caetera tolle*” as his personal motto⁹.

While still recovering from shock Don Bosco encountered Bartholomew Garelli in the sacristy of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi on December 8, 1841. This marked the beginning of his lifetime option for poor and abandoned boys. This option was sealed during the famous dialogue with Marchioness Barolo who advised him to give up his work for the poor boys and focus on being a

chaplain of her *Refuge*: “You have enough money to hire all the priests you need for your institute, but my poor boys have no one else. ... Therefore, I will give up my regular duties to care for my abandoned boys ... my life will remain dedicated to helping the boys. Thank you for your offer but I cannot abandon the path Divine Providence has shown me.” From 1841 to the next ten years, out of his missionary zeal, Don Bosco established his first works for poor and abandoned boys.

In the Oratory, he fostered among his boys the missionary fervour. He challenged his best boys to befriend those who were not so good and encouraged them to visit the Blessed Sacrament and approach the Sacraments. As early as 1848 he talked to his boys about sending missionaries to distant regions. When Turin was struck by the cholera epidemic in



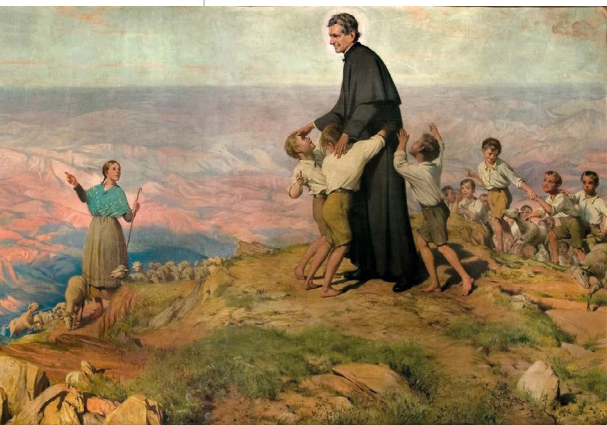
⁹ E. Ceria, *Annali*, I, 530

The fifth missionary dream

1854, Don Bosco sent his best boys to help the victims not because he wanted to put them at an unnecessary risk but to teach them that they need to learn to look beyond the 'comfort zone' of Valdocco and reach out to those who are suffering. He often spoke about his desire of evangelising those who do not know Christ in Africa, America and Asia¹⁰ The dream of Dominic Savio about Pope Pius IX bringing the light of faith to England is a clear indication of that missionary fervour in the Oratory. In 1886, a year and a half before his death, Don Bosco's fifth missionary dream in Barcelona between the night of 9 to 10 April started with the

dream at nine, bringing about a full circle of his life. In fact, his missionary dreams about the Patagonian missions (1872), the Congregation's future worldwide mission (1883), the South American missions (1884), future missionary developments (1885) and the future Salesian missionary presences from Valparaiso to Beijing (1886) are expressions of his missionary fervour and yearnings.

His uncompromising missionary zeal to defend the faith of his boys and the poor working classes led him to start his apostolate of the press by publishing more than 150 pamphlets and books. On March 1, 1853 he published the first issue of the *Catholic Readings*. He envisioned it as a counter-measure against the anti-clerical, anti-Catholic and anti-religious forces during his lifetime. He founded the Salesians on December 18, 1859. In 1861 he started the



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¹⁰ MB VI, 795.

printing press in Valdocco *Printing Press of St Francis de Sales*. In 1867 the invocation “Mary Help of Christians, pray for us,” replaced “Seat of Wisdom, pray for us” in the Oratory. The Church of Mary Help of Christians was consecrated on June 9, 1868. Although the “Salesians” still lacked cohesiveness both as to membership and organisation as well as canonical approval, the Church stood as an act of faith and courage of Don Bosco that his Congregation will develop. On April 18, 1869, Don Bosco founded the Association of Mary Help of Christians. Don Bosco officially committed himself before the Salesians to the foundation of a female institute on April 24, 1871. On the same date, he sent a letter to Mother Enrichetta Dominici, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Anne of Providence, inviting her to take charge of drafting a Rule suitable for a female religious institute that he intended to found. However, it was only on August 5, 1872, that the Daughters of

Mary Help of Christians was officially established with the profession of Mary Domenica Mazzarello and 10 other companions.¹¹ Since the beginning of his work Don Bosco had always involved lay people in his apostolic endeavours. In 1876 their regulations received Church approval as an association of committed Catholic men and women who make present the Salesian spirit in society, henceforth called ‘Salesian Cooperators’. When the material needs of the missionaries became pressing Don Bosco sought the help of the Salesian Cooperators “who responded generously to the appeal, each according to his means.”¹² In 1877 Don Bosco published

¹¹ M.E. Posada, “Don Bosco Fondatore dell’Istituto delle Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice, in Dicastero Per La Famiglia Salesiana, *Don Bosco Fondatore della Famiglia Salesiana. Atti del Simposio, 22-26 gennaio 1989*, a cura di M. Midali, (Roma: SDB, 1989), 286-288; G. Capetti, a cura di, *Cronistoria*, I (Rome: FMA, 1974), 303-304.

¹² E. Ceria, *Annali*, I, 212.

the first issue of the *Salesian Bulletin*, initially as a means of communication among the Salesian Cooperators. But soon it developed as a means to make the Congregation's initiatives known and obtain support. It also became an important means to make known the missionary initiatives in South America and support them. Thus, right from the beginning, Don Bosco involved the whole Salesian Family in his missionary commitment.

Thus, throughout Don Bosco's life, we see like ever-growing waves of his passion "for the salvation of others". His heart was flaming with zeal, fervour, drive, and "joy of sharing the experience of the fullness of the life of Jesus"¹³ which made him "seek souls and serve God alone."¹⁴ It is also pastoral inventiveness, courage and the willingness to be sent wherever there is a need, expressed in the '*ci vado io*' ('I'll go there') that Fr Albert Caviglia considered as being

the 'Salesian motto.' This missionary spirit inspired Don Bosco's vision and his pastoral initiatives. It is the heart of Don Bosco's pastoral charity, which manifests itself in the 'Oratorian heart' as a concrete expression of the merciful and redeeming love of the Good Shepherd. It is all summed up in his lifetime's motto: '*Da mihi animas, caetera tolle.*' It is in this light that Fr. Luigi Ricceri, the 6th successor of Don Bosco, insisted that the missionary spirit was not just a personal inclination of Don Bosco. It is a "*charisma foundationis*", an intimate part of the founder's charism so much so that the SDB Constitutions consider missionary work an essential feature of the Salesian Congregation.¹⁵

¹³ P. Chávez, "Address at the Closing of the General Chapter 26," in ACG 401, 137.

¹⁴ *Const.* 10.

¹⁵ *Const.* 30.

The felt need to start a foreign mission

Fr. Angelo Amadei points out that “back in 1871 Don Bosco had asked the Holy Father’s opinion on responding to insistent requests for new foundations in Italy, Switzerland, India, Algeria, Egypt and California. The Pope had replied: “Just now concentrate your efforts on establishing your Congregation firmly here in Italy. When it is time to send your sons elsewhere, I shall let you know.” Thus, immediately after the formal approval of the Salesian Society, the Holy Father urged him to widen his field of activity wherever he thought best”.¹⁶

In fact, in his correspondences, Don Bosco expressed the joy of having the Congregation definitively approved by the Holy See on April 3, 1874. But he also showed concern that this could bring about a comfortable lifestyle to the members of



the newly approved Congregation. Thus, immediately after the definitive approval of the Congregation, Don Bosco felt the urgency to send his Salesians ‘to the missions’. In 1875 he opened the first house in Nice, France. In 1881 the school for poor boys in Utrera, Spain was opened followed by Sarria, Barcelona in 1884. The seventh successor of Don Bosco, Fr. Egidio Viganò, reflected Don Bosco’s feeling of urgency when he stated: “The missionary commitment is freeing us from the dangerous trend towards a soft and easy life, from superficiality in spiritual matters, and from genericism”.

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¹⁶ MB X, 532

His own missionary experience showed him that “in the missions, we get a taste of the origins, we experience the perennial validity of the oratory criterion, and we seem to see Don Bosco once again in the authentic beginnings of his mission to the young and the poor!”¹⁷

This missionary enterprise of Don Bosco was the ultimate manifestation of his missionary spirit. It is worth noting what Fr. Michael Rua wrote in the Salesian Bulletin of January 1897: “Our dearest father, Don Bosco, in the ardent zeal in which he was devoured shouted out: *Da mihi animas!* It was this need to save souls which made the old world seem narrow and drove him to send his sons to the distant missions of America.”¹⁸

Fr Joseph Aubry rightly emphasises that missionary commitment is “the beginning of the true story of Don Bosco” and a living manifestation of the energy and drive of his pastoral zeal and

charity. The missions were the final great wave of missionary zeal flowing out of his pastoral charity synthesised in his motto: *Da mihi animas!*¹⁹

Therefore, Don Bosco’s missionary option was a confluence of three factors: firstly, it was the realisation of his own long-held personal desire ‘to go to the missions’ expressed in his five ‘missionary dreams’. Secondly, Don Bosco felt that the missionary commitment of his newly approved Congregation would prevent the members from falling into the real danger of a soft and easy lifestyle. Above all, his Congregation’s missionary commitment is the fullest expression of his charism summed up in his own and the Congregation’s motto:

¹⁷ E. Viganò “The Pope’s Appeal for the Missions,” in *ACG*, 336.

¹⁸ *Bolletino Salesiano*, January 1897.

¹⁹ J. Aubry, *The Renewal of our Salesian Life*, I (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1984), 44-50.

Da mihi animas, caetera tolle!

Conclusion

The missionary commitment of Don Bosco reveals the intensity of his pastoral charity, zeal for souls, passion for the greater glory of God, and availability for the spread of God's Kingdom especially among the poorest. It was his missionary commitment which fostered a further development of his charism: *mission to the young* who are poor and abandoned and *mission ad gentes*. The work for young people especially those who are poor and abandoned, whether in the pampas or the city, is a peculiar expression of Don Bosco's missionary spirit. Indeed, the foreign missions not only marked the beginning of the expansion of Don Bosco's mission to the young to the whole world but it was an opportunity to develop a new method of evangelising by educating which is typically his



own. The Salesians and the Salesian Sisters enriched their missionary work with many elements from their pastoral experience working in schools, oratories, and hospices in Europe to foster the evangelisation of youth in Buenos Aires and Patagonia: theatre, choir, music band, lotteries, quizzes, etc. Thus, missionary work became “a synthesis which englobes all our mission.” “In this way the missionary spirit became part and parcel of every Salesian because it is rooted in the Salesian spirit itself... It is like the heart of pastoral charity, the endowment which characterises the vocation of all.”²⁰



²⁰ J.E. Vecchi, “Look around You” 7.

MISSIONARIES in the world, MISSIONARIES of life

Strenna 2025, Commentary n. 4

“As we have already pointed out, this Jubilee Holy Year runs parallel with something else that is at the origin of what the Family of Don Bosco is today in

the world because – and let us restate this firmly and with certainty – none of us and none of the institutions that today form the great tree that is the



Salesian Family, the Family of Don Bosco, would exist in the Church had the Holy Spirit not given rise to its missionary zeal from the beginning.

This jubilee year marks the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition to Argentina, promoted by Don Bosco in 1875.

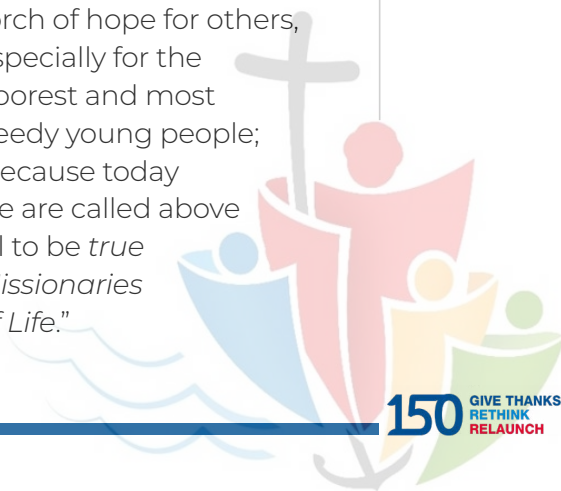
The celebration of this very important event in the Jubilee Holy Year 2025 therefore puts us in a favourable position to **give thanks, rethink and relaunch**.

Give thanks, rethink and relaunch: three verbs that revive and feed hope, urging us towards new missionary frontiers of the Congregation and the Salesian Family, especially to encounter the poorest and most marginalised young people.

Giving thanks, rethinking and relaunching are

not verbs of facile optimism. They are actions rooted in faith in Jesus Christ, who is always with us even when we experience moments of worry, fear and difficulties that arise in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Giving Thanks, rethinking and relaunching revive and nurture the hope that launches us towards new missionary frontiers. There are and always will be challenges and missionary difficulties, but, endowed with hope “filled with faith”, they will courageously urge us towards new socio-cultural, digital and geographical frontiers, so that we ourselves become a small torch of hope for others, especially for the poorest and most needy young people; because today we are called above all to be *true Missionaries of Life*.”



DEVOTION to the Sacred Heart and MISSIONARY COMMITMENT

In commemoration of the Jubilee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that runs from 27 December 2023 to 27 June 2025, Pope Francis published his encyclical “Dilexit nos,” where he calls for a renewal of authentic devotion to avoid forgetting the tenderness of faith, the joy of serving, and the fervour of mission. In the numbers 207-211, the Pope highlights that devotion to the Sacred Heart should nourish us

and bring us closer to the Gospel: missionary commitment.

207. The flames of love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also expand through the Church’s missionary



outreach, which proclaims the message of God's love revealed in Christ. Saint Vincent de Paul put this nicely when he invited his disciples to pray to the Lord for "this spirit, this heart that causes us to go everywhere, this heart of the Son of God, the heart of our Lord, that disposes us to go as he went... he sends us, like [the apostles], to bring fire everywhere".



Sacred Heart in Generalate chapel

208. Saint Paul VI, addressing religious Congregations dedicated to the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart, made the following observation. "There can be no doubt that pastoral commitment and missionary zeal will fan into flame, if priests and laity alike, in their de-

sire to spread the glory of God, contemplate the example of eternal love that Christ has shown us, and direct their efforts to make all men and women sharers in the unfathomable riches of Christ". As we contemplate the Sacred Heart, mission becomes a matter of love. For the greatest danger in mission

is that, amid all the things we say and do, we fail to bring about a joyful encounter with the love of Christ who embraces us and saves us.

209. Mission, as a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ, requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives. They are impatient when time is wasted discussing secondary questions or concentrating on truths and rules, because their greatest concern is to share what they have experienced. They want others to perceive the goodness and beauty of the Beloved through their efforts, however inadequate they may be. Is that not the case with any lover? We can take as an example the words with which Dante



Alighieri sought to express this logic of love:

Io dico che, pensando al suo valore amor si dolce si mi si fa sentire, che s'io allora non perdessi ardire farei parlando innamorar la gente.

210. To be able to speak of Christ, by witness or by word, in such a way that others seek to love him, is the greatest desire of every missionary of souls. This dynamism of love has nothing to do with proselytism; the words of a lover do not disturb others, they do not make demands or

oblige, they only lead others to marvel at such love. With immense respect for their freedom and dignity, the lover simply waits for them to inquire about the love that has filled his or her life with such great joy.

211. Christ asks you never to be ashamed to tell others, with all due discretion and respect, about your friendship with him. He asks that you dare to tell others how good and

beautiful it is that you found him. “Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven” (Mt 10:32). For a heart that loves, this is not a duty but an irrepressible need: “Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16). “Within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot” (Jer 20:9).

For Reflection and Sharing

- Mission, requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives.
- The dynamism of love has nothing to do with proselytism; the words of a lover do not disturb others, they do not make demands or oblige, they only lead others to marvel at such love.
- Christ asks you never to be ashamed to tell others. For a heart that loves, this is not a duty but an irrepressible need

PILGRIMS of hope

The Holy Year calls us



Marco FULGARO

Secretary for the Missions Sector

2025: year of grace, jubilee year, Holy Year²¹.

The celebrations began with the opening of the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, 2024.

The whole Church is invited to walk, pray and be reconciled. All the faithful can ask for a plenary indulgence, i.e. the remission of sins for themselves or their deceased relatives.

In addition to St Peter's, holy doors were opened in

the other three major basilicas of Rome: St John Lateran, St Mary Major and St Paul Outside the Walls. In addition, the pope personally wanted to open a Holy Door in a prison to offer prisoners a concrete sign of closeness.

So many pilgrims have come to Rome and will continue to arrive throughout the year. For those who are unable to get to Rome, bishops around the world

²¹ See the official Jubilee 2025 website: www.iubilaeum2025.va/eng

have designated cathedrals or shrines as special places of prayer for Holy Year pilgrims, offering opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences and other events designed to strengthen and revive faith. The term 'Jubilee' would seem to derive from the instrument used to indicate its beginning, the 'yobel', the ram's horn, the sound of which announced the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). We find some references to it in the Bible: in Leviticus (Lev 25:8-13) it is said to be convened every 50 years, as it was the 'extra' year, to be experienced every seven weeks of the year, as an occasion in which to re-establish the correct relationship with God, between people and with creation. It also had important practical implications such as the forgiveness of debts, the restitution of alienated land, and allowing the earth to rest.

The mission of Jesus, quoting Isaiah, takes up

these points in the gospel: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).

The First Holy Year was proclaimed in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII and, since 1470, has been celebrated every 25 years, except on special occasions, such as the Jubilee of Mercy 10 years ago.

What can we expect from this Jubilee?

Pope Francis invites us to hope in a world that increasingly needs hope. *"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by*



looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision."

Therefore, in addition to the ecclesial moments promoted and organised in all the dioceses of the world, we are personally called to a real and meaningful conversion. As Christians we are all pilgrims of hope, and we must bear witness to this with our life experience, starting with our daily lives.

We thank Providence for being able to celebrate the Jubilee and the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition in the same year, an anniversary that recalls and bears witness to how Salesian missionaries have brought hope to countless poor and marginalised young people in countless contexts around the world. The Jubilee, like the anniversary of the first missionary expedition, can be a beautiful mosaic of hope, with local initiatives throughout the year, for the benefit of

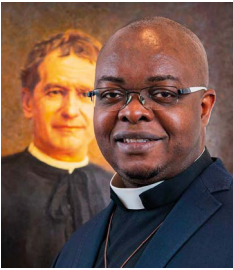
many young people who can experience the beauty of faith. The Congregation and the Salesian Family will experience a powerful time around 11 November 2025, when the missionaries of the 156th missionary expedition will be sent, exactly 150 years after the first sending, and all the PDMAs (Provincial Delegates for Missionary Animation) of the world will come together for that occasion. This will be the only celebration at Congregational level. Each province and community is invited to establish moments at local level to infuse missionary hope in young people. And each of us can also find ways to light flames of hope for our young people, using creativity and resourcefulness, to be missionaries of hope.

May this Holy Year be an opportunity for everyone to go to the roots of Christian Hope and live our missionary charism more ardently!



150 Years of Salesian Missions

A Prophetic Reflection in Light of the GC29



■
Fr. Alphonse OWOUDOU SDB
*Regional Councillor for
Africa- Madagascar
29th General Chapter Regulator*

The theme of the 29th General Chapter, “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people,” offers us a privileged lens through which to reflect on our mission, articulated around three key dimensions: vocation and prophetic fidelity (“give thanks”), community as a prophecy of fraternity (“rethink”), and the institutional reorganisation of the Congregation (“relaunch”).

The Salesian vocation is

rooted in a call received and preserved with prophetic fidelity. As we celebrate 150 years of missions, we are invited to thank God for the gift of this vocation, not just as an exercise in memory, since it expresses a living recognition of the transformative power of vocation when it is lived with passion and dedication.

The GC29 theme invites us to reflect on prophetic fidelity as a central element of our vocation. Being faithful means

caring for one's own vocation as well as that of others, accompanying the journey of confreres and young people. The missionary context requires creative fidelity, one that is capable of adapting to the signs of the times without losing sight of the essence of the charism. Now, more than ever, we are called to preserve and pass on the fire of vocation, helping young people discern God's call in their lives and supporting confreres in their daily fidelity.

The Salesian community is at the heart of our mission. GC29 emphasises the importance of authentically living the prophecy of fraternity within our communities, involving not only the confreres but also the laity, co-workers, and young people. The mission is always realised in a community context where diversity becomes a richness and unity becomes an evangelising force.

From this perspective, the celebration of 150 years of

mission urges us to rethink how our communities can be spaces of genuine fraternity and shared responsibility. The Salesian mission has always been an experience of expanding the community, building networks of fraternity that transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. In particular, the African concept of community as an "extended family" invites us to see the mission not only as pastoral action but as a process of integration and inclusion, where the missionary becomes part of a larger family. This vision challenges us to review our community dynamics, valuing the participation of the laity and promoting a culture of shared responsibility.

Rethinking the Salesian mission today means recognising that the community is not a static reality but a dynamic one that grows and enriches itself through encounter and sharing.

The Salesian mission, from its inception, has re-



quired a flexible and dynamic structure capable of adapting to local contexts while preserving charismatic unity. However, as the Congregation has grown and expanded worldwide, there has been a need to develop modes of governance that combine animation and governance in order to support and enhance the mission. This requires a structure that can value differences, promote participation, and ensure a shared vision. Being missionaries today means knowing how to organise and animate harmoniously, creating spaces for dialogue and collaboration that foster synergy among the different sectors and levels of the Congregation. Reorganisation should not be an end in itself but should be oriented toward supporting the mission, ensuring that pastoral and educational action meets the concrete needs of local communities.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first Sale-



sian missionary expedition, we are called to look to the future with hope. The Salesian mission is not only a heritage to be preserved but a challenge to be taken up with renewed enthusiasm and a prophetic vision. The GC29 theme invites us to be passionate about Jesus Christ and dedicated to young people, projecting ourselves into the future with the courage of those who know that the journey is still ongoing.

With gratitude for the past, discernment for the present, and boldness for the future, let us continue walking together, inspired by the same missionary zeal that drove the first Salesian missionaries beyond borders, motivated by the desire to make God's love visible among young people.

The Salesian Mission Day over TIME

The missionary spirit always needs to be sustained and revitalised in many ways, including powerful moments of missionary animation, such as the SMD.

The Salesian Mission Day (SMD) is an opportunity offered to SDB communities, Educative and Pastoral Communities (EPCs), all young people and members of the Salesian Family to live this aspect of the Salesian charism well and spread missionary awareness.

The name, however, may be misleading: it is not a particular day, there is no single date because each Province can choose the period

that best suits its own rhythm and calendar to experience this powerful moment of missionary animation to the full. Moreover, the SMD is the culmination of educative and pastoral processes, and is not an activity detached from the rest.

The first Congregational SMD was launched in 1988, on the 100th



anniversary of Don Bosco's death, and since then it has gone through many themes and proposed many rich and useful insights. Initially, the theme chosen was linked to a particular missionary context, especially geographical, then Initial Proclamation was explored in the different continents, and in recent years broader themes have been chosen that could be adapted to each context, developed in collaboration with other Sectors of the Salesian Congregation.

In this special issue of SMD, the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition will accompany us, according to the three verbs 'Give thanks, rethink, relaunch', as expressed in the logo.

Each Salesian Province is called upon to make cre-

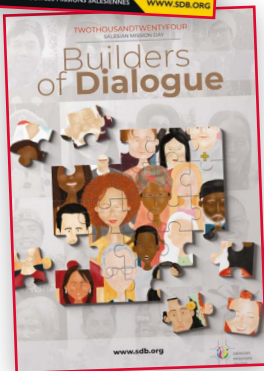
ative use of the cues in the materials provided by the Missions Sector according to its own context.

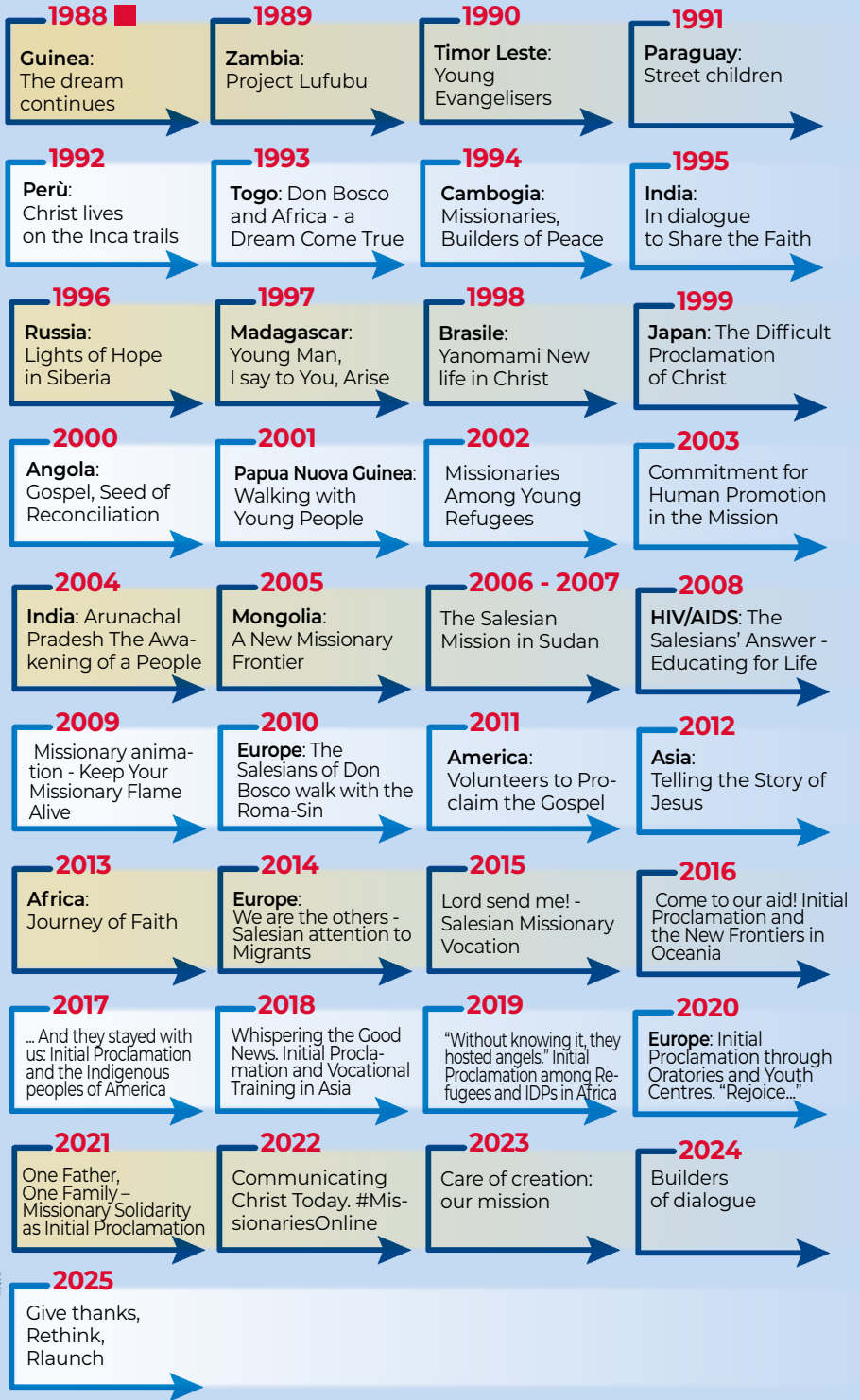
In addition to this booklet, the poster helps visualise the SMD and make it visible, while the prayer, with the invitation to pray it every 11th of the month, is a simple and important way to ask the Lord for a

more missionary heart.

Each SMD proposes a project, linked to the theme of the year, as a concrete opportunity for solidarity and missionary animation. This year we chose the opening of an oratory in Pagos, Greece, one of the new Salesian missionary frontiers.

The official video for the SMD 2025 is available on the Missions Sector YouTube channel.





The SALESIANS of the First Missionary Expedition



■ Fr. Reginaldo CORDEIRO SDB
Missions Sector

The missionary history of the Salesian Congregation began thanks to some missionaries motivated and inspired by Don Bosco to go on mission. The first expedition took place after the First Vatican Council when several bishops asked Don Bosco to send some Salesians to China, Egypt and the United States. But Don Bosco, after a few years of study, after his first missionary dream in 1872, having also been asked to go to Argentina to work with the natives of Patagonia, chose this place as the destination for the first Salesian mission.

If we look at the age of the members, the expedition was made up of young Salesians. The first missionary expedition included 10 Salesians: 1 cleric, 5 priests and 4 brothers, known above all thanks to the famous photo taken by Michele Schemboche, a professional photographer.

1. **Giovanni Battista Allavena** – cleric
He was born in Pigna, Porto Maurizio, in 1855. He was barely 20 years old when he left for the missions and was the youngest of the group. He joined the others in Marseilles as he did not yet have a passport.
2. **Giovanni Battista Baccino** – priest
He was born in Giusvalla, Alexandria, in 1851, an ‘adult vocation’ because he interrupted school to help his family work in the fields. He was one of the first to put in writing his intentions to go to the missions. He thought of America and thanked God for this beautiful and unique opportunity for service, he was 32 years old.
3. **Valentino Cassini** – priest
He was born in Varengo, province of Alessandria, diocese of Casale Monferrato, in the year 1851. He was 24 years old and a professor.
4. **Domenico Tomatis** – priest
He was born on 23 September 1849 in Trinità, in the province of Cuneo, in the diocese of Mondovì, and entered the San Francesco di Sales Oratory, in Turin, on 23 October 1862. He wrote the chronicles of the missionary journey. He was 26 years old when he left for the missions.
5. **Stephen Belmonte** – brother
Musician and economist, he was one of those who knew that his first destination would be to accompany Fr. Cagliari to the Argentine city of Buenos Aires, but understood that his steps would follow the direction the Congregation decided to take to achieve its goals. At the time of his departure, he was 29 years old.
6. **Vincenzo Gioia** – brother
Cook, master shoemaker, he was born in Alexandria in 1854. Don Bosco presents him as ‘a boy and master of the shoemaker’s trade’. He had the task of looking after the feet and stomach of his missionary companions: two

key elements to complete evangelisation on the new continent. Only 21 years old when he left for the missions, he too joined the group in Marseilles.

7. **Bartolomeo Molinari** – brother

Teacher of vocal and instrumental music, he left for the missions at the age of 21. He left the Congregation in 1877.

8. **Bartolomeo Scavini** – brother

Master carpenter, born in Benevagienna, Cuneo, in 1839, he knew how to make wood into a noble instrument for human use. He enjoyed prestige for his profession and this could have opened doors of work for him anywhere, but he wanted to be worthy of these circumstances and teach his art to those in need, across the seas. When he left for the missions, he was 36 years old.

9. **Joseph Fagnano** – priest

Don Bosco presented him as a 'doctor of fine literature', that is, regularly qualified to teach Greek, Latin and Italian literature, history, geography and other humanistic disciplines. He was born in Rocchetta Tanaro, in the province of Asti, on 9 March 1844. He was 31 years old when he left for Argentina.

10. **Giovanni Cagliero** – priest

Born at Castelnuovo d'Asti, Alessandria, on 11th January 1838. Don Bosco gave him the honour of being the leader of his first missionary expedition. He was 37 years old when he went on mission.

To commemorate these ten missionaries is to renew Don Bosco's missionary spirit, this ardent desire to share his faith with poor and needy boys that began in Valdocco and continues today in 137 countries around the world.



Don Bosco's FAREWELL to the FIRST MISSIONARIES

Don Bosco's homily on the occasion of the first Salesian missionary expedition

11 November 1875 was a solemn and emotional day. Don Bosco prepared a sermon to accompany his sons who would be the first to cross the ocean to Argentina.

all people... preach my gospel to all creatures). "With these words our Savior was giving His Apostles not a suggestion, but an order to go and bring the light of the Gospel to all parts of the earth."

The first to put the Gospel invitation into practice were the Apostles, who did not remain in Palestine or Jerusalem but immediately went out into all the world, followed by other zealous Christians.

The Salesians also received this appeal and, in dialogue with the Pope, Argentina was chosen: "In doing this we are entering upon a mighty undertaking, not because we have

The homily began with these words: "Our Divine Saviour, when he was on this earth, before going to the Heavenly Father, gathered his Apostles and said to them: *Ite in mundum universum... docete omnes gentes... Praedicate evangelium meum omni creaturae.*"

(Go into all the world... teach

Go into
all the
world...
teach all
people...
preach my
gospel
to all
creatures



any pretensions, or because we believe we can convert the whole world in a few days; yet who knows? This departure [for the missions], this humble beginning may be the seed that will grow into a mighty tree.” The missionary expedition can be an opportunity to awaken in many the desire to consecrate themselves to God as missionaries *ad gentes*.

What would they find in Argentina? First of all, the Christian faithful who did not have the good fortune of other countries and found it difficult to live their faith due to the lack of priests, who could not even administer the sacraments in such a vast and extensive territory. Then, a special recommendation to Italian migrants who risked forgetting the Christian faith and needed education. Finally, the apostolate with the indigenous peoples living in the regions surrounding the cities, such as in Patagonia, to whom missionaries could bring enormous comfort.

For the missionaries, the commitment to always show gratitude for the benefactors



who made this venture possible. If there was sadness at the farewell, at the same time there was great consolation in the heart to see the growth of the Congregation and to place ourselves at the service, with the little we have, for the good of the Church. “Yes, go forth bravely, but remember that there is but one Church that is spread over Europe, America, and the whole world and welcomes men of all nations who seek refuge at her maternal bosom.”

The mission is the same, regardless of location, and unity of spirit prevails even when we are physically distant, all working for the greater glory of God, maintaining the Salesian and Catholic identity, loving, professing and preaching the Gospel.

“As Salesians, no matter in

what remote part of the world you may be, never forget that here in Italy you have a father who loves you in the Lord and a Congregation that thinks of you in every circumstance, provides for your needs and will always welcome you as brothers. Go, then. You will have to face all kinds of trials, hardships, and dangers. Do not be afraid; God is with you; He will give you such grace that you will be able to say with St. Paul: By myself I can do nothing, but with Divine help, I am all powerful.

You will go, but you will not go alone because everyone will accompany you. Many of your companions will follow your ex-

ample, and join you in the field of glory and tribulation. Those who are unable to accompany you to the evangelical field to which Divine Providence has destined you, will follow you in thought and prayer.

“Farewell! Perhaps some of us shall not meet again on this earth. For a while we shall be physically separated, but one day we shall be reunited forever. We, who work for the Lord [will look forward to] hearing these words: *Euge, serve bone et fidelis ... intra in gaudium Domini tui.*”

The complete version of Don Bosco's homily is contained in the *Biographical Memoirs*, in vol. XI pp. 358-363.



Dear Missionaries...

The correspondence between Don Bosco and the Salesian missionaries



Fr. Francesco MOTTO SDB
Salesian Historical Institute

Among the hundreds of letters from Don Bosco that crossed the Atlantic Ocean from 1874 to 1887, most were addressed to the Salesians, from Fr. Cagliero to Fr. Fagnano, from Fr. Bodrato to Fr. Vespignani, from Fr. Costamagna to Fr. Tomatis and so on to many of the 150 Salesians, priests, brothers, clerics, who left during the 12 missionary expeditions organised from 1875.

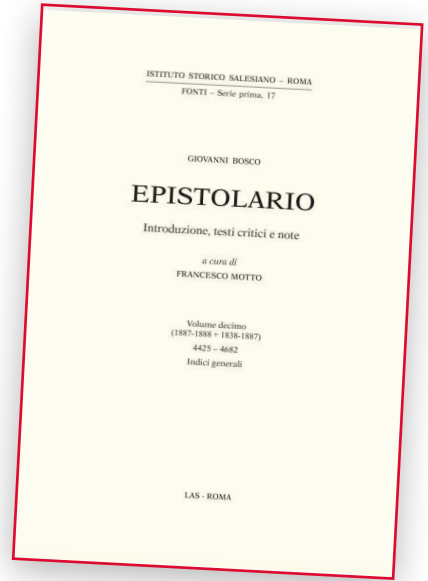
With these letters, together with those addressed to religious authorities (bishops,

vicars, priests...), to secular authorities (Heads of State, government officials, presidents of associations...), to benefactors and Cooperators – and obviously to their replies now preserved in the Central Salesian Archive – we can reconstruct the history of the first Salesian missions in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil. A history that for the most part has already been written, but which awaits to be specified, completed, enriched and even corrected through the unpublished

Dear Missionaries...

letters of Don Bosco published in volumes IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X of the new Epistolary of the Saint. It turns out that the establishment of the Salesian work on South American soil was not a walk in the park, an easy success as one might sometimes believe by reading the accounts of the missionaries in the *Salesian Bulletin*: instead, it required hard negotiations on the part of Don Bosco and Fr. Cagliero, immense sacrifices and dangers of various kinds on the part of the missionaries, including imprisonment and expulsion. Not to mention excessive work, exceeding their strength, in often extremely problematic environmental contexts.

Not only that. The missionaries, who had grown up in Don Bosco's shadow and were now scattered in unknown territory thousands of kilometres away from Turin, in contact with "civilised" Europeans often hostile to the faith and with "natives" who had never known it, needed spiritual support, an encour-



aging word, a sign of affection from Don Bosco. But Don Bosco also needed to keep these favourite sons of his "close", to "form" them at a distance, to remind them of the teachings given at Valdocco about prayer, attendance at the sacraments, obedience to superiors, the fraternity that had to reign in the community, the practice of the Preventive System in a socio-cultural environment that did not appreciate it. The following letter from Don Bosco on 5 February 1886 sent to the missionary in Brazil Fr. Carlo Peretto is sufficient in this regard:

“My dear Fr. Peretto,

Your letter gave me great pleasure... If I were twenty years younger, how the trip to America would soon be done! But while there is a remedy for everything, there is none for the passing years: so, patience. But do not think that we are

so far apart that I cannot be with you at certain times. And when evening comes and I rest for a few moments in semi-darkness, I review you all one

by one, I see you in spirit, I seem to hear your voice, I am moved and I pray for you, oh!

With how much affection, with how much fervour! And then I bless you as if you were all before me... as you were on the day of departure! In those moments, the vast ocean that separates us is no more than a drop of water; Brazil, Patagonia, Bue-

nos Aires, Montevideo are no more than a step away from my chair. But what I regret is hearing that your health is somewhat precarious. Take care and above all trust in Mary Help of Christians She will know how to obtain health for you if it is useful for the good of your soul, that is, ever greater strength and courage (which you already have by the grace of the Lord).”

The Salesian missionary plant, which was born in Italy and grew stronger in South American soil in Don Bosco’s time, would later take root elsewhere; today it bears fruit in 137 countries.

If I were twenty years younger, how the trip to America would soon be done!



The MISSIONARY DREAMS of Don Bosco

A prophetic vision

Although Don Bosco never set out as a missionary *ad gentes*, he always cherished the thought and kept in his heart the desire to extend the Salesian charism beyond all borders and share the Gospel with the whole world.

This emerges quite clearly in his five missionary dreams: below you can find a brief summary, the full text is available by scanning the QR code.



The illustrations are by Severino Baraldi, from the booklet *Don Bosco ti ha sognato. Vol.2.* (Elledici, Bologna, 2013).

First missionary dream:

Patagonia

(1872, cf. "*Biographical Memoirs*" X, 46-48)

I seemed to be in a wild region I had never before seen, an immense untilled plain, unbroken by hills or mountains, except at the farthest end, where I could see the outline of jagged mountains. Throngs of naked, dark-skinned, fierce-looking,



long-haired men of exceptional height and build swarmed all over this plain. Their only garments were hides strung across their shoulders. Some men were hunting, others were carrying bloodied chunks of meat at spear point, still others were fighting among themselves or with European soldiers. Just then many missionaries of various orders came to preach the Gospel, but they were immediately captured and killed without mercy. I said to myself: "How can these people be converted?" Then other missionaries approached, smiling: they were Salesians! I then thought about stopping them to avoid another massacre, but I saw that they were treated nicely, the people laid down their arms and began to welcome the missionaries. Then everyone began to pray the Rosary on their knees and the human to Mary was so loud that it woke me up."

Second missionary dream:

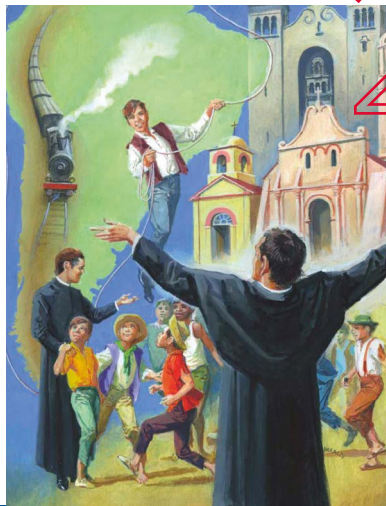
South America

(1883, cf. "Biographical memoirs" XVI, 304-312)

So many details of this

dream turned out to be prophetic and correspond to missionary works realised by the Salesians over time.

I seemed to have entered a room where there were many people I heard that some of them were speaking about the foreign missions, about the many peoples still not yet evangelised and about the lack of enthusiasm of European missionaries for bringing the Gospel message to them. I did not understand where we were when all of a sudden a radiant teenager appeared, his garment woven with heavenly richness and on his head he wore a cap shaped like a crown studded with the most spar-



ling precious stones.. He called me by name, took me by the hand and began to speak to me about the Salesian Congregation, without telling me his name. I recognised him, it was Louis, the son of Count Fiorito Colle of Toulon, our benefactor, especially of the missions in America. This young boy had died shortly before. In the room there was a table with a coil of rope, with lines and numbers corresponding to the geographical degrees of latitude. When Louis invited me I pulled as far as the first knot, at number 47, from which began three strands that spread to the east, west and south. “ $47+3+5=55$ ”. I then pulled on the end up to number 10, after which there was water. All of a sudden I was a vast area with many islands, some with indigenous populations, other uninhabited, others covered in snow or ice. “ $55+10=65$ ”. To the west I saw high mountains, the Andes Cordillera, to the east the sea, the Atlantic Ocean. Louis told me that the mountains are the border where so many people are waiting for the Salesians

and faith in Jesus. At this point Father Lago arrived and gave me a basket of small green figs, not yet ripe, saying that I had to find a way to make them ripen and could be reattached to the plant. He showed me how: he took a fig, dipped it into a basin of blood, then immediately dipped it into another basin full of water. It would take sweat and blood to make those people return to the plant and be pleasing to the master of life. Then we were on a train to see what would happen in future Salesian generations and I was shown a map. As the train went on, I learned many things by looking at this map, listening to Louis and looking out the window: forests, mountains, plains, rivers, incredibly grasping every tiniest detail. The train made two stops on the way and then stopped in the Strait of Magellan where we got off, amidst deposits of coal, planks, beams, wood, immense piles of metal. “What is now merely a project will one day be reality. What elsewhere excites wonder among people will here assume such stupen-



dous proportions as to arouse more astonishment than does anything else now.”

We got back on the train to join the Salesians in Patagonia and, once I got off, nobody recognised me because they had never seen me alive. Those people did not even know the first missionaries because so much time had passed and they were already dead. We continued the train journey north and found a terrible scene: a crowd of natives with deformed faces surrounded a bound captive, asking him questions about his travels. Suddenly, one of the natives hit him, cutting off his head, and the others poured over the corpse to cook his meat and eat it. The train set off again and every time we saw people, Louis repeated to me that this was the Salesian harvest. When we encountered ferocious animals, he told me that the Salesians would make them tame. When we were almost at the end of the journey, Louis explained to me the itinerary we had

travelled: the whole of South America was precisely drawn on the map, More than that, it showed all that had been, what then was, and what would be in those regions, but without confusion, rather with such a clarity that one could instantly see all at one glance I woke up: the dream had lasted all night.

Third missionary dream: a journey by air

(1885, cf. “*Biographical Memoirs*” XVII, 273-280)

I seemed to be accompanying the missionaries on their journey. They were gathered around me and asking for advice; without knowing how we found ourselves almost immediately in America. At the end of the journey, I found myself alone in the heart of an immense prairie located between Chile and Argentina



3

and I was amazed at how few Salesians were there. Perhaps they seemed so few because they were spread across an infinite expanse. The long roads and numerous houses looked mysterious and fantastic, while the vehicles soared into the air. Every street had a Salesian presence and you could see the missionaries engaged in their work, but on one street there were only two Salesians. Then a shining figure appeared and told me that we were in Mesopotamia, which was very strange because we were in Patagonia. As I continued to look I very clearly saw all the places where there are and will be Salesians, with the peoples to be evangelised. The Salesians were only sowing at that time, but those who come after them will reap: men and women will swell our ranks and become preachers, children will become the evangelisers of their parents and friends. The Salesians will succeed in everything with humility, work and temperance.

It seemed to me then that I was back in Italy and I saw all

of Turin beneath my feet. There was a continuous coming and going to South America, where I had suddenly returned. In the dream I went from the present to the past to the future, meeting many people and changing scenery. Bishop Cagliari appeared at my side, with some missionaries at some distance. Many others were around me with a good number of Salesian Cooperators. The vast plain became a hall, magnificent and difficult to describe in its size and splendour, filled with tables with elegant tablecloths and vases full of flowers, but without food, drink, plates or glasses. People began to arrive, dressed in white with a ribbon of rose, who stood around a table singing with joy, followed by other groups, of all ages and cultures, who were also rejoicing. Every crowd that entered was a people to be converted by the missionaries. Among the tables were many of our Sisters and many Salesians, with no distinguishing marks of being priests, clerics, or sisters, as the others wore white robes and a rose-coloured ribbon. There



were also some natives, who, after drinking the milk of the divine word, became proclaimers of the word of God themselves. The hall was full of people, the chairs no longer had a specific shape, but took the shape that each one desired: everyone was happy with the seat they occupied and the seat that others occupied. Silence fell and the diners began to sing in different choirs, to which voices from above were added, forming an extraordinary symphony. I thought I was in heaven, but Cagliero said it was only a simple and but only a pale image of what Paradise really will be.

When I woke up, I was left with a thought to share with Cagliero and my dear missionaries: "Let all the efforts of both the Salesians and the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians focus on cultivating vocations for the priesthood and religious life."

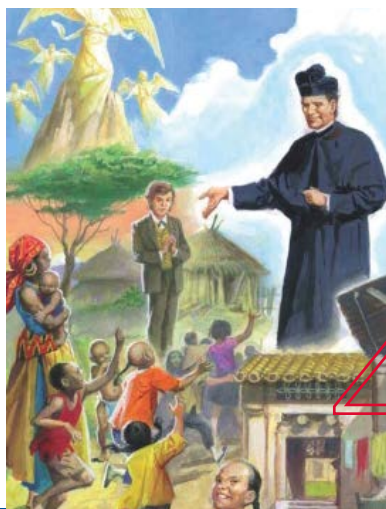
Fourth missionary dream:

Asia, Africa and Oceania

(1885, cf. *Biographical Memoirs* XVII, 594-597)

It seemed that I stood be-

fore a high mountain on whose peak stood a radiant angel, and around was a huge number of unknown people. The angel held a sword that blazed like a flame in his right hand, and he pointed out the surrounding countryside to me with his left. He called on me to wage the battles of the Lord and to gather the peoples into his granaries, and he was surrounded by other angels. I could hear the voice of the angel, but not that of the people around the mountain; they spoke unknown languages among themselves. I saw isolated things all simultaneously, and these changed the scene before me, and I was lifted to an immense height, as



if above the clouds, surrounded by an infinite void. Many were accompanying me and encouraging me, urging the Salesians not to stop on their way. It seemed to me that I was in Mesopotamia, then in Africa in a vast desert with naked peoples, and then again in Australia, an aggregate of many islands, with a multitude of children who tried to come towards us, but were prevented by the distance and the waters that separated them, and asked us to continue the work begun by our fathers.

I felt that all this indicated that Divine Providence was offering part of this evangelical field to the Salesians, but at a future time. Their efforts will bear fruit, for the hand of God will be constantly outstretched over them.

**Fifth missionary dream:
from Valparaiso to Peking**

(1886, cf. *Biographical Memoirs* XVIII, 50-52)

I was near Castelnuovo on a hillock and could only see a thick thicket, covered with an innumerable quantity of small

mushrooms. I saw Giuseppe Rossi, owner of the country estate, all serious, looking down the valley, and he did not answer when I called him. I saw Father Rua sitting down, looking serious. He did not answer me. So I went down from the hillock and walked to another, from the top of which I could see a forest, cultivated and criss-crossed by roads and paths. I heard the uproar of an innumerable crowd of youngsters. "We've been waiting for you. We've been waiting for you so long. Now at last you're here. You're among us and you won't get away from us!"

Without understanding much, I then saw a huge flock of lambs led by a shepherdess, who, having separated the young ones and the sheep, and put the one group on one side and the other on the opposite side, spoke to me and brought back to my mind the dream I had when I was nine, which I did not remember at the time. She summoned the youngsters and asked them

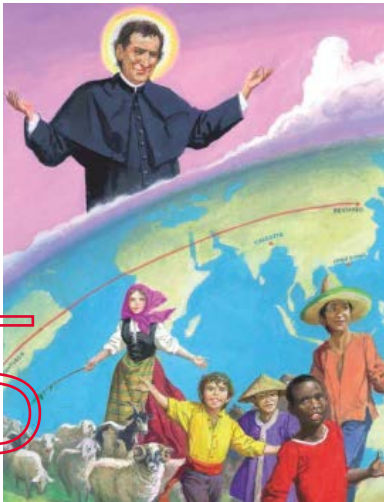


and me what we saw. "I saw mountains, sea and hills" and the children read 'Valparaiso. Santiago.'" The shepherdess told me that starting from that point I would have a standard of what the Salesians would do in the future. Then, turned the other way, she had me draw a line of sight. I could still see mountains, sea and hills, the children in chorus read 'Peking'. Then she had me draw another line from one end to the other, from Peking to Santiago, with its centre in Africa. I did not understand how I could do all this: the distances were immense, the places difficult and the Salesians few. "Don't worry. Your sons, the

sons of your sons, and their sons again will do this. Just let them steadfastly observe the Rules and keep the spirit of the Pious Society." Drawing a new line from Santiago to the centre of Africa, I saw ten stations. The shepherdess told me that those centres would have houses of studies and novitiates, providing many Salesian missionaries. On the other side, I saw another ten centres from the centre of Africa to Beijing which will form missionaries. "There's Hong Kong; there, Calcutta; farther on, Madagascar. Here and also elsewhere there will be more houses, houses for studies and novitiates."

"There is only one thing to do: recommend that my sons constantly cultivate the virtue of Mary." "And beware of the error now prevailing, which is to mix those who are studying the human arts with others studying the divine arts, for the science of Heaven is not to be mixed with earthly matters."

I wanted to reply, but I woke up.

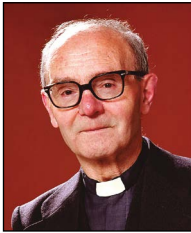


The General Councillors for the Missions

Let us look back together at the Salesians who have served as Councillors for the Missions

“The Councillor for the Missions fosters the missionary spirit and commitment throughout the whole Society. He coordinates initiatives and directs activity in the missions so that it may respond in a Salesian way to the urgent needs of the peoples to be evangelized. It is also his duty to see that provision is made for the specific preparation and updating of missionaries”.

(Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales, Article 138)



Fr. Modesto BELLIDO IÑIGO
1948-1965 (+1993) - Spanish

from SMA Province (Spain – Madrid)

First General Councillor for the Missions

Rectors Major:

Fr. Pietro Ricaldone *until 1951*, Fr. Renato Ziggiotti

New presences: Puerto Rico, Syria, Philippines, Lebanon, Taiwan, Rwanda, Swaziland, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Rep. of Congo, Bhutan



Fr. Bernard TOHILL
1971-1983 (+2010) – Irish

from CIN Province (China), missionary in Hong Kong

1980: Africa Project

Rectors Major:

Fr. Luigi Ricceri, Fr. Egidio Viganò *since 1977*

New presences: Gabon, Bahamas, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Liberia, Kenya, Lesotho, Senegal, Tanzania, Angola, Benin, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Nigeria, Togo, Sudan, Zambia



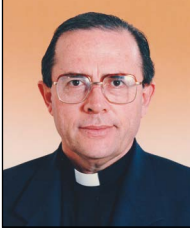
Fr. Luc VAN LOOY
1984-1990 – Belgian

from KOR Province (Korea), missionary in South Korea
now Bishop Emeritus of Gent, Belgium

1988: the first congregational Salesian Mission Day

Rector Major: Fr. Egidio Viganò

New presences: Indonesia, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Belarus, Georgia



Fr. Luciano ODORICO
1990-2002 – Italian

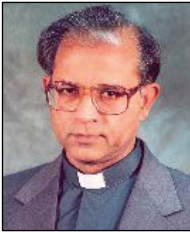
from VEN Province (Venezuela) missionary in Venezuela, Kenya and Papua New Guinea, now in Venezuela

Establishment of the role of the PDMA (Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation)

Rectors Major:

Fr. Egidio Viganò *until 1995*, Fr. Juan Vecchi

New presences: Russia, Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Central African Rep., Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chad, Eritrea, Solomon Islands, Malawi, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Namibia, Romania, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Mauritius, Mongolia, Kuwait



Fr. Francis ALENCHERRY
2002-2008 - Indian

from INC Province (India – Kolkata), now in Bangladesh

First missionaries sent to Europe,

Rector Major: Fr. Pascual Chavez

New presences: Moldova, United Arab Emirates



Fr. Václav KLEMENT

2008-2014 – Czech

from KOR Province (Korea), missionary in South Korea
now Superior in AFM (South Africa, Lesotho, eSwatini)

Don Bosco Network (network of Salesian NGOs)

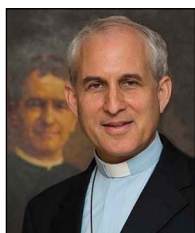
2008: First Consultation Body of the Missions Sector

2009: First issue of the missionary bulletin Cagliero 11

2014: The Missionary Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Rector Major: Fr. Pascual Chavez

New presences: Bangladesh, New Zealand



Fr. Guillermo BASAÑES

2014-2020 – Argentinian

from ANG Province (Angola - Namibia), missionary in Angola
now Provincial in AFC (Dem. Rep. of Congo)

*2019: updated manuals of PDMA and Salesian Missionary
Volunteering*

Rector Major: Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime

New presences: Gambia, Malaysia



Fr. Alfred MARAVILLA

2020-2025 – Filipino

From PGS Vice-Province (Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands), missionary in Papua New Guinea

2021: Guidelines “The Salesian Missionary Vocation”

2024: First meeting of Salesian Missionary Museums

2024: Guidelines for Provincial Mission Offices

Rector Major: Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime

New presences: Algeria, Botswana, Greece, Niger, Vanuatu



Pioneers of HOPE

In this section we would like to present some figures of lesser-known Salesian 'pioneers' who have contributed to spreading the Salesian charism in the five continents.

FR. FRANCISQUE DUPONT The initiator of the Salesian mission in Vietnam

We begin in Asia with Fr. Francisque Dupont, a French Salesian, born in 1908 and sent to Japan as a missionary in 1935 as a young priest.

He was very good at speaking and writing and used these talents in his ministry, serving God and souls in the Salesian priestly life to which he had been called.

Due to the growing world-wide conflict in 1940 he was



called to serve the French army and sent to Vietnam to serve as an interpreter for the French High Command in dealing with the Japanese

occupying force, given his knowledge of Japanese. Even with this assignment, he kept his missionary heart and engaged in various pastoral works following

some Indochinese youth groups.

Already in 1936, Bishop John Baptist Nguyen Ba Tong, the first Vietnamese bishop, wrote to Fr. Carlo Braga, then Provincial of China, asking him to send French-speaking Salesians to take care of the formation of a minor seminary, run a parish and set up a vocational school. Thus began a first temporary Salesian presence in Vietnam. In 1942, an orphanage for French-Vietnamese children in Hanoi was entrusted to the Salesians, and Fr. Braga gave permission to Fr. Dupont to take over the direction of the work, later joined by Fr. Raymond Petit from Thailand.

With great sacrifice and hard work, involving several lay people, Fr. Dupont put into practice the preventive system for the education of the adolescents, about a hundred of them, in the orphanage.

In 1944, after the heavy bombings of Hanoi by the American planes, the chil-

dren were moved to Ke So, about 50 miles south of Hanoi and later the group split up, with the older ones returning to Hanoi with Fr. Petit. Fr. Dupont prayed with hope that a new world, far from sin and hatred, would be born out of the horrors of war.

The withdrawal of the Japanese occupying force in August 1946, the political situation of Vietnam became chaotic. The drive for independence mingled with the hatred towards foreigners and Catholics. There had been rumours that revolutionaries wanted to kill the missionaries at Ke So, and people tried to persuade them to find safety in Hanoi. Fr. Dupont chose to stay with his boys and did everything he could to obtain a passport and bring his boys to the capital, safe from possible revolutionary massacres, despite the death threats he received and warnings to leave Ke So. When advised to leave he responded "I have to stay,



because of the children". In the evening of August 10 he told the boys: "I have always done good things, promoting good understanding between the French and Vietnamese. If something were to happen, I would do my best to save myself. In any case, everyone should die once, right? Even Charles de Foucault had done only good things and they killed him too."

That evening at 9.20 p.m., a band of five armed revolutionaries broke in his room, tied him down, and forced him in pajamas and without shoes out of the house towards the river. The next day, people found his body in the river; hands tied, stabbed in his loins and shot through the left temple.

He was buried in the Catholic cemetery in Ke So. With his martyrdom, the

words of John's Gospel came true: 'If the grain of wheat that falls into the earth does not die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'

Fr. Paul Seitz MEP helped Fr. Dupont's work. Later he became the founder and Director of the *Orphanage of St Teresa* for young victims of war. It developed and grew to become a 'boys town' with 450 boys. When Fr. Paul Seitz was appointed bishop of Kontum in 1952, the Rector Major, Fr. Renato Ziggotti, accepted the appeal of the Apostolic Delegate to take over his work. On October 3, 1952,

Fr. Antonio Giacomino and Fr. Andrej Majcen arrived to take over the Boys' town. However, on 19 September 1954 in Geneva, an agreement was signed by all the interested parties to divide Vietnam into two: the north to the Communists, and the south to



the Nationalists. This forced the Salesians to leave the north until they settled in Thu Duc, 10 miles north of Saigon in February 1955. In 1995 Fr. Egidio Vigano, Rector Major, sent Salesians to start a presence in Hanoi.

The work of the early pi-

oneers and the blood of the martyrs are bearing very prosperous fruit: today there are more than 370 Salesians in 38 presences in Vietnam. A Delegation in the North is preparing to become a Vice-Province. Another 110 Vietnamese Salesian missionaries work on all continents.



FR. VALERIANO BARBERO

The sower of the Salesian charism in Papua New Guinea

Moving to the southeast, we come across the continent of Oceania where the Salesian presence is spread across several countries, including Papua New Guinea where there are currently seven communities within the PGS Vice-Province, which also includes the Solomon Islands. Vocations to Salesian con-

secrated life are growing; in 2013 the first Salesian priest from Papua was ordained.

The roots of the Salesian charism in the country of more than 600 islands go back to the 1980s and are linked to the figure of Italian missionary Fr. Valeriano Barbero.

“Fr. Val”, was born in Bellinzago Novarese, in Piedmont, and started his Salesian formation, convinced by Fr. Angelo Miglio that the Madonna, the Help of Chris-



tians, had huge plans for him.

At only 22 years old, in 1960, he left Genoa for Hong Kong, where he stayed a few months before arriving at his missionary destination, the Philippines. A year and a half later he made his Perpetual Profession, and for the occasion Fr. Carlo Braga, a great missionary now a Servant of God, told him these simple words that accompanied him throughout his life: “Dio solo” (“God alone.”)

After three years as school administrator in Makati, he was appointed Provincial Economist. He followed the construction in Parañaque of the Salesian theodate and the national Shrine of Mary Help of Christians. Archbishop Francis Panfilo would say, emphasizing his frugal lifestyle and his detachment from money: “People will talk about the buildings he erected, yet, what he leaves behind is that he was first a priest, a Salesian priest, and he was proud of it. He was



a man of prayer, and his reflections were spiritually profound.” The Salesian missionary spirit is embodied precisely in this zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel, which manifests itself in the life lived, often in hidden, simple and humble acts, as Fr. Val showed us.

Twenty years after leaving Europe, Fr. Val embarked again, this time to Papua New Guinea, a little-known land of different languages and tribes, poverty, division and tragedy, arriving on 14 June 1980, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Fr. Val was appointed Parish Priest of Araimiri, where the Salesians were also entrusted with a school for boys rejected by government schools, with boarding,

consisting of a number of dilapidated shacks, left by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, repurposed for the occasion. When Araimiri was temporarily closed, Fr. Val went further west to start a Salesian presence in Lariau, where there were more than 30 missionary stations within the parish of Mary Help of Christians.

In 1994 he was called to Port Moresby in a very different and more modern context, where he continued the expansion of the Salesian charism with the construction of a high school, a spirituality centre and a church dedicated to the Help of Christians in thanksgiving for her presence in the various Salesian works in Papua New Guinea.

There has been no shortage of difficulties and dangers: "I was attacked with an axe. I was taken to court

several times over land issues. I was threatened for the strangest reasons in the hope that I would give in to their demands... I contracted malaria many times and, as a last touch, also leprosy", Fr. Val said a few years before he died.

He came back to Italy in 2021, taking with him a return ticket to Papua New Guinea, convinced that he would return there one last time. In his last days he repeated that many things, without friendship, are meaningless. Someone pointed out to him, "You have so many visitors and yet you have no inheritance to leave: you are lucky then, because you have friend-



ships to share!" Humbly, in his mission he went quietly from village to village, perhaps not even converting anybody but simply being present to the suffering, the sick, the needy, the elderly, and the hungry. It was in this way, he said, that he tried to bring "the

caress of God" to the people.

On 14 April, on the very same day when the Church honours Saint Valerian the martyr, Fr. Val experienced the Father's final caress on earth: his witness remains a living stone of faith that knows no boundaries.

FR. JACQUES NTAMITALIZO

The inspirer of Project Africa

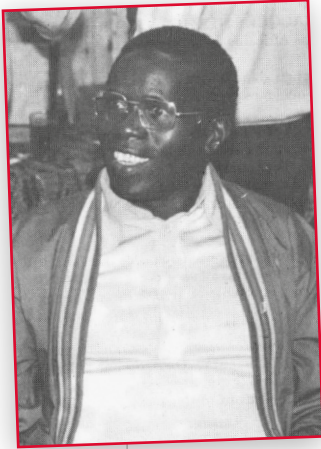
We move now to Africa, a continent where the Salesians are growing in number and spirit. Since 1980, Project Africa contributed to spread the Salesian charism and we have to give a special thanks to Fr. Jacques Ntamitalizo.

Fr. Jacques Ntamitalizo was born on 14 September 1942 in Rungu, Haut-Uele (Rwanda). He studied with the Salesians, initially in Rwesero and then at St François de Sales College in



Lubumbashi (Zaire). He was ordained a priest in Rwanda (Rwanda), on 13 August 1972, and after a few years of priestly work, he continued his studies at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome, obtaining a Licentiate in spiritual theology. As Director of Novices he was appointed as Provincial Delegate for Rwanda and Burundi. He took special care

Pioneers of HOPE



Salesian Mission Day 2025

in presenting the word of God, trying to express it with simplicity, and comprehensible to the poor people.

In 1978 the Salesians celebrated their 21st General Chapter and Fr. Jacques participated as a Delegate of the Central African Province (AFC). In the General Report of the Rector Major, Fr. Luigi Ricceri stated that “our entering Ethiopia is meant to indicate the special interest the Congregation intends giving in the near future to Africa in its missionary action” (n. 276). However, it was the intervention of Fr. Jacques which made a decisive impact on the members of the General Chapter: “In my poor words, I wish you could hear a cry of fervent appeal, inviting, on behalf of so many needy youth to experience the Salesian

spirit. The harvest is great and mature, but alas the number of Salesian hands actually present in this marvellous continent is disproportionate to the immense and promising apostolate to be undertaken. From Don Bosco’s time up to today many eminent people of the Church, with profound regard for the Congregation, have not ceased to make this appealing cry (...) Speaking of the missions in Africa (...) Don Bosco said ‘this mission is one of my dreams’. Don Bosco could not realise this apostolic dream of his because of his age. Immediately after I remembered these other words that he said, leaving it as a testament to his sons: ‘What I have not done you will do’. I would like to invite the Congregation, with great respect and simplicity, to consider these words which have filled me with joy and hope for a radiant Africa (...) with the support of the words of the Rector Major in his General Report



on the state of the Congregation, it seems to that in the practical guidelines (...) there be one which promotes Salesian missionary activity in Africa. Africa asks for this service in the hope that it will give good fruits.”

Fr. Jacques’s appeal and cry for Africa was received enthusiastically by the members of the General Chapter and it was immediately felt as a real inspiration from God, a unique intervention of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Congregation. And, in fact, it marked the turning point of decisive importance in the practical guidelines that refer to the Salesian commitment to the African continent.

In February and May 1980, Fr. Egidio Viganò visited confreres already working in Africa. That same year in his letter ‘Our African Commitment’ (AGC 297) he warned: “When we think of the scarcity of personnel in many of these places, and the dwin-

dling numbers in once-flourishing Provinces ... then we can only conclude that our African commitment will have to face up to grave problems. ... This is true. But before thinking of lessening our efforts, we must increase our generosity. There is no future for our Congregation if we simply rest on our oars in pleasant contemplation of certain fine basic aspects of our Congregation...”, Thus, he decisively launched ‘Project Africa’ with the arrival of Salesians from Europe, South Asia and South and North America.

In 1994 the ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi exploded in Rwanda which also spread to Burundi. Refusing to leave Burundi and return to his country, he remained alone in the mission of Rango/Butare, thus managing to defend it from pillage and destruction. A devotee of Mary Help of Christians, he declared: “Since God is watching over me and Mary

Help of Christians is visibly protecting me, I must continue to give myself for others, despite the risks". Thanks to his courage, lives were saved. But on 10 July 1995 in Bujumbura, Burundi, Fr. Jacques Ntamitalizo was murdered. His body was buried in an unknown common grave with all other victims of the genocide.

Today there are more than 2,200 Salesians in 15 Provinces in 41 countries on the African continent and the spread of the charism is



expanding, with an increase in local vocations and a new awareness that will guide African Salesians to be 'Don Bosco today' for so many young people across the continent, responding to today's new challenges.



FR. RAFFAELE PIPERNI
The forerunner of the Salesians in U.S.A.

The Salesians arrived in the United States of America in 1897: four SDBs with a short letter

written by the superior general, Fr. Michael Rua, that it contained a very important mandate accompanied by his paternal blessings, with a reminder to his Salesian sons to always remain united with their brother Salesians all



over the world in prayer. Fr. Raphael Piperni was at the head of the group directed to San Francisco, California, after eighteen days of crossing the Atlantic and ten days of trip from New York, through Chicago.

Fr. Raphael Piperni was born in 1842 in Casacalenda, in Southern Italy. As a diocesan priest he taught in several high schools before responding to the call of the missions. As he wrote in his memoirs: "I was convinced that I did have a missionary vocation, and after a year's preparation and training, I was sent by the Propaganda Fide to the Holy Land." From the very start Palestine captivated Fr. Piperni's heart. There he soon joined the Brothers of the Holy Family, a religious congregation founded by Canon Antonio Belloni. It was Belloni who recognized Father Piperni's remarkable talent for fundraising. This gift was put to work as Piperni's fundraising tours took him to France,

Belgium, England, Ireland, Canada, and eventually to the United States. By the time he reached San Francisco (not as a Salesian, but as a member of the Brothers of the Holy Family), he had become a seasoned traveler and his efforts on behalf of the Brothers' foundations in Palestine were more than amply rewarded. Canon Belloni himself attested that it was Father Piperni's regular life-saving bank drafts from abroad that enabled his little congregation to stay afloat.

Father Piperni's final destination was Mexico City where he enjoyed the esteem of the archbishop. Al-



though he was not conversant in Spanish at that time, still his fundraising efforts exceeded all expectations. He noted in his memoirs: "Though a poor nation, the generosity of the Mexican people was overwhelming. And many contributed from their want." After 13 years of what he called his "years of wandering", the weary traveler decided it was time to return home. The year was 1891.

But it was not a happy homecoming. The lack of religious vocations forced founder Antonio Belloni, with Rome's approval, to disband his Congregation and to merge it with the Salesian Society. On 8 October 1892, Fr. Piperni professed as a Salesian and was assigned to Mexico where the Salesians had recently opened their first institution. Back in the country he was greatly loved, he was soon made director of the Salesian trade school in Puebla. Three years later he was summoned to Turin by Fr. Michael Rua and entrusted with the founding

of the first Salesian work in North America.

The other three members of the first group of Salesians in U.S.A. were Fr. Valentino Cassini, who had studied at the Valdocco Oratory and in 1903 left California for Argentina, seminarian Joseph Oreni, 23 years old who was the first Salesian priest ordained in North America who later was transferred to Venezuela to serve the Italian immigrants there and left the Congregation in 1915, and Br. Nick Imielinski, who served as sexton at Sts. Peter and Paul's church for half a century.

Fr. Piperni found the Italian community in North Beach in the grip of vicious anticlerical hotheads. Moreover, the lot of the Italian immigrants in San Francisco was not a happy one. Just as half a century earlier the arrival of great numbers of Catholic Irish, Poles, and Germans had borne the brunt of harsh discrimination and intolerance, it was now the



Church of Saints Peter and Paul
in 1884 and today

Italians' turn. Their presence on American soil resurrected a new version of anti-Catholic nativism.

Fr. Piperni's accomplishments as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul spanned more than 30 years. No doubt, he will always be remembered as the man who, against all

odds, was responsible for the construction of the magnificent church of Sts. Peter and Paul now facing Washington Square. At age 85, ailing and feeble, Fr. Piperni asked to retire to the newly opened junior seminary across the bay in Richmond, and three years later was stricken with pneumonia and died on 15 November 1930.

The work of the Salesians is appreciated in the U.S.A. especially for the significant social impact on young people achieved in the two Provinces SUE (United States East) and SUO (United States West).



FR. PASCUAL CHÁVEZ

The conceptor of Project Europe

Following an outdated mentality, Europe is not to be considered a mission land, yet we know that this is not the case, to such an extent that the Salesian Congregation launched “Project Europe” some time ago, which became a reality mainly thanks to the impetus of Fr. Pascual Chávez.

Fr. Pascual Chávez was born in northern Mexico on 19 December 1947. A Salesian since 1964, he was Provincial of Mexico-Guadalajara (MEG) from 1989 to 1994 before being elected two years later as Regional Councillor for the In-

teramerica region. In 2002, during General Chapter 25, he was elected as Don Bosco’s ninth successor. He completed his second term as Rector Major in 2014.

From his experience within the Executive Council of the USG (Union of Superiors General), in a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI in December 2005, among other things Fr. Chávez, spoke to the Pope about “Project Europe” which he had been thinking about for some time.

In his message to the 26th General Chapter in 2008

Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “At a time when vocations are decreasing in Europe and the challenges of evangelization are growing, the Salesian Congregation must be



attentive to strengthening the Christian proposal, the presence of the Church and the charism of Don Bosco on this continent.” The same General Chapter indicated as an explicit task: “to revive the Salesian charism in Europe”; it committed the Rector Major with his Council to define “the nature and objectives of the intervention for a renewed Salesian presence in Europe.”

Fr. Chávez describes “Project Europe” as “an act of apostolic courage and an opportunity for charismatic rebirth” in Europe that should be placed in the broader context of the new evangelization. It is a project of the whole Congregation, but the elaboration and implementation are first and foremost up to the Congregation in Europe. “‘Project Europe’ intends to commit the whole Congregation to the strengthening of the Salesian charism on the continent, especially through a profound spiritual

and pastoral renewal of the confreres and communities, so as to continue Don Bosco’s project on behalf of the young especially the poorest.”

Fr. Chávez indicated some important steps to be taken for the Europe Project:

First, the change of mentality to move from the attitude that considers consecrated life in Europe destined to end and sees the Salesian charism now passed to the laity, to a change of mentality, leading to the “revitalization” within of the European confreres.

Then, the overcoming of the attitude of maintenance and turning to a process of verification of one’s work, with the courage to “leave structures and works that lack Salesian identity, that have become an obstacle, or are now ineffective for a real evangelization of young people,” creating “some new presence, capable of attracting young people, so that they respond to their urgent

needs, and to give hope to the most sensitive Salesians.”

Fr. Chávez had insisted that for “Project Europe” Provinces must first have an overall plan, drawn up, discussed and accepted in the provincial assembly that can foster the spiritual rebirth of the charism in each of the confreres. In this light, the sending and welcoming of missionary confreres “must absolutely not be aimed at safeguarding what exists, but at the development and management of new activities and initiatives that are more significant from a charismatic point of view.” An inner journey of conversion on the part of the European confreres is equally necessary. They should receive the missionary confrere as a brother in common life and close collaborator in the Salesian mission.

This project is not comparable to the other missionary projects of the Salesian Congregation. Being missionar-

ies in a secularized Europe poses considerable internal and external challenges; good will is not enough. Missionaries must be prepared to be open-minded and able to understand the European population and culture well. It is not possible to retreat into a maintenance ministry or, worse, to give in to pastoral sloth, or a psychology of the grave. The Salesians are bearers of hope: through faith and enthusiastic Salesian life they promote the endogenous revitalization of the Salesian charism.

Missionaries in Slovenia



On the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition, looking back with the eyes of faith we realize that, in the person of Fr. Chávez, the Spirit was preparing the Salesian Congregation to face the new reality of Europe, so that it could be more aware of its resources and challenges, with hope to revitalize the

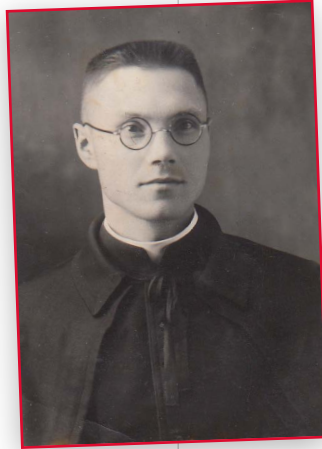
Salesian charism on the continent. Only by faith can we recognize the Europe Project as a tangible sign of the active presence of the Spirit in the Salesian Congregation, who “wants to see it vibrant for the good of the Church and never ceases to enrich it with new apostolic energy” (SDB Const. 22).

FR. BRONISLAW CHODANIONEK

The undercover pioneer in Moldavia

As a final pioneer figure, we would like to present the Polish Salesian Fr. Bronisław Chodanionek.

After the Second World War, the Polish Salesians lost all their presence in the former borderlands of the Republic of Po-



land, which were within the borders of the USSR, due to the peace agreements. At that time, most of the Salesians left these areas together with the Polish population, because the Communist authorities of the

Soviet republics, led by their Muscovite principals, forced them to leave their homes with reprisals, intimidation and blackmail. Refusing the order to leave were nine Salesians from the Province of St Stanislaus Kostka (Poland - Warsaw), who until then had worked in the archdiocese of Vilnius, much of whose territory remained beyond the eastern border. They decided to remain there to serve Catholics, Polish and non-Polish, by engaging in parish work in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine.

Among them was Fr. Bronisław Chodanionek, born in Kodonia Przemiany in 1910. Thanks to the parish priest's care, as a boy, dreaming of a priestly vocation, he studied Latin privately with him, and in the years 1928-1931 began his studies at the Junior Seminary run by the Salesians in Daszawa. Having become a Salesian, he was in Vilnius when the world war broke

out, as a theology student, and remained in Lithuania for the first years of his priestly life.

In 1949, Fr. Bronisław, together with his mother Józefa and part of his family, decided to go to Chisinau, the capital of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova. He worked there for the next 24 years, being the only Catholic priest in Moldova. At that time, it was inhabited by about 25,000 Catholics, mostly Germans and Poles. Some former parishioners from the Vilnius region also travelled to the capital of Moldova to secretly receive the holy sacraments.

Life for Christians was not easy: the aim of the Communist authorities was to subject the Catholic Church to Soviet legislation. The clergy suffered various harassments and religious Congregations were dispersed, limited to parish work, while nuns worked in state institutes clandestinely carrying on community life.





Parishioners did not always understand whether their priest or parish priest belonged to an Order or was a secular priest. The Salesian confreres in the diaspora maintained contact, as far as possible, with the Congregation and the superiors, writing letters to them officially and through couriers. In the official correspondence of the superior of the Province, the Provincial was called 'uncle'.

In the parish church entrusted to him, Fr. Bronisław took special care of the furnishings and liturgy, organised a choir and a music and literary library. At

the beginning of the 1960s, however, he too was expelled by the Communist authorities, who requisitioned the church premises to make a cinema and theatre. From then on, his pastoral ministry continued in a small, beautifully renovated cemetery chapel, which could only accommodate 50 people, where he celebrated Holy Masses in Polish and German. He tried to maintain friendly relations with his faithful, serving them not only with his priesthood, but also with his other skills. For example, one of his passions was repairing watches, so he repaired them free of charge for his parishioners. The service in the cemetery chapel also turned out to be only temporary, as the authorities closed this too. Fr. Bronisław continued to exercise his priestly ministry under these conditions, also travelling to other republics, replacing priests mainly in Ukraine and Lithuania. He held religious ser-

VICES in homes, cared for the sick and buried the dead. He was a priest at the disposal of the faithful 24 hours a day, carrying out missionary work on the model of St Paul. He lived the Salesian sacrament of presence to the full, with a tireless missionary zeal, always trusting in the Lord, even in difficulties.

Due to the worsening conditions of his pasto-



ral ministry and the restrictions imposed by the communist authorities, Fr. Bronisław began to think about going back to Poland and returning to work in the Salesian presence in the Warsaw Province. He managed to gather all the necessary documents, but the deterioration of his health got in the way. In the spring of 1973, he became seriously ill and, despite medical treatment, deteriorated and died in Chisinau on 25 November 1973. His funeral was attended by numerous faithful, Catholic priests from the Ukraine and Orthodox clergy.

The seeds of the Gospel sown in Moldova by Fr. Bronisław Chodanionek bore fruit after many years. At the invitation of the Bishop of Chisinau, in 2005 the Salesians opened an educational centre for poor young people in the capital of Moldova, as part of the INE Province (Italy North-East).



A FRUITFUL charism

**Congregations and institutes founded
by Salesian missionaries²²**



**Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of
Christians (MSMHC)**

Founder: Bishop Stefano Ferrando SDB

Year of foundation: 1942

Countries where we are present: 14

India, Italy, Swaziland, Lesotho, South Sudan, South Africa, Mozambique, Ethiopia, U.S.A., Germany, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, and Philippines.

Motto: Go Proclaim the Good News to all Nations.

Number of members: 1386

Superior General: Sr. Christine Mynsong MSMHC

Specific charism: Missionary evangelization and catechetical instruction, especially of women, girls and children.

Brief history of the foundation

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, the first indigenous Congregation in North East India, was founded on 24 October 1942, in Guwaha-

²² Data refer to the first half of 2024, read more about: *La Famiglia Salesiana di Don Bosco*, Rome, 2020.

A FRUITFUL charism

ti, Assam, by Venerable Stephen Ferrando, SDB, the then Bishop of Shillong. Reading the signs of the time and responding to the need of the hour, Bishop Ferrando founded the Congregation to evangelize, catechize, heal and educate the far-flung population of North East India. He was also overwhelmed by the poverty, illiteracy and unhygienic living conditions of the people of the region whose misery was doubled by the ravages of World War II. The War prevented the missionaries both priests and religious who were working in the region from freely moving around to help their needy flock. This situation coincided with a group of nine girls coming forward to become sisters led to the founding of the Congregation. He imbued the Congregation with Salesian spirit and the ability to adapt themselves to any difficult situation of the people in the villages for the proclamation and the spread of the Gospel.

The Congregation is blessed with members belonging to 75 ethnic groups from India, Myanmar, Nepal, Hawaii and Lesotho.



Contacts

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 msmhcgghy@gmail.com
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 (+91) 361-2233949



Caritas Sisters of Jesus (SCG)

79

Founder: Fr. Antonio Cavoli SDB

Year of foundation: 1937

Countries where we are present: 16

Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Italy, Germany, Papua New Guinea, Australia, USA, Philippines, China, Argentina, Vietnam, South Sudan, Uganda.

Motto: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." (Mar16,15); "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." (Math 5,7)

Number of members: about 900

Superior General: Sr. Emiliana Park SCG

Specific charism: Witness the merciful charity of Jesus toward all and especially toward the poor and suffering

Brief history of the foundation

In 1926, 9 Salesian missionaries from Italy arrived in Japan, headed by Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti. Among them was Fr. Antonio Cavoli, who became Salesian after having volunteered as a military priest during World War I.

In 1929 Fr. Antonio Cavoli gathered a group of young girls and began visits to the poor and sick, and later opened a hospice for them. Although there were difficulties in preaching the gospel in non-Christian countries, not to mention language difficulties, he was convinced by the words of farewell given by Fr. Rinaldi when the missionaries left Italy, that stressed charity as the only and essential means of gaining access to the hearts of Japanese, and he devoted himself to gospel





preaching through charitable activities.

Before the World War, Fr. Vincent Cimatti (Venerable and Co-Founder) proposed to Fr. Cavoli the founding of a women's congregation. Fr. Cavoli accepted the proposal and on 15 August 1937, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Japan was founded. Even though there were still fewer than 20 members, around 1943

the first missionaries were sent. Fr. Cavoli was always burning with missionary passion and continued to witness it to his sisters.

Contacts

caritadigesu.com

[Facebook.com/caritassisters](https://www.facebook.com/caritassisters)

[instagram.com/suore_della_carita_di_gesu](https://www.instagram.com/suore_della_carita_di_gesu)

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Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (HHSSCC)

Founder: Blessed Fr. Luigi Variara SDB

Year of foundation: 1905

Countries where we are present: 11

Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Spain, Italy, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea.

Motto: Let us keep our hearts fixed on where the true joys are.

Number of members: 245

Superior General: Sr. Eulalia Marín Rueda HHSSCC

Specific charism: Salesian victimal charism

Brief history of the foundation

Fr. Luis Variara, Salesian missionary, in the exercise of his priestly ministry in Agua de Dios (Colombia) discovered, through the sacrament of reconciliation, the religious vocation of some young women already affected by leprosy and other daughters of the sick but healthy who saw their ideal of consecrating themselves to the Lord as unfulfilled. Guided by him, 6 young women, 4 sick with leprosy and 2 healthy, but daughters of lepers, started the Institute.

The first sisters discovered illness and pain as values of redemption and total self-offering. The experience of Salesian sacrificial spirituality is realised in the practice of evangelization of the poor, with priority given to lepers, children and young people. For this reason, the Institute runs various educational works, in which it promotes pastoral health care. There are also a number of centres for the care of the sick, social and missionary works in Colombia and other countries.

Some of those who would later become co-founders of the religious Institute were part of the first consecrations in 1902. They were able to give concrete form first in practice and then, over the years, in doctrinal content, in a new spirituality and a characteristic apostolic style, which since 1975 has been shared with the laity and priests of the secular Movement.





Contacts

<https://hhsscc.org/>

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YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@HHSSCC-OFICIAL>

Instagram https://www.instagram.com/hhsscc_variara/



Sisters of the Resurrection (HR)

Founder: Fr. Jorge Puthenpura SDB

Year of foundation: 1977

Country: Guatemala, among the Maya Q'eqchi' population

Motto: Duc in Altum

Number of members: 86

Superior General: Sr. Zoila Caal Cacao HR

Specific charism: Giving dignity to rural women, especially young women and girls, through evangelization, education and integral human promotion, based on systematic and gradual catechesis, as well as pastoral missionary activities.

Brief history of the foundation

Fr. Jorge Puthenpura was sent to the Q'eqchi' ethnic group of Maya origin in Guatemala in 1970, and is still living in the same house, in the village of San Pedro Carchá

He gathered nine young indigenous girls in 1977, who soon increased in number and a community of four nuns was formed to care for the young women, who dedicated themselves to their literacy and to learning women's handicrafts, as well as to visiting the rural communities, alternating one week of formation at home and two weeks working in the villages. In 1982, the sisters withdrew and the community of young peasant women was established as a religious congregation. Another stage of the congregation was marked on 8

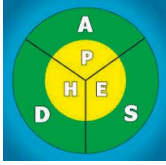


December 1991 with the foundation of the Talita Kumi Centre for the education and formation of indigenous women in the village of Trinidad in San Pedro Carchá, with a group of 160 rural women. In their three educational Centres, the sisters continue, with the Salesian Spirit and method, to form hundreds of indigenous and peasant girls and boys, making them true evangelizers and catechists, capable of bringing sociocultural change to their communities. In 2024, there are more than 35,000 Sunday School children.



Contacts

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(Mother General)



Association of the Damas Salesianas (ADS)

Founder: Fr. Miguel González SDB

Year of foundation: 1968

Countries where we are present: 24

Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Curaçao, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Spain, Philippines, Angola.

Number of members: 3153

President: Eliana Gherardi

Specific charism: Sanctification in daily activities, working for the renewal of the world in Christ, addressed to the woman, active subject and at the same time recipient of the mission. Spirituality of action, of giving, of sacrifice, of generous zeal in the service of others and nourished by prayer, the Eucharist and devotion to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, and St Michael.



Brief history of the foundation

Fr. Miguel González SDB, a Spanish Salesian missionary in Central America, in 1961, expelled from Cuba, directed the construction of the National Church of St John Bosco in Venezuela in Caracas, in the Altamira area, to celebrate 75 years of the Salesian presence in the country. Six years later a group of women co-promoters of the social works of Don Bosco decided to remain united, free and autonomous in order

to give life to the social aspirations of the Complex that had sprung up next to Don Bosco's church and to form a new Christian and Salesian Association called "Damas Salesianas", Fr. Miguel González guided the Damas Salesianas along original paths, sharing common elements with the Salesian Family: vocation, youth mission, spirit, charism and educational method. The Damas Salesianas promote legitimate secular autonomy and are committed to transforming society according to the Gospel, taking care of the health, physical, moral and spiritual, especially of the needy. Marginalised youth, excluded from any educational process, are the significant area of their apostolate. They care for children with material, physical and spiritual deficiencies, working with their mothers.



Contacts

www.adsmundial.org

www.facebook.com/ADSMundial/

www.instagram.com/adsmundial/



Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians (SMI)

Founder: Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow SDB

Year of foundation: 1948

Countries where we are present: 7

India, U.S.A., Germany, Italy, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda

Motto: To Love God and Help others to love God

Number of members: 693

Superior General: Sr. Jane Nadackal SMI

Specific charism: Evangelization and Catechetical instruction of women, girls and children in towns and villages in imitation of Jesus. The Smiling Apostolate is another unique gift that their Founder Bishop Morrow has handed down as a prerequisite for all the apostolates.

Brief history of the foundation

Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow SDB was ordained Bishop of Krishnagar in 1939. Known as the Smiling Bishop, his smile for one and all was ever aglow with his love of God, and he was eager to share that joy and peace with everyone as a priest, bishop, writer and founder. Upon taking charge of the Diocese of Krishnagar, Bishop Morrow clearly saw the necessity of having educated religious women to work among the women of his diocese. "We are not going to just wait for the people to come to us, but we shall go to the people, into the villages, towns and into their homes."



The Sisters fulfill his mandate through their main apostolate of Home Visitation in towns and villages, and they conduct various awareness programmes, raising awareness of women and girls about social evils like prostitution, abuse of women, human trafficking, child labour, female foeticide and infanticide in the rural areas, parishes, schools, hostels, streets, etc.

The entire life of Bishop Morrow was based on the unique spirituality of the Holy Eucharist with frequent visit to the Blessed Sacrament. The chief emblem in his coat of arms was the



Holy Eucharist, the centrality of his life. He was called home to heaven for his eternal reward on 31 August, 1987.

Contacts

www.smiofbpmorrow.org

smisecygen@gmail.com/smi.generalate@gmail.com



Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (SIHM)

Founder: Gaetano Pasotti SDB

Year of foundation: 1937

Countries where we are present: Thailandia, Cambodia

Motto: Caritas Christi Urget Nos!

Number of members: 85

Mother General: Sr.Maliwan Paramathawirote SIHM

Specific charism: With simplicity and humility of service and in the spirit of loving, serving and forgiving, SIHM serve the local churches in partnership with the Salesian family and local clergy wherever there is a need, missionaries' residences, parishes and schools.



Brief history of the foundation

Gaetano Pasotti, an Italian Salesian, born in 1890, left as a missionary to China, where he remained for nine years under the guidance of Bishop Aloysius Versiglia. In 1927 he left China as leader of the first Salesian expedition to Siam (now Thailand), where fourteen years later he was consecrated bishop, in Bangkok.



With a lively sense of the local Church and apostolic zeal for the evangelization of the people, he founded the Congregation of the Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on 7 December 1937, on the eve of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The first seven novices began their formation in the residence next to the Salesian Theologate in Bang Nok Khuek, Samutsongkram.

After the dedication of the Church to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Bishop Pasotti dedicated the Congregation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the new Patron in 1942.

The new Congregation started with the group of young women who worked in the Salesian kitchen, already guided in Christian formation by Carlo della Torre, then a Salesian seminarian, and the foundation proceeded with the assistance of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

With pastoral zeal, the SIHM assist the parish priests in their pastoral ministries: preparing children for the sacraments, caring for families, accompanying the BEC in their meetings to share the



Gospel, strengthening the faith of families with the Word of God, nourishing meetings with joy and prayer services. In a spirit of community, they visit the elderly and sick, disaster victims and migrants in the vicinity. Formal education challenges the sisters to administer schools with wisdom and Christian prudence.

In 1997, the first missionaries were sent to Cambodia, associated with the Thai Missionary Society (TMS) in the diocese of Battambang.

Contacts

www.sihm.or.th

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sistersihm@gmail.com



Daughters of the Queenship of Mary (DQM) Sisters of the Queenship of Mary (SQM)



Founder: Fr. Carlo della Torre SDB

Year of foundation: 1954

Countries where we are present: Thailand

Motto: Expanding the Kingdom of God through prayer and work under the direction of Our Mother Mary

Number of members: 40 DQM – 26 SQM

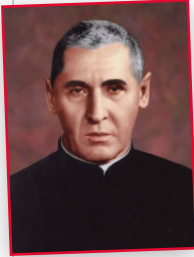
DQM General Moderator: Teresa Ratchanee Simmaree DQM

SQM General Mother: Sr. Maria Magdalen Pranee Kum-
puth SQM

Specific charism: To share in the redemptive work of Christ, to help restore and spread the Kingdom of God through the devotion of life consecrated to God and the brethren, with

prayers and servitude in various forms, such as, education, teaching catechism, and cooperating with the Church in the mission of evangelization.

Brief history of the foundation



The Institute of the Daughters of the Queenship was established in 1954 by Fr. Carlo della Torre, a Salesian missionary priest in Thailand, who started to gather young girls in Kanchanaburi to live together and formed them to live a holy life, training them to work to help themselves. Their vocation slowly grew and flourished and in 1948 they went to Bangkok with Fr. Carlo offering their lives to God and working to spread His Kingdom.

They lived in a corner of a Salesian place which was slowly developing to be today's Don Bosco Technical School.

The DQMs are a secular institute, the first consecrated secular institution established in Thailand.

Fr. Carlo Della Torre implanted the spirit of the institute that has been handed down from generation to generation: support for the Lord Jesus as the centre of one's life, devotion to the Holy Eucharist and fidelity to Mother Mary, living a simple, cheerful, humble life, in a family atmosphere, in the mode of "Prayer and Work", following the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

The Daughters of the Queenship of Mary continue to respond to the challenge of preaching the Good News in today's world, bringing its mission in various ways to the social contexts to which



they belong, being consecrated persons, witnesses of Christian love, as salt, leaven and light, in an atmosphere of fraternal life, participating in God's plan to change the world and make it holy from within.

In 2000, the institute of the DQMs opened a reflection on its origins, trying to clarify the lifestyle of its members, and so two different groups were formed: the DQMs and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Queenship of Mary (SQM), a diocesan religious congregation of the Bangkok archdiocese. Members take vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in response to God's call and live in community.

Contacts

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Sisters Announcers of the Lord (SAL)

Founder: St. Aloysius Versiglia SDB

Year of foundation: 1936

Countries where we are present: China, Hong Kong, Canada

Motto: Serve the Lord in Joy for the greater glory of God

Number of members: 17 professed sisters

Superior General: Sr. Prisca Tsang SAL

Specific charism: Education of youth

Brief history of the foundation



The Congregation of the Sisters Announcers of the Lord was founded by Bishop Aloysius Versiglia, SDB (now proclaimed a Saint) in 1930 in Shaoguan, China and was recognised by the Congregation of Faith in Rome in 1936 at the time when the first novitiate was started.

The mission of the sisters is to help evangelization in parishes as well as to devote themselves to the education of youngsters. The mother house was first situated in Shaoguan, China. The sisters helped Salesian missionaries in their apostolic work in Canton Province. In 1953, eight sisters moved to Hong Kong, China and started the new mother house in Yau Yat Chuen, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

At present, the Congregation has 6 professed sisters helping evangelization in Shaoguan, China. In Hong Kong, 10 professed sisters operated 1 catholic primary school (Tak Nga Primary School) and 2 Catholic secondary schools (Tak Nga Secondary School, Our Lady of the Rosary College). There is also one retired sister helping evangelization in Calgary, Canada.



Contacts

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Contemplative Fraternity of Mary of Nazareth (FCMN)

93

Founder: Bishop Nicolás Cotugno SDB

Year of foundation: 1977

Countries where we are present: 5

Uruguay, Argentina, Italy, Slovakia, Czechia

Number of members: 700

Specific charism: To highlight the contemplative dimension of baptismal consecration to which all members of the People of God are called. This contemplation consists, essentially, in the experience of union with God, following the example of Don Bosco. Through contemplation in action, Nazarenes want to unite themselves to the mystery of the human action of Jesus who, being one with the Father, lived in history, also through action, the fullness of union with Him.

Brief history of the foundation

Don Bosco's "contemplation in action" is the embryonic seed that developed into the charism of the FCMN. The initiative of the Contemplative Fraternity of Mary of Nazareth (FCMN) was born from the concern of Bishop Nicolás Cotugno in the Salesian novitiate (Como, Italy, 1957), when he expressed to his superiors his inclination towards the contemplative life. They encouraged him to continue in the Salesian Congregation, as the Salesian charism had a strong call to contemplation. In 1977, some members



Salesian Mission Day 2025



of the FCMN consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin as a Contemplative Fraternity; thus the doors were opened to live this contemplative experience, which began in Montevideo with groups of young

people, couples and communities of consecrated persons, who settled in the Fraternity's headquarters from 1986.

Nazarenes respond with freedom and love to this union with the Risen Lord through the Commitment, the Promise or the Vow of Contemplation. They accompany various groups of young people and new families who have opened up to know and deepen the Nazarene charism by following the itinerary of its discovery. The work and activities of the Nazarenes are characterised by service according to the Nazarene way of life.

Since 2014, Bishop Cotugno, Archbishop Emeritus of Montevideo, has been at the complete disposal of the Fraternity.

Contacts

www.fraternidadmariadenazaret.org/



Community of the Mission of Don Bosco (CMB)

Founder: Deacon Guido Pedroni

Year of foundation: 1983

Countries where we are present: 9

Italy, Madagascar, Burundi, Haiti, Ghana, Chile, Argentina, Ukraine and Mozambique

Motto: At the roots of the heart

Number of members: 597

Specific charism: A life lived in a permanent “State of Mission” means living the moments of the day, in any place, from the dimension of witness, participating in the mission of the Church that is embodied in the style of Don Bosco in favour of the young. The three cornerstones of our spirituality are: Unity, built in fraternal dialogue; Charity towards the young and the poor and realised in communion; reliance on the essential, lived in sharing in Salesian and family style. A spirituality of seeking and an attitude of familiarity lay the foundations for unity among the members of the Community and the Association.

Brief history of the foundation

As a “founding element” of the Community, the original intuition arose during a Eucharistic celebration in Rome in 1982, when the missionary crucifix was handed over to a Salesian Cooperator leaving for Patagonia. “During that Holy Mass I felt with an irrepressible force, the call to change, to leave, to change my way of believing; I had to set my religiosity in a more radical way. A very strong inner call to which it was impossible to say no! Almost a sharp sword, which left no escape!! recounts Guido Pedroni, at the time a civil service volunteer and Salesian Cooperator. Later, he left with a group of young



people from the ILE province for Ethiopia, driven by an inexhaustible urge, in search of the meaning of what he was experiencing. From 1983 the work as a missionary group in the Bologna area was mainly directed towards missionary activity for Ethiopia. Then gradually there was a shift from free time to commitment in daily life, involving the choices of the lives. In 1988, was made the first draft of the Rule of Life based on its Unity, Charity and Essentiality. In 1994, the Community became an Association with its own juridical structure, and in the following years it extended to other countries through missionary expeditions.

In 2024, the CMB participated in the missionary sending out in Valdocco, on 29 September, together with SDB and FMA.

Contacts

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www.associazionecmb.it

Missionary sending, Valdocco, 29th September 2024



Sentinels of HOPE

The missionary holiness of the Salesian Family

Read more by downloading
the attachment here:



SERVANT OF GOD ANTONIETTA BÖHM FMA

Born: 22.09.1907, Bottrop (Germany)

PLACE OF MISSION: ARGENTINA – PERU –
BOLIVIA – MEXICO

Death: 27.04.2008, Coacalco (Mexico)

“The testament she leaves is one of ardent love for Jesus, unlimited trust in Mary Help of Christians, welcoming kindness and generous and serene availability to the mission for the extension of the Kingdom of God in various cultures, among families and in people’s hearts.”

(Fr. P. Cameroni SDB, General Postulator)



**SERVANT OF GOD
LUIGI BOLLA SDB**

Yáнкуam' Jintia ("Shining Star of the Path")

Born: 11.08.1932, Schio (Italy)

Place of mission: Ecuador – Peru

Death: 06.02.2013, Lima (Peru)

"Now this is the testimony I would like to keep: I would like to animate the young people who have doubts and say: I try, instead of being willing to do anything... I would like to tell them: look at the great joy he gives you. It is the Lord who calls you to his service, the missionary vocation is extraordinary, it must never die on earth. It must never die."

(Fr. L. Bolla SDB)



**SERVANT OF GOD
CARLO BRAGA SDB**

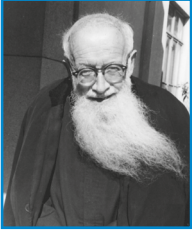
Born: 23.05.1889, Tirano (Italy)

Place of Mission: China – Philippines

Death: 03.01.1971, San Fernando (Philippines)

"Father Braga had a soul bubbling with optimism and healthy enthusiasm, missionary zeal and cultural sensitivity."

(Fr. E. Viganò SDB, 7th successor of Don Bosco)



**VENERABLE
VINCENZO CIMATTI SDB**

“Don Bosco of Japan”

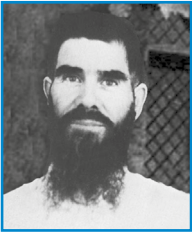
Born: 15.07.1879, Faenza (Italy)

Place of Mission: Japan

Death: 06.10.1965, Chofu (Japan)

“For me Monsignor Cimatti is the most complete Salesian I have known for his piety, skill, spirit of fraternity, fatherliness, his skill in winning over souls. He was an educator rather than a professor of pedagogy, very versatile and very friendly, a true copy of Saint John Bosco.”

(Fr. R. Ziggotti SDB, 5th successor of Don Bosco)



**VENERABLE
FRANCESCO CONVERTINI SDB**

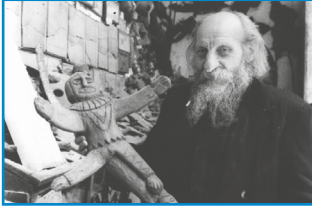
Born: 29.08.1898, Locorotondo (Italy)

Place of Mission: India

Death: 11.02.1976 Krishnagar (India)

“Fr. Francis is good, that is why everyone wants him for a friend. He talks to everyone, Hindu and Muslim, about Jesus, about his love for everyone. He is revered by all as a great sadhu, a monk who brings the peace of God. The life of all these years of his mission has nothing sensational about it. It is made up of ten thousand gestures of goodness that would not even offer a sensation-seeking journalist enough for a news article.”

(Fr. T. Bosco SDB)

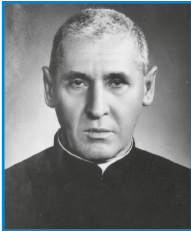


**VENERABLE
CARLO CRESPI SDB**

Born: 29.05.1891 Legnano (Italy)
Place of mission: Ecuador – Peru
Death: 30.04.1982 Cuenca
(Ecuador)

“When I was studying in the college, the Virgin appeared to me in a dream and showed me a scene: I was dressed as a priest and had a beard; I stood on an old pulpit, around me a multitude of people eager to hear my words. The pulpit was not in a church, but in a hut.”

(Fr. C. Crespi SDB)

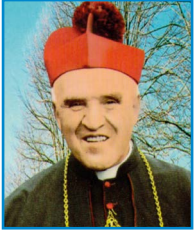


**SERVANT OF GOD
CARLO
DELLA TORRE SDB**

Born: 09.07.1900, Cernusco sul Naviglio
(Italy)
Place of Mission: Thailand
Death: 04.04.1982, Bangkok (Thailand)

“The most characteristic spiritual traits of this true son of Don Bosco were first of all humility, especially in the most critical and difficult moments of life, when he was always respectful and submissive. His detachment from earthly things, money, comforts, his poor and austere standard of living were proverbial. And with poverty he loved work, always ready to carry out any task and assignment: preaching, teaching catechism, being a bricklayer, carpenter or mechanic.”

(Fr. P. Cameroni SDB)



**VENERABLE
STEFANO FERRANDO SDB
BISHOP**

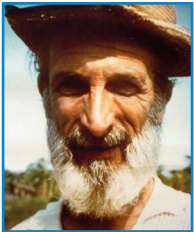
Born: 28.09.1895, Rossiglione (Italy)

Place of Mission: India

Death: 20.06.1978, Genoa (Italy)

"Lord, as shepherd of the flock, I offer my life as a sacrifice for the sake of the sheep, the salvation of the souls entrusted to my care."

(Bishop S. Ferrando SDB)



**VENERABLE
ATTILIO GIORDANI
SALESIAN COOPERATOR**

Born: 03.02.1913, Milan (Italy)

Place of Mission: Brazil

Death: 18.12.1972, Campo Grande (Brazil)

"Life is more than just talking about what we should do. It is not a case of preaching, but what you actually do is what matters. We must demonstrate with our lives what we believe in. There is no preaching to be done. The preaching is to live."

(A. Giordani)



**SERVANT OF GOD
RUDOLF LUNKENBEIN SDB**

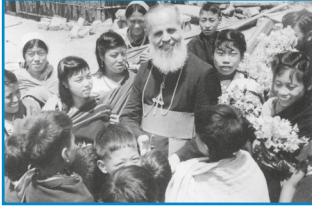
Born: 01.04.1939, Döringstadt (Germany)

Place of Mission: Brazil

Death: 15.07.1976, Meruri (Brazil)

"Meruri Rodolfo! Meruri Simão! Meruri, martyrdom, missão! In Mass and in dance, in blood and in the earth, Rodolfo and Simão weave their covenant! Meruri in life, Meruri in death, and the ultimate love, and the mission accomplished."

(Bishop P. Casaldáliga)



**SERVANT OF GOD
ORESTE
MARENGO SDB
BISHOP**

Born: 29.08.1906, Dianod 'Alba (Italy)

Place of Mission: India

Death: 30.07.1998, Tura (India)

"You are truly one of the missionaries who made Don Bosco's dreams come true! We are grateful to the Lord who made our Bishop Marengo a docile and effective instrument for the expansion of the Kingdom."

(E. Viganò SDB)



**SERVANT OF GOD
ANDREJ MAJCEN SDB**

Born: 30.09.1904, Maribor (Slovenia)

Place of Mission: China – Vietnam – Slovenia

Death: 30.09.1999, Ljubljana (Slovenia)

"I will announce the Gospel to the Chinese in the Chinese language; therefore, I will be Chinese with the Chinese; with the Vietnamese, a Vietnamese, in the Vietnamese way."

I am grateful to God for calling me and giving me courage to follow his call. Life's adventure is very significant, one in which God sends us!"

(Fr. A. Majcen SDB)



**VENERABLE
LAURA MEOZZI FMA**

Born: 05.01.1873, Florence (Italy)

Place of Mission: Poland

Death: 30.08.1951, Pogrzebień (Poland)

“Love and seek only Jesus; live and work only for Him: this was her spiritual program. In this communion with the Lord hers was a constant practice of the evangelical virtues and counsels. She guided the Sisters prudently and justly; she faced obstacles energetically and meekly; she served her brothers and sisters with a sincere and constant spirit of charity, characterised by purity and kindness.”

(Fr. P. Cameroni SDB)



**BLESSED
MARIA ROMERO MENESES FMA**

Born: 13.01.1902, Granada (Nicaragua)

Place of Mission: Costa Rica

Death: 07.07.1977, Las Peñitas (Nicaragua)

“Grant to me, O God, that as I face life’s challenges, I may unceasingly wipe away all the tears I come across; soften all bitterness and sorrow, smooth all harshness and put a little balm in all the wounds.”

(Sr. M. Romero Meneses FMA)

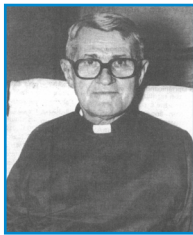


**BLESSED
MARIA TRONCATTI FMA**

Born: 16.02.1883, Corteno Golgi (Italy)
Place of Mission: Ecuador – Peru
Death: 25.08.1969, Sucúa (Ecuador)

“She is the very embodiment of evangelical simplicity and shrewdness. With what exquisite motherhood she conquers hearts! She finds a solution to every problem, one that is, in the light of the facts, always the best. She never forgets that she has to deal with weak and sinful beings.”

(Fr. G. Vigna SDB)



**VENERABLE
JOZEF VADOR SDB**

Born: 29.10.1909, Dorog (Hungary)
Place of Mission: Cuba
Death: 8.10.1979, Santa Clara (Cuba)

“He said to the people: I am a friend, I am a friend; he breaks bread with the poor, he denies no one his wine. His hands bear no weapons. His words are of life, they are those of a friend. And the people who saw him said to their neighbours: There is a man in the streets who brings peace and wants to be our friend.”

(Fr. Aranguren)



**VENERABLE
COSTANTINO VENDRAME SDB**

Born: 27.08.1893,
San Martino di Colle Umberto (Italy)
Place of Mission: India
Death: 30.01.1957, Dibrugarh (India)

“On fire, since my earliest years, with the idea of the Christian apostolate pushed to its strongest and purest expression, without yet having been able to give free rein to this sacred flame, without yet having been able to freely release this accumulation of energies that I feel increasing more and more, I feel immense relief in finding souls to whom I can reveal my whole soul without fear of being misunderstood and even mocked. There are moments when one feels one’s heart overflowing with gratitude to the good God who so graciously, without any merit of our own, has caused us to be born into the bosom of his religion, while the soul renews its oath to dedicate itself wholly to unveil these divine wonders to so many eyes.”

(Fr. C. Vendrame SDB)



**SAINT
LUIGI VERSIGLIA SDB,
BISHOP**

Born: 05.06.1873, Oliva Gessi (Italy)
Place of Mission: China
Death: 25.02.1930, Li Thau Tseui (China)

“Don Bosco saw that when in China a chalice would be filled with blood, the Salesian Work would wonderfully spread among this immense people. You bring me the chalice seen by the Father: to me the filling of it with blood, for the fulfilment of the vision.”

(Fr. Versiglia SDB)



**SAINT
CALLISTO CARAVARIO SDB**

Born: 08.06.1903, Cuorné (Italy)
Place of Mission: East Timor - China
Death: 25.02.1930, Li Thau Tseui (China)

"If the Lord gives us the grace to be able to make good Christians out of these children, we will soon have as many Christian families. My enthusiasm for China continues to be alive. It is true that we left our homeland, it is true that I left my mother, but there are many boys here who have no mother and for whom heaven would not be their homeland".

(Fr. C. Caravario SDB)



**BLESSED
LUIGI VARIARA SDB**

Born: 15.01.1875, Viarigi (Italy)
Place of mission: Colombia - Venezuela
Death: 01.02.1923, Cúcuta (Colombia)

"Fr. Louis Variara is a first-class missionary who consecrated his life to the relief of the most compassionate and abandoned suffering people, the founder of a religious family which, for the first time in the history of the Church, has the privilege of also associating leprosy sufferers with the state of perfection, a religious and a victim soul who knows how to obey even in the most arduous trials, an apostle and a hero of faith and charity to whom justice is only done after death."

(Fr. R. Ziggotti SDB)

Young WITNESSES of CHRISTIAN HOPE

The luminous fruits of the Salesian missions

“For us Salesians and all members of the Salesian Family, it would be impossible to talk about the life of Don Bosco, about him, without talking about his dreams. He kept his dreams in his mind and heart throughout his life, even after achieving them. Inspired by Don Bosco’s dream and by what they are living and experiencing in our Salesian settings, young people will discover that their beautiful desires are the driving force that makes them capable of great things and they will learn that every challenge can be overcome with courage and self-confidence. Young people have big dreams, but they must be encouraged to dream! And we educators have this task: to accompany them on the authentic path of life. Young people have the right to dream of a better tomorrow; they have in their hands the possibility of being reborn and of always starting over, of studying and working, of building a future rich in humanity and hope.²³”



²³ Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people, Strenna 2025, no.3

CEFERINO NAMUNCURÁ



■ Fr. Francisco CHIMENTO SDB
Argentina (ARS)

■ Give thanks!

Ceferino Namuncurá was born on 26 August, 1886 in Chimpay, in the heart of the central Río Negro area. He was the son of indigenous chief Manuel Namuncurá, heir of Calfucurá, the legendary Mapuche chief who resisted the “huincas” (westerners) for a long time in their advance towards the southern lands, and of a woman prisoner, Rosario Burgos. At Christmas 1888 he was baptised by missionary Fr. Domenico Milanesio.

The missionaries passed through Chimpay only sporadically, so Ceferino was nurtured in the Mapuche religion. During the first years of his life, he proved to be an affectionate and faithful son,

capable of helping his parents from an early age: he brought in wood at dawn to save his mother work.

He was 11 years old when his father enrolled him in a state school in Buenos Aires, because he wanted to make his son the future defender of his people. But Ceferino did not feel at home and his father transferred him to the Salesian Pius IX school. Here began the adventure of “grace”, which would transform a heart not yet enlightened by the spirituality of the Gospel into a heroic witness as a disciple and missionary of Jesus.

■ Rethink!

Today as yesterday, in the

journey with the indigenous peoples, Ceferino embodies the suffering, anguish and aspirations of his Mapuche people.

Ceferino was able to open himself to the proclamation and construction of the Kingdom, with the accompaniment of the Salesians. Therefore, by rethinking “Mission” as a common commitment, in a process of learning and mutual enrichment, Ceferino’s life became a program of shared mission, with his motto: *“I want to be useful to my people”* - *“Kupa kellun tañi pu che”*. Because Ceferino wanted to study, acquire knowledge and other tools of the trade to become a missionary. He wanted to return to his people to contribute to the development of his people’s culture, wisdom and spirituality as he had seen the first Salesian missionaries who helped the “buen vivir” of the people do.

■ Relaunch!

Sharing the Gospel in



the cultures of indigenous peoples is the vital linchpin of “buen vivir”. The dream of other possible worlds is a process that cannot be left behind or ignored, like the “Sumak Kawsay” (Quichua)-Kümelen Mongen (Mapuche). That is why the evangelisation of culture and the inculturation of the Gospel in the face of interculturalism lead us to see that the Gospel must be systematically related to encounter, mutual enrichment, inter-learning and reciprocity with culture, and vice versa.

LAURA VICUÑA



■ Sr. Silvia DUPONT FMA
Argentina

■ Give thanks!

Today we want to give thanks... because this sending out to the least and to God's favourites comes to embrace our dear Laura Vicuña, a girl whose father had died, who was exposed to violence, who entered the María Auxiliadora school in Junín de los Andes in 1900 where an entire Salesian community together welcomed her, and accompanied her in a pastoral work "together". Laura is the fruit of the Salesian mission that Don Bosco saw and dreamed of in these lands.

In those years the work was known as the mission of Junín de los Andes, founded by Father Domenico Milanesio in 1894, the rector. The works included the Salesian community, the parish, the settlement

and the fledgling school run by the Sisters whose superior was Sister Angela Piai.

We give thanks for the charism mediated by the Sisters and Salesians, that reached out and saved, reached out and healed, reached out and helped the young people from these Patagonian lands.

■ Rethink!

Looking at her – Laura – at her young age, and her fragile and vulnerable life situation, makes us pay attention to the kind of acceptance that the Salesians showed in their fledgling houses. It seems that the ability to pay was not a prerequisite; on the contrary, priority was given to the poor and those who needed schooling. Laura gives us a glimpse of



the logic of the Kingdom that guided the educative and pastoral criteria of the house.

She makes us review and rethink the communities that accompanied her – they were the first ones to learn how to pass on the charism. The FMA community consisted of Sisters Ángela Piai, Rosa Azócar and novice Carmen Opazo. They were a small community, young, inexperienced, novices in the role, but ready to look after the life that presented itself to them.

Then there was the Salesian community: Father Milanesio and Father Crestanello, the vice-rector of the house and confessor for Laura and her mother, who helped in this process of conversion, as

well as Father Félix de Valois Ortiz: teacher and assistant, or “courtyard formator” as we like to call him. A great friend of Laura’s spirit, someone who was close, on the journey with her. A man of God, a seeker of his Will, faithful to his Love.

■ **Relaunch!**

Laura is the fruit of a community that was encouraged to welcome a young person as they are, in the situation they find themselves in. Laura is the fruit of the work, of the assistance of Salesian communities at the service of the Kingdom. Laura is the result of an accompaniment that guided her in her life situation with an embodied faith. Laura is the result of a preventive system lived in community, so much in communion as to generate a preventive, healing and salvific environment.

SIMÃO BORORO

■ **Give thanks!**

Simão Cristiano Koge Kudugodu was born in Meruri

on 27 October 1937, to Teresa Okogeboudo and Floriano Utoboga. He attended ele-



mentary school in Meruri. As a young man he went to work with white miners in the mines along the River Garças. Back in Meruri, he was invited to join a Bororo group to accompany the missionaries to the first missionary residence among the Xavante, in the Santa Terezinha Mission. He was the youngest of the group, but the most aware of his role as a missionary among the Xavante.

He became a practical bricklayer and devoted the rest of his life to this craft, collaborating in the village and in the mission. He was very fond of the children of the village, was always ready to help his other companions with money, with feathers for decorations, and with medicinal remedies based on arnica. He was very patient and never got angry.

He was mortally wounded in an attempt to defend the life of his friend Father Rodolfo Lunkenbein SDB, who was murdered for defending the life of the Bororo, on 15 July 1976. Sister Genoveva stayed

with him from the scene of the attack to the mission hospital (200 metres), walking slowly, she holding her wounded brother in her arms, he holding the open wound in his stomach and the two of them praying the rosary all the way. At the hospital in Meruri he received the last sacraments, while also receiving first aid from the nurse, Sister Margarida Abatti. The remaining hours of his life he dedicated to prayer, asking forgiveness from those whom he might have offended and forgiving everyone. He died on the plane that was taking him to the city for treatment.

■ Rethink!

Simão lives in the memory of the missionary Church. The Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) has dedicated his name to the headquarters of the CIMI Regional Office of Mato Grosso, in Chapada dos Guimarães. The church of Rondonópolis honours him in the annual Way of the Martyrs, a procession through the streets of the city. In Meruri,



the anniversary of his martyrdom is solemnly celebrated every year, along with that of Father Rudolf Lunkenbein.

His commitment to a simple and humble life, as well as the extreme gesture that led to his martyrdom, are an example to be realised in the defence of indigenous peoples.

■ Relaunch!

The Salesian presence among indigenous peoples is one of the most precious fruits of the missionary charism. As witnessed by Simão Bororo, it is an apostolate that is not easy and full of pitfalls, but well rooted in the Christian identity of people created in the image and likeness of God. As a Church, we embrace indigenous peoples with their cultures so that we can discover the points of agreement between traditional indigenous values and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

SERVANT OF GOD AKASH BASHIR



■ Fr. Gabriel De JESUS CRUZ TREJO SDB
Salesian Postulation

■ Give thanks!

The presence of Salesian Missionaries in Pakistan

has left an indelible mark, marking a legacy of dedication to education, commu-

nity service and promoting the well-being of the neediest young people. Since their arrival in the country in 1999, Salesians have been key agents in transforming lives in this South Asian nation.

Born in 1994, Akash Bashir met the Salesians when he was a student at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Lahore. The bond with the Salesian missionaries marked his academic formation and his commitment to society. At the age of 17, he decided to serve as a security guard at the parish of St John, in the Youhanabad district of the city of Lahore.

On 15 March 2015, while performing his voluntary guard and surveillance service at the entrance to the parish, Akash bravely faced a suicide bomber who intended to blow himself up and take the lives of all those who were inside the church at the time Mass was being celebrated. Young Akash, uttering his last words “I

would rather die than let you in,” sacrificed his life to protect the faithful. His heroic act not only saved hundreds of lives but became an inspiration to Christians in the region and to young people facing extreme situations of religious discrimination and persecution.

■ **Rethink!**

The historical presence of Christians in Pakistan dates back to well before the British colonial era and the partition of India in 1947. Some Christian communities already inspired and led by Dominican and Franciscan missionaries in what was then East India, lived the Catholic faith intensely. Today Christians in Pakistan make up about 1.6% of the total population, about 4 million people who face considerable challenges due to conditions of poverty and Islamic extremism.

Discrimination and marginalisation, as well as the lack of equal opportuni-





ties in work and education, have a strong impact on the lives of Christians in Pakistan. Despite this, there are numerous success stories in which courageous and resilient Christians have overcome obstacles to achieve significant social, educational, and religious advancement.

■ **Relaunch!**

Despite the challenges, the Christian community in Pakistan shows resilience and hope. The Churches and Christian organisations play a fundamental role in providing support and promoting inter-religious unity; the Salesians have certainly contributed much in this field through their sig-

nificant presence. Salesian missionaries in Pakistan continue to be a beacon of hope.

The Vatican's authorisation to open the cause of martyrdom for the canonisation of Akash Bashir, granted on 9 November 2021, is a significant recognition of his exceptional courage and sacrifice. The diocesan inquiry, which concluded on 15 March 2024, coinciding with the ninth anniversary of his martyrdom, marks a fundamental step towards his potential beatification. Akash Bashir's legacy illustrates the essence of Salesian teaching: selfless love, solidarity, and dedication to service. His sacrifice embodies Jesus' words: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:12-17). Akash Bashir's story remains a living testimony to this truth, reminding us of the transformative power of faith even in the darkest of times.

New SALESIAN MISSIONARY FRONTIERS

Give thanks, rethink and relaunch revive and nurture the hope that launches us towards new missionary frontiers. There are and always will be challenges and missionary difficulties, but, endowed with hope “filled with faith”, they will courageously urge us towards new socio-cultural, digital and geographical frontiers, so that we ourselves become a small torch of hope for others, especially for the poorest and most needy young people²⁴.

New Salesian presences, especially in countries where Salesians are not present yet, are indications of the missionary impetus of the Salesian Congregation that invigorates faith, gives new vocational enthusiasm and revitalises the charismatic identity of the Salesians in the Province that takes responsibility for the new presence as well as in the Province that sends and in the Province that receives missionaries. In addition, the missionary impetus of the Congregation frees us from the dangers of a middle-class lifestyle, spiritual superficiality and genericism, forces us to go out of our comfort zones and leads us forward into the future with hope.

■ ²⁴ Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people, Strenna 2025, no.4

NIGER



Niger is a country of 27,000,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom are Muslims. Only 0.24% are Christians. Around 0.09% of the country's population is Catholic. There are 25 parishes in two dioceses served by 61 priests and 88 sisters. On 5-17 January, 2020, Salesian Fr. Aurelien Ahouangbe from Porto Novo, Benin was invited to preach at the retreat as well as a formation session of the diocesan clergy on "Educative relationship in youth ministry". The presentation made a great impact on the clergy so much so that on 29 January 2020, Archbishop Laurent Lompo of Niamey, and Bishop of Ambroise Ouedraogo of Maradi invited the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, to open Salesian presences in Niger "to help in the field of education, the formation of forma-

tors and the accompaniment of young people (vocational animation and student pastoral work)". In a country where 49.1% of the population are under 15 years old, pointed out the Archbishop, education and unemployment of young people are a problem. This makes the young, especially East of Niger, victims of radical ideologies. Thus, the Archbishop invited the opening of Salesian presences "for education and formation of formators", and "vocational and pastoral animation of students".



On 2 March 2021 the new Province of St Artemides Zatti (ANN), with headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria was established. On 24 January 2023 the Rector Major, with the consent of his Council, accepted the invitation to start

a presence in Niger. From him, the new Provincial, Fr. Jorge Mario Crisafulli, received the explicit mandate to give priority to starting presences in Niger. The first 4 Salesians arrived on 29 October 2023.

BOTSWANA

It all started when Bishop Anthony Rebello SVD invited Salesian Fr. Eustace Siame from Zambia to preach the retreat for Catholics in Francistown. Later he invited the Superior of the Vice-Province of Mary Help of Christians (ZMB) with headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia to open a presence in his diocese. After an exploratory visit by Fr. Michael Mbandama, the newly appointed Superior, and two other Salesians on 8-9 February 2023, the ZMB Provincial Council expressed its favourable vote to seek permission to open a presence in Botswana by 2024.



On June 19, 2023, while on a trip to Italy, Bishop Rebello came to Valdocco to meet the Rector Major. Present at the meeting were the General Councillor for the Missions, Fr. Alfred Maravilla, the Regional Councillor,



Fr. Alphonse Awoudou, and Fr. Mbandama. After discussing the possibilities, the Rector Major assured Bishop Rebello his willingness to open a presence in Francistown upon receipt of a written invitation. On 6 July 2023 Bishop Rebello sent his official invitation to the Salesians to work for poor youth and eventually start an Oratory, pastoral care of Catholics. He offered the Salesians “to work specifically for poor youth, entrust and assign a Salesian to the pastoral care of students at the diocesan school.” The Catholic Church is a small minority (7%) while other Christian ecclesial com-

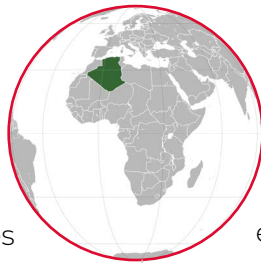


munities are the majority (64.4%).

On 18 July 2023, Fr. Fernández Artime, with the consent of his Council, accepted the invitation to start a new presence in Francistown at the same time entrusting it to the ZMB Vice Province. On 26 November 2023 three Salesians arrived to form the new Salesian community in Botswana.

ALGERIA

On 20 May 2019, Archbishop Paul Desfarges SJ of Algiers wrote to Fr. Fernández Artime inviting the Salesians to open a presence in the country. Actually, the Salesians first



arrived in Algeria in 1891 and opened an Oratory in Oran, the first Salesian presence on the African continent. Eventually, two other presences were opened. Due to a hostile political climate, the Salesians had to withdraw in 1976.

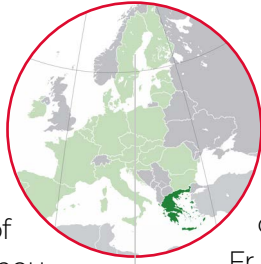
Archbishop Desfarges' initial proposal was that the Salesians take over the management of CIARA, a diocesan centre for short technical courses for young people, many of whom come from the Sahara desert. On Feb 27 to March 3, 2020, Fr. Domenico Paternò, from Tunisia, visited CIARA on behalf of Fr. Guillermo Basañes, then General Councillor for the Missions, since GC28 was in session at the time, 2020. On 3-6 December 2021 the new General Councillor for the Missions, Fr. Alfred Maravilla, and Fr. Domenico Paternò visited Algiers to visit CIARA and discuss possibilities and challenges with Archbishop Desfarges. On 24 January 2022, the Rector Major, with the consent of his Council, accepted the invitation to return to Algeria and start a presence in Algiers.

Upon the establishment of the Special Circumscription of North Africa (CNA) on 28 August 2023, Algeria was placed under its responsibility. In the meantime, the new Archbishop, Jean-Paul Vesco OP, renewed the invitation to the Salesians underlining that "this foundation will obviously go beyond its initial mission and will expand to the wider mission of the Church in Algeria". Later his proposal that the Salesians explore other possible apostolate due to internal difficulties in CIARA was accepted. Due to the delay in the approval of the visa, the two Salesians are still waiting to arrive in Algeria.



GREECE

On 20 October 2020, the Vicar General, on behalf of Bishop Petros Stefanou of Syros, Santorini, and Crete, wrote to Fr. Marcin Kaznowski, Provincial of the Province of St Hyacinth (PLS) with headquarters in Cracow, Poland offering the Salesians the parish in Heraklion, Crete. The Provincial forwarded the invitation to the Rector Major. Since the response came only on 16 July 2022, by then the Bishop had already signed an agreement with the Vincentian Province



in Poland entrusting the parish to them in November 2022. The General Councillor for the Missions, Fr. Alfred Maravilla, visited Crete in August and then Santorini and Syros in September 2022 to discuss with the bishop who, instead proposed to entrust to the Parish of Pagos to the Salesians and that they eventually take up responsibility for youth and vocation ministry in the three dioceses under his care. The Catholic Church in Greece is a very small minority (0,5% of the population) but it also reaches out to over 350,000 migrant Catholics and countless refugees in the country.

Fr. Fernández Artime, with the consent of his Council, accepted the invitation to administer the Parish at Pagos, open an oratory and later gradually work for the youth ministry of the Diocese. On 2nd October 2024, the first Salesian has arrived in Athens, who, along with the two others who arrived in the follow-





ing days, is studying modern Greek, in view of starting a Salesian community in 2025. This will be the newest coun-

try in Europe for the Salesians to start a presence since 2005 when the Salesians arrived in Moldavia.



VANUATU

Upon the invitation of Bishop John Bosco Baremes SM, Fr. Alfred Maravilla, then Superior of the Vice-Province of Bl. Philip Rinaldi (PGS) with headquarters in Port Mores-



by, Papua New Guinea, together with Fr. Srimal Silva made an exploratory visit to Vanuatu on 7-10 August 2018. Fr. Václav Klement, Regional Councillor for East Asia-Oceania, accompanied by Fr. Maravilla, went to Vanuatu for a



second exploratory visit on 12-15 May 2019. On 7 June 2019, the Provincial Council voted favourably to request the Rector Major to consider opening a new presence in Vanuatu. "At this time and stage, Vanuatu needs Don Bosco's charism." Bishop Baremes wrote in an official invitation to the Rector Major on 27 November 2019. Thus, he invited them "to start a Salesian presence in Vanuatu," at the same time stating that "once they arrive here, they will assess the situation and launch initiatives to respond to the needs of our youth espe-

cially those who are marginalised."

On 24 January 2022, Fr. Fernández Artime with the consent of his Council accepted the invitation to start a presence in Vanuatu, entrusting it to the PGS Vice-Province. On 25 February 2023 the Bishop of Vanuatu signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the PGS Superior, Fr. Gregorio Bicomong Jr, giving 20 hectares of land for the use of the Salesians to develop their presence in the light of their charism. The arrival of the first Salesian community was set for November 2025.



CUSTODIANS of the SALESIAN cultural heritage

The Salesian missionary museums

In order to preserve and enhance the rich cultural heritage accessible thanks to the work of missionaries, museums are a valuable and useful tool, and among them, Salesian missionary museums are a Congregational resource for

evangelization to be rediscovered and valued.

Recently, networking among Salesian missionary museums has begun under the coordination of the Missions Sector, and in January 2024 a Congrega-



Musei in Missione Incontro musei salesiani



Colle Don Bosco
18 - 22 gennaio 2024

tional meeting was held for the first time with the directors and managers of several Salesian museums at Colle Don Bosco, involving 24 Salesians and lay people. Some of the main objectives of the meeting were to get to know each other, to reflect and deepen the identity of Salesian missionary museums, to launch a network of Salesian museums, and to find strategies to reaffirm the missionary nature of these museums.

Following the meeting, an 'Advisory Team' of Salesian Missionary Museums, coordinated by Fr. Reginaldo Cordeiro SDB, has been carrying on the work of reflection and coordination.

Within the definition proposed by the International

Council of Museums ICOM a Salesian missionary museum:

“is a permanent, non-profit institution that preserves the material and immaterial heritage of anthropological, charismatic, historical, cultural and mis-siological value of the different communities in which the Salesian Family carries out its work. Its mission is to acquire, conserve, order, document, research, disseminate and exhibit its collections in an educational, didactic, technical-scientific and aesthetic manner, with the aim of involving the visiting public in the values of cultural diversity and fraternity with a view to respect for Human Rights, creating an active awareness of their importance in view of the evangelizing mission of the Congregation.”

As the reflection continues, we can outline here some traits that Salesian missionary museums have in common. First of all, these



museums present an accurate, fraternal and respectful representation of cultures that encourages active participation. It is not a static environment, in fact it actively promotes development and reflection on the ways of life, history, culture and traditions of the different communities, strengthening their sense of cultural identity and belonging. Interculturalism is promoted through the exchange of knowledge and wisdom of the people, leading them to a greater awareness and appreciation of the other. As a

missionary, it helps people, especially young people, to awaken interest in the person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. In addition, the Salesian missionary museum is an educational and cultural space where activities are organised to sensitise communities to the values that interculturalism entails.

We wish everyone the good fortune to visit our Salesian missionary museums and grasp the depth and beauty of what they contain and promote!

SALESIAN Missionary Volunteers

Time and life donated to the others



Adam RUDIN
Salesian Missions, U.S.A

While missionaries *ad vitam* spread the Salesian charism throughout the world, lay volunteers share the same mission giving a period of time serving the youth. To clarify the meaning of Salesian Missionary Volunteering (SMV), the Congregation defines it as “a service of solidarity, made without

cost and freely-given by a young person, sent and welcomed by a community, which is part of the educative and pastoral project of a Salesian presence or promoted by it, with a sufficient continuity of time, motivated by faith, with a missionary style and according to the pedagogy and spirituality of Don Bosco”.



We borrow a reflection of an American volunteer who was in South Sudan to express the gratitude for the gift of SMV.

“It’s been one year. I’ve had 365 days of intimate friendships, precious moments, and sweet memories. I’ve survived 52 weeks without a hug from mom or a face-to-face conversation with any of my favorite people from home. For an entire year, I’ve worn one pair of shoes every single day and a combination of

five outfits that have kept my knees and shoulders from ever meeting the South Sudanese sun. I’ve denied myself simple comforts in order to have my life radically transformed by a motley gang of precious, mischievous, and affectionate African children.

People first

Life is comprised of so many choices. In the modern world we live in, even here in the jungles of Africa, we face the daily struggle of being consumed by a cy-



ber-world that can swallow hours of our time. The rule I've set for myself from the beginning of this mission is to always choose the person in front of me before anything else. If I have planning or grading to do for school, but a little one wants to play, the schoolwork can be done later so that the child can be loved now. This started out as a mental rule for mission, but I've realized that this outlook will directly translate into my life back home.

Fear not.

As a "missionary", there is a complete trust and surrender to God, knowing that since he's already gotten you this far, he must want to do something wonderful through you. The results were glorious – beautiful relationships, lots of little victories, and many visible graces. But here's the thing: I'm just me, just trying to love, and without any special powers to do anything different than

what I've been capable of doing every day for my entire life. I realize that the impossible is always possible with the help of God. It doesn't matter where I am but what does matter is that God is beside me and ready to work through my weaknesses. The only effort He requires is just for me to try.

Simplicity

We need so much less to survive happily and peacefully. I spent half my day every Saturday washing my clothes by hand. I saved every scrap piece of paper, plastic, or fabric lying around in hopes of using it for a future project in school. I didn't have any money, but neither did anyone else around me. I ate the same food every day, I wore the same clothes, my hair in the same style every day. And you know what? I'm still happy. I'm loved because all I have to offer is Jesus, and fittingly, he is Love.

The **missionary** GROUP in AFC PROVINCE



Fr. Piero GAVIOLI SDB
Missionary in Dem. Rep. of Congo (AFC)

To advance the missionary spirit among the youngest, missionary groups are a valuable and exciting experience. We report here the example of the AFC province in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The missionary group of the Salesian Family was born in 1995, when Fr. Odorico, then General Councilor for the Missions, visited the AFC Province. It began at the Theologium with

theology students accompanied by Fr. Piero Gavioli and some members of the Salesian Family. Little by little, the group expanded to include almost all Salesian works.



General Objectives	
Promoting the formation and witness of faith of members according to Salesian youth spirituality	The spirituality of daily life, of joy, of optimism, of friendship with the Lord Jesus, of church fellowship and responsible service
Promoting the experience of gratuitousness in the lives of members	Witnessing the Gospel through a deep attitude of faith, communicating the Gospel explicitly, performing free services (volunteering during the year in parishes, schools and during holidays, etc.).
Promoting interest in the mission ad gentes	The desire to give a generous response in the mission ad gentes and the desire to support missionaries spiritually, morally and materially.

Specific Objectives

- Propose formation itineraries that present models of missionary holiness (a life given for others)
- Empowering and involving adult Salesians and lay people in group animation
- Train and inform young people about Salesian Missionary Volunteering and see how it can be put into practice (in collaboration with Salesian Youth Ministry)
- Promoting the commitment of young people by widening the scope (creating new missionary groups)
- Concrete service to the poor

Mode of action:

- Monthly formation meeting (distribution of tasks).
- Concrete service activities in each missionary group
- Appoint a young person to lead the local missionary group.
- Give prominence to the 11th of each month (create a time of prayer, post notice boards, good morning or good night talks).
- Realize missionary commitment in the context of Salesian Missionary Volunteering ad extra and ad intra.
- Involve other young people, especially alumni (university students) and other young people from different parishes in a nominal way.
- Involve community leaders in activities and keep them informed.
- Organize important meetings twice a year for all missionary groups: World Mission Day, Salesian Mission Day and other events.



Let's SUPPORT the **new SALESIAN** **presence in Greece**

This year we decided to propose one of the new missionary frontiers as a **solidarity project**. The proposal of a project on the occasion of the SMD is elaborated every year and wants to be for the Salesian communities an opportunity not only to raise funds, but above all an educational experience of concrete solidarity for young people.

The opening of an oratory in Paggos, on the island of Syros, will be one of the keys to involving young Greek Catholics and migrants in the area and starting Salesian work with them. All the funds raised will be used to start up pastoral activities,



arrange the premises and purchase animation materials. The involvement of Salesians in the diocese's youth ministry will allow

us to share our charism to enrich the local Church, a small minority in need of animation.

The parish of Pagos is located in the centre of a small village 8.3 km from Ermoupolis and consists of a parish house with three rooms. There is a hall used for Sunday catechism with a children's playground and, next to the church, the town's basket-



ball courts. All this makes the organisation of the Oratory easily possible.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE

you can send
your donation
here specifying
GMS25 – Project Greece

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OPERE DON BOSCO
Banca Popolare di Sondrio,
Agenzia n. 2 Roma
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IBAN: IT54 0 05696 03202 000004655X77
BIC/SWIFT: POSOIT22**

Who WANTS to be a **MISSIONARY**...

"I know the Salesian missions"!
Are you sure? Test yourself with these questions and find out what your profile is.

1. *'Missio ad gentes' means...*

- a) Being sent by Christ, through the Church, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- b) Living in poverty, chastity and obedience
- c) Living in a people far from home
- d) Been a missionary for at least 15 years

2. *Who was Francesco Convertini*

- a) Great Salesian missionary in Brazil
- b) Italian diocesan missionary priest close friend of Salesians in India
- c) Humble Salesian missionary from Puglia in India, now venerable
- d) One of the first boys at the Don Bosco Oratory

3. *Who was the first Salesian missionary declared a saint?*

- a) St Vincent Cimatti
- b) St Louis Versiglia, together with St Callistus Caravario
- c) St Joseph Cafasso
- d) St Francis Xavier

4. *Which of these phrases is not one of the souvenirs given by Don Bosco to the first Salesian missionaries on 11 November 1875?*
- a) Hear both sides before judging on reports and matters in dispute.
 - b) Do not send to tomorrow the good that you can do today, because you may not have time tomorrow.
 - c) Recommend to the boys frequent confession and Communion.
 - d) Take care of your health. Work, but only as much as your strength allows.
5. *In which year did the most missionary expeditions take place?*
- a) 1975: five missionary expeditions were carried out to mark the 100th anniversary
 - b) There has never been more than one missionary expedition in a year
 - c) 1988: three missionary expeditions
 - d) 1891: four missionary expeditions
6. *Which Province has sent the most missionaries in the last 25 years?*
- a) AFC – Rep. Dem. of Congo
 - b) VIE – Vietnam
 - c) SMX – Spain
 - d) INS – India
7. *Which of the following statements about Cagliero is incorrect?*
- a) He was born in Castelnuovo d'Asti
 - b) He was the first Salesian bishop and cardinal
 - c) Served as Vicar Apostolic in Peru
 - d) He knew Don Bosco personally

8. *The first Salesian Mission Day...*

- a) In 1988, about the Salesian mission in Guinea
- b) It had as its theme Don Bosco's missionary openness
- c) It was launched in 1998 and concerned the Salesian presence in Africa
- d) Presenting the story of the first Salesian missionaries

9. *Cagliero*

- a) It is the official newsletter of the Missions Sector, which comes out every 3 months
- b) Each week it offers a cooking recipe from the Salesian world
- c) Contains monthly messages from the Missions Councillor
- d) It is translated into more than 15 languages

9 right answers: **CAGLIERO** level!

Wow, you are a black belt in Salesian missions: I recommend that you live this missionary zeal in your environment and share it with those close to you!

7-8 correct answers: **ASPIRANT MISSIONARY** level

Not bad, you are doing quite well on this subject...take advantage of this 150th anniversary to deepen the missionary dimension in your life!

5-6 correct answers: **MICHELE MAGONE** level

You probably know Don Bosco and the Salesians... but you need someone to introduce you to the Salesian missionary charism as well. It's worth it!

0-4 correct answers: **SAINT TERESA OF ÁVILA** level

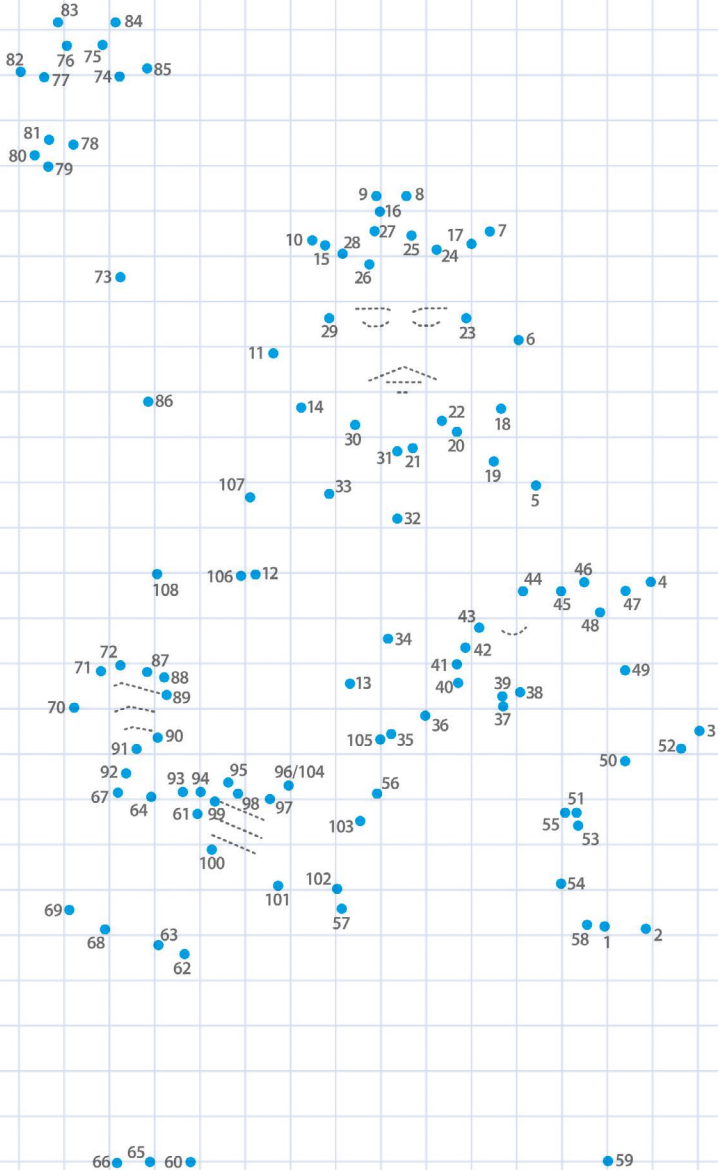
Don't feel bad, you have lived far away from Don Bosco and the Salesian missions, but you are on the right path to learn about this beautiful charism of the Church!

Right answers: 1A - 2C - 3B - 4B - 5D - 6B - 7C - 8A - 9D

CONNECT THE DOTS

... and you will find the model of every Salesian missionary!

Salesian Mission Day 2025



How old was Cagliero when he became the leader of the first Salesian missionary expedition?



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Salesian Mission Day 2025

	1	1					
	1	1	7	0	1	7	7
3	3						
1	1						
1	1						
3	1						
1	1						
1	1						
3	1						

You can read here the rules of the nonogram:
<https://gamelo.net/en/Play/HowToPlayNonograms>

Right answer: 37

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Insert the image of Don Bosco and Cagliero in the right space

Salesian Mission Day 2025

37



1875

GIOVANNI CAGLIERO

1815



GIOVANNI BOSCO



Solve the sequence and find the number of countries where the Salesians are present

-53 , 122 , -69 , 53 , -16 , 37 , 21 , 58 , 79 , ?

Right answer:137



Find the different number and find out how many years Monsignor Fagnano, Salesian missionary in Latin America, lived



141

Salesian Mission Day 2025

75
 75
 75
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 75
 75
 75
 75
 75

Right answer: 72

How did the first missionaries travel? Solve the stereogram and find out



Guess the hidden character

- I was born in the province of Asti, Italy, in 1875.
- I arrived in Valdocco four months before Don Bosco died.
- I founded a missionary congregation..
- I like music.
- I have spent most of my life in South America.
- I suffered so much from the incomprehension of my superiors.
- I was proclaimed blessed in 2002.



Who is he?

Blessed Louis Variara SDB, for more info read the articles on missionary saints and the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

To know more...

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The members of the Missions Sector help the Missions Councillor to fulfil his role of promoting the missionary spirit and missionary commitment in the Salesian Congregation.



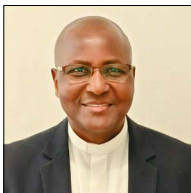
Salesian Mission Day 2025



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150 GIVE THANKS
RETHINK
RELAUNCH



SMD 2025 PRAYER

Praised be God our Father,
for the missionary spirit
that you have infused in Don Bosco's heart
as an essential element of his charism.

We thank you for 150 years
of Salesian missions,
and for so many Salesian missionaries
who have given their lives
bringing the Gospel and the Salesian charism
to 137 countries worldwide.

Send your Spirit to guide
us in rethinking a renewed vision
of the Salesian missions,
with tireless missionary creativity.

Enkindle our hearts with the fire of your love
so that, passionate about Jesus Christ,
we may relaunch ourselves
with missionary zeal and enthusiasm
to proclaim him to all,
especially to poor and abandoned youth.

All Salesian missionary saints,
pray for us!

