



Publication of the missions sector for SDB communities and friends of the salesian mission



Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

"For you my God, I sing, of the joy of being your witness, Lord." Years ago, I sang this song along with my friends, meditating on the meaning of its lyrics, experiencing a deep desire to live joyfully knowing that I am a witness of Christ.

Ever since the earliest Christian communities, the testimony of those who are convinced that Jesus Christ inspires their way of living and acting is the most convincing way of proclaiming Him. When we are witnesses of the Gospel, with a happy, simple, fraternal and compassionate way of life, it is possible to offer it as an option for those who seek the meaning of their existence even in the midst of the greatest difficulties. Don Bosco invites us to be bearers of the joyful news of the incarnate, visible, concrete Love that God has for the little ones and the poor. I believe this is the commitment of a Salesian missionary.

■ Fr. Hugo Orozco SDB
Regional Councillor
for the Inter-American Region

Intercultural Dialogue as a process of Inculturation

More than the incarnation, it is the kenosis that reminds us what inculturation truly is: the Word became flesh so that we may be brought back to **God's glory** (Phil 2, 6-11).

An understanding of inculturation which presumes a cultureless faith that is transplanted into a religiously different culture whereby **Christian faith and this culture**, formerly unknown to each other, meet and fuse is artificial and unrealistic. The Christian faith is lived by persons of a specific culture. In fact, there is no such thing as a cultureless Christianity nor a culture that is truly Christian. Similarly, no faith is devoid of culture nor is any culture devoid of its religious belief.

Since culture and faith are intimately interwoven, to separate faith from the culture which begot it and then to transplant it into another culture is doing it violence to the core. On the other hand, as a human person journeys through time, the new realities he encounters bring him new insights. Thus, **every culture progresses when it is open** to an encounter; its own insight and values are transformed by such an encounter. On the contrary a culture that isolates itself from the dynamism of history dies.

It is in the process of interaction of cultures that their enriching and dehumanising elements expressed in their values and practices are revealed. Inculturation takes place through intercultural dialogue. Through this intercultural process **of mutual enrichment and critical exchange** cultures are stimulated to be open to the freshness of the Gospel. Thus, the values and concepts of a culture are enriched, broadening and deepening their horizons, so that that society's way of life includes or, at least does not preclude, the ideals of the Gospel which give meaning to human existence. It is in this process that we discern what is contrary to the Gospel and what is not.

■ Fr. Alfred Maravilla SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

FOR REFLEXION AND SHARING

- *Am I open to be enriched by other cultures?*
- *Do I have the courage to share my lived experience of my Christian faith?*



VENEZUELA – YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE RUN AND MISSIONS

The Salesian province of Venezuela has a beautiful and rich tradition of working with catechists. How do the catechists there "transmit" to the youngsters a relationship with the living Christ, not just the Catholic doctrine?

We try to convey the message and present the person of Jesus through the cultural categories lived out in different social contexts: friendship, family – with a large family unit –, hospitality... In this way Jesus becomes the Friend, the Brother, the One who visits us and lives in our home.

What good experiences have you had as regards the missionary animation of Salesians?

The Salesians who work with the indigenous peoples of the Amazonia pass on to us the experience of a catechesis rethought in terms of their own languages: signs, symbols, cultural categories with which the Gospel message can be better expressed and understood.

For example, catechesis is organised around the celebration of a feast which becomes a liturgical celebration with its preparation (messages, songs, representations, artistic expressions...). In this way catechesis is combined with a living liturgy.

Many people from Venezuela flee to neighbouring countries. Do you, as Salesians, support them in this decision or do you try to convince them to stay?

The decision to emigrate is always very painful, especially in a country that has never had this experience in its history. Young people dream of alternatives and solutions that may turn out to be short-term ones. They do not readily accept advice; they want immediate results to meet their family's needs. We maintain contact with organisations run by Salesians in other countries to coordinate humanitarian aid or to help in special cases when guidance is needed to find possibilities for work or for studies. On the other hand, in our vocational and youth centres we offer them various alternatives for short-term vocational preparation and inspire in them hopes of a better future for Venezuela.



Fr. Jorge Bastidas SDB

He is originally **from Caracas**, Venezuela, where he became a Salesian (2005) and was ordained a priest (2014).

After studying philosophy, pedagogy and theology in Los Teques and Caracas, he obtained a Bachelor's in philosophy and theology at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome.

Starting from 2014 he worked in Punto Fijo "Falcón" for three years as head of a **professional centre** and a youth centre/oratory. Then he was sent to the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome for two years for specialization in **youth ministry**.

At the moment he is a provincial councillor and the **delegate of the provincial**, Fr Rafael Montenegro (VEN), for youth ministry.



NEW LOGO FOR THE SECTOR

The Salesian Missions Sector is launching a logo for the new year 2022. Here is an explanation of the symbols:

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- JESUS & SALESIANITY – the Salesian cross
- INTERNAZIONALITY – 5 colours, 5 continents
- PEOPLE – centrality of the human person
- CHARISMA – the flames of the Holy Spirit
- LOVE – the fire of the love of God the Father
- MYSTERY – the burning bush of Moses
- MARY – the beads of the "missionary rosary"



DECEMBER SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

Catechists

For proclamation and testimony of God's love despite the difficult socio-economic situation in Venezuela.

Let us pray for the catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God: may they be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Pope Francis' prayer intention]

AMERICA

