



arrived in Darkhan in 2005, there was not even one Catholic in the city. No one knew who Jesus Christ was. Now, when Fr Paul was recently appointed to be the first parish priest of Mary Help of Christians Parish in Selenge Aimag, a vast province which includes Darkhan, 22 times larger than Hong Kong, he found out there were already around 150 Catholics because of the hard work of the missionaries. Some of them are now preparing themselves to be catechists or Salesian Cooperators. And he is now preparing to build a shrine dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians.

Fr Paul recently came back to be beside his dying mother. We learned that this mother of our first missionary was a very wonderful woman, mother of five children. She was not a Catholic but always remained an honest non-Christian woman.

As Fr Paul himself told us, when he was still a young college student after he graduated from a Salesian school in Hong Kong, one day he asked for his mother's permission to be baptized and his mother answered, "No problem" but then added, "You should never be a missionary". After about a year, he told her that a certain priest had telephoned him, and instinctively she asked, "Priest? Do you also want to

be a priest one day?" "Yes", Paul answered. She didn't say a word but closed herself in her room for three days weeping, carrying all the pain of her son's mysterious plan in her heart. Then she generously gave her consent: "Take good care of yourself then... if one day you cannot stand the hardship, you are always welcome back home".

Years later Fr Paul had been sent to Rome to study. One day he gave her a call indicating that he was going to spend a long summer holiday visiting another country. She immediately twigged that he might be heading for some dangerous place and advised her son: "Please, be careful if you are going to countries in trouble". In fact Fr Paul went to Albania to serve those under persecution.

Then, again after some years, Fr Paul told her that he would like to be a missionary to Mongolia to spread the Good News and probably would be away from her for a long time. She again remained a generous, always available mother, saying, "Son, I know you are always restless, but you must know that it is very cold there, so put on more clothes, eat more and whenever you are free, come back to see me".

From then on she took great care of

him and gave full support for all that her son was doing in the missions. She was always proud of him.

Don Bosco's dream for Salesian work in China and Fr Paul Leung's calling as a missionary are hard to fathom for many of us. The explanation can only be that God has a marvellous plan for the future of our Province and we are to cooperate with him to make it happen.

On 25 March, the China Province welcomed the solemn arrival of Don Bosco's Casket in Hong Kong. In the welcoming ceremony at Tang King Po School, organised by the Youth Ministry Office, to our great surprise Fr Paul appeared among us with six Mongolian young people and one Salesian cleric. They danced and sang before the Relic. The following day, during the public veneration of the relic, some priests and sisters, and some young men and women from the south and north of China came to see Don Bosco. They had learned of the event through the press or Internet.

Do we have reason to say that this may be a sign that now is the time for Don Bosco's dream to be fulfilled? Are we ready and well prepared for that possibility? The question remains.

