

CAGLIERO 11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



A Publication of the Missions Sector for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission



Our Beloved Sisters, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, have just completed a missionary jubilee year: 140 years since their first Missionary Expedition, the one led by Sister Angela Valais to their first American foundation in Uruguay.

It is a fact that the SDB and the FMA share countless, beautiful pages of missionary history. For numerous Salesian missionaries *ad gentes* the FMA have been true mothers and sisters, who supported and encouraged them, sometimes in very adversarial circumstances! Read, for example, the testimonies of the missionaries in Ecuador about the care and attention they received from Blessed Mary Troncatti.

Mother Yvonne, on the occasion of these jubilee celebrations, wrote in her letter no. 972, asking the FMA about their missionary availability: *"Dear Sisters, why not now? Do we perhaps lack confidence? Are we too lost in our short term emergencies? Has the universal outlook that was nurtured so well at Mornese now been weakened?"*

The same questions - translated and contextualized - and the same appeals, could be addressed today in their totality also to us, the SDB! Yes, a little less of calculations - which does not mean giving up an adequate and up-to-date reflection - and perhaps a little more generous audacity. It seems that this is what we still lack. Let's help each other!

Thank you and courage!

J. Basaños
D. Guillermo Basaños SDB
 Councillor for the Missions



"The Church is in no sense alien to any people"

Pope Francis gives us yet another missionary event: he has declared an extraordinary missionary month in October 2019, to commemorate the centenary of the missionary encyclical *Maximum Illud*. We share here a few thoughts from his letter of 22/10/17.

"The intention behind this missionary month is that of fostering an increased awareness of the *missio ad gentes* and taking up again with renewed fervour the missionary transformation of pastoral activity. This initiative can enable all the faithful to take to heart the proclamation of the Gospel and to help their communities grow in missionary and evangelizing zeal. May the love for the Church's mission, which is 'a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people' grow ever stronger!

Pope Benedict XV recognized the need for a more evangelical approach to missionary work in the world, so that it would be purified of any colonial overtones and kept far away from the nationalistic and expansionistic aims that had proved so disastrous. "The Church of God is universal; she is not alien to any people," he wrote, firmly calling for the rejection of any form of particular interest, inasmuch as the proclamation and the love of the Lord Jesus, spread by holiness of one's life and good works, are the sole purpose of missionary activity. Benedict XV thus laid special emphasis on the *missio ad gentes*, employing the concepts and language of the time, in an effort to revive, particularly among the clergy, a sense of duty towards the missions.

"Today, missionary activity still represents the *greatest challenge* for the Church and the missionary task must remain foremost. What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*.

"It has a programmatic *significance* and important consequences. ... Throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'. ... The Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* called for transcending national boundaries and bearing witness, with prophetic spirit and evangelical boldness, to God's saving will through the Church's universal mission. May the approaching centenary of that Letter serve as an incentive to combat the recurring temptation lurking beneath every form of ecclesial introversion, self-referential retreat into comfort zones, pastoral pessimism and sterile nostalgia for the past. Instead, may we be open to the joyful newness of the Gospel. In these, our troubled times, rent by the tragedies of war and menaced by the baneful tendency to accentuate differences and to incite conflict, may the Good News that in Jesus forgiveness triumphs over sin, life defeats death and love conquers fear, be proclaimed to the world with renewed fervour, and instil trust and hope in everyone."



To each and every one,
 our best wishes for Happy Christmas.



MY MISSIONARY LIFE IS A GIFT FROM GOD



I am a Salesian, originally from the Central African Province (AFC) in Congo. When I was a student at the Salesian school, I read the story of the first Salesian missionaries in my country. Their testimonies appealed a lot to me. They have contributed greatly to the evangelization and the social life of my people. I felt inspired. I began to personally discern a missionary vocation in my own heart. I felt deep within me a call to Salesian life and, during my novitiate, I expressed my desire to be a missionary *ad gentes, ad vitam*. I was closely accompanied by my spiritual guide during my three years of philosophy. I wrote to the Rector Major to express my readiness for the mission. The missionary theme of that year became my daily prayer: "Lord, send me". I thank the Lord for calling me to the 146th Missionary Expedition (2015) and to be a missionary in Sri Lanka.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast country and Salesians are not present everywhere. They are needed in many more areas of the country. With such a need for internal missionaries, the question arises why one should become a foreign missionary. The Salesian Congregation is missionary. It offers us the possibility of being a missionary in our own country or abroad because we belong to the great Salesian world. I felt the call of sharing my Christian and Salesian life with others wherever the Lord would send me.

As a missionary in Sri Lanka, my first assignment is to do my practical training (regency) in the studentate of philosophy. I feel great joy whenever we go out to meet the young people in a completely Buddhist village. This is our Sunday ministry. How nice it is to see Buddhist parents accompany their children to our oratory. We deal with the children and young people in a Salesian way and teach them a little English. I am happy to give myself to this missionary apostolate and I feel warmly welcomed. Sri Lankans are known for their genuine and spontaneous smile. It is really an oratory of joy, despite their material poverty.

I come from a culture very different from that in this part of the world. The daily diet consists of rice and spicy sauces; different local languages; bare feet in the church (temple, house) ... These are small challenges that I will gradually overcome in order to learn and appreciate this new culture. The missionary course in Rome taught us to be patient when experiencing "cultural shocks". Personal prayer helps me overcome my personal challenges.



To young Salesians who would like to become *ad gentes* missionaries, I would say, we must always remember that a missionary vocation is a gift from God, who wants us to continue his mission all over the world. When we feel called to the missionary life, we give an immediate and positive response, because it is God's own initiative in our regard.

Faustin BAHATI sdb
Congolese Missionary in Sri Lanka



Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

The Venerable **Attilio Giordani** (1913-1972), a layman, husband, and father of a family, worked many years with Christian enthusiasm in the Salesian Oratory of St. Augustine at Milan. Then, with an extraordinary apostolic spirit, moved to Brazil. In his letters to his girlfriend Noemi, his future bride, written in 1942, in the middle of the war, he jokes: "Miss, we have had to clear out a lot of masonry from our house and consequently we have a lot of place for joy. Miss, I want you to be cheerful. As for myself, thank God, despite the usual ailments, despite my advanced age with all the thoughts that come along with that, I am quite cheerful ... It is my firm intention, and I invite you to pray for it, to always work for the glory of God and not for any other purpose. Miss, I confess that I dream of a family where the integrity of Christian peace and the innocent laughter of children (if the Lord grants us such a great grace) are not disturbed by any clouds."



FOR ELDERLY AND ILL SALESIANS

Salesian Missionary Intention

So that they may continue to radiate the joy of the call and be intercessors of the Lord's generous blessings on the Salesian mission.

Faith, hope, and charity are the virtues of Christian life, which lead us to "the fullness of maturity in Christ" (Eph 4: 13). Those who are more advanced in age have an ever-increasing treasure to draw on. It is a wealth that is renewed, the more it is given. Even among confreres of differing generations we can have a communion of goodness that challenges all changes in culture, language, taste and fashion. Let us pray that this dialogue and encounter between wisdom and experience on the one hand and the new generations on the other may be truly fruitful.

