Savio Juniorate, Mawlai, Shillong-8 (Assam) India 4

17th. January, 1968.

My dear Confreres,

Yet another pioneer of the Salesian missions in India,

Fr. Aloysius Ravalico

has been called to his eternal reward. This great son of Don Bosco had all the qualities that a good missionary needed – zeal, self-sacrifice, initiative and a tremendous love for the people whom he regarded as his own in Christ.

About three months prior to his death, Father Ravalico had returned to Italy to recuperate his strength after he had been struck down with partial paralysis and trombosis. His whole nervous

system was affected and the one thing that he needed most – co plete rest – was the one thing that Fr Ravalico refused to ta Even in Italy, he toured extensively begging help for the ma missionary undertakings in the land of his adoption and especially this Aspirantate in Shillong which he loved.

Eventually, despite the Doctor's insistence to the contra he decided to return to the land he love and resume his work aga A short time after his arrival, with his customary spirit of self-sac fice, Fr Ravalico offered to accompany a group of 28 Sales benefactors from Italy round the Salesian missionary centres Northern India. After this Fr. Ravalico felt very tired but he return to work with indomitable courage. However, it was clear to all th he was in great pain and so he was urged to visit the Welsh Missi hospital to see if something could be done to alleviate his sufferi Dr. Hughes, a famous English Surgeon took Father under observati and decided to operate. After the operation, it seemed that Fati would rally. He was assisted continually by his sister, a Mission Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, by the priests from this Aspir tate and by the staff of the hospital who gave him every attenti But complications set in and this great son of Don Bosco returned his creator on 17th December. In his last hours he was assisted Very Rev. Fr. Provincial who had hastened to his bedside on rece of the news of his illness.

His mortal remains were taken to the chapel of this aspir tate where the boys he loved so much, kept vigil and where Salesians from far and near came to bid a last farewell to a belov confrere. On the evening of the following day, the body w removed to the Cathedral of Shillong where His Lordship Bish Ferrando officiated at the Pontifical Requiem Mass and preached touching eulogy to a packed Cathedral. Monsignor Oreste Maren Bishop of Tezpur, was also present for he had work together w Fr. Ravalico in the early days of the Mission. He officiated at t graveside and spoke with feeling, to the very large gathering of C freres. Religious from the various communities and Christians w had come in procession to the cemetry, that Fr. Ravalico was a pri who never said «no» to any work and once it was undertaken never rested. Finally, a young Aspirant, speaking on behalf of all companions read, in moving terms, a LAST FAREWELL to a Fati who had loved them so well.

Fr. Ravalico was born on 6th. March, 1906, the fourth in family of seven. Young Aloysius first came in contact with Salesians in South Italy where the family had moved during the fi

world war. He was received into the Salesian House of Mogliano Veneto and the Rector there, Don Mose' Veronesi, remembered him with great affection. Later he entered the Salesian Novitiate at Este where he made his first Religious Profession on 14th. September, 1924. In December of the same year he left his native shores with a group of young Salesians for India, along with the young priest Fr. Constantine Vendrame, the future apostle of the Khasis.

As a cleric Fr. Ravalico distinguished himself by his love for study and by his teaching ability. As a young priest, he was a pioneer and together with Fr. Alessi, founded the mission of Tezpur in Assam, on 1st. June, 1932. From here he visited the numerous tea plantations and formed the first Christian centres in the valley of the Brahmaputra. After seven years of exhausting work, he was transferred to the Provincial house at Liluah where he assumed the duties of Provincial Secretary and directed the Propaganda. He was still at this task when the second world war broke out and he was interned together with other Italian Confreres. On his releast after six years, he was sent to Goa to help Fr. Scuderi to found a Festive Oratory, which proved to be the beginning of the Salesian works which now florish in Goa.

In the year 1950, he went to Madras where he took part in the foundation of the new Oratory at Basin Bridge. In the same year he met with a very serious accident, and the Doctors said that it was more than good fortune that he came out of it unscathed. Soon afterwards, Fr. Ravalico made a short visit to Italy in search of new benefactors.

Following on the erection of the new diocese of Dibrugarh, in Assam, Fr. Ravalico was sent there to establish and direct the Propaganda work. From there he used to visit Manipur occasionally and he was actually the first to begin our Salesian Works in that region. Very often, this intrepid missionary forged his way through dangerous jungle paths where no missionary had ever gone before. He always had the words of Jesus on his lips, « Go out all over the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. . . » Soon he was joined by other missionaries in Manipur and so he was able to construct a house and a school and church and afterwards other mission stations.

In the year 1963, exhausted by the immensity of his labours, his health broke down and he was recalled to Mawlai, to rest a little and to occupy himself with propaganda work, and with the new

foundation – the Savio Juniorate. God blessed his work abundantly and sent many generous benefactors to help him. The Juniorate flourished but the strain of it all told on this noble missionary as he toiled tirelessly in these last years of his life.

Two days before his entrance to the hospital, the novices in Shillong were asked to stand ready in case Fr. Ravalico might need a blood transfusion. All twenty eight novices volunteered to offer their blood without a moment's hesitation. The old missionary was moved to tears by this demonstration of love and he wept because he never deemed himself worthy of this spontaneous sign of affection and gratitude.

And so another great Salesian has gone to his eternal reward. We ask you, dear Confreres, to have a remembrance of him in your prayers. May God grant that we may be inspired to follow his example as a zealous missionary.

for this house.