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Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



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

Dear confreres, dear friends,

As we approach the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection, here is Pope Francis whispering a Beatitude to us yet again:

"Blessed are those who are in tears, for they will be comforted."

"Being able to cry with others - this is holiness." [GE 76]

This is exactly what Salesian missionaries did and still do today. They succeeded to cry, because "they stayed with us", said the theme of Salesian Mission Day 2017. They remained and they wept with so many ethnic minorities in the Amazon - they brought salvation to many, bringing Jesus to them. At the time of the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone (2012), the Salesian missionaries stayed on and wept with them - they were able to save so many lives. A Salesian missionary cries alone today inside his hut in the Palabek refugee camp (Uganda), faced with the extreme suffering of the last and the least: "They devour my people as though they were bread", says the psalmist (53.4).

The Salesian missionary, therefore, shares the anxieties and hopes of peoples not yet evangelized (see Constitutions 30) and, "sharing their problems and sufferings, invokes for them the light and strength of His presence" (C95).

Knowing how to cry with others, particularly with the young who are suffering - this is the expression of a missionary and Salesian heart.



*Fr. Guillermo Basañes SDB
Councillor for the Missions*

Initial Proclamation - Angolan style



From 2 to 5 March, the Missionary groups of the Salesian Family in Angola, animated by the FMA and SDB, held at Luanda a seminar on the Initial Proclamation of Jesus Christ. This was a follow-up of the Seminar on this theme at Johannesburg last year (13-19/08/18).

The core of the event was a search for new ways and methods, and to generate fresh impetus and enthusiasm to bring the person of the Lord to the thousands of people in our parishes, small Christian communities, primary, secondary and professional

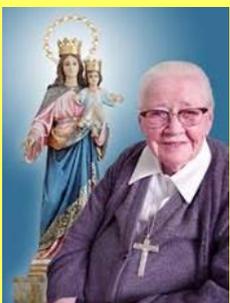
schools, our university, social services, oratories, youth centres and through our Social Communication.

The great challenge we face is to approach those who are far from the Lord and from the Christian community. We need to reinvigorate and revive those who have moved away or have allowed the flame of their faith to gradually fade away. We need to ask ourselves how the various sectors of our mission can be truly missionary instruments of the Lord. How can they, through the witness of charity and the joy of Christian and community life, awaken a fascination for the person and the mystery of Jesus? How can they announce him?

Salesians (SDB and FMA), missionary animators and pastoral ministers from all over the country reflected on "Initial Proclamation and the Salesian mission". Seminars of this type have been organized in many other provinces, and in various cultural contexts, as a means of maintaining our focus on the core of our mission: The proclamation of Jesus Christ!

Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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



The Servant of God Antonietta Böhm (1907-2008), Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, German by origin and missionary in Latin America. She was fortunate to live in places replete with memories of Laura Vicuña. In 1988 she participated at the beatification of this young girl at Colle Don Bosco. She also knew the Salesian brother Blessed Artemide Zatti. In 1973, Sr. Ersilia Crugnola gifted her a little statue of the Madonna and invited her to use it to bless people in Mary's name. Mother Antonietta said: "From the first blessing right up to now, the Madonna has worked day and night and so her mission goes on through the post, fax and e-mail, and it arrives in numerous places in Mexico and in many other parts of the world."

Sharing my life with young people gives me profound missionary fulfillment .



Two elements from my childhood urged me towards becoming a missionary. One was my dad. Before he got married, he worked four years as a builder-foreman in Ghana, Africa. His stories and pictures of “black people” fascinated me very much. Second, as a young adult I had an accident in the sea. I was caught in a current and almost drowned. Only through God’s grace was I saved. I received a second life. I saw it as a call from God for some specific mission for me. This was also the time I was woken up from an over-protected life in my family and left without any clear direction in life.

Not long after the accident I came to know that the Salesians in Papua New Guinea needed an instructor in mechanics. I had the required background of mechanical engineering. I offered my

services through a Swiss volunteer organization. I stayed three years in the Don Bosco Technological Institute at Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. Very soon I came to realize that sharing only my engineering knowledge and professional skills was not enough. The accompaniment of the young people became more and more important to me. My role models were many Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) and the aspirants among whom I worked.

I returned to Switzerland and began to work as a project leader in a metal fabrication company. I felt unsatisfied. I missed the young people. I was no longer interested in making a career, looking only for my own benefit and wellbeing. I turned once again to the Salesians. In spite of not being a Catholic, I was allowed to start my aspirantate. I became a Catholic. Already in the novitiate I felt the vocation to become a lay brother - to be with the young people in the workshop, class room, dormitories. The good Lord guided me further towards this. The missionary experience I had had accompanied me all through my formation.

After making my final vows Fr. Provincial, Josef Gröner, allowed me to return temporarily to PNG.

There my wish to become a missionary intensified so much that, in 2016, I followed the call of the Rector Major to be a missionary *ad vitam*. And again, the good Lord let me go back to PNG.

I am assigned for five years to Don Bosco Technological Institute - the same institute where I had been as a volunteer. My main task is technical education in the machine fitting and welding trade. A good change from this demanding work as an educator-pastor is the Sunday oratory. Sharing my life with the less privileged children and youths from our neighbouring villages gives me great fulfilment and strengthens my identity as a missionary.

I am very happy to be a Salesian lay Brother. I am fully immersed among young people - in the class room, in the workshop and in the Oratory. After class I spend time with the students and children. Through this intense togetherness a relationship of trust and love has emerged. The young people’s confidence in me has grown. They open up. They get interested in my life as a religious. So, I get opportunities to share with them my Christian values and promote good behaviour, respect, dignity, love, etc. A holistic formation is taking place, which will last far beyond our time together.

Looking back, I think what is most essential for a missionary is to be open and humble. Had I not listened to God and let myself be guided by the Holy Spirit, I would not have become a Salesian, a brother, a missionary.

Reto Wanner,
missionary from Switzerland into Papua New Guinea



FOR THOSE WHO

PROMOTE THE FULLNESS OF THE HUMAN PERSON THROUGH SOCIAL SERVICE

Salesian Missionary Intention

For educators, doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and many others who collaborate in our clinics and social services: may the Lord reward their efforts for the integral promotion of the people entrusted to us.

Blessed Artemide Zatti, Venerable Simone Sruji and many others took care of the bodies and basic needs of children and the poor. They practised the gospel of charity. Let us pray for those engaged in social work: so that the Lord may sustain them in their commitment, that they be generous in serving the little ones and that they draw their strength and motivation from the love of Christ.

