



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



Dear friends,

Talking about hope is not easy. It never has been, especially since man has found himself trapped between a chaotic world and the abyss of the meaninglessness of life. But humanity has always found a way forward, because we are made of hope. From our mother's womb we wait to see the light, when we take our first steps, we hope one day to run. Experiencing our teenage years, we dream of being independent and secure. Studying in our youth we want to be professionals. Discerning our vocation, we wish for a future of prosperity and happiness. Hope fills man, completes him. Man is made of hope.

Hope leads us today to look at reality and find there the reasons why we can move forward. Beyond any situation that makes us suffer, moments of transformation await us until we reach the happy embrace of God, our Father. Hope makes us better, accompanies faith and gives strength to charity.

I wish you never to lower your arms and to direct your gaze to discover what makes us Salesians: to be signs of love and hope for the young.

■ Fr Ricardo Campoli SDB
Member of the Sector for
Social Communication, RMG

Called from every nation to go to all the nations!



The word **'Church'** means **'assembly'** of all those who believe in Jesus Christ. The Church was "born" on Good Friday as Jesus' blood and water flowed from his side. With the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles began to proclaim their faith in the Risen Lord to all nations. St Paul refers to the Church **as the body of Christ** (1 Cor 12:12-14). Through the action of the Holy Spirit, all members of the Church are mystically united in a hidden and real way to Jesus Christ, the only Mediator and the only way of salvation (CCC 805; LG 7).

As Jesus Christ is true man and true God, so the Church is holy because it is the body of Christ. However, she is **always in need of reform and renewal** because her members are human beings stained by sin (UR 6). St Augustine emphasised that 'the Church is not a museum for saints but a hospital for sinners. The sins of some members of the Church should not diminish the love for the Church, since it is on the way to perfection that she will not reach until the end of history (LG 48). 'I see the Church as a field hospital after a battle,' Pope Francis insisted, "with its capacity to heal wounds and warm the hearts of the faithful" (19 August 2013).

The Church has an essential and indissoluble relationship with the kingdom of God. It is the seed, sign and instrument **at the service of the kingdom of God**. In faithfulness to the mission received from Jesus, the Church proceeds with urgency, joyfully sharing the Gospel. It continually reaches out to the furthest corners of the earth, persevering without growing weary or discouraged in the face of challenges and obstacles. The Church does not exist for its own sake, but as a reflection of the light of Christ and its mission is to radiate it over all peoples (LG 1), not through pressure, coercion or proselytism, but through the closeness, compassion, tenderness and mercy of Christ.

Don Bosco expressed his love for the Church through **unconditional fidelity to the Pope**, his commitment to evangelise those who did not know their faith or who, even though they had it, had stopped practising it, especially poor and abandoned young people, and his missionary commitment to those who had not yet heard the Gospel.

■ Fr Alfred Maravilla SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- How do I concretely express my love for the Church?
- In which way can I personally grow in my missionary commitment?



THE SALESIAN FAMILY BEARER OF HOPE IN EL SALVADOR



Dear Fr Mariano, what is the current situation of the Salesians and Salesian work in El Salvador?

The first Salesians arrived in El Salvador, Central America, on 2 December 1897, at the request of President Rafael Antonio Gutiérrez (1895-1898). The beginnings of Salesian work in El Salvador and throughout Central America came about because of the good reputation which the Salesian Society had spread in various countries of the Americas.

At present, the works present in the country are San José College, Santa Cecilia College, Ricaldone Technical Institute, María Auxiliadora Parish and Ciudadela Don Bosco, the largest work, which includes San Juan Bosco Parish, Don Bosco College, the vocational training centre, the oratory and Don Bosco University.

What is the Salesian Family doing and what could it do to support the hope of the people of El Salvador?

The groups of the Salesian Family present in the country, in addition to the Salesians of Don Bosco, are the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Daughters of the Divine Saviour (a Congregation of nuns founded by Salesian Bishop Pedro Arnoldo Aparicio), the Salesian Cooperators, the Association of Mary Help of Christians and the Damas Salesianas.

The challenges are many because the country has experienced armed conflicts in recent decades and continues to experience some problems that make us listen to the cry of young people who need someone to accompany them. We are convinced that 'hope does not disappoint', because the Salesian Family will continue to be a bearer of hope in its daily work in all its works, with all that we offer from the experience of Don Bosco's Preventive System.

You are not Salvadoran, and you work in El Salvador: what do you think is the difference in the Salesian approach in El Salvador?

The sense of belonging to the Province makes us see the six countries as a single Salesian mission field. We make no distinction between one country and another. The works were born and developed according to the needs that arose in each historical moment.

It must be said that since El Salvador was the first country where the Salesians arrived, the works developed, grew and became consolidated as very robust educational works. But it was from here that the various requests to send Salesians to other countries were answered. In Guatemala today we have the strength of the formation houses and missionary works, as well as some educational activities. In the other countries (Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama) we have mainly educational activities and some parishes.



Fr Mariano Miranda SDB

I am originally from **Nicaragua**. I have lived, as a Salesian, three times in Managua. For 23 years I have worked in various works in **El Salvador**. I am currently at the Ciudadela Don Bosco in **Soyapango**, a very large work in the centre of one of the most popular areas of El Salvador.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT EL SALVADOR

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- El Salvador means "The Saviour".
- The Salesians run the **Don Bosco University** in Soyapango.
- El Salvador has **five national parks**.
- El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America and **has no standing army**.
- **The city bus** is the means of transport in El Salvador.
- The national dish is **papusa**, a thick flatbread made with maize flour or rice flour, usually stuffed with cheese, chicharrón, pumpkin or refried beans.



DECEMBER SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

For Pilgrims of Hope

For the Salesian Family of El Salvador and its support for Christian hope among the people

Let us pray that this Jubilee will strengthen us in faith and help us to recognize the Risen Christ in our lives, and thus transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope. (Prayer intention of Pope Francis)

EL SALVADOR

