



Pakistan – Salesian presence among our Muslim brothers and sisters



Dear friends and confreres,

Cagliero11's theme for the month, "RESPONSIBILITY – an eco-sustainable lifestyle", reminded me of Don Bosco's words in The Young Man:

"Lift up your eyes, my children, and see what there is in the heavens and on earth. The sun, the moon, the stars, the air, the water, the fire are all things that once did not exist. But there is a God, who in his omnipotence created them, bringing them out of nothing."

From his experience at the feet of Mamma Margaret who taught him to know how to contemplate God in nature, Don Bosco trained his boys for this "simple gaze", a revelation of God's love. There is no doubt that the ecological issue is a reality that challenges us, and I want to share in your concern for a matter of vital importance for humanity. It is everyone's business, we are all responsible.

■ Don Juan Carlos Pérez Godoy, SDB
Regional Councillor for the Mediterranean Region

Since its foundation in 1999, Salesian work has continued to grow in Pakistan. We offer our service **to the young people most in need**, especially among the Christian communities, but we remain open to young Muslims.

Today we are four Salesians distributed between two communities: in **Lahore** and in **Quetta**. Fr Noble Lal and Fr Samuel Adnan are the first two Salesians from Pakistan, now directors of the two communities. There is a Salesian coadjutor from Italy, Piero Ramello. Fr Gabriel Cruz from Mexico is the head of the Delegation. 'Father Gabo', as he is called, has been in Pakistan since 2018. Since April 2021 he oversees the Delegation of Pakistan and all the members of the Delegation outside the country as well.

"Some congregations like the Dominicans, Franciscans and others, have been in Pakistan since a long time and have many vocations," says Fr Gabo, "we, also have them. We are the only Religious Congregation in the country that offers technical education. Our "Don Bosco Technical School & Youth Centre" is among the top six technical schools in Pakistan. It is the only Catholic school among them; the others are Muslim."

Salesians offer education not only to Christians (Catholics and Protestants), but **also to Muslims**, who come to us because we them offer quality education. We collaborate a lot with the dioceses and in the parishes in which our institutions are. We also teach in the inter-diocesan seminary.

The Muslim community respects and appreciates the work we do in the country. Christians may practise their faith, especially in our neighbourhoods and parish areas. Unfortunately, in some parts of the country Christian communities are **persecuted or discriminated** against; so, it is not always easy to proclaim the faith openly. Yet, Christians live their faith with beautiful devotion and at depth.

Perhaps the question comes to mind, **"What use is the Salesian presence** in such a strongly Muslim country?" Fr Gabo replies: *"We offer the youth the same things that Don Bosco wanted for all his young people: a home, bread, integral formation, education and, above all, religion – in a word: dignity. Through education we offer them a certain standard of living, more possibilities of getting a good job and capacity to live with dignity for themselves and their families. That's no small thing."*

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

■ Am I willing to see Christ also in those who profess another faith?

Don Gabo (in red sweatshirt) with the Salesian aspirants



DIVERSITY THAT ENRICHES EVERYONE



Lauren, you have been working with Salesian missionary volunteers for many years now. What is unique or special about the "Cagliari Project" in your province?

We have been blessed to have so many incredible volunteers give of their time, energy, gifts and talents since we began the Cagliari Project in 2007. The Salesian charism is the foundation and strength of our program. In Australia, this is quite an achievement as we live in an incredibly secular society. We welcome all volunteers who have a desire to work and journey with young people. What is amazing is many of whom would not have identified with any formal aspect of Catholicism, or any religion, return and call themselves 'Salesian' and commit to following in the footsteps of Don Bosco.

What can the Salesian Mission of the AUL Province (Australia, New Zealand, Western Samoa and Fiji) offer that can enrich the whole Salesian world?

We have such a diverse and rich province comprising of four incredibly different countries and many different cultures and ways of looking at the world. To fly from one end of our Province to the other would take at least 12 hours and many different flights! Of course, there are challenges with this diversity but most importantly it encourages us to always be open to different ways of thinking. Ultimately, our diversity leads us to an expanded understanding of humanity – this is a great gift.

Till recently you were the only lay woman Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation (PDMA) in the congregation. How do you find yourself in this role?

When I attended my first PDMA regional meeting in 2016, I was nervous! How will I be welcomed as a lay person and a woman? I shared this with Fr Guillermo Basañes. He, after the meeting, said, "We were nervous too!" I had no reason to be nervous: all the wonderful Salesian priests and brothers I have worked with have been so welcoming to me in this role over the last five years and I am truly grateful. We dialogue as equals and I think this is a true testament to the openness of the Salesians of Don Bosco. I love bringing a different voice and a different point of view as a PDMA and I am truly honoured by the opportunity to be involved in the Congregation in this unique way.



Ms. Lauren Hichaaba

Lauren grew up in **Melbourne**, Australia; however, she was in the United States to attend high school and university. After graduating with a degree in Religion and Theatre, Lauren spent two years as a teacher **in Zambia**.

This experience inspired her to obtain her BA in Teaching in Melbourne and then, later, a Masters in Development Studies. Lauren has worked with the Salesians of Don Bosco for 15 years and is the **Provincial Delegate** for Missionary Animation, and the Director and Co-Founder of **Project Cagliari**, the Salesian Missionary Volunteer Program for Australia Pacific (AUL).

She is the mother of four beautiful and lively children (pictured with son Xavier).

F O R U M

New Volunteer "Advisory Board"

- An "Advisory Board" has recently been created to offer support and opportunities for connection to those who are involved in the Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service (SMVS).
- It is a group of Salesians of Don Bosco and lay Salesians (Rafael Bejarano, Marco Fulgaro, Lauren Hichaaba, JC Montenegro, Adam Rudin and Pavel Zenisek) with long-time experience of working in Salesian volunteer programs.
- It is aimed at anyone who needs direction or support in creating volunteer programs. Here is email you can contact: salesianvol@sdb.org.



SEPTEMBER SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

An environmentally sustainable lifestyle

For Salesians' and young people's environmentally responsible behaviour in Australia

We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this. [Pope Francis' prayer intention]

OCEANIA 