

# CAGLIERO 11

Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation

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



## A Province which does not reach out to the frontiers, gets sick!

Dear confreres and friends of the Salesian missions!

The most impressive experience I had this year was the visit to the places of Fr. Luigi Bolla, an excellent missionary who died on February 2013. Every year Fr. Luigi visited all the thirty Ashuar villages in the Peruvian territory of the Amazonian forest, forming a true 'indigenous church'. I consider his words as the best commentary on the theme of the GC 27: "When the ship was leaving the port of Genoa, I experienced one of the most beautiful moments of my life. It seemed to me that everything dies - your friends, your land, your mountains ... And I think that this is the feeling of all the missionaries. It was then that I said to the Lord, 'I have lost everything, now YOU are the only one I have, because in the new world I know nothing. And at that time the Lord answers you 'I AM EVERYTHING and I AM ONLY FOR YOU'. It is a moment of joy, infinite joy! I want to

encourage young people to follow the missionary vocation. Yes, the missionary vocation is an extraordinary gift!"

I wish you a fruitful celebration of Christmas 2013!

*Václav Klement*

Fr. Václav Klement, SDB  
Councillor for the Missions



Article 6 of our Constitutions points out the tasks we have in the Church: "The Salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church and puts us entirely at the service of her mission. Faithful to the commitments Don Bosco has passed on to us, we are evangelizers of the young, and the more so if they are poor; we pay special attention to apostolic vocations; we are educators of the faith for the working classes, particularly by means of social communication; we proclaim the Gospel to those who have not yet received it. In this way we contribute to building up the Church as the Body of Christ, so that also through us she may appear to the world as the 'universal sacrament of salvation'."

This article applies to every Salesian confrere, community and province. Achieving the goals of the Congregation is everyone's responsibility; it applies to the education and evangelization of young people, especially the poor, to apostolic vocations, to the education of the faith of the working classes, particularly by means of social communication, and precisely to the proclamation of the Gospel to people who do not know it. Therefore, it is not the exclusive task of the Councillor for the Missions to accomplish this fourth task of the Congregation and stir up missionary vocations; this responsibility falls on all of us.

Our provinces run the kind of risk that Pope Francis is denouncing in the Church: becoming closed. A province centred on itself and its own needs, one that does not go out into the streets and reach the frontiers, becomes sick. There are provinces with an abundance of vocations that think only of themselves; and there are poor provinces that receive missionaries and also send them. The Church and the Congregation are renewed through a missionary commitment and an exchange of vocational gifts. That is why international communities are important; they are a sign that the Congregation is alive because in it there is a readiness for generosity and missionary mobility.

Fr. Francesco Cereda  
Councillor for Formation

(excerpt from an address at the 2nd Meeting of Missionaries in Europe,

On the eve of GC 27 and almost at the end the six year period we wish to say **THANK YOU** to all who collaborated in the preparation of Cagliero 11: Luciano Arcarese, Fr. Angelo Biz, René Dassy, Fr. Alfred Maravilla, Fr. Hilario Passero, Renée Saghers, Fr. Agustin Pacheco, Fr. Dionisio Pacheco



## Amongst the Gypsies I discovered my missionary vocation

**M**y missionary vocation developed over a long period of time. The first invitation goes back to my youth, after getting to know the life of a missionary, St. Damian De Veuster. At that moment I felt a call to be with the weakest. The other steps were slow in my Salesian life. Years later, while I was rector of the Salesian students in theology, I went with them to a village 35 km from Bratislava where a group of about 400 Rom had built houses on a meadow. The Sisters of Mother Teresa had already launched initiatives with the children. But for us Salesians it all started with the celebration of Sunday Mass for Rom children in the parish church.

The other step in my missionary vocation was the preparation of the parents for the baptism of their children. We rented some rooms in an old nursery for

children and we adapted it according to the need: as an oratory, a chapel or a classroom to prepare kids for school, etc. . Initially I expected that the parents would come to our 'centre', but in the end I had to go to find them in their homes, where I started the first 'catechesis.' Slowly I came to know a good group of families. Besides us (Salesians) some FMAs, some university students, as well as other students of theology of other religious congregations also worked there. After a few years the number of Salesian students of theology declined and it was decided to send them to Crocetta (Turin). At the end I was the only Salesian left among the Rom.

Now I live in a Salesian community in a neighborhood of the city of Kosice, where some 5,000 Rom live. Our presence among them has opened my eyes to the existence of a different culture either from the social or Christian point of view. Being with them, I realised how the Gypsies have managed to maintain what we today - people of the culture of 'efficiency and of rights' - do not understand. I can describe it perhaps only loosely, as the perception that the world is not our property, but that it is of everyone and that we are not owners but only pilgrims; the sense of the joy of being together as a family, as a group, and so on. This, to me, is a fertile field for the Gospel.

The majority of the Roms are baptised but not evangelised. They want their children to be baptised, but nothing else after. However, I have also found individuals and families who are open to the faith. To me, the biggest challenge is to understand well their core culture and not stigmatize them as 'lazy' and 'cunning.' It takes patience to find areas where you can sow. After eight years of journeying with them I found out that amongst the Gypsies I can live authentically our Salesian life: to live among the poor not only in the economic sense, but also from the religious point of view, including those who have not yet accepted Christ into their lives.

*Indeed, amongst the Gypsies I discovered my missionary vocation !*

**Fr. Jozef Žembera**

*Slovak, missionary among the Gypsies in Slovakia*



Video

*Interview of Fr. Faustino García Peña, Provincial of the Province of Africa Occidentale Francofona (AFO) in French with subtitles in English (<http://vimeo.com/79874272>)*

## For the youth of North Europe Region

That the young people of Europe may encounter in the settings of the Salesian Family Christian communities which reflect the face of Christ today.

*Project Europe needs the strength of internal regeneration, which takes place through the new evangelisation that rediscovers the roots of true life based on Christian values. In spite of appearances the young generation of Europeans seek the meaning of life, spirituality and depth. Through the educative activity of the Salesian Family they may become the hope for the future of the European continent. The commitment to missionary volunteer service and active participation in youth groups (SYM) in the Salesian settings may be the way to rediscover the face of a Church alive.*

