

Missionary Day Commemoration

Prayer Service

11 October 2013

Hymn: *How good it is to dwell* (Pray Sing 14)

Introduction

A very good evening to everyone gathered here! A fundamental requirement and a sure way of fulfilling our Salesian vocation is the aspect of living and working together (Community life). As religious we distinguish ourselves with the community life besides the evangelical counsels. Moreover, a special and inevitable aspect of our Salesian life is the '*family spirit*.' This family spirit brings lots of joy to our ascetical life (prayer and sacrifices), religious life (vows) and our mission with the young (apostolate).

This aspect of living and working together is much more essential in our missionary life. Today, as we commemorate the Salesian Mission Day, let us thank God for this wonderful gift of community life and pray to God that drawing inspiration from the Holy Trinity, we may live together in our own communities and evangelize the young through our joyful life together.

Penitential Rite

(Distribute papers cut in the shape of a heart and arrange for burning those papers).

God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit live in ultimate unity. Psalm 133 says that it is blessedness for brothers to live together. But many a time we have failed to cherish the community life and accept others as they are. Let us now write in the heart-shaped paper the moments when we judged others and did not accept others or let us write the names with whom we find difficult to relate with genuine love. After a minute of silent prayer, let us come forward and burn the hearts as a sign of offering our repented heart to God.

Opening Prayer

O Most Holy Trinity, the example of perfect unity, we beseech thee, as we celebrate the mission day, to instill in us a heart that goes out in love for one another, correct each other, share the joys and sufferings of one another and thus become good missionaries through our love for one another. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Don Bosco Speaks

Our father and founder St. John Bosco is not only a writer, not only a pedagogue, not only a miracle worker but above all he is a spiritual master. As we are in the year of Bosconian

spirituality, let us listen to what he himself gave to the first missionaries who went to Patagonia. On November 11 1875, the saint instructed them how to love each other and how they can become effective missionaries. Today, he addresses us. Let us listen carefully to these practical tips point by point.

“Love one another, advise one another, correct one another, and do not be carried away by either envy or rancour. Let the good of one become the good of all, and let the troubles and sufferings of one be regarded as the troubles and sufferings of all, and let each one strive to banish or at least to mitigate the sorrows of others.”

Gospel Reading: Mt 18: 15 - 20

Reflection

In the Gospel, the Lord is very clear that we never have a smooth sail in living together. He is also very practical. After saying that we are sure to have difficulties in community life he gives three steps. First, personally we confront the person. This implies that we have an urge not to miss that relationship and that we are courageous enough to confront others face to face. Second step comes only if you or he make something go wrong in the first step, then we get a few more into this deal. Even then if there is some problem, then we take it to the Church.

The Lord as well as our spiritual master St. John Bosco tell us very clearly that we need to practically and courageously deal with our relationships and that we make personal effort to keep the bond of love strong through the grace of God. As we reflect today on the community life and the family spirit, and our missionary life, we realize that it is very important that we live together in love and happiness so as to be the signs and bearers of God’s love to the young.

Let us thank God for the great gift of brothers to live with. In case of some struggles, let us begin today to follow the commandment of God and the instruction of our father and founder St. John Bosco.

Missionary for Imitation

Fr. Peter Maggioni

Early Life

Fr. Peter Maggioni was born on 27 March 1909 at Legnanello (Italy), to Giuseppe and Carolina. As a young lad, he attended the Salesian centre at Legnano and completed his high school studies. Then, he took a diploma in architecture and worked for four years as a designer. He was a dynamic leader in the Catholic Action Movement, serving as its Secretary, while Fr. Egidio Sola, also from the same place, was its president. He was an active member of the parish

and used to play the organ for the Church services. At the age of 20, he felt the call of God and entered the missionary aspirantate of Ivrea. He made the novitiate at Villa Moglia and professed on 14 September 1933. Soon he left for India and studied philosophy at Shillong. After his practical training in the office of the Archbishop of Madras, he went to Bandel for theology and completed it at Mawlai. He was ordained on 26 October 1940 at Shillong.

Ministry

Back in Madras after his ordination, Fr. Peter served in various capacities at Wandiwash, Refuge (Madras), Tirupattur, Dehra Dhun camp... At the end of 1945, he did the pioneering work at Kotagiri to begin the philosophate there in 1946. From 1946 to 1970 he worked at St. Mary's Co-Cathedral. For some years he was also the Chancellor of the Archdiocese and Director of the Catholic Centre. He served on the archdiocesan Council for 25 long years. During his tenure at St. Mary's, he renovated the Church, conducted the services with superb decorum and punctuality and organized works of piety and charity.

In 1971, Fr. Maggioni was appointed administrator of the Rinaldi Juniorate. He spent the remaining years at the provincial house, working tirelessly to raise funds to support the numerous works of the province. Fr. Maggioni's architectural skill can be seen today in about 28 buildings dotting the province at Madras and Bangalore. He planned many buildings for the Salesian Sisters too.

Fr. Maggioni who had defied doctors up to the age of 74 had a cerebral stroke in May 1983. He spent nearly five months in Hospital utterly helpless and for the most part semiconscious or unconscious. But on October 22 1983, he regained consciousness, thanked and blessed the sisters and died peacefully.

Characteristics

- 1. Compassionate:** Fr. Maggioni's charity was proverbial. He preferred to be cheated than to run the risk of turning away someone who was in real need. He reached out to hundreds of poor people with timely assistance.
- 2. Fun and Humour:** He had a good collection of jokes and anecdotes to brighten up any occasion, though no special occasion was needed for him to surprise everyone with a side-splitter. He was quick to see the incongruencies of human life and knew how to laugh at himself too.
- 3. Quick to Forgive and Apologize:** While trying to live a life of fidelity and attachment to the Congregation, characterized by a sense of duty and a spirit of relentless work, it was not easy for him to adjust himself to changes. At times he would lose his temper. He would say jokingly, "When God was distributing patience, I had gone for a walk, but he gave me a double share of work." He was quick to forgive and if he involuntarily hurt anyone, he was quick to apologize.

4. **Tireless Industry:** Throughout the day he could be seen with piles of letters, writings, stamping, classifying or he was seated at his outdated but complicated drawing board, calculating, measuring, drawing or erasing with infinite patience.

Intercession

Let us implore from God the spirit of love and of peace so that we may build up a true fraternal community

- ✿ Father, you have willed that living and working together should be a fundamental need and a sure way for the realization of the Salesian vocation:
 - help us to build up a community where mutual love leads to the sharing of everything in true family spirit.
- ✿ Calling us to live in community, you entrust us with brothers to love:
 - grant us your spirit that, becoming one heart and one soul, we may be signs of love and unity for the youth of our time.
- ✿ Enlighten us so that, despite difficulties, we may daily discover the presence of Jesus:
 - make us open to fraternal correction, capable of offering affection, esteem and encouragement to all.

Our Father.....

Concluding Prayer

O God, in the fullness of time, you revealed yourself to us as a communion of persons, calling all of us to live as brothers. Grant us, as we celebrate the Salesian mission day, the grace to become more missionary in living as messengers of fraternity. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Hymn: "To follow the Lord and find freedom" (Pray Sing 410).