

M 28 : 19



Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

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DON BOSCO and the MISSIONS

Last November 7, 2009, the Commission on Missionary Animation of the Philippine Northern Province held a symposium in commemoration of the first Salesian missionary expedition led by Fr. John Cagliero (later to be a Cardinal).

The symposium is an event to rekindle the missionary spirit of the Congregation at least in the FIN province. It was held at the St. John Bosco Parish with participants coming from the students, parishioners, salesian cooperators, and young volunteers.

Fr. Eli Cruz, Provincial, gave an incisive welcome remark that set the tone for the symposium. For this year, we invited the noted missiologist Fr. James Kroeger MM who spoke about what Mission per se is all about. The manner he spoke and explained the topic was well received by the participants because of its depth albeit a lively communicative presentation. The second speaker was Fr. Bobby Mac Roxas who presented a historical background of the FIRST EXPEDITION. Here, Fr. Bobby narrated how Don Bosco chose the best Salesians of the first hour who were fortunate to plant the seeds of the Gospel in Patagonia Argentina. Don Bosco may have not gone to the missions but in his lifetime, he was able to send 11 expeditions. The last speaker is Mr. Joey Clemente of the Socio Pastoral Institute. He is an active advocate of lay volunteerism working in Mindanao among the Muslim people.

From the perspective of the different topics presented, we have come to realize the realities of missionary life and volunteerism. Everyone is enjoined to seek ongoing involvement within multi-cultural contexts and the availability to immerse oneself in the love of God through concrete mission work and discipleship.



November 16 - 18, 2009

East Asia and Oceania Missionary Animation Meeting (Tuloy sa Don Bosco Foundation, Muntinlupa City)

The EAO context calls first to form all Salesians as the 'missionary inter gentes' and also continue in the effort to send more missionaries ad gentes - ad vitam according to the needs of the Congregation and the universal Church.

Objective:

Qualify the Salesian missionary animation in the context of East Asia and Oceania Region.

Specific Objective:

Strengthen in each Province the Salesian missionary dynamics of the Delegates for more qualified missionary animation in the perspective of the First Asian Missionary Congress (Chiang Mai, 2009) and the journey of the local Churches.

The East Asia and Oceania Region participants (Nov 16 – 18, 2009) -

Australia, Fiji, Samoa (AUL)
China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan (CIN)
Indonesia, (ITM)
Timor-Leste (ITM)
Korea South (KOR)
Japan (GIA)
Philippines North, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands (FIN)
Philippines South, Pakistan (FIS)
Thailand, Cambodia, Laos (THA)
Vietnam, Mongolia (VIE)

Being a Salesian Lay Brother

...this gives me that assurance that this is my calling and fidelity to this life will be my way to meet Christ and later hopefully, enter heaven

I present here my simple reflection on my vocation as a religious brother.

Whenever I introduce myself and say that I am a Salesian Brother - I also always ready myself for the many questions that usually follow clarifying *what it means to be a Salesian Brother*. People do wonder why on earth would one not get married nor get rich and look for high paying jobs, then also leave family and home, stay in a religious community and yet not be able to celebrate Mass nor administer the other sacraments. Did they fail their Philosophy and Theology subjects? Are they not qualified? or Have they committed any serious offense? These are simply some of the often raised questions of my intrigued audience.

I always say that I am a brother not that I didn't like to become a priest. My vocational discernment in fact started out in

that line. I entered the seminary because I dreamt of becoming a priest. But along the way, I discovered that I am being called to another kind of life. God surely works in mysterious but marvelous ways. And He guides and leads us to where we rightfully belong if only we open ourselves to Him and listen to His voice.

Nobody actually invited me to become a brother. But it was in my daily interactions with our Brothers Salesian that I felt the attraction to become just like them. In particular, it was their silent witness, humble service and joyful presence especially among young people that drew my attention and heightened my desire to become like them.

I guess, the lay or religious brother vocation also fits my likes and interests. I always believe that God meets us where we are and that our vocation grows around our capabilities,

skills and potentials as human beings. *Grace builds on nature* as they say. Being a lay brother, allows me as well to try on those other possibilities and areas waiting to be explored for which ministry may prevent priests from doing. The life of a brother is in continuous dialogue with the world--with its needs and longings, with the advancement and issues in education, technology and industry, with people immersed in the reality of the 'worldly' yet long to have a glimpse of God and eternity.

I find meaning and contentment in my being a brother. There are of course plenty of struggles and difficulties but the choice I made after serious discernment and prayer and which I renew everyday give me that assurance that this is my calling and fidelity to this life will be my way to meet Christ and later hopefully, enter heaven. I am a Salesian Brother.

(Br. Carmelo Martinez is a missionary in Pakistan. We accompany him in our prayers for strength and perseverance).



Two communities of Lahore and Quetta together after their arrival: From left down: Br. Carmelo (FIN), Fr. Peter Zago (FIS), Br. Eric (first Pakistani practical trainee), From left up – Fr. Jude Albarando (FIS), Fr. Miguel Ruiz (SMA), Fr. Ladislav Miko (SLK), Fr. Julio Palmieri (ALP)