



FR. MIGUEL SOLAROLI, SDB

(September 29, 1927– November 19, 2009)

To his brother Salesians: "Be with the boys, and be more attentive to them."

To his beloved Alumni "Do the same with your family. Discipline them but at the same time educate them by the example of your presence."

The following excerpts is lifted from the book of Fr. Remo Bati SDB "Passing On His Brilliance – Salesian Pioneers in the Philippines 1951 – 1963". Fr. Miguel is one among the many Salesian Pioneers who worked in the Philippine Province bringing it to a status where it lofts stands right now. We salute our Salesian Pioneers of whom some passed away already and some are bedridden. We pray that through their dedication and love for the "Da Mihi Animas Coetera Tolle" of Don Bosco, we keep alive the Salesian Charismatic Identity in our hearts.

I am **Ercole Michele Solaroli y Zanetti**, 80 years old, and a Confessor at present at Don Bosco Mandaluyong. The eldest of the eleven children of two different mothers, my mother died at childbirth when I was two years old, so I do not even remember her. My father remarried and had ten children. The family was rather poor. My father was a tailor at Faenza. He specialized in clergy attire. Unfortunately, in the 1930's the job situation became very difficult and we were not always sure of our daily meals.

The Don Bosco College of Faenza helped us by passing the leftover bread of each boarder. In this way, providence allowed us to eat every day.

We frequented the public school for our elementary schooling and I entered Don Bosco School at the beginning of high school together with my brothers. We frequented the oratory every Sunday where my father was a very active catechist, teaching every Sunday afternoon. He was also a good actor in comedies and drama. These weekly contacts with the Salesians inspired me to enter the Congregation. This inspiration was fostered by my friendship with Msgr. Vincenzo Cimmati and Fr. Ragazzini, then Provincial of Central America. From Faenza I was sent to the missionary seminary at Ivrea where I continued my high school until I graduated in 1943.

A letter from the superior asked me to be a missionary in China, so I arrived there on December 1947. Shanghai was my first assignment and then Hong Kong. From Hong Kong I was sent to India in Shillong, where I was ordained priest by Bishop Fernando on July 25, 1954. From India, I was assigned to Mandaluyong in 1955. There I was in-charge of the DBYC, then as principal of the school. In 1970, we started Tondo, amidst the problems of the land and squatters. I stayed in Tondo for nine years. It was Tondo that offered me the most cherished moments of my life as a Salesian including the unexpected visit of Pope Paul VI.

**My message to
the young:**

**"Never loose
heart and hope
even in the
most difficult
moments.**

**The Lord will
always offer a
happy solution."**



In honor of IGE

Tributes in honor of Fr. Miguel Solaroli SDB

(The quotes are lifted from the book Passing on his Brilliance by Fr. Remo Bati, SDB)

A man of first class public relations. Full of friends, great love for children and school. Used to go to Tondo many times to take out children using drugs and they would sleep in his office. When the Pope came and Imelda Marcos phoned if he needed policemen, he answered, “No, we do not need anyone. Not one of the Filipinos will touch the Pope.”

Organized Tondo at a time when it was difficult to live there. Initiated great works which the Rector Major today has praised very much. With Fr. Curto, he organized a magnificent, very nice oratory where all children could gather for games, theater, sermons of the church. A very good organizer of oratories.

Fr. Adolf Faroni, SDB

What impressed me is his love and dedication to the alumni. He has been the father figure of a lot of the Bosconians. Even in his old age, his thoughts and his wishes are still with the alumni. He is the epitome of Don Bosco in his love for the young.

Br. George Celis, SDB

When I graduated in 1964, he was already our principal in Don Bosco Mandaluyong. He was very close to all students which was also evident in the number of boys who transferred from Don Bosco Makati to Mandaluyong. Most of the student in Makati, upon learning that Father Miguel will transfer to Mandaluyong, also transferred there. He got to be very close to them because of the way he related with them; he gave them advice, guided them to confession. Until now he is loved by the students and by all the alumni of Don Bosco.

**Mr. Joey de Ocampo
DB Mandaluyong Alumni**

He was my rector for two year in Tondo. He had great courage and understanding. He knew what kind of people we were supposed to evangelize – the squatters of Tondo – that they were not like students of a technical school, etc. He knew how to keep the community united, trying to prevent friction among Confreres from Italy, Spain and other European countries who speak out what they think. Fr. Miguel was able to prevent the “fireworks”.

Fr. Giovanni Arienti, SDB

He was our religion teacher and he made us aware of the Gospels. He would ask us to memorize some significant passages. Until now I still use the same method whenever I teach catechism.

Fr. Vic Cervania

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