



CAGLIERO 11

newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



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Dear friends,

Greetings from Malta. In the history of Europe Malta was at the crossroads of numerous powers, who occupied the island until 1964 when we won our Independence. Our language and our surnames bear witness to the long series of occupiers. This history made encounter and a fascination for diversity to be in the DNA of Maltese people.

In the past, Malta offered many missionaries to several countries; today, it receives missionaries as well. I am convinced that missionary work is, first and foremost, a matter of encounter between fellow travellers on the journey of life. Action is a second step. I hope and pray that more and more people in the Church be intrigued by the beauty of the encounter between different stories, as those differences are meant to be an enrichment. I hope that we will be able to nurture this encounter and help it grow.

Roberto SDB

■ Fr. Roberto Falzon, SDB
Regional Coordinator for
Missionary Animation for
Central & North Europe
Region, and PDMA for Malta

Pope Francis and his concept of 'mission'



In his magisterium, Pope Francis hardly ever speaks of 'missions', i.e., of missions in the classical sense of 'missio ad gentes'. On the contrary, he very often speaks of the 'mission' (*Evangelii Gaudium*), the mission of the Church in which we have been involved since baptism, but to which we cannot at the same time lay any claim, because it is first and foremost the mission of Jesus Christ Himself and we only participate in it.

According to Pope Francis, this **missio includes the whole person**, with his values, relationships, faith and the world in which he lives. It therefore presupposes a readiness to meet and to go out, as well as the capacity for listening and real dialogue. It manifests itself in the effort for one's own conversion, in an attitude of altruism, acceptance of the other and mercy in all its various forms. These are mainly internal attitudes, and it is, therefore, very important to **free missio from all forms of functionalism**. Missio does not primarily mean doing something, i.e., to be busy in some way, organising or building something; instead, it is the horizon of all Christian thought and action, a true way of life. It is a gift that the Christian receives from God with gratitude, because it is an undeserved gift. At the same time, he wants many others to be part of it. This attitude transforms him and the community in which he lives, and gradually changes other people in his vicinity and transforms the whole environment around him.

For Francis, the whole Church is in movement as God's faithful people living in space and time, because **it is the work of the One who is most in movement, the Triune God**. This movement in God Himself is also the basis of the missionary movement. Therefore, if there are no conditions for this movement in the Church, nothing moves, the Church remains static and 'rots'.

Therefore, if we ask ourselves how Francis' vision of missio can be expressed, we would use his key concepts: **encounter, go forth, and merciful service**. According to him, the missionary is the disciple and vice versa, i.e., the one who through his faith has encountered Jesus Christ, has been called by Him and sent forth to people. He wants to meet them in order to bring them the Word of God and make His love accessible. So, he goes out to meet them, and wants to serve them in their specific situation with a merciful heart, helping them on their way to the fullness of life in Christ.

■ Fr. Pavel Ženišek, SDB
Member of the Salesian Missions Sector

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- What examples of functionalism do I find in Salesian missionary activities?
- How can I develop attitudes of encounter, going forth, and merciful service?



LIVING THE "SACRAMENT OF PRESENCE"

AMONG THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF PANAMA

Dear Alex, How is the Salesian presence known and perceived by Panamanian society, which has 'only' two communities, both in the capital of the country?

In their 116 years of presence, the Salesians in Panama have become significant contributors to the country's development, and protagonists of education and pastoral care. We see this in the impact that the two communities currently have in the country. The Basilica of Don Bosco is one of the most important parishes in the archdiocese and a great centre of devotion to Don Bosco. It draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and devotees of Don Bosco every year. The Don Bosco Technical Institute has always been a reference point for technical education in the country.

What do young people in Panama miss the most?

The most serious problems our young people face are delinquency, organised crime, dropping out of school, lack of opportunities and the huge economic gap between the rich and the poor. One perceives a certain uneasiness among the 1.8 million young people of our country. They confront great uncertainty in achieving their desire to build a nation led by nobler goals. We have a need for consistent models to rekindle youthful ardour in Panama.

What do you consider the missionary dimension of your country?

Currently, Christianity continues to be part of the backbone of Panamanian society. However, there are also currents such as secularism and consumerism, which promote a certain individualism, hedonism and non-religious affiliation. This gives us to understand that the missionary action of the Church in caring for the people of God in Panama must be oriented, not only towards the sacraments, but also to listening to and accompanying them, especially the young, allowing them also to play a leadership role.

As Salesians, we are called to witness to our faith and vocation. The reality that there are currently only five Salesians of Panamanian nationality is not to be taken simply as matter fact. It urges us to do more to root the charism in the hearts of our young people. We need to live the 'sacrament of presence' among them and witness to them the beauty of our vocation. We must also not be afraid to make the vocational proposal explicit to our young people and help them to open up to broader horizons.



**Alex Jesús Pinilla
Jiménez, SDB**

I am a Salesian of Don Bosco. I met the Salesians in the institute that we still have in **Panama City**, the capital of my country, Panama.

Once I entered Don Bosco's house, feeling called, I decided to stay for the rest of my life. I made my first profession in 2016 and last September 2nd I made my Perpetual Profession.

Since 2021 I have been in **Rome** studying theology in the Zeffirino Namuncurá Community (Bufalotta).



SALESIAN CARDINALS

On 30 September 2023 the College of Cardinals numbered 242 cardinals, of whom 137 are electors. 50 cardinals belong to some religious society; the largest number, Salesians: 10 cardinals, 4 of whom are electors, including our Rector Major.

ELECTORS

Ángel Fernández
Artime | 63, Spain

Daniel F. Sturla
Berhouet | 64,
Uruguay

Cristóbal López
Romero | 71, Spain

Charles Maung Bo
| 74, Myanmar

NON-ELECTORS

Óscar A. Rodríguez
Maradiaga | 80, Honduras

Ricardo Ezzati Andrello
| 81, Chile

Angelo Amato | 85, Italy

Tarcisio Bertone | 88, Italy

Raffaele Farina | 90, Italy

Joseph Zen Ze-kiun | 91,
China

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NOVEMBER SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

For the Pope

That the Salesians and the whole Church
of Panama be always faithful to the Pope

We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfils his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit. [Prayer intention of Pope Francis]

PANAMA

