



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

**O**ur missionary eyes and hearts are turned towards the Synod of Bishops, towards the youth of the whole world. The Successor of Don Bosco is there, participating in this XV Ordinary General Assembly. With him, the whole Congregation is present too.

This is not a time of waiting nor of curiosity for the "news" that may emerge. For us it is already a time of "pastoral and missionary conversion". The whole of *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis as well as the *Strumentum Laboris* of this Synod (see Part III) focus on this conversion, "which cannot leave things as they are" (EG 25). The originality of this missionary transformation is that the Holy Spirit, who "makes all things new", wants to implement it now through the young, through their voices: "we want to express our request for a transparent, welcoming, honest, attractive community - communicative, accessible, joyful and interactive" (SL 67).

The young confreres who are sent forth each year *ad gentes, ad exteros, ad vitam* - and the Rector Major has just sent 18 practical trainees at the 149th Missionary Expedition! - are also a clear and powerful voice that invites the whole Congregation to this missionary conversion. Courage!

Fr. Guillermo Basañes, SDB  
Councillor for the Missions



**T**ransmitting the faith to the ends of the earth: You too, young friends, by your baptism have become living members of the Church; together we have received the mission to bring the Gospel to everyone. You are at the threshold of life. To grow in the grace of the faith bestowed on us by the Church's sacraments plunges us into that great stream of witnesses who, generation after generation, enable the wisdom and experience of older persons to become testimony and encouragement for those looking to the future.

And the freshness and enthusiasm of the young makes them a source of support and hope for those nearing the end of their journey. In this blend of different stages in life, the mission of the Church bridges the generations; our faith in God and our love of neighbor are a source of profound unity.

This transmission of the faith, the heart of the Church's mission, comes about by the infectiousness of love, where joy and enthusiasm become the expression of a newfound meaning and fulfilment in life. The spread of the faith "by attraction" calls for hearts that are open and expanded by love. It is not possible to place limits on love, for love is strong as death (cf. *Song 8:6*). And that expansion generates encounter, witness, proclamation; it generates sharing in charity with all those far from the faith, indifferent to it and perhaps even hostile and opposed to it. Human, cultural and religious settings still foreign to the Gospel of Jesus and to the sacramental presence of the Church represent the extreme peripheries, the "ends of the earth", to which, ever since the first Easter, Jesus' missionary disciples have been sent, with the certainty that their Lord is always with them (cf. *Mt 28:20; Acts 1:8*). This is what we call the *missio ad gentes*. The most desolate periphery of all is where mankind, in need of Christ, remains indifferent to the faith or shows hatred for the fullness of life in God. All material and spiritual poverty, every form of discrimination against our brothers and sisters, is always a consequence of the rejection of God and his love.

The ends of the earth, dear young people, nowadays are quite relative and always easily "navigable". The digital world - the social networks that are so pervasive and readily available - dissolves borders, eliminates distances and reduces differences. Everything appears within reach, so close and immediate. And yet lacking the sincere gift of our lives, we could well have countless contacts but never share in a true communion of life. To share in the mission to the ends of the earth demands the gift of oneself in the vocation that God, who has placed us on this earth, chooses to give us (cf. *Lk 9:23-25*). I dare say that, for a young man or woman who wants to follow Christ, what is most essential is to seek, to discover and to persevere in his or her vocation.

**B**earing witness to love: I am grateful to all those ecclesial groups that make it possible for you to have a personal encounter with Christ living in his Church: parishes, associations, movements, religious communities, and the varied expressions of missionary service. How many young people find in missionary volunteer work a way of serving the "least" of our brothers and sisters (cf. *Mt 25:40*), promoting human dignity and witnessing to the joy of love and of being Christians! These ecclesial experiences educate and train young people not only for professional success, but also for developing and fostering their God-given gifts in order better to serve others. These praiseworthy forms of temporary missionary service are a fruitful beginning and, through vocational discernment, they can help you to decide to make a complete gift of yourselves as missionaries.

Together with the young, let's bring the Gospel to everyone.

## I WOULD BE A MISSIONARY 1000 TIMES



**I**m Don Angelo Regazzo, 75 years in age. When I was in the third grade, at the age of 8, our teacher showed us a missionary documentary. We watched a black man eat a live animal. It was simply disgusting! The teacher then asked us point-blank: "What can we do to help this man?" I replied: "We could collect waste paper and scrap metal, sell them and send the proceeds to the missionaries." "Bravo, Angelo! But there is an even better way and that is to BECOME a missionary." Bull's eye! "I want to be a missionary!" I told myself firmly, not knowing what it meant to leave the family and the country, to be a priest ...

In early September 2018, I celebrated with great joy my 58 years of Missionary Life. If I were to be reborn 1000 times, I would walk the same road 1000 and one times! It is too good to give one's life for the most emarginated ones! At the age of 17 I sailed from Genoa to Thailand. They made us do the Novitiate in a forest, preceded by a Jungle survival course in the style of Rambo, because we were surrounded by wild beasts and poisonous snakes. The roles were reversed now and it was me eating raw animals in place of that man in the documentary ...

The biggest challenges? Learning new languages, absorbing different cultures and the distance from one's own country. I returned to Italy for the first time only after 8 years. Philosophy and English in Hong Kong, Theology at Cremisan (Israel), Priestly Ordination in Italy and then again to Thailand but, still, no black man in sight! Finally, Fr. Egidio Viganò went to the East in search of 'Volunteers for Project Africa' and I raised my hand: "Present!"

Destination Makallè, Ethiopia, from where Project Africa took off in 1975. From then there were as many black children as I could wish for! In 1984-85 there was the great famine in the Tigray with 1.4 million deaths. Cesare Bullo (Bud Spencer) and I (Terrence Hill) led the rescue operations.

In 1996 I was sent to Eritrea to open a new Salesian presence with a large technical school at Dekemhare and a study house at Asmara. Given the great need for water I made about forty wells. I made some prefabricated schools for the villages around Dekemhare. In 2008, I was expelled from Eritrea along with 22 other missionaries. I returned to Ethiopia and started caring for the street boys of Addis Ababa and that's where I am now. One of the street boys, a Muslim, invited Don Dino and me to his baptism. He had secretly attended Catechism classes given by the Consolata Fathers. After Baptism he told us: "And now I want to become a Salesian."

"Take it easy! Why do you want to be a Salesian?" I asked him point-blank. "I know what you have done for me. I want to do the same for many other friends of mine on the streets." The JOY I experienced was simply indescribable! I am sure that, one day, this boy will be the Director of the Bosco Children Centre.

Have you heard his CALL? Do not lose time! Just follow it! HE will make up for your weaknesses.

**Don Angelo Regazzo,**  
*Italian missionary in Ethiopia and Eritrea*



### Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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

**Servant of God, Don Elia Comini (1910-1944).** He was killed by the Nazis for having defended some people taken prisoner. He offered his life to save them. A student speaks of him thus: "He was loved and respected by all of us. He was always ready to help us. Above all, he was for us a secure spiritual guide. He was decisive and demanded strict discipline but was not harsh. He was very understanding and available. His physique demanded respect, but his face and his eyes invited trust and his heart beat in unison with our anxieties. During recreation he was everywhere, and we felt observed and protected. He participated in our games and became a desired team-mate, who guided and led us."

## For Salesians and other consecrated persons of the Salesian Family

**So that the consecrated persons of the Salesian Family may awaken their missionary fervour and be present among the poorest.**

*The Salesian Family is made up of thousands of consecrated persons, who are an opportunity and a power for evangelization. We pray that in every continent they may know how to live their vocation with passion and radiate the joy of loving the Lord and the little ones.*



## Salesian Missionary Intention

