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**FR. JOSE MOLL BOSCH, SDB**  
**( 1921 - 1995 )**





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## FR. JOSE MOLL BOSCH, SDB ( 1921 - 1995 )

**Dear Confreres,**

### *Introduction*

Our Constitutions tell us, "Death for the salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord, and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph" (art. 54). By this standard, we can say that through his life and death, our dear Fr. Jose Moll Bosch has won a great victory. He was a remarkable salesian missionary, who worked tirelessly and zealously up to the day the Lord called him to return to his Creator. He died on October 13, 1995, the feast of Our Lady of Fatima, at the Makati Medical Center, Makati City, Philippines. He was 74 — on the 55th year of religious profession and the 44th year of priesthood.

### *His Last Years and Days*

Fr. Jose lived an intensely salesian missionary life characterized by extraordinary pastoral charity and apostolic zeal. In 1993, however, one heart attack after another led to an open-heart surgery for a quadruple bypass at the Makati Medical Center. Though he never recovered his original strength after that, he would continue to become an inspiration through his serenity in suffering.

In February 1994, with his kidneys malfunctioning, he had to undergo three hour-dialyses — once a week for the first two months then twice weekly thereafter. Every time he would come home from the hospital with his head slightly bowed, we knew he was drained of all his strength. Yet his irrepressible smile assured us of the courageous spirit that kept him alive. This indomitable

spirit was Fr. Jose's priceless contribution to his confreres.

Though feeble, Fr. Jose was always present in all the community's activities — prayer, meals, gatherings, and recreation. He drew strength from the community. And through his serene and constant presence, he taught us how to love and treasure our community life.

Neither did Fr. Jose rest from his salesian and priestly obligations. He made himself available for the little services he could offer. He spent long hours of prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament and promoted the devotion to Mary Help of Christians. He warmly welcomed confreres and lay people for confession and spiritual direction. Every afternoon, he would park his wheelchair beside the football field and assist the boys.

He also occupied his time by writing many letters to friends and benefactors. Fr. Jose also wrote and published "Sandali Lang" (translated: "Wait-a-Minute"), a leaflet that contained interesting easy-to-read articles for simple people. Fr. Bosch also nurtured his mind through diligent study and research. He cultivated a passion for semantics and delved into the origin and interconnectedness of Filipino words in the various dialects. A testimony to his keen linguistic interests is the wealth of manuscripts he left on the subject.

Early in September 1995, Fr. Jose took a turn for the worse. We brought him to Makati Medical Center so he could be attended to round the clock. After a week, he improved a little so he asked to come home again. A few days later, his heart functions deteriorated to 25% and his breathing became difficult. We rushed him back to the hospital and doctors diagnosed his condition as "very critical . . . he could go anytime." He was like a dwindling



*In 1990, Fr Jose celebrated his Golden Anniversary of Religious Life at Don Bosco Technical Institute - Makati where he served as confessor and spiritual guide for many years.*

candle striving to keep aflame in vehement weather.

The early morning of October 2, with the community surrounding his bed side, I administered the sacrament of anointing and gave him holy communion. He was so happy and grateful for it. The following days, Fr. Bosch became restless due to intense pains. He started saying, "Good-bye" and "I'm leaving". In the following evenings, the community prayed the rosary in his hospital room and listened to his last good night talk. He concluded by saying, "Continue to pray for me. I am always praying for the community."

On October 8th, Sunday, a false alarm spread that Fr. Jose was dying. A good number of Salesians rushed to his bedside. He was given the anointing of the sick for the second time.

On October 11th, after praying the rosary with the community, Fr. Jose opened his eyes, smiled and said that he wanted to give a blessing to the community. He did — and that was his last blessing. I then took courage to ask him,

"Are you prepared to meet the Lord?"

"Yes", he said.

"Do you need to go to confession?"

"I already went."

"Would you need the Anointing of the Sick?"

"I already received two: you gave me one, didn't you?"

The following day (Oct. 12th) at 5:00 AM, his heart failed. He was immediately wheeled to the "intensive care unit." At midmorning, he whispered to Bro. Martel Ramos, "Ay... I will meet my Creator. Pray and tell the community to pray for each other. I'm leaving. Courage, Brother!" At mid-afternoon, we said the prayer of commendation of the dying and I gave him the blessing of apostolic pardon. He was again restless and agonizing in pain. He would groan, then utter some words, at times clear, at other times confused.

Bro. Jesus (Jess) Garcia, a young salesian missionary to Papua New Guinea, who had just arrived on that afternoon from his vacation in Spain, came by. Fr. Jose was so happy to see him. They had spent some years together in the same community where they shared many moments like "father and son." Bro. Jess asked him, "Father, do you need anything? Do you have any message for the community?" Fr. Bosch replied, "Tell them to persevere. Tell them to be missionaries."

At around 5:30 PM, his doctor instructed the nurses to prepare him for a badly needed dialysis. It was going to be risky because it could trigger a heart failure. What was most feared did happen. Fr. Bosch suffered a cardiac arrest. Friends and confreres came to visit him during his last hours. Bro. Jess and Fr. Noel Osial kept vigil at his bedside. At around 2:00 AM of October 13th, he was breathing heavily, now and then opening his eyes and showing a faint smile. Then at 4:15 AM he breathed forth his last, so quietly and peacefully, almost unnoticeably.

Fr. Jose was laid in state at Our Lady's Chapel of Don Bosco Technical Institute - Makati from October 13 to 16. On Oct. 16th at 8:00 AM, the school community celebrated the Holy Mass with great solemnity and deep



piety. At 2:00 PM, Bishop Leo Drona, SDB, presided over another Mass at St. John Bosco Parish for the members of the Salesian Family. Fr. Luciano Capelli, Salesian Provincial, delivered the homily.

The following morning, on October 17, his body was flown to Cebu City for it was his desire to be buried among the people he loved and ministered to for many years. The Cebuanos, specially the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes, gave the homecoming son a grand welcome. Thousands came to pay their respects to their beloved pastor and friend. The funeral Mass and interment on October 22 at 1:00 PM, attended by some 6,000 people, was presided over by Bishop Precioso Cantillas, SDB, together with Bishop Salvador and a good number of priests. As he was laid to rest in a tomb at the back of the tabernacle outside the church, the parish rondalla played his favorite songs and pieces.

### **Historical Note**

Fr. Jose was born in Ciutadella, Menorca-Baleares Islands, Spain on March 27, 1921, Easter Sunday. He came — from what he himself described — a "poor" family. His parents were Jorge and Francisca. Three brothers came before him (Francisco, Jaime, Jorge) and one sister (Teresa) followed him. Jose was baptized on April 3, 1921 at San Francisco Parish.

The young Jose attended kindergarten (1928-29) with the Franciscan Sisters. At 7, he started to serve Mass and to play at the nearby Don Bosco school. He later moved to the St. Francis de Sales School for his elementary studies (1929-1934) where he met the Salesian priest, Fr. Gustavo Mas. He would mark this meeting as his first encounter with the Salesians. He recalled, "Since that day until now, thanks be to God, I have been with Don Bosco."

In Grade 5, he joined the Blessed Sacrament Sodality and the Knights of the Altar and caught the quick eye of Fr. Jose Armelles, the school's spiritual moderator. Seeing Jose's potentials,

Fr. Armelles challenged him to teach catechism to the poor boys of the neighborhood. When Fr. Armelles asked all the volunteer catechists to write down the reason why they were teaching catechism, the young Jose wrote, "I like to teach children so that they will know, love and serve Jesus better."

Fr. Armelles then gave him a stampita at the back of which he copied Jose's reply and below added, "If you will become a priest, you will be able to make Jesus known better." This little note awakened Jose to his Salesian and priestly vocation. The young Jose, attracted as he was by the joy, unity and understanding that reigned in the Salesian community of that school, wanted to be one of them someday.

In 1934 he entered the aspirantate at Tibidabo, Barcelona. The following year, 1935, he moved to Saint Vicens Dels Horts in the province of Barcelona. When the communist revolution erupted in 1936, Jose — then 15 — had to return home and work in the field.

After the revolution in 1939, Jose entered the novitiate in Gerona. A year later, on September 11, 1940, he pronounced his first religious profession. He then pursued studies in Philosophy until 1942. From 1942 to 1946, he did his practical training in Mataro, Barcelona.

At the end of his practical training, Jose made his perpetual profession in Madrid. After this, he moved to



*The simple and joyful spirit of Fr. Jose was contagious, making him feel young among the young*



Marti-Codolar, Barcelona for his theology. It was during these years that he forged a deep love and commitment to his Salesian vocation. A conference given Bishop Marcelino Olaechea, SDB, of Valencia, Spain touched this deepening sensitivity. On many occasions, Fr. Bosch would echo these words of the Salesian Bishop, "My dear Salesians, ask the Lord to let your body be torn into pieces before abandoning your vocation!" To these words, he added his own prayer, "Jesus, daily preserve and increase my love for my Salesian vocation!"

On June 24, 1951, he was ordained a priest at the Temple of the Sacred Heart at Tibidabo. This was also to be his first assignment. In his characteristic zeal and creativity, he ministered as preacher, liturgist, director of its magazine. Fr. Jose, the linguist who spoke English, French, German and Italian, became a much sought after guide to pilgrims and visitors.

It was also here at Tibidabo where Fr. Bosch cultivated an intimate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He passed on this devotion specially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation where he exuded the compassion of the Sacred Heart. He also composed personalized prayers to the Sacred Heart for the penitents who came to him.

As early 1939, Fr. Bosch already expressed his great desire to go to the missions. This wish was finally fulfilled on Nov. 25, 1955, when he was sent to Turin, Italy to receive the missionary crucifix at the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. On Dec. 21, 1955, he sailed for the Philippines. On March 2, 1956, after a stopover in Hongkong, he set foot on what was to be the Philippines.

He served the following offices:

- catechist: Don Bosco Victorias, Negros Occidental (1956-57);
- chaplain: Victorias Milling Company, Negros Occidental (1957-58);

- asst. parish priest: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Cebu City (1958-64);
- parish priest: same parish (1964-66);
- rector: Don Bosco Pampanga (1966-67, only for 8 months because he got sick of coronary thrombosis);
- provincial vicar (1967-70)
- confessor: DBTI-Makati (1967-71);
- confessor: Don Bosco Pampanga (1971, only for 5 months);
- parish priest: O.L. of Lourdes Parish, Cebu City (1971-83);
- confessor: DBTI-Makati (1983-84);
- parish priest: MHC Parish, Mayapa, Calamba (1984-85, only for a few months);
- confessor: DBTI-Makati (1985-95).

***Parish Priest of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish  
(Punta Princesa, Cebu City)***

Fr. Jose Bosch, easily endeared himself to the faithful of the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Not only was he their good shepherd who dedicated his life for his flock. He also became one with the Cebuanos as he embodied their



*In 1983, Fr. Jose was proclaimed "adopted son of Cebu" in recognition of his dedicated service to the Cebuanos. In the background is the big church which he built in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes.*



virtues of simplicity and generosity. No wonder then that in 1983, he was proclaimed "adopted son of Cebu".

On May 9, 1958, Fr. Jose was appointed assistant to Fr. John Peter Clifford, SDB, the first parish priest of Lourdes. Together they laid the foundations of a vibrant Christian community. While Fr. Clifford took charge of parish administration, Fr. Jose moved about on his motorcycle and visited the parishioners in their homes, celebrated mass in their community chapels and sat for hours to hear confessions. Wherever he went, people would come out and meet him.

When Fr. Jose succeeded Fr. Clifford as parish priest in 1964, he immediately set about building a bigger church to accommodate the expanding parish. Through the help of generous benefactors and friends he was able to procure a large piece of land. On February 13, 1966, a huge rock taken from the Buhisan River was laid as the cornerstone of the church. His Eminence, the late Julio Cardinal Rosales celebrated the Holy Mass and dedicated the church to our Lady of Lourdes as a perennial monument to the first centennial of her apparitions.

Fr. Jose built, not only the physical structures of the Church, but its living members. He did not spare himself from the demands of defending and strengthening his flock in the faith. To those who attacked it, he was its undaunted defender; to the simple and unlearned he was a patient teacher. He enflamed his parishioners with this same zeal. In the early sixties, Lourdes Parish was noted for its regular bible study, catechetical and apologetics programs for the laity.

Fr. Bosch's pastoral concern was not only limited to the spiritual. He also responded compassionately and generously to the needs of the poor. He provided numerous scholarships for needy and deserving youth. He genuinely appreciated and cultivated local culture. He believed in the Cebuano's exceptional musical talents and put up a school of music for 300 students. His "Lourdes Parish Rondalla" had 600 young members.

At his invitation, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (May 24, 1981) came to help out in the catechetical apostolate, oratory, school and training center for women.


Under his pastoral care, the parish blossomed into a dynamic community. It was later divided into three other parishes — the Holy Cross Parish (Basak), the San Roque Parish (Mambaling) and the San Lorenzo Parish (Tisa).

At present, the Our Lady of Lourdes is a model parish in the Archdiocese of Cebu. It is characterized by well trained and committed laity who share in the task of building Basic Ecclesial Communities. Together with their pastors, they systematically reach out to about 45,000 people in some 66 chapels. This was Fr. Jose's legacy, whose fruits they younger generation of priests and laity draw out a rich harvest.

### *Conclusion*

As we recommend the soul of our dear Fr. Jose to the Lord, let us be filled with joy and gratitude to the Him for the precious gift of his person both to the Church and to the Congregation in the Philippines. May his life of fidelity and service be an inspiration to all of us and a source of encouragement to live our salesian vocation with greater fidelity and zeal.

**For the Community of DBTI-Makati,**



**Fr. Vicente B. Cervania, SDB**  
**Rector**

**For the Necrology**

**FR. JOSE MOLL BOSCH, SDB**  
**(1921 - 1995)**

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