



Number 2

«Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation»

11 February 2009

Dear confreres,

How can one assist in reviving the missionary fire? Especially through a generous response to the Rector Major's appeal for the 140th extraordinary missionary expedition in September 2009 in the context of the 150th anniversary of our Congregation. As of 31st January 2009 we have but 23 candidates confirmed!

Fr Chávez has reminded us that the mission is a response to God's redeeming love. It is this love which urges us to mission, especially beyond our own country (*ad extra*) on the frontiers of mankind (*ad gentes*) for the rest of our lives (*ad vitam*).

The feast of our protomartyr saints, Louis Versiglia and Callistus Caravario on 25th February next can be an opportune occasion for reminding ourselves of the invitation to offer ourselves for *missio ad extra, ad gentes e ad vitam!*

Don Václav Klement, SDB

Councillor for the Missions

IN THIS ISSUE

- **from the Councillor for the Missions**
- **Saint Luigi Versiglia**
- **Salesian Mission Intention – February 2009**
- **Servants and Apostles of Jesus Christ**
- **A Missionary Writes**



Shiu Chow 12-II-'20

The missionary who does not remain with God is a channel detached from its source.

- *The missionary who prays much achieves much*
- *Love souls a lot; this will teach us all the tricks to do good*
- *Aspire always to do better in everything; but be content with whatever is achieved.*
- *Without Mary Help of Christians we Salesians would be nothing*

+LVersiglia

Salesian Mission Intention February 2009

«For Salesians in Eritrea that they may be effective signs and courageous bearers of reconciliation, justice and peace»

In November 2008 the last non-Eritrean Salesian in the region was expelled. Now there are only Eritrean Salesians there, in two communities – Asmara and Dekemhare – with various Salesians in novitiate and initial formation. This means a great challenge for inculturation of Don Bosco's charism in this country. These young confreres of our have need of strong support in prayer from the whole Salesian Family.

for the Pope's general and mission intention see www.sdb.org

for suggestions and contributions: cagliero11@gmail.com

Servants and Apostles of Jesus Christ

1. Humanity is in need of liberation

On this occasion I feel duty-bound to take up the Message of the Holy Father for World Missionary Day, because it is particularly enlightening and full of proposal: “The missionary mandate continues to be an absolute priority for all the baptised, called to be “servants and apostles of Christ Jesus” at the beginning of the millennium. My revered predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, already said in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity.” (n. 14).

... St Paul had understood well that only in Christ can humanity find redemption and hope. Therefore he warned how pressing and urgent is the mission to “proclaim the promise of life in Christ Jesus” (2 Tm 1:1), “our hope” (1 Tm. 1:1), so that all peoples may join in the same inheritance of being participants in the promise by means of the Gospel (cf. Eph. 3,6). He was aware that without Christ, humanity is “without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2,12) – without hope because it is without God” (Spe salvi, 3). In effect, “whoever does not know God, even though he may have many hopes, deep down is without hope, without the great hope that is the foundation of all life (Eph 2,12)” (Spe salvi, 27).

2. Mission is a question of love

It is then an urgent duty for everyone to proclaim Christ and his message of salvation. “Woe to me”, St Paul said, “if I do not preach the Gospel!” (1 Cor 9:16). On the road to Damascus he had already experienced and understood that redemption and mission are the work of God and his love. Love of Christ led him along the roads of the Roman Empire as a herald, apostle, flag-bearer, teacher of the Gospel, and one who would call himself “an ambassador in chains” (Eph 6:20). Divine love made him “all things to all people, in order to save some at any cost” (1 Cor 9:22). Looking at St Paul's experience, we can understand that missionary activity is a response to the love with which God loves us. His love redeems us and urges us to *missio ad gentes*; it is the spiritual energy capable of giving growth in the human family to harmony, justice, communion amongst people, races and nations, which everyone aspires to (cf Enc. *Deus caritas est*, 12). It is God therefore, who is love, who leads the Church towards the frontiers of humanity and who calls on evangelisers to drink from “that first and

original source which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows God's love” (Deus caritas est, 7). Only from this source can we draw the attention, tenderness, compassion, acceptance, availability, involvement in people's problems, and other virtues needed by messengers of the Gospel in order to leave everything and dedicate themselves completely and unconditionally to spreading the perfume of Christ's charity throughout the world.



3. Always evangelising

While first evangelisation is urgent and essential for not a few regions in the world, a lack of clergy and vocations today afflicts many dioceses and Institutes of Consecrated Life. It is important to insist that, while faced with growing difficulties, Christ's mandate to evangelise all people remains a priority. There can be no reason which justifies a slowing down or pause in its regard, since “the mandate to evangelise all men constitutes the life and essential mission of the Church” (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 14).

4. Woe to me if I do not evangelise (1 Cor 9,16)

Dear brothers and sisters, “*duc in altum*”! Let us set out on the sea of the world, following Jesus' invitation, casting our nets without fear, trusting in his constant assistance.

Don Pascual Chávez Villanueva

Homily for the 139th Salesian Missionary Expedition
Basilica of Mary Help of Christians – 28 September 2008
(the complete text is found in www.sdb.org)

A Missionary Writes

Shiu-Chow, 13 February 1930

My dearest mother,

[...] In a few days I will leave here and with our bishop and some young girls who have finished their studies, I will return to Lin-Chow. We will spend a good week in a boat. The way is full of pirates, however we are sure the Lord will help us. Faced with all that my heart is calm and at peace. Oh how we feel that we are in God's hands! [...] Courage my good mother, as you can see life is constant sorrow: however in prayer and confidence and an enlightened trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Help of Christians, we find peace even in the midst of so much sorrow. Let nothing disturb or frighten you [...].

[...] And now I recommend myself to you. You sent me some nice gifts and knowing the kindness of your heart I hold these very dear, however the most beautiful gift you can give me is to pray and pray a lot for me. Only the Lord's constant assistance can help us to support Priests and Missionaries in their lives. Pray, pray a lot for me that I may be a holy priest dedicated only to the salvation of my soul and the souls of others. I know that you have until now always prayed that I be a priest: now that I am one, pray that I may be a holy priest [...].

your ever affectionate son, Callistus
(this letter was written 12 days before his martyrdom)