



SOCIETÀ DI SAN FRANCESCO DI SALES

SEDE CENTRALE SALESIANA

Via Marsala, 42 - 00185 Roma

Il Rettor Maggiore

Prot. 18/0483
Roma 08th December 2018

MISSIONARY APPEAL OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

On the occasion of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2018

My dearest Confrères,

May my fraternal and affectionate greeting reach you on the day of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the day I chose three years ago to address a strong missionary appeal to all the confreres in all the provinces of the world. I renew this appeal again this year, accompanying it with a video of about five minutes.

Pope Francis declared the month of October of next year 2019 *an extraordinary missionary month*, because of the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* that Pope Benedict XV wrote at the end of World War I.

Hard times are always **favorable times**. In this case, they are times for “*doing good business*”, a “*great business*”, as Dominic Savio remarked when he read in Don Bosco’s office the words “*DA MIHI ANIMAS COETERA TOLLE*”. It was a matter of the utmost importance, and this is what we consider the evangelization of peoples, a permanent and deep passion of the heart of our Father don Bosco: a matter *of the utmost importance*.

My dearest Confreres, what do I intend to propose? I am inviting you to celebrate and remember the missionary generosity of the sons of Don Bosco.

The next missionary expedition will be the **150th** and will take place on Sunday, September 29th, 2019, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, as has always been done since don Bosco’s time. How much do I wish that the response to the missionary appeal were the best gift that the Society of St. Francis de Sales, we *Salesians*, could present to the Lord, to Pope Francis and to the Church and, above all, to our beloved youth in all our presences in the world.

I dream that each Province this year could put at the disposal of the Rector Major at least one confrere for the *missio ad gentes, ad exteros, ad vitam*.

Is it too much to ask and dream?



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Even the Provinces that are numerically poorer of Confreres can do it. There already is a Province in which six confreres have matured their Salesian missionary vocation and put themselves at the disposal of the Rector Major for next year's 150th expedition.

I encourage you, my dear Provincials, to be the first to help the confreres to cultivate in their lives these missionary aspirations and to facilitate their discernment, inviting them, after a personal dialogue with you, to get in touch with the Rector Major.

Let us keep in mind that God does not allow himself to be overcome in generosity, nor does our Congregation itself, when it thinks of the needs of each Province, particularly of those that give generously, like *the widow of the Gospel with her offering in the temple*.

The dialogue with the Dicastery for the Missions and the reflection shared in the last months within the General Council allow me to precisely point out the urgencies identified for 2019 and where I would like that a significant number of confreres might be sent:

- To our presences in Amazonia and to the new presence in Colón, Panama;
- To Sudan and other Salesian presences at the service of refugees in various zones of Africa;
- To Lithuania, Albania and Kosovo, Bulgaria and to other new frontiers of Project Europe;
- To Mongolia, Laos, Nepal, Yakutia;
- To our numerous presences in the islands of Oceania;
- To some missionary frontiers in Latin America, if we have sufficient forces.

All this will naturally depend on the generous response to the appeal.

Provincial Chapters, in the path of preparation for GC28, are immersed in a full and fruitful discernment on the central theme: «*What kind of Salesians for the Youth of today?*». Before clear and inspirational responses are drafted and formulated, let us allow the happy, generous and precise faces of young and mature confreres to speak eloquently, as they feel they have to listen to the *missionary call the Lord is addressing to them*.

My dear Confreres, I pray for this and I entrust this intention to the intercession of our Immaculate Mother Help of Christians, asking Don Bosco to continue to nourish in his Salesians the same missionary zeal he lived.

I greet you with true affection.

Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB

Rector Major

