

# CAGLIERO 11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation

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

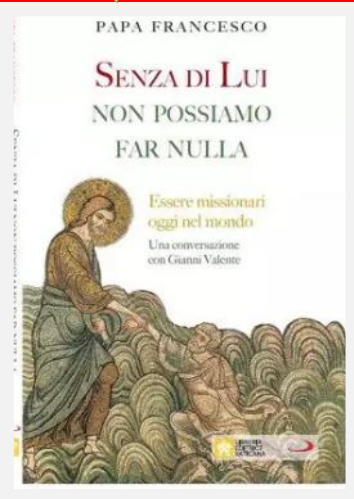


**A**s we conclude this year 2019, we come face to face with Child Jesus bringing him EVERYTHING and EVERYONE. Small and with his arms wide open, he welcomes everything; he embraces everything. The Child Jesus embraces the whole world. One of the visits that touched me the most in 2019 was to the home of the young Salesian martyr, Akash Bashir, who died on 15 March 2015 at Lahore in Pakistan. This visit lasted only half an hour, but it was very intense and meaningful. I was with his father and mother, his sister and brothers: a Christian family that is alive, and that feels their martyred son more alive than ever. It was a visit as also a pilgrimage; yes, a pilgrimage from Turin to Lahore, with several intermediate stages and a journey of several thousand kilometres, bringing with me in my backpack, a statue of Mary Help of Christians: a souvenir and a prophecy from the Rector Major for this tried and blessed family. Mary is still the Queen of Martyrs today. And the young continue to be seduced by a risen Jesus who asks for everything because he gives everything. Let us implore the Child Jesus for a year 2020 without martyrs ... But filled with the Christian and Salesian spirit of martyrdom.

*Fr. Guillermo Basanes, SDB – Councillor for the Missions*



## A CONVERSATION ABOUT BEING A MISSIONARY IN THE WORLD TODAY



**A** new book of lively interviews with Pope Francis, released just a few days after the closing of the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019. The interviewer is Gianni Valente of Fides Missionary Agency.

The thread that runs through the entire conversation carries the many recurring expressions that Francis uses in his magisterium to define the nature of the mission of the Church in the world. The Bishop of Rome pauses for the first time to explain in a relaxed way what he intends to suggest when he insists that the Church grows "by attraction" and not by proselytism, that the protagonist of the mission is the Holy Spirit and that the Church is by its very nature 'outgoing'. En passant, the Pope also eliminates the risk of reducing these expressions to mere conformist slogans of 'ecclesialese' language. He suggests images and episodes, taken from his memory as a pastor, what could be the dynamism proper to every apostolic work, and what could be its source. For this reason, the Pope's thoughts on the mission contained in this new book, can be enlightening, intriguing, dazzling and comforting. Their appeal is not only to those who are directly involved in the work of missionary animation.

In Francis' answers, apostolic work is never presented as the result of an effort, the end of yet another commitment to be added to the labours of life. The dynamism of every missionary movement - he affirms - proceeds "by falling in love, by loving attraction. One does not follow Christ, and even less does one become his messenger and of his Gospel, through a decision taken at the coffee table. Every missionary impulse can be fruitful only

if it happens within this attraction and transmits it to others." In the interview, the Pope suggests a distinctive trait of the authentic apostolic work. It "facilitates, makes easy, does not put us in the way of Jesus' desire to embrace all, to heal all, to save all. Do not make distinctions, do not set up 'pastoral border controls'. Do not play gatekeepers to check whether others have the requisites to enter."

The Pope also offers evocative ideas on the relationship of missionary work with money, with the media, with the processes of globalization. He points out that, at this point in time, "it is necessary to be on the lookout for everything that in any way ends up showing the mission as a form of ideological colonization, though in disguise". It warns against functionalist temptations to entrust the effectiveness of the mission to strategies copied from marketing and to presumptuous theological methodologies. He criticizes the phenomenon of 'hit-and-run' missionaries, those who pass off their 'spiritual tourism' as mission - a travesty of the apostolate. "To follow Jesus and proclaim the Gospel", the Pope clarifies, "one leaves oneself and one's self-reference; but, then, one must also 'stay', remain in the places and situations to which the Lord brings us."

It is not a question of "doing missionary animation as if it were a job, but of living with others, staying where they are, wanting to accompany them, learning to walk at their own pace". Only within the fabric of daily life, and not in the organization of events and artificial mobilizations - the Pope notes - can missionary work "become fruitful. And only in this way, in the journey of everyday life, can the process of a real inculturation of the Gospel be realized in different realities. Inculturation is not done in theological laboratories, but in daily life."

## I AM HAPPY TO SEE THAT DON BOSCO'S SPIRIT STEALS PEOPLE'S HEARTS



Berlin Wall fell, we discovered that the two young workers, who dedicated their free time to us, were Salesians. They spoke to us also about the missions. But the first thought of becoming a missionary came to me when I was 15. It was then that Fr Jozef Daniel Pravda visited our parish. He had returned from the mission in Congo (at that time Zaire), where he had been working for more than 15 years, and he shared his experience with us. I remember his words: "If anyone wants to become a missionary, he must begin now by serving others."

I started my Salesian formation. The missionary vocation was still a little distant for me. I thought that to be a missionary I had to have great abilities and in that sense I didn't feel capable. Then, slowly, with the experience of Salesian life, I began to understand that what is important is to trust in God and not in my abilities. Another strong push was the visit of Don Milan Zednicek, a missionary in Angola. He came to our community in Banska Bystrica where I was a young priest. I was struck by his deep joy and happiness. The thought of going on mission came to me more often. I began to talk to the Provincial as well. He suggested that I should pray for discernment. Then he sent me to the community in the Orava region, where I felt a very strong missionary spirit in the Salesian family. There were many volunteers who had had missionary experience in Siberia and, in the last five years, three Salesians had left this house on mission. When Don Bosco's urn arrived in April 2013, I prayed in front of him and I heard the answer: "Why are you still waiting?" Then, in June 2014, the Provincial sent me for two months to a community in Yakutia in Siberia to have my first missionary experience.

Since July 2015 I am in Yakutsk and I am very happy to be in this mission. It is a place with a very harsh climate (in winter the temperature sometimes reaches  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ ); but for me, it was more difficult to get used to the new social relations, because here there are only a few Catholics. I also suffered from the lack of a Salesian community because, at the beginning, there were only two of us. But that has changed, and my joy was great when new confreres arrived. I am also happy to see that Don Bosco's spirit steals the hearts of the local people even though they are not Catholics. I see that, for the missionary, it is very important to have trust in God and in Mary Help of Christians so that we become instruments that help people to meet the person of Jesus Christ, who is full of joy and life.



Peter Lorenc, missionary in Siberia - Sakha Republic (Yakutia)



### Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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

**The Servant of God Ignatius Stuchly (1869-1953).** His 150<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on December 14. He held roles of responsibility for a large part of his life: bursar, prefect, Vice-Rector, Rector, Provincial. He was considered a 'living rule', an effective witness to the spirit of Don Bosco, from the Czech Republic to Italy, from Slovenia to Slovakia. "Ignatius Stuchly was a religious who did not write 'Rules', but obeyed them." He is still remembered in the Czech Republic as a 'second John Mary Vianney' and the 'Don Bosco of Bohemia'.



## Salesian Missionary Intention

### For today's youth

That young people all over the world may realize the dream of God for them.



In 2018, the Synod of Bishops on Youth, Faith and Vocation Discernment was celebrated. Let us ask that all our presences in the world may be meaningful for the life and dreams of the young people that the Lord has entrusted to us

