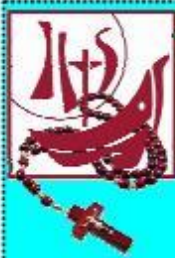


N. 53 - May 2013



Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation

A Publication of the Mission Department for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission



Dear confreres and friends of the Salesian missions,

A cordial greeting before Pentecost missionary day par excellence. Throughout the Easter season we read the Acts of the Apostles where we learn from the early Church the *why* and *how* of initial proclamation of Jesus Christ to 'pagans', the journey of faith of new Christians as well as strategies to build the Church from 'zero'. In the same way that the first persecution of the Church in Jerusalem hastened the spread of the Gospel in the Roman Empire, so it happens even in our times in many parts of the world.

Sixty years ago, almost all the institutions of the Church in China (schools, hospitals, publishing, social work) were nationalised and more than 5,000 foreign missionaries were expelled. Today, however, with all the limitations of the situation, there are more Christians in China than in Italy, we are surprised by the missionary zeal of the laity. A Protestant Publisher in Nanjing has printed 100 million Bibles in the last 30 years. Between 1949 and 2012, without the presence of missionaries *ad gentes* from outside, the Protestant communities have grown from 1 million to 70 million (the more modest estimate), and the Catholic Church from 3 million to 12 million faithful. All thanks to a tenacious, strong and missionary faith of many simple Chinese Christians and pastors! The prayer for the Church in China on May 24, willed by Pope Benedict XVI offers a real opportunity to bring us closer to the faithful in China!

In these times of *silent apostasy* of Christians in Europe (we have everything, but we have lost the faith) or of *defection* of so many Catholics in America (millions of Catholic faithful have gone to sects) - the growth of the Church in China gives us a glimpse of the dynamics of the Acts of the Apostles today.

I wish you a fruitful celebration of Pentecost to relaunch of our evangelised and evangelising communities!

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Fr. Václav Klement, SDB
Councillor for the Missions

"Constantly promote devotion to Mary Help of Christians"

An essential element in the Salesian mission is the presence of Mary, a typically evangelical conviction (cf. Jn 2,1.12; Acts 1,14) and a certainty of faith deeply lived by Don Bosco. This active presence of Mary in the life of the Church has been well-described by the title of Help of Christians. Don Bosco's souvenir to the missionaries recommends this "devotion" which needs to be carefully cultivated. [...]

With the use of the title of "Mary Help of Christians" the Salesian charism is opened up to the missionary dimension, and a feature of Salesian missionary activity is the spreading among the people of devotion to Mary Help of Christians, the celebration of the principal Marian feasts, the publication of booklets and holy pictures, the building of Marian churches in every part of the world, the visible expression of the diffusion of Don Bosco's apostolic and educational charism. "The Holy Virgin Mary" - he wrote in his 'Spiritual Testament' "will continue most certainly to protect our Congregation and Salesian houses, if we persevere in our trust in her and continue promoting her devotion." [...]

Fr. Pascual Chávez
(The Inculturation of the Salesian Charism, AGC 411)



Mary Help of Christians
Papua New Guinea

"If the Lord is calling you to be a missionary outside our Country ... GO!"

I was born in Kerala, South India. As an altar boy I heard a good number of the 65 priests coming from my Parish share their experiences missionary during their vacation. Naturally I began to ask myself: 'if I could be near to a priest at the altar, why can't I be there at the altar one day'. The visit of a Salesian vocation promoter later led to my joining a vocation camp when I was 14. During the camp I expressed my desire to be missionary north of India in the Province of Kolkata.

I started as an aspirant there in 1994, 2400 kilometers away from my home, in a totally new culture and language. At the end of my post novitiate I expressed my desire to be a missionary *ad externos* to my Provincial who advised me to take more time to discern. After my priestly ordination I was appointed to a parish

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Interview of Fr. Camiel Swertavagher,
Provincial of Africa Great Lakes
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The course for new missionaries in Rome and Turin provided me lots of spiritual and practical tips which made me even more enthusiastic about my mis-



sionary vocation. After receiving the missionary cross at Valdocco, I landed in Guatemala without knowing a single person, the culture and the language. You could imagine my feelings... But I encountered great Salesian Spirit and I felt immediately at home though I had to struggle to understand and to communicate since I had not yet learnt Spanish. My previous experiences helped

me greatly to cope up with the feeling of being a child again in a new culture and language. It was of course difficult but my heart never gave up beating!

Now I am working as part of the new community at San Benito, Peten, Guatemala. I struggled to get into the situations of the local area, but by the grace of God, things are on the right track. It needs courage to be a missionary. Challenges are everywhere, but if we do not take up the challenges,

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*Fr. Shiju James Thottupurathu
Indian, missionary in Guatemala*

NEW MISSIONARIES SOUGHT FOR AMERICA

Province - Country	Necessary languages	Environment and necessary qualities of the missionaries
ARS - Argentina	Spanish	Need missionaries especially for Patagoina
BOL - Bolivia	Spanish, Kechua, Aymara	Presence among tribal groups (Kechuas and Aymaras) Evangelization centred on education (School) and socio economic development
BRE Brasile - Recife	Portuguese	Scarcity of Salesians, Social work in the poor areas of the Northeast.
PER Perú Vicariate of Pucallpa	Spanish Indigenous Languages	1. Vicariate of Pucallpa entrusted in 2009, few missionaries, indigenous peoples; 2. Missions-Valle Sagrado (Kechua), 3. Missions in Yurimaguas (San Lorenzo)
SUE - SUO USA Migrant ministry	English Spanish	Pastoral care for migrants of Hispanic origin (parish, youth centres - oratories, social empowerment)



Salesian Missionary Intention

For the evangelisation of young Chinese migrants the worldover

That the members of the Salesian Family may welcome the opportunity offered by the presence of Chinese migrants in our works in all continents to share the faith and open the doors of the Gospel to them.

China - the most populated country in the world has about 1.3 billion inhabitants and about 100 million Chinese migrants of various groups in all five continents, outside mainland China. Let us pray that God may raise up apostles who will take the gospel to the many millions of Chinese migrants, especially young people. Due to linguistic, social and cultural diversity many look at the Chinese either with suspicion or with folkloristic curiosity, deprive of any apostolic perspective. In Africa alone there are 25 million Chinese migrants, the vast majority of whom are young workers.



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