

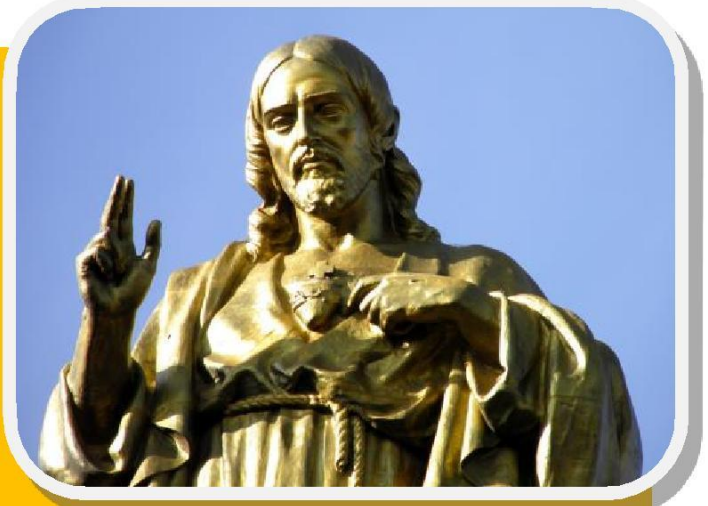


Publication of the Missions Sector for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission

**G**reetings coming from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, built by our dear father Don Bosco. I entrust all our missionar-ies to this beloved Heart!

The extraordinary missionary month - October 2019 - helps us draw new light and momentum from the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV, whose centenary we will be celebrating. Jesus Christ is clearly at the centre of this Apostolic Letter. This reminds us, as Salesians of Don Bosco, forcefully and clearly, of the cardinal article 11 of our Constitutions: "*the Salesian spirit finds its model and source in the very heart of Christ, the apostle of the Father*". We recall in particular two of the features - perhaps among the most missionary - from the figure of the Lord. We could be more sensitive to these while reading the Gospel: "*solicitude in preaching, healing and saving under the urgency of the Kingdom to come, and desire to gather the disciples in the unity of fraternal communion*". It is in fact very encouraging to go through this entire Letter of Pope Benedict XV under the light of this fundamental article.

Happy missionary month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!



*J. Basañes*

Fr Guillermo Basañes, SDB -  
Councillor for the Missions

**We** have some good news from missionary America, especially the **São Paulo, Brazil:** fruitful missionary week of the province of Sao Paulo (Brazil).

F. Tiago Eliomar writes: The participants will be the youth and **1050 missionaries** for adolescents of the GAM (Missionary Action Group). They are young people from the schools, universities and parishes of the province. Each year they **the mission week.** organize the Missionary Week at the Province level, offering

a missionary colour to the whole of our Youth Ministry. Their missionary activities are not, of course, limited only to this one-week event. There are other missionary formation processes in various educational communities. Each of them responds differently to every group according to their maturity. For example, as a part of this missionary animation, young missionary volunteers go out for a year to other countries. This missionary dynamic has proved its fruitfulness in the pastoral care of young people and in vocations. Among the fruits of the missionary spirit and of these pastoral initiatives are the six priests being ordained this year and the 2 coadjutor brothers who will make their perpetual vows.

**Here are some interesting numbers:**

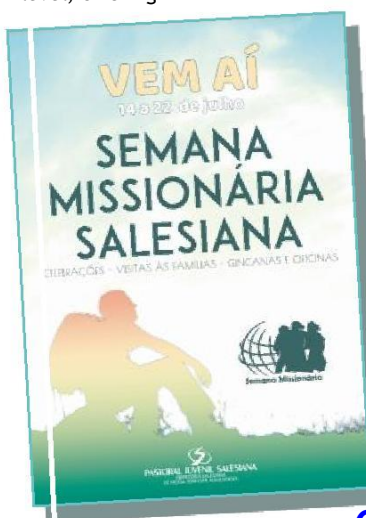
Between the 14th and the 22nd of July in

- \* 1050 missionaries will participate (yes, a thousand fifty!)
- \* 25 communities (8 parishes)
- \* 7 cities: Votuporanga, Cananeia, Guapiara, Cajuru, Aguai, Charqueada, Piranguçu
- \* 18 Salesian priests,
- \* 55 Salesians in formation or aspirants

## Other missionary information coming from America

The next **Missionary Congress of America (CAM 5)** is to be held at Santa Cruz, Bolivia, from 10 to 14 July. More than 5,000 delegates are expected to participate. Many of America's PDMA will be there.

A **Salesian Pan Amazonic Meeting** is under preparation: "The Synod challenges us." It involves the provinces that have missions in Amazonia. The meeting will be at Manaus, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November. It will be a precious occasion to gather the pastoral, scientific, pedagogical and testimonial patrimony of more than a century of Salesian presence in this very special area; to read the current socio-politic, economic, ecclesial and Salesian situation of the Region; and to make proposals for the future. Finally, the native missionaries and pastoral agents will prepare some suggestions for the Pan-Amazonic Synod of 2019.





## “to be a missionary is a gift from Heaven”

was born in Madrid in 1930, into a fervent Christian family. In the Lent of 1945 I came across a book called "Volunteers". It narrated of missionaries and had a few pages of explanation on vocation. I read the book out of curiosity and I was immediately fascinated. It opened up to me unsuspected horizons full of charm. I discovered the value of a life spent in following Jesus and spreading his Gospel. When I went to the school chapel after that and knelt near the Tabernacle, I thought of the words of Jesus to the apostles: "Come and follow me." I recalled Saint Francis Xavier, at the age of 43 after a life of preaching the Gospel.

While in the novitiate I applied to go to the missions. The day after my Religious Profession, the provincial read out the names of those accepted. Of the 63 newly professed, 32 were announced for South America. My name was missing. I was sad, but the provincial continued, "And this year, four of the newly professed will go to Japan," and read out the names. The third name was mine. I was stunned. I went straight from the dining hall to the chapel and wept out of emotion.

I arrived in Japan in January 1950. Obedience sent me later to Korea. I arrived there on Friday, March 30, 1962. I was appointed an assistant parish priest in the suburbs of Seoul, in the parish of San Giovanni Bosco. That afternoon the Christians made the Way of the Cross. Everyone knelt on the wooden floor, the men to the right, the women to the left, leaving a corridor in the centre of the church. After the Way of the Cross, many stayed on for night prayers. The next morning, after Mass too, many people stayed back to pray, and we meditated with them, sitting on the floor.

The first days were difficult, but slowly I realized that everything had been a gift from Heaven. The Christians gave us an example of prayer, sitting on the floor near the tabernacle. They helped us also to a life of sharing in poverty, with patience, hope and joy. They loved us very much. One of the bigger challenges I faced was the language. I had already learned Japanese and now I started with Korean, which was more complex. Another challenge is that, even at this moment, Catholics are only 10% of the population. It also hurts me to see Korea, even now, divided into two separate nations.

The greatest joys I have experienced have been the baptisms of catechumens and the religious profession of novices. It is also a joy to see the progress that Korea has made. It used to be a very poor nation. Now, thanks to the work culture and organizational skills of Koreans, it is a nation where you see order, progress and a dignified standard of living. Everyone is willing to share their wealth with poorer nations.

I would like to remind young people who wish to become missionaries that the foundation of a life of personal prayer, a joyful community life and all our activities, is the Love of Jesus, truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist. We need to visit the Blessed Sacrament every day. Furthermore, we cultivate with gratitude a devotion to the Virgin and pray the Rosary, as Don Bosco taught us to.

We try to live with a heart always open to the good examples and lessons of others, especially the poor. Once Mathew, a poor old Christian, asked me how I would summarize the Gospel into just a few words. I immediately started to explain, mentioning some essential elements. Good old Mathew listened to me patiently. Finally, he said, "Don't you think you were a little long?" And I said to him, "Well, then, tell me how you would do it in fewer words." And Matthew said, "For me the Gospel is this: 'If someone slaps you on the right cheek, present him the left.'"

**Fr. José María Blanco,**  
*Spanish missionary in Korea*



### Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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

Blessed Zeffirino Namuncurà (1886-1905) incarnated in himself the sufferings, anguish and aspirations of his Mapuche people. They had, in the period of his adolescence, encountered the Gospel and opened up to the gift of the faith under the guidance of wise Salesian educators. He had a phrase that summarized the whole program of his life: "I want to study to be useful to my people." In fact, Zeffirino wanted to study, become a priest and return to his people to contribute to their cultural and spiritual growth, as he had seen done by the first Salesian missionaries.

**For social networks to foster solidarity and respect for others and their difference**



**Salesian Missionary Intention**

*For the Salesian presence, there would be "houses" where everyone would feel welcomed and respected as they are and where everyone could discover the joy of the Good News.*

*More and more, our presence is pluralistic from the social, cultural and religious point of view. Our mission impels us, also through both IT and social networks, to a respectful welcome and to a joyful testimony and announcement of the Good News.*

