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Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



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Dear confreres, dear friends,
We are already at the 4th beatitude, and still with Pope Francis: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied."

"Seeking justice with hunger and thirst; this is holiness." [GE 79]

It is not just that so many young people are not on a stable road to quality education. The fourth Objective for Sustainable Development (United Nations, Agenda 2030) also points in this direction. Salesian missions have always been characterized by a serious, creative commitment, incarnated in the form of education. It is particularly in this that Salesian missionaries express their typical way of "cooperating with those who build a society more worthy of man" (Constitutions 33). Don Bosco needs Salesian missionaries today who are ready to work for justice and peace in the world, Salesians like Bro. Matthew Thaiparambil († 01.02.2019) of Calcutta. For over forty years he served thousands of young dropouts with great tenacity and creativity. The gold-paved pathway of Salesians is nothing other than the education of young people. Salesian missionary educators who are hungry and thirsty for justice!

Seeking justice with hunger and thirst, especially through the education of young people; here is the characteristic of the Salesian missionary.

Fr Guillermo Basañes, SDB - Councillor for the Missions



It is often said that it is difficult to be a missionary in Japan because one will lack the joy of seeing visible results. It is true. I personally admit that the mission is difficult, but I do not concede that there is no joy and no visible results. Since years I have been accompanying two groups, each of about 10 or 15 people. For different reasons they came close to the Church. They participate in catechism courses. Almost all of them become catechumens and at the right time they receive baptism. It is a long journey to prepare and accompany a person who does not know God and does not know that he became man to make us happy, but who feels a strong need for it; but, it is a compelling and joyful adventure. It takes patience, but there is some result because the grace of the Lord does what the missionary cannot do.

It is important to listen to people, but it is vital to present the good news with conviction, joy and even a little skill, always coated with a broad smile. Most Japanese do not need material bread, but they need spiritual food even more so.

If the missionary is passionate about communicating the beauty of living in close harmony with Jesus and neighbors, he may still say that the mission in Japan is difficult, but he can never say that the joy of being a missionary is missing, even if the results are not so striking.

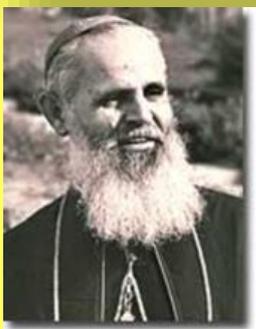
Achille Loro Piana (DIAM of Japan)



To be a missionary in Japan, what joy!

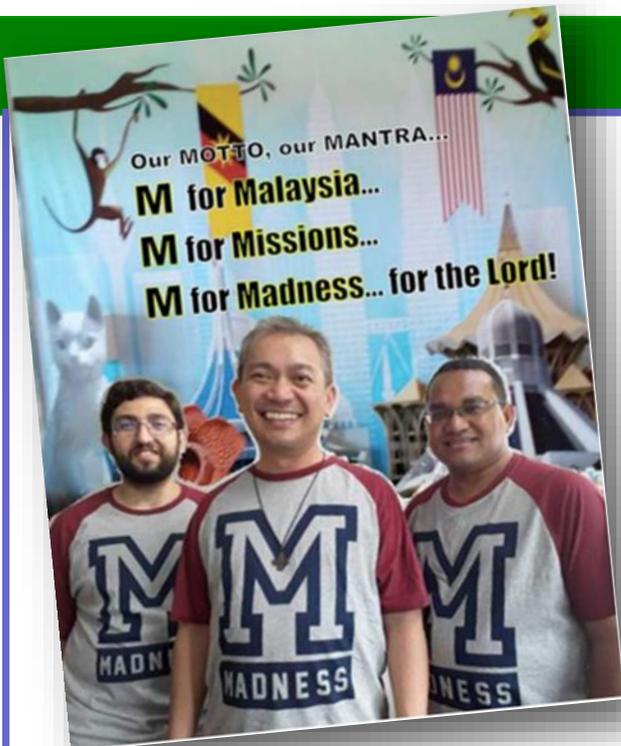
Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

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



Servant of God Mons. Oreste Marengo (1906-1998), a great missionary in North East India and founder of three Dioceses. He made his novitiate in 1923 at Foglizzo. When a cleric died who had been destined for the missions in India, he obtained the permission to replace him. "This was the greatest desire of my life. I had asked to become a Salesian on the condition that I could consecrate my life to the apostolate in mission lands. I didn't care where in the world they sent me." He was the youngest of the pioneers: only 17 years old! He lived the path of holiness inspired by the Words of Jesus: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as a little child receives it, will not enter into it."

Willing to wait...



It was in August 2015, at the celebration of the bicentenary of St. John Bosco's birth, that I felt the call getting stronger and stronger to be a missionary 'ad gentes'. I was then the Provincial Delegate for the Missionary Animation of our Philippines-North Province. Little did I realize that while I was fishing for people to fall in love with the missions and to become missionaries, it was actually I who had swallowed the bait. Soon enough, I became my own first catch.

I was inspired by the Salesian missionaries I had met, above all the late *Fr. Peter Zago* and *Fr. Luis Iriarte*. I had personally experienced their kindness and care. I saw with my own eyes their zeal and their joy, especially when I was still a young Bosconian in Don Bosco Tondo back in the 80's. In 2016, I whispered to God in prayer, "Yes, Lord. Please send me as your missionary." Don Bosco gifted me so much. This was my way of responding, "Thank you, Don Bosco. Happy birthday, too! I offer this to you as my

humble gift." Earlier I had been one of the many recipients of the great goodness and generosity of missionaries. Now I feel I am one of the few called to pass it on. It is as though God has been telling me, "Ramon, it's payback time! Go, be a giver-missionary this time."

Thus, in August 2017, at the age of 45, I was sent as a missionary to the Archdiocese of Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Assigned with me here are *Fr. Andre Belo* from East Timor, and *Bro. Manuel Ruperez* from Spain. Our companion missionaries of the 148th Salesian Missionary Expedition went out to various countries; we moved to this part of Malaysia to be God's disciples in the spirit of St. John Bosco.

The plan was for us Salesians to run a skills-training school, owned by the Archdiocese, for the poor youth of the locality. But for understandable reasons, that plan is, as of now, far from being actualized. At the request of the Archbishop of Kuching, our Provincial has tasked us to help with various ministries in the Archdiocese while waiting for the foundation of the said school. The two of us Salesian priests are serving in the Youth Commission of the Archdiocese. We also help in the parishes around, especially with Holy Masses, sacraments and sessions of formation. Our lay brother serves as a teacher in St. Joseph's International School, a Catholic school in Kuching City.

We have been here in Malaysia since 2017 and our Salesian presence here is yet to be established. We do not even have a residence nor a school we can call our own, where we can live and pray together as confreres, where we can serve the youth through Salesian education and evangelization. Yet we remain hopeful. We pray, trusting and entrusting, that in God's time and grace, through Mary's intercession, everything will turn out fine. As those who are madly in love would say and do, "**We are willing to wait... no matter what it takes.**"

It took me forty-five years to say 'yes' to God's invitation to be a missionary. And God was so willing to wait. I just wish it won't take forty-five years too for a Salesian missionary presence to be established here. But no matter what and when, as God has, I too am so willing to wait.

FR . RAMON G. BORJA, SDB— Philippine missionary in Malaysia

For Salesian vocations as Brothers and Priests in EUROPE



Salesian Missionary Intention

That the Lord may continue to send holy and numerous vocations for the abundant harvest of the Salesian mission, and grant perseverance and holiness to those he has already called.

The Church and the Salesian Family, rich in ministries, charisms and vocations, continue to have an urgent need of consecrated persons who live and animate the charism of Don Bosco in fraternal communities, which bear witness to the absolute primacy of God and total self-giving to the service of young people. We pray that the Lord may continue to send new and generous Salesians who are signs of his love for the young, especially in Europe.

