



Publication of the Missions Sector for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission

Dear confreres, dear friends,
I write to you from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome. It is as though, He Himself shouts out to the four winds, from the tower of the basilica built by our dear father Don Bosco, this His fifth Beatitude:

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

"To look and to act with mercy, this is holiness" [Gaudete et Exsultate 82]

The Salesian missionary should breathe and "transpire", therefore radiate, the Preventive System which, for us, is mercy in the form of an educational and missionary presence. It is clearly and spontaneously said of many Salesian missionaries, "Here is a friend of all." Indeed, one could or should engrave this on their tombstones as their best definition. They were "actively present among youth in brotherly friendship" (C39), "following the example of the Son of God, who made himself in all things like his fellow men" (C30). A supreme and radiant example of this Salesian, friendly and universal mercy was that of Venerable Simone Sruji. One of his students testified, "His kindness was such that he simply had to be listened to and loved. With his love for us, the young, he won our esteem, our souls." Behold, the beatitude of mercy, made Salesian holiness! True friend, always and of everyone; here is the wisdom of the Salesian missionary.



J. Basañes

Fr. Guillermo Basañes SDB.
Councillor for the Missions

In the Presence of greatness (Cagliari Project- Australia)

Since the beginning of the Cagliari Project, the Australia-Pacific Province's long-term volunteer programme, Cambodia has always been a priority area.

There has been a steady stream of volunteers since 2008, who have supported the Salesians of Don Bosco in their work for the beautiful young people of Cambodia. It has been a great privilege and a pleasure that the Cagliari Project has been able to play a small role in assisting this incredible work.

It has been a chance for the young (and the young at heart) volunteers from Australia to be part of a rich missionary history in the making. The work in Cambodia has been the dream and hard work of missionaries from all over the world - the Netherlands, Philippines, Korea, Italy, Colombia, India, Vietnam and many other nations.

Every year I have the privilege of travelling to Cambodia to visit our volunteers. Fortuitously, Fr. John Visser, the great Dutch missionary, was in Phnom Penh during my visit this year - a man who was one of the first foreigners to enter Cambodia in 1992 and to start the difficult work of rebuilding a war-torn nation.

Fr. John chuckled over breakfast as he reminisced at the humble early days in Cambodia - "when we first came all we had was a car!" Oh, how things have changed! Since then there are schools and oratories in Phnom Penh, Battambang, Poipet, Kep and Sihanoukville that work with thousands of some of the poorest

young people from across Cambodia. I felt humbled to be in the presence of this great missionary who is ever focused on the young even in his 'semi-retirement'.

The Cagliari volunteers have been so fortunate to have such openness from the confreres in Cambodia to work with the laity in a genuinely shared mission. It has not always been easy, I am sure, neither for volunteers nor for the SDB; however, it has proven to be a beautiful communion between the laity and SDB. Our volunteers are so privileged to share in this beautiful missionary community. We hope the relationship continues for many more years to come.



Lauren Hichaaba

Director of the Cagliari Project and AUL PDMA

Holiness is unconditional love and service



The birth of my Missionary vocation: I was born in Vietnam. In my youth, there were no Vietnamese missionaries. The concept that people had of a missionary was of someone who left his country and never saw his home again. Naturally, parents would never want their children to do that. Already as a novice I had this desire but, I kept it to myself right up to my perpetual profession. Then one day, in the 3rd year of Theology, I heard again the invitation for missionaries Ad Genes. I prayed seriously and placed myself in the hands of God. It really messed up my mind, in the midst of my daily duties, studies, examinations, tons of worries, imagined difficulties and challenges I would have to face if I become a missionary. Then the first two missionaries were sent to PNG (they were my students, too), pushing me to write the letter to the Rector Major. My offer was accepted.

I then received the news that my sister had been diagnosed to be with cancer and was under treatment in the hospital. One of the nurses was a religious sister. She knew me. One day she informed me that the cancer was a very dangerous one. My sister would have to undergo chemotherapy. She could expect to live six months or,

at the most, a year. I cried for my sister. She had converted her husband and had 3 small children. I prayed to God earnestly for a reasonable exchange: "Take my life and let her live." But then, God happens to know better than we do. God has kept my sister alive and healthy right up to now, and He sent me to Mongolia.

The time came to tell my superiors, and then my family, of my intention. My Mom did not want me to leave her, but my Dad said, "You belong to God; you do what He wants you to!"

The challenges in my mission land: As a young cleric I was sent to the new mission of Mongolia (first group). The winter in this country lasts more than 6 months. The temperature is below zero: -30, -40 and sometimes below that. Summer is so short, but with the heat of a semi desert: +35, +40. The staple diet is meat and meat. Fruits of any variety are unheard of! As a matter of fact, it couldn't be more different from my own country where in all seasons it is green and warm, and with plenty fruits and vegetables! Besides, the local language is so difficult to learn, to write, to speak ... But I can share with you that these are not the greatest challenges I face in my missionary vocation. My challenge is to live in harmony and to work with the other Salesians even though they all are (and so am I) very enthusiastic and full of zeal for the mission!

My greatest joy in the mission: I have been in all the communities and houses in Mongolia (there are only two)! In the technical School, I enjoyed being with the youngsters and watching them graduate, get a job, start a family and find success in life. Many of them return to our place and express their gratitude! While I am in the parish, my joy is to see people receiving the faith; so much so, they enjoy coming to church even for daily mass which is not easy even in my own country or with my own brothers and sisters. How much faith these people have here! One of my happiest moments was when a young man came to me for confession and he burst out in tears in the confessional! And they were tears of joy! I could not have imagined how God works inside the hearts of people!

My humble thoughts for young missionaries: after my 18 years in the mission what I can tell you is, first: pray and make a good discernment before going to the missions; check what your motivation really is; prepare yourself well with a sense of acceptance and forbearance. Second: daily meditation; be close to Jesus; do not look for any interests of your own; build up the community life first; see the other Salesians as your own brothers/sisters; love and care for them sincerely; then the local people, especially the young, will follow in your footsteps, steps to holiness, steps of unconditional love and service. Last, but not the least: entrust all things to our Blessed Mary, Help of Christians!

Andrew Tin Nguyen, Vietnamese, missionary in Mongolia.



Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

Fr. Pierluigi Camerini SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

Saint Dominic Savio (1842-1857) was clear about his intention: "I want to become a saint, I must become a saint and I will not be happy until I become a saint". He resonates a lot - if not everything - of what Don Bosco had been able to convey to him, ever since the sermon in which Dominic had heard these encouraging words: "To become a saint is easy. We must all become saints. There is a great prize waiting in heaven for those who become saints." Don Bosco himself wrote that this sermon was the spark that kindled Dominic Savio's heart, making him a lover of God. He shared this holiness with many friends, including in a special way Giovanni Massaglia. From this sharing was born the Company of the Immaculate, the nursery of the first Salesian generation.

**For the Church in AFRICA,
a leaven towards unity.**



Salesian Missionary Intention

That the Church in Africa be a leaven of unity among peoples and a sign of hope for this Continent.

Through the fruitful "Project Africa", the Salesians are now present in 43 African countries, with almost 200 communities and about 35,000 committed lay people.

Let us pray that the Salesian Family, a wonderful missionary fruit and a gift to the Church and the Continent, be a source of evangelization and a promoter of peace, unity and solidarity, and be particularly caring for internally displaced persons and refugees.

