



Even as we walk this year 2018 in faith, we have our eyes fixed on 2019, the year in which we will celebrate an extraordinary missionary month in October to commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*. In the context of the time immediately after the war (1919), the Pope draws the attention of the whole Church to that dramatically painful hour in history. It is at the same time a time of hope, a very opportune moment for the proclamation of Jesus Christ to everyone. The memory of the "fury of persecutions" in the first centuries of Christianity, says Pope Benedict XV, makes us look with realism and responsibility at this hour marked by clear signs of opposition and non-acceptance of the light of the Gospel.



The analogy with our own times today is more than evident. We are in the midst of "a piecemeal third world war", as Pope Francis repeats so often. However, this is not a time for lamentations only. It is a moment for abundant and generous sowing. We Salesians are called to "follow the flow of history", not to be discouraged by difficulties. As we announce the Good News, we are called to be always happy (see Salesian Constitutions 19 and 17). Good mission to everyone!

J. Basaños

Fr Guillermo Basaños, SDB
Councillor for the Missions



Il The Missionary Project Europe "walks" with enthusiasm

Wayfarer, there is no path: the path is made by walking", so reads the poem 'Caminante' by Antonio Machado, expressing very well how our life and our mission are sometimes an unplanned journey. The path shapes the traveler. The young Salesian missionaries who undertook the adventure of 'Project Europe' experienced this in a concrete way by traveling together the "Camino de Santiago".

Project Europe has young Salesian missionaries from India, Vietnam, East Timor, Indonesia, Peru, Poland, Congo, Zambia, Nigeria and Guatemala. They serve in France, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Kosovo, Austria, Bulgaria and Italy. Between 11 and 18 February, they made a pilgrimage on foot to Santiago de Compostela. Their helpers in their Provinces as well as the team of the Department for the Missions were with them on this pilgrimage.

"The journey was a paradigm of the mission in Europe. February is not easy in the green countryside of Galicia. We faced the cold, the wind, the snow and even a constant rain. It reminded us of the cold path of evangelization we walk in the face of the indifference of European secularism. The walk offered us also a glimpse of hope. We did arrive at our goal - Compostela. We turned the 38 missionaries in the old continent into a community. The pilgrimage gave us strength and matured us in our Salesian and missionary choices."

The apostle St. James the Greater, one of the Lord's beloved, reinvigorated our vocation as disciple-missionaries and purified our evangelical motivations. He helped us get ready even for martyrdom for his 'Name' as he himself did. A programme for the on-going formation of young missionaries in Europe is held every two years. In these meetings the progress of the project is evaluated, and the challenges analyzed. The path that the Salesian Congregation is making in various countries of Europe is really bearing fruits of life and hope.

It was in this place (Compostela) that Pope St. John Paul II uttered those famous words "I, the bishop of Rome and pastor of the universal Church, cry out with love to you, ancient Europe: find yourself! Be yourself, rediscover your origins. Revitalize your roots. Return to living the authentic values that made your history glorious and your presence in other continents a blessing. Rebuild your spiritual unity, in an atmosphere full of respect for other religions. You can still be for the world a beacon of civilization and a stimulus for progress."

THE JOY OF TRANSMITTING THE CHARISM OF DON BOSCO



My missionary vocation was forged, I believe, at the same time as my Salesian vocation. I had the providential fortune of growing up in a very poor neighborhood of Seville. In my childhood, a very young Salesian community settled in my neighborhood. It was an insertion presence of the post-conciliar era: few structures, witnessing to evangelical and Salesian life and concrete solidarity with the poorest. My childhood, and that of many children and young people in my neighborhood, was transformed thanks to an oratorian atmosphere. It seduced us and shaped us towards joy, life in groups, love for Jesus and the service of others, of the poorest in particular. That community helped many children like me to continue their studies. Those Salesians made a mark on me to the extent that I wanted to be like them. My willingness to go to

Africa, right from the early stages of my training, was spontaneous.

I have faced several challenges in my missionary life. I present you two. The first was illness. My "baptism" by malaria almost killed me in my very first year in the missions of Togo. They saved me through emergency evacuation. That almost ended my missionary life *ad gentes*. The second challenge was the new Salesian presence in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. It seemed like my turn to relive what I admired in the Salesians of my childhood. Without economic means, any infrastructure, or even a home of our own ... and with only one companion in my community. The foundations of our community and our work took the form of a spontaneous oratory on the streets, visits to families and Sunday celebrations under the trees. It took us two years of living there and an analysis of the area to come with a plan for a stable form of educational and pastoral services. Our plan was simple and practical. It was entirely for those simple children and young people.



One of my greatest joys as a missionary was, without a doubt, the beginning of our presence in Ouagadougou. It was very challenging; but, far more than that, it was an immense joy. We could see that we were transmitting a charism through our words, actions and decisions. We were laying the foundation for Don Bosco's work. Besides, it helped me feel very missionary, living and working in an area of first evangelization, among people thirsting for the Gospel, in a country with a significant Christian presence.

My second joy: the years I lived in Mali - 6 years of discovering a phenomenal country that is mostly Muslim, but tolerant of other religions, especially Christianity. Salesian centres are very much appreciated and the Church is highly respected. Many students and collaborators were authentic "Christians by desire" and their integration into Salesian activities was excellent. For me it was a reason to hope for the coexistence of religions. There is a future for the work of the Church and of the Salesians in the Muslim majority countries.

I leave a little thought for the young. I believe that Salesian life is worth it. If we live it with a missionary spirit of joyous dedication, availability and love for the poorest young people, it fills our whole existence.

Antonio HERRERA, Spanish Salesian Missionary in Benin (AFO)

Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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



Blessed Alberto Marvelli (1918-1946), alumnus of the Salesian oratory of Rimini. His centenary of birth occurs this March 21. He reminds us of the way we prepare land for the sowing of the seed. Collaborators of the Spirit of the Lord, within his family and in the Salesian oratory, did this for him. They took care of his life and his human and Christian growth. Each of us has a serious responsibility. To accomplish it, we too must have in our hearts that spark of holiness proper to the seekers of God who, as a community, work for the Kingdom of heaven.

For the Salesians in Europe



Salesian Missionary Intention

For the Initial Proclamation of Jesus Christ to take place on the European continent; that the Salesian Family, in its multicultural and multi-religious context, will have the gift of discernment in the Spirit.

Europe is a great multicultural and multi-religious melting pot. Christian communities face the challenge of a respectful dialogue and the courage to offer their Christian spiritual heritage; that, in dialogue and proclamation, they may fulfill their mission faithfully.

