

Dear Confreres,

Jesus is born in Bethlehem and in our hearts again! This is real breaking news, much more than just a "reminder". Some days after Christmas we celebrated, the beginning of 2013, more or less the years that separate us from the birth of Jesus, the real central event of the history of humanity.

Well, in this issue of 'Mission' I would like to share with you an article from Alfred Maravilla, of the Mission Department, regarding missionary animation in Africa. Read it carefully and try to see if it fits with your idea of Missionary animation. As for me, I was quite impressed by it and I think it is an absolutely good point of view.

In this edition we will come to know one of the two young missionaries from Vietnam who just joined our AFW Province. At present we have the opportunity to host them here in Ibadan to improve their knowledge of English... they will soon be ready to join their communities, Peter in Ondo and Thomas in Onitsha!

I wish you all Happy New Year to everybody and God bless you

Bro. Paolo

## Keeping Alive the Passion

Alfred Maravilla

Salesian missionary promotion, has a twofold purpose which are interrelated and mutually complementary. Above all it aims at **keeping alive in every Salesian the passion to make Jesus known and to preach the Gospel**. Such missionary zeal leads to a rediscovery of "the joy of being Christians, of being sustained by the inner happiness of knowing Christ and belonging to his Church". Hence, an effective missionary promotion renews "the passion for the salvation of others, by the joy of sharing the experience of the fullness of life of Jesus" of individual Salesians and, consequently, making every member of the local and Province community "happy from deep within". From this joy springs the energies to share our Christian faith and live radically our Salesian life which, in turn, overcomes faith fatigue which could be noticed in the joylessness and inner sadness in living the consecrated life. Enthusiastic Salesians attract young people to Salesian life. An effective **missionary promotion**, therefore, **is also a form of vocation promotion**. **This missionary zeal that should be present in every Salesian does not preclude but actually implies that there are Salesians who have a specific vocation to be engaged in the missionary apostolate** outside even their own homeland, cultural milieu and language group (*ad externos*); among those who have not yet heard the Gospel, or where the Church is not yet fully established (*ad gentes*); and in contexts where there is an abandonment of the faith (*new evangelisation*) through a life-long commitment (*ad vitam*). Thus, the second purpose of missionary promotion which flows from its primary aim is to help Salesians discern if they have the call to be missionary. Those who feel called to be missionaries are helped to start the initial process of discernment by seeking the help of a spiritual guide to discover God's call, purify and deepen their motives, discern their qualities and attitudes in view of determining their basic suitability for Salesian missionary life. Our Salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church which "is missionary by her very nature" because she "is sent forth to the nations". In the same way that within the one Salesian vocation some are called to be priests while some to be brothers, similarly the Salesian missionary vocation is a call within our common Salesian vocation. In this light, it is not a matter of "we need confreres here" nor of "escaping" from the needs of the Province. No, no! It is a matter of helping a confrere respond





to a personal call to be a Salesian missionary. Hence, *Africae Munus* n. 167 underlines positively that responding to the need of missionaries in other countries and continents is “a concrete sign of the fruitfulness of the *missio ad gentes*”.

#### **Missionary Promotion in Salesian Communities**

Salesian missionary promotion in the whole Province is under the care of the Province Delegate for Missionary Animation (PDMA) who works in close collaboration with the Province Delegates for youth ministry, social communication and formation. In our local communities missionary promotion could take different forms. Here are 3 simple proposals:

The annual celebration of the **Salesian Mission Day** on a common date chosen by the whole Province is meant to foster awareness to different missionary situations and overcome every temptation to shut oneself off in one's own context. Every year the Missions Department prepares a poster, printed materials, a DVD with short films on the theme which are also available on *You Tube*. These draw attention to the vitality of the Salesian charism and the expressions of the missionary zeal of Salesians in different contexts.

The **Monthly Missionary Intention** as well as **prayer for missionaries every 11 of the month** underline the importance of spiritual dimension of mission and the possibility of all confreres to support the Congregation's missionary activity through their prayer.

The formation of a **missionary group** in every local setting fosters the revival of the missionary consciousness of young people and the whole educative pastoral community (EPC), revitalises the enthusiasm for the faith and the fascination for the Salesian charism. This, in turn, stirs up the ardour that gives birth to new vocations.



#### **Missionary prayer intention for the month of JANUARY:**

#### **MOR - Middle East Province**

For the members of the MOR Province and their lay collaborators present in all seven countries so that, in the midst of many difficulties, they may continue the Salesian mission of education and evangelisation with faith, courage and patience.



**“This is my place”:** My Full name is *Nghia Trong Nguyen, Peter*. I have two siblings who are students at the moment and I got a Bachelor's degree in Music

I have had the desire to become a priest since my first communion. At that time I did not distinguish between diocesan priest and religious priest. When I finished my secondary school, my parish priest enrolled me for my diocese. But at the same time I needed a place to stay to attend the college. As God's will, my former parish priest assistant sent me to Don Bosco hostel in Cau Vong. Upon staying in Don Bosco Cau Vong, I talked to myself “this is my place!” Two weeks later, my parish priest sent me a form to fill up as the requirement to enter the diocesan seminary, but I declined; I felt attracted to Don Bosco.

After two years, I became a seminarian in Don Bosco Cau Bong. Every Sunday, I had to travel 300 km back and forth to attend this programme. After becoming seminarian for one year, I graduated from my college. My superiors wanted me to move into Don Bosco K'Long so that I did not have to travel a long distance. I could not make it because according to the practice of the government I had to teach for two years as “paying back”. I believe that it's God's will that I went to teach so that it may help me in my future apostolate.

In 2007 I became a postulant. On August 14th 2008 I made my first profession. This event made me happy and marked a great change in my life: from now on I totally belong to God and dedicate myself to serve His people in the charism of Don Bosco.

**Motivations to Become Missionary:** Missionary vocation came to me all of a sudden without much preparation. When Fr. Bregolin came to receive the applications of my classmates, I was still indifferent and annoyed with the brothers for talking too much about missionary vocation. But after the Feast of Don Bosco, the idea of becoming a missionary kept on burning on my heart. I tried to forget it, but I thought of it even when I slept. I talked to myself “Does God really want me to become a missionary?” I decided to go to the chapel and prayed for this intention. I felt fearful thinking of this vocation and I prayed to God: “I cannot become a missionary because I still have many defects, shortcomings, and struggle in my studies and I do not have necessary qualifications.” I went out of the chapel and decided not to think about this vocation any more. But this idea kept on disturbing me all the time. I came to share this with father rector and he advised me to make a novena for discernment. After the novena, I am convinced that God wants me to become a missionary *ad gentes*. Therefore, I wrote my application to the mission with serenity and deep conviction that “God Himself calls me to become a missionary.”

January 2013

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