**SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO**

**SAN DOMENICO SAVIO PROVINCE - BMA**

**GENERAL CHAPTER 28**

**GOOD NIGHT**

**MISSION**

Dear brothers,

**The Salesian presence in Latin America**

The Salesians arrived in Latin America in the last decades of the 19th century. We know all the stories from the first missionary expedition (1875). Today we are called to deepen the growth after this first expedition.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, motivated by the Second Vatican Council and the Latin Conferences that proclaimed the preferential option for the poor, the Salesians realized that indigenous peoples were a group in need of accompaniment and assistance and not just baptism.

Colleges for indigenous children have been started, the main reasons of which can be summarized as follows: starting from the education of children to convert adults to Christianity; concentrate several dispersed peoples in a central place; separate from the indigenous family environment, considered "wild" and not very educational. This system has generated very controversial results and has come to an end.

**The Kingdom to be built**

The extraordinary Synod for the Pan-Amazon, held in Rome in October 2019, was a precious opportunity for us and for the whole Church to deepen our commitment to the inculturation of the Gospel, to the defense of ecology and poorest - young people, children and adolescents.

Below I share with you a short video with scenes of our mission in the northern region of Brazil, part of the Brazilian Amazon, where the Province of San Domenico Savio is located. What will we see in these scenes? A continent of immense natural beauty, a real multi-cultural mosaic with a nod to the great socio-political challenges. At the center of this geographical scene is our dear AMAZON, as His Holiness Pope Francis says in the post-synodal document.

When we think of the profile of the Salesian for today's young people, we also ask ourselves: what missionary work the Salesians do? What do they dream of for the Pan-Amazon in Latin America?

**A social dream**

They dream of "an Amazon that integrates and promotes all its inhabitants, so that they can consolidate a good lifestyle" bem viver ". (QA, 8).

The inter-provincial missionary experience of the Salesians has promoted a missionary exchange at Brazilian level for youth workers and Salesians in formation. In the Manaus Province we have received these groups of young people from all over Brazil with some frequency.

We promote missionary formation in initial formation. Particular attention has been given by our province to the sending of those being formed, pre-novices, practical trainees, post-novices, theology students to areas of missionary presence. We underline in particular the experience of the Vocational Volunteer that welcomes young people (boys and girls) in the Salesian communities of the Rio Negro for pastoral work and vocational discernment experiences.

**A cultural dream**

We dream of promoting the Amazon through a solid and embodied professional and Christian education. "This is the meaning of the best educational work: to cultivate without eradicating, to grow without weakening identity, to promote without invading" (QA, 28). The most awaited result of this process is the harmonious synthesis between culture and education. The effort to translate Sacred Scripture into indigenous languages, the creation of social movements, the fruitful contact with anthropologists, the development of inculturated educational practices has contributed to saving important cultural values ​​of the various indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, thus promoting capable leaders and communities to actively participate in your story.

**An ecological dream**

We dream of a missionary practice sensitive to integral ecology, where the relationship of the human being with nature becomes cosmic. "Freeing others from their slavery certainly means taking care of their environment and defending it and - more importantly - helping man's heart to open himself with confidence to that God who not only created everything that exists, but who has given to us in Jesus Christ "(QA, 41)

**An ecclesial dream**

"The Church is called to walk with the peoples of the Amazon. But to make this incarnation of the Church and the Gospel possible, the great missionary proclamation must resonate unceasingly." (QA, 61). In this sense, indigenous vocations represent the future of our charism in the Amazon. The presence of qualified priests, coadjutor brothers and numerous indigenous young people in our houses of formation nourishes our soul and makes us believe that the seed sown is bearing fruit.

**Acknowledgments**

Dear Chapter confreres, dear young people, I want to raise here, in this chapter assembly, as in an act of faith, a hymn of gratitude to God. Gratitude for having entrusted us with such a beautiful mission in the Amazon, gratitude for the brothers with whom we shared this journey started many decades ago, gratitude for the loving collegiality with which I feel in thought and action with the Provincials of our region. When we often stretch out our hands for help, we never lacked the generosity of the provinces.

I thank Don Natale Vitali for the paternity and affection he has had for us in the South Cone Region in these twelve years of service to the Brothers. May the good god reward him for his hard work.

Finally, thanks to the Rector Major who has always been so prompt and close to us. Angel, I am sure that in sending the Salesians to the lands of the Amazon, the Congregation wants to give us a testimony of a happy religious life rooted in the values ​​of the Gospel. Today, despite the many limitations that we have, we are committed to doing what we can, to give the best of our strengths and hearts so that Don Bosco's charism is a strong and living reality in Brazil in the Manaus Province.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Amazon help us to "transform the reality of the Amazon and free it from the evils that afflict it".

Thank you.

Good night!

Jefferson Luis

Salesian inspector