



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



Dear freinds,

At the centenary celebrations in Northeast India this year we recall the gallant and fruitful efforts of the Salesian missionaries in this region ever since January 13th 1922. "Dare and hope" was the motto of Fr Louis Mathias, the leader of the expedition. In a land alien to them in language, culture, tradition, food, climate, and suffering from lack of personnel, paucity of funds and natural calamities, the valiant and committed missionaries who came year after year, lived their Salesian missionary spirituality with undaunted courage and unbridled passion to bear abundant fruit: a true 'miracle of Mary Help of Christians'.

The missionary mandate is challenging, sometimes seemingly impossible. Yet, the intuitive, ever youthful Salesian spirit finds novel ways to overcome hurdles with courage and hope because Christ gave us not only a command, but also an assurance along with it: I am with you always.

■ Fr. Joseph "Sunny"
Palamthattel, SDB
Regional Coordinator for
Missionary Animation, South
Asia Region

Missionary Synodality



"Synodality" comes from the Greek *synodos*, which means **journeying together**. Synodality is actually a new word for an old reality. The event with the disciples of Emmaus in **Luke 24, 18-35** is an example of synodality. More than a specific theme addressed, a term used or a concept in its documents, the Second Vatican Council used 'collegiality' as the method of building the conciliar processes. However, synodality lies at the heart of the work of renewal the Council was encouraging..

Synodality is not a simple discussion nor a parliamentary deliberation which ends in a vote to verify the majority nor putting doctrines up for a vote. It is not even a programme to be implemented. Instead, it is a style of life, it is being a Church of participation and co-responsibility, involving the whole people of God.

Synodality implies an attitude of **attentive listening** with humility, respect, and patience even to discordant ideas, so as to **discern** the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and **act** with wisdom and creativity..

Missionary activity is, above all, proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ. Instead, missionary synodality is an approach to a pastoral reality. Sent to proclaim the Gospel, every missionary has to learn to listen attentively and respectfully, as fellow travellers, to the local people, to followers of other religions, to the cries of the poor and marginalised in order to be closer to Jesus and his Gospel and be a Church that goes forth, not closed in on itself.

Personal conversion will always be needed because we humbly recognize that there are still many hindrances within us to our efforts to live the missionary synodality: a tendency to teach than to listen; a sense of privilege and entitlement; a failure to be transparent and accountable; a slowness to dialogue and a lack of animating presence among the young; a propensity to control and to claim the sole right to make decisions; a lack of trust in empowering the laity as mission partners; and a lack of recognition of the presence of the Holy Spirit in cultures and peoples even before our arrival.

■ Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- What was my previous understanding of the word 'synodality'?
- What attitudes do I need to change in myself to better practise missionary synodality?



LAOS: FOUR SALESIANS IN ONE SALESIAN PRESENCE



Fr. Maccioni, the Salesians work in Laos in one mission station. How is the Salesian presence and mission received by the local (mostly) Buddhist population?

The MOU, renewable every 5 years, signed by the Revolutionary Lao Youth Union and the Salesian Foundation of Thailand, says that our work must be “unrelated to politics and religion”. So, officially, no religious activity. The Buddhist families from which most of our trainees come are very grateful to Don Bosco. Government officials, companies and shops appreciate the technical and human preparation of our graduates. We use Don Bosco and his educational method as a “channel” to communicate also religious and moral values! Indeed, Don Bosco makes the difference in our work of education!

What are you and your community doing to encourage and empower the Laotian youth to live as responsible persons in the society and build up a career for life?

Don Bosco Youth Vocational Training Center Vientiane, an outreach project of the Thai Province for poor Lao young men, 16-30 years of age, teaches them a job in auto mechanic, electricity (1 year courses), motorcycle repair, welding skills (4 months courses). Most of the 140 trainees who graduate every year are successful in finding a job. Besides the technical training, Don Bosco gives them also a good human education to prepare them for their future family life, and for their job performance in society. In our Center, we organize activities with experiences that teach discipline, order, cleanliness, good manners, self-sacrifice. We give talks on moral and religious principles, interpersonal behavior, dignity and value of work, health insurance, labor market, etc.

There are four Salesians in Laos: two Italians and two Vietnamese. Do you face any challenges to live and work together?

At present, our community, the only Salesian presence in Laos, is made up of 2 Vietnamese confreres and one Italian. Differences of character and cultural background are found in all communities. Accepting each other is a sign of maturity and of growth for all. What challenges our community most is our mission for our poor Lao trainees: speaking their language, accepting and appreciating the values of their culture, spending our talents and our time for them, in order to make our work more fruitful and apostolic, thus preparing the soil also for possible future Lao Salesian vocations!



Fr. Maccioni Magi Patrizio, SDB

Italian, 77 years old. He arrived in Thailand when he was 18. After 53 years in Thailand, he was sent to **Vientiane, Laos** where he has been working for almost 6 years.

He represents the Salesian Foundation of Thailand for ordinary matters when he has to deal with the **Lao Youth Union** officials. Besides, he is now the Rector and the Principal.

S.D.B. STATISTICS, 31.12.2021

Source: <https://statisticsal.net/> (adj. 15.02.2022)

- Σ** ■ **The total number of the Salesians in the world (professed + novices + Bishops) is 14,028** [cf.: at the end of 2020 it was 14,232]
- U** ■ **The difference between the incomers (379 newly professed) and the loss of professed (533 deceased and retired) at the end of 2021 was equal to -154** [cf.: at the end of 2020 it was -266]
- O** ■ **In the regions: difference in the number of professed + novices between 2021 and 2020:**
- Africa-Madagascar **+156** ■ South Asia **-7** ■ East Asia-Oceania **-18** ■ America South Cone **-35**
 - Interamerica **-80** ■ Central & North Europe **-82** ■ Mediterranean **-130**



AUGUST SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

Small businesses

For courage within the young in the Salesian environment in Laos to earn actively and responsibly

We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities. [Pope Francis' prayer intention]

