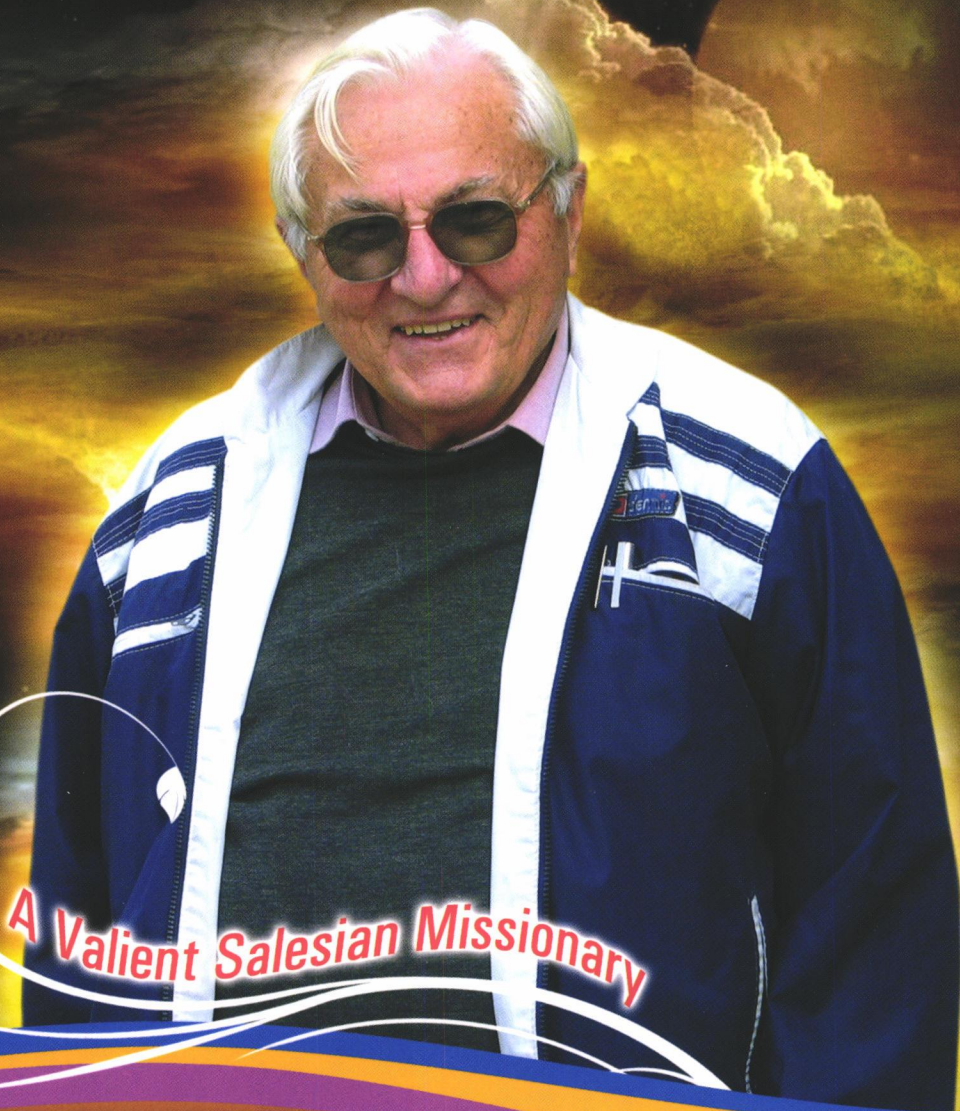


FR. PETER BIANCHI SDB

1922-2008



A Valient Salesian Missionary



Salesian Province of Dimapur, Don Bosco Provincial House
PB 40, Dimapur - 797112 - Nagaland



Fr. Peter Bianchi SDB

(1922-2008)

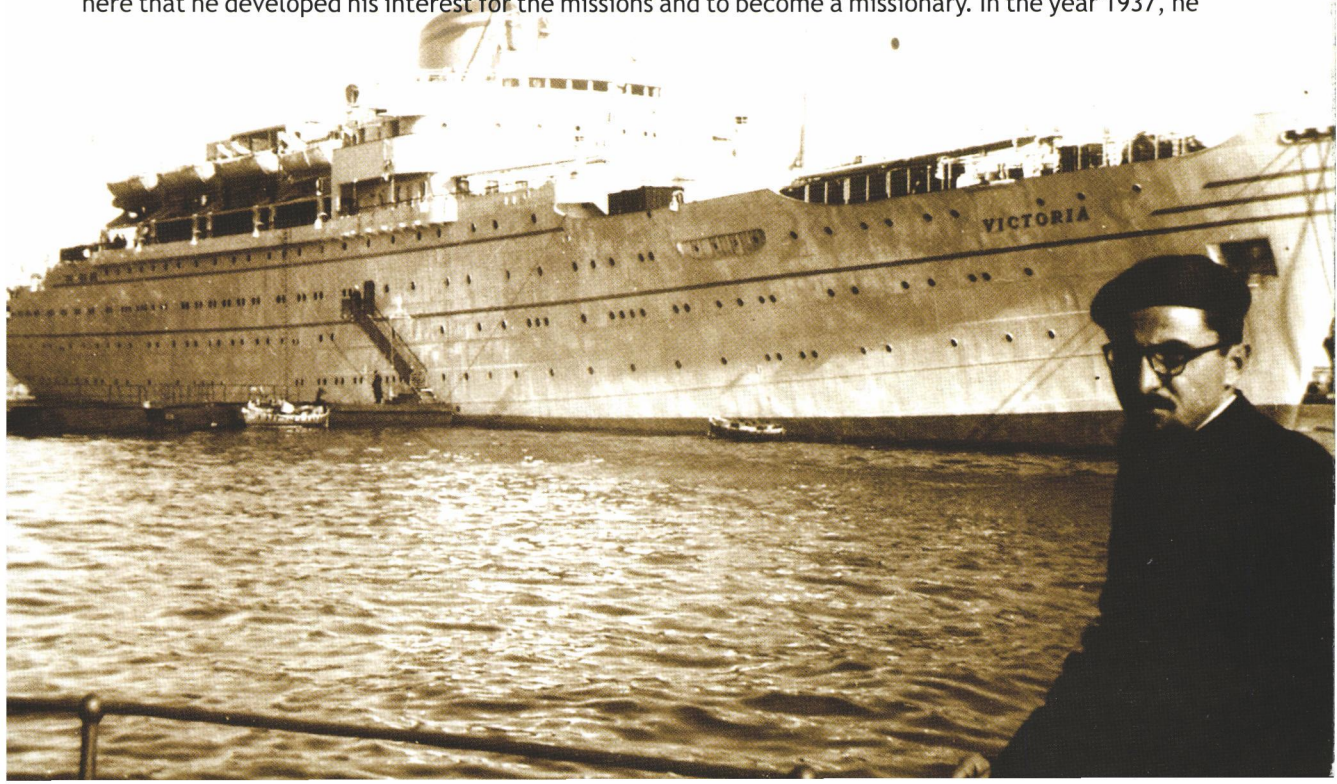
A Valiant Salesian Missionary

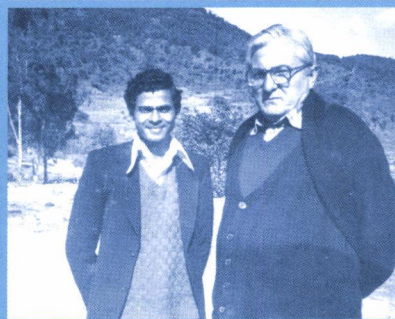
*"As for me the time of sacrifice has arrived, and the moment of my departure has come.
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4: 6-7).
"Death for the Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord..."
(Constitutions, Art.54).*

The rising sun of 08 March 2008 saw the setting of a legend in the history of Manipur Missions. Fr. Peter Bianchi, the vibrant and valiant missionary of Manipur, calmly passed away in the quiet early hours of that day. It marked the end of an era of adventurous pioneering missionary life that spanned half a century and more: a life that moulded the life and destinies of numerous peoples, that brought the light of Christ to practically every nook and corner of Manipur - the colourful and charming 'Land of Jewels.' But the death was in fact also a birth - a birth into the indelible legacy of the history of missionary evangelization. At the demise of Fr. Peter Bianchi SDB, the 'Land of Jewels' was enriched with one more heavenly jewel, a tireless and fearless missionary, who will ever remain unfading in the annals of the unending course of the history of evangelization.

Fr. Peter Bianchi SDB: A Glimpse at the Early Years

Fr. Peter Bianchi SDB, affectionately called *Pitrein* (*Peter*) at home, was born on 28 January 1922 at Passano Coriano in the Northeastern coast of Italy. His parents were Battista Bianchi and Arlotti Aurelia. He was the eldest child of the family of six children. He had his early schooling at *Scuola Elementare* in San Giovanni Marignano. 27 April 1930 was an important day and a turning point in his life. It was on this day that he had his First Communion. Incidentally, it was also the day on which he decided to become a priest one day. In October 1933 he joined the Rimini Diocesan Seminary. It was here that he developed his interest for the missions and to become a missionary. In the year 1937, he





decided to join the Salesians of Don Bosco. Being enthusiastic and energetic by nature from an early age, he had a special attraction to Don Bosco. As a young boy, he could openly declare: *"I loved Don Bosco's love for the naughty boys like me."*

Sailing to India; Formative Years, and Early Apostolate

His first missionary love was Japan. But the Superiors decided to send him to the missions of Assam. Thus on 23 November 1938, he left his homeland and set sail for the missions in India. On 05 December he set foot for the first time in the land of his dreams, India. He did his novitiate in Sonada, under Fr. Orestes Marengo. He made his first profession on 02 April 1940. He completed the philosophical studies in 1942. He had to do his theological studies in various places: in the concentration camps (due to the outbreak of war), first at Deoli in the desert of Rajasthan and then in Dehra Dun, later in Thirupathur and finally in Shillong. He did his practical training in Don Bosco Shillong. He was ordained priest on 06 January 1951 by Bishop Ferrando at the Cathedral of Mary Help of Christians, Shillong. He was first appointed as Prefect of Studies at Don Bosco, Shillong, and in 1953, Prefect of Studies of the Aspirants at Bandel. On 21 June 1954, he received his Indian citizenship. He returned home for the first time only after 16 years.

To Manipur, The Land of Jewels

On his return from Italy, he was appointed Secretary to Bishop Orestes Marengo at Dibrugarh in 1955. He was told that he would have to accompany him soon on his Easter tour to Manipur. Fr. Bianchi started learning Tangkhul from the boarding boys and prepared a slide programme. Thus in March 1955, he had his maiden visit to the state of Manipur in the company of Bp. Orestes Marengo. During his first missionary tour to Manipur, Fr. Bianchi was very much impressed by the diverse tribes and communities of Manipur and he felt that the Lord had prepared him to carry out the missionary activities of Evangelisation and Education in this "land of jewels."



They reached Hundung by night and the Catholic community there welcomed them warmly. The first trip took them to Hundung, Choitar and Nungshong. They spent a day in each village. Then they proceeded to Khamasom, Phungrei and Nungbi, administering the sacraments to the faithful. They also covered Nungbi Khullen, Kachii and Chincheroi in this missionary tour.

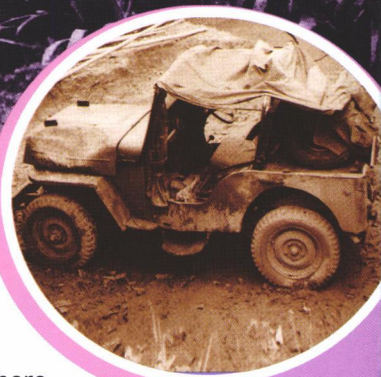
This missionary expedition took them also to the Southern Tangkhul area where there were very few Catholic villages. They took shelter one night in Marao village which was a stronghold of Protestants. They slept in the school and proceeded to Shingkap, Mawaii and Keihao. At Pamphei, they baptized a few catechumens and accepted a few fresh catechumens. The people were afraid to get rid of the things in their house associated with spirit worship. The Bishop and father had to do it for them and bless their houses. During this time, they covered Mawai and Keihao. It was during their second trip that they visited South Western Manipur and Burma border and all its Zou, Monsang, Lamkang and Anal communities.

On 11 February 1956, the daring missionary duo found a temporary house in Imphal as their wayside place of rest during their tours. It was the house of Mr. Palit, (today's *Nirmalabas*), the Superintendent of Police. And it was on 05 March 1956 that Bishop Marengo entrusted Fr. Ravalico and Fr. Peter Bianchi the task of opening the new mission centre at Imphal. They were given a prayerful sent off to the mission land of Manipur from Dibrugarh.

Fr. Ravalico, on reaching Mao Gate, the entry point to Manipur, carried away by his sentiments of entering the Promised Land, asked Fr. Bianchi, "What do you feel at this solemn moment of realization of our dreams?" Fr. Bianchi promptly replied, "I feel hungry!" They entered Manipur on 06 May 1956, which became a red-letter day in the history of Manipur mission. It was on this day, the feast of St. Dominic Savio, that the first mission station at Imphal was opened at Nirmalabas from where Fr. Bianchi continued his missionary work among the various tribes and communities of Manipur. For several years he was an ardent apostle to the Tangkhuls, Maos, and Marams, becoming a living legend among them.

Education of Catholic children was their priority, so that they could have leaders who would guide the destinies of the people in remote villages. As the space in Nirmalabas was too small for a Salesian school, Fr. Ravalico bought a plot of land at Chingmeirong. In and around there, the fathers generally came to be known as '*Father Don Box*'.

In May 1956, Fr. Bianchi visited the Maram Mission. And from 1956 to 1968, Maram area was looked after by him. He visited Maram Khullen, Maram Khunou, Sadim Pukhri, Rajamei, Senkhumei, Willong





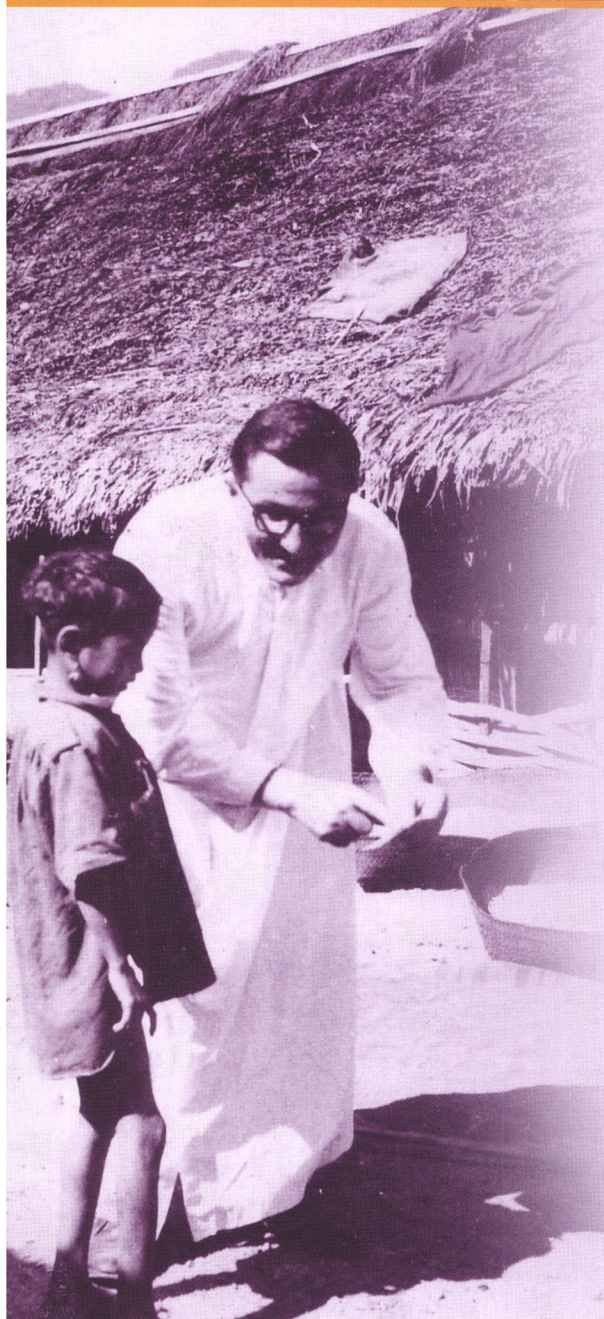
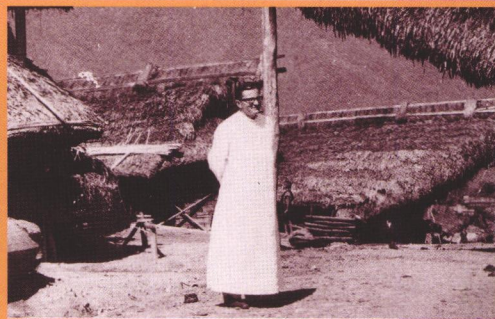
and Khongnem. Around this time, he also visited the villages of Hmar, Senwon and of Kokot. In 1957 Fr. Bianchi visited the villages of Leibi of the Maring Nagas. In 1957 they took up residence at Hundung for the work of evangelization and catechizing the people of that area. Fr. Bianchi and Fr. Joseph Felix toured the Tangkhul, Maram and Tamenglong areas from there. In 1959 Fr. Bianchi came down to Don Bosco Youth Centre, and by 1962 he shifted to Nirmalabas, as the Little Flower School and convent were shifted to the present site at Kwakeithel. In 1963 Fr. Peter Bianchi was appointed Parish Priest at Chingmeirong and continued his missionary endeavours there. In 1966 he was asked to open the mission at Punanamai, Mao. He willingly accepted it and worked there assiduously to lay a strong foundation for the Mao mission and to establish the school and the church. Fr Bianchi's pioneering work there witnessed his immense apostolic energy and enthusiasm in spreading the Gospel and building up the people of God.

However, in 1969, he went out of Manipur to work as Parish Priest of the Cathedral in Dibrugarh. In 1971 he went to Italy and worked in one of the Salesian institutions there. On his return from Italy, in 1972, he worked at Bengtol among the Bodos and pioneered the new centre at Soraibil. The year 1974 saw him working in the mission at Haflong where he remained for five years. In the year 1980, he was sent to Mon, the land of the Konyaks, in Nagaland. Thus, he became the pioneering missionary among the Konyak Nagas, establishing the school and mission centre in Mon and remaining there till 1984.

On 29 July 1985 Fr. Bianchi was put in charge of Maram centre. He had looked after this centre from Imphal from 1956 to 1968. Initially, Fr. Bianchi took charge of the school. As the centre developed and more members joined the faith, it was erected into a Parish. Fr. Peter Bianchi was appointed the first parish priest of the canonically erected Parish of St. John Bosco's Church, Maram, on 31 January 1989 by his Lordship Rt. Rev. Joseph Mittathany, the Bishop of Imphal. Fr. Bianchi put his heart and soul in his apostolate and built up the Maram mission with great dedication and commitment. His mammoth work in building up both the structural and spiritual edifice of the Maram Mission will ever remain as an indelible chapter in the history of that centre.

In 1995, after ten years of dynamic apostolic service at Maram, Fr. Peter Bianchi was asked to take up the mission at Shajouba, which was looked after from Punanamai. He was the first Salesian to take up permanent residence over there. He was in charge of the centre and the school. He rendered yeoman's service to the people around there in his educative and pastoral ministry. Putting his heart and soul in the mission there, he was completely immersed in building up the mission. He took special care of the people of God there, especially caring for the poor and needy, besides helping numerous poor children in their educational upliftment.

As Fr. Bianchi has recounted his own missionary life story (*In His Name*), over the years from 1955 onwards he worked mainly with the Naga Tribes, the Kuki-Chin tribes, the Meiteis and other communities of Manipur.



Sickness and Deterioration of Health

The year 2003 was a year of miracles for Fr. Peter Bianchi. He had suffered from a stroke, and the doctors attending on him said that it was only a miracle that could save him. Indeed, the power of prayer and the Rosary gave him a second lease of life. In spite of his failing health and ailments, he remained at the Shajouba centre and continued to be of service to the people around there. He built homes for the homeless (Bosco Village), looked after the village school at Tobufii and cared for the school as well as the children at the main centre.

While in Shajouba, he fell seriously sick again on 18 May 2007. As he was not feeling too well he was taken to the Catholic Medical Centre at Koirengei for treatment. He suffered a minor stroke, which affected his memory power and eyesight. In order to get better medical care, he was taken to Appollo Hospital in Chennai in the month of July. On the recommendation of the doctors he was taken back to Imphal to continue with the medication, and later to return to Chennai for a review after 3 months. He remained with the community of Don Bosco Imphal, and the confreres there took great care of him. While staying at Don Bosco, Chingmeirong, he was going to CMC Hospital for regular check up. But his situation deteriorated by 07 March 2008.

His Last Days

The severe cold of February in Imphal seemed to have aggravated his physical condition. He became weaker with a cold and cough. Since the occasional meetings with the doctor were not having much impact, and his health condition worsening day by day, he was readmitted to Catholic Medical Centre on 27 February 2008. He

complained about difficulty in breathing and weakness. His doctor, A.D. Singh, advised him to remain in the hospital for further observation. On 02 March, there was an indication of frailty and sleeplessness. It became a little unbearable and he seemed to be restless. The doctors, sisters and the nurses did all they could to help him calm down and relax. On 05 March, he was quite normal because he slept sufficiently well in the night. By 06 March, he seemed to be quite strong and cheerful. He completed some of his correspondence. He was anxious to complete some more work, and on the 07 March too, he continued with some pending works. He joked, and cheered all who came to see him.

However, the night of 07 March made him ill at ease and restless. He found it extremely difficult to sleep or rest, and early in the morning of 08 March 2008, at about 2 am, he asked for the fathers from Don Bosco. Realizing that it was too late to call the fathers, his attendant Miss Pucci offered to call the sisters, but Fr. Bianchi insisted on calling the fathers. Since there was nothing exceptional, the sisters who came to attend on him also told him that it was too late in the night to call the fathers, and Fr. Bianchi accepted that as an answer.

At about 3.00 am, he went to relieve himself. It was in fact the beginning of a massive heart attack. He came back after two or three minutes and sat on a chair, saying he was extremely tired. He said that something was wrong. At about 4.30 am, he felt severe pain. "I cannot breathe," he began to complain. Before long, his eyes became wide open and he began sweating profusely. The sister on duty was called upon and she came quickly along with the doctor on duty. Slowly they put him to bed, and gave him drips along with emergency medication as he was 'in shock'. He adjusted himself straight so that he won't give trouble to the attendants for medication. He was fully conscious and recognised the persons around him from time to time. And in pain he was calling on Jesus and Mary. Seeing his condition critical, everyone stayed on and all the sisters of the hospital came around and prayed for him.

The emergency medication had its effect and revived him, but only for a few minutes. Again his condition only began to worsen. Immediately, the fathers from Chingmeirong were called to the hospital and they all came around him. However, his condition became more critical, and he was anointed by Fr. Francis, the Director of CMC, Hospital. He was conscious to the last. Because of pain he was struggling and at times restless. He silently passed away at about 6.00 am on 08 March 2008. At the time of his death, all the confreres of Don Bosco Imphal, and all the Sisters of CMC hospital were present at his bedside, praying with him in his final moments. Thus, 08 March 2008 saw the setting of a legend - the valiant missionary of Manipur had departed from this world and gone to his eternal reward.





The Final Journey Home

After his death, the mortal remains of Fr. Bianchi were shifted to Don Bosco Chingmeirong. The Requiem Mass was presided over by Rt. Rev. Dominic Lumon, Archbishop of Imphal. Later the body was taken to Dimapur. The cortege stopped at Maram for the faithful to pay their last respects to Fr. Bianchi. The body was also taken to Shajouba, and the Holy Eucharist was celebrated at St. Joseph's School, the community to which he belonged. Later the cortege proceeded to Salesian College, Dimapur.

On 10 March a Requiem Mass was celebrated at Salesian College, Dimapur, presided over by Rt. Rev. Jose Mukala, Bishop of Kohima, and assisted by Rt. Rev. Robert Kerketta SDB, Bishop emeritus of Tezpur, Fr. Nestor Guria, the then acting provincial of Dimapur province, Fr. Linus Neli, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Imphal, Fr. Joy Pallikunnel, the Vicar General of the diocese of Dibrugarh, and about 70 priests. The Eucharist was attended by a large number of religious and lay faithful from Dimapur and

various parts of the province. There were also representatives from various places where Fr. Bianchi worked.

After the Requiem Mass in Dimapur, his body was taken to Punanamai, Mao, in Manipur, for the funeral mass and the last rites. The evening funeral mass there on 10 March was presided over by Rt. Rev. Dominic Lumon, the Archbishop of Imphal, and celebrated by Rt. Rev. Joseph Mittathany, the Archbishop emeritus of Imphal, and Rev. Fr. Nestor Guria, the acting provincial and the vice provincial of Dimapur province, Rev. Fr. Linus Neli, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Imphal, and about 60 priests. The funeral Mass witnessed a large gathering of people. The final rites were presided over by Fr. Nestor Guria, and Fr. Bianchi was buried in a specially prepared grave in front of St. Mary's Church, Punanamai, Mao.

Fr. Peter Bianchi: The Missionary, Passionate and Heroic to the Last

Fr. Bianchi was a hardworking and tenacious person to the core. He said, *"Once an idea strikes me, I pursue it with all my soul. I do my very best to live up to the idea."* As a young man, he was very much attracted by the spirit of Don Bosco and his love for youth. He tried to live up to the ideals

of Don Bosco. In his enthusiasm he demanded from others order and discipline just as he himself always abided by them. He immensely admired the great Salesian missionaries like Fr. Vendrame, Mgr. Marengo, and Fr. Ravalico, and made them his role models. He considered them as truly heroic souls whom he wanted to imitate to the full.

During his lifetime Fr. Peter Bianchi really proved himself by his words and deeds that he was a true son of Don Bosco. His zeal for souls through evangelisation and catechesis is a living legacy he has left behind. His great interest in the integral development of the young people through education was clearly manifested by the number of educational institutions he established and the great number of poor children whom he helped in every place. Wherever he went, his main thrust was evangelization and education. He considered it as his top priority in accordance with the command from the Lord Himself to "*Go and teach.*" He gave supreme importance to catechesis and faith formation and took keen interest in sending young people for Catechists' training.

Like a true son of Don Bosco, he was a true devotee of Mary Help of Christians, and saw many miracles through her intercession. He himself testifies that Mary was very much present in his life and works, and at all times he experienced her motherly protection. It had been his special joy to spread devotion to Mary, especially in the recitation of the Rosary. During his critical illness at the Vellore Mission Hospital in 1984, all had given up hope. Dr. Pandey, a

Hindu doctor, who had seen him clinging to the Rosary, remarked: "Only that can save him now." And indeed, it was the Rosary that saved him from that fatal illness!

He always loved and esteemed people and went out of his way to help them in their need. He had a compassionate heart especially for the poor and the suffering. Wherever he went, the people became friendly to him and easily accepted him. He always felt totally at home in the missions, even when there were innumerable difficulties. He always went ahead with determination and trusted in God's grace. He himself confessed that he had no regrets in his life. He felt himself fulfilled that he had done something worthwhile with his life as a son of Don Bosco.

He experienced the grace of God, the protection of our Blessed Mother, and the inspiration of Don Bosco especially in moments of struggles and hardships.

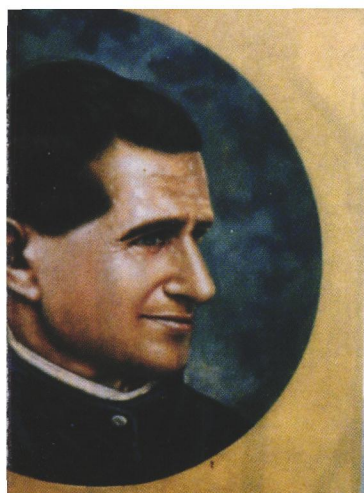
He had a great desire to go to Italy once more and return. He wanted everything to be very clear and settled, and he took utmost care in settling all the administrative matters in an appropriate way with the concerned people.

He was very meticulous to follow the prescribed diet during his illness. He would willingly take the given food, though it was oftentimes not so palatable. Miss Pucci, from Liyai Khullen village, was his constant helper who was like a guardian angel looking after him for about 23 years, till his death. She really took care of him both during his healthy times and his illness. We acknowledge with gratitude her commitment and self-sacrifice in caring for him till his end.

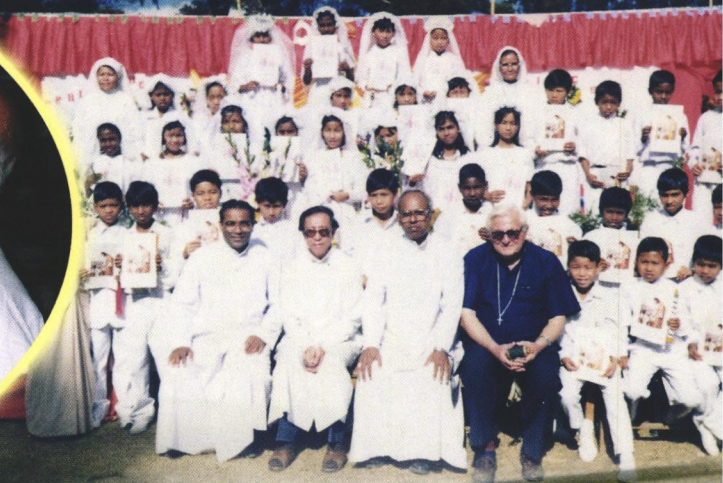
Whenever the villagers visited him, he would be much moved and at times would start crying, seeing the goodness and generosity of the simple people. His advice to each one of us is, "*Be single*













mindful and determined in your resolve to be what you have decided to be. Don't ever give up." He himself gathered strength from the Lord in the Eucharist, from personal prayer and Marian devotion. These gave him the strength to carry on as a zealous missionary to his last breath. He always remembered the advice of Don Bosco, *"Let nothing perturb you."* And he lived his life to the full to the last day, ministering wholeheartedly to God's people.

The Salesian Province of Dimapur places on record its sincere gratitude to Fr Francis, the director of CMC Hospital, Sr. Pius and her community at CMC, and the doctors and nurses who took care of Fr. Bianchi during his illness and last days. The confreres of the Salesian community of Chingmeirong deserve a special mention of gratitude for all that they have done to look after Fr. Bianchi during his illness.

It is the gospel command of love that impelled him to go forth as a young man to commit his life in the mission of love. He heeded that call and worked zealously with heart and hands in building up the Kingdom of God. And he remained loyal to his task to the last. May the good Lord reward his endless faithfulness with everlasting life.

Reminiscences and Fond Memories: Excerpts

"I wonder whether there is any village at all in Manipur which was not visited by Fr. Bianchi... No village, whether Catholic or Baptist, had escaped his touring programmes.... Though he had to undergo a lot of difficulties in reaching out to the people and evangelizing them, he accepted it all with true apostolic spirit... He had great passion for teaching the Catholic doctrine to the people, especially the youth of the villages... He endeared himself to everyone he came across... Fr. Bianchi will be remembered by all the people of Manipur."

- Rt. Rev. Joseph Mittathany D.D., Archbishop Emeritus of Imphal.

"Fr. Bianchi was truly a pioneering missionary who loved the people and underwent immense sacrifices for the spread of the Gospel... In the passing away of Fr. Bianchi, a chapter in the era of pioneering missionary activity has come to an end."

- Rt. Rev. Jose Mukala D.D., Bishop of Kohima.

"Fr. Bianchi was a faithful friend. He was a typical Italian impulsive, but very open. He was a missionary right from his early life onwards and a good missionary. He had a heart to be with the people. He liked to contact people and tried to live for the people. His apostolic spirit was exceedingly admirable."

- Fr. John Med SDB



“Fr. Bianchi was a man with short temper but never kept grudges. Truly a religious person, his vision was to see equality in education for boys and girls. He took personal initiative to educate the girl child. He says: “Educate and train well the girls, then there will be good families with proper values, healthy environment, cleanliness and health of the families.” He had a remarkable sense of inculturation... loved and respected the culture of the people and the place. The Maram and Shajouba Churches bear lasting witness to this. His aesthetic and artistic sense was remarkable by the perfection in all that he did and built. Fr. Bianchi was a person of varied interests and hobbies. He was a great lover of flowers and beauty. Gardening was one of his passions. He took personal care of the all round growth of the children and trained in them a sense of neatness, tidiness and attention to small details. He cultivated the spiritual growth through his insistence on mass, confession, devotion to the Sacred Heart on every First Friday of the month, devotion to Mary, church attendance and active participation. He insisted, “Never say enough for evangelization works.” Indeed, he was truly a great missionary.”

- Fr. Palathingal Varghese SDB

“Fr. Bianchi had great respect and trust in the sacraments, and was extremely particular about the sacraments.. During his illness he woke me up at least three times in the middle of the night to make his confession.. One of the most humbling experiences of my life was his use of me as a confessor during the final months of his life... While he was healthy, whenever he came down to Imphal he would make it a point to make his confession to Fr. John Med. He was particular in celebrating the mass everyday... Even while he was bedridden in the hospital and forbidden by the doctors to move around, he insisted on going to the hospital chapel to celebrate mass; when it was suggested to him to celebrate mass in his own room, he retorted: “I just had the meal here. I chat and joke and laugh here. How can I lower the dignity of the Eucharist by celebrating it here in this same place? I will say Mass only in the chapel, no matter what the doctors say.” He was always optimistic and enthusiastic, and at all times looked forward to the next project and work... No one can doubt his almost excessive love for his people. Despite the huge amount of money that passed through his hands, he himself lived poor...

Many a times he repaired and used the same old jacket that he had, and never spent lavishly on anything for himself."

- Fr. Menamparampil George SDB

"Fr. Bianchi was a dynamic person full of life and energy... He was immensely missionary minded, zealous and hard working and strong in physique. He was a strong willed person, independent in character and had a solid determination. In order to carry out his apostolate, he began right from the beginning his own propaganda. He learnt the trade by himself and from his mentor Fr. Ravalico who taught him the lesson of faithful correspondence..Fr. Bianchi was indeed a true missionary and so he began encouraging early vocations right from the beginning of his apostolate. He toured all the hill districts of Manipur. However, the most satisfying experience of his mission life was among the Mao-Maram areas as the people co-operated with his missionary work openly. Fr. Bianchi was a person of discipline. In matters of Liturgy, he was truly a Liturgist. He adhered strictly to the decorum and religiosity during the religious functions."

- Mgr. Kachiramattam Joseph

"There was a peculiar charm and mystery in the person of Fr. Bianchi... He began his educational mission at the grass-root level... He was a pioneer in the education of women... "Mould a girl, make a society" was his motto for his system of social transformation... He championed the cause in opening the door of education to female children in Mao area... He was a man of prayer and faith... He prayed his breviary quietly and regularly, and taught us to pray the Holy Rosary... He encouraged me in my priestly vocation and always accompanied me... He showed me a gracious way of being a priest."

- Fr. Linus Neli, V.G. of Imphal Archdiocese

"I was five years of age when I left home and village (Liyai Khullen) for Mon in the year 1982. There, when Fr. Bianchi started the mission, I too was accepted among his family of children. He was a person of vast acquaintance, and he loved every one of us; but I being the youngest and the smallest would get the greater share of his love... Fr. Bianchi used to get up early, listened to the BBC and would say his morning prayers (Breviary) and prepare for the Holy Eucharist. He never missed his practices of piety even if he was alone and very busy. A man is known through his actions, and so I would not be wrong to say that Fr. Bianchi had special devotion to Our Lady Help of Christians, Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Don Bosco. He encouraged all his parishioners to observe the First Fridays with





great obligation. Most of his Goodnight talks were replete with stories of Don Bosco and his encounter with boys. He was a very warm hearted man and was easy to approach. He always tried to get closer to the people especially the poor. He won the heart of the youngsters through his joviality, good cheer, and generosity. The welfare of the poor people was among his top priorities.. He helped hundreds of children to study wherever he went and I am one among those privileged ones who have profited from his generosity. However, due to his ill health, he could not realize the dream of attending my ordination. In spite of my delay in meeting him, he waited eagerly for a first mass from a new priest for him and his benefactors. I was both impressed and humbled by his gesture of humility when he asked me to bless him, when for the last 25 years I was constantly being blessed by him!"

- Fr. Paul Panii SDB

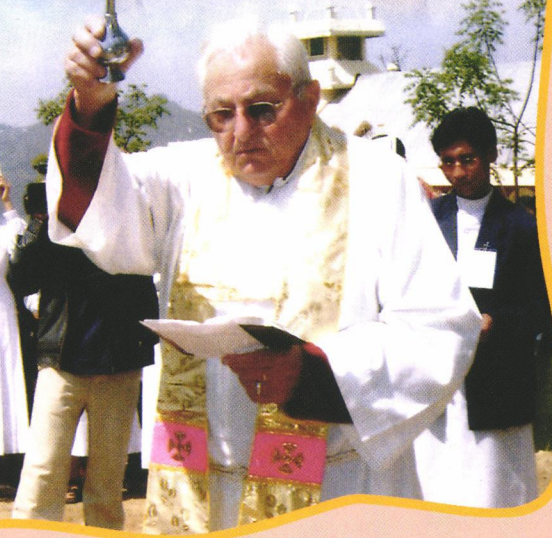
Conclusion

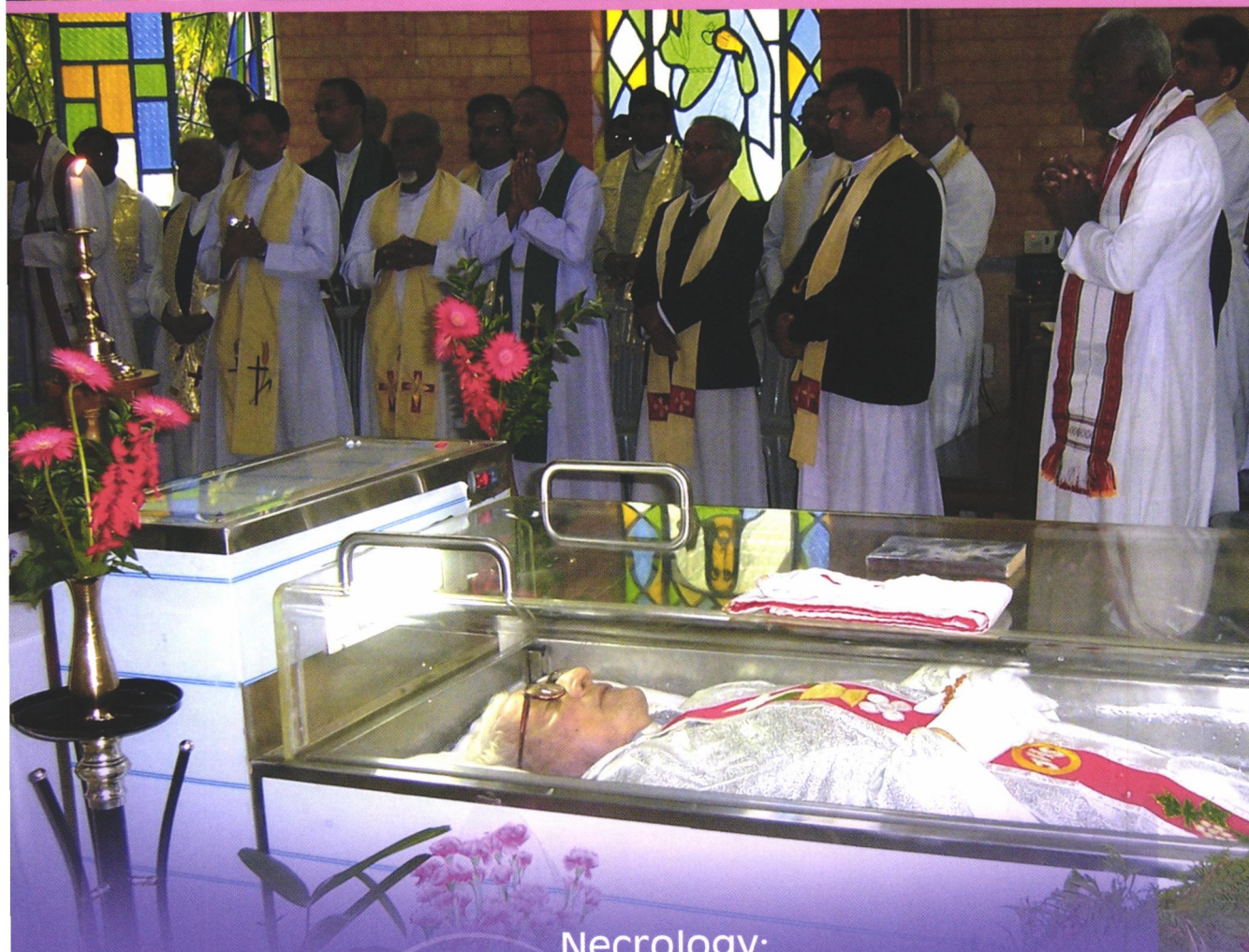
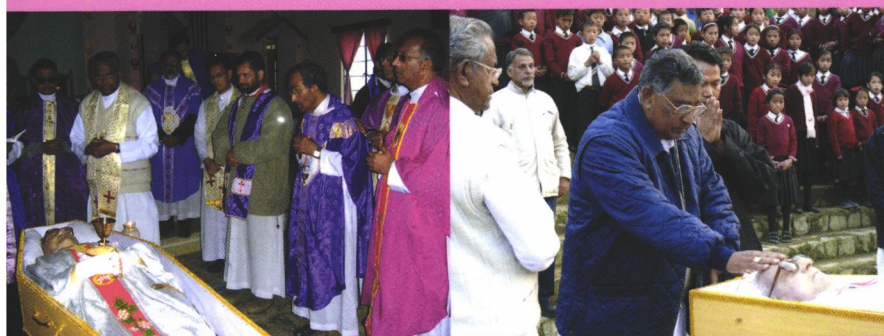
"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," proclaimed St. Paul, the all-time champion of Christianity. For a believer, death is not the end of life, but rather, the crown of life. Death is the way to eternal life. It opens the gates of paradise. Bonhoeffer calls death, "thou greatest of feasts on the journey to freedom eternal." And for John Milton, "death is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity." From the seeming darkness, we enter into the ineffable, splendid golden sunlight of God's glory. Fr. Bianchi gave himself wholly to Christ and his mission. He was intent on the service of Christ day and night. A life that is totally spent in the service of God and his people is perhaps the best preparation for eternal life. Fr. Bianchi was a true pastor and teacher, a friend and guide. He lived up to his own exhortations. He could be severe and gracious; awe-inspiring and meek. He was understanding and compassionate. He laboured to spread the Gospel with a magnanimous spirit, with such lavish energy and generosity. Indeed, he was utterly an apostle of Christ, an apostle of the people. May the good Lord reward him with eternal rest, and may Fr. Bianchi continue to intercede for all God's people.

- Fr. Elow Samuel SDB & Fr. Thuruthel Joseph SDB

"For me Fr. Bianchi was indeed "a St. Paul on foot in his missionary expedition to Manipur." He would walk for miles, weeks and months in order to reach all the villages in Ukhrul district: Hundung, Ukhrul, Khamasom, Khamasom Phungrei, Nungbi, Chingjaroi, Paoyi, Pushing, Keihao, Tangkhul Hundung Khullen, Tangkhul Hundung Khunou, Mawai, Lairam, Khangkhui Khunou, Khanghui Khullen, Langdang, Choither, Siroy, Shingkap, Pharung, Tasar, Kalhang and the rest. He was a real missionary at heart and in life. He was strong, straightforward and iron willed. He forgot all his comfort for the sake of Christ. He was ready to put up with any challenges during his missionary tours... He was kind hearted; his sole preoccupation was of bringing souls and seeking souls for Christ. If we are Catholics today, it is because of the enormous labour of the missionaries like Mgr. Marengo, Fr. Ravalico and Fr. Bianchi..."

- Oja A.S. James Wungmatem,
Touring Catechist of Mary
Immaculate Parish, Imphal





Necrology:

Birth : 28-01-1922

Profession : 02-04-1940

Ordination : 06-01-1951

Death : 08-03-2008