



Rev. Father Albert Correnzia,

S. D. B.

78 years of age ... Born on April 15, 1906
Salesian since 6-1-1929 ... Priest since 29-4-1933
DIED ON MAY 15, 1984

Albert was born of Leonard and Paola Fontana on the 15th of April 1906 in Milan. The parents were exemplary Christians and educated him to a life of piety. Hence his priestly vocation.

He had his early education in a local school and gymnasium. In October 1919 Albert joined the Junior Seminary of the diocese of Milan where he successfully completed the gymnasium. In October 1922 he entered the Philosophical seminary of the diocese in the town of Monza. Unfortunately, sickness forced him to leave the seminary and return home. One can imagine his disappointment and the sorrow of his mother on seeing the cherished dream of the priesthood slip by.

But Paola was not the woman to give up hope. Being a lady of great faith and tender devotion to Mary, she told Albert: "Let us start novenas without end so that you may get well and Our Lady may open to you another way."

One day, among the magazines that came into the house, there was, by chance, the Salesian Bulletin. Don Bosco was little known in the house. But Albert read the Bulletin from cover to cover and felt inspired to become a Salesian. He promised Our Lady that if he was accepted he would become a missionary. While the novenas continued, he wrote to the Rector Major of the Salesians, seeking admission to the society. The Rector Major, the Servant of God Don Rinaldi, replied asking him to meet him at Foglizzo, the studentate of theology. The appointed day found Albert and his mother at Foglizzo, their hearts beating with expectation and hope. The Rector Major did not go through any of the formalities. He just grasped Albert by the hand and said, "Here comes the son of Mary." The tears of surprised joy that filled the eyes of the mother and son on realizing the effect of their novenas can better be imagined than described.

Albert joined the school named "Cardinal Cagliari" at Ivrea. It was an institution founded specifically for the purpose of fostering vocations for the East. On November 23, 1927 he left Ivrea for India and reached Shillong on 23 December.

Under the enlightened guidance of Father (later. Bishop) Stephen Ferrando Albert made his novitiate and professed on January 6, 1929. On the completion of his studies at the studentate of "Our Lady's House" in Shillong he was ordained a priest by Mgr. Ferdinand Perier, Archbishop of Calcutta, on April 29, 1933.

Dibrugarh :

Fr. Albert's first assignment was as the assistant in the Parish of Dibrugarh. He remained here only about three months.

Don Bosco Shillong :

Fr. Albert was next appointed the Catechist and Counsellor of Don Bosco Shillong, then an orphanage. The days were hard for everyone, as the house was very poor. Fortunately there prevailed fine religious spirit and an atmosphere of piety and hard work. The boys numbered about 130, most of whom were orphans. The young Correngia was by now suffering from angina pectoris, his old ailment, that somewhat crippled his active life.

An Exemplary Salesian :

People who came into contact with Fr. Correngia have been impressed by his spirit of piety and prayer. He was devoted to his daily full rosary and approached the Sacrament of Confession every week with unfailing regularity. He was very happy and grateful when, though bedridden, he could sit up and concelebrate the Mass with a fellow priest to assist.

Here was a man of strong will who never retreated, whether in health or sickness, from any duty. He was a source of edification to all in the Community and in the hospital. He was an enemy to comforts, grumbling and laziness and always accepted services and attention with a smile and gratitude. Great and tender was his love for Our Lady, the Congregation and Don Bosco. Of Fr. Correngia it can be said that he was a priest 'convinced and convincing.'

Dear confreres, while I recommend to your prayers the soul of our dear Father Correngia, let us beg the Lord to help us to live an exemplary Salesian life for the glory of God and the good of men.

Fr. JOHN KALAPURA, S.D.B.,
Provincial

Gauhati – India
29 – 4 – 1985

For the necrology :

Father Albert Correngia, born in Milan on the 15th April, 1906 – died in Shillong, India, on 15th May, 1984.

increase in the number of students and the opening of new sections made Fr. Correngia convinced of the necessity of a larger building. As a result a 3-floor building, constructed at great sacrifice and expense, now houses the school. He spared no effort to see that the school achieve a good name and high standard. Under his care it became one of the flourishing institutions of the state.

However, the many years of hardship and the recurrence of his old ailment began to tell on his health. For some time he continued to direct the school from his sick-bed; but in the end he had to retire.

Mawlai :

He retired for rest and treatment to the Sacred Heart Theological College at Mawlai. In spite of his ailments he served the community as a confessor. He was also a dedicated and esteemed chaplain to the Salesian Sisters of the near-by Sacred Heart Convent. In the last two years of his life he had to be hospitalized off and on because of heart trouble. The last month of his life was spent in bed, well cared for by dedicated doctors and sisters. The Fathers and Brothers of the Sacred Heart College took turns to be beside him day and night. He was deeply grateful for every service rendered to him.

At the end of life one gathers the fruits of one's good works. Father Correngia, now rich in good works and merits, enriched also by much suffering born with great resignation, went to his reward in the night of May 15, 1984.

These are the last lines he wrote: "Today I feel very bad; God's will be done. I offer my life to God through our Lady and through St. John Bosco for our mother the Congregation, for vocations, for the conversion of sinners, for the non-Christians, for the protestants.....In Heaven I don't want to be lazy; I will pray for all of you, for the Khasis and for India. We shall meet again in heaven together with St. John Bosco and our Blessed Mother. Au revoir, in heaven."

His passing away was peaceful, though his breathing was very painful.

Raliang :

After about four years in Don Bosco Shillong, Fr. Albert was appointed Rector and Parish Priest of Raliang, to substitute Fr. Di Benedetto Fiori. Raliang was an undeveloped and difficult area.

Dehradun :

In 1940 Italy entered the war. Albert was sent, like most of the Italians in India, to the internment camp at Dehra Dun, where he remained till the end of 1945. There were in the camp as many as 135 Salesians. At the end of the war they were released in small batches.

Mawlai :

After the confinement of the internment camp, the parish of Mawlai became the wide field of his apostolate. There for 13 long years he gave full vent to his pastoral zeal. The new Church of St. Dominic Savio stands witness to his tremendous zeal and pastoral endeavour. Fr. Albert was a great devotee of St. Dominic Savio and wrote a life of the young saint in Khasi, the local language.

Mawkhar :

In 1959 Fr. Albert went home for a much deserved rest. His nearest relative was a niece and they were fond of each other. She often helped him and once also paid a visit to him in India.

On his return in March 1960 he was posted at Mawkhar, which was to become for him the scene of 19 long years of strenuous work. The present St. Dominic Savio High School at Mawkhar stands out as a monument to his spirit of sacrifice, dedication and untiring work. It was founded by Fr. Vendrame, the apostle of the Khasi Hills, under the name "Little Flower School." When Fr. Correggia took charge, it was a small school upto Class VI with about 350 students, poorly staffed and furnished. On May 6, 1960 – the feast day of St. Dominic Savio – he renamed it as "St. Dominic Savio School" and set out, under the patronage of the saint, to upgrade the school and gain government recognition. Since its inception, the school was housed on the ground-floor of the Church building and served also as the Parish Hall. The rapid

