

Dear Confreres,



Around a month ago a voice resounded "Habemus Papam"! Card. Jorge Mario Bergoglio took the name of Francis and he is now leading the universal Church towards new frontiers. Let us pray for him together with Fr. Jorge Mario Crisafulli, our Provincial who shares with the new Pope first name and nationality. Let us also listen to the story of Fr George missionary vocation. I want to share a short report about an outreach program in a village around Ibadan. A small group enthusiastic for evangelization has been formed and the

will to continue on that line is great. Hoping it will give ideas for similar experiences in other houses.

I renew my best wishes for a holy Easter in the Lord. May this Season of Joy and Hope renew our lives as Christians and Salesian Missionaries.

God bless you

Bro. Paolo

MISSION WITNESS

Fr. Jorge Mario Crisafulli, can you share your emotions when you heard about the election of Card Bergoglio as successor of Peter?

The first emotion was "surprise": the Holy Spirit and the Cardinals had chosen a Pope from the "ends of the earth". Secondly, I felt a deep joy, not because the new Pope was from Argentina and his name Jorge Mario but because he was the first Pope from Latin America, a Continent that has the highest number of Catholics...and poor people on earth. I felt joy because the new elected Pope Francis was a Religious and I knew him as a "pastoral man", committed to "bringing the Church to the streets". I felt that something new was happening, new fresh air for the tired lungs of the Church: "Francis, renew my Church".

Can you tell us something about your missionary vocation?

My missionary vocation started when I was 15 and a student of Don Bosco School in Bahia Blanca. I was a member of a missionary group that used to go on mission to the poorest area of Rio Negro Province, in Sierra Colorada. That first missionary experience changed my heart: the life of prayer and the sacraments, the community experience and above all to "see, touch and smell" the poverty and pain of "indios Mapuches", the indigenous people of Patagonia: it was a "missionary conversion". I wanted to give my life, to share my faith, to live with them and work with them to improve their life situation. Later, during my Novitiate, before my first profession I apply to go to the missions but

I was asked to finish my initial formation. I tried again before diaconate and priesthood but I was asked to work first in Patagonia as a young priest for some years. After 5 years of educational and pastoral work in Villa Regina and Bahia Blanca, thanks to an intervention of Don Odorico –by then World Councilor for the Missions– I was able to depart to Africa. Today I can truly say that I have found my place in the world, in the Church and in the Salesian Congregation: Africa is my home and I hope that one day I will become African soil!

Which new frontiers to be crossed in the Mission “ad Gentes” you dream for AFW?

My missionary “Ad Gentes” dream is focused on Evangelization. Our new frontiers are not only geographical, as Pope Francis said, they are there where children and young people are suffering, at risk, abandoned, unwanted and unloved. They should be our first “missionary destination”! Their cries and sufferings should impel us to go out, to move, to open new presences, to give concrete answers to their real needs.



I also think that the “new frontiers” are also within our “old presences”: God is calling us to offer a “deeper evangelization and catechetical formation” to our youngsters or to re-evangelize youth with a new evangelization in those areas where faith and spirituality are separated from life and culture (big cities!)

We can also speak of new geographical frontiers in Nigeria (Kontagora, Benin city, Port Harcourt), in Liberia (Tapita, Fish Town), in Sierra Leone (Bo, Kenema) and in Ghana (Yendi, Bolgatanga, Kumasi, Takoradi). The Bishop of the Gambia is also interested in the presence of the Salesians. We have to be open to the Spirit and when the signs of time are clear and circumstances mature, we have to move forward without calculating too much, without fears.

Last but not the least: the Lord has been generous with AFW. He has sent so many missionaries from all over the world to our land; vocations are also flourishing in good numbers. We have to be generous and offer to the Salesian Congregation some of our best confreres so that they can depart for the mission “Ad Gentes”, beyond the limits of AFW.

MISSIONARY OUTREACH IN IBADAN

9th of March was a special day for the whole Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan. The



Archbishop launched an outreach program involving all the faithful: to mark the special Year of Faith each Catholic should have gone in the streets to proclaim our Faith, a courageous initiative which Societies in the Church took at heart with quite a good success in some parts of our metropolis. I immediately thought that it was good to get involved in this project. Together with Bro. Anthony and Alpheus we

have been “exploring” the outstations of our Parish, St. Mulumba, since last October. Especially our two young confreres have been meeting people, organizing Sunday liturgies and visiting families in order to create a friendly atmosphere. We took part in some meetings constituting and giving formation to a sort of “missionary group” among youth of the Parish and that day... oh yes! We were ready to spend a whole weekend in the village of Awaye, a rural environment one hour drive from our house. Saturday morning was allocated for logistics, while real action started in the afternoon. Small groups of “missionaries” spread in all the houses of the village carrying a brief message of faith and basic catechesis. Nobody closed the door in front of us, nor even did we hear any voice of disappointment. Instead attentive ears were given to us, a lot of curiosity and joy was expressed by the numerous children and the enthusiasm from within was growing minute after minute. We gave appointment to everybody for the evening for prayer and for watching a movie together. A very interesting night for almost sixty people (the normal congregation is less than twenty...), with a lot of questions about Jesus, the centre of our faith. Actually the movie inspired by the Gospel according to Saint Luke was fully understood because of the punctual translation in Yoruba, the local dialect and a powerful catechetical message could be easily delivered. After few hours of rest morning prayer, rosary in the roads of the village and a very solemn Mass were organized. It has been good to be in Awaye and now we are looking forward to do the same experience in another village. There is a lot of work to do to build the kingdom of God!



Missionary prayer intention for the month of APRIL: Territories entrusted to the Congregation in the Inter American Region

That the Salesians in the six territories entrusted by the Holy See to the Salesian Congregation in the Inter American Region may develop into a truly inculturated Church.