



Dear friends,

In Don Bosco's life there is a valuable correlation between the process of founding the first groups of the Salesian Family and the development of their missionary ardour 'ad gentes'.

In 1844 Don Bosco manifested his desire to enter the missionary institute of the 'Oblates of the Virgin Mary'. From 1848 he often spoke of sending missionaries to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Daniel Comboni visited the Oratory in 1864. During the First Vatican Council (1870) he met many bishops from missionary areas. In 1871 he had his first missionary dream. In 1875 (approval of the Salesian Cooperators) the first missionary expedition was launched, the FMA did so two years later. And his dreams continued until his death.

In Don Bosco the cultivation of the missionary ideal and participation in the missionary work of the Church went hand in hand with the foundation of the first groups of the Salesian Family. Therefore, we should strengthen our common missionary vocation in favour of the young and the poor, so that the Kingdom of God can reach everyone?

● Fr Juan Playà SDB
Rector Major's Delegate
for the Salesian Family

Crisis as opportunity also in families

Culturally, family crises tend to be perceived as negative events, associated with failure, break-up and end. There is a tendency to hide moments of difficulty and seek solutions individually. However, the term 'crisis' derives from the Greek 'krino', meaning 'to judge', 'to discern', 'to evaluate', suggesting the opportunity to question and rethink because crises are seen as a natural part of the family life cycle, an anthropological and evolutionary experience. Every family goes through different stages with specific developmental tasks that entail a continuous reworking of relationships.

"Every crisis conceals good news that one must know how to listen to by sharpening the hearing of the heart" (*Amoris Laetitia* 232).

Addressing family crises from a pastoral point of view is necessary:

- **Work towards a conversion of mentality**, considering crises as natural steps. Einstein defines the crisis as a blessing that leads to progress, creativity and innovation because it is in the crisis that the best in everyone emerges and that one overcomes one's limitations.
- **Approach crisis situations 'on tiptoe'**, with tenderness, understanding, respect.
- **Listen with the heart**, creating empathy and compassion. Listening should not aim to give immediate answers, but to enter into the other person's pain and stay there until we can come out together.
- **Accompanying people to accept their own frailty**, reconciling with their past.
- **Educating in forgiveness and forgiving oneself**, because kindness and forgiveness are care for ourselves and others.
- **Promoting a spirituality of the journey** rather than a spirituality of perfection.
- **Recognise families as active subjects** in pastoral care, collaborating and investing in their formation.
- **Welcoming all families**, especially those with vulnerabilities, helping to heal their wounds.
- **Recover the spiritual dimension** in the family context.
- **Promote formation meetings** for families, couples and young people.
- **Collaborate with experts**, competent lay people, to talk about bonds and the family.

In summary, accompanying families in crisis requires persons capable of empathic listening, understanding, support and promotion of a positive view of the crisis. Those who accompany families must be facilitators of growth, forgiveness and reconciliation, supporting them along the way, recognising their active role and welcoming their diversity.

● Antonella Sinagoga, Member of the Youth Ministry Sector,
Psychotherapist and Family Mediator

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

- Why is it important to educate on forgiveness, including the importance of forgiving oneself, in the context of a family crisis?
- How can I help promote a more positive view of 'crisis' in general within my community?



HOW TO FORGIVE THE TRASGRESSIONS OF MISSIONARIES OF THE PAST?



Dear Sr Koshuni, what does it mean for you, who is a missionary yourself, to forgive the transgressions of missionaries from the past?

The nature of missionary life involves navigating complex cultural and political scenarios. These inherent vulnerabilities can lead well-intentioned actions to have unintentional and even harmful consequences. Forgiving past transgressions, therefore, requires recognizing the historical context and the limitations of understanding at the given time. However, I believe forgiveness does not absolve us from the responsibility to acknowledge the damage caused and to learn from past mistakes. As Christians, we confess our sins to be purified (1 Jn 1:9) and ask for God's forgiveness just as we forgive those who trespass against us (Mt 6:12). With hope, I pray daily for this grace.

Why is it so hard for us to forgive?

I understand that to forgive is to give a part of myself to the other who harmed me in whatever way, for their benefit. It takes a conscientious effort to prioritize others' well-being over my own. For this reason, I sometimes take time to forgive others. However, through personal experiences of giving and receiving forgiveness from my family, friends, and self, I have come to realize that forgiveness is not as difficult as it initially seems. Every human forgives in their own way. Perhaps people just need some personal time to become aware that in forgiving, we empower others while gaining inner freedom ourselves. Therefore, I would say that the ability to forgive is more amazing than it is hard. Whenever I am able to forgive others or myself, I feel spiritually uplifted.

How can the Salesian Family help foster forgiveness for hurts and wrongs?

One of my convictions as a member of the Salesian Family is the simple principle of St. Francis de Sales: preferring a drop of honey to a barrel of vinegar in order to draw people to God. De Sales emphasized compassion as a central value of Jesus, essential for Christian sanctity. Don Bosco drew hope, light, and strength from this Salesian Spirituality in his ministry, enabling him to win over many hardened hearts and guide straying souls. His pastoral ministry consistently focused on the well-being of others. Similarly, as members of the Salesian Family, it is essential that we first experience the healing power of forgiveness within ourselves and then extend that grace to others. Through this act of forgiveness, we truly embody the Salesian Spirituality, modelling the love and care that Don Bosco exemplified.



Sr Koshuni Auxilia VSDB

I am a Mao Naga, from a tribe in **Northeast India**. I belong to the Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco (**VSDB**), the 30th member of the Salesian Family.

My special mission is accompanying young people in school and religious formation. I worked with the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) in **South Sudan** for five years. I am a mental health professional. Currently, I am the **councilor in charge of Evangelization and Youth Ministry** in the congregation.



Σ Some numbers about families

- Divorce rates range from 40-50% in many developed countries
- Around 23% of children globally live with one parent
- Domestic violence affects nearly 30% of women worldwide in their lifetime
- Approximately 1 billion children (out of 2.4 billion) experience some form of violence
- Teen pregnancy affects about 21 million girls aged 15-19 annually
- Child marriages still affect 12 million girls under 18 annually



MARCH SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

RELAUNCH > FORGIVENESS

SALESIAN INTENTION

Let us pray for forgiveness for the sins and faults committed by Salesian missionaries over the last 150 years.

Prayer intention of Pope Francis > *For families in crisis*



Members of the
Salesian Family