

CAGLIERO 11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



THE WITNESS OF A HEART BURNING WITH LOVE FOR CHRIST

Dear Salesian missionaries and friends of the Salesian missions!

Cordial greetings during the month of Mary!

On May 24, 2010 all the Salesian bishops of the world have a special event at Valdocco at the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. Among the 100 bishops there will also be many missionary bishops *ad gentes* who received their missionary cross from this basilica.

I'm happy to share the testimony of Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze Kiun (陈日君). Salesian since 1949, now bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, he studied in Turin 50 years ago. The testimony of the heart on fire for Christ is the best missionary animation.

Václav Klement
Don Václav Klement, SDB
 Councilor for the Missions

**“Mary is
 our guide,
 Our teacher,
 Our mother”**

Don Bosco, MB VII, 676

Living and Working Together is our secret!

Some time ago, Cardinal Joseph Zen, bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, was in Pisana and we asked him to share some thoughts with the readers of Cagliero 11.

You studied theology in Turin. What do you remember of Crocetta when you were a student there?

The studentate of theology at Crocetta, Turin has produced many missionaries and the secret was fraternal relationship between professors and students. The house, then, was poor but the spirit was very beautiful. Since my childhood I learnt that one may be poor but happy. We were a poor family but we were happy. So were we also at the Crocetta. The situation was poor but we were happy. We studied seriously, we had many celebrations too. During summer those from Europe returned to their Provinces. We, from other Provinces, were involved in many activities: youth camps in the mountains, animation of



the oratory, and of course manual labour at home. Even during these activities we learnt that the secret was in being together.

My life was almost always in the Salesian studentate except one and a half years in Macau and three years in Aberdeen (Hong Kong). I was very happy in these two houses. Again, the secret was being together with the confreres. As a bishop I also realised that living together with my seminarians made a big impact on us all. I am truly convinced of the value of our living and working together.

During the centenary of the Salesian presence in China I pointed out that our gift to China is the family spirit: being together, friendship, and not being afraid to waste time with young people, being everybody's friend. Being together is our secret.

In your opinion how can we evangelise in our schools?

The missionaries are a sign of vitality. Perhaps in the past there was too much emphasis on the conversion of non-Christians. Now, inversely, perhaps after Vatican II we have not given much importance to proclamation in schools because in many of our schools the vast majority of teachers are also followers of other religions. But, fortunately, in our Salesian schools we have the visible presence of the Salesian community that helps create an environment. When I was Provincial I once baptized 90 children in our school. Now we found out that adults seeking baptism in Canada or America are largely our alumni in Hong Kong. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* speaks of telling the story of Jesus in Asia. But before we can tell his story our hearts should overflow with love for Jesus. When I say this I think of Fr. Charles Braga who could speak three Chinese dialects and all at the same time, which means he spoke very poor Chinese but he had a big heart overflowing with love for Jesus Christ and that was what attracted many.

What are the challenges and or opportunities for the Church in Hong Kong today?

As bishop of Hong Kong I sent a diocesan priest in Kenya. Now after years of missionary experience he has returned bringing so much enthusiasm in the diocese. Now we also have lay missionaries in connection with the PIME missionaries. It's easy to do pastoral work among Catholics. Missions *ad gentes*, instead, imply great effort. In Hong Kong we have an annual average of 2000 conversions. In recent years the diocese has decided to celebrate the feast of the missions that requires long preparations. Through this celebration friends are invited to know Jesus that eventually leads to conversion. This is not the case of not respecting the conscience or religious freedom but the case of making Jesus Christ known. The environment in Hong Kong is certainly secular, the birth rate is very low, divorce is high while the average age continues to rise. Indeed the family is in trouble. But there is no contempt for religion. There is no problem about conversion to Christianity. It is actually up to us to be zealous in evangelising. Of course we also talk about indirect evangelisation which is to promote Gospel values but we have no fear in proclaiming Jesus Christ directly. There are now Chinese workers in the Diaspora and the world. Now this is really a challenge that we need to face. They too have the right to be evangelised. But there are few priests who care for them. In this case it should be the lay missionaries who should be protagonists in the evangelisation of these Chinese



Statistics of the Catholic Church in China - Cf. *Tripod*, vol XXIX, 152 (2009) p.57

Number of Catholics According to Government statistics: According to the Holy Spirit Study Centre of Hong Kong:	5.300.000 ca. 12 million	Number of priests Official priests: Unofficial priests:	ca. 3.010 50 (old), 1.800 (young) 60 (old), 1.100 (young)
Number of churches and chapels	More than 6000	Number of sisters In the open Church: In the underground Church:	4.750 3.500 1.250
Dioceses and ecclesiastical territories Traditional number: Official number:	138 (116 active, 22 inactive) 97 (following the arrangement of civil boundaries in recent years)	Number of seminari Major Seminaries: Minor Seminaries: Underground seminaries:	12, with 610 seminarians 22, with 550 seminarians 10, with ca. 350 seminarians
Number of bishops: Official bishops: Unofficial bishops:	100 58 42	Number of Sisters' Novitiate Open Church: Underground Church:	ca. 60 40, with 200 in formation 20, with 200 in formation



Salesian Missionary Intention

Salesians in America

That the Salesians of the American continent may commit themselves in the building-up and training of basic ecclesial communities.

The American continent contains nearly half of the Catholic population in the world and the Catholic communities want to grow also in their co-responsibility in the missionary commitment ad gentes. The basic ecclesial communities offer an opportunity' to grow daily in the missionary spirit in their environment. Latin American bishops have always fostered the formation and missionary outlook of the basic ecclesial communities in all parishes. We pray that all our parishes and mission stations in the Americas may know how to accompany the growth and formation of the basic ecclesial communities.



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