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newsletter for Salesian
Missionary Animation



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*Dear confreres
and friends,*

Happy Feast of St Joseph!

I would like to invite you to reflect on the figure of St Joseph as a model of service to the mission of the Universal Church. Traditionally, every Wednesday, especially in the month of March, is dedicated to the devotion to St Joseph, who is our intercessor, support, and teacher of the interior life. In Salesian houses the statue of St Joseph always has a place of honour.

The greatness of St Joseph is in his closeness to the human condition of each one of us: a man of daily presence, discreet and welcoming. Such a presence makes us jointly responsible for the lives of our brothers and sisters.

May St Joseph be a model of presence for us so that we can be authentic Christian missionaries in dedicating ourselves to others. I believe that our renewed devotion to St Joseph will bring abundant fruits of good works from all of us.

Roman Jachimowicz

■ Fr. Roman Jachimowicz SDB
Regional Councillor for the
Region of Central-Northern
Europe

Can COVID-19 also offer hope?



When writing the **Strenna** for this year 2021 I wrote that it was impossible for me to write even a single page without being influenced by the multi-faceted crisis that has affected all of humanity, in all countries and all at the same time. We are still living in very difficult times; we have experienced what we could never have imagined or suspected. During these months we have also witnessed many acts of generous dedication and sacrifice. We too, as **Salesian Family**, have done much good and helped many, with great creativity very similar to that of our Father, Don Bosco.

It is said that 'normal' times will be returning soon. I ask myself: what will this "new normality" mean? What will be left in each of us after this year? Will there be a mad rush to recover the "lost time", the lost economy? Will what we experience today be just a bad nightmare, soon forgotten? Or, on the contrary, will it leave **something positive** behind in many people, in the organisation of societies? Will the 'new normal' bring something really new? Will it change some realities for the better? I do not know what awaits us, but I feel that there is a path that we, as Salesian Family, could travel, which could do us a lot of good as well as offer others a humble contribution through us.

There are those whose life is an unceasing stream of complaints and negativity, flowing through their own hardened hearts. Fortunately, there are also many who are moved by a dynamism that leads them **to seek after life**, to try to do what is right, to focus on living in love and service, to work under the **inspiration of hope**. When we are moved by hope, we realize that love, service, and a heart full of humanity bring meaning into our life. Our world still suffers so much, too much, dehumanisation. Indeed, from our point of view, for the human being, hope is an important ingredient of love.

This is my wish for the whole of our Salesian and missionary world.

■ Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime SDB

FOR REFLEXION AND SHARING

What can I be
thankful for in
today's "new
normal"?

How can I bring
more hope
where I am?



I AM YOUR "ENVOY" IN ALBANIA

How come a Mexican FMA is a missionary in Albania? Did you want to go there?

Not in my wildest imagination! In 1999 the Provincial visited my community at Tuxtla Gutiérrez – capital of the State of Chiapas. She asked to me whether I would like to go as a missionary ad gentes!!! That was a bolt from the blue. I didn't even know what to say. The Provincial told me: "Think about it, pray, and I'll let you know by the Feast of Saint Joseph. I was very confused ... The missions? Ad gentes? Africa? I prayed a lot. To be honest, I didn't want to go anywhere; I was happy where I was; I was on a mission there, too! I went to the Lord saying: "If it is your will, here I am. I don't want to deny you anything, but if it is just the Provincial's fancy, I'm perfectly fine here." Yes, I think I was afraid to leave my Mexico, my blessed land! And here I am. It is here that He wanted me. This has given me and continues to give me so much peace in life: I didn't ask for it, I am His envoy.

As a Latin American, is there anything that fascinates you about Albanians?

Of course! There are so many things I like about Albanian people! The first thing that struck me when I arrived here was their welcome! Not only do they make you feel at home; they really care about you, they offer you everything, even their own hearts! They are a communicative, joyful people, always ready to party, to learn, to get to know! In short, ever since I arrived in Albania, I have felt in tune with them.

How do you find strength, perseverance, inspiration, patience for your missionary service?

Wow! What a question!!! Definitely. In the certainty of knowing that I am doing His will! When I left Mexico to go to Italy to start my missionary life, I told Mom, "You'll see, I'll be back within a year!" And I left with the thought that if I return to Mexico, I would be very happy to be back here in Chiapas too! Then, I decided not to say or think it anymore; instead, to live in the moment and to live and love my "magnificent inheritance", always with Mary holding me by the hand, Mary, my friend, guide, and advisor.



Sr. Isabel Aguilar FMA

Born in Morelia, Michoacán State of **Mexico**. After being immersed for six years in the Salesian world, she made her first profession with the FMA sisters at the age of 22. All her religious and professional formation was done in Mexico. She has a doctorate in pedagogy.

She has been a missionary in **Albania** since 2000.

She is presently in the community of **Shkodër** (Shkodra) where she is responsible for the school and for the economy of all the FMA works.

F O R U M

Romani (Roma) people

There are around **36 million Roma** in the world today. Of these, **18 million** are in **India**, the place of origin of this ethnic community being Rajasthan, India. **Europe's 9-12 million Roma** live in Spain, France, and Eastern Europe. There are one million of them in the **United States**, **800,000** in **Brazil**. The country where they form the highest percentage of the population is **Bulgaria (10.5%)**.

Roma are associated with **poverty** and their behaviour is perceived as anti-social or inappropriate. **Salesians** work in several countries for greater inclusion of the Roma, their **education** e their rights.

MARCH SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

Sacrament of reconciliation

For a greater appreciation of the sacrament of reconciliation by the young in Albania.

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.
[Pope Francis' prayer intention]

