



CAGLIERO 11

newsletter for Salesian
Missionary Animation



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Hello everyone!

The parish is the unit of our community that expresses our faith, creates a spirit of fraternity and shows solidarity. This month Pope Francis asks us to pray for this communion in the Church.

Faith is not only prayer, but a commitment to live in fraternity and solidarity. Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco belong to several faiths, but our Salesian identity demands that all of us unite in fraternity and solidarity. Our values of life, truth and freedom find their expression in seeking justice, promoting fraternity and ensuring solidarity.

Our love and gratitude for Don Bosco allows us to bring these Christian values in harmony within a multi-religious dimension in a unique and enriching way.

■ Bryan Magro, President
World Confederation of
Past Pupils of Don Bosco

Missionary aspirantate?



The First World War was followed by a period of missionary revival in the Catholic Church. In this climate, **Blessed Filippo Rinaldi** founded the magazine *Gioventù Missionaria* to animate Salesian missionary groups. Finally, in 1922, he founded the **first Aspirantate in Ivrea**, destined to train future missionaries *ad gentes*. Soon after, other missionary Aspirantates were founded in Italy, Spain, Great Britain and France. The concept was that, after secondary studies, the aspiring missionaries would be sent to the missions, where they would begin their novitiate and undertake initial training with the local Salesians.

In the current formation process of the Congregation, **the post-novitiate** is the formative phase in which the charismatic identity is deepened. Therefore, it is the most suitable formative phase for serious missionary discernment and where there is the most lively and generous missionary readiness among Salesians. After consulting his spiritual guide, his Rector and the Provincial, the confrere may write to the Rector Major presenting his missionary availability.

Today the Salesian Aspirantate is considered the natural bridge between youth ministry and initial formation. Although there are different types of Salesian Aspirantates (e.g., university aspirants, high school aspirants, etc.), their primary objective is to accompany young people who express a **desire and willingness to discern** whether God is calling them to Salesian life and, therefore, willing to embark on a path of verification to understand whether this initial attraction is truly a call from God and whether they have the right conditions to accept it.

The aspirant is **accompanied in this discernment** through a strong community life with companions and the accompanying team, a lived experience of Salesian Youth Spirituality, initiation into Salesian apostolic activities, particularly in missionary situations to mature as a man and a Christian. In this way, the aspirant is helped to discover whether God's call for him is towards Salesian life or towards something else, and then be guided towards it.

Therefore, today, rather than having a Missionary Aspirantate, what is of greater importance is for all aspirants to have **meaningful missionary experiences**, especially involvement in some form of missionary volunteer work!

■ Don Alfred Maravilla, SDB
Consigliere generale per le Missioni

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- How can we arouse in young people the desire and willingness to discover God's call for them?
- How can we create a strong missionary sensitivity in our CEP?



MOLDOVA – MISSIONARIES IN DAILY LIFE



Fr. Andrea, this month's theme is parishes. Is there anything specifically Salesian in the parish pastoral work in Chisinau?

Our community is entrusted with two parishes: one here in Chisinau, in the city, and, since last year, one in Cretoaia, in a small village 28 km from Chisinau. These are two very different parishes. The one in Chisinau experiences the dynamics of the city, in particular depersonalization and a watered-down sense of belonging. The one in Cretoaia, on the other hand, is very cohesive, since the village is small, and all the inhabitants are related to each other. In some ways, it can be said to be ecumenical because, due to the many mixed marriages, it is attended by both Catholics and Orthodox. In Chisinau, I would say that there is little that is specifically Salesian in the pastoral work, because the young people and children in the parish have to be looked after with the fewest of hands. In Cretoaia, on the other hand, the Salesian specificity of the parish pastoral work is based on the collaboration with the congregation of nuns founded by Blessed Edmund Bojanowski. They have been running the only kindergarten in the village for some 20 years.

Pope Francis says that all pastoral work in the Church must be missionary. Is this element present in your parishes?

Here in Moldova, one must be careful when speaking of missionary work so as to avoid the risk of being accused of proselytization. Here, in fact, we are in a country with an Orthodox majority and, therefore, Christian. The Orthodox do not like to be told that Moldova is a mission country, that is, where people go to bring the first proclamation of Christ; nor is it a country to be re-evangelised, despite having lived for many years under the Soviet regime. I often remind parishioners that each one of us is a missionary in our daily lives because wherever we are, we are called to bear good witness of Christ so that He can enter the lives of the people we meet along the way, without necessarily having to enter the Catholic Church.

What great challenges do you find in the Salesian presence in Moldova?

There are many challenges in Moldova, especially for a presence such as ours that is still young (the work was opened in 2007). Despite being in the capital and despite the strong emigration to Europe, a pronounced mistrust of Catholics is still palpable not only among the ordinary people but also among the Orthodox clergy and civil authorities. This constant suspicion of the goodness of our intentions, of our desire to help young people without seeking our own benefit, is truly disheartening.



Fr. Andrea Ballan, SDB

Born **in Italy** in Castelfranco Veneto, he studied at the UPS (Salesian Pontifical University) in Rome and Turin, as well as at "All Hallows College" in Dublin, Ireland.

From 2002 to 2017 he lived in Gatchina, **in Russia** working in the "Don Bosco" vocational training center. After spending three years in the community of San Callisto in Rome he moved **to Chisinau** in the Republic of Moldova, where he still works today.



World population: Catholics, priests, missions

FORUM	Continent	Population	Catholics	% of Catholics in the population	Persons per priest	Mission Stations without resident priests
	Africa	1,350 mil.	259 mil.	19.2%	26,000	70,200
	America	1,100 mil.	650 mil.	59.1%	8,350	20,100
	Asia	4,600 mil.	151 mil.	3.3%	43,450	36,900
	Europe	730 mil.	285 mil.	39.1%	4,350	430
	Oceania	43 mil.	11 mil.	25.6%	9,150	870
	Total	7,823 mil.	1,346 mil.	17.2%	14,950	128,500



Source: Agenzia Fides

FEBRUARY SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

For parishes

That the hearts and minds of the parishioners in Moldova remain open to the needy

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need. [Prayer intention of Pope Francis]

MOLDOVA

