



### Dear Confreres and Friends,

A missionary is one who shares Jesus' friendship with others by proclaiming the good news of the love of God - making known the Father's love to all (cf. Jn 15:15).

The value of friendships come to the fore in times of adversity. The intensified experience of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in the recent months in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh has exhibited how friends are ready to risk life itself for taking care of each other and the loved ones of their families, irrespective of their caste, clan, tribe or language. Over hundred priests and religious in India have lost their lives in the last two months. Friendship in Christ propels each one to give their best in service, even in the face of pain, loss, and death itself. Jesus' words continue to ring true: There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends (Jn 15:13).

Let us keep sharing true friendship in Christ.

■ Fr. Biju Michael, SDB  
Regional Councillor  
for South Asia

## Jerusalem – growing friendship

The three Abrahamic religions can be compared to three rivers. Before arriving in Jerusalem, I thought that the inhabitants of this City, who draw water from one or another of these three rivers, lived isolated from each other. This vision, typical of the imagination of the tourist and pilgrim, does not sufficiently describe **the complex reality** of this city. It takes a long time to adequately investigate issues relating to religious affiliation, and it is necessary to stay in Jerusalem and experience the daily life of the inhabitants.

After I lived a few years in Jerusalem I discovered, in fact, that there are some channels that connect those three great rivers: attempts at dialogue that promote friendship and collaboration at various levels. In particular, I remember two significant moments that I personally experienced. The first was an **interreligious meeting** at which the participants gathered to pray together following a text suitable for everyone. The second moment was the **Open Day** organized in the Salesian house in Jerusalem, which has played a significant role in local history. Without any embarrassment whatsoever, the guests visited the church and asked us Salesians various questions on religious topics. When I was in Egypt, I couldn't even imagine that something like this could take place.

One might think that attempts at dialogue are of little significance, because they do not give immediately visible results on a large scale. Jerusalem is a ferment of initiatives similar to those I referred to, yet their fruits are not very evident yet. **Don Bosco's words**, however, encourage us to keep going. To those of his family and staff, who felt he was not sufficiently rewarded for his love, care and work, he said, "Remember that the Lord pays non secundum fructum, sed secundum laborem" (MB, vol. VII).

This shared effort, then, is necessary, and I think it is very positive for everyone to meet people who believe in **dialogue and friendship**, and work to promote their concrete realization; however, we must not forget that the future we hope for and spend ourselves on remains in God's hands, more than ours.



### ■ Author:

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# PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE

*Taichi, you are working with Don Bosco Green Alliance. What is it about and what makes you happy in doing this?*

The Salesian family in different parts of the world has been, for sure, doing a lot of environmental actions since a long time. This ecological journey was highlighted more when, in 2015, Pope Francis promulgated *Laudato Si'* on the care for our common home. Inspired by this encyclical, the Don Bosco Green Alliance (DBGA) was born, a global network of youth from different Salesian communities who are working and advocating actively towards environmental stewardship. We go beyond bring just a network; we are working in this area as one Salesian family. We do so, not because we are experts but because environmental issues are seriously affecting the lives of the youth we are serving, especially the poor and the vulnerable. Our accompaniment, presence and life-witness do not focus excessively on the political side of it. We approach it according to the core of our mission – education and evangelization. It is not only about the environmental activities that we organize but how much our young people are engaged. They need to understand what the issues are. We evangelize them about the spirituality behind taking care of God's creation. After all, this is just one of the many expressions of our Salesian charism and identity, a part of our efforts to form our young people to be good Christians and honest citizens. Working with DBGA is a blessing. It has given me the opportunity to serve young people and to do something for the greater glory of God. And these make me more happy and grateful.



**Zenaida Ann Miranda**  
"Taichi"

From Cebu, **Philippines**. Her involvement in Salesian Youth ministry started in 2006. In 2009, she worked in the FIS Provincial House immersed in various departments and projects. Her recently concluded job was in the **Missions Office** as the in-charge volunteering program. She offered volunteer service in Myanmar in 2018.

After her participation in GC28, she was appointed a member of the Global Team of the **Don Bosco Green Alliance** representing the EAO Region.

*What positive can COVID-19 bring to the young and to the Salesian family?*

It makes us more human while allowing ourselves to be spirituality grounded. We become more health conscious, more sensitive to what's happening around us and to the needs of others. We are more practical yet innovative, and more accepting of changes and limitations. We acknowledge humbly that we need each other and God's presence to keep living meaningfully despite inconveniences.



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## Don Bosco Green Alliance (DBGA)

- **DBGA** is an international collective of young people from the Salesian Family institutions, who contribute to **global environmental** action, thought and policy. Launched in 2018, DBGA has already **434 members** from **75 countries**.
- **Don Bosco Society** is an international organization that focuses on the education and overall development of young persons. DBS is present in close to 2000 locations across **134 countries**, and running over **3000 institutions**



<https://donboscoogreen.org/>

**JULY**  
**SALESIAN**  
**MISSIONARY**  
**INTENTION**

## Social friendship

For overcoming discrimination due to caste differences in India.

We pray that, in social, economic, and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship. [Pope Francis' prayer intention]

ASIA

