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Rev. Fr. Joseph Mangion  
Priest Salesian

Dates: Born 31st March 1921  
Profession: 9th September 1939  
Ordination: 3rd July 1949  
Died: 26th July 1997

**Joseph Mangion was born in Sliema** - Malta to Emanuel and Maria Stella nee Saliba. He was the second of seven children. He received his elementary education from the Government School in Sliema and at the age of twelve enrolled as a student at the Salesian School of 'St. Alphonse'.

During his leisure time in the evening he regularly frequented the Salesian Oratory in Sliema playing football. He also took a special delight in using his experience to teach catechism.

He was soon overcome by the happy Salesian family and liked it so much that he decided to dedicate himself to the Salesian life. But before deciding to join the Salesian Congregation, he requested advice from Father John DeGiorgio, a superior of warm piety and deep spirituality who was his teacher at 'St. Alphonse'.

On August 6th 1936, the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, Joseph Mangion sailed for Catania - Sicily together with eight other young Maltese students to start the three formative years as a novice and student of philosophy. He first studied at the aspirantate of the Salesian Province in Pedara and later on at the novitiate of San Gregorio thereby concluding his first religious profession on September 3rd 1939 - the very same day of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Between 1939 and 1941, Bro. Mangion completed a two year study phase, doing philosophy and ancillary academic subjects

Salesian Congregation entrusted Fr. Mangion with yet another project. This time it was the supervision of the construction of 'St. Dominic Savio Missionary College' at Dingli. This Salesian foundation took twelve years to complete.

Following his outstanding accomplishments, in October 1978 Fr. Mangion joined the community at St. Patrick's school teaching and working amongst the boys. In this post he was admired for his untiring patience in correcting the restless ones. Meanwhile he was also put in charge of the Printing Department of the school and zealously continued the apostolate of the press and published the Salesian Bulletin.

In February 1987 Fr. Mangion accompanied Fr. Victor Mangion, Provincial Delegate, on a fact finding mission to Tunisia in the hope of establishing a new Salesian apostolate for the hundreds of children and adolescents. The study report was encouraging and on the 5th January 1988 the Maltese Salesians went to La Manouba - Tunis. They took over the house previously occupied by the Sisters of Nevers. The Salesians of Malta heartily responded to the urgent request by the Rector Major Don Egidio Vigano, while the Prelate of Tunis, Mons. Calens welcomed the first Salesians of Don Bosco with great delight.

In his everyday life Fr. Mangion never shirked toil and hardship. He was always calm, reserved and yet efficiently thoughtful. At St. Patrick's, his last home, he was a familiar figure. He was an amiable counsellor full of comfort and

diocesan priest who was enchanted by the Salesian spirit and who gave invaluable assistance to the Salesian Community.

After the success of his initial assignment Fr. Mangion was appointed Rector of the Oratory in Sliema on the 12th of February 1955, a post he held until 1965.

During his ten years in office, he left no stone unturned to instil new heart and life into the whole Salesian complex. He undertook construction works on the 'Juventutis Domus' and enlarged the whole Oratory complex to revamp the school for vocations. Fr. Mangion always found people willing to help him in his undertakings. Many of today's Salesians owe their religious vocation to his wise guidance and fatherly presence.

During the time of his rectorship at the Oratory, Fr. Mangion turned to a matter he had cherished for a good number of years - a foundation of the Salesian Sisters Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Gozo. No doubt this was an added burden which the Provincial of the time, Fr. Thomas Hall, had asked him to undertake. Since Divine Providence had wished it to be established, regardless of the many difficulties, civil and ecclesiastical, the opening of a new house was made possible by the generous contribution of Miss Olympia Bondi. Fr. Mangion finally had reason to rejoice when he saw the first Salesian Sisters taking up residence and settling in Gozo.

In February 1965 the Rector Major of the



which covered a wide range of topics. For his practical training he was sent to teach at Pedara until 1943 - living amongst Italians and Germans during the hardest years of the war. On November 17th 1943 he returned to Malta to the Salesian Oratory in Sliema, where he spent eighteen months and took his perpetual profession in 1944.

Later he moved on to St. Patrick's School for a period of two years during which time he studied theology at the Carmelite Studentate in St. Julian's. On September 8th 1947 he went to Blaisdon England for his third year of theology, while the fourth and final year was spent at Bollengo near Ivrea in Italy.

Fr. Mangion was ordained to the priesthood on July 3rd 1949 at the Basilica of Our Lady Mary Help of Christians by His Eminence Cardinal Fossati - Archbishop of Turin, and a month later he returned to Malta and was assigned to the Salesian mission in Victoria Gozo. There he worked on the newfound and long-cherished 'Don Bosco Oratory' and as a result of his undertaking and the good will of all those with whom he came in contact the five and a half years spent in Gozo passed happily and profitably. This was a period in his life he would recall so often during his last years.

During his stay in Gozo, Fr. Mangion gathered around him a good number of young men in whom he encountered good-heartedness and who were full of enthusiasm for all that was Salesian. Fr. Mangion also had a deep and grateful admiration for Dun Paul Micallef - a

advice, and an excellent confessor and spiritual director. He never neglected any opportunity to let the Past Pupils know that he had not forgotten them or their help. Through the medium of the 'Hajja Salesjana' (the Salesian Bulletin) which he widely publicised, he reached a large number of these Past Pupils who had emigrated to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and other parts of the globe. Ample proof of everyone's respect for him is the fact that many of the Past Pupils who re-visit their mother country for holidays, invariably took the opportunity to call on Fr. Mangion and chat with him at length about their past life in the house of Don Bosco.

Since 1989 Fr. Mangion has been afflicted by chronic attacks of arthritis and later on by hypoglycaemia. But despite his health problems he continued with the publication of the 'Hajja Salesjana' and kept up the fairly large amount of correspondence. When his poor health took a turn for the worse he was rushed to hospital.

His illness was more serious than anticipated and from hospital he was transferred to the home of Priests 'Christus Sacerdos', where he experienced the love and care of the Nuns and their staff.

After a long and fruitful life - in which he was a model of genuine Salesian spirit, Fr. Joseph Mangion entered eternal bliss on Saturday 26th July 1997.

Rev. Fr. Savio Vella sdb  
Rector

Joe Busuttil  
Past Pupil