



CAGLIERO 11

newsletter for Salesian
Missionary Animation



181 JANUARY 2024

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



Dear friends,

"An army marches on its stomach!" Napoleon was a genius, one of the greatest military strategists in history, the builder of a vast empire. He was also totally realistic. He knew his capacities; but he also understood the needs of the people who won him his magnificent victories. They needed to be cared for. They needed to be fed.

I am glad to have been given the opportunity to contribute in a small way to the worldwide Salesian missions by helping them find resources for their material needs. After a period of almost 8 years in this service I move ahead. I salute every Salesian and every member of the Salesian family out there, evangelizing through education, educating through evangelization.

I wish you success in the new year and all through your life in your Salesian Mission.

■ Fr. MC George
Menampampil SDB
Outgoing member of the
Missions Sector

A new generation of missionaries who bring hope



In our Salesian schools in Brussels, the capital of Europe, we have students from as many as a hundred different nationalities: a representation of the wide diversity in the big cities of Western Europe. When we succeed in **bringing young people into respectful dialogue** with each other, they discover enormous richness and can learn a lot from each other. The multicultural, multireligious reality is a reflection of our world that is increasingly globalized and interconnected.

From the Salesian province of BEN (northern Belgium and the Netherlands), hundreds of confreres went as missionaries to all continents throughout our history. Some of them have returned to our province because of illness or age. They are there in almost all the communities of the province, bringing them their experience of other cultures. **It broadens our own world**, our coexistence and our mission. Sometimes they also help us not to overestimate our own problems because they see things from a broader perspective.

The BEN Province is very fortunate to be able to welcome young confreres from other continents in its turn. As there has always been throughout the history of our province a great connection with missionary-confreres in other continents, there is a great openness to receiving this new generation of missionaries. They bring hope to a part of the world where there are few homegrown new vocations. They approach young people with fresh enthusiasm and **are not afraid to bear witness to their faith**. The young people to whom they are sent have no difficulty in accepting our young missionaries because they are used to living in a society that is very diverse.

In our communities, too, diversity is undeniably an enrichment. Mutual listening brings different visions and cultures into conversation with each other and only makes living together more fascinating: **a beautiful manifestation of synodality**. Different generations and different cultures under the same roof challenge us all to live our vocation faithfully and not to shut ourselves up in our own world. Thus, our diverse communities give a contagious witness of living and working together in the multicultural society into which we are sent.

■ Don Wilfried Wambeke SDB
Provincial Delegate for formation
and director of the formation community of Oud-Heverlee

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- How do I see diversity as enrichment and contribution to my life and mission?
- How can I prevent diversity from becoming division?



DIVERSITY PRESENTS A BIG OPPORTUNITY IN THE GBR PROVINCE



Fr. Saju, the GBR province is one of the most diverse as regards the origin of its members. How do you find this situation after 13 years of your presence here?

Salesians have been in GBR over 130 years. The diversity of people, communities and cultures has created a suitable environment for Salesian work and apostolate. GBR was one of the provinces that provided missionaries as well as financial support to numerous English-speaking missions over half a century. Today, our Salesian presence and its context have changed radically; GBR responded by empowering lay people to lead, guide and become collaborators in the mission.

I have been part of this amazing experience over 13 years, at first as a student and subsequently as a member of the province. I have experienced a wonderful rediscovery of my Salesian vocation. The local Salesian school in London is sandwiched among tower blocks that house financially deprived communities. The young people around me opened my eyes to the rich harvest awaiting our Salesian apostolate. It is a privilege to be a Salesian in this context.

What opportunities does this diversity offer for the Salesian presence in the UK?

The arrival of missionaries to the UK was met with surprise and caution among many. However, their presence has enriched the Salesian life and mission of the province. As in the early church, missionary presence is taking deeper roots in our province. These missionaries provide:

- A greater opportunity to work with various communities and cultures;
- The sight of young Salesians at work in the school and parish, and available in the playground;
- Missionaries, professionally qualified locally, and equipped to engage in a challenging consumerist society;
- Openness to working with and being led by animated youngsters and lay people in our schools, parishes and at the retreat centre;
- Witness of evangelical poverty, chastity and community life in a culture that could be otherwise.

Do you have any concerns about the Salesian future in GBR?

Salesian life has definitely grown over the years; there is a visible presence of young Salesians in the province. However, looking at the future, the most concerning challenge is the lack of local vocations to Salesian life. We remain with the firm hope that our presence and the witness of Salesian life will eventually bring more young people to follow in the footsteps of Don Bosco.



Fr. Saju John SDB

I am a Salesian of Don Bosco. As a young person, I had the wonderful experience of studying in a **Salesian school** and of being taught by Salesians. I was captivated by the life and work of Don Bosco and wanted to follow him.

I have been a Salesian over 30 years and a priest over 20 years. The **last 13 years** I am among the **young people of GBR**, walking along with and inspired by them.



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Salesian missionaries in Europe

Salesian missionaries sent to the Mediterranean and Central-Northern Europe regions between 2000 and 2023: **189**.

Missionaries of the "EUROPE PROJECT" (EP): **146**, of which 17 left and 37 returned or moved in another Province.

<p>Provinces with the highest number of EP missionaries:</p> <p>GBR: 18 of which 13 current</p> <p>IME (Albania, Kosovo): 18 of which 12 current</p> <p>UNG: 14 of which 9 current</p>	<p>Provinces of origin of the most missionaries of the EP:</p> <p>VIE 28, INT 10, AFC 9</p>
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For the Gift of Diversity in the Church

For the Salesian Family in the UK to value and support the diversity of its members.

Let us pray that the Spirit will help us recognize the gift of different charisms within Christian communities and discover the richness of different ritual traditions within the Catholic Church. [Prayer intention of Pope Francis]

UNITED KINGDOM