

Missionary Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Missions department - Formation department
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Translated from the Italian original:
La Formazione Missionaria dei Salesiani di Don Bosco
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The General Councillor for the Missions
The General Councillor for Formation

Rome, January 24, 2013
Prot. 13/0033

Subject: Missionary Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Dear Confreres,

We are sending you these reflections and proposals concerning the “missionary formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco”. These are the result of the joint work of our Missions and Formation sectors, after consulting with the respective Province Delegates; these find their foundation in the duty which the Constitutions assign to the Councillor for the Missions regarding “the specific preparation and updating of the missionaries” (C. 138); they were approved by the Rector Major and his Council on January 23, 2013.

We are acquainted with the missionary awareness which Don Bosco had gradually developed over his lifetime and which had matured through the sending of the first missionary expedition on November 11, 1875, and with successive expeditions. Similarly, we are aware of Don Bosco’s “Souvenir for missionaries” which the Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chávez, had taken up again in his letter “The inculturation of the Salesian charism” (ACG 412, Rome 2011). We also see today the missionary commitment of the Congregation, likewise codified in Article 6 of the Constitutions.

These reflections and proposals seek to keep the missionary spirit of the Congregation alive. At a time of globalisation and migration we need to be open to pastoral and intercultural formation. The Church's commitment to the

new evangelisation and ordinary evangelisation demands that we continue to push the frontiers of first evangelisation. The need to establish international communities and Project Europe are a call to missionary mobility in the Congregation.

In particular, these notes offer a twofold purpose. Above all they aim at the growth of missionary awareness in every confrere as well as the capacity for missionary promotion among young people and the laity; we know the potential of mission groups and of the missionary volunteer service for pastoral work, which open the young people to a style of life that is simple and in solidarity with the poor, and which engages them in the cause of the Gospel and challenges them in their Salesian consecrated vocation.

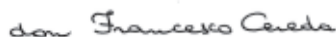
Secondly, they aim at offering a range of strategies for discovering, discerning and developing a true Salesian missionary vocation. Such a vocation is born, grows and develops as a gift of God, following the evangelising commitment of Jesus and through the impulse of the Holy Spirit; at the same time its historical circumstances require our cooperation.

We entrust these reflections and proposals to the commitment of the Provinces so that they may bear abundant “missionary” fruit during the imminent bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco.

Cordial greetings and thank you for your attention.



Fr. Vaclav Klement, SDB
Councillor for the Missions



Fr. Francesco Cereda, SDB
Councillor for Formation





Abbreviations

- Const. *Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales.*
- BM *Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco.* 19 vol. (Salesiana Publishers: New Rochelle, 1965-2002).
- FSDB *The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Principles and Norms.* (Editrice SDB: Rome, 2000).
- GSSFI Guidelines concerning Salesian Studies during Initial Formation. Methodology and Distribution of Study Courses during the Various Phases of Formation (Rome, 2005).
- Reg. *Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales.*
- RM John Paul II, *Encíclica Redemptoris Missio* (1991).
- SSCS *Salesian Social Communications System. Guidelines for the Salesian Congregation.* Second edition (Editrice SDB: Rome, 2011).



Introduction

This document seeks to encourage every Salesian to keep alive Don Bosco's missionary zeal alive through formation, and enable him to be a missionary animator as well as help him to discern whether God is calling him to be a missionary *ad gentes*.

This document highlights the *contents, attitudes, experiences* for various moments of formation. The contents are offered to highlight the missionary aspect of the formation experience; attitudes to be cultivated and experiences to be promoted are also indicated. These are contents, attitudes and experiences to be continually deepened in the various stages. Since the formation communities are located in different settings, the various proposals need to be contextualised.

At the end of the document specific issues are presented: criteria for discernment of the Salesian missionary vocation and formation of the Salesian missionary.



Initial Formation

THE PRENOVIATE

The pre-novitiate is the first stage of formation; it aims at stirring up interest in and enthusiasm for the Salesian vocation; it offers an experience of Salesian community and apostolic life where pre-novices deepen their vocational choice; it helps the pre-novices to mature in various human and Christian aspects as missionary disciples¹ and fosters their preparation for the novitiate.

Contents to be emphasised:

- the study of Don Bosco's life shows his zeal for souls, also expressed through his desire to go to the missions since his early years of priestly formation and which developed following his launching of the missionary frontier of the Congregation when he was much older;
- a description of the current presences of the Congregation offers pre-novices an insight into the variety of the Salesian mission in different countries and entuses them particularly regarding the work missionaries do in different parts of the world, despite the challenges and difficulties they encounter²;
- the presentation of historical figures and current witnesses of Salesian life also offers the pre-novices the example of missionaries from whom they can draw inspiration for their lives.

¹ CELAM V, *Aparecida. Documento Final*, n. 146, 216-220, 278 (Conferencia Episcopal Peruana: Lima, 2007) 62, 118-119, 143-145. The document emphasises that all Christians are called to be missionary disciples of Christ. Consecrated life is living this missionary discipleship radically.

² Cf. *GSSFI*, 1.2; 1.3.


Attitudes to be fostered:

- gratitude for the faith received, interest in study of the catechism, the joy of knowing and loving Christ and the Church, the desire to share his faith with others;
- openness to different social and cultural realities of their country and the world, to situations of poverty, to the reality of many young people who are like “sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9, 36), and thus the sense of compassion and solidarity;
- apostolic generosity which leads to a simple life and to the free gift of self, fruit of a Salesian spirituality that requires commitment to responsible service.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- know the work of missionaries in one’s Province, in the local church, in one’s country and around the world, for example through videos and visits by missionaries;
- be part of a missionary group in the pre-novitiate;
- experience the sharing of one’s faith with others, with other pre-novices and with young people;
- commit themselves in catechesis and in the apostolate, stirring up questions about the meaning of life in young people, fostering interest in the faith, creating the desire to know the figure of Jesus.

THE NOVITIATE

 The novitiate is the beginning of the experience of Salesian consecrated life. The novices increasingly configure themselves to Christ the Good Shepherd as his mis-

sionary disciples, deepening their relationship of love and friendship with him. By starting to live the consecrated life, they learn to situate themselves in the heart of the Church and place themselves entirely at the service of its mission³. As the *Ratio* states, "the service of the Kingdom, the witness to the Gospel, a sense of Church and missionary enthusiasm are all characteristics of the novitiate experience"⁴.

Contents to be emphasised:

- the study of the *Memoirs of the Oratory* with the intent of helping the novices understand the oratorian heart of Don Bosco as an expression of his missionary zeal and his apostolic inner life⁵;
- contact with holiness lived out by some significant figures of the Salesian Family, particularly by missionaries, and the reflection on the characteristics of their holiness in view of fostering the growth of a missionary heart among the novices⁶;
- the study of the Salesian Family with a view to broadening the horizons of the novices through collaboration and contribution of members of the Salesian Family and the laity, in the fulfilment of the Salesian mission, with particular reference to the missions.

Attitudes to be fostered:

- the willingness to identify oneself ever more with the sentiments of Jesus and with his commitment, so that all people may know the Gospel, and desire to see him known and loved by all, especially to young people;
- identification with the missionary heart of Don Bosco and the desire to become signs of the Father's love, especially for young people who do not know Jesus;



³ Cf. *Const.* 6.

⁴ *FSDB* 366.

⁵ Cf. *GSSFI* 2.1.

⁶ Cf. *GSSFI* 2.3.



- the ardour of the *Da mihi animas* that leads the novices to the total gift of self to God in religious profession according to the way of life traced out by Don Bosco;
- a positive attitude towards the missions and Salesian missionaries and a growing interest and willingness to offer themselves to the missions, if this is the will the God for them.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- take advantage of the possibility of insertion in the social and apostolic context⁷ and express pastoral charity at the service of the Kingdom through various educational and pastoral experiences, in order to have the possibility of “knowing and experiencing the world of the young, especially of the poorest”⁸;
- foster prayer for missionaries and the missions⁹, especially Eucharistic adoration and the Rosary;
- interact in a friendly manner, where possible, with young people of other religions;
- maintain contacts with some Salesian missionary, preferably from one’s own Province;
- be involved in the annual celebration of Salesian Missions Day, in the monthly remembrance of the missions every 11th of the month, and in personal prayer for missionary vocations and the missionary needs of the Church and the Congregation.

THE POST-NOVITIATE

The post-novitiate is the stage in which the newly professed Salesian strengthens the vocational experience of the novitiate for what concerns Salesian consecrated life; where he prepares himself for practical training, enters into dialogue with culture through philosophical,

⁷ Cf. *Reg.* 89.

⁸ *FSDB* 367.

⁹ Cf. *RM* 78.

pedagogical and catechetical studies and integrates faith, culture and life¹⁰.

Contents to be emphasised:

- critical and Christian reading of culture and ecclesial and world events, in order to understand their implications today for evangelisation, especially among young people;
- the study of the history of the Congregation and the Salesian work, with particular reference to its missionary expansion in the world¹¹;
- the study of the Preventive System with attention to its inculturation especially in today's multicultural and multi-religious context¹²;
- knowledge of the phenomenon of migration and its social, cultural and religious challenges;
- the study of catechesis and social communication to learn how to bring the Gospel to young people, and particularly to those who are indifferent, non-believers, or non-Christians;
- knowledge of the *Criteria for the Discernment of the Salesian Missionary Vocation* in order to initiate a possible discernment of a missionary vocation.

Attitudes to be fostered:

- critical and compassionate openness to the social, cultural and religious situation in one's country and in the world, especially of young people, and to listen to the cry of the people for a better life;
- sensitivity to the needs of young migrants, street children and youth at risk;
- interest and participation in the evangelising mission of the Church and the Congregation and the desire to contribute to its growth in one's country and the world;

¹⁰ Cf. *FSDB* 396; *Const.* 114.

¹¹ Cf. *GSSFI* 3.4.


¹² Cf. *GSSFI* 3.1; P. CHÁVEZ, "The Inculturation of the Salesian Charism", *AGC* 411, pp. 49-51.

- the willingness to be challenged by the missionary call and the generosity of offering oneself joyfully through a life that requires commitment, sacrifice and self-giving.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- apostolate among young migrants, among the poor in rural or urban areas, and among young people at risk in the context of the apostolic experiences of the post-novitiate;
- organise and animate mission groups in places where one goes for apostolate;
- have some experience of missionary promotion using the means of social communication¹³;
- reflect personally and in community on the *Criteria for the Discernment of the Salesian Missionary Vocation*.

PRACTICAL TRAINING

 Practical training is the vital stage of intense evaluation of Salesian activity in a pastoral and educative experience which helps young Salesians to mature in their consecrated Salesian vocation and to ascertain their suitability in view of perpetual profession¹⁴.

Contents to be emphasised:

- the personal and community reflection and evaluation with other practical trainees on their life experiences and Salesian activities;
- direct knowledge of the life of the Province and the Congregation.

¹³ Cf. *SSCS* II, 3-4.

¹⁴ Cf. *FSDB* 428-429.

Attitudes to be fostered:

- the joy of faith and love for Jesus and the enthusiasm to bring young people to know him, especially through catechesis;
- Don Bosco's passion for proposing to young people, especially those who do not know the Gospel or are far from the Church, the experience of the Christian faith;
- availability for the practice of the Preventive System as an expression of passion and joy in sharing the experience of the fullness of life in Christ;
- theoretical and practical exploration of the Preventive System with attention to inculturation.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- set up and animate a missionary group among young people and stir up their enthusiasm to take part in various initiatives in favour of the missions, including missionary volunteer service;
- find ways to interact with young people from other religions in one's context, and where possible provide direct experience in a Salesian missionary presence in one's Province.



THE SPECIFIC FORMATION OF SALESIAN PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

The specific formation is that which completes the initial formation of the Salesian pastor, missionary disciple, educator and shepherd, along the lines of his specific vocation as a brother or priest¹⁵.

Contents to be emphasised:

- the study of Don Bosco the Founder in his later years, when he faced new pastoral challenges, involved numerous apostolic forces, opened the Congregation to missionary frontiers¹⁶;
- the study of Salesian Youth Ministry, which helps to deepen the missionary dimension of evangelisation, that is, the urgency of proclaiming Christ and educating young people to faith, new forms of presence among young people, the Salesian presence in the country, attention to missionary promotion¹⁷;
- the study of pastoral theology with attention to documents of the Church dealing with missionary activity, theology of religions, theology of evangelisation, missiology, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, and other related issues such as the challenges of globalisation, secularism, multiculturalism and multi-religiosity, immigration, popular religiosity and ways of proclaiming the message of the Gospel in today's context¹⁸;
- the study of social communication and how to make use of the instruments and language of modern media in proclaiming the Gospel and transmitting its message to the very culture of modern media itself;
- the missionary zeal and dynamism of the priest by virtue of his configuration to Christ the Shepherd¹⁹.

¹⁵ Cf. *FSDB* 446.

¹⁶ Cf. *GSSFI* 4.1.

¹⁷ Cf. *GSSFI* 1.3; P. CHÁVEZ, "The Salesian Youth Ministry", in *AGC* 407, n. 4.2, pp. 48-51.

¹⁸ Cf. SYNOD ON THE NEW EVANGELISATION, *Proposition 9*.

¹⁹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *Circular Letter "The Missionary Identity of the Priest"* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican City, 2011), n. 2.

Attitudes to be fostered:

- the bond of deep friendship with Christ which leads those in formation to conform themselves to Him and then to draw their deep pastoral charity from Him;
- love for the Church as the People of God which welcomes all peoples;
- belief that the Salesian charism is a missionary charism²⁰.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- the experience of missionary work with young people who are followers of other religions;
- knowledge and the animation of the catechumenate program according to the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*;
- the summer missionary experience;
- involvement in Salesian missionary promotion at the local and Province level;
- the proposal to the sick to pray for missionaries and the missions.



²⁰ GSSF 4.2.



Ongoing Formation

Ongoing formation is the natural continuation and necessary deepening of the Project of Life as a Salesian missionary disciple, which was initiated and experienced in initial formation and lasts throughout life. It takes place primarily in the ordinary daily life of each confrere within the community and it aims at keeping alive in him the joy and enthusiasm of completely dedicating himself to the cause of the Gospel.

Contents to be emphasised:

- the possibility offered to the confreres of the Province to take part in any formation program, conference, course ... which may help in exploring or better preparing them in some aspects of their apostolic task, e.g. inter-religious dialogue, new evangelisation, ...;
- exploring reflections and guidelines of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and of our sector for missions;
- missionary promotion in the Province and the Congregation;
- volunteer service among young people and lay people.

Attitudes to be fostered:

- the desire to live up to one's task in order to give one's best in the evangelising mission;
- openness to new contents and methods that could improve the apostolic effectiveness in one's context;
- awareness of one's fragility and poverty in the fulfilment of the missionary mandate and thus the need for

meditation and prayer, self-assessment of one's actions, and a renewed determination to journey with greater commitment and fervour.

Experiences to be encouraged:

- reflect and share one's experiences in order to keep alive the "the passion for the salvation of others, and the joy of sharing the experience of the fullness of life in Jesus"²¹;
- take advantage of study days and reflection together with the members of the Salesian Family and lay collaborators on topics relating to evangelisation and culture, commitment to mission *ad gentes* ...;
- use social communication media for a critical assessment of new and emerging cultures and value the opportunities they offer in the proclamation of the Gospel;
- learn new methods of evangelisation;
- animate missionary groups.


²¹ P. CHÁVEZ, "Address at the closing of GC26" *Acts of the 26th General Chapter*, p. 137.





Specific Preparation of the Salesian Missionary

DISCERNMENT

 *Criteria for discernment of the salesian missionary vocation*²² “ad gentes, ad exteros, ad vitam”

Individuals or groups involved at various levels:

- the confrere who is accompanied by a spiritual guide and by the confessor;
- the community where the confrere lives, that is, the Rector, formators, confreres;
- the Provincial and his Council;
- the General Councillor for the Missions.

Counter indications of the missionary vocation

- the search for adventure and simple desire to change the place where one works;
- urged on by a third person: parents, confreres, friends;
- escape from one’s relational, personal, vocational problems;
- inability to integrate into the life and apostolate of the community. If such a confrere is sent to the missions, he will be exposed to a more demanding environment (due to language, culture, and other factors) and will only worsen, rather than improve, his situation.

²² Cf. *Ad Gentes* 25; L. ODORICO, “The Candidates for the Salesian Missions”, in *AGC* 337, pp. 52-56.



Insufficient elements

- It is *not enough* to have some general missionary motivation like, for example, a vague wish to work for poor youngsters or in a poor setting...
- It is *not enough* to have a superficial enthusiasm for the missions that is not accompanied by concrete attitudes of commitment, sacrifice, generosity; such enthusiasm will not last long.

General Criteria for Vocational Discernment – for the confre and for the Rector and his Council

Three essential aspects: (1) Right intention, (2) free decision, (3) necessary qualities. The necessary qualities are:

- good health;
- human maturity; sense of responsibility; relational capacity;
- robust personality; psychological balance; perseverance in difficulties;
- patience, understanding, humility, capacity to appreciate authentic values in other cultures and religions and to adapt oneself in changing situations;
- supernatural spirit, so as not to reduce mission to something merely philanthropic or social activity;
- spirit of faith; rootedness in Christ through personal and community prayer life, centred on the Eucharist, regularity in the reception of the sacraments;
- salesian life lived with missionary zeal shown by his ardour in making Jesus known, especially to poor and marginalised youth;
- profound love for the Church and the Congregation;
- spirit of sacrifice; generosity; being content with the conditions in which he finds himself in;

- fortitude in enduring fatigue and fruitlessness of one's own effort;
- flexibility and ability to adapt oneself and to love life in an intercultural community;
- capacity to learn a new language;
- capacity to live in community and to work as a team with the members of the community, lay mission partners, the young;
- communion with and obedience to the local bishop in overall pastoral activity.

SPECIFIC PREPARATION OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONARY

The Salesian who feels the call to be a missionary outside his homeland, cultural milieu and language group (*ad exteros*)²³, among those who have not yet heard the Gospel, where the Church is not yet fully established (*ad gentes*)²⁴, through a life-long commitment (*ad vitam*)²⁵, may offer himself any time to serve in missions.

Young confreres are preferred for their ease in learning a new language and culture and their spirit of adaptation; generally it is preferable to end the process of discernment of their missionary vocation during the post-novitiate, but it is also possible during the specific formation of the Salesian priest and the Salesian brother.

The 19th General Chapter also opened the possibility for Salesians to be missionaries *ad tempus*, for at least 5 years, "provided that they are considered suitable"²⁶. This can be done for specific and urgent tasks in the missionary activity of the Congregation or to help the confrere better discern his Salesian missionary vocation *ad vitam*.

²³ Cf. FABC Office of Evangelisation, "Consultation on Asian Local Church and Mission ad Gentes", ed. Franz Josef Eilers, *For All the Peoples of Asia*, III, n. 5 (Claretian Publications: Quezon City, 2002), p. 222.

²⁴ Cf. *Ad Gentes* 6

²⁵ Cf. RM 66.

²⁶ *Acts of the 19th General Chapter no. 18, Orientations*, 2.

Discernment

The process of discernment is a gradual and progressive journey with the help of a spiritual guide. In this process the candidate learns, like the Virgin Mary, to listen to the voice of the Spirit, to purify and deepen his motivations, to discern his qualities and attitudes which determine his suitability for Salesian missionary life. The community has also an important role in this process. For this process the *Criteria for the Discernment of the Salesian Missionary Vocation* are used. It is also possible that the missionary candidate is given, for example, the experience of working in a missionary context outside of his own Province on a trial basis for a year. This experience could also be useful in the discernment of his Salesian missionary call.

When, as a result of the discernment, the candidate comes to the conclusion that he is called to serve in the mission field, he sends a letter to the Rector Major in which he explicitly manifests his wish and puts himself at the disposition of the Congregation. This does not remove the opportunity to specify his preferences or concrete predispositions for a determined mission territory; this applies particularly to Project Europe.

The Rector Major, through the Councillor for the Missions, enters into dialogue with the confrere's Provincial, asking from him and his Council a written opinion regarding the missionary vocation of the candidate, always with reference to the *Criteria for the Discernment of the Salesian Missionary Vocation*.

Having successfully completed the discernment and having obtained the opinion of the Provincial to release the confrere for the missions, the Rector Major assigns the candidate his destination.

Preparation

In the intervening period before departure, the Province:

- offers the possibility to the future missionary, as far as is possible, to learn the language and culture of the place in which he is assigned, as well as take part in meetings or courses organised for missionary candidates by the Conference of Religious or by the Episcopal Conference;
- offers the possibility of knowing the basic concepts of cultural anthropology and the dynamics of intercultural dialogue;
- sends the missionary to take part in the Orientation Course for new missionaries organised by the Missions Department as an immediate preparation of the missionaries before the giving of the missionary cross;
- prays and invites prayers for the confrere who will be sent as a missionary.

Insertion

Meanwhile, the Province, to which the new missionary has been assigned, creates a welcoming atmosphere and receives him fraternally when he arrives.

To facilitate his insertion into the new cultural, social and ecclesial context, the Province:

- starts by offering him an orientation program regarding not only the history, the culture and values of the country, but also the history, mission and works in the Province;
- guarantees him adequate time to learn the language;
- assures him initial accompaniment through a spiritual guide who assists and advises him during the first years of his inclusion, listening to his expectations, deepening his motives, removing his eventual preju-



dices, helping him to draw up the plan of Salesian missionary life;

- facilitates his gradual insertion by refraining from appointing him to positions of administrative responsibility during the first two years;
- organises regular meetings of new missionaries, for example, twice a year, with their formators, rectors and the one in charge at Province level and at the same time offers indications to the rector of the new missionary;
- gives him the possibility to participate in the Orientation Course for new missionaries organised either by the Conference of Religious or by the local Bishops' Conference in order to know and be inculturated in the local culture.

After five years, the missionary is helped to evaluate his missionary experience, and in particular:

- his integration into the life and apostolate of his Province;
- his insertion into the local culture, especially among young people entrusted to him, his capacity for openness;
- a reflection on his apostolic zeal and commitment to missionary life.

Meanwhile, the missionary who is in the formative period completes his initial formation, is ordained to the priesthood and / or makes the perpetual profession. For those who are at the practical training stage, the two years envisioned in the *Regulations* (R. 96), are counted starting from his educative and pastoral insertion in the local community to which he is assigned; for example: the time spent exclusively for the study of the language or waiting immigration procedures are not to be counted as practical training.

Formation continues

The missionary inserts himself fully into the missionary work of the Province and pays attention to his continuing formation, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the Province to deepen his personal relationship with Christ as the source of his missionary zeal, continually in-culturate himself in the culture of the people in the light of the Christian faith and the Salesian charism.

Takes part in the various meetings in the Province (community day, meetings of the educative and pastoral community and Salesian Family, and other initiatives), in the country (as for example, courses organised by Salesian regional centres for on-going formation, meetings organised by the Conference of Religious or Bishops' Conference), as well as at the Salesian Pontifical University which offers the course for on-going formation of missionaries.

If he has the necessary gifts and if these correspond to the needs of the Province, the missionary is asked by the Provincial to take up further studies in missiology, anthropology, intercultural dialogue, inter-religious dialogue, and new evangelisation in order to render a competent service in the Province.





Appendices

The Salesian Missionary Vocation

Egidio Viganò, SDB¹

The missionary heart of Don Bosco

“We may safely say that Don Bosco can be listed among the great missionaries of the 19th century, even though he was never personally on the missions ad gentes.

‘It can be said’, wrote Eugene Ceria, ‘that the missionary idea grew in him’². It is an idea that is intrinsic to his vocational plan as a Founder, and coextensive with his whole existence. At first it was present in embryo and he was hardly conscious of it, but then it gradually took on a form that became progressively clearer and more distinct.

The same thing is said in more incisive or delicate terms by both Fr Paul Albera and Fr Philip Rinaldi, who trace back Don Bosco’s missionary vision to his dream at the age of nine.

The foreign missions, wrote Fr Albera, ‘were always a burning aspiration in Don Bosco’s heart, and I am quite sure that Mary Help of Christians, from her first motherly revelations to him while he was still a boy, had given him a clear intuition in this regard... He spoke about it continually to us his first sons; we were filled with wonder and felt ourselves carried away by a holy enthusiasm... At the bedside of young John Cagliero who was dying, Don Bosco saw the Patagonians waiting to receive redemption at Cagliero’s hands, and he foretold his recovery and revealed in part what the future had in store for him’³.

¹ Excerpts from E. VIGANÒ, “The Pope’s Appeal for the Missions”, in AGC 336 (1991) pp. 5-12.

² E. CERIA, *Annali della Società Salesiana I*, p. 245.

³ P. ALBERA, *Lettere Circolari* (Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco: Torino, 1956) pp. 132-133.

And Fr Rinaldi said in his turn: 'In commemorating that first dream of our venerable Father we have implicitly celebrated the centenary of the beginning of the whole of Salesian work; because we may say that it was in that first vision that he was consecrated as the apostle of youth, the father of a new religious family, a missionary to non-Christian peoples; that vision it was that stirred up also in his heart a lively desire for religious life and the evangelisation of pagans'⁴.

The missionary ideal in fact, that had been alive in him from the time of his secondary school studies⁵, developed and matured with the passing of time.

At the end of his period of pastoral formation in the College of St Francis of Assisi in Turin (1844), he was thinking of entering the Oblates of the Blessed Virgin, who had opened a flourishing mission in Vietnam, so that he could soon become a missionary, and for this he began to prepare himself by prayer and the study of the appropriate languages. Fr Cafasso, his spiritual director, let him go along on this line for a while, but then at an opportune moment said a decisive 'no' and bade him stay in Turin, where he found him a post at the refuge of the Marchioness Barolo, where he could concern himself with large numbers of young people. He obeyed, and Providence guided his steps. But his apostolic work among the young, far from quenching his missionary zeal, shed fresh light on it and gave it a new and original slant.

We know that missionary undertakings, reported in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith one of his favourite sources of reading material made a deep impression on him⁶. There were so many souls to be saved, and he felt that in some way he shared the responsibility for them.

From 1848 Fr Rua and others had heard him exclaim more than once: 'Oh, if only I had lots of priests and

⁴ ACS, VI, June 24, 1925, p. 364.

⁵ Cf. BM I, 328.

⁶ Cf. BM III, 363.

young clerics! I would send them to preach the Gospel in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego...⁷.

He was often seen, during those same years, looking at a map and heaving a deep sigh at the thought that 'so many regions were still lying in the shadow of spiritual death'⁸.

When after indescribable sacrifices he was finally able to launch his missions (1875: the Congregation's greatest enterprise!) his missionary heart exulted, and he seemed to give them the whole of his eager attention.: 'From then onwards', wrote Fr Albera, 'the Missions were at the centre of his heart and he seemed to live only for them... He talked about them with such enthusiasm that we all marvelled and were deeply edified by his burning ardour for souls'⁹.

With no less intensity Fr Rinaldi, drawing on memories of the distant past, wrote: 'In his great heart there had been accumulating for years on end the apostolic ardour of a Francis Xavier, nourished by a heavenly flame that was revealing the future to him through dreams... For me there has never been a missionary as zealous and tireless in his propaganda as he was. I can still see him, the loving Father, in the distant memories of my Salesian vocation, precisely in those years when his missionary fervour was at its height; and it has left an indelible impression on me: he was a true missionary, an apostle devoured by a passion for souls'¹⁰.

But Don Bosco was not satisfied to keep the missionary ideal to himself; he passed it on to his Congregation (and Family) as an essential element of his spiritual and apostolic patrimony. A memorandum he sent in 1880 to Pope Leo XII is quite explicit: 'The foreign missions have always been a cherished concern of the Salesian Congregation'¹¹. It was his wish therefore that his foundation should be also truly missionary *ad gentes*.



⁷ BM III, 363.

⁸ BM III, 546; IV, 424.

⁹ P. ALBERA, *Lettere Circolari*, p. 134.

¹⁰ ACS, VI, June 24, 1925, p. 367.

¹¹ BM XIV, 510.



It will be worth our while to consider, albeit briefly, some of Don Bosco's dreams that manifest very dearly his plans as a Founder.

He dreamed of sons going to the South and the East

Don Bosco had many dreams: not without justification has he been called 'the dreaming Saint'.

Their classification is a ticklish problem, and their interpretation still more so. We still lack a critical and scientific study of them, nor is it easy to make one¹².

But this does not mean that some of his dreams lack historical and prophetic importance; they have given substance to his charismatic personality and prompted him to undertake courageous initiatives inexplicable from a purely human point of view.

Commenting on the so-called dream of the diamonds¹³, I said that one can speak of Don Bosco's dreams at a level that is different and more vital than scientific criticism (though the latter is also desirable for a serious investigation); it is the level of the existential influence they had on the mind of the Founder and in the life of his followers.

Some of the dreams must be considered as revelational in character; they cannot be explained merely by an analysis of the personal inner feelings of the Saint.

Fr James Costamagna (who later became a bishop and had verified at first hand in Latin America the charismatic value of various dreams) saw dearly in Don Bosco a 'prophetic personality'; after reading of a missionary dream in 1885 he wrote to Fr Lemoyne and told him of a phrase said to him in confidence by the good Father: 'perhaps of all religious Congregations and Orders, ours is the one which has received most the Word of God'¹⁴.

Among the dreams containing 'revelations' there are five that refer specifically to the missions *ad gentes*:

¹² Cf. F. JIMÉNEZ, *Los Sueños de Don Bosco* (CCS: Madrid, 1989).

¹³ Cf. ASC n. 300.

¹⁴ BM XVII, 281.

- one in 1872 on Patagonia; this was the one that made Don Bosco begin his missions;
- a second in 1883 which describes a journey through Latin America: it relates many details that were unknown not only to Don Bosco but even to scholars of the time;
- a third in 1885 about the lower part of South America; this was the one that led Fr Costamagna, who was already in America, to write back and quote the phrase referred to above;
- a fourth, also in 1885, on Africa, Asia and Oceania; we look upon this one with special wonder and interest at the present day, because we are already witnessing its prodigious realisation;
- and the fifth in 1886, on the journey by air from Valparaíso to Peking: I have checked the geographical details myself during various journeys I have made, so as to encourage all of us to renew our hope as we courageously approach 'Project China'¹⁵.

These missionary dreams help us to understand the mind of our Founder, his magnanimity and the boldness of his initiatives. In them the Congregation clearly appears as being among the ecclesial groups committed as such in the mission *ad gentes*, and this precisely in the South and East of which the Encyclical speaks: they foretell the flourishing of vocations among native peoples and provide scope for verification – in 500 years time¹⁶!

The period from the first missionary expedition (1875) to the present day shows that such dreams have come true, even though prospects of further growth still remain open, especially in China where, for that matter, Salesian missions were launched with unhoped-for success and bedewed with the blood of our first martyrs.

They are dreams which – and this perhaps is a fact unique in history – have traced some decades in advance

¹⁵ Cf. *AGC* n. 323.

¹⁶ Cf. *BM* XVII, 596.

what would be done later by his followers. And not without reason Don Bosco is felt today, in the most widely separated places on earth, as a fatherly and forestalling presence friendly to local culture and a powerful protector.

In many intercontinental journeys I have often been able to verify to some extent the prophetic element in these dreams, which always incite us to press on towards a fascinating future. I have found this to be true in Latin America, in Africa and Madagascar, in Asia, Japan and the Philippines, in Australia and Oceania. As our confreres in those regions read these dreams once again, they consider them as so many providential prophetic messages. In some places I have even been asked to settle heated discussions about some geographical point.

They are dreams which have had a real influence on missionary life in the Congregation, and continue to do so. In their own way they provide confirmation for the constitutive aspect of the Salesian vocation itself in the Church.

Ours is a missionary congregation

The mind and heart of the Founder and the uninterrupted tradition in our Family are an open confirmation of the fact that the missionary dimension is an 'essential feature' of our charism¹⁷.

For us Salesians the missions *ad gentes* are not just so many works on a par with others, the only difference being that they are carried out in distant countries with different cultures: no, no. **They represent something very much deeper: an essential aspect, a particular dimension of our identity as Salesians of Don Bosco in the Church.** It is true that the Congregation is not listed in the Pontifical Yearbook among the 'Missionary Institutes' strictly so-called (i.e. among those dedicated solely to the foreign missions); but in it, and this precisely by ecclesial

¹⁷ Cf. *Const.* 30.

institution, the Founder wanted there to be a true commitment to missions *ad gentes*. His was a truly providential plan. Today we cannot but recognise the fact that the missions have been the historical means for bringing about the inculturation of the Salesian charism in the world on a universal scale. And that, is something deserving of great merit.

From the very beginning we have fostered missionary vocations in the strict sense, i.e. the care of those confreres – and they are many – who have been enriched with the ‘special vocation’ which is the characteristic note of every true missionary. **Such a special vocation is not something that makes them exceptional in respect of other confreres, but rather a more lively and generous expression of the vocation of all.** It manifests, in fact, a condition inherent in the nature of the common charism; every confrere is fundamentally available to go to the missions if obedience should take him there.

It is no more than 100 years since we began our missions in Latin America; 50 years later we turned to Asia and finally (after another 50 years!) we have committed ourselves in an overall fashion to Africa and Oceania. We can say that we have directed our attention, as the Pope suggests, towards the South and the East¹⁸, where the greatest demographic growth of people is taking place: so many of them young and in conditions of such great poverty.

Our missions are a standing demonstration, in three great and successive stages and at world level, of the practical preferential option of the Congregation for the young who are poor and in such great need.

The last two decades have seen a relaunching of missionary activity among us. This is something providential which is giving new life to our charism and leading us forward into the future with hope. In my letter on *Our African Commitment*¹⁹, I said that the opening of this new mis-



¹⁸ Cf. RM 40.

¹⁹ Cf. ACS n. 297.

sionary frontier was inherent in our living tradition and would be the harbinger of great blessings from the Lord. We are witnessing the truth of that statement. The missionary commitment is freeing us from the dangerous trend towards a soft and easy life, from superficiality in spiritual matters, and from genericism. **In the missions we get a taste of the origins, we experience the perennial validity of the oratory criterion, and we seem to see Don Bosco once again in the authentic beginnings of his mission to the young and the poor”.**



Who is the missionary today?

Alfred Maravilla, SDB

It is not rare to hear Salesians from technologically developed countries asking ***“Why send us missionaries? We are not a poor country!”*** Similarly, some missionaries from countries once considered ‘mission land’ also wonder at the sense of being sent to materially well-off or technologically developed countries.

To many Salesians here lies the non verbalised ‘problem’ regarding the last General Chapter’s directive to relaunch the charism in Europe by taking the necessary action to renew the Salesian presence in the continent (GS 26, 108, 111) now known as ‘Project Europe.’

Actually the problem is deeper than mere socio-geography or a Congregational project! It is rooted in the **selective comprehension** of ‘mission’ expressed in the conciliar decree *Ad Gentes* no. 6 understood solely as unidirectional movement from ‘Christian’ countries to ‘pagan’ lands where peoples or groups do not yet believe in Christ or where the Church has not yet taken root. And so it is with the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* no. 31, where human promotion and development are seen as the most important components of mission. It seems that the understanding of mission of many is fossilised here.

Yet, already way back in 1991, John Paul II had insisted in *Redemptoris Missio* nos. 33-34 that **mission can no longer be seen solely in unidirectional geographic terms but primarily as the proclamation of Jesus Christ in interpenetrating contexts** where there is a need of either *missio ad gentes*, ordinary pastoral activity or new evangelisation²⁰. Thus, he called for interdependence and mutual assistance between Churches in what was traditionally called ‘Christian countries’ and ‘mission countries.’

²⁰ Fr. Viganò had already pointed out that among the new perspectives of this encyclical was precisely the “new criteria for the specific description of missionary activity - criteria that are not only geographical but also cultural and sociological”. E. VIGANÒ, “The Pope’s Appeal for Missions”, p. 15.

In Asia, a context where everyone has a neighbour who is a follower of another religion, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences has pointed out that the missionary is one who goes out of his or her cultural context, linguistic group or country, (*ad exteros*) amongst those who have not yet heard the Gospel and where the Church is not yet fully established (*ad gentes*) to proclaim the gospel. And every local church, the Asian bishops insisted, is called to send and receive missionaries²¹.

In this light, mission is no longer just a movement toward the "mission lands". It is now a multidirectional movement, because the mission is wherever a Christian crosses a human border to proclaim the Gospel. Similarly, every Salesian Province, rich or poor in personnel or resources, shares responsibility in the missionary initiatives of the whole Salesian Congregation. All Provinces, therefore, send and receive! That is why today's missionaries come from and also are sent to Africa, Asia, America, Europe and Oceania. In this perspective, what is important is not only the geographical place, insisted the Latin American bishops, but to live one's life "in a state of mission"²². Therefore, the missionary today is one who is sent either to the forest or to the city, either to the parish or to the school, either among followers of other religions or among those who do not have any religion, among those who live their Christian faith as something cultural or among those who live it in a routine manner. What is important is that the missionary keeps alive his or her passion for Jesus Christ and his people²³.

It is in this light that Pope Benedict XVI invited the Church in Africa "to contribute to the new evangelisation in secularised countries" which "are today sadly lacking in vocations." This, he underlined, is not a weakening of missionary impulse *ad gentes* but "a concrete sign" of its "fruitfulness"²⁴! With this renewed vision of mission Pope

²¹ Cf. FABC Office of Evangelisation, "Consultation on Asian Local Church and Mission ad Gentes", p. 222.

²² CELAM V. *Aparecida. Documento Final* (Lima: Conferencia Episcopal Peruana, 2007) n. 213; JOHN PAUL II, "Address to the CELAM Assembly" (March 9, 1983).

²³ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) 268.

²⁴ BENEDICT XVI, *Africae Munus* (2011) n. 167.

Francis continually invites Catholics “to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel”²⁵.

This multi-directional movement, in reality, is already something that happens for some time now in many dioceses and religious congregations. Is it not perhaps that some Salesians or Provinces prefer to be either only “senders” or simply “receivers” rather than send and receive at the same time? Thus, the Rector Major’s insistence that **Project Europe** is a “Congregational Project” which involves “all Regions and Provinces”²⁶ primarily demands from **all Salesians** a **conversion of mind and heart** to make their own this profound change in the understanding that ‘the whole Church is missionary.’ Only then will there be a multidirectional exchange of Salesian missionaries animated by mutual trust and openness which, in the final analysis, will enrich all Provinces and renew the whole Congregation!



²⁵ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 20.

²⁶ *Acts of the General Chapter XXVI*, p. 147.



The Salesian Mission Group

T.C. George, SDB

Woe to me if I do not share the Good News (1 Cor 9,16)

The Church is missionary by her very nature²⁷. Our Salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church, and hence is missionary. Right from the beginning, Don Bosco wanted the Salesians to have a real commitment to evangelisation and mission *ad gentes* in particular²⁸. Don Bosco handed on the missionary ideal to the whole Salesian Family as a constitutive element of his spiritual and apostolic heritage. Immediately after the approval of the Constitutions in 1874, he sent the first missionary expedition on 11 November 1875.

The glories of the Salesian presence and activities in the South Asia region today are the fruits of the missionary enthusiasm and commitment of the early Salesian missionaries who brought the *Da mihi animas* of Don Bosco to our region. The mind and heart of the Founder and the uninterrupted missionary tradition of the Salesian Family are an open confirmation that the missionary dimension is an essential feature of our charism.

Today we are called to keep alive the missionary zeal and apostolic passion of Don Bosco our founder in the vicissitudes of time and even amidst newly arising challenges in the region. We need to discover new ways of presenting the person of Jesus Christ to all, especially the young. Every Salesian should become convinced that Christ is the best gift to be received, to be lived and to be shared. And, sharing Christ with our brothers and sisters is not the duty of just a few who are called “missionaries”. It is the privilege of everyone who has accepted him.

²⁷ *Ad Gentes* 2, RM 62.

²⁸ RM 3.

Keeping in mind our missionary nature, we need to live our missionary Charism enthusiastically and hand it on effectively to the young under our care so that they too, set on fire for Christ, may take up the challenge to “go and proclaim” (Mk 16,15). We need to pass on our beautiful Salesian missionary heritage. In the past, missionary groups have played effective roles as instruments of missionary formation and missionary activities in the Church and in our congregation.

The Province Delegates for Missionary Animation of the South Asia region and the Salesian Family members at the *Study Days on the Salesian Mission and the Initial Proclamation of Christ in South Asia* (from 7-11 August 2011) once again felt the need to transmit our missionary charism to the young especially to those under various stages of formation. Fr Václav Klement, the Councillor for the Missions, had already been requesting our Provinces to form missionary groups. The Province Delegates for Missionary Animation of the South Asia drew up an action plan to revive or establish missionary groups in our various settings with the purpose of revitalising and building up a missionary culture in the region.

Aims and Objectives of the Salesian Mission Groups

The Salesian Mission Group aims at participating actively in the missionary mandate of Jesus Christ to *go and proclaim* discovering its missionary model and source of strength in the heart of Christ himself, the Missionary of the Father. Through prayer, reflection and action the group promotes missionary spirit in its own setting and foster interest in mission *ad gentes* while endeavouring to ensure its own growth in Christian commitment to mission and bearing witness to each one’s faith in Christ.

Suggested Activities of the Mission Group

- Conducting formative programmes for the group members themselves through group study and reflection on the Word of God, group Masses, conferences, etc.
- Getting familiarised with the documents of the Church on evangelising mission, etc.
- Praying for evangelising mission of the congregation and promoting prayer ministry through the prayer mission hub of the South Asian region.
- Meeting fortnightly to evaluate and plan activities.
- Collecting and maintaining some resource materials for missionary animation and documenting the activities of the group.
- Fostering mission *ad gentes* vocations.
- Organising annual mission congress.
- Disseminating *Cagliero 11* in various ways.
- Organising conference, seminars, prayer services, quiz for the community/groups and displaying of information, reflection, etc on missionary themes on notice boards.
- Celebrating the *Salesian Mission Day* every November 11.
- Arranging missionaries to come and share their missionary experiences with the community/group.
- Screening the DVD produced by Missioni Don Bosco of Turin for the community/ groups.
- Organising mission exposure programme, field visits etc to impart mission experience during holidays.
- Networking with other missionary groups in the Province and Region.
- Promoting a culture of donating to the missionary activities by making efforts to raise funds even in a small way.

The Structure of the Group

A mission group can be organised in our settings: formation houses, parishes, schools, youth centres.

The mission group will have a core team consisting of a president, a vice president, a treasurer and a secretary. The core team will be responsible for the overall functioning of the group.

The group will undertake activities in consultation with the staff representative and the Province Delegate for Missionary Animation.

The mission group is not to be considered as an exclusive group of “missionaries” but of “missionary animators” who work towards instilling missionary consciousness among the confreres as well as the young. They are like the leaven that enlivens the missionary culture, the salt that adds a missionary taste and the light which makes everyone see opportunities for mission.



The Missionary Aspirantate

Václav Klement, SDB

After the First World War the universal Church experienced a period of missionary revival, marked by large-scale meetings and missionary exhibitions, a flowering of missionary youth groups and publications at all levels. Missionary promotion has contributed to sending thousands of European missionaries to all the other continents. The young Salesian Congregation also received various responsibilities in mission territories (mission Prefectures, Vicariates or Prelatures) in America, Africa, Asia and Oceania.

The third successor of Don Bosco, Blessed Philip Rinaldi, in communion with the Church, founded the magazine *Gioventù missionaria* to animate groups of the 'Friends of Gioventù missionaria'. Finally, in 1922, the first institution which was meant for the formation of future missionaries *ad gentes* was founded in Ivrea near Turin. After high school young people were leaving for the missions, where they began their novitiate.

From the first missionary Aspirantate - **Cardinal John Cagliero Institute, Ivrea** - other missionary aspirantates were established in Penango, Gaeta, Bagnolo, Mirabello, Novi Ligure, Cumiana, Turin - Rebaudengo, Colle Don Bosco (Italy), Astudillo (Spain), Shrigley (UK), Coat-an-Doc'h (France) - not to mention other specifically missionary houses of formation (Turin Valdocco, the various 'missionary seminaries'). A good part of the 11,000 Salesian missionaries is the result of the typical Salesian tradition, having confidence in young people - even in the field of mission *ad gentes, ad extra, ad vitam*.

Like many other traditions in the immediate post-Vatican II period, all the missionary aspirantates in Europe were closed in the 60s. On the other side of the globe, in the region of South Asia during the centenary celebrations

of Don Bosco in India (2006), the idea to continue the original tradition of Salesian missionaries aspirantates came up. Thus, with the permission of the Rector Major, the first two missionary aspirantates outside Europe were opened. The first in **Sirajuli** (*Hubert D’Rosario Institute*, Guwahati, 2011) and the second in **Perambur** (*Don Bosco Missionary Aspirantate*, Chennai, 2012). Now there are about 70 young aspirants in India, 18 pre-novices, 6 novices being formed specifically to be missionaries. The project is open to all 12 Provinces of the region. It is envisioned that after the postnovitiate the young missionaries will be sent either to other parts of the region or to missions *ad gentes* in other continents. The main motivation of the project is that “after receiving 400 Salesian missionaries, we now have a strong faith and vocations. As a sign of gratitude, the time has come for India to send missionaries around the world and in Europe”.

The opening of missionary aspirantates was warmly endorsed by other Provinces rich in apostolic vocations. The specific missionary formation is expressed mainly in the environment permeated by missionary enthusiasm: contents of conferences, good nights, missionary literature, and contact with missionaries *ad gentes*, missionary experience in the local oratory or the experience of initial proclamation of Jesus in the rural area.





The urgent need for missionary promotion

Alfred Maravilla, SDB

It is not uncommon to hear statements like “we are in the missions already, so what is the need for missionary promotion?”, or “we also need personnel in our Province so why encourage our Salesians to be missionaries abroad?”. These statements seem to indicate that missionary promotion is often misunderstood as fishing for missionaries. No wonder confreres sometimes wonder at the sense missionary promotion has when there is lack of personnel in the Province!

Looking back to Don Bosco

What is missionary promotion? It might be helpful to return to Don Bosco in order to shed light on what we mean by Salesian missionary promotion. From 1841 to 1850 Don Bosco established his first works for the young. From 1850 to 1860, at a time of great danger for the faith of the people, he undertook a bold initiative of founding the Salesian Society in 1859 and of establishing a printing press as well as the publication of the *Catholic Readings*. In the next fifteen years he founded the other branches of his family: the Association of Mary Help of Christians in 1869, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in 1872 and the Salesian Cooperators in 1876. Finally, he opened an entirely new page in the life of his young Congregation by sending out his first missionaries in 1875, immediately after the approval of the Salesian Constitutions (1874).

A closer look at the missionary thrust of Don Bosco reveals that it is but the ultimate fruit and liveliest mani-

festation of his missionary zeal to make Jesus known. This apostolic passion is the dynamism which underpins all his initiatives. In fact, if we examine closely his ministry to young people, it is easy to realise that this was deeply permeated by his passion for preaching the Gospel: During the outbreak of cholera in 1854 Don Bosco challenged his best boys to look beyond the safe confines of the Oratory and go and help those stricken with cholera. Dominic Savio's dream-vision of the Pope bringing the light of faith to England reflects the missionary spirit that reigned in the Oratory. "Don Bosco's oratory" stressed Fr Viganò, "is conceived with a missionary perspective for young people without a parish"²⁹.

This missionary zeal – synthesised in *Da mihi animas* – was the animating dynamism which cuts across all his initiatives. Fr Michael Rua wrote that "Don Bosco, in the ardent zeal by which he was devoured, shouted out: *Da mihi animas!* It was this need to save souls which made the old world seem narrow and drove him to send his sons to the distant missions of America"³⁰. In 1925, the fiftieth anniversary of the first missionary expedition, Fr Philip Rinaldi used these words to describe Don Bosco's missionary zeal: "The apostolic ardour of a Francis Xavier had been burning in his large heart for many a year, fed by a divine flame which lit up the future through his dreams... He was a true missionary, an apostle devoured by a passion for souls"³¹. Indeed, Don Bosco passed on to his first Salesians and to his boys this ardent desire to share his faith with poor and abandoned boys in Valdocco, with the people of Turin and with those who lived beyond Italy's shores. Truly his example indicates that the missionary commitment to mission *ad gentes* "would be the Congregation's ongoing concern, in such a way that it forms part of its nature and purpose"³².

²⁹ E. VIGANÒ, "The Pope's Appeal for the Missions", p. 34.

³⁰ *Bolletino Salesiano* (January 1897), 4.

³¹ P. RINALDI, *ASC* 30 (1925) p. 367.

³² *Acts of the General Chapter XIX*, 178; *Acts of the General Chapter XX*, 471.

The Twofold Purpose of Salesian Missionary Promotion

In the light of Don Bosco's experience we can now draw up our purpose for missionary promotion. **Salesian missionary promotion** has a twofold purpose which is inter-related and mutually complementary. Above all it aims at **keeping alive in every Salesian the passion for making Jesus known and for preaching 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"³³. Hence, an effective missionary promotion renews "the passion for the salvation of others, the joy of sharing the experience of the fullness of life of Jesus"³⁴ of individual Salesians and, consequently, makes every member of the local and Province community "happy from deep within"³⁵. From this inner joy energy springs "to serve Christ in hard-pressed situations of human suffering, the strength to put oneself at his disposal"³⁶ and live our Salesian life radically. This, in turn, overcomes "faith fatigue" or the "sense of having had enough of Christianity"³⁷ which causes inner weariness, small mindedness, and loss of apostolic zeal which, ultimately, "ends up in a state of paralysis and acedia"³⁸ expressed in the joylessness and inner sadness in living the Christian and consecrated life. Enthusiastic Salesians attract young people to Salesian life. An effective **missionary promotion, therefore, is intimately linked to 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 their own homeland, cultural milieu and language group (*ad externos*); among those who have not yet heard the Gospel, or

³³ BENEDICT XVI, "Homily, Parco Expo Bicentenario, León, Mexico" (March 25, 2012).

³⁴ P. CHÁVEZ, "Address at the Closing of the General Chapter 26", *Acts of the General Chapter XXVI*, 137.

³⁵ BENEDICT XVI, "Christmas address to the Roman Curia" (December 22, 2011).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium* 81, 83.

where the Church is not yet fully established (*ad gentes*); and in contexts where there is an abandonment of the faith or where it is lived and in contexts where there is an abandonment of the faith or where it is lived as merely something cultural (*new evangelisation*)³⁹ through a life-long commitment (*ad vitam*)⁴⁰. Thus, the second purpose of missionary promotion which flows from its primary aim is to help Salesians discern whether they have the missionary vocation *ad exteros, ad gentes, ad vitam*. 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 Church⁴¹ which "is missionary by her very nature" because she "is sent forth to the nations"⁴². In the same way that within the one Salesian vocation some are called to be priests while others to be brothers, similarly the Salesian missionary vocation is a call within our common Salesian vocation⁴³. 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 his vocation to be a Salesian missionary!

Missionary Promotion in Salesian Communities

Salesian missionary promotion in the whole Province is under the care of the **Province Delegate for Mission 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 4 simple proposals:



³⁹ FABC Office of Evangelisation, "Consultation on Asian Local Church and Mission ad Gentes", ed. Franz Josef Eilers, *For All the Peoples of Asia*, III, n. 5, (Claretian Publications: Quezon City, 2002) 222; RM 33; BENEDICT XVI, *Motu Proprio Ubicumque et Semper* (2010).

⁴⁰ *Ad Gentes* 6, 27; RM 32, 79; *Acts of the General Chapter XX*, 465.

⁴¹ *Const.* 6.

⁴² *Ad Gentes* 2; RM 1, 62.

⁴³ E. VIGANÒ, "The Pope's Appeal for the Missions", p. 11.

- 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 Youtube. These draw attention to the universality of the Salesian charism and its vitality as shown in the expressions of the missionary zeal of Salesians in different contexts.
- The **Monthly Missionary Intention** as well as **prayer for missionaries every 11th 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 and sacrifices.
- The monthly issue of **Cagliero 11**, distributed to the communities through the PDMA, offers resources not only for spiritual reading of the community but also for the '*Good morning*' talks to students.
- The formation of a **mission 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. A mission group could also foster **volunteer service** among the young and all the members of the EPC. This, in turn, stirs up the ardour that gives birth to new vocations.

The Sense of doing Missionary Promotion

So, do we really need missionary promotion today? In fact, we really do! Salesian missionary promotion helps us to rediscover the "joy of believing" and of "communicating

Jesus Christ”⁴⁴ which “enlivens the community of disciples”⁴⁵. Indeed, an effective missionary promotion will be that spark that could trigger an “openness to a constant self-renewal”⁴⁶ in every Salesian and, consequently, “the renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion”⁴⁷ in every community and Province, less we give in to ‘faith fatigue’, and slide back comfortably to the joyless and ardourless “maintenance mode” of Salesian presence. Salesians overflowing with the “delightful and comforting joy of evangelising”⁴⁸ will certainly attract young people to the Salesian life!



⁴⁴ FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium* 86, 30.

⁴⁵ Idem, 21.

⁴⁶ Idem, 26.

⁴⁷ Idem, 27.

⁴⁸ Idem, 10, 13, 83.

Salesian Mission Day 1988-2015

Since 1988 a mission theme has been offered to the entire Congregation. All Salesian communities are invited to get to know about a missionary situation in a particular continent. It is a powerful occasion for Missionary Promotion in the Provinces, houses, youth groups, and in the Salesian Family. Is not an isolated event but rather a chance to involve local Salesian communities and educative-pastoral communities (CEP) of the Province by offering a proposal that can become an annual practical project.



YEARLY THEMES

Year	Theme
1988	Guinea - Conakry: The dream continues
1989	Zambia: Lufubu Project
1990	Timor Leste - Venilale: Young evangelisers
1991	Paraguay: Street children
1992	Peru-Valle Sagrado Incas: Christ lives in the steps of the Incas
1993	Togo-Kara: Don Bosco and Africa - a dream comes true
1994	Cambodia-Phnom Penh: Missionaries builders of peace
1995	India - Gujarat: In dialogue sharing the faith
1996	Russia - Yakutsk: Lights of hope in Siberia
1997	Madagascar: Boy, I say to you, get up
1998	Brazil: Yanomami: New life in Christ
1999	Japan: The difficult proclamation of Christ in Japan
2000	Angola: Gospel seed of reconciliation
2001	Papua New Guinea: Walking with the young in PNG
2002	Missionaries among the refugees worldwide
2003	Salesian commitment to human development and evangelisation
2004	India - Arunachal Pradesh: A People awakes
2005	Mongolia: A new missionary frontier
2006	Sudan - The Salesian mission in Sudan
2007	Sudan - The Salesian mission in Sudan
2008	HIV/AIDS: The Salesian response - educating for life
2009	Worldwide Salesian Missionary Promotion - Keep alive your missionary flame
2010	Europe: - The Salesians of Don Bosco walking with the Gypsies
2011	America: Volunteers proclaiming the Gospel
2012	Asia - Oceania: Telling the Jesus story to the young of Asia - Oceania
2013	Africa: Journey of Faith
2014	Europe: we are the others - care of immigrants
2015	Missionary heart of Don Bosco - Salesian Missionary Vocation

Some Centres for Postgraduate Studies

Gregorian Pontifical University (Rome)

Faculty of Missiology (http://www.unigre.it/struttura_didattica/missiologia/index.php)

- **Evangelisation**
- **Theology of Religions:**
 - **Religions and Cultures of the Mediterranean**
 - **Islamic Studies**
 - **Asian Religions and Cultures**

Urbanian Pontifical University (Rome)

Faculty of Missiology (http://www.urbaniana.edu/it/missiologia/ord_stud.htm)

- **Theology of mission**
- **Missionary Catechesis and Pastoral Activity**
- **Mission and Religions**
- **Annual Course of Missionary Formation**
(personalised plan)

'Angelicum' Pontifical University (Rome)

(<http://www.pust.it/>)

- **Centre for Interreligious Dialogue**

Scalabrini Migration International Institute (Rome)

(<http://diplomasimi.org/>)

- **Diploma in Migrant Ministry**

Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica (Rome)

(<http://www.pisai.it/home.aspx>)

- **Introductory Course in Islam**
- **Licenciate in Arabic and Islamic Studies**
(3 years, 1st year in Egypt)
- **Doctorate**

Ateneo de Manila (Philippines)

- **Chinese Studies Program** (<http://www.admu.edu.ph/ls/soss/chinese-studies/about>)

Dar Comboni for Arabic Studies (Egypt)

- **Diploma in Arabic and Islamic Studies** (<http://www.comboniegypt.org/Ita/DAR%20COMBONI%2017.htm>)

Fundación Universitaria San Alfonso (Colombia)

- **Specialisation in missiology** (<http://fusa.edu.co/index.php/la-fundacion/rectoria>)

Institute for Consecrated Life In Asia (Philippines)

- **Licentiate in Missiology** (<http://www.icla.org.ph/index.php/degree-programs>)

Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram Pontifical Institute (India)

- **Licentiate in Missiology** (<http://www.dvk.in/ViewCourseDetails.aspx?CourseId=52&FacultyId=1>)

Sacred Heart Theological College (India)

- **Licentiate in Missiology**

Tangaza University College (Kenya)

- **Institute of African Studies**
(<http://www.tangaza.org/>)

Universidad Católica Boliviana (Bolivia)

- **Instituto Latinoamericano de Misionología**
(http://www.misionologia.org/info_academica.php)

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (Libano)

- **Centre de Recherches et d'Études Arabes** -
Islamics and arabic language studies



Publicazioni del Dicastero per le Missioni

(per titolo e anno di pubblicazione)

1. *Il Missionario* (1980)
2. *Salesian Africa* (1986)
3. *Pastoral Amazónica. Semana de Estudos Missionários* - Campo Grande (1986)
4. *Evangelization in India. Study sessions for the Salesian Family on Evangelization in Tribal Areas of India* - Shillong (1987)
5. *Africa Salesiana. Visita d'Insieme* - Lusaka (1988)
6. *Spiritualità Missionaria Salesiana I. La Concezione Missionaria di Don Bosco* (1988)
7. *Spiritualità Missionaria Salesiana II. L'Educazione Cristiana e Missionaria di Don Bosco* (1988)
8. *Salesian Missionary Spirituality III. Prayer and the Salesian Missionary* (1988)
9. *Espiritualidad Misionera Salesiana IV. The Ideal of Mission* (1988)
10. *Spiritualité Missionnaire Salésienne V. The Missionary Project of the Salesians of Don Bosco* (1988)
11. *Pastorale Salesiana in Contesto Islamico* (1989)
12. *Animazione Missionaria Salesiana II. Secondo Incontro di Studi per DIAM* - Madrid (1989)
13. *Pastoral Mapuche. Encuentro DIAM Salesiano* - Junin de los Andes (1989)
14. *The Far East. Cultures, Religions, and Evangelization* - Hua Hin (1989)
15. *Lettura Missionaria di "Educare i Giovani alla Fede" CG XXIII. Incontro di Procuratori e DIAM dell' Europa* - Roma (1991)
16. *Animación Misionera Salesiana. Primer Encuentro de DIAM de America Latina* - Lima (1991)
17. *Missionary Animation. First Meeting of the PDMA for Asia and Australia* - Bangalore (1992)
18. *Spiritualité Missionnaire Salésienne, Les Jeunes Africains en Quête de Leur Identité. Séminaire d'Animation* - Yaounde (1992)
19. *Evangelización y Cultura en el Contexto de Pastoral Amazonica. Seminario de Animación* - Cumbayá (1993)
20. *Evangelización y Cultura en el Contexto de Pastoral Andina. Seminario de Animación* - Cumbayá (1994)
21. *Evangelización y Cultura en el Contexto de Pastoral Mapuche. Seminario de Animación* - Ruca Choro (1993)
22. *Evangelization and Interreligious Dialogue. Missionary Animation Seminar* - Batulao (1994)
23. *Evangelization and Interreligious Dialogue. Missionary Animation Seminar* - Hyderabad (1994)

24. *Evangelización y Cultura en el Contexto de Pastoral Mesoamericana. Seminario de Animación* - Mexico (1994)
25. *The Volunteer Movement and Salesian Mission* (1995) - ENG, ESP, ITA, FRA, POR
26. *Educare alla Dimensione Missionaria* (1995)
27. *Presenze dei Salesiani in Africa* (directory published annually from 1986 to 1996)
28. *Church - Communion and Mutual Missionary Relationship. Missionary Animation Seminar* - Addis Ababa (1997)
29. *Incontro Europeo DIAM* - Roma (1997)
30. *National Missionary Animation Meeting for PDMA* - Mumbai (1997)
31. *Manual of the Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation* (1998)
32. *Uniqueness of Salvation in Jesus Christ and Need of Primary Evangelization. Animation and Missionary Formation Seminar SDB-FMA East Asia Oceania* - Hua Hin (1998)
33. *Missionary Praxis and Primary Evangelization. Animation and Missionary Formation Seminar SDB-FMA* - Calcutta (1999)
34. *Seminário de Pastoral em Contexto Afro-Americano. Seminario de Animação e Formação Missionária* - Belo Horizonte (1999)
35. G. Ballin, *I Fioretti d'un Missionario. Paraguay Cuore d'America* (1999)
36. *Le Projet-Afrique face au Défi de la Première Evangelisation et de la Phase de Consolidation. Séminaire d'Animation et de Formation Missionnaire* - Yaounde-Mbealmayo (1999)
37. *La Primera Evangelización en Diálogo Intercultural. Experiencias y Formación de Catecistas. Seminario de Animación y Formación Misionera en el Contexto Pastoral Andino y Mesoamericana* - Cumbayá (2000)
38. *Seminário Sobre a Práxis Missionaria na Região Amazônica. Seminario de Animação e Formação Missionária* - Manaus (2000)
39. *Missionari nel Paese del Sol Levante Discepoli di Don Cimatti. Figure che Parlano ancora* (2000)
40. P. Baldisserotto, *Rio de Agua Viva. Cartas de Pe. Antonio Scolaro Para a Missão e Testemunho* (2000)
41. *Sprazzi di Vita. Figure che Parlano Ancora* (2000)
42. *Project Africa Between the Challenges of First Evangelization and the Phase of Consolidation. Animation and Missionary Formation Seminar SDB-FMA* - Nairobi (2001)
43. *Seminario di Animazione e Formazione Missionaria. SDB-FMA in Contesto Islamico* - Roma (2001)
44. *Presenza Salesiana SDB-FMA in Contesto Ortodosso. Seminario di Animazione e Formazione Missionaria* - Roma (2002)
45. *Salesian Family Missionary Seminar. Mission Animation Notes 1* - Port Moresby (2005)
46. *East Asia and the Challenges of Mission Ad Gentes. Salesian Family Missionary Seminar. Mission Animation Notes 2* - Hua Hin (2005)
47. *Planning and Development Office. Proceedings of the Seminar* - Rome (2005)
48. *Les Defis de la Mission Ad Gentes en Afrique. Séminaire de Missiologie de la Famille Salesienne. Animation Notes 3* - Kinshasa (2006)
49. *Mission Ad Gentes Today in Africa. Challenges to Mission Ad Gentes in the English Speaking Provinces of Africa in the Light of the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa. Mission Animation Notes 4* - Nairobi (2006)

50. *Pueblos Indígenas y Evangelización. V Encuentro de Misioneras y Misioneros Salesianos en Contextos Pluriculturales* - Cumbayá (2006)
51. *Project Africa [1980-2005]* (2006)
52. *Impegno Salesiano nel Mondo Islamico. Dossier* (2008)
53. *Voluntary Service in the Salesian Mission* (2008) - ENG, ESP, ITA, FRA, POR
54. *Mantén Viva tu Llama Misionera. II Seminario Americano de Animación Misionera SDB-FMA* - Cumbayá (2012)
55. *Planning and Development Office at the Service of the Salesian Charism in the Province* - Hyderabad (2012) - ENG, ESP, FRA, POR
56. *Provincial Mission Office at the Service of the Salesian Charism* - Bonn (2012) - ENG, ESP
57. *Study Days on the Salesian Mission and Frontier Situations and Initial Proclamation in Europe Today* - Prague (2013)
58. *Study Days on the Salesian Presence Among Muslims* (2013) - ENG, ITA, FRA
59. *Study days on the Salesian Mission and the Initial Proclamation of Christ in Oceania in the Context of Traditional Religions and Cultures and Cultures in the Process of Secularisation* - Port Moresby (2013)
60. *Study Days on the Salesian Mission and the Initial Proclamation of Christ in the Three-fold Context of East Asia* - Sampran (2013)
61. *Study Days on the Salesian Mission and the Initial Proclamation of Christ in the Three-fold Context of South Asia* - Kolkata (2013)
62. *The Missionary Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco* - Roma (2014) - ENG, ESP, ITA, FRA, POL, POR.

