



# OPUS CHRISTI SALVATORIS MUNDI

Newsletter  
Year 3  
Issue 6,  
June 2015

MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE POOR OF THE THIRD WORLD

## Missionary Intention for June:

*That the personal encounter with Jesus may arouse in many young people the desire to offer their own lives in priesthood or consecrated life.*

Intention entrusted to us by the Holy Father at the Apostolate of Prayer

## A Word from the Magisterium

*We continue with our presentation of a few passages of the Papal Exhortation EVANGELII GAUDIUM, on the topics most related to our charism and the work of our Missionary Servants of the Poor TW, like poverty and mission.*

### REASONS FOR A RENEWED MISSIONARY IMPULSE

(...)270. Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people.

271. It is true that in our dealings with the world, we are told to give reasons for our hope, but not as an enemy who critiques and condemns. We are told quite clearly: "do so with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet 3:15) and "if possible, so far as it depends upon you, live

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peaceably with all" (Rom 12:18). We are also told to overcome "evil with good" (Rom 12:21) and to "work for the good of all" (Gal 6:10). Far from trying to appear better than others, we should "in humility count others better" than ourselves (Phil 2:3). The Lord's apostles themselves enjoyed "favour with all the people" (Acts 2:47; 4:21, 33; 5:13). Clearly Jesus does not want us to be grandees who look down upon others, but men and women of the people. This is not an idea of the Pope, or one pastoral option among others; they are injunctions contained in the word of God which are so clear, direct and convincing that they need no interpretations which might diminish their power to challenge us. Let us live them *sine glossa*, without commentaries. By so doing we will know the missionary joy of sharing life with God's faithful people as we strive to light a fire in the heart of the world.

(continues)

## *News from the Church*

### *Bicentenary of the birth of St. John Bosco*

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, Pope Francis will go to Turin to venerate the Holy Shroud and also to honour, as he himself said, the bicentenary of the birth of St. John Bosco (born on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1815), the Piedmontese priest who dedicated his whole life to the education of the youth, and whose education method, the "Preventive Method", is our point of reference in the work that we do in Peru. In fact, as stressed by Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime sdb, the current Rector of the Salesian Family, in the opening message of the year of the celebration of the bicentenary, "the Salesian Charism is the gift that God has given to the Church and to the World, through Don Bosco. It is a charism to which all those who, through their vocation, have some part in the education of the youth, can refer.

The Holy Father took the opportunity to show his appreciation towards the Salesian family and its work on 31<sup>st</sup> March, when he received the participants of the General Chapter of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, assuring them that when one works for the good of souls, they seek only God and His Kingdom. Pope Francis expressed his burning desire that "the Holy Spirit help them to perceive the expectancies and challenges of our time – especially from the youth – interpreting them through the Light of the Gospel and their charism". He also reminded everybody how the founder of the Salesian Society reinforced this through the two pillars of work and temperance, which consist of having a sense of measure, conforming, being simple. "Work and temperance", said St. John Bosco, and repeated Pope Francis, "will make the congregation flourish". The Holy Father, who from his

election began to express his desire for a poor Church for the poor, heartily encouraged "that the poverty of Don Bosco and his mother Margarita inspire in every Salesian and every one of their communities an essential and austere life, closeness to the poor, transparency and accountability in the management of assets". The Pope also stressed the importance of preparing young people to work according to the Gospel, "as builders of justice and peace" and to "live as protagonists of the Church". These words from the Holy Father, we listen to as though they were directed to our very selves, the Missionary Servants of the Poor, not only because our work very much resembles the work that the Salesians across the whole world have been doing for 200 years, but also because obedience to the Pope – as well as Eucharistic and Marian Devotion – is one of the pillars of our young missionary family.

Returning to the words of Father Angel Fernandez Artime sdb in the message already mentioned, we too, during this year, "feel more encouraged not only to admire Don Bosco, not only to perceive the relevance of his gigantic figure, but to strongly feel the unwavering commitment of imitation, of him who, from these hills, reached the outskirts of Valdocco and the rural periphery of Mornese to engage with them and other people, with all those who sought the good of the youth and happiness in this world and in eternity."

Finally, our devotion to the Piedmontese saint par excellence goes beyond the simple adoption of his education method. In fact, in a very difficult moment for our Movement, Fr. Giovanni Salerno tells us that in dreams, Don Bosco said to him "...If you want the purity of the City of Boys to flourish, use the Preventive System... Be strong!" We always trust in his powerful intercession.

May our Celestial Mother, "Mother of the Poor" and, according to the invocation so much loved by Don Bosco, "Mary Help of Christians" continue to aid and protect us in the difficult task of educating the many children that Providence entrusts to us. May God permit us to make of them, according to the words of Don Bosco, "good citizens and holy Christians".

## *The Light of our Charism*

*In this issue, we continue with our presentation of a document by Fr. Giovanni Salerno from 30th March 1996 about our Marian spirituality.*

### **Why we invoke Holy Mary as Mother of the Poor of the Third World**

(...) The Virgin had given Juan Diego the strict order to open up his tilma full of roses, only in front of the reverend Bishop. However, on arriving at the residence of the prelate, Juan Diego had some trouble getting to see him, since the gatekeeper, and everybody else charged with caring for the palace, considered him crazy and a liar. It was also difficult to keep the secret of the roses, especially when he was asked to let them see what he had brought in his tilma, as a condition for letting him pass. However, by a miracle from God, they were not able to see what he had brought, because when they tried to take, or even touch one of the roses that they glimpsed, it appeared as though it were embroidered onto the tilma, which they found very strange, and this urged them to go quickly to the Bishop to tell him what was happening.

Finally Juan Diego was taken to the Bishop, to whom he told everything that had happened, and how he had brought the sign that he had requested from the Virgin Mary. Actually, in the precise moment that he let the roses fall from his tilma, on it, there miraculously appeared the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, an image that still today is a moving testimony to the presence and love of our heavenly Mother.

This is, perhaps, the most important apparition of the Virgin (without undervaluing any other apparition), because it was the only one in which she has left the imprint of her image, which was not painted by human hands, and was not an invention of the Spanish, or of anybody. This is the living image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who wished to stay with us to receive her children, the smallest and the poor.

There was once somebody who wanted to make a replica of the original on a fabric made with maguey

rope, like the tilma that Juan Diego the Indian was wearing, but he was unsuccessful. The attempted replica deteriorated in less than a year and had to be removed. How could we explain, then, how the original image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, at 465 years old, is still in perfect condition? And this is in spite of the fact that at first, for more than 150 years, it had no special protection, exposed to humidity, to dust, and to the smoke from the numerous candles lit by devoted. In this image there are many other prodigious details discovered through the numerous studies that have been carried out. These discoveries permit us to see its supernatural character, as well as its extraordinary message.

In the image, the Virgin is presented as a woman pregnant with the Saviour. How do we know this? It is deduced from the fact that in the Mesoamerican culture, if a woman wore a black belt around her waist, it meant that she was pregnant. The image of the Virgin of Guadalupe also wears a black belt tied round her waist, meaning that she carries Jesus in her womb, having come to evangelize the new continent.

The four-leafed clover that appears above the Virgin's womb, a four-leafed clover that in Mesoamerican culture is a symbol of life, also corroborates this significance. For these reasons, some scientists want to perform ultrasonic testing on the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, hoping to find in it Jesus, his Son, the Son of God. The Virgin of Guadalupe has indigenous traits, her features are those of a typical Indian American. This also stresses the central message of the apparition that shows us Mary as our Mother, totally identified with her people. Our Lady of Guadalupe is also presented in prayer, but before the sun and with the moon beneath her feet, meaning to say to the indigenous that their old beliefs about the sun and moon – considered by them as gods – must expire to give way to faith in the One True God. *(Continues)*

## *News from our Homes*

### *Diaconal Ordination of Br. Rafael Santillán Rodríguez*

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, the Saturday of the Easter Octave and the Vigil of Sunday of Divine Mercy, once more, God showed his mercy for our Movement, by granting us another Ordination. That day, our seminarian, Rafael Santillán Rodríguez, from Mexico, Morelia, was ordained Deacon. He came to Cusco for the first time in August 2006, aged 20. After entering our House of Priestly Formation, and finishing his studies in 2014, he has spent the last few months accompanying Fr. Giovanni on his travels. Although he was incardinated in the Diocese of Morelia, in Michoacán, Brother Rafael was ordained deacon by the Archbishop of Cusco, Mons. Richard Daniel Alarcón Urrutia, in the chapel in the City of Boys. It was a beautiful celebration, in which some of the Sisters participated, the Missionary Families (even the Salazar family who have spent more than a year working in Mexico, and arrived especially to participate in the celebration), many children from our school, and also some of the Sisters of Charity, who work in Cusco, and who the priests of the Movement support by giving them talks and hearing their confessions. After the celebration, there was a festive lunch in the school's dinner hall, with the priests and brothers serving. We thank God for not abandoning us.

### *Mourning for the whole Movement*

The joy that we felt at the diaconal ordination of Br. Rafael was obscured by a sad piece of news. Just the day before, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April, Don Felipe Gonzalez Gonzalez died in Toledo, aged 81. Although a diocesan priest, he actually defined himself as a "Servant of the Poor", since, from the beginning of the Movement he has been the spiritual director of all our seminarians and priests. Fr. Agustín Delouvroy, msp, was at his side when he died.

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the church of St. Nicholas of Bari (Toledo), in which Don Felipe himself (Asturian of birth) was parish priest for many years. At the ceremony, which was presided over by the Archbishop of Toledo and the Primate of Spain, Mons. Braulio Rodríguez, 40 priests were present. Our seminarians served on the altar during the Mass. After the burial, everybody stayed in the graveyard praying and thanking God for having known, and been guided by, him. "Total integral priest, who is set to Christ to the core, even until the last breath of his life on this earth, giving us an example of his integrity, his union with Christ on the Cross, in accepting and offering his sufferings" (the words of Father Álvaro Gómez msp, who benefitted from the spiritual direction of Don Felipe even before he came across the Movement, when he was a diocesan seminarian in Toledo).

#### **Missionary Pledge of the Month:**

I will prepare myself for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart (12<sup>th</sup> June) with a Novena, I will participate in the Mass of the day and I will receive communion asking for many holy missionary vocations for the Church and the Movement.