CAGLIERO11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation

204 DECEMBER 2025

150 GIVE THANKS RETHINK RELAUNCH

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

RELAUNCH

Dear Friends,

As a Salesian of Don Bosco, I have been blessed to witness the courage and faith of our brothers who live and serve in difficult places. Recently, I visited Myanmar and the Holy Land - two regions wounded by violence and division. In both places, I encountered Salesians who, despite fear and uncertainty, continue to live the Gospel with joy, offering education, hope, and peace to young people.

I must confess that their courage, faith, and witness touched me deeply. It reminded me that even in the darkest moments, God doesn't stop caring for His children. We must always remain positive, trusting that God can bring good out of every trial.

"God does not want war. God wants peace". With these words, Pope Leo urges us to pray for peace. Let us join in prayer that peace may dwell in our communities and in the hearts of all who suffer from conflict. May our Salesian presence continue to be a small flame of hope, showing that love is stronger than hatred, and that Jesus' peace can still transform the world.

With prayer and gratitude.

• Fr Gabriel Stawowy SDB
General Economer

If we want peace, let us educate for peace

It seems incredible that in the 21st century there are **more than a hundred active armed conflicts** in the world. Eleven of them are real wars that leave thousands dead and millions displaced. The outlook is bleak, because those who suffer most are always children and young people. I have seen it with my own eyes as a missionary in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, where children were forcibly recruited to fight on the front lines.

Pope Francis has told us clearly: "*Every war is a defeat.*" In the end, no one wins; everyone loses, because hearts are wounded and the wounds of the soul take longer to heal than those of the body. Pope Leo XIII confirmed this: "*nothing is lost with peace; everything is lost with war*", inviting us to dialogue and forgiveness as the only ways capable of silencing weapons and thus building **a peace based on justice and respect** for human dignity.

For us, as a Salesians and Missionary Family, peace is not just an ideal or a right: it is a way of life and an educational process. Every family, community, playground, workshop or classroom must be an authentic school of peace, where children and young people learn to live together, to dialogue, to forgive and to respect differences. **Don Bosco was convinced that peace can be taught**; it is taught more by gestures than by words, by living the family spirit in an atmosphere marked by kindness, trust and listening. Therefore, if we want peace, let us educate for peace! Because peace cannot be imposed, it is built by educating the hearts of individuals and peoples, especially young people. Don Bosco always said that education was a matter of the heart, and so is peace!

• Fr Jorge Mario Crisafulli SDB
General Councillor for Missions

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

• How can I contribute, on a personal or community level, to world peace?

FORUM

Main war zones affecting Christians

Sudan: Civil war has displaced more than 7.7 million people, creating the world's largest displacement crisis. Islamic extremists have destroyed more than a hundred churches and targeted Christians for kidnapping and murder.

Myanmar: Christians in the Kachin region have suffered what activists describe as a "slow genocide," particularly since the 2021 military coup.

Nigeria: Nigeria remains the deadliest country for Christians, with 9,814 confirmed deaths between 2022 and 2024.

Gaza: Since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas, Gaza's Christian communities have been on the brink of extinction, with almost all their homes destroyed.

DISARMING OUR HEARTS TO BUILD PEACE

Dear Fr Thathi, this month we are praying especially for Salesian communities living in war zones. Wars begin in people's hearts and affect relationships even in our communities. Do you think conflicts in communities are normal?

Thank you for choosing peace as the theme for the December issue of Cagliero 11. In these dark times, we are urgently called to pray persistently like the widow of the gospels, for an end to wars that wound and kill our brothers and sisters - our shared humanity. Let us be united in solidarity with our confreres who, in the midst of conflicts and wars in different parts of the world, continue to stand courageously with the young and the people entrusted to their care.

Conflicts are inherent to the human experience, and our communities are no exception. They emerge from our daily living, working, and sharing a common mission together. Among confreres, conflicts may start with something as small as a difference of opinion. If these differences are not managed with maturity and humility, they can gradually grow into deeper misunderstandings, conflicts and divisions.

You were Provincial of INH and leader of a couple of communities, including Colle Don Bosco. What experience did you gain from these roles in terms of conflict resolution and reconciliation among confreres?

I have experienced how fragile peace can be among confreres and within our communities. Differences of opinion, misunderstandings, and personal wounds can easily grow into walls that separate hearts. At times, I found myself caught between confreres who struggled to see eye to eye. I have learned that the most transformative path to peace is listening: deep, patient, non-defensive listening. When we truly listen, walls fall, and bridges are built.

I have found prayer as an effective means of fostering reconciliation and harmony. In moments of tension, I used to entrust both the situation and the confreres in need of healing to the Lord, allowing His grace to work where words or actions fall short. Time and again, I have witnessed the quiet yet transformative power of the Spirit bringing understanding, peace, and renewal to hearts and relationships. The Spirit works most powerfully when we surrender control and allow Him to soften hearts.

Another essential path to peace is forgiveness. I have come across confreres willing to forgive unconditionally in spite of woundedness. They are saints next door. Acknowledging our faults and seeking pardon are not signs of weakness but expressions of true strength and humility. As Gandhi reminds us, only the courageous can truly forgive. When no one claims superiority, dialogue becomes possible, which leads to reconciliation and peace.

What would you recommend to us who pray for peace in the world and in human hearts?

When we pray for peace, we must first ask God to calm the storms within us and to disarm our hearts. Peace begins in the way we speak, listen, forgive, and reach out to others in daily life. In these troubled times, as the world trembles under the weight of war, violence, and division, our communities are called to be true oases of hope.

Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar SDB

He comes from the Province of **Hyderabad**. He has served the province in various leadership roles: as **Delegate** for Social Communications and Youth Ministry, **Vice Provincial**, and later as **Provincial** (2016–2022).

Following his term, he was appointed **Rector of Colle Don Bosco** (2022–2025). In April 2025, the 11th Successor of Don Bosco, Fr. Fabio Attard, appointed him as his **Personal Secretary**.

He is qualified in **philosophy** and **communications**, taught philosophy and worked for young at risk.

DECEMBER SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

RELAUNCHING PEACE

SALESIAN INTENTION

We pray that peace may dwell in Salesian communities and in the hearts of people living in war zones.

Prayer intention of Pope Leo > *For Christians in regions in conflict*

Salesian Provincials and Rectors