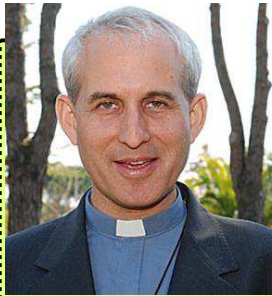


CAGLIERO 11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



A Publication of the Mission Department for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission



Dear Friends!

The eleventh day of the month is approaching once again. We remember with vivid emotions the 11th of November 1875, prophecy of all Salesian missionary expeditions that followed it including the recent 145th Expedition last Sept. 28.

Little by little, in the Provinces and in the houses the 11th of the month is taking a missionary shape and colour. The initiatives are multiplying: Missionary Rosary, community missionary celebrations, missionary testimonies, missionary send offs of groups or individuals, and so on.

Along with the 24th of each month - Mary Help of Christians - and the last day of the month - Don Bosco - the 11th should become a "thermometer" and a "beacon": a "thermometer" that measures the missionary "temperature" of our hearts, our houses and our projects; "Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour," Pope Francis insists (EG 109); and also a "beacon" that guides the missionary horizons of our daily educative and pastoral commitment which, in turn, helps us not to stand still.

May the missionary animators know how to seize the marvelous opportunity the 11th of every month offers, particularly this November! Thanks!

G. Basañes
Fr. Guillermo Basañes SDB
Councillor for the missions

The seed planted on November 11, 1875 has become a vigorous tree

The *Biographical Memoirs* narrates the first missionary send off 139 years ago:

"Finally, November 11 dawned... the departure of a group of missionaries for South America... was an extraordinary event in the eyes of people living in the remote little corner of Turin known as Valdocco... As soon as the Magnificat was intoned, the missionaries made their appearance two by two and took their places in the middle of the sanctuary where space had been reserved for them. The priests were dressed in Spanish style and held their boat shaped hats in their hands; the coadjutors wore black suits and carried top hats...

Don Bosco mounted the pulpit as Vespers ended. At the sight of him, a profound silence fell over that vast sea of people, all trembling with emotion as they eagerly drank in his every word. Every time he referred directly to the missionaries his voice became choked, the words almost dying away on his lips. He manfully restrained his tears, but his audience wept... "In doing this," Don Bosco preached, "we are entering upon a mighty undertaking, not because we have any pretensions, or because we believe we can convert the whole world in a few days; yet who knows? This departure and this humble beginning may be the seed that will grow into a mighty tree..." (BM XI, 356-360).

Thanks to this missionary spirit, which is an essential element of the Salesian spirit, today the charism of Don Bosco is present in 132 countries! That seed planted on November 11, 1875 has really become a vigorous tree!



Missionary challenges and joys in Belgium



During my prenovitiate I read a passage from Isaiah 6,8: “I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said: Here am I; send me” and I felt as if God was addressing it to me. Later, in prayer, I made Isaiah’s response my own as well. Eventually I shared three times with my novice master my missionary desire “to share God’s love with other people as a Salesian missionary either *in my own country* or *outside my country*! The response, however, was always the same: “Why do you want to become a missionary abroad? Indonesia needs missionaries”!

In the course on time, I could no longer refuse God’s voice who was calling me to become a missionary *ad extra*. Therefore, I expressed again my desire to my Rector in the postnovitiate but I still got the same response: “Indonesia needs more missionaries!” This didn’t dampen my missionary desire. I also thought that while Indonesia needs missionary, here there are vocations while other Salesian Provinces as well as other parts of the Church need workers in the Lord’s vineyard. Thus, during my second year in the postnovitiate (without the permission of my Rector) I decided to write directly to Fr. Francis Alencherry, then Councillor for the missions. Two months later he replied telling me to prepare myself to be a missionary.

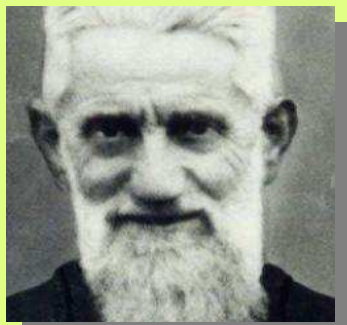
In 2010 during his visit to Indonesia I spoke about my missionary desire to Fr. Václav Klement, the, then, new Councillor for the missions. A month later he wrote to me telling that I will be sent as a missionary in Belgium. I was very excited to finally fulfill my missionary vocation. It has been four years since I arrived. During these years, like all missionaries everywhere, I exerted extra effort to learn Flemish in order to communicate with the local people. I had to adapt also to the food, the climate, mentality, and to their way of life. I did my practical training here and right now I am studying theology in Leuven.

Living in Belgium is not so simple. Every moment is a challenge which I try to face with faith and joy. Secularism, materialism and rationalism pose enormous challenges. Their impact on present day society often limits the discourse about religion, God and faith especially among young people. In fact I realised that for most young people in Belgium these topics are considered irrelevant to talk about. This secularised environment similarly affects us Salesian missionaries. If we do not have a profound spirituality we could be just social workers. Even worst, we ourselves could also end up living a secular lifestyle.

How, then, can we proclaim the Gospel in Belgium? Let me share my experience. One day some young people saw me play soccer and they asked if I was a soccer player “No,” I told them, “I am a Salesian”. “What is Salesian?” asked one of them. “A Salesian is a religious priest or brother”. “What are you doing here?” asked another. I told him, “I am a missionary”. “What? A missionary in Belgium! Isn’t that strange?” they answered with surprise. So I told them “I am a real modern missionary!” Yet, through this simple encounter I became their friend. Now, we are beginning to talk about religion, faith and God. They have also accepted me as missionary. Indeed, I have discovered that in this secularised, materialist and rationalist society friendship is what opens the way to the initial proclamation of Christ.

I am very happy to be a missionary here in Belgium. With the help of your prayers our missionary witness and effort to foster initial proclamation will one day bear abundant fruits!

Cl. Antonius Berek
Indonesian, missionary in Belgium



Witness of salesian missionary sanctity

“The real fraternal bond that binds these dear children with brown face and pure heart is always the same: charity and good manners. They know they are loved, that’s all; and they strive to respond to our care, even at the cost of small personal sacrifices” (October 1926).

From an article for the Salesian Bulletin by the Servant of God Vendrame Constantine (1893-1957), the fiery apostle of the gospel, as a new St. Francis Xavier in the North East of India



Salesian Missionary Intention

Salesians in the South Asian Region

May Salesians in the South Asia Region be committed to evangelisation in all their educational or social works, and in political empowerment of all our beneficiaries.

In the context of the great Salesian mission we are at times tempted to remain at the level of social work - eliminating illiteracy, offering quality education or offering out-of-school youth a good technical preparation, rescuing street children etc. But we can also slowly forget that we are first of all disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus’ solution was to save humankind from all evil, including material and social oppression. The best thing we can give the poor is the Gospel and the Spirit who makes us free! Even though conversion is not our direct aim, proclaiming Jesus Christ in all our words and deeds is our right, beginning with Baptism. It is important for our vocation throughout our life.

