

REMEMBERING BRO. ALOYSIUS SERIOLI

- the man and the missionary

On August 31, it will be a year since Bro. Serlioli left us. On the occasion of his first death anniversary we remember him with gratitude and love.

Bro. Serlioli worked as a missionary for 49 years in the same place with only four years of gap during World War II when he was interned in the concentration camp.

Early Life

Luigi was born at Marone, Brescia in Italy on January 27, 1912. His parents were Lorenzo and Antonietta. Luigi lost his brother while he was still young, and he was the only son of the family. Young Luigi spent his childhood days looking after the sheep that his family had. While out in the open he would often lift his heart and pray, "Lord Jesus and Mother Mary, help me to become a saint like Aloysius and come to heaven". He lived contemplating the presence of God, and prayed for the grace to be kept simple and innocent.

From his childhood days, he had an earnest desire to become a saint. He cultivated a special devotion to St. Aloysius Gonzaga, his patron. His desire to excel in sanctity was soon coupled with his desire to be a missionary. Whenever a missionary from his parish returned from some far away mission land, he would listen to him with rapt attention. His desire to be a missionary increased each day. He once wrote in his diary: "I love the great faith and sacrifice of the missionaries".

Whenever mission Sundays came, Luigi would contribute generously from his own pocket money. He would also persuade his two sisters to spend less money on themselves so that they could help the missions. Throughout his life he practiced a deep sense of economy. In 1918 during World War I, his family welcomed refugees whom everyone turned away, and offered whatever they could afford. They never sent away anyone without at least a bowl of hot soup.

Salvation of souls was uppermost in the mind of young Luigi and as he grew older, his desire to be a missionary grew. This was what prompted him to join the Salesian novitiate in 1935 at Ivrea, which produced many valiant



Salesian missionaries.

All through his life Bro Luigi had in mind that priests and religious must be persons of God and must show good example which the simple Christians can follow. Those who lived with him during the last years of his life can testify to the courageous way in which he faced the final illness which took him to the Lord on August 31, 1993.

In the first week of December 1935, Luigi arrived in Shillong as a novice. His novice master was Fr. Foglia. He made his first religious profession on 8 December 1936 at Woodcot near Darjeeling.

Bro. Luigi's first appointment was to Bishop's House, Shillong in 1936. He was an inspiring educator to the boys of the boarding attached to the Cathedral parish in Shillong. He took great care to look after the boys by assisting them and being with them at all times. He saw to it that the boys were well behaved. He would bring them food, assist them at study, in the dormitory, in the chapel; and for the boys he was all in all. Several of his past pupils today occupy positions of importance. They still remember him and love him for all that he did to help them.

In the Bishop's House he was in charge of the administration. On Sundays he would go with the Parish Priest for the regular prayer services (jingiasengs) conducted in the Catholic houses of the parish. He would invariably give a talk at such prayer meetings.

A Visionary

Bro. Luigi was able to see the needs of the future and sometimes suggested

to his superiors to act in certain ways. Like Don Bosco, he was able to discern the needs of the times. In a letter to the Provincial on 24 July, 1973 he wrote: "... boys from the villages come to the town and become a little learned, then they do not want to go back any longer to their villages where there are not many possibilities. Instead they try to settle down in the town where they hope to find a better living and more comforts.

For this reason I would suggest that we should train boys in their own centres without bringing them to the towns." This is surely a departure from the established traditions of those days. He is even more bold when he says: "I have the impression that we have been all out to make priests and not trying to make political leaders and we will find that there will be none to defend the rights of the church in political matters. I would rather put up a Catholic University for diplomats (political leaders) than a seminary".

His cheerfulness and simplicity of life

Bro Luigi was noted for his simplicity of life and cheerfulness. He was a very approachable person, and would listen to all with great attention. He carried out his tasks in humility and obedience. He never showed irritation or displeasure at anything. Even in his last years of life, the novices at Sunnyside with whom he lived, would gather around him just to put some questions to him. He had a humorous reply to almost every question. As his memory was short, the novices would have a lot of fun with him. He too used to enjoy them.

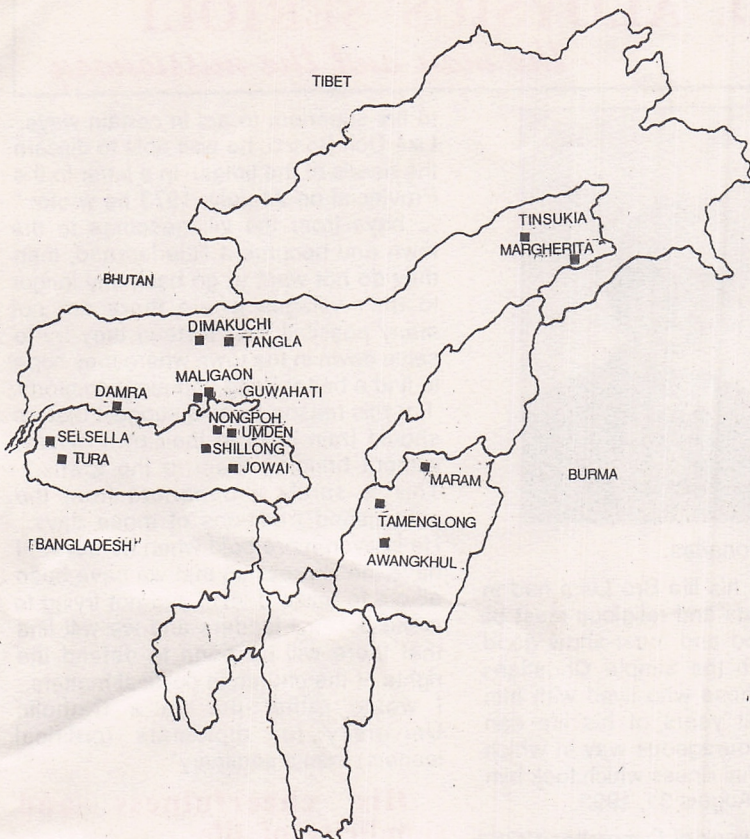
He led an exemplary life of simplicity. He was not appointed to many prestigious posts, but wherever he worked, he left an indelible mark of hard work and selfless dedication. He was by nature very cheerful and he spread his cheerfulness wherever he was. Even in his last eight years at Sunnyside, he loved to join the community recreation. He always insisted that he was very young in spirit. Whenever asked, "Brother, where are you going?" the prompt reply was always "a paradiso".

(Fr. Josepn Almeida SDB)

up for what they believe in-ultimately the memory survives through.

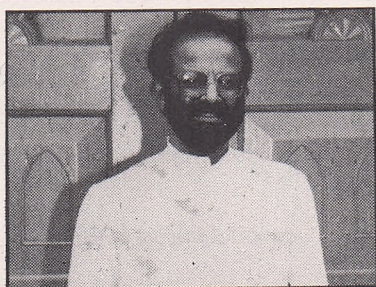
It might be THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES, BUT IT IS TIME WELL SPENT ALL THE SAME.

Johnson Parackal SDB



witnessed the impressive conclusions of some of the camps when the youth held hands together and took the pledge to battle poverty, illiteracy and discrimination in our motherland ; to work for peace, harmony and progress of our nation. Well, their determination and their dedication spoke of tomorrow, when they will be at the helm of our nation. Their honesty and their courage to live up to their beliefs and convictions spoke of their commitment to build a new India.

Well, convictions and beliefs once formed do not change so easily. And whether the time is good or bad, standing for a good cause does not hurt at all. Well, if the youth of today who have experienced unity and love stands



Fr. Varghese Palathingal, the third Provincial of the Salesian Province of Dimapur took charge on 18 July. Fr. C. J. Francis, the Vice-Provincial represented our Province at the function. Confreres from different parts of the province of Dimapur participated in the concelebrated Eucharist and the felicitations.