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newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



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*Dear friends
and confreres,*

For the missionary disciple, who is passionate about Jesus Christ and who experiences the joy of proclaiming the Beatitudes of the Kingdom, the experience of ecclesial communion is fundamental.

The secret of the beauty of our Christian life is that we always live in community: in families, in parishes, in communities of consecrated life, in grassroots communities, in our groups and movements. It is the strength of the community that sustains us in the mission, where we share joys and sorrows. Dialogue and community discernment are a daily apprenticeship.

Today more than ever, as missionary disciples, we are called in our communities to cultivate amiability, which implies appreciation and respect, facilitates the search for consensus, opens paths, builds bridges and enables us to be artisans of peace.

■ Fr. Gabriel Romero, SDB
Regional Councillor
for the region of South Cone

Lay People and Salesians as Missionary Disciples

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, **all Christians are people of God** and share in the mission of the Church. The Second Vatican Council emphasised in a special way that every baptised person and all Christian communities share in the Church's missionary task of extending the frontiers of faith (*Ad Gentes*, 2, 6). Therefore, every disciple and every Christian community is challenged, and invited to be missionary by making its own the mandate entrusted by Jesus to the Apostles, to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1,8). Thus, Pope Francis insists that for every baptised member of the Church "we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries' but rather that we are always **'missionary disciples'**" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120).

As consecrated persons, our Salesian religious profession is a unique and fruitful deepening of our baptismal consecration in view of our particular mission in the Church. As Salesians, we are, everywhere, true missionaries of the young and **the youth is our mission land**. We live our identity of missionary disciples by living Don Bosco's missionary spirit. This missionary spirit – summed up in the 'Da mihi animas' – is the heart of our pastoral charity, which manifests itself in the 'oratorian heart', fervour, drive and the capacity for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. It is the passion for evangelisation, especially of young people, 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'. In short, the missionary spirit is typical of every Salesian, because its roots are in Don Bosco's charism itself. It is this missionary spirit that makes us live the Salesian consecrated life **"permanently in a state of mission"**.

■ Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

FOR REFLEXION AND SHARING

■ How do
I live my
missionary
discipleship
as a lay
person or as
a consecrated
person?



ANGOLA, A COUNTRY OF MANY VOCATIONS



Fr Martín, you are from Uruguay; you have worked in the missions and in the Missions Sector at Rome; now you are the Provincial of the Angola Vice-Province with Salesians from many nations. How do you feel about the growing internationality of our Congregation?

In Angola, after 40 years, internationality has diminished somewhat given the growth of Angolan vocations. At the moment we are from ten countries: one Paraguayan, one Spaniard, one Indian, two Togolese, three Italians, three Vietnamese, five Argentinians, five Uruguayans, six Brazilians and 117 Angolans. The variety of nationalities is a great richness: it highlights the catholicity of the Congregation. We also want to live this internationality by sending Angolan confreres to other cultures: Ireland, Portugal, Papua New Guinea, the Middle East.

Could you characterize the Angolan youth of today? How have they changed since the time of your practical training in Angola thirty years ago?

The socio-economic and political situation has changed a lot and that has affected the lives of young people. Earlier we had the civil war with all its tragedies. Now there is the possibility, at least for many, of doing university studies. Migration from the interior of the country to the big cities has increased, and globalised culture and the resulting identity crisis are powerful factors. But in all this, the smile is the same. The young Angolan is generally very cheerful, sociable and open to Salesian values.

There are many young people in Angola who respond to Jesus' call to follow him as Salesians, aren't there?

The vocational response among young people is very generous. We currently have 18 novices and 20 pre-novices, and we also have a request from 74 adolescents and young people to become Salesians. The two key words in this process are discernment and accompaniment. That is why it is essential to make individual journeys, to get to know their families. After the young people have journeyed a while in our youth groups, some ask to enter the aspirantate. We have four types of aspirantates: for young people between 15 and 18 years in age, for those aged 19-20, for others who do their discernment in Salesian communities and, finally, for those who continue their discernment at home being accompanied by a Salesian.



Fr. Martín with Fr. Gianni Rolandi and the PDMA group at a meeting in Prague



Fr. Martín Lasarte Topolanski, SDB

Originally from Montevideo in **Uruguay** where he became a Salesian (1982) and was ordained a priest (1991). After studying engineering, philosophy and pedagogy in Montevideo he earned a Bachelor's in theology at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome followed by a Licentiate at the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

From 1995 he worked in **Angola**, first as a formator and teacher at the major seminary of Luanda, then as rector and parish priest in the community of Lwena and the Delegate for Salesian Youth Ministry in Angola.

In 2015 he moved to the **Salesian Generalate in Rome** and worked for the formation of missionaries, worldwide missionary animation (**editing Cagliero11**, e.g.) and international Salesian volunteering. He was also one of the synod fathers of the Pan-Amazonian Synod (2019).

Since 2020 he is the **Superior of the Salesian Vice Province** of "Mamá Muxima" in Angola (ANG).

Uruguay → Angola → Rome → Angola

Ecological footprint in the world

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- Factors with the strongest impact on the worsening ecological situation in the world: Discharges/Industrial Gases 58% • Deforestation 33% • Drainage of Reservoirs 8%
- Countries with the largest ecological footprint (in global hectares): China 5,010,000,000 • U.S.A. 2,725,000,000 • India 1,361,000,000 • Russia 821,000,000
- Countries with the smallest ecological footprint (in global hectares): Montserrat 27,400 • Nauru 29,500 • Cook Islands 80,200 • Dominica 161,700 • Tonga 304,300



**OCTOBER
SALESIAN
MISSIONARY
INTENTION**

Missionary Disciples

For many new Salesian missionary vocations in Argentina.

We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel. [Pope Francis' prayer intention]

AMERICA

