



Dear friends,

From the very first day in the Novitiate my eyes were drawn to the Globe in our study hall. A Globe we find in every community of ours. Every time I passed by it a desire would arise in me to go to one place or another and see how the Salesian charism had set up its tent there. How many times did I not look at those parts of our beautiful planet where the grey colour on the globe indicated that we were not present there. There too, in those very places, young people, especially the poorest, are calling out to us.

Mission is part of our identity as Christians, and it is as a community of believers that we can together be signs of the Father's all-providing love for all people of good will. The joy, enthusiasm and initiative of Don Bosco truly moves us to a renewed missionary commitment..

■ Fr. Francesco De Ruvo, SDB  
Coordinator of the Office for  
Missionary Animation in Italy

## Bioethical challenges through the eyes of a Salesian



At the end of each of his speeches, Pope Francis insistently says: "Don't forget to pray for me!". When the Holy Father asks us to pray for him, it is not a mere figure of speech. He feels on his shoulders the weight of decisions that affect, above all, the **faith** and **morals** of believers. They find in his words a sure way of facing hitherto unknown challenges, including in bioethics.

Almost thirty years ago, John Paul II established the Pontifical Academy for Life to which he entrusted the delicate task of **studying** how to promote and **defend** human life in order to develop a culture of life. The members of the Academy are scientists from all over the world, who put their professionalism at the service of the dignity of every single human being, no one excluded, no one 'discarded' at any stage of his or her life.

And what are the latest projects you are working on?

In addition to the 'classic' challenges concerning the beginning and end of life (e.g. *Human Genome Editing* and *Palliative care*), there are the 'new' ones brought about by the progress of technology: **algor-ethics**, which seeks to give a human imprint to artificial intelligence that is seeing exponential progress never before seen in history; **robo-ethics**, which looks at how humans and machines can work together, not against each other, to improve the quality of life and to combat disease, ignorance and poverty. Finally, the major challenge of **global bioethics** is to reflect together on major issues by offering cultural and religious input.

These are some of the most recent bioethical challenges that the Church helps us to face with joy and hope. She does not want to replace our conscience, nor our reason but, as Mother and Teacher, she wants only the good of her children; that they do not live in error. Perhaps our Salesian mission is also this: to **pray** for the Pope, **study** his Magisterium and **form** young people to the culture of life..

■ Fr. Peter Štellmach, SDB  
Teacher of moral theology and vicar  
of the Turin-Crocetta community

### FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- How can I contribute to the promotion and protection of human life?
- How can I favor a culture of life in the environment in which I live?



# WELL-COORDINATED SALESIAN DEVELOPMENT- WORK



*Dear Fonny, you are working as the coordinator of DBN. What for do we need this network in today's world full of many other interesting networks?*

Don Bosco Network is an international network of nine Salesian Ngo's and Mission Offices which work in the field of develop cooperation. We believe in the benefit of exchange of information and good practices among our members and with related Salesian institutes. We support capacity building of Planning and Development Offices, and are active in the field of advocacy and development education. Coordinated effort makes development work much more **efficient**; it makes the Salesian work more **recognizable** and we are able to work on common issues and topics in a coordinated way.

*What do you think is the most important contribution of DBN to the Salesian missions?*

Our biggest contribution to the Salesian Mission Sector is our **practical and coordinated assistance** in case of global emergencies. For example, during the first Covid-19 year, there was a call from the Rector Major for global solidarity. DBN assisted in the coordination of this Emergency Response by offering its platform, human resources and communication tools to make all work more transparent and have all info more centralized.

*This month we pray for the young in Belgium. What can we – Salesians and the entire Salesian movement – bring to these young people to help them live their lives in an authentic and responsible way?*

In these times when many young people do not feel well about themselves, are vulnerable because they lack self-confidence, and are in need of acceptance... they need a place where they find (inner) peace and rest. A place, **a HOME, where they are accompanied** by someone who makes them feel welcome, appreciated and accepted for who they really are. This is what Salesian educators can offer in our centres, schools and boarding schools. Next to that, I hope that young people get the opportunity **to be really 'young' again**. Many schools, sport and youth centres, social meeting places... were closed last many months because of Covid-19 restrictions. Young people need these places: to meet and interact with peers, to have educators and role models around them, to be away from home for a while when it is difficult to be there.



Fonny Grootjans

39 years old, living in **Belgium**, married and having a 3-year-old son. In 2000, his Salesian career started at the local oratory of the FMA. In 2011, he started working at Jeugdendienst Don Bosco as an in-charge for **international volunteering**. In 2015, he was elected as voluntary president of Don Bosco Youth-net, a European network of Salesian youthwork organisations. Since 2020, he is **the coordinator of DBN**.



**DBN - Don Bosco Network**  
A global network of Salesian NGOs and mission offices

- Includes 9 members in Belgium, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Slovakia and USA.
- Its main objective is to strengthen the (development) work that DBN member organisations and other Salesian institutes do around the world.
- DBN works closely with the Salesian Missions Sector in Rome.



**MARCH SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION**

## Bioethical Challenges

For an authentic and life-supporting behaviour of young people in Belgium

We pray for Christians facing new bioethical challenges; may they continue to defend the dignity of all human life with prayer and action.  
[Pope Francis' prayer intention]

