



OFFICE OF

FORMATION

on going

San Francisco Province, USA

February 2009

Dear Confreres and Friends,

This month, the theme is on Don Bosco's twofold intentions in accepting the invitation to go to Argentina. It is in this moment that Don Bosco sees the possibility to have Salesian Congregation seen as a worldwide missionary Congregation with all the eventual possibilities this implies. It opens a field of evangelization much wider than ever before for the fledgling congregation. These pages provide us with a view to the inner thoughts of Don Bosco in seeking ever wider horizons for his evangelical zeal. As usual the monthly letter of Don Pascual Chavez from sdb.org is included.

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Salesian Missions Established in Argentina (1880-1885) by Arthur J. Lenti, SDB

Introduction

The official proposal to establish the Salesian *work* in Argentina was made and accepted without any reference to the evangelization of the native tribes of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. In 1875 by initiative of John Gazzolo, Argentine consul in Savona, offers were made to Don Bosco by Archbishop Federico Aneyros of Buenos Aires and by Fr. Peter Ceccarelli. But these offers concerned only pastoral work among poor Italian immigrants, a chaplaincy at the Italian church of Our Lady of Mercy in Buenos Aires and, some 160 miles northwest up river, a school in San Nicolás de los Arroyos.

1. Don Bosco's Missionary Aim in Accepting the Argentine Proposal

Don Bosco was quick to see the specifically missionary possibilities of the proposal, which responded to the



Don Bosco with the First Missionary Expedition in 1875.

missionary plans he had been forming in the late 1860s and early 1870s, and to the suggestions of his dream of 1871/1872 (Cf. below in *Lectio Salesiana*). Thus, in his exchanges with the Argentine Church authorities he spoke only of the typical Salesian work for youth in parish, school and oratory, etc.¹ On the contrary, in addressing the Salesians or the Holy See, he emphasized the missions proper.

For instance, in a circular letter inviting Salesians to volunteer he writes: "Among the many proposals received for the establishment of a foreign mission, the one submitted by the Argentine Republic seemed preferable. In Argentina, beyond the regions already civilized, there are immense territories inhabited by savage populations."² It is among these

¹ Cf., e.g., letters to Fr. Ceccarelli of December 25, 1874 [Motto, *Epistolario* IV, p. 372-373], and (in Latin) to Archbishop Aneyros, November 15, 1875 [Motto, *Epistolario* IV, p. 552-553].

² In typical European 19th c. usage, native

that, by the grace of God, the Salesians are called to exercise their zeal."³ Likewise in a memorandum addressed to Card. Alexander Franchi, Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Don Bosco outlined a plan for the evangelization of the native tribes, and spoke of the school of San Nicolás as a "seminary" and as a staging area for the mission: "The strategy that appeared to be most likely to succeed is to establish shelters, schools, hostels and educational institutes on the borderlands of the savages. Once contact is made with the children, it would be an easy step to contact their families, and so gain a foothold among the tribes of the savages. This city [San Nicolás] is situated a mere 60 miles from where the savages live. From this vantage point the Salesians would be able to study the language, the history and the customs of those peoples. populations with lower cultural standards were often referred to as "savages."

³ Cf. circular letter of February 5, 1875 (Motto, *Epistolario* IV, p. 407-409).

It might even be possible to develop native missionary vocations from among the pupils. [...] It is called San Nicolás School only so as not to offend national sensibilities. But it is actually a seminary, that is, a school where missionary vocations are trained for work among the savages.⁴

This strategy for the evangelization of the native population through native vocations was too idealistic to be put into effect. This was due to personnel limitation, language and cultural difficulties, ecclesiastical organization and the fact that in the eyes of the Buenos Aires Church authorities the Salesians were there to take care of the poor in city slums. They were not regarded as “missionaries.” Moreover, the armed clashes between the Argentine government and the natives at the southern frontier complicated matters.

Don Bosco, however, did not refrain from speaking and writing in glowing, optimistic terms of the conversion of the natives. This served to keep alive the missionary spirit among his Salesians and boys, and to keep the idea of possible missionary territories before the Roman authorities. The prospects for early missionary activity among the natives were not good, but as far as he was concerned the Argentine proposal offered opportunities that went beyond the churches and schools in Buenos Aires and San Nicolás. He never gave up his plan for the canonical establishment of one or more mission territories, since he considered that an essential step in the work of spreading the gospel and “building up the Church.” Don Bosco was impatient to begin missionary activity. It was only a matter of time before the hour of the missions would strike.

But sobering words of advice were heard from Buenos Aires. Fr. Cagliero wrote to Fr. Rua, “You live in a fantasy world: ‘Go and preach to the natives, convert and civilize the natives!’ We cannot even find an entry. [...] Everyone, beginning with the Archbishop, advises us to bide our time.”⁵

Don Bosco’s utopian projects had perforce to come to terms with the harsh reality encountered by his Salesians in the field. He acknowledged the wisdom of establishing a strong base in Buenos Aires and the Plata area; he simply replied, “What you write about Patagonia is in complete accord with my own feelings about the matter.”⁶ But, he felt that a missionary engagement had to take place to earn the Church’s official recognition for the Salesians as “apostolic missionaries,” through the creation of Vicariates or Prefectures.

2. Military Activity by the Argentine Government to Extend the Frontier Southward

In the early 1870s, the southern Argentine frontier did not extend beyond the near reaches of the Pampas and

⁴ Don Bosco to Card. Franchi, May 10, 1876, in ASC 131.01, *FDBM* 23 A3-6 (autograph), Ceria, *Epistolario* III, p. 58-61.

⁵ Fr. Cagliero to Fr. Rua, December 20, 1876.

⁶ Ceria, *Epistolario* III, p. 170.

the Rio Colorado. The soldiers had built a series of forts or stockades on the frontier to protect the settlements; and from there they were attempting to drive the natives farther south. But the natives kept coming back; and although they usually got the worse of it in skirmishes, in practice it was a stand off. The catalyst of the resistance was the Araucan Chief Calcutfurá. He died in June 1873. But the resistance continued under his son, Manuel Namuncurá, and the engagements continued with increasing frequency and violence.

In 1875 the Minister of Defense (General Alsina) decided to engage in a sustained and organized effort to establish permanent Argentine control of Patagonia. The incentive came not only from the “threat” the natives posed, but also from two other factors. One was the fear that Great Britain (who had control of the Falkland or Malvinas Islands) would try to go into Patagonia. Another and more serious reason was the attempt by the Chilean government to establish control over parts of that territory. In April 1879 General Julio Roca (successor to Alsina as Minister of Defense) mounted a large military expedition for the purpose of extending the frontier farther to the south to ensure for Argentina undisputed control of Patagonia. This would entail driving the natives back beyond the Rio Negro and the Rio Neuquén. Msgr. Anthony Mariano Espinosa (diocesan vicar of Buenos Aires) and the Salesians Fr. James Costamagna and seminarian Louis Botta accompanied the expedition as chaplains. Carefully kept abreast of events, Don Bosco immediately notified the Holy See with a note of triumph.⁷

On April 27, 1879 the expedition made peaceful contact with the natives at Choele-Choel on the Rio Negro, the gateway to Patagonia. Holy Mass was celebrated, as the natives looked on. The trip ended at Carmen de Patagones at the mouth of the Rio Negro, where Fr. Costamagna preached a mission to the settlers.

3. Salesians Established at Carmen de Patagones and Viedma. Pacification of the Rio Negro Region

In the context of the above-mentioned expedition, Archbishop Aneyros decided to entrust to the Salesians the parishes of Carmen de Patagones and Viedma at the mouth of the Rio Negro, from where natives living along the river might be contacted. On February 2, 1880, Fr. Fagnano was installed as pastor. A few months later, Fr. Emil Rizzo was assigned as pastor to Our Lady of Mercy in Viedma, the future seat of the Vicariate on the southern bank of the river.⁸ It is from this twin base that the Salesian mission work proper would spread upward along the Rio Negro in the next few years.

Meanwhile General Roca’s campaign for control of the

⁷ Don Bosco to the Holy See (Leo XIII). April 20, 1879, Ceria, *Epistolario* III, p. 468-470.

⁸ Cf. J. Borrego, “Il primo iter missionario nel progetto di Don Bosco e nell’esperienza concreta di Don Cagliero,” in *Missioni Salesiane 1875-1975*, ed. by Pietro Scotti (Roma: LAS, 1977), p. 78-85.



Don Bosco with Second Missionary Expedition in 1876.

territory was meeting with fierce resistance on the part of many groups of Araucan natives led by Chief Manuel Namuncurá. The skirmishes continued for some years, usually with undecided outcome, but with considerable loss of life sustained by the natives. Some of the natives fled into Chile, while others surrendered and were detained as prisoners or were drafted into the Argentine army. Toward the end of 1882 and into 1883, General Conrad Villegas, to whom General Roca had handed the command of the Rio Negro frontier, undertook another campaign that forced Namuncurá to surrender. The Salesian Father Dominic Milanesio acted as go-between in the negotiations that pacified the region under Argentine control. These military operations impeded Salesian missionary activity to a considerable degree, but by 1883, with the cessation of military action, Salesian missionary activity among the remaining tribal groups gained momentum all along the Rio Negro valley as far up as the Andes. Fr. Fagnano's report of 1883 describes the Salesians' first missionary successes.⁹

The establishment of the Salesians at Carmen de Patagones, Viedma and the Rio Negro marked the initial

⁹ The story of the pacification of the Rio Negro is told in *EBM XVI*, pp. 291-295.

Fr. Dominic Milanesio (1843-1922) joined the Salesians in 1869, was ordained in 1873 and was a member of the third missionary sending in 1877. In 1880 he joined the small group that founded the mission on the Rio Negro and distinguished himself as an active missionary in the field. In 1883 he acted as intermediary in the surrender of Chief Namuncurá (whom he converted) and in 1888 he baptized Namuncurá's son Ceferino. Fr. Milanesio died at Bernal, Argentina in 1922.

phase of Salesian missionary activity. But it should be clearly understood that the Salesians began their mission work among the natives under the patronage of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, *not* as apostolic missionaries. It was only when the vicariate was created (1883-1885) that the Salesian mission work came under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and that the Salesians became missionaries of "apostolic right." Don Bosco hailed this achievement as the greatest triumph of the congregation and as the augury of the future expansion of the Salesian work throughout South America.

4. Entrustment of a Vicariate / Prefecture to the Salesians by the Holy See: the Church's Official Recognition of Salesian Missionary Activity

(1) Importance of the Church's Official Recognition

Even before the realization of this first stage of the missionary "project" on the Rio Negro, in fact even as the Salesians of the first expedition were just beginning the work in Buenos Aires and San Nicolás, Don Bosco had been petitioning the Holy See for the official recognition of the missionary activity of the Salesian Society through the erection of Vicariates or Prefectures. Such recognition by the Holy See would confer "apostolic" status on the Salesian missions in Patagonia.

Don Bosco attached the utmost importance to this official stamp of approval, to the point that this further stage of the "project" became an all-engrossing preoccupation. He practically came to regard its successful



Don Bosco with Third Missionary Expedition in 1876.

completion as a vindication of the Salesian Society and its mission in the Church. Don Bosco wrote to Fr. Costamagna, who had meanwhile (in 1880) succeeded the deceased Fr. Francis Bodrato as provincial: "Obtaining the erection of a Prefecture or of a Vicariate Apostolic in Patagonia is of the utmost importance. The Holy Father wants it and is urging it. It would also be advantageous to us, for without this [official commissioning] we shall not have the support of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, nor that of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, nor that of the Holy Childhood. It seems that neither Fr. Bodrato nor you yourself have been aware of the importance of this project"¹⁰ To Fr. Fagnano he wrote: "The mission of Patagonia is our Congregation's greatest undertaking. You will be told everything in due time. But I must warn you at once that great responsibilities are being placed on you. God's help, however, will not be wanting."¹¹

Don Bosco had been petitioning the Roman Congregation for such recognition ever since 1876.

(2) Don Bosco's Essay on Patagonia Researched by Fr. Barberis (1876)

¹⁰ Don Bosco to Fr. Costamagna, January 31, 1881, Ceria, *Epistolario* IV, p. 7.

¹¹ Don Bosco to Fr. Fagnano, January 31, 1881, Ceria, *Epistolario* IV, p. 13-14.

Patagonia was no household word in Rome, and Church authorities wanted more detailed information on the land and its native people. Hence it was that at the request of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith Don Bosco undertook to produce a memorandum on the subject. He had Fr. Barberis research "Patagonia and the Southernmost Regions of the American Continent," and the result was sizable monograph. Don Bosco signed it with the date of August 20, 1876 and submitted to the Sacred Congregation.¹² The information contained therein was derived from current manuals, dictionaries and encyclopedia, and reflected the knowledge of Patagonia that was current in Europe in 1876 (much of it defective). The concluding pages of the work described a number of possible projects for the evangelization of Patagonia's native populations.

(3) Petitions and proposals submitted by Don Bosco to

¹² G. Bosco, *La Patagonia e le Terre Australi del Continente Americano* (Torino 1876) is a manuscript of 164 pages dated and signed by Don Bosco himself. It was discovered in 1983 in the library of the Pontifical Urban University of Rome by the Salesian Father E. Szanto, who published it in facsimile with a Spanish translation in 1986. The Salesian Historical Institute published a critical edition: *G. Bosco, La Patagonia e le Terre Australi del Continente Americano*, Introducción y texto crítico por Jesús Borrego, *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 7 (1988), and separately in *Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano*, 11 (Roma: LAS, 1988).

the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith

No sooner had the first Salesians established themselves in Buenos Aires and San Nicolás than Don Bosco began making his case for “missions” with the Roman authorities. The essay on Patagonia mentioned above (1876) is a case in point. Between 1876 and 1883 numerous exchanges and negotiations took place to that effect.

In the 1876 memorandum to Card. Franchi (quoted above), after laying out his strategy for the evangelization of the native tribes out of San Nicolás, Don Bosco adds: “I humbly ask your Eminence: [...] 3^o to create a Prefecture Apostolic that might exercise ecclesiastical authority over the natives of the Pampas and of Patagonia, who up to now have not been subject to any diocesan Ordinary nor to any civilized government.”¹³ In a subsequent memorandum to the same Prefect (1877), Don Bosco suggested the erection of a Prefecture Apostolic at Carhué and of a Vicariate at Santa Cruz.¹⁴ A little later (1878) in a letter to Cardinal Giovanni Simeoni, newly appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Don Bosco proposed the creation of a Vicariate or of a Prefecture at Carmen de Patagones at the mouth of the Rio Negro. Here “two well known [native] chiefs are asking for our missionaries, giving assurance of help and protection.”¹⁵

Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda (Archbishop of Turin) and Msgr. Dominic Jacobini were delegated to study the proposal. Of this phase of the negotiations Don Bosco wrote to Pope Leo XIII in 1880 (when the Salesian, though already established at Patagones, had hardly begun any missionary activity): “In obedience to Your Holiness’ command, I have had a long conference with His Eminence Card. Alimonda and with the Most Reverend Msgr. Jacobini. [...] It was a common point of agreement that a Vicariate Apostolic should be erected for the colonies [missions] established on the Rio Negro, and that a seminary to train evangelical workers should be founded in Europe.” In the detailed “Report on the Salesian Missions” (that is, on the Salesian work in Argentina and Uruguay) attached to this letter, Don Bosco pointed out that the Argentine government had just created the Province of Patagonia. He suggested that the Vicariate might well take the same name and cover the same territory, including all the lands to the east of the mountain range of the Andes “until another Vicariate is erected at Santa Cruz.”¹⁶

¹³ Don Bosco to Card. Franchi, May 10, 1876, in ASC 131.01, *FDBM* 23 A3-6 (autograph) *Ceria-Epistolario* III, p. 58-61.

¹⁴ Don Bosco to Card. Franchi, December 31, 1877, *Ceria, Epistolario* III, p. 256-261, transcribed in *EBM* XIII, 590-596. Carhué (in the Pampa southwest of Buenos Aires) and Santa Cruz (on the Atlantic coast in southern Patagonia) were military outposts. Fr. Cagliero declined these offers.

¹⁵ Don Bosco to Card. Simeoni, [March] 1878, *Ceria, Epistolario* III, p. 320-321. In this letter Don Bosco also declares his willingness to prepare missionaries “for the Vicariate of Mangalor, India, or some other mission.”

¹⁶ *Ceria, Epistolario* III, p. 567-575; *EBM* XIV pp. 500-508 (Don Bosco’s

Don Bosco’s “definitive” proposal was made, after further consultations and negotiations, in a laboriously worded memorandum to Cardinal Simeoni, on July 29, 1883. This proposal was for three Vicariates and/or Prefectures. Don Bosco suggested the immediate erection of a Vicariate for Northern Patagonia (Rio Negro) with seat at Carmen de Patagones, and a Prefecture for Southern Patagonia (Santa Cruz). Central Patagonia (Chubut), still undeveloped and “wholly under Protestant control,” would be under the patronage of the northern Vicariate, until a separate Vicariate could be established there. Similarly, the southern Prefecture would remain under the general patronage of the northern Vicariate, unless the Holy Father decided to make it an independent Vicariate.

Requested to nominate candidates for these posts, Don Bosco submitted the names of Fr. Cagliero or Fr. Costamagna for the northern (and central) Vicariate, and Fr. Fagnano, for southern Patagonia. Don Bosco commended the three as “strong, hard-working men, good preachers, inured to toil, and of unimpeachable moral character.” Fr. Fagnano, was further commended as particularly suitable for southern Patagonia, being “a man of powerful physique and defiant of toil and danger.”¹⁷

At this point (end of July 1883) Don Bosco rested his case and waited for Rome’s decision. A few days before, the Salesian work had been established in Niterói (Brazil).¹⁸

One month later, the Third General Chapter was convened and held its preparatory spiritual retreat at San Letter and Report to Leo XIII of April 13, 1880).

¹⁷ Don Bosco to Card. Simeoni, July 29, 1883, *Ceria, Epistolario* IV, p. 225-227; *EBM* XVI, pp. 295-296.

John Cagliero (1838-1926), one of the early followers of Don Bosco, was ordained a priest in 1862, and led the first band of 10 Salesians to South America, where as Don Bosco’s vicar from the start, he headed the Salesian work and guided its development through the length and breadth of the continent. He was appointed Vicar of Northern Patagonia in October, and ordained bishop on December 7, 1884. Pope Benedict XV made him a cardinal in 1915.

James Costamagna (1846-1921) was ordained a priest in 1868 and served as local director of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from 1875 to 1877. He led the third missionary party in 1877, and was among the three missionaries who accompanied General Roca’s military expedition in 1879 and made contact with the Araucan natives on the Rio Negro. In 1880 he succeeded the deceased Fr. Bodrato as director of the Pius IX school in Almagro (Buenos Aires), and as provincial he founded the Salesian work in Chile in 1887. Nominated Vicar Apostolic of Méndes y Gualaquiza (Ecuador), he was ordained bishop on May 23, 1895. While awaiting the opportunity to enter his Vicariate, he acted as Fr. Rua’s representative for the Salesian works on the Pacific side. He was permitted to visit Ecuador briefly in 1902, and then allowed to enter his Vicariate permanently in 1912.

Joseph Fagnano (1844-1916) was ordained in 1868 and was a last-hour substitute member of the first missionary group in 1875. He served as first director of the school of San Nicolás, and in 1879 he was named pastor of the parish of Patagones, whence his true missionary career was launched. In November 1883 he was appointed Prefect Apostolic of southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Having established a base at Punta Arenas in mid-1887, the indomitable Fr. Fagnano founded missions in Tierra del Fuego for the evangelization of the natives.

¹⁸ Cf. *EBM* XVI, pp. 288-291; *Ceria, Annali* I, p. 457-460.

Benigno. The “missions” were represented by Fr. Cagliari and Fr. Costamagna.¹⁹ Although the missions were not a topic on the Chapter’s agenda, they must have been a lively topic of conversation.²⁰ Father Costamagna had made first contact with the Araucan natives during the expedition of 1879 and had celebrated a memorable Mass in their presence at Choele Choel. The two missionaries must have created a stir by their reports; and Don Bosco himself doubtlessly fanned the flames by expatiating on the great project and on his future plans. They were the very persons whom Don Bosco had nominated for the post of Vicar Apostolic in his proposal to the Holy See. Perhaps this was not yet public knowledge; but Don Bosco must have opened his heart to them, and the three must have shared their experiences and future projects.

In this climate, on the last day of the retreat, Don Bosco, as he anxiously and with high hopes was awaiting the impending fateful decision of the Holy See, had a dream—the *Second Mission Dream* (Cf. below in *Lectio Salesiana*).

5. The Church’s Official Approval of Salesian Missionary Activity: the Creation of Vicariate and Prefecture and the Ordination of Fr. John Cagliari as Bishop-Vicar Apostolic

(1) First Action: Creation of a Pro-Vicariate of Northern Patagonia and of a Prefecture of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego

Fr. Costamagna was already on the high seas bound for the missions at the head of a band of 20 Salesians and 10 Salesian Sisters, when the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith came to a decision.²¹ But disappointingly, by the briefs of November 16 and 20, 1883, it only erected a pro-Vicariate of Northern Patagonia, and a Prefecture for Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, naming Fr. Cagliari and Fr. Fagnano for those posts respectively. This action of the Holy See establishing missionary territories under the patronage of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith made the Salesians Apostolic missionaries, but this arrangement granted less than what Don Bosco had hoped for, since neither Fr. Fagnano as Prefect nor Fr. Cagliari as pro-Vicar would be appointed bishop. At a meeting of the General Council held at Alassio on April 5, 1884, Don Bosco stressed the importance for the Salesian Society to have a full Vicariate and a bishop.

From Alassio Don Bosco, accompanied by Father Lemoyne, went on to Rome primarily for the purpose of

¹⁹ Cf. ASC 04: Capitoli Generali presieduti da D. Bosco, *FDBM* 1,863 E7, where the official list of participants, 35 in number, is given.

²⁰ Neither Don Bosco’s letter of convocation of June 20, 1883 nor the eight themes published with the same date, nor the minutes of the Chapter, nor its proceedings published together with those of the Fourth General Chapter in 1887 show that the missions were up for discussion. [Cf. Ceria, *Epistolario* IV, p. 221-222; *Annali*, p. 468-469; ASC 04: Capitoli Generali; *FDB* 1,863 E7 -1,864 B6; *Opere Edite* XXVI, p. 249-280].

²¹ Cf. Don Bosco’s letter to Fr. Costamagna of November 12, 1883, Ceria, *Epistolario*, p. 240-241.

petitioning Leo XIII personally for the privileges, and possibly also discussing the Vicariate. His Roman sojourn lasted from April 14 to May 14, 1884 and it was a time of apprehension and pain. When he was finally granted an audience on May 9, the Pope assured the ailing venerable old man that the privileges would be granted, and that he loved him, yes, him and the Salesians. It appears, however, that the question of the Vicariate was not raised in the audience.²²

(2) Second Action: Creation of a Full Vicariate with Cagliari as Bishop-Vicar

Back in Turin, Don Bosco sought the mediation Archbishop Cajetan Alimonda, who also believed that, in view of the great development of the missions on the Rio Negro, it would have been more appropriate to have a full Vicariate established there, with a bishop at the helm. Consequently on September 26, 1884, he submitted a petition to Pope Leo XIII to that effect. Pope Leo was not unaware of the situation in Argentina, and of that of the Salesian missions in particular. Don Bosco had kept him informed about what had been achieved and of what was in progress or being planned. Hence, he granted the request, and by decree of October 30, 1884, he upgraded Patagonia to a Vicariate with Fr. Cagliari as vicar and bishop. (Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, with Fr. Fagnano as prefect, retained the status of prefecture.)

This action by the Holy See was a great victory, as well as a great physical and moral boost, for Don Bosco personally. It was also a sure sign of the Pope’s benevolence for Don Bosco and the Salesians. But more significantly it was the Church’s seal of approval and validation of the Salesian Society’s missionary vocation and of its missionary projects. Rightly Ceria writes: “The raising of this son of Don Bosco to the episcopacy was, for the whole Salesian family, an event of unparalleled significance. Later Salesian generations cannot even imagine the triumphant jubilation of the confreres at the time. Who would have dared entertain such a hope? For the Cooperators too it was a time to rejoice; for in that elevation they recognized the Church’s anointing of the Salesian missionary apostolate.”²³

(3) Bishop Cagliari’s Ordination and Difficult Entry into His Mission

Fr. Cagliari’s ordination as titular bishop of Magida by Cardinal Alimonda took place on December 7, 1884. On February 1, 1885 the bishop was ready to leave for his mission at the head of a band of 18 Salesians priests and brothers and 6 Salesian Sisters. Don Bosco had spent the previous days in a painful, almost anguished state of mind. He was, moreover, confined to his room by illness. Cagliari, his beloved son, was leaving him. He might never see him again. It was in this context and in this frame of mind that on the night of January 31, 1885, preceding the departure

²² The month-long stay in Rome is described in detail in *EBM* XVII, pp. 54-102. The privileges were finally granted by decree of June 28, 1884.

²³ Ceria, *Annali* I. pp. 504-505.

of the missionaries, he had a dream—the Third Missionary Dream on South America.²⁴

By the time Bishop Cagliero and the missionaries arrived in Montevideo (Uruguay), the situation in Argentina had deteriorated. Anticlerical opposition to the Salesians and their work; accusations by General Winter, governor of the Rio Negro province, specifically against pastor Fr. Fagnano, director of the mission; the government's refusal to accept the new vicar on grounds that there had been no prior consultation regarding the establishment of a vicariate—all this made the bishop's entry problematic.²⁵

Bishop Cagliero, after a brief stay in Uruguay, entered Argentina quietly and took up residence in the Salesian school of Almagro (Buenos Aires), waiting for the right moment to make his official appearance and hopefully be permitted to enter his See.

Fr. Fagnano, who was the chief target of the accusations by Governor Winter, brought his case before the Archbishop with a detailed exposition of the facts. The Archbishop then took the case to the Minister of the Interior, who apparently accepted the explanation, and refrained from acting on the Governor's brief.

With this development, taking advantage of a lull in the hostile press, Bishop Cagliero asked to be received by President Julio Roca. Accompanied by Fr. Costamagna, who had participated in General Roca's expedition of 1879, he presented his credentials to the president. The audience started badly, but took a turn for the better, when Fr. Costamagna began to recall events from the expedition, and Bishop Cagliero reassured the President that as a Salesian and as Vicar he would work for the development of all the people in the area. Thus reassured, the President gave him a letter of introduction to the Governor. On July 9, 1885, Bishop Cagliero could finally obtain permission to enter his See at Patagones and Viedma. The Salesian Missions could now be regarded as established *de facto* as well as *de jure*.²⁶

At this time Don Bosco's health had taken a turn for the worse. He was losing his eyesight, a consequence of his rapidly degenerating bodily systems. It was a foreboding of his approaching end. But his moral vigor and spiritual insight seemed rather to be on the increase. He was sure now that the extension of the Salesian work in South America (and worldwide) could not be stopped. Painfully he wrote to his "generals" in the field. These letters are

²⁴ "Don Bosco accompanies the missionaries to [South] America," title given to this dream, which we have on Lemoyne's authority alone. (Cf. *EBM* XVII, pp. 273-280.)

²⁵ In a letter to Don Bosco, dated January 2, 1885, Archbishop Aneyros had described the pique of the government when presented with a *fait accompli* in the matter of the vicariate (Cf. Ceria, *Epistolario* IV, p. 314, note 1; *EBM* XVII, pp. 287-289.)

²⁶ For the story of the "persecution" of the Salesians by the Governor of Rio Negro (General Winter) and of Bishop Cagliero's entry into his Vicariate see *EBM* XVII, pp. 285-292.

precious guidelines for Salesian missionary strategy, as well as a kind of spiritual testaments.²⁷

Conclusion

The courage and perseverance of the missionaries (Salesian fathers, brothers and sisters) made Don Bosco's original dream of missions among the natives a reality. From Turin Father Rua, at great cost in personnel and money and with continuous personal encouragement, backed the missionaries' efforts. And with the help and support of the Salesian Cooperators by 1900 the whole lower portion of South America, from the Pampas to Tierra del Fuego, was recognized as the mission field entrusted to the Salesians—Don Bosco's Salesian Family.

²⁷ Don Bosco's letters: to Bishop Cagliero (August 6, 1885); to Fr. Costamagna (Provincial) and to Fr. Fagnano (Prefect Apostolic) (August 10); to Fr. Tomatis (Director at San Nicolás) (August 14); to Fr. Lasagna (Director at Villa Colón and Provincial of Uruguay and Brazil) (September 30). [Ceria, *Epistolario* IV, p. 327-329, 332-337, 340-341; Aubry-Caselli, *Spiritual Writings*, pp. 339-346 (Don Bosco's last five letters to heads of missions).

Lectio Divina — Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:45-48: Great missionary commission of the disciples by the risen Lord

Matthew 28:16-20: The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Luke 24:45-48: Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Lectio Salesiana — (1) Don Bosco's First Mission Dream (1871/72), Barberis Report — (2) Don Bosco's Second Mission Dream (1883), Lemoyne B Report

The (First) Missionary Dream of 1871/72

(1) Sources and Reports

According to Don Bosco's own statement as reported in the sources, this dream (commonly called ("after the fact") Dream of the Patagonian Missions) took place in 1871 or 1872. We are also told that he tried to identify the people and the land he had seen in the dream, but was unable to do so. He interpreted the dream to refer to the Patagonian

natives only after he had received the offer from Argentina (1874). In February-March 1875 Don Bosco was in Rome and was received by Pius IX. On that occasion he may have discussed the Argentine mission with the Pope (though there is no record that he did so); in any case he did not speak of his dream.¹

He related the dream for the first time to Pius IX the following year, in March 1876, and subsequently to some Salesians. This was at least four years after it had occurred, and a few months after the first “missionaries” had left for Argentina.

The dream narrative comes to us primarily from a first-hand report of Fr. Julius Barberis. The Barberis Report is the primary source and was so regarded by Lemoyne. In ASC it is included in Lemoyne’s collection of dream narratives. The manuscript is neither in Barberis’ nor in Lemoyne’s hand, but appears to be a calligraphic copy made from Barberis’ original draft and placed by Lemoyne in his own file.²

Lemoyne, following his accustomed method, edited the two reports (Barberis’ and his own) into one narrative, in *Documenti*. And this is the text that Father Angelo Amadei transcribed in the Biographical Memoirs.³

2. Text of the Dream Narrative

(1) Marginal notes by Lemoyne are inserted into the text in italics. Editor Lemoyne’s inserted slashes (//) at various points, where he was planning to do editorial work. Words that are struck through in the Barberis Report are part of Lemoyne’s editorial work.

(2) Where the source reads “selvaggi,” I translate “savages;” where it reads “indigeni,” I translate “natives;” where it reads “barbari,” I translate “barbarians.” These terms should be understood in the sense given to them in the Romantic literature, especially in the missionary journals of the day.

July 31, 1876

Don Bosco’s Dream of the Missions in Patagonia
Report by Father Julius Barberis

[Barberis’ Introduction]

Here is the dream on account of which Don Bosco was later to decide to give some thought to the missions of Patagonia. He first related it to the Pope on the last trip he took to Rome // (before July 31, 1876). Subsequently, [he related it] to some of us. On July 30, [he told it] to Father Bodrato. From the latter I heard it, too, on the evening of

¹ No mention of missions or dream occurs in EBM XI, p. 98-128.

² The Barberis Report is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, “31 Luglio 1876, Sogno,” FDBM 1314 D1-4. Barberis’ autograph could not be traced; it is not where one would expect to find it, namely, in ASC 110: Cronachette, Barberis, Notebook 8, where the pages are missing, though the dream is listed in the Table of Contents of that notebook [cf. FDBM 843 E9 e 844 A3 and 5].

³ Cf. A. Amadei, IBM X, p. 54-55 (dream text) and 1267-1270 (Don Bosco’s attempts to identify the natives and the region); EBM X, p. 46-48 and 543-548.

the same day at Lanzo, where for some twenty days I had been vacationing with half of the clerical novices’ class. Three days later, back in Turin, Don Bosco related it to me, as we paced up and down in the library. I took care not to mention that I had already heard it, because Don Bosco usually omits one detail or another [in a first narration]; and also because, heard from his own lips, it would make a stronger impression on me. He told us we were the first to hear it.

[Dream Narrative — Dream Setting]

I seemed to find myself in a region, wild and completely unknown [to me]. // It was an immense, totally uncultivated plain on which neither hills nor mountains could be seen. At its farthest boundary, beyond the ken of human eye, [the plain] was wholly encircled by jagged mountains that formed a crown on either side of it. On this plain I saw two bands, throngs of men // roaming about. They were nearly naked, of extraordinary height and build, fierce-looking, with shaggy, // long hair, bronzed and dark of complexion, their only garments being long cloaks draping down from their shoulders and made of animal hides. For weapons they carried a kind of long spear and a sling. //

[Scene I]

Just then a great number of individuals came into view whose way of acting showed them to be missionaries belonging to various [religious] orders. They approached [the natives] in order to preach the faith of J. C. [to them]. But [the natives] with diabolical fury and with hellish glee slaughtered them all, hacking their flesh to pieces, and impaling it on their long, pointed spears. From time to time bloody fighting would break out among them, and between them and neighboring peoples. //

[Scene II]

After observing these horrible slaughters for some time, I asked myself, “How can one convert such brutal people?” At that moment I saw a small group of missionaries, different from the former, advancing with cheerful mien toward them, with a band of youngsters marching in front. I trembled at the mere thought that they were going to get killed. I walked up // to them; I did not recognize any of them, but I could tell that they were Salesian missionaries, our very own. “How can this be?” [I asked myself.] I did not want them to advance any farther, and was about to stop them and force them back, when I realized that their arrival was causing widespread joy among that throng of barbarians. They lowered their weapons, ceased from their savage behavior, and received our missionaries most courteously.

[Scene III]

In utter amazement I mused: “Let’s see how things will turn out.” I then saw that [the natives] were receiving instruction from our missionaries, and they were paying willing attention and were learning. [The missionaries] were admonishing them, and they were putting their admonitions into practice. // I watched them for a while, and then I realized that they were reciting the rosary, missionaries and

savages, peaceably together. //

[Conclusion of Dream Narrative]

After a while one of the missionaries intoned the [hymn], “Praise Mary, You Faithful Tongues;” and all those men with one voice took up the song. They sang it through in such unison and with such power that I woke up with a start.

[Don Bosco’s Conclusion and Comments]

I had this dream four or five years ago, // but I did not make much of it [at the time], especially as I was unable to learn what people might be indicated by the characteristics I had observed in those savages. At first I thought they might be Africans // from the region of Mgr. Comboni’s mission.⁴ Then, as I was at the time negotiating with Mgr. Raimondi for missions in Hong Kong,⁵ // I thought they might be from those islands. But upon investigation I learned that neither the area nor its inhabitants matched what I had seen [in the dream]. Some time later we had a visit from Archbishop Quinn of Australia [sic],⁶ and I made inquiries about the condition and character of the savages there; but again what he told me did not tally with what I had seen. And yet the impression the dream had made on me and the intimations it had left with me were such that it could not be disregarded—especially since, as past experience had taught me, what I had seen might well come to pass. Meanwhile, we began to talk about the Argentine Republic and [to discuss] the proposals for [foundations in] Buenos Aires and San Nicolás, made to us through the Argentine consul.⁷ I gathered data, made appropriate inquiries and sought information. I quickly reached the certain conclusion that the people I had seen were the Patagonian natives dwelling in the southern regions of that republic. From then on I entertained no further doubt as to where my concern and my efforts should be directed.⁸

⁴ [Bishop] Daniel Comboni, founder of the Verona Fathers, had established missions in the Sudan and the White Nile region. In the late 1860s he and Don Bosco had discussed involving the Salesians.

⁵ On October 6, 1873, Bishop Timoleonte Raimondi sought Cardinal Barnabò’s mediation to obtain Salesian missionaries for Hong Kong. In a letter to Father Rua of January 5, 1874 [Motto, Epistolario IV, 194-195] Don Bosco wrote that he had spoken to Pius IX about the project. On March 12, 1874 he presented a petition to the Pope in which he stated that he was about to open “a home for poor children in the island of Hong Kong, China,” and a “hospice and school in Savannah, [GA] in [North] America” [Motto, Epistolario IV, 251-252.]

⁶ Archbishop Matthew Quinn of Sydney, Australia.

⁷ The Argentine consul was John Baptist Gazzolo (1827-1895), a Genoese navy captain who had migrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was appointed consul for Argentina at Savona, Italy, in 1870. Soon after his appointment he met Don Bosco, in 1871 or 1872, on visits to the Salesian schools of Alassio and Varazze. [Jesus Borrego, “Primer proyecto patagónico de Don Bosco,” *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 5 (1986) 21-72, p. 48, Note 147.]

⁸ Lemoyne in *Documenti* and Amadei in the Biographical Memoirs expand considerably Barberis’ account of Don Bosco’s attempts to identify the people and the region of the dream (Cf. EBM X, 543-545).

Don Bosco’s Second Mission Dream (1883)

(1) Occasion of the Dream Experience and of the Narration

The second Mission Dream took place at San Benigno, at the end of the spiritual retreat preparatory to the Third General Chapter, on the night preceding the feast of St. Rose of Lima, hence on the night of August 30, 1883.¹ Don Bosco narrated the dream five days later to the members of the Third General Chapter meeting at Valsalice. In some of the manuscripts, it bears the title, *The American Missions or The Great Gathering at the Equator*.

This lengthy dream narrative tells of a gathering at a great hall located in the equatorial region of South America. Here the missions are the topic of conversation and of allegorical scenes. There follows a train journey southward down the length of South America to the Straits of Magellan, along the eastern slope of the Andes. Don Bosco, accompanied by an interpreter, is shown “the harvest entrusted to the Salesians.” This is followed, in one tradition of the text, by a journey northward, by another route, back to the point of departure.

(2) Sources and Textual History of the Second Mission Dream

A number of archival documents, namely, Viglietti’s chronicle, the minutes of the Third General Chapter, and Lemoyne’s reports.

[Lemoyne A]

Fr. Lemoyne, a member of the Third General Chapter, drafted a first-hand report, (*Lemoyne A*). It is a long autograph narrative with marginal notes by the same. It tells of the gathering in the great hall at the equator, and relates the train journey southward ending at Punta Arenas (with a conclusion of the dream and the awakening). It does not speak of a return journey back to the starting point.²

[Lemoyne B]

Subsequently, Lemoyne (on the basis of *Lemoyne A*) drafted a second report that he submitted to Don Bosco for revision. As in the case of *Lemoyne A*, we have a long autograph narrative describing the meeting at the hall, the train journey southward, ending at Punta Arenas with a conclusion of the dream and the awakening. A number of marginal additions and interlinear corrections in Don Bosco’s hand appear through the first part of this draft. One large marginal addition of over 160 words near the beginning reports the conversation heard by Don Bosco in the hall. There are also further marginal notes by Lemoyne (perhaps added later). Again, *there is no reference to a return journey*.

Lemoyne B, reviewed and authenticated by Don Bosco,

¹ The feast of St. Rose of Lima fell on August 31. The memorial is now kept on August 23.

² *Lemoyne A* is in ASC 132: Autografi-Sogni, *FDBM* 1,347 B10-C9.

remains our principal source.³

Second Mission Dream (1883) Dream Narrative — Text of *Lemoyne B*

[Note: The marginal additions and corrections in Don Bosco's hand are inserted in bold *Italics* into the main body of the text. Lemoyne's additions are left in the margin at the place where they occur in the manuscript. Titles and other additions in *square brackets* are added for easier reading.]

[Introduction by the Narrator]

On the night preceding the feast of St. Rose of Lima (August 30) I had a dream. Somehow I was conscious of being asleep. At the same time I seemed to be running hard, which exhausted me to the point that I was unable to speak, write, and work at my usual occupations.

[Dream Setting: In the Reception Hall]

As I was considering whether this was dream or reality, I seemed to be entering a reception hall where many people were conversing on various subjects.

A prolonged conversation ensued on the fact that a great number of savages in Australia, in India, in China, in Africa, and particularly in America, are still shrouded in the shadow of death.

One speaker remarked: "Europe, Christian Europe, the great teacher of civilized living and of the Catholic faith, seems to have grown apathetic with regard to the foreign missions. Few have the courage to brave long voyages or unknown [lands] to save the souls of those millions of souls [sic] that were nonetheless redeemed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ."⁴

Another speaker added: "How many idol-worshippers in America alone lead unhappy lives outside the Church, deprived of the knowledge of the Gospel! People think (and geographers make the same mistake) that the American Cordilleras are like a wall that divides that part

³ *Lemoyne B* is in ASC 132: Autografi-Sogni, *FDBM* 1,347 A6-B5. It is followed immediately (*FDBM* 1,347 B6-9) by *Appendix X* containing the adventurous story of the return journey. *Appendix X* is all in Lemoyne's hand, with his own marginal notes, but none by Don Bosco. It was not part of Don Bosco's original narration at GC III, and therefore not part of *Lemoyne A*. It was added by Lemoyne after the conclusion of *Lemoyne B* in a further editorial effort. Hence the status *Appendix X* is uncertain. Lemoyne *final* editorial effort is represented by *Lemoyne C*, which re-orders all elements to achieve a logical and integrated narrative: main narrative as in *Lemoyne B* + *Appendix X* (return journey) + conclusion and awakening + integration of all marginal notes into the narrative (*Lemoyne C* is in ASC 111: Sogni, *FDBM* 1,318 D7-E12+1,319 A1-9). This is the text edited in Lemoyne's Documenti XXVI (Ch. 37, p. 525-534, in ASC 110: Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc, *FDBM* 1,089 E11 - 1,090 A8), and thence transcribed by Ceria in the Biographical Memoirs (Cf. *EBM* XVI, p. 304-312).

⁴ The portion of text in bold *italics* that follows is Don Bosco's long marginal addition, already mentioned. In dreams "auditions" and conversations are not unusual; but this conversation is very unusual for its length and complexity. All other marginal and interlinear corrections or additions by Don Bosco deal with small details. The important consideration is that Don Bosco reviewed this text.

of the world in two. But it is not so. Those long and high mountain ranges are crossed by valleys that are more than one thousand kilometers long. Within them are forests as yet unexplored; [rare] plants, animals, and [precious] stones [so rare] that [they] are scarce [even] there [sic]. Coal, petroleum, lead, copper, iron, silver and gold lie buried in those mountains, where the Creator's almighty hand placed them for people's benefit. O cordilleras, cordilleras, how rich are your eastern slopes!"

At that moment I felt the urge to seek an explanation on a number of subjects, and to find out who those people were, and where I was. But I thought: "Before opening my mouth I ought to see what kind of people these are!" And so I looked around to investigate, but I recognized no one. Meanwhile, ***as if they had only noticed me at that very moment***, they invited me to join them, and they received me kindly. Then I inquired: "Where are we? Are we in Turin, London, Madrid or Paris? And who are you?" But the gentlemen dodged my questions and continued their discourse on the Missions.

[Act I: Allegorical Actions in the Reception Hall]

At that moment a young man of ravishing beauty, radiating light brighter than the sun, who appeared to be about sixteen years of age, came up to me. His clothes were splendidly embroidered; he wore a crown-like adornment on his head that was set with sparkling jewels. He looked at me kindly, and seemed to be interested in me in a special way. His smile expressed ineffable love. He spoke my name, took me by the hand, and began to speak about the Salesian Congregation.

At a certain point I interjected: "Whom have I the honor to be speaking with? Please tell me your name."

The young man replied: "Have no fear! Speak freely, for you are with a friend."

"But what is your name?"

I would gladly tell you my name, but it isn't necessary. You should know who I am."

Then I looked more intently at that radiant face. How beautiful it was! Immediately I recognized him as the son of Count Colle, the illustrious benefactor of all our houses, and especially of our [South] American missions.⁵ "Oh, it's

⁵ In a number of dreams Don Bosco is guided by an Interpreter. For example, Dominic Savio fills this role in the Lanzo Dream of 1876. Here the Interpreter is Louis Colle, the son of Count Louis Antoine Fleury Colle of Toulon, France. In March 1882, Don Bosco visited the young man as he lay dying of tuberculosis. He died on April 3 at the age of 17. Don Bosco thought so highly of Louis, (and of his great benefactors, the Count and Countess Colle) that a short time later, with the help of Fr. de Barruel, he wrote and published a biography dedicated "À Monsieur et à Madame Colle": *Biographie du jeune Louis Fleury Antoine Colle*, par Jean Bosco prêtre (Turin, 1882) [Cf. *EBM* XV, p. 57-59.] Was Louis to be the new Dominic Savio?

Be that as it may, the identity of the Interpreter-Guide, as presented in the sources of this dream, is problematic. In the *GC3 Minutes* he is simply a "layperson." In *Lemoyne A* (up to page 4 of the main text), the Interpreter is described as "a gentleman" (*un personaggio*), "a man" (*un*

you,” I said, speaking his name. “And who are all these gentlemen?”

“They are friends of the Salesians; and I, as a friend of yours and of your Salesians, *and in God’s name*, would like to give you a small task to perform.”

[Scene 1: Acted Allegory: The Numbered Rope]

“What kind of task? What’s this all about?”

“Come up to this table, and pull down on this rope.”

There was a table in the middle *of the great hall*, and on this table was a rope coiled up into a ball. I observed that this rope was scored with lines like a ruler. Later I realized that the hall was located in South America, right at the equator, and that the numbers on the rope represented the degrees *of the earth’s latitude*. So, I grasped the end of the rope, and as I looked at it I saw the number 0 marked on it. I began to laugh.

“This is no laughing matter,” the angelic youth said to me. “Observe, and tell me what you see written on the rope.”

“The number 0.”

“Pull on the rope a bit.” I pulled, and out came the number 1.

“Pull some more, and coil the rope as you pull.” I pulled, and out came the numbers 2, 3, 4, up to 20.

“Is this enough?” I asked him.

“No,” the young man replied. “Pull farther. Pull till you find a knot.” I pulled till I reached the number 47 and, after it, a large knot. The rope extended beyond that point, but divided into many smaller cords that radiated out toward the east, the west, and the south.

“Is this enough?” I asked him.

“What is the number?” he inquired in turn.

“The number is 47.”

“And what does 47 plus 3 make?”

“50!”

“And 50 plus 5?”

“55!”

“Watch carefully: fifty-five,” he said, and added: “Pull some more!”

“I have reached the end!”

“Well, then, turn around, and pull the rope in the opposite direction.” I pulled on the rope in that direction till I reached the number 10.

“Pull some more,” said the young man.

uomo), “that man” (*quell’uomo*). But Lemoyne’s later marginal notes from page 2 on, already specify that he was a young man (*un giovane*), subsequently identified as “the son of the Counts Colli” [*sic*]. Then from page 4 on, Lemoyne systematically deletes the original designations (such as “that man”) replacing them with expressions like, “that young man”, “that dear young man.” It appears, therefore, that in the original narration Don Bosco had not identified the Interpreter as young Louis Colle. In *Lemoyne B*, which (as mentioned above) is a re-working of the text by Lemoyne reviewed by Don Bosco, the Interpreter is identified as young Louis Colle from the start.

“There is no more!”

“So, there is no more. Then, look farther. What do you see?”

“It’s water,” I replied. At that moment I had an experience so strange as to defy all explanation. I was standing in that room, was pulling on that rope, and yet at the same time I had a bird’s eye view of a vast panorama that was unfolding before my very eyes, and that stretched along the full extent of the rope.

[Lemoyne’s marginal note]

It seems that the point 47 represents the starting place of the Salesian center from which to reach out to the Falkland Islands and the Tierra del Fuego, and other islands of those farthest lands

[*sic*] in [South] America.⁶

[marginal note]

I saw in concentration all that I later saw in detail. The degrees on the rope where the clues that helped me memorize successive points visited on the journey.

[Main text]

[rope] From the first number 0 to number 47 there stretched a limitless land that was bounded *at its end* by straits of ocean and then broke up into hundreds of islands, *of which one was much larger than the others*. To these islands apparently *pointed* the little cords that radiated from the large knot. Each little cord ended at an island. Some islands were inhabited by fairly large numbers of natives; other islands appeared sterile, stark, rocky, and uninhabited; yet others were entirely capped with ice. To the west [were] numerous clusters [of islands inhabited by savages in large numbers.

At the opposite end, that is, from number 0 to number 10, stretched more of the same country: and it ended in that [body of] water seen last of all. That [body of] water was (*so it appeared*) the sea of the Antilles. There it lay before my eyes in a manner I find totally inexplicable.⁷

[inexplicable] After my reply, “It’s water!” the young man continued: “Now add 55 and 10. What does that add up to?” I replied: “It adds up to 65.”

⁶ This note by Lemoyne locates a Salesian center at the 47th degree of latitude south. Actually there is no Salesian center at that location. Santa Cruz, which may historically be regarded as the staging base of Msgr. Fagnano’s future mission, is located at about the 50th degree of latitude south. Ushuaia, the future southernmost Salesian foundation, is located at about the 55th.

⁷ In a (later) note at the end of the dream narrative, Lemoyne states that the bishop of San José, Costa Rica, had requested the Salesians by letter of September 15, 1883. This city is located at the 10th degree of latitude north. (The Salesian work in San José began in 1933.)

"Now put everything together, and you have one [unbroken stretch of] rope.

"What happens now?"

What do you see on this side?"

"To the west I see very high mountains; and to the east, the ocean."

"Excellent! These mountains constitute a bank, a boundary. From the mountains to the ocean lies the harvest entrusted to the Salesians. These thousands and millions of people are waiting for your help, *waiting for the faith*." Those mountains were the Cordilleras of South America.

[Scene 2: The Allegory of Unripe Figs]

"But how are we to do this?" I rejoined.

"How? Look." Immediately Fr. Lago appeared on the scene carrying a basket of small, green figs.⁸

"Here, Don Bosco, take this," he said to me.

"What have you got there?"

"[Figs.] I was told to bring them to you."

"But these figs are not fit to eat. They are not yet ripe."

Then the young man took up the basket, which was wide but not very deep. He offered it to me with the words, "This is the present he is giving you."

"And what am I to do with these figs?"

"These figs are not ripe yet, but they are nonetheless the fruit of the great fig tree of life. It is up to you to bring them to maturity."

"How? If they were larger, they could be made to ripen on straw like other kinds of fruit. But these are so small, so green! That would be impossible."

"There is more to it than that. You should know that for these figs to ripen you have to re-attach them to the tree."

"How? That's impossible."

"Then watch. Saying this, the young man took a fig and dipped it first in a small bowl of blood, and next in a little bowl of water. Then he explained: "By sweat and by blood will the savages be returned to the tree and be made pleasing to the Lord of life."

I was thinking to myself: This will require a lot of time. Instead turning to the dear young man I said: "I just don't know what to say."

The youth replied: "All this will be accomplished before the end of the second generation."

"What second generation?"

"Not counting the present generation—two generations from now."

I was thoroughly confused, and could only stammer: "How many years to each of these generations?"

"Sixty years."

"And after that, what?"

⁸Angelo Lago (1834-1914), a graduate pharmacist from the University of Turin, joined Don Bosco after hearing a retreat sermon by the saint in 1872, and was ordained in 1877. Assigned to the office of the prefect general, he worked as assistant to Fr. Michael Rua practically until his death.

"Do you want to know what lies in the future? Come and see."

[Act II: The Railway Journey Southward]

Without knowing how, I found myself at a railway station, where a lot of people had gathered. We boarded a train. I wanted to know where we were. The young man replied: "Look and pay close attention. We are going to travel along the Cordilleras. But the road is open to you also to the east, as far as the ocean.⁹ It is another gift from the Lord."

"And when shall we go to Boston? They are awaiting us there."¹⁰

"In its own good time." And so saying he took out a map.

"What is that?" I asked. He answered by unfolding the map. On it the diocese of Cartagena was shown on a large scale and in high relief. (Was that to be our starting point?)¹¹

[Scene 1: First Stage of the Journey]

As I looked at the map, I heard the train whistle and observed that the train had started. During the trip my friend did most of the talking, but I was unable to follow him very well because of the noise the train was making. Nevertheless, I learnt new and wonderful things pertaining to astronomy and navigation; and about the mineral resources, the fauna and flora of those lands. On these subjects he spoke with eloquence and precision. From the very beginning he held my hand and continued to hold it in friendly manner until the end of the dream. Occasionally I would lay my [free] hand on his, but it seemed to vanish under my touch, so that my left hand would only find my right. The young man only smiled at this futile attempt of mine.¹² I kept looking out the window and watched the ever-changing and amazing landscape filing by: forests, mountains, plains, very large and majestic rivers, which even so far upstream were far larger than I had thought. We traveled along the edge of a virgin forest, as yet unexplored, for over a thousand miles. My power to see was intensified in such a marvelous

⁹ Some two months before the dream Don Bosco, in response to repeated requests, decided to open a house in Brazil, and asked Father Louis Lasagna to proceed with the negotiations. The first Salesian foundation was in Niteroy (Niterói), close to Rio de Janeiro, toward the end of 1883.

¹⁰ A proposal to establish a Salesian work in Boston had been received, through intermediaries, toward the end of 1882. The first Salesian work in Boston (the Don Bosco Technical High School) was established in 1945.

¹¹ The city of Cartagena (Colombia), like San José (Costa Rica), is located at about the 10th degree of latitude north. But at the beginning of the dream narrative the reception hall is said to be located at the equator.

¹² A similar experience of the insubstantial nature of heavenly apparitions is described, with additional elaborate explanations, in the Lanzo Dream of 1876, with respect to Dominic Savio (cf. EBM XII, p. 439f.).

manner, that it seemed able to penetrate those regions at will. It could not only peer into the Cordilleras, but it could also see through the isolated mountain ranges rising above those interminable plains (Brazil?).

<p>[Marginal note by Lemoyne] Between the 15th and 20th degree there lay a very long and wide basin (<i>seno</i>) that began at a point forming a lake. Then a voice spoke and said repeatedly: "When mines will be dug in the depths of these mountains (of that valley), then the promised land flowing with milk and honey will be revealed here, and there will be inconceivable wealth. 13</p>	<p>[[Brazil?]] The incomparable [mineral] riches of the soil still awaiting discovery were revealed to my gaze. I saw numerous mines of precious metals, inexhaustible coal pits, petroleum deposits more abundant than existed anywhere. And this is not all. At many points the Cordilleras opened up on regions the existence of which is totally unknown to our geographers. They [mistakenly] imagine that in those regions mountain ranges form a kind of sheer wall. In those basins, in those valleys, which may be as long as one thousand kilometers, live dense populations that have had as yet no contact with Europeans, nations that are as yet completely unknown. 14</p>
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[unknown] The train meanwhile kept rolling on and on, turning here, turning there. Finally it came to a stop. At this point a great number of passengers got off and crossed under the Cordillera over to the west. [Don Bosco made reference to Bolivia. The station may have been La Paz, where a tunnel may provide a passage to the Pacific coast, and may connect Brazil with Lima by another railway line.] 15

[Scene 2: Second Stage of the Journey]

13 This marginal note in Lemoyne's hand has been interpreted as pin-pointing geographically the future capital of Brazil, Brasilia, even though no mention is made of any city, and the geographical description of the site is too general for any determination. At this time Don Bosco had Brazil on his mind, as he had Boston (USA) and San José (Costa Rica). 14 These ideas were ridiculed in Rome. Reporting Don Bosco's words, Lemoyne writes in Documenti: "In Rome I made a full presentation to Card. Barnabò [Prefect of Propaganda Fide]; but he ridiculed the project as childish fantasy, especially my statement that in South America there were large populations yet to be discovered. Therefore, he refused to speak to the Pope about it. Don Bosco himself then spoke to the Pope, who at once took the matter seriously and asked Card. Franchi [the next Prefect of that Congregation] to make a report. His Eminence was putting it off, however; and when Pius IX insisted, he would reply: 'These are delusions of a sick mind!' But Pius IX gave the order, got the report, and fully backed the new mission" [Documenti XIV, p. 143, ASC 110: Cronachette Lemoyne-Doc, FDBM 1,024 C4]. It should be noted that Pius IX had served as auditor in the apostolic delegations of Chile and Peru from 1823 to 1825.

15 The words in square brackets are a comment by reporter Lemoyne.
16 The words in square brackets are a comment by reporter Lemoyne.

<p>[Lemoyne's marginal note] + The name of the river should be noted (the Paraná, I think). ++ D.B. should also put the river's name here (Uruguay) and, as before, it runs over bridges, through tunnels, by lakes, rivers, forests.</p>	<p>[Main text] [line] The train continued on its journey. We rode along the banks of the Uruguay. I had thought it was a short river; instead it is very long. At a certain point I saw the river + which flows close to the ++ both of them, rivers of great length. Then they separate and form a wide loop. Meanwhile the train kept on rolling south, turning first one way, then another; after a long haul it came to a second stop. Here again a lot of people got off and crossed under the Cordillera over to the west. [Don Bosco made reference to the province of Mendoza in the Argentine Republic. Hence he believes, the station may have been Mendoza, and the tunnel, that which gives access to Santiago or Valparaiso, the capital of Chile.] 16</p>
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[Scene 3: Third Stage of the Journey]

The train continued on its run through the Pampas and Patagonia. Fields under cultivation and scattered homesteads were an indication that civilization was making inroads into those deserts

<p>[Lemoyne's marginal note] Huge heaps of metal partly in ore form and partly refined. It took but a moment. I got off the train and saw them at once. There were more churches, schools, many houses with large numbers of people in them, many hospices, apprentices in trade and agricultural schools, young people and adults together</p>	<p>[Main text] [deserts] Finally we arrived at the Straits of Magellan. I was looking on. We got off. Puntarenas lay before me. The ground for miles around was strewn with stores of coal, planks, beams and lumber. Freight cars were parked in long rows on the tracks. My young friend drew my attention to all these things. So, I asked him, "What are you trying to tell me by all this?" "That at present," he replied, "this is all at the planning stage. But these savages will one day become so docile that they will freely come in order to be taught religion, civilized living, and commerce. Here [the development] that has caused people elsewhere to marvel will be so astounding as to surpass that of all other peoples [sic.] I have seen enough [of this], I said ending the conversation.</p>
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<p>guided by missionaries— Daughters [of Mary Help of Christians?] were working at various domestic tasks. I mingled with them. They looked at me as though I were a stranger.</p>	<p>“Now take me to see my Salesians of Patagonia.”</p> <p>He did, and I saw them. There were many of them, but they were unknown to me; and not one of my old sons was among them. They stared at me in utter amazement. And when I demanded, “Don’t you know me? Don’t you know Don Bosco?”</p> <p>[They replied,] “Don Bosco? Ah yes, we know him all right; but only from pictures, not personally,”</p> <p>“And where are Fr. Fagnano, Fr. Lasagna, Fr. Costamagna?”¹⁷</p>
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[Costamagna?] “We have never known them personally. They are the pioneers of old, the first Salesians to come to these lands from Europe. But they have been dead all these many years!” On hearing this amazing reply, I began to ask myself: “Is this dream or reality?” I clapped my hands, felt my arms, and shook myself. I had a distinct perception of the sound of the clapping and of the feel of my body.

[Conclusion and Awakening]

In this troubled state, I thought I heard Quirino ringing the morning Angelus; but when I was awake, I realized that the ringing came from the bells of the parish church of St. Benignus,¹⁸

The dream had lasted all night long.¹⁹

[Moralistic Conclusion]

Don Bosco concluded with these words: “With the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales will the Salesians succeed in drawing the peoples of [South] America to Jesus Christ. At first the task of converting the savages to Christian morals will be a most difficult one; but their children will most willingly accept the teachings of the missionaries. Through them colonies [missions] will be founded; civilization will replace barbarism; and a great number of savages will join the fold of Jesus Christ.”

¹⁷ Luigi Lasagna (1850-1895), ordained in 1873, left for the missions with the second group in 1876. As director and then as provincial he developed the Salesian work in Uruguay and initiated scientific and cultural projects. He established the Salesian work in Brazil. He was ordained bishop in 1893 and charged by Leo XIII with the mission of protecting and evangelizing the natives there. But he died in a tragic train collision shortly thereafter.

¹⁸ Don Bosco was at San Benigno Canavese (a house of novitiate at this time) for the spiritual retreat with the members of the Third General Chapter, and was awakened by the Angelus bells of the local church of St. Benignus. In his half-waking state he had at first thought that it was the Angelus bell of the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Turin rung by Brother Camillo Quirino (1847-1892), “that saintly brother—a mathematician, polyglot and bell ringer.” [EBM XVI, p. 312, note 34]

¹⁹ Dreams do not last all night, though they may appear to do so. They last only some fifteen or twenty minutes in real time during REM sleep toward the end of a sleep cycle.

**FEBRUARY :
THE OFFICIAL
GROUPS OF THE
SALESIAN FAMILY**

The Salesian Family of Don Bosco is made up of three central groups (SDB, FMA, Cooperators) to whose foundation he himself gave much time, energy, and formative and organizational expertise, because they constituted the key and nucleus of his work, and of a constellation of many other groups. From him the Association of Mary Help of Christians took its rise. (CIC 2).

In the previous article in the month of January, I explained how Don Bosco founded the first four groups of the Salesian Family. But he was not simply the founder of the Salesians, of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians with Saint Mary Dominic Mazzarello, of the Cooperators and of the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

In fact, creating an all-embracing family atmosphere, within and outside his houses, he not only originated a particular style of personal relationships and of authority, but, guided but God, he gave rise to a charismatic identity that was shared and was capable of being shared, which finds its expression in the Salesian spirit and mission.

In this way, the action of the Holy Spirit guided Don Bosco to give life to various apostolic forces, the first, but not the only ones, those founded by himself. His original plan, not fully realized in his own lifetime, remained a driving force to be developed: the Salesian Family with its innumerable groups is the obvious historical proof of this.

If on the one hand one cannot attribute all the developments of the Salesian Family to Don Bosco, since his heritage is not a “museum” but a living reality; on the other hand, all the subsequent foundations in the Salesian Family are attributable to his own apostolic plan, as has been so often said by his successors, guarantors of the authenticity of his spirit and of the Salesian mission.

The miraculous expansion of the Salesians and of Salesian work in the world was certainly the fruit of the co-involvement of so many apostolic forces, especially of the Cooperators. Even today we can say that this involvement of the Salesian Family continues to be the secret of the expansion of Salesian work, in all parts of the world. To commit ourselves therefore to know and love the Salesian Family and help it grow



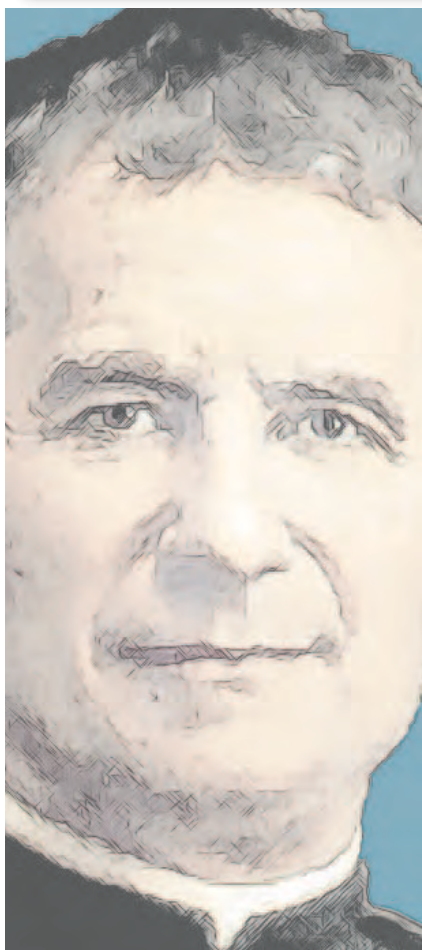


has been and will continue to be a common characteristic of the common Salesian vocation and at the same time, the secret of the fruitfulness of this great spiritual and apostolic movement which had its origins in the heart of Don Bosco.

Don Bosco had therefore begun his work on behalf of poor boys founding the Salesian Congregation (SDB standing for Salesians of Don Bosco), then the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), the Salesians-Cooperators (SSCC), and the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA). But all this was only the seed spoken of in the Gospel; that tiny seed which has a great future ahead of it: to become a great tree. For all the Sons of Don Bosco, nowadays this image has become an icon, and all those who

know about it speak with full awareness of “the tree of the Salesian Family”.

At the moment there are twenty three groups officially accepted as being part of this great family. It is already a tree with many branches, each different from the others but animated by the same charism: there are groups with members male and female consecrated in the religious life, members belonging to secular institutes and lay people. Their areas of apostolate are also different: some are working in the field of education, others in health services, other in human development or the world of social communication. But all of them with common elements and a common identity that finds its origin in the great heart of the Founder, Don Bosco, now so well-known in all parts of world.



**Dear Members of the Salesian Family,
This is the time of the year when the Institute of Salesian Spirituality at Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley begins to process applications for the 2009-2010 course year. We invite you to consider this program for your ongoing formation and personal enrichment.**

Statement of Purpose

The Institute of Salesian Spirituality (ISS) offers a various types of study programs and formative experiences. Programs range from one week to nine months.

The specific purpose of the Institute is to make a comprehensive Salesian renewal experience available to members of the Salesian Family. Critical study is integrated with experiences aimed at deepening spirituality and fostering personal growth in the context of Salesian community life and ministry.

The process encourage participants to deepen their appreciation for the charism of the founder, the spirit and story of the Salesian Family, and the distinctive qualities of Salesian spirituality and mission.

Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley, home of the ISS, is a community that is fully committed to pursue the ideals of Salesian ongoing formation. (cont.)

INSTITUTE OF
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INSTITUTE OF SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY

1. To acquire a deeper and more critical knowledge of Don Bosco's life and times by research, study and reflection;
2. To draw on the theological and cultural resources available in the area for an ever broader vision of the Salesian mission;
3. To live a spirituality that impacts our everyday life and calls us to face new challenges with courage and a spirit of initiative.
4. To live our vocation through a deep experience of community characterized by Salesian family spirit.



THE SALESIAN VOCATION IS A GIFT FROM GOD ROOTED IN BAPTISM. IT IS THE CALL TO BECOME, LIKE DON BOSCO, DISCIPLES OF CHRIST TO FORM COMMUNITIES THAT WITNESS THE LOVE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD TO THE YOUNG.

[FORMAZIONE DEI SALESIANI DI DON BOSCO. #1]

Program Components

Every ISS program has five components:

- Intellectual and professional
- Life in the Spirit
- Personal Growth
- Pastoral development
- Living and working in community

Course Offerings

- Don Bosco Founder
- Spirituality Francis de Sales
- Youth Spirituality
- Don Bosco Builder
- Salesian Identity & Charism
- Leadership, Ministry & the Young

In addition to three Salesian courses offered each term, ISS participants have ample opportunity for pastoral updating and pursuing specific interests in religious education, thanks to the wide array of theological courses available at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). ISS is fully affiliated with the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology (DSPT), which in turn is a member school of the GTU.

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