



A Publication of the Missions Sector for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission



To Live and Announce the Initial Proclamation

From 23rd to 31st April Salesian Missionary America met at **Cachoeira do Campo** (Belo Horizonte - Brazil) to find practical ways to live and announce the Initial Proclamation of Jesus Christ in the various sectors and environments of the Salesian mission. 72 SDB and FMA from the whole of the Americas reflected together on the theme. They were enlightened by the synthesis of the results of the eight regional seminars that were held on all continents over the last few years. They dwelt on the wealth of our Preventive System, as well as other pastoral experiences of Initial Proclamation outside the Salesian context. Participants shared their concrete experiences through several workshops. They reflected on criteria and made operational choices for the animation of their provinces. They proposed creative ways to be tools of Initial Proclamation in schools, youth-centres, urban parishes, social services, indigenous communities, and among children and teenagers at risk. All this was bathed in a climate of rich spirituality through reflection on the Word of God. There was an enriching experience of Salesian family spirit. Each DIAM (SDB) and Coordinator of Missionary Animation (FMA) made plans for the replication of the seminar and practices. Just like the 72 disciples of the Lord (Lk 10: 1), these 72 SDB and FMA were sent forth to all the provinces and nations between the United States and Chile to bring the Good News to all of our Salesian presences.

In the month of March, Yapacarái (Paraguay) hosted the Team Visit to the Region of Cono Sud in Latin America. This programme was colored by the fraternal memory of the red blood of our Salesian Missionary Don Rodolfo Lunkenbein. Right up to his martyrdom (Meruri - Brazil, July 15, 1976) he was accompanied by his young and faithful collaborator, Simone Bororo. 40 years on, the process was launched for the recognition of their martyrdom. "Rodolfo and Simone, life for life!", are the powerful words of the hymn composed for this occasion. It is becoming a popular tune in all the Salesian Provinces of South America. There are many who preceded us. They sowed, and they watered with their blood and sweat, the seed of a new life in Jesus Christ as incarnated in the Salesian charism. Preserving their memory is a sure means to keeping alive the missionary spirit of the Congregation. They too, as the theme of the Salesian Mission Day 2017 says, "stayed with us!" Don Bosco continues knocking at the heart of so many young Salesians of all continents who are ready to leave everything, to go and "stay with them" ... *Ad vitam, forever!*

J. Basañes

Fr. Guillermo Basañes, SDB
Councillor for the Missions



THE JOY OF SERVING THE LORD



The stories of missionaries have always fascinated me. After some experiences in the missions of Guatemala, I had a 'missionary distress' during my postnovitiate. I spoke of this with my spiritual director, my confessor, and especially with missionaries. After all, these missionaries had one day lived this same anxiety and today are the bearers of this charism in our province. Above all, I prayed. I knelt before the tabernacle. My fingers rolled over my rosary beads. I asked the Lord for clarity in his call, the courage to answer, and the love to make it a reality.

The counsel that impressed me most was that of Don Checchi. He smiled and said, "My dear, if you've already placed your life in the hands of God ... enjoy His dreams. Let Him do the driving. Let Him take you to the kids He has thought of for you. Love His voice. Love what he has planned for your life. I assure you, you will be happy that you trusted Him."

Some of my confreres were more rational. They said, "Why go out? We have such a lot of work here itself?" True, there is a lot to do. It is also true that the Congregation is one, the world over. Young people as well as confreres are waiting for us everywhere. If the vineyard is of the Lord, He should be the one to distribute His workers. It is ours to do what He asks of us, with the love He gives us, where He wants us and sends us. And then I thought ... if the first Salesians did not risk what they had to go beyond, how would we ever have come to know God, Don Bosco and our vocation?



Urged on by the desire to serve the Lord, I made myself available and, in 2015, I was sent to Kosovo in Albania. There I faced a totally unexpected reality. I had got used to thinking of missions with their churches overflowing with believers. I had not imagined myself landing up in a completely Muslim village. There I was, sharing the joy of being a missionary with two confreres and 18 Catholics!

My very first difficulty was to give up the idea that I had had till then of the missions. I had to try and understand what the Lord was offering me. Add to that the difficulty of the language and my ignorance of Islam. I found myself faced with a real challenge. Only the help of my brothers and sisters gave me the courage to understand and to carry on. How much joy I have discovered since then in letting me be surprised by the presence of God in the boys around me. Their questions, our discussions, and the way we have listened to each other, are today the joy of my heart. They are my gratitude to God for my missionary vocation. I think it will always be so, that the most beautiful blessing from being a missionary will be the young and the confreres.

I believe that to be a missionary is part of our Salesian DNA. From going out to the streets to find boys, to leaving our country for God's love, our vocation gets greatly enriched. We live life in its fullness when we make God's dream our dream, His youngsters our boys, His calling our life. So if God wants you to be a missionary, let yourself be guided by his love and go where the young people are waiting for you: I assure you there will be no greater joy in your life!

*Giuseppe Liano SDB
Guatemalan, missionary in Albania - Kosovo*



Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

The **Servant of God Matilde Salem (1904-1961)** did not have an easy married life, tested by God, among other things, also by her inability to bear children. She developed her maternal identity by being at the service of orphans and those in need: "These will be my children forever, as well as all others whom the Lord will make me meet in my life." She worked tirelessly so that the Salesians could open a house in Aleppo (Syria). Afflicted at the age of 54 by a terrible tumour, she made the supreme offer - her life itself: "My God, I offer my life for the unity of Christians, the sanctification of priests and the prosperity of Salesian work."

Salesian Missionary Intention



FOR SALESIANS WHO WORK IN CONFLICT AREAS

That they may be Builders of Peace through the weapon of "education" and the proclamation of the "Prince of Peace".

Salesians are present in many areas of the world where there are military, social, political, ethnic, and religious conflicts, often manipulated by commercial and business interests; interests that have no compassion on the innocent, or the weakest. The mission of the Salesian Family in these areas is to be free, prophet and builder of peace with the tenacity of education for coexistence and human dignity, supported by the One who "is our peace".

