



FR. MICHAEL SUPPO

b. Pianezza (Italy) 20.10.1902

p. Macau 8.12.1925

o. Hong Kong 30.5.1931

d. Hong Kong 13.11.1972

Fr. Suppo was born at Pianezza (Italy) in 1902. On completion of his primary schooling he expressed the desire to study for the priesthood but meeting with strong opposition on the part of his father, gave up his plan for the time being, pursued his studies and graduated as an accountant. Subsequently the young man worked with success in a bank and before long was appointed manager of one of its branches.

At 20 years of age, Michael underwent military training at Bologna and encouraged by the Archbishop set up a catholic military club for the welfare of his fellow soldiers. Discharged from the army and already of age, he left home and joined our aspirants at Ivrea; the following year he came to China, where after his novitiate he made his profession on December 8th 1925. Then he was sent to Shanghai where teaching his students he also attended to the study of philosophy and of the Chinese language. In 1927 he started his theology at Macau and concluded it in Hong Kong (St. Louis) in 1931 with the priestly ordination.

Young Fr. Michael then worked with alacrity in several capacities in Macau, Shanghai and Shiu Chow. Subsequently he taught for a number of years and was prefect of studies at the house of formation in Hong Kong - Shaukiwan and later in Shanghai where the community had moved at the breaking out of world war two. At the 'house of formation he taught several subjects and was much appreciated for his learning and wisdom. He was also well versed in Chinese history and literature of which he composed a useful manual for the use of his students.

In 1942 the Salesians took over the management of Yuet Wah College in Macau and Father, put in charge of it, before long brought it up to a high standard and gained a good name for it in the city.

Later Father moved to Shanghai again as rector of the Don Bosco Technical School: his leadership brought new vitality both to the school and to the parish, also entrusted to our Society (St. John Bosco's).

After the new regime took over in China in 1949, the authorities in Shanghai set their eyes on the school and on the Salesians who were running it. Before long Father was arrested on trumped up charges and imprisoned for 15 months. He bore his trials with heroic patience and set a remarkable example of christian fortitude. After his eventual release and expulsion from China, Fr. Michael was assigned to look after the Hua Ming Press in Taipei (Taiwan) which was by then administered by the Salesians. Later he worked for three years as provincial economer in Hong Kong and subsequently as rector at the Tang King Po School in Kowloon for six years. Today he is still remembered with gratitude by the many youngsters he helped in those days.

On completion of his term of office, Father was assigned to St. Louis School as teacher and spiritual director; there he made himself very useful in spite of the fact that he was already being troubled by diabetis. In the morning of November 13th 1972 Fr. Suppo did not turn up, as it was his habit, for meditation. The rector of the community rushed to his room and discovered that Father during the night had quietly passed away.

His memory has left such a strong mark on the life and spirit of the province that the late Fr. Suppo can rightly be regarded as one of the greatest pioneers of Don Bosco's work in China.

FR. MARIO RASSIGA, S.D.B.

I N M E M O R I A M

A Tribute
to the deceased Salesians
who worked in China
(1906 — 1986)

SALESIAN PROVINCE OF CHINA
1987

