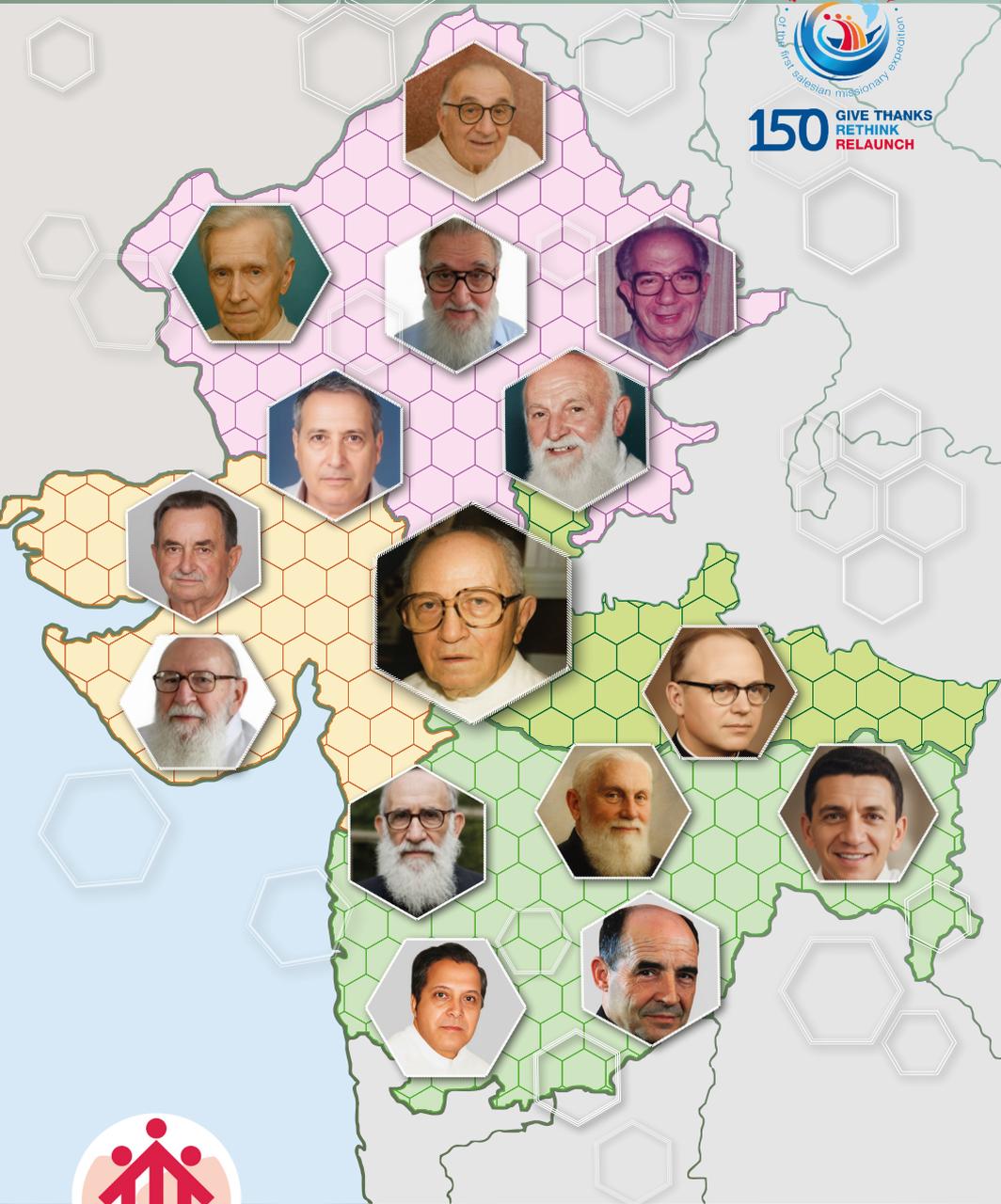


Grateful Memories



150 GIVE THANKS
RETHINK
RELAUNCH



Salesian Province of Mumbai INB

Don Bosco sending his first Missionaries



Top row from left: Fr. Gioia, Fr. Scavini, Fr. Cassini, Fr. Baccino, Fr. Belmonte, Fr. Tomatis, Fr. Allavena, Fr. Molinari,
Bottom Row from left: Fr. Cagliero, St. John Bosco, Fr. Gazzolo and Fr. Fagnano



Fr. Aurelius Maschio SDB and Fr. Joseph Casti SDB



This book is lovingly dedicated to:

Fr. Aurelius Maschio, SDB, and Fr. Joseph Casti, SDB
— missionaries of remarkable zeal, pioneers of vision,
and shepherds filled with deep pastoral charity.

Their lifelong devotion to Mary Help of Christians
and their tireless commitment to carrying forward the
dream of St John Bosco among the young, the poor,
and the marginalized continue to inspire and guide us.



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FOREWORD

It is with deep gratitude and admiration that I present this foreword to a remarkable work lovingly prepared by Fr. Gregory D'Almeida, our Provincial Economist. This book, a labour of love, brings together the life sketches of 48 Salesian missionaries who have served in the Salesian Province of Mumbai. Through its pages, we encounter men of faith, vision, and tireless dedication—missionaries who laid the foundations of our province and shaped its mission with extraordinary zeal.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition, this book stands as both a tribute and a call. It honours the legacy of those who came before us—men who gave of themselves generously, who faced challenges with courage, men of prayer who loved Jesus and the Church deeply, and who remained steadfast in their commitment to Don Bosco and the Salesian charism.

But more than a historical record, this book is an invitation. It invites each of us to draw inspiration from these missionaries and to imitate their spirit. May their stories awaken in us a renewed passion for our mission, a deeper love for the young, and a stronger fidelity to the Salesian way of life.

Thank you, Fr. Gregory, for this invaluable gift to the Province and to the wider Salesian family. May this book inspire generations to come.

- Fr. Ashley Miranda SDB,
Provincial



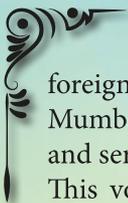
INTRODUCTION

On 11 November 2025, the Salesian world joyfully commemorated the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian Missionary Expedition. It was on that memorable day in 1875 that Don Bosco, surrounded by a small group of Salesians and benefactors, bid farewell to the first ten missionaries who set sail from Genoa to Argentina. Their destination was a distant land and their mission—to proclaim the Gospel in the unique, warm, and practical style of Don Bosco—was filled with hope and sacrifice. These pioneers dedicated themselves especially to the poor, the underprivileged migrants, and the indigenous peoples they encountered.

From that humble beginning, the flame of missionary zeal has continued to spread across the world. Over the past 150 years, more than 10,700 Salesians have set out on 155 official missionary expeditions to bring the message of Christ and the spirit of Don Bosco to new lands. Today, the Salesians are present in 137 nations—an astonishing testimony to the faith, generosity, and courage of those who answered the call to “Go and proclaim the Gospel.”

The history of our own Mumbai Province is deeply marked by this same missionary spirit. We owe much to the many foreign missionaries who labored tirelessly in our midst—men such as Fr. Maschio, Fr. Moja, Br. Ludvik, Fr. Alessi, Fr. Casa, Fr. Mondini, Fr. Venia, Fr. Bianchi, and many others. They were the pioneers who laid the foundations of our institutions, communities, and faith traditions. Their lives and sacrifices have shaped the story of our province, enriching it with their dedication, simplicity, and unwavering commitment to the young.

The motto chosen for the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian Missionary Expedition—“Give Thanks, Rethink, Relaunch”—invites us to pause and reflect. It is a call to gratitude, to remembrance, and to renewal. As we look back on the lives of the foreign missionaries who worked in our province, we cannot but give thanks to God for their generosity. Through their sacrifices, they brought not only the Gospel but also the Salesian charism to our land. Since the first Salesians arrived in 1928, forty-eight



foreign missionaries have laboured in what today forms the Mumbai Province. Each of them left behind a legacy of love, faith, and service that continues to inspire us.

This volume, *Grateful Memories: A Collection of Obituaries of 48 Foreign Missionaries Who Worked in the Mumbai Province*, is a humble act of thanksgiving. It seeks to preserve the memory of those who gave the best years of their lives for the growth of the Salesian mission in India. Their stories remind us that behind every institution, school, and community lies the silent heroism of men who left their homeland to serve God's people here.

The inspiration for this book came to me while reading the obituary of a confrere—sometimes in a circular, sometimes during a homily at a funeral Mass. I often felt a pang of regret that I had not known more about him while he was still among us. These were men who had done immense good, but whose stories often remained untold or forgotten. This realization stirred in me the desire to compile their obituaries, not as mere records of death, but as living tributes to lives well spent in the service of God and youth.

I make no claim to originality in the text of these obituaries. Many of them were lovingly written by our former Provincials—Fr. Joaquim, Fr. Ivo—and by Rectors and confreres from various Salesian houses. My contribution has been simply to gather, edit, and preserve them within a single volume, so that future generations may know and cherish the legacy we have inherited. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to many who made this work possible. First and foremost, I remember with affection the late Fr. Aurelius Maschio and Fr. Joe Casti, whose example and encouragement planted the seed of this project.

This book is, above all, a tribute of love and gratitude. May these pages help us relive the faith and devotion of those who came from faraway lands to make our lives richer in the Salesian spirit. May their memory inspire us to continue their mission with the same zeal, generosity, and fidelity.

**- Fr. Gregory D'Almeida SDB
Provincial Economer**



A Missionary of Vision, Charity, and Devotion:

Fr. Aurelius Maschio, SDB (1909-1996)

On September 9, 1996, in Mumbai, Fr. Aurelius Maschio, SDB, passed away at the age of 87, leaving behind a monumental legacy as a missionary, educator, builder, and spiritual father. Widely regarded as the patriarch of the Salesian Province of Mumbai, Fr. Maschio's life was a tapestry of daring vision, tireless work, and deep devotion to Don Bosco and the young.



Early Life and Vocation

Born on February 12, 1909, in Vazzola, Treviso, Italy, Aurelius was the sixth of eleven children in a family known for its winemaking



enterprise—*Cantine Maschio*. From a young age, he expressed a desire to become a priest. At the age of 10, his parents sent him to the Don Bosco Institute at Sampierdarena, Genoa, and later to the aspirantate at Penango in 1923.

In October 1924, at just 15 years of age, he asked to be sent to the missions. He joined the missionary expedition from the Salesian Mother House in Turin and set sail from Venice to Bombay on November 2, 1924. After a 15-day voyage, he arrived in India and travelled to Shillong, where he began his novitiate. He made

his first profession on December 25, 1925, and began his philosophical studies, during which he learned Khasi so well that he was entrusted with editing the local religious magazine, *Ka Ling Kristan*.

He did his practical training at Don Bosco Technical School, Shillong, and began theology in 1930. On April 29, 1933, at the age of 24, he was ordained a priest by Msgr. Ferdinand Perrier, Archbishop of Calcutta.

Early Missionary Work

Fr. Maschio's first assignment was in Cherrapunjee, where he worked with

Fr. Mlekus. When Fr. Mlekus died of exhaustion, young Fr. Maschio took over the mission. He purchased land, rebuilt the residence, and invited the Salesian Sisters to establish a presence. His organizational skills and fundraising abilities were already evident.

Pioneer of Salesian Mumbai

The Salesian presence in Mumbai began in 1928 with Fr. Joseph Hauber and Fr. Adolph Tornquist, who managed the Mary Immaculate Institute at Tardeo. When Fr. Tornquist fell ill, the provincial, Fr. Eligio Cinato, appointed the 27-year-old Fr. Maschio to take over. He arrived in Tardeo on February 20, 1937.

Almost immediately, Fr. Maschio began searching for a permanent home for the Salesians in Mumbai. He identified a plot of land near King's Circle (now Maheshwari Udyan) in Matunga, and the sale was approved in July 1938. When the Salesians had to vacate Tardeo Castle in 1940, they temporarily moved to Cumballa Hill. Construction began at Matunga in 1941, and by October 31, 1941, Don Bosco School and Boarding had shifted to its new home.



In April 1944, following the Bombay Dock Explosion, Fr. Maschio seized the opportunity to acquire debris for landfilling. This initiative led to the creation of the iconic playground at Don Bosco High School, Matunga. The second block of the school was completed in 1952, and the institution quickly became a beacon of Salesian education in India.

Don Bosco's Madonna and the Shrine

In his first year in Mumbai, Fr. Maschio began publishing a small folder titled, *Don Bosco's Madonna*. This humble initiative grew into a monthly religious magazine with a circulation of nearly 100,000 copies, reaching readers across India and abroad. The publication became a spiritual lifeline for many and a powerful tool for evangelization and devotion.



Fr. Maschio also envisioned and built the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna at Matunga, modeled after the Basilica of Our Lady Help of Christians in Turin. The Shrine became not only a place of worship, but also a symbol

of Salesian presence and Marian devotion in Mumbai.

Leadership and Legacy

Fr. Maschio served as Rector of Matunga for 16 years, until 1953, when he was succeeded by Fr. Mauro Casarotti. He continued as Rector of the Shrine and managed the Shrine Office, which became a hub for fundraising and communication with benefactors.

Among his many supporters was J.R.D. Tata, a testament to Fr. Maschio's ability to build bridges across communities.

During World War II, while many Italian Salesians were interned, Fr. Maschio and his confrères in Mumbai were spared. They were restricted to Bombay Island and had to report weekly to the police, but they continued their work undeterred.

In 1970, the Italian government conferred on him the Knighthood of the Italian Republic, and in 1973, the title of *Commendatore*. The European Community recognized him as the head of a non-governmental organization and entrusted him with the distribution of food for social projects.

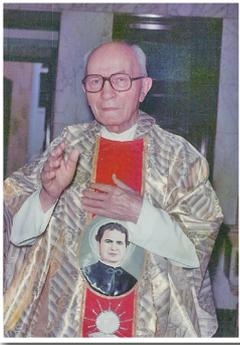
In 1972, the Salesian Province of Mumbai was officially established, with Fr. Dennis Duarte as its first provincial. This was the realization of a dream that Fr. Maschio had nurtured for decades.

A Builder of Institutions and Hearts

Fr. Maschio was not just a builder of buildings—he was also a builder of people. His vision extended beyond infrastructure to the formation of youth, the empowerment of the poor, and the spiritual nourishment of the faithful. His leadership was marked by humility, foresight, and unshakable faith.

He was a master fundraiser, but never for personal gain. Every rupee he raised was poured into schools, churches, hostels, and social projects. He believed in the power of education, the necessity of discipline, and the centrality of prayer.





Fr. Maschio Humanitarian Award

In 1993, a group of lay volunteers formed the Diamond Jubilee Committee and instituted the Fr. Maschio Humanitarian Award to honour individuals who embodied his spirit of service. Recipients have included Mother Teresa, Baba Amte, Kiran Bedi, Archbishop Thomas Menampampil, Gladys Staines, Julio Ribeiro, and Gram Mangal. The award continues to celebrate those who, like Fr. Maschio, dedicate their lives to the upliftment of others.

Maschio Memorial Foundation

In 1997, the Maschio Memorial Foundation was established at Don Bosco, Matunga, to continue his work. The Foundation supports projects that provide education, training, and care for the young and the poor. It stands as a living tribute to a man who gave everything for the mission.



Final Years and Death

Fr. Maschio remained active until the very end. Even in his later years, he was a source of wisdom, encouragement, and inspiration. He passed away on September 9, 1996, in Mumbai, the city he had served and loved for nearly six decades. He was buried in the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna, the Church he had built with faith and love.

Fr. Aurelius Maschio was a Salesian missionary of extraordinary vision, a man whose life embodied the spirit of Don Bosco in every word, deed, and dream. He was a builder, a pastor, a writer, a fundraiser, and above all, a father to the young. His legacy lives on in the institutions he founded, the lives he touched, and the mission he carried forward with unwavering zeal.



May his life continue to inspire generations of Salesians and lay collaborators to dream big, serve humbly, and love deeply.

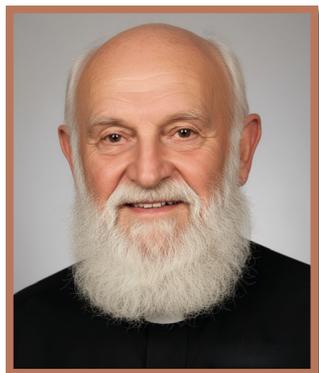


A Volcano of Apostolic Zeal:

Fr. Vincent Scuderi, SDB (1902-1982)

On the early hours of November 22, 1982, in the Salesian house of Barriera in Catania, a great heart ceased to beat. Fr. Vincent Scuderi, SDB, still active and full of missionary fire, passed away suddenly at the age of 80. His death was a final act of surrender—a Salesian dying in harness, just as he had always wished.

Born on May 30, 1902, in Ramacca, Sicily, Vincent was the eldest child of Gaetano Scuderi and Carmela Calcaterra. His upbringing was steeped in Christian values, shaped especially by his mother's strong educational instincts and deep faith. After primary school, he joined the Oratory of San Filippo Neri in Catania, where his "oratorian heart" was formed—a heart that would beat for youth and missions all his life.



He entered the Salesian novitiate at San Gregorio and made his profession on September 20, 1918. Ordained on May 29, 1926, he was soon drawn to the missions. Before leaving for India in 1928, he prayed at Don Bosco's tomb and wrote:

"I go so that Christ may triumph. I go to save my soul. I go to atone for my sins." His motto became: "*Impendam et superimpendar ipse... charitatis igne succensus*"—"I will spend (myself) and be spent, inflamed by the fire of charity."

Missionary to India

Fr. Scuderi arrived in Shillong in December 1928 and was welcomed by Bishop Louis Mathias. He began as a catechist and advisor to theology students, and was soon sent to Guwahati, where he directed the lower Brahmaputra mission district. In 1934, at just 32, he was appointed Provincial Superior of North India, and a year later, Apostolic Administrator of Krishnagar.

His leadership saw the expansion of missions, schools, novitiates, and formation houses. After a fire destroyed the Cathedral of Shillong and the Salesian formation house, he mobilized global support and rebuilt all three structures—stronger and more beautiful than before.

Internment and Apostolate in Captivity

During World War II, Fr. Scuderi was interned by British authorities.

Though exempt, he chose to join his fellow Salesians in the Dehra Dun concentration camp, serving as chaplain and leader. He transformed the camp into a vibrant spiritual and educational centre, organizing theology classes, religious services, literacy programs, and even music and drama. His advocacy for dignity made him “inconvenient” to authorities, and he was transferred to Burandhar, where he continued his ministry among the marginalized.

Goa and the Return to Italy

In 1946, rather than repatriate, he requested to be sent to Goa, then under Portuguese rule. Starting with nothing, he founded schools, oratories, and a chapel that became a centre of devotion. Despite serious illness, he remained undaunted. In 1952, he returned to Italy, but his missionary fire never dimmed.

Apostolic Builder in Sicily

Over the next 30 years, Fr. Scuderi served in Caltanissetta, Gela, and Riesi, revitalizing parishes, building churches, technical schools, homes for the elderly, and social centres. In Riesi, a town marked by poverty and Protestant presence, he reopened four parishes, built a new oratory and FMA house, and fostered ecumenical dialogue. The municipal government named him honorary citizen, and resisted his transfer.

In his final years, he served as Provincial Delegate for Missions in Catania, founding the newsletter *Sicilia Salesiana Missionaria*, the missionary support network *Lega dei Diecimila*, and the youth group Humanitas. Even in his last months, he wrote to missionaries in Madagascar, pledging renewed support.

Legacy of a Prophet

Fr. Scuderi was remembered as a Patriarch, a model of perpetual youth, and a prophet—wise, energetic, and deeply faithful. His robust physique, penetrating eyes, and enthusiastic speech were matched by a steel will and a heart full of love. His motto remained: “*Enthusiasm. Great enthusiasm. Always enthusiasm.*”

He was a volcano of apostolic energy—never at rest, always aflame with the love of God and youth. His life was a masterpiece of missionary dedication, pastoral creativity, and spiritual depth. He lived Don Bosco’s charism with passion and fidelity and continues to inspire Salesians and lay collaborators across generations.

Fr. Vincent Scuderi now rests in peace, but his legacy lives on—in the missions he built, the lives he touched, and the fire he ignited in the hearts of many.

Missionary, Provincial, Visionary:

Fr. José Luis Carreño, SDB (1905-1986)

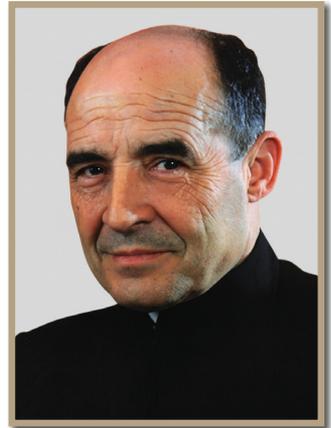
Described by historian Joseph Thekkedath as “*the most beloved Salesian of South India*” in the first half of the twentieth century, Fr. José Luis Carreño left a legacy that spans continents and generations. From British India to Goa, the Philippines, and Spain, Salesians remember him with deep affection. Yet, despite his towering influence, a comprehensive biography remains unwritten—apart from the moving obituary letter by Fr. José Antonio Rico titled, “*José Luis Carreño Etxeandía, God’s Labourer.*”

Early Life and Vocation

Born in Bilbao, Spain, on 23 October 1905, José Luis lost his mother at age eight and was welcomed into the Salesian house in Santander. At twelve, he entered the Aspirantate at Campello, where he encountered figures like Fr. Binelli and Fr. Rinaldi, who left lasting impressions of holiness and fatherliness.

After novitiate and post-novitiate, he served as assistant to novices. His brilliance was evident—Fr. Pedro Escursell wrote to the Rector Major praising him as a model cleric and urging his assignment to the missions.

On the eve of his ordination in 1932, José Luis wrote directly to the Rector Major, offering himself for missionary service. His offer was accepted, and in 1933, he arrived in Mumbai, India.



Formator and Provincial in India

In 1934, just a year after arriving, he was appointed novice master at Tirupattur at the age of 28. His warmth and wisdom left a deep impression. Archbishop Hubert D’Rosario recalled, “*He won us over with his fatherly heart.*” Another novice, Fr. Joseph Vaz, remembered how Carreño gave him his own jumper when he saw him shivering—an act of quiet generosity.

During World War II, while many foreign missionaries were interned, Carreño, a Spanish citizen from a neutral country, remained free. In 1943, he was appointed Provincial of South India, succeeding Fr. Eligio Cinato. He also served as Vicar General to Archbishop Louis Mathias.

As Provincial (1945–1951), Carreño consecrated the Province to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a gesture many believe led to its extraordinary growth. Under his leadership, Salesian works doubled, and he founded Sacred Heart College in Tirupattur, which transformed the region.

He championed the “Indianisation” of the Salesian mission, actively promoting local vocations—a visionary move that proved vital when India later restricted foreign missionary visas. Today’s thriving Salesian presence in India owes much to his foresight.

Challenges and Transitions

Though deeply respected, Carreño’s gentle approach sometimes clashed with stricter disciplinary views, notably those of Archbishop Mathias. He was also criticized for being a poor administrator, though Fr. Aurelio Maschio strongly defended him, recognizing his visionary leadership.

Some of his ideas—like involving lay volunteers—were ahead of their time and are now widely embraced. In 1951, after 18 years in India, he was asked to return to Spain. Though the reasons were complex, he accepted the decision with serenity.

Goa: A New Mission Field

In 1952, Carreño was sent to Goa, where he served until 1960. He fell in love with the land and its people, writing, “*Goa was love at first sight.*” He became a patron of Konkani writers, a spiritual guide to the diocesan clergy, and a father to poor boys at Don Bosco Panjim. To support them, he and others donated blood at the nearby medical college to earn money for food and necessities.

Philippines and Final Years

After Goa’s annexation in 1961, Carreño could not return. In 1962, he was sent to the Philippines as novice master, where he served until 1965. He opposed sending newly professed Filipino Salesians to Hong Kong for studies, advocating instead for a local formation—a view later accepted, though he had already requested to return to Spain.

Even in his brief time in the Philippines, he made a lasting impact. Fr. Nestor Impelido called it “*an immeasurable and crucial contribution to the Salesian presence.*”

Back in Spain, Carreño worked with Missionary Procures and animated the Iberian Provinces, inspiring young Salesians with his missionary zeal, songs, and stories.

A Final Dream: Pueblo Misionero

In his later years, Carreño dreamed of founding a *Pueblo Misionero*—a missionary village to train young missionaries and house retired ones. Though the project never fully materialized, it led to the creation of the *Hogar del Misionero* in Alzuza, near Pamplona. His final apostolate was through the written word—he authored over thirty books, five dedicated to the Holy Shroud, to which he had deep devotion.

Legacy

Fr. José Luis Carreño died in Pamplona in 1986, aged 81. On the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination, he wrote:

“If fifty years ago my motto as a young priest was ‘Christ is everything,’ today, old and overwhelmed by His love, I would write it in golden letters, because in reality—CHRIST IS EVERYTHING.”



A Gentle Master of Formation and Mission: Fr. Joseph Casti, SDB (1931-2022)

On January 29, 2022, in Rome, Fr. Joseph Casti, SDB, passed away peacefully at the age of 90, at the Artemide Zatti Infirmary. His funeral was held on January 31, the Feast of Don Bosco, in the chapel of the infirmary, with Fr. Ivo Coelho, General Councillor for Formation, presiding. The timing was deeply symbolic—Saturday, a day dedicated to Our Lady, and the feast of the founder he loved so dearly.



Early Life and Vocation

Born on September 28, 1931, in Borbona, Italy, to Salvatore Casti and Concetta Tocco, Giuseppe Casti grew up in a family originally from Sardinia. His early years were shaped by the pastoral and spiritual richness of Borbona, a town steeped in Franciscan and Dominican heritage.

He entered the Salesian house of Tolentino in 1942, moved to Sampierdarena in 1946, and began his novitiate in Varazze in 1947. He made his first profession on August 16, 1948, and pursued philosophical studies in San Callisto, Rome. After practical training in Florence, he made his perpetual profession in 1954, and was ordained a priest on January 1, 1958, in Turin.

Missionary Work in India

In 1958, Fr. Casti arrived in Goa, then Portuguese India. He served at Don Bosco, Panjim as Catechist and Prefect of Studies, remembered fondly for his simplicity, humour, and love for sports—especially football, boxing, and judo. He later served in Valpoi, Yercaud, and returned to Panjim as Rector in 1968.

He was instrumental in building the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, blessed in 1970, with support from Fr. Aurelius Maschio. His leadership and pastoral care endeared him to students and parishioners alike.

Formator and Provincial Leadership

Fr. Casti was elected Province Delegate to the Special General Chapter (SGC) in 1971, contributing to the redrafting of the Salesian Constitutions. He served as Vice Provincial twice: under Fr. Dennis Duarte (1973–74) and Fr. Tony D’Souza (1976–78). In 1974, he completed a Ph.D. in Missiology at the Urbanianum University, focusing on the Salesian missions in North-East India.

Don Bosco Lonavla and Nashik Novitiate

From 1975 to 1978, Fr. Casti served as Rector of Don Bosco, Lonavla, where his judo skills and joyful spirit made him a beloved figure. In 1978, he became the first Rector and Novice Master of the newly established Salesian Training Institute (STI), Nashik, guiding twelve batches of novices over 12 years.

He was known for his deep spirituality, human formation programs, storytelling, and openness to Eastern spiritualities, especially influenced by Fr. Tony De Mello, SJ. His motto: “*Do not harm anybody*”, reflected his compassionate approach.

He introduced programs like John Powell’s “Fully Alive Experience”, the Intensive Journal, and used Sufi stories and parables to deepen spiritual awareness. His guitar, country songs, and humour were part of his unique pedagogy. He was described as a “holistic maestro” who blended mysticism, theology, and pastoral care.

Provincial House and Shrine of Don Bosco’s Madonna

In 1990, Fr. Casti moved to Matunga, Mumbai, assisting Fr. Maschio in the Shrine Office. He became Rector of the Provincial House (1991–1996) and later Procurator and Rector of the Shrine (1996–2002). His spiritual presence and pastoral care continued the legacy of Fr. Maschio.

Despite suffering a major stroke, he remained active until his transfer to Italy in 2002.



Return to Italy and Final Years

Fr. Casti returned to the Ligure Toscana Province (ILT), serving in communities across La Spezia, Florence, Varazze, and Rome. In his final years at the Artemide Zatti Infirmary, he was lovingly cared for by the members of that community and Salesian confreres of Mumbai often visited him.

He passed away on January 29, 2022, a

Saturday dedicated to Our Lady, and was buried on January 31, the Feast of Don Bosco.

Legacy and Tributes

Fr. Casti was a true Salesian pastor and educator, remembered for his:

- Kindness and humility, Love for the poor, Spiritual depth and human formation, Cheerfulness and storytelling, Generosity and missionary spirit

He sponsored chapels in Ahmednagar, supported rural missions, and mentored countless Salesians. His biography of Fr. Maschio, *For Him, Living Was Giving*, remains a heartfelt tribute from one missionary to another.

Fr. Ivo Coelho described him as “a good man” who clothed his entire way of being with goodness and cheerfulness. “He was not a photocopy of anyone,” said Fr. Ivo, “but profoundly Salesian and profoundly free.” Fr. Savio Silveira, Provincial of Mumbai, called him “one of the most beloved Salesians in the Province... a gentle, mild, loving, generous and joyful Salesian.”



Voices from the Heart

- Students remembered his judo classes, football games, and gentle humour. “He never raised his voice,” said one. “His smile was inbuilt in his face.”
- Salesians recalled his generosity, spiritual wisdom, and ability to correct with kindness. “He was the master of fraternal correction,” said one assistant.
- FMA Sisters praised his humility, availability, and spiritual direction. “He made our burdens light,” said Sr Meena D’Silva.
- Parishioners remembered his hospitality, attentiveness, and pastoral care. “He listened more than he spoke,” said one.
- Fr. Cletus D’Souza called him “a treasure trove of spiritual legacy,” and Fr. Joaquim D’Souza described him as “a heart of gold.”

A Life of Goodness and Grace

Fr. Casti's life was a blend of simplicity, wisdom, and joy. Whether strumming his guitar, teaching judo, or guiding novices, he embodied the spirit of Don Bosco. His legacy lives on in the hearts of those he formed, served, and loved.

He was, as one tribute aptly put it, "a soul without guile."

May his memory continue to inspire Salesians and lay collaborators to live with gentleness, generosity, and faithful dedication.



A Missionary's Heart:

Fr. Giuseppe Moja, SDB (1915-2009)

From Orino to India – A Journey of Faith and Fire

On 26 May 2009, in the quiet town of Arese, Italy, the world lost a remarkable soul. Fr. Giuseppe Moja, SDB, passed away at the age of 93, closing a chapter of missionary zeal that spanned over seven decades in India. His was a life of paradoxes—of hardship and humour, of solitude and community, of fierce independence and deep obedience. Above all, it was a life consumed by a singular passion: Don Bosco and the mission he inspired.



Early Life: A Seed Planted in War-Torn Soil

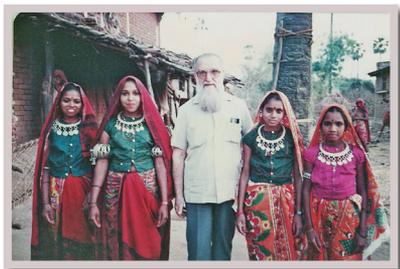
Born on 20 December 1915 in Orino, a small village nestled in the province of Varese, northern Italy, Giuseppe was the son of Tranquillo Moja and Elisa Clivio. His early childhood unfolded in Verdun, France, a town still bearing the scars of World War I. The echoes of conflict and the resilience of survival perhaps sowed the first seeds of the courage that would later define his missionary life.

Returning to Italy, young Giuseppe entered the diocesan seminary in Como at the tender age of 13. But it was at the Salesian house in Ivrea that he found his true calling. “Here with Don Bosco, I have found my place,” he told the Rector—a declaration that would echo through the rest of his life. His confessor at the diocesan seminary, a man who had once been a boy under Don Bosco himself, played a pivotal role in introducing Giuseppe to the Salesian spirit. That early influence ignited a lifelong devotion to the saint of youth.

The Call to India: A Young Missionary's Leap of Faith

In October 1933, at just 17 years old, Giuseppe embarked on a journey that would define his destiny. Along with a group of young missionaries, he set sail for India, arriving in Bombay on 4 December. Three days later, he began his novitiate in Shillong, a hill station in the northeast that would become the crucible of his early formation.

He made his first profession on 8 December 1934 and immersed himself in the study of philosophy and theology. But missionary life in those days was



far from easy. Resources were scarce—so scarce, in fact, that the young Salesians had to share a single cassock, washing it at night and wearing it again the next morning. Fr. Moja would later recall how the Bandel chapel reeked of “stale fish,” a pungent blend of damp cassocks and youthful sweat.

Yet, these hardships only deepened his resolve. The Salesians of the time were pioneers, and inculturation was not a buzzword but a necessity. Giuseppe, with his gift for languages and sharp intellect, was soon teaching Bengali to Bengali boys, a task daunting even for the most seasoned educators.

The Scuderi Years: Learning Leadership

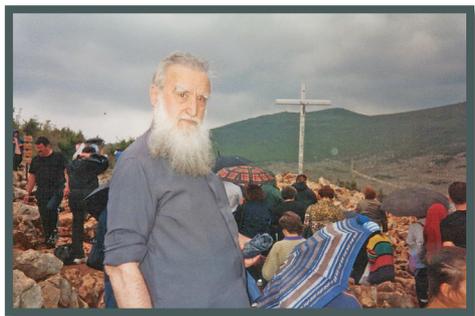
In 1937, Giuseppe was sent to Krishnagar to serve as secretary to Monsignor Vincent Scuderi, the Provincial and Vicar General of the diocese. This role, entrusted to him while he was still a young cleric, was formative. Scuderi, constantly on the move, relied heavily on his young secretary—not just for administrative tasks, but for correspondence with superiors and even the Vatican. Many of those letters, Fr. Moja would later admit with a chuckle, bore his signature rather than Scuderi’s. “But historians will never know,” he’d say, eyes twinkling.

He later served in Sonada, where he spent “three unforgettable years” teaching and mentoring young Salesians. But the winds of war soon disrupted his mission.

War and Internment: Faith Behind Barbed Wire

With the outbreak of World War II, Giuseppe, an Italian national in British India, was deemed an “enemy alien.” He was first placed under house arrest, and then interned in camps at Deolali and Dehradun. These were difficult years, marked by confinement and uncertainty. Yet, even behind barbed wire, the Salesian spirit thrived.

The interned Salesians transformed the camps into makeshift religious houses. They brewed wine, made sausages, and even set up a theology school. Giuseppe completed his theological studies and was ordained a



priest on 8 December 1944—a moment of grace in the midst of adversity. He remained in the camp until 1946, and when the British denied him re-entry into Bengal, he turned to Goa, then under Portuguese rule.

Goa: A New Frontier

In Panjim, Fr. Moja became Prefect of Studies, and in 1947, helped establish the Don Bosco English High School. He served as Principal, teacher, and Oratory leader, laying the groundwork for what would become a vibrant Salesian presence in Goa. Sundays were spent cycling to villages like Calangute, where he and his companions conducted festive Oratories, often bringing loaves of bread and joy to the local children.

His time in Goa was not without its challenges. Known for his fiery temper and caustic wit, Fr. Moja could be a polarising figure. Yet even his critics acknowledged his tireless work ethic and unshakable commitment to the mission. “The work went on and even flourished,” wrote one contemporary, “because Moja was his ever-enterprising self.”



Sulcorna: From Jungle to Jubilee

Perhaps the most iconic chapter of Fr. Moja’s life began in 1962, when he was sent to Sulcorna, a remote 200-acre jungle in South Goa, gifted to the Salesians by a benefactor. It was a land of wild beauty—and wild beasts. Armed with little more than a tarpaulin, a helper, a dog, a gun, and a jug of feni, Fr. Moja began the arduous task of clearing the land and building a mission.

The first night brought torrential rain. He spent it poking the sagging tarpaulin with a stick to keep the water out, the feni offering some warmth and courage. There were monkeys, leopards, and sceptical locals who scoffed at his efforts. But slowly, the jungle gave way to a thriving agricultural colony, school, and social centre. He planted cashew, coconut, guava, and chickoo trees, built a small house (still visible today), and laid the foundation for a mission that would flourish long after his departure.

Fr. Moja remained in Sulcorna for 16 years, pouring his heart and soul into the land and its people. His transfer to Lonavla was, by all accounts, against his will. But he accepted it with grace, continuing his ministry as confessor and communications delegate.

The Editor, the Elder, the Eternal Missionary

After sixteen transformative years in Sulcorna, Fr. Giuseppe Moja was transferred—reluctantly—to Lonavla. Though he had grown deeply attached to the land and people of Goa’s hinterland, he accepted the move with the same spirit of obedience that had marked his entire life. In Lonavla, he served as confessor and communications delegate, roles that allowed him to continue shaping young minds and hearts, albeit in a quieter, more reflective capacity.

The Pune Years: Friendship and Fraternity

From Lonavla, Fr. Moja moved to Pune, where he took on the role of Administrator. It was here that many of his confreres came to know him more intimately—not just as a missionary or superior, but as a friend. His sharp wit, often laced with sarcasm, could be disarming, but beneath it lay a heart of gold. He was affectionate without being possessive, deeply loyal without being overbearing.

One Salesian who worked closely with him during this time recalled, “He had a mighty temper and a caustic tongue, but there are few people I remember today with greater affection.” Fr. Moja was not one to sugar-coat his opinions, but his honesty was never malicious. He challenged others to think, to grow, and to love Don Bosco more deeply.

Matunga and the Madonna: A Voice for Don Bosco

Fr. Moja’s final major assignment in India was in Matunga, Mumbai, where he spent two decades as the Editor of *Don Bosco’s Madonna*. This monthly magazine, beloved by thousands across India and beyond, became his pulpit. Through its pages, he preached not with fire and brimstone, but with humour, insight, and a deep understanding of the human heart.



His editorials were marked by clarity, conviction, and a touch of mischief. He had a gift for storytelling, and his love for Don Bosco shone through every word. Under his stewardship, *Don Bosco’s Madonna* became more than a devotional magazine—it

became a spiritual companion for countless readers.

Even as age caught up with him, Fr. Moja remained intellectually active. He translated Teresio Bosco’s biography of Don Bosco, a task he undertook as a labour of love. “I know all these stories and these facts,” he once said, “but so many times I have been unable to go on, simply moved to tears.” The translation was not just a scholarly exercise—it was a spiritual pilgrimage.

The Return to Italy: A Heart Still in India

In 2007, after a brief hospitalisation for cancer treatment at Hinduja Hospital, Fr. Moja made the difficult decision to return to Italy. He first spent time in his beloved Orino, reconnecting with his roots, before moving to Casa Don Quadrio in Arese, a Salesian infirmary near Milan.

Though physically frail, his spirit remained indomitable. He kept a daily diary, wrote letters, and continued to reflect deeply on his life and mission. He often said, “When I want to feel alive, I think of India.” His heart, it seemed, had never left the subcontinent.

Even in his final years, he remained a missionary. His room became a place of quiet counsel, his letters a source of encouragement, his prayers a lifeline for those he had once served. He prepared for death with the same intentionality with which he had lived—making a general confession, receiving the Anointing of the Sick, and surrendering himself to God with peace.

A Salesian to the End

Fr. Moja died peacefully on 26 May 2009, at the age of 93 years and 6 months. His funeral was held in Orino, where the Municipal Council unanimously granted him a burial place in recognition of his lifelong service. It was a fitting tribute to a man who had given everything—his youth, his strength, his talents, and his heart—to the mission of Don Bosco.

He was, in every sense, a Salesian to the end. A poet, a preacher, a farmer, an editor, a linguist, and above all, a missionary. He never quite abandoned his Italian roots—he loved cheese, wine, and the culture of his homeland—but he gave his life to India. He may not have embraced every aspect of Indian culture wholeheartedly, but he embraced its people with a love that was deep, enduring, and transformative.



Legacy: A Love That Endures

Fr. Moja’s legacy is not just in the schools he helped build, the articles he wrote, or the trees he planted. It is in the hearts he touched, the vocations he inspired, and the love for Don Bosco that he ignited in others. He was, as one confrere put it, “hopelessly in love with Don Bosco,” and he made others fall in love with him too.

He worried that the new generation of Salesians in India did not know Don Bosco well enough. His life was a living testament to what it meant to be a son of Don Bosco—joyful, resilient, deeply spiritual, and utterly

committed to the young.

In his final days, he often imagined the reunion that awaited him in heaven. “There will be good old Fr. Casa who might groan to see Moja coming up,” he joked. “There will be Bro. Joe Mascarenhas, who had the knack of turning up just when some secret party was being organised. There will be Don Bosco himself, and Our Lady, and a thousand others, all united in the loving and forgiving heart of our Father.”

Conclusion: A Life Well Lived

Fr. Giuseppe Moja’s life was a symphony of service, composed in the key of love. He lived through war, exile, and hardship, yet never lost his sense of humour or his sense of purpose. He built schools, nurtured vocations, and brought the light of the Gospel to some of the most remote corners of India.

He was not perfect—he could be sharp-tongued, impatient, and stubborn. But he was also generous, courageous, and deeply faithful. He gave everything he had, and then some. And in doing so, he became not just a missionary, but a legend.

As we remember him, we do not merely mourn his passing. We celebrate a life that was poured out like a libation, a life that continues to inspire, challenge, and bless. May his memory be a blessing, and may his example continue to guide all who seek to follow Christ in the spirit of Don Bosco.



The Gentle Shepherd:

Fr. Mauro Casarotti, SDB (1917-2007)

A Life Rooted in Faith, Formed by Don Bosco

On 20 July 2007, in the quiet of the Provincial House in Matunga, Mumbai, Fr. Mauro Casarotti, SDB, passed away peacefully in his sleep. He was 90 years old. Known affectionately as Fr. Casa, he was a man of gentle strength, deep prayer, and unwavering fidelity to the Salesian mission in India. His life was not marked by dramatic conversions or grand gestures, but by a quiet, consistent, and deeply loving presence that left an indelible mark on generations of Salesians and laypeople alike.

Early Life: A Childhood of Loss and Longing

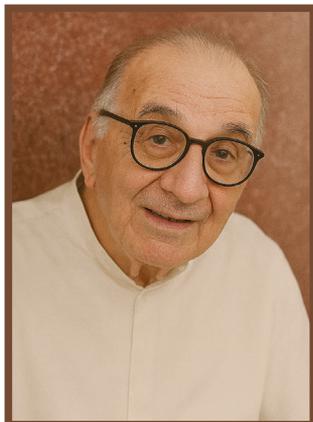
Born on 17 May 1917 in Casalbuttano, a small town in Cremona, Italy, Mauro was the second of two sons born to Carlo Casarotti and Maria Generali. Tragedy struck early—he lost his mother when he was just a year and five months old. Raised by his father, Mauro grew up cheerful and sociable, traits that would later define his pastoral style.

As a young man, he joined the Catholic Action movement, where he first felt the stirrings of a missionary vocation. But it was the canonization of Don Bosco in 1934 that changed his life. His elder brother Romolo, who would later become a diocesan priest, brought home two volumes on Don Bosco's life. Mauro devoured them. The fire was lit. He had just completed his *Magisterale* (a teacher's training degree), but now he knew he wanted to be a Salesian missionary.

Ivrea and the Call to India

In 1936, at the age of 19, Mauro joined the Salesian missionary aspirantate at Ivrea, where he lived among Salesians who had personally known Don Bosco. Their stories, their spirit, and their example left a lasting impression on him. Originally destined for Japan, Mauro volunteered to go to India when two Salesians fell ill. It was a decision he never regretted.

He arrived in Bombay on 5 December 1939, and was immediately sent to Tirupattur, where he began his novitiate on 8 December, the Feast of





the Immaculate Conception. A year later, on the same feast, he made his first profession. He began his philosophical studies in Tirupattur, which also housed the philosophate at the time.

War and Internment: Faith in the Shadows

World War II disrupted the lives of many missionaries. As an Italian national, Mauro was interned by the British—first in Deolali, then in Dehradun. Yet even in these camps, the Salesian spirit endured. He renewed his vows in 1943 in Dehradun and continued his formation with quiet resilience.

After the war, he resumed his practical training in Vellore, made his perpetual profession in 1946 at Kotagiri, and began his theological studies there. The arrangement was informal—he was simultaneously assistant to novices, catechist, and Latin teacher. Eventually, he moved to Shillong, where he was ordained a priest on 7 August 1949 by Msgr. Stephen Ferrando.

Matunga and the Making of a Leader

Fr. Casa's first assignment was as Catechist and Prefect of Studies at Matunga, Bombay. In 1952, just three years after his ordination, he succeeded Fr. Aurelius Maschio as Rector. It was a significant responsibility, and he rose to the occasion with humility and vision.

During his tenure, the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna was constructed—a project initiated by Fr. Maschio. Fr. Casa often recounted how the massive statue of Our Lady was placed on the dome with technical help from Bollywood studios. Fr. Maschio, nervous about the operation, was sent to Juhu for the day, while Fr. Casa and Fr. Giacomello supervised the installation.

But perhaps his most visionary act was the purchase of land in Lonavla for Rs. 50,000—a princely sum at the time. The land, pointed out by Our Lady on 24 May, would become the Salesian aspirantate, the cradle



of local vocations in the Bombay Province. Fr. Casa believed deeply in the potential of Bombay boys, even when others dismissed them as too worldly. His faith bore fruit: the first Provincial of the Bombay Province, Fr. Dennis Duarte, was a local vocation.

A Citizen of India, A Son of Don Bosco

In 1953, Fr. Casa became an Indian citizen, a decision that reflected not just a legal status, but a deep emotional and spiritual commitment to his adopted homeland. He often joked that he could pass for a Parsi, but his love for India was no joke. It was real, rooted, and lifelong.

He served as Rector in Yercaud, then again in Lonavla, before being appointed Provincial of Calcutta (1964–66) and Guwahati (1966–72).



His leadership was marked by pastoral sensitivity and a deep concern for vocations. He appointed Fr. Thomas Menampambil as his Vice Provincial in Guwahati—a decision that paved the way for Indian leadership in the Salesian congregation.

In 1975, he was appointed Provincial of Bombay, but resigned after 18 months

during a crisis involving Fr. Maschio. He believed stepping down was the only way to preserve unity. His humility and self-sacrifice during this period speak volumes about his character.

Formation, Friendship, and Fidelity

Fr. Casa's later years were spent in formation houses—Koregaon Park, Lonavla, Nashik, and Matunga—where he served as confessor, teacher, and spiritual guide. He was beloved by young Salesians, whom he affectionately called “boys with cassocks.” His presence was gentle, his advice wise, his confessional a place of healing.

He suffered from depression, especially during his years in Nashik, grieving the departure of many confrères. Yet he never lost hope. He believed in the gift of Salesian life and lamented when it was taken for granted. “What is the use of being a Salesian, a Religious?” he once wrote. “The gift of ‘Salesianity’...!”

The Gentle Shepherd and the Hidden Hero

After decades of leadership and formation, Fr. Mauro Casarotti entered the final phase of his life with the same humility and quiet strength that had defined his earlier years. Though he had held high offices—Rector, Provincial, Founder, and Formator—he never sought recognition. Instead, he chose to serve in the background, offering his wisdom, his prayers, and his presence.

The Confessor and Companion

In his later years, Fr. Casa became a beloved confessor and spiritual guide. Whether in Lonavla, Nashik, Koregaon Park, or Matunga, he was always available to listen, to counsel, and to forgive. His confessional was a place of peace, his advice always gentle, never judgmental. He had a gift for making people feel heard, understood, and loved.

He often wept during the Eucharist, overcome by the mystery he celebrated daily. His reverence was contagious. He once told a group of young Salesians, “Let your homilies be like miniskirts—long enough to cover the essentials and short enough to keep up the curiosity.” It was classic Fr. Casa: humorous, wise, and deeply human.

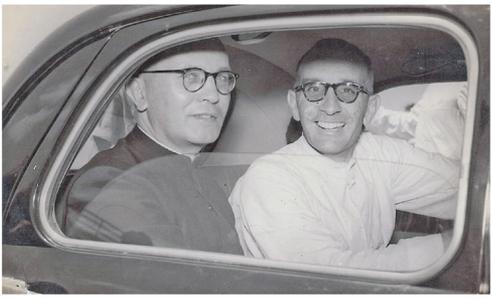
He also served in the Shrine Office, corresponding with Italian benefactors. His letters were warm, personal, and pastoral. Many benefactors poured out their hearts to him, and he responded with empathy and prayer. Though this work was largely invisible, it was vital to the mission. “If you put all those months together,” he once said, “I can say that I have run the office for at least two years.”

A Salesian Through and Through

Fr. Casa’s Salesian identity was not just a title—it was his very being. He lived and breathed Don Bosco’s spirit. He was especially paternal to young Salesians, always seeking them out, embracing them, and remembering them with affection. His slogans—“Once a Salesian, always a Salesian,” “A good Salesian or no Salesian at all,” “*Sempre con Don Bosco*”—were not

mere words. They were the program of his life.

Bishop Valerian D’Souza called him “a wonderful fruit of the Salesian Society.” Fr. Tony D’Souza wrote, “He had a deep sense of belonging to God, to Don Bosco, and to his mission in



India... a life of faithfulness worthy of emulation.”

The “Failed Missionary” Who Succeeded in Love

Fr. Casa often joked that he was a “failed missionary” because he had never baptized anyone. His dream had been to ride on horseback through Indian villages, baptizing people with a bucket of water. “But that was not to be,” he would say with a smile. Yet, if a missionary is one who loves deeply, then Fr. Casa was among the greatest.

His love for India was evident in every choice he made—from taking Indian citizenship, to eating rice and curry with joy, to nurturing local vocations, to appointing Indian leaders like Fr. Menampambil. He marvelled at the growth of the Salesian presence in India, and he rejoiced in the success of others.

Fr. Joaquim D’Souza wrote movingly: “He was so much part of my life and shaped much of what I am today. I will always remember him as a priest with a caring heart.”



The Final Years: A Life Poured Out

In 1995, Fr. Casa was brought to Matunga, where he continued to serve quietly. In 2000, he was sent to Koregaon Park as confessor to theology students, but the long hours weighed on him. He returned to Lonavla, his beloved cradle of vocations, where he resumed his ministry as confessor and correspondent.

In 2003, he was transferred back to Matunga, where he became a sought-after confessor at the Shrine of Don Bosco’s Madonna. He also resumed his work in the Shrine Office, handling Italian correspondence with grace and warmth. His letters were not just updates—they were lifelines of love and faith. Despite his age, he remained active. He read voraciously, prayed deeply, and attended evening Mass in the Shrine. He often said, “It is for my death, that the good Lord might have mercy on me.” He was preparing, slowly and serenely, for his final journey.

A Holy Death, A Lasting Legacy

On 20 July 2007, Fr. Casa passed away in his sleep. He had fallen a few days earlier and lost some blood, which left him disoriented. He even forgot his age, saying he was 80, when in fact he had just turned 90 two months earlier. His death was as gentle as his life. He was found by Fr. Michael Fernandes, who had come to check on his breakfast. There was no drama, no

struggle—just a quiet slipping away into the arms of the God he had served so faithfully.

His confrères mourned him deeply. “We will miss you, dear Fr. Casa,” one wrote. “Your constant presence, your little jokes, your work in the office, your gentleness in the confessional, your being there for us.”

Conclusion:

Fr. Casa’s life was not one of headlines or heroics. It was a life of hidden holiness, of faithful service, of unseen sacrifices. He was not perfect—he could be withdrawn, melancholic, even depressed. But he was also deeply human, deeply holy, and deeply Salesian.

He once said, “We are in God’s hands—and they are good hands.” He lived by that trust, and he died in that peace.



A Life Lived for Love:

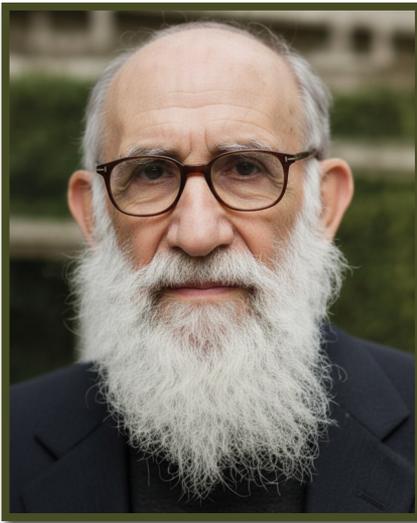
Fr. Antonio Alessi, SDB (1906-1995)

Fr. Antonio M. Alessi was born on April 27, 1906, in Nove, a picturesque town in northern Italy renowned for its ceramics. He was the eldest of nine children—four boys and five girls—in a humble, hardworking family. Among his siblings, Pauline would later join the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, dedicating her life to missionary work in Argentina, echoing the spirit of service that would define Antonio's own life.

Antonio's early years were marked by sacrifice. Though he longed to study and become a priest, his family's financial struggles forced him into agricultural labour. When his father was drafted into World War I in 1916, ten-year-old Antonio assumed the role of head of the household. The war years were difficult, but they forged in him a resilience and maturity

beyond his age.

After the war, at age 14, Antonio was finally able to pursue his calling. He entered the aspirantate in Faenza, where he made up for lost time with intense dedication. He studied day and night, even during holidays, completing his secondary education in record time. His novitiate at *Castel De Britti*, near Bologna, culminated in his religious profession in 1923. Just two years later, at the age of 19, he left Italy for India, the land that would become his lifelong mission and second home.



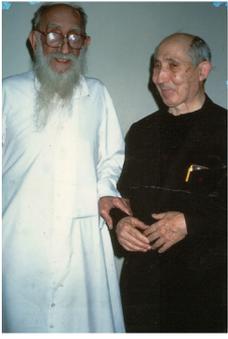
Ordination and Early Missionary Work

In India, Fr. Alessi studied philosophy and theology in Shillong, nestled in the hills of northeast India. He was ordained a priest on April 25, 1931, and began his missionary journey in the Brahmaputra Valley, a region of lush forests and remote tribal communities. For 13 years, he served as an itinerant missionary, reaching out to primitive tribes, founding mission stations, and laying the groundwork for what would later become flourishing dioceses.

His work was not limited to preaching. He brought education, healthcare, and dignity to communities that had long been marginalized. His approach was holistic—he saw the Gospel not just as a message of salvation, but as a call to uplift the human person in every dimension.

Burma: A Mission in the Midst of War

In 1939, Fr. Alessi was sent to Burma (now Myanmar) to establish the Salesian mission. The timing was ominous: World



War II had begun, and Burma soon became a battleground. Japanese forces invaded, and the country descended into chaos. Fr. Alessi found himself in the heart of a humanitarian crisis—bombings, epidemics, and brutal repression by the Kempei Tai, the Japanese secret police.

For three years, he survived on herbs, bamboo shoots, and overpriced rice. He ministered in a leper hospital, buried the dead, and cared for the wounded in Mandalay, which had been reduced to ruins. His courage and compassion during this time were

extraordinary. He risked his life daily, not for recognition, but out of love for the suffering people around him.

Even after the war ended, Burma remained unstable. Political factions vied for control, and in 1966, all foreign missionaries were expelled. Yet, Fr. Alessi's legacy endured—he had planted seeds of faith and hope that would continue to grow.

Provincial Leadership and Expansion in India

After a brief return to Italy, Fr. Alessi was appointed Provincial Superior from 1952 to 1965, overseeing Salesian works in the vast provinces of Calcutta and Guwahati. In this role, he became a builder—not just of structures, but of communities. He opened new houses, built churches, orphanages, and schools, and encouraged vocations with tireless zeal.

He was a leader who led by example. His confreres were inspired by his humility, courage, and boundless charity. He urged them to spread the Gospel through every available means, always emphasizing the dignity of the human person and the transformative power of love.

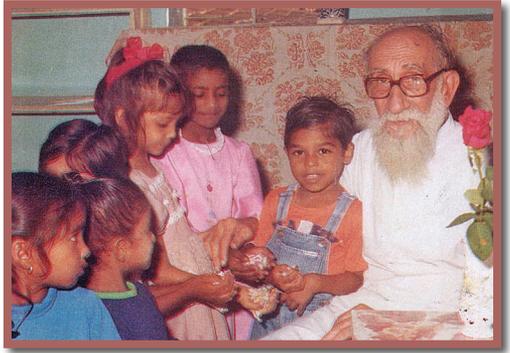
The City of Love and the Slums of Bombay

From 1965 to 1978, Fr. Alessi focused on promoting vocations in Maharashtra. Later, he joined Fr. Aurelius Maschio at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Matunga, Mumbai, dedicating himself to the poor,

sick, and marginalized. He visited slums weekly, especially Vehololi, where he built his masterpiece: The City of Love, a sanctuary for lepers and their children.

He worked closely with the Helpers of Mary, affectionately known as the Sisters of the Smile, who ministered in the slums. His life was a constant “yes” to God and others, often at the expense of his own health. He was dubbed “the living miracle”, having received the Anointing of the Sick 14 times, and even had Requiem Masses celebrated for him while still alive.

His health was fragile—he suffered from amoebic dysentery, malaria, typhus, ulcers, and sunstroke. His diet was minimal, and his journeys were perilous: crossing rivers on bamboo bridges, trekking through forests, and sleeping in treetop huts to avoid predators. He consumed whatever the locals offered—monkey, snake, dog, lizard, and silkworms.



Despite these hardships, he remained joyful, tireless, and deeply committed. Even at 85, he needed only two hours of sleep, spending the rest of his time writing to benefactors, hearing confessions, and preaching. His confessional at the Shrine was always full, and his presence in the slums brought comfort and hope.

A Missionary’s Heart: Faith, Culture, and Compassion

Fr. Alessi’s missionary work was not limited to spiritual conversion—it was a holistic transformation of lives. He faced criticism that missionaries disrupted tribal cultures. His response was clear: they improved lives through education, healthcare, and dignity. Hundreds of schools were established, and tribal youth became professionals and leaders.

He respected local traditions, studying languages and incorporating songs, dances, and folklore into religious celebrations. He opposed harmful practices like head-hunting among the Nagas and forced marriages, advocating for women’s rights and dignity.

Fr. Alessi emphasized that conversions were never forced. The Christian message was presented through witness and love. His schools and aid programs served Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Buddhists, and animists alike. He believed that the missionary loves every person as a child of God.

He also addressed criticisms about grand churches amidst poverty. He explained that in India, religiosity is profound people traditionally donated half their earnings to worship. The Catholic Church, he argued, could not oppose this deep spiritual need.

Reflections on Mission and Culture

Fr. Antonio Alessi's missionary journey was not only marked by physical endurance and spiritual zeal—it was also shaped by deep reflection on the cultures he encountered and the criticisms he faced. In interviews conducted during his Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Fr. Alessi addressed common accusations against missionaries with clarity and humility.

One such criticism was that missionaries disrupted tribal traditions. Fr. Alessi responded that the Salesians had not destroyed indigenous cultures but had improved living conditions—economically, socially, and hygienically. He pointed to the hundreds of schools established in regions where illiteracy once prevailed. These institutions produced professionals, graduates, and leaders who contributed to local governance and development.

He emphasized that missionaries respected local customs, studying languages, grammar, and folklore to preserve cultural heritage. Songs, dances, and rituals were integrated into religious life, provided they did not contradict natural law. Practices that harmed human dignity—such as head-hunting among the Nagas or forced marriages—were gently challenged and replaced with values rooted in respect and love.

Fr. Alessi was clear: conversions were never forced. The Christian message was shared through witness and compassion. “We never made distinctions of race, language, or religion,” he said. “The missionary loves every man because he sees in each one a child of God.”

The Poor, the Forgotten, and the Eucharist

Fr. Alessi's heart beat strongest for the poor. He believed that the greatest gift one could offer was to make people feel loved and accepted. His work in the slums of Bombay, especially with the Helpers of Mary, was a testament to this belief. He distributed aid to thousands of non-Christians every Saturday, never asking for anything in return.

Fr. Alessi's daily life was anchored in the Eucharist. He rose early, spent time in prayer, and celebrated Mass with deep devotion. His confessional was always open, and he spent hours listening, forgiving, and guiding souls. Even in his final years, he continued to write letters to benefactors, thanking them for their support and sharing the fruits of their generosity.

India: A Mosaic of Faith and Challenge

Fr. Alessi had a profound understanding of India's complexity. He described it as a mosaic of races, languages, and religions. He admired its ancient civilization, contributions to mathematics and philosophy, and its role in spreading religions like Buddhism and Hinduism.

Yet, he was also deeply aware of the challenges. He lamented the stark contrast between wealth and poverty, and the fatalism that often-prevented change. He believed that only two forces could transform India: a violent revolution or the Christian message, which upholds human dignity and rights.

He spoke candidly about the persistence of caste discrimination, despite its constitutional abolition. He praised Mahatma Gandhi for his advocacy for the *harijan* (children of God), noting that Gandhi's efforts ultimately cost him his life.

Fr. Alessi also reflected on the cultural divide between East and West. He criticized Western materialism, promiscuity, and atheism, and urged Westerners to learn from Eastern values of spirituality and respect for life. "We have little to teach these cultures about proper behaviour," he said. "Instead, we have much to learn from them."

Personal Sorrows and Joys

When asked about his greatest sorrow, Fr. Alessi did not speak of personal suffering. Instead, he spoke of the pain of witnessing the suffering of others—women, children, lepers—who begged for help he could not always provide. "You want to assist them," he said, "because you know and believe that Christ lives in them. But you cannot, because the aid is limited, and the suffering is immense."

His greatest joy, however, was the formation of vocations. He had dedicated his best energies to nurturing religious, apostolic, and missionary vocations. When the Salesians first arrived in India, they were a small group, unfamiliar with the language and customs. By the end of his life, there were 1,800 Salesians, almost all indigenous, working across six provinces. The number of Catholics had grown from 5,000 to over 600,000. He was especially proud that young Indians were now going to missions abroad. During a visit by the Rector Major, 42 Indian Salesians expressed their desire to serve in foreign missions. Twenty had already gone to Africa. "It brings us immense joy," he said, "to think that others are taking up the torch of faith from our hands."

No Regrets, Only Gratitude

Fr. Alessi had no regrets about leaving his family or homeland. His decision at 14 to follow Don Bosco was final and fulfilling. “I never had second thoughts,” he said. “Only with great optimism, enthusiasm, and God’s help can you overcome trials and difficulties.”

He urged young people to reject materialism and embrace great ideals. “Life is wonderful,” he said. “Live it intensely and joyfully! Reject what is easy, petty, and bourgeois. Set your sights on great ideals. A life without ideals is like a day without sunshine.”

He called on youth to open their hearts to Christ, the true liberator. “Do not waste your energy on petty ambitions or fleeting pleasures. Open yourselves to the great ideals of humanity, striving for justice and freedom.”

The Final Journey

On the morning of January 18, 1995, Fr. Alessi began his day as he always did—typing letters to benefactors, visiting the Eucharist, and preparing for Mass. After celebrating the Eucharist at the Shrine of Don Bosco’s Madonna, he felt unusually tired. He sat down to rest before climbing the stairs to his room. It was there, quietly, and peacefully, that he heard the call of his Lord.

He died as he lived—grateful, prayerful, and ready. His soul took flight to

meet the Lord who surely greeted him with the words: “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of the Lord!”



A Colloquy with God

In one of his final writings, Fr. Alessi shared a heartfelt prayer—a colloquy with God. He expressed gratitude for his vocation, sorrow

for the suffering he could not alleviate, and hope that young people would carry forward the mission. He ended with the words of Simeon: “Let thy servant go in peace, O Lord.”

He prayed for the Church in India, for the poor, for benefactors, and for those he could not reach. “You are my life, my truth, and my existence,” he wrote. “You who are the embodiment of infinite goodness, forgive and save people from every nation.”

Legacy and Testimony

Fr. Alessi's legacy lives on in the thousands he served, the vocations he nurtured, and the missions he built. His life was a testament to faith, courage, and boundless charity. He was a man who risked everything for love and gave everything for God.

Among the many tributes he received, one stands out—a testimony from Fr. Ferruccio Calliari, who witnessed Fr. Alessi's suffering and resilience during a surgery in Turin. Despite immense pain, Fr. Alessi remained serene, smiling, and full of faith. His hospital room became a place of conversion and prayer.

Even after being told to rest, he gave away his wheelchair and crutches to a fellow missionary suffering from cancer. "With these tools, I would be a complete man," he said. "God must be trusted! He never performs miracles by halves!" And of miracles, Fr. Alessi saw and lived many.



A Heart Rooted in the Soil of God's Providence:

Br. Ludvik Zabret, SDB (1923-2010)

Seed from Slovenian Soil

Brother Ludvik Zabret was born on 9 August 1923 in the picturesque village of Topole, Slovenia, to Joseph Zabret and Rosalia Borc. Two days later, on 11 August, he was baptized at Menges — a simple act that would mark the beginning of a long pilgrimage of faith and toil across continents.



Slovenia, his homeland, lies nestled between mountains and meadows — a land of quiet beauty and sturdy people. It was here that the young Ludvik learned the value of work, self-discipline, and faith. In his own words, spoken with the simplicity of a child, he would recall:

“When I was five years old, my father told me, ‘Next year you are going to school, and here are two rabbits and two pigeons. There is a heap of planks — whatever you sell will be your pocket money; I will not give you a penny.’ From that time, I always had money in my pocket.”

This early lesson in responsibility would blossom into a lifelong dedication to hard work and creative ingenuity. His mother's deep faith and devotion nurtured his spirit, while the Salesians who ran schools nearby attracted his youthful imagination. Yet even as a boy he met with obstacles: he was told he was too small, not fit for the congregation. The determined lad simply replied, “I am not going home.” That stubborn fidelity to a call from God became the rhythm of his whole life.

On 20 October 1940, the Feast of Christ the King, he made his first profession as a Salesian Brother, sealing his life in the Lord's service through manual labor and prayer.

Through Fire and Flight — The War Years

The Second World War erupted just as Ludvik's vocation was taking root. In 1941, Slovenia was torn apart by German, Italian, and Hungarian forces. Communist guerrillas struck terror by night; families vanished into the forests. In this chaos, young Brother Ludvik learned both fear and faith. He recalled vividly: “Our small Slovenia was divided by Germany, Italy,

and Hungary. At the same time, the Communist revolution began. The Communists came by night, taking influential people from their homes and shooting them dead in the forests.”

The Salesians managed small farms to feed the confreres in the cities, but by 1943, even these were attacked. On 12 September 1943, Ludvik was captured, bound with barbed wire, and forced to march with other prisoners. Providence intervened — a sympathetic guard loosened their bonds, whispering a chance of escape. “We ran in the dark, hungry, barefoot, not knowing where we went,” he wrote. “If I had known they were Communists, I would never have approached — but God, in His goodness, fed us. Glory to God!”

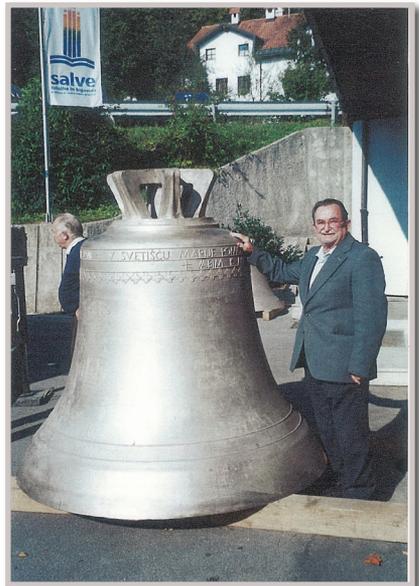
Eventually, he crossed into Italy, carrying little more than his habit and an unshaken faith. Many of his companions in Slovenia never returned. His journey became both an exile and a calling — a passage from the suffering of war to the service of peace.

The Missionary Call — Italy, Spain, and India

After surrendering to the British Army, Ludvik and a few Salesians found themselves in a camp in Italy. Divine intervention came again — through the Rector Major’s request, they were released to continue their religious life. Ludvik spent 1946 at Cumiana Agricultural School near Turin, honing the skills that would later bless thousands.

Then came the turning point. Fr. Carreño, Provincial of South India, was visiting Turin in 1947 and invited him to India. Ludvik accepted joyfully. Passing through Spain, he boarded the ship that would carry him to his new homeland. He arrived at Don Bosco Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, in 1947 — a new missionary in a new world. He once remarked with his characteristic candor: “I do not know English. I had no time in the beginning to sit and study. I know only what I learn as children learn — by hearing.”

And yet, in the language of work and kindness, he spoke eloquently everywhere he went.



Sagayathottam — A Garden of Our Lady

In 1950, the Provincial assigned Bro. Ludvik to a barren stretch of land in Uriyurkuppam, Tamil Nadu — what would become Sagayathottam, “Our Lady’s Garden.” It was nothing more than scrub and dust when he arrived. With unflagging energy and childlike faith, he cleared the soil, dug wells, planted trees, and built walls. The desert bloomed under his hands.

He filmed his efforts on small Super-8 reels, later transferred to video — a record of faith transforming earth. His method was simple: prayer, sweat, and ingenuity. Over fifteen years he turned Sagayathottam into a model agricultural training centre, the cradle of many Salesian Brothers’ formation in technical and agricultural apostolates.

Those who lived with him remember his stern humour and his fierce love for the land: “The soil is like the soul,” he would say, “if you take care of it, it will take care of you.”



Sulcorna — From Forest to Field

In 1965, Ludvik joined Fr. Giuseppe Moja at Sulcorna, Goa. There, 200 acres of dense forest awaited transformation. With primitive tools and missionary grit, they cut paths, built irrigation canals, and constructed bridges and dams. Ludvik’s inventive hands produced flourishing fields of pineapple, cashew, mango, and sugarcane. His home-made pineapple wine became famous across Goa — not for profit, but as a sign of God’s abundance.

Though never a businessman, he gave generously, sometimes to his own loss. His true joy was in creating, cultivating, and sharing. “God made the world beautiful,” he would laugh, “and man makes it dirty; I just try to make it clean again.” For fifteen years he toiled in Sulcorna, side by side with the youth he trained.

Nashik and the Novices

In 1980, he was sent to the new Salesian novitiate at Nashik. There, amid young men discerning their vocation, Bro. Ludvik found renewed purpose. He planted vineyards, started a piggery and dairy, and turned the barren campus into a green paradise. His earthy humour delighted the novices: “If you don’t eat it, I’ll give it to the pigs; if the pigs don’t eat it, I’ll give it back to you!”

Yet behind the humour was profound spirituality. He often reminded them, “Feel fool, fool feel,” mocking worldly pride. His prayer was steady, quiet, and constant. The novices saw in him the living example of Don Bosco’s ideal — a Brother who sanctified himself through work and cheerfulness.

Later Years in Goa and the Return Home

After fifteen fruitful years in Nashik, Bro. Ludvik returned to Goa, serving in Fatorda, Loutolim, and Odxel. Even in advancing age, his hands never rested. Gardens bloomed wherever he stayed; his laughter filled community tables. Though quick-tempered, he was even quicker to forgive. He prayed deeply, often lost in silent conversation with God before the Blessed Sacrament.

In 2004, age and health called him back to Slovenia, where he lived in a Salesian home for senior confreres. Fr. Ivo Coelho, visiting him there, wrote: “I cannot forget the beauty of the place, the abundance of food, and the hospitality. I began to understand Ludvik’s love affair with good, home-grown food.”

He lived peacefully among his own people, still remembering India with affection. His stories of Sagayathottam and Sulcorna filled the evenings of his old age.

A Life Harvested in Joy

Bro. Ludvik Zabret embodied the Salesian Brother’s vocation in its purest form — prayerful, hardworking, practical, humorous, and deeply united with God. He lived for God’s glory and for the good of others. His was a holiness born not in chapels or classrooms but in the furrows of the earth. He remains an icon of creative fidelity, of a lay religious whose sanctity was forged in service. His story spans war and peace, exile and homecoming, soil and spirit — a living testament that God can make saints out of farmers, builders, and dreamers.

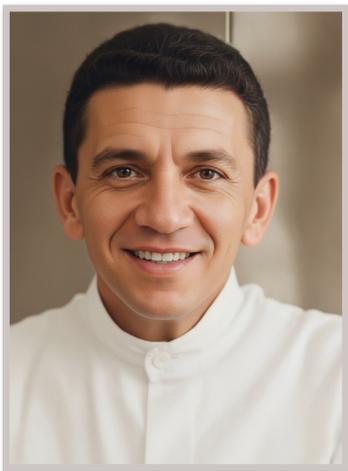
As we remember him, we echo the final words written about him: “God bless you, Bro. Ludvik, and thank you for being a blessing to us in this land of your providential mission.”



A Life of Discipline, Dedication, and Deep Faith: Fr. Eliseo Bianchi, SDB (1914-1991)

Faithful Servant Called Home

A “God must have decided He had waited long enough for the pleasure of his company in Heaven.” With these tender words, we recall the passing of Fr. Eliseo Bianchi, a Salesian of Don Bosco whose life was marked by total dedication, discipline, and love for God and youth. On 1 December 1991, the Lord called him home, just two months short of the 48th anniversary of his priestly ordination.



For months, Fr. Bianchi had borne the burden of failing health — asthma and a weak heart confined him largely to his room in Don Bosco, Lonavla. Even in illness, he displayed a spirit of fortitude that had characterized his entire life. Reluctant at first to accept help, he eventually welcomed with gratitude the generous service of the post-XII students who assisted him by day and night. When hospitalization became inevitable, he chose to remain close to his community, first in Lonavla, then at Holy Spirit Hospital, Mumbai, where he peacefully breathed his last.

His funeral, held on 3 December 1991, drew a large gathering of Salesians, Sisters, students, and friends who came to thank God for the gift of his life and to bid farewell to a confrere remembered for his integrity, intelligence, and industriousness.

Pioneer, Teacher, and Craftsman

Born on 22 August 1914 in Lumezzane, Italy, to Luigi Bianchi and Maria Bonomi, young Eliseo was drawn early to Don Bosco’s spirit. At only sixteen, he left his homeland for the missions of India — a gesture of courage and faith that defined the rest of his life. He entered the novitiate in Shillong in 1930 and made his first profession on 8 December 1931.

His early assignments were in Krishnagar, Shillong, and Gauhati. During the Second World War, while interned at Dehra Dun, he continued his theological studies and was ordained priest on 30 January 1944. His first

posting as a priest was at Don Bosco Vellore, followed by many fruitful years at Matunga, where his influence on generations of students was deep and enduring.

When he came to Lonavla in 1962, he quickly became one of its pioneers. The chronicles of that time record him as a “model of a normal-work Salesian for our aspirants.” He built iron beds, church benches, and even a shrine to Our Lady — cutting, drilling, and assembling with his own hands. His resourcefulness saved the house much expense and inspired the young to find holiness in hard work.

His creative energy extended to every field: he founded the 59th Mawal Scout Troop, trained gymnasts, built apparatus with his own tools, and guided boys with firm yet fatherly zeal. His students still recall his precision in teaching Latin and Catechism — a man who demanded excellence because he lived it himself. For him, the classroom was as sacred as the chapel.

Lover of Music, Theatre, and Storytelling

Few Salesians possessed as wide a range of gifts as Fr. Bianchi. To call him “talented” would be an understatement. He was at once a musician, dramatist, storyteller, teacher, and craftsman. Under his baton, music in Lonavla flourished. Many remember his humorous dismissal, “Go play ping-pong!” to those who lacked a musical ear — a quip that still brings smiles decades later.

When he sat at the organ, his playing lifted hearts heavenward. The band he conducted and the choirs he trained were marked by precision and fervour. He also loved the theatre, spending hours training the boys to help them discover their hidden gifts. During long monsoon days, his storytelling lit up the “Nazir Bungalow” — even the superiors joined the boys to listen as his voice, gestures, and expressions brought tales to life.

A Spirit of Prayer and Charity

Behind his strict exterior lay a deeply spiritual man. Fr. Bianchi was disciplined, austere with himself, yet generous with others. His room was simple, clean, and orderly. Every Thursday, he drove to town to distribute bread and alms to the poor — a practice that spoke volumes of his compassion.

His piety was profound and practical. Even when illness confined him, he never failed to celebrate Mass or recite his breviary. Often, he was seen gazing at the crucifix in silent prayer, tears flowing as he united his suffering with that of Christ. His rosary never left his hands. His devotion to Our Blessed Mother and fidelity to Don Bosco remained constant until the end. At the Propaganda Office in his final years, he worked tirelessly typing hundreds of letters to benefactors each morning, offering prayers for them

as he worked. His industry was prayer in action, an expression of love for the mission and for those who supported it.

Gratitude for a Life Well-Lived

Fr. Eliseo Bianchi's 77 years were a testimony to what grace can do in a soul that gives itself completely to God. He served in numerous houses — Vellore, Matunga, Yercaud, Kurla, Borivali, Baroda, and finally Lonavla — leaving behind the fragrance of zeal, precision, and prayer.

A music composer and choir master par excellence, artist and set designer, carpenter, media creator, electrician; it seemed like he was a jack of all trades and master of them all. His knowledge of gymnastics, scouting and the outdoors was such that one began to discover abilities in oneself that one never knew one had. He taught you to understand and believe in yourself and to give your best. Being with Fr. Bianchi meant in some sense you inherited something of him that made him unforgettable.

He spent most of his years at Don Bosco Matunga and Lonavla. Every boarder in these institutions benefited from his training in the school brass band, playing classical, jazz or other genres of music.

He was a Salesian who showed that holiness consists not only in great works but in the faithful completion of small duties. His life teaches us that love for God and young people finds expression in craftsmanship, creativity, and constancy. If there was a Salesian who could come close to a perfect 10 with regard to talent and abilities, it was Fr. Eliseo Bianchi. He was highly disciplined, versatile in talents and one who would keep raising the bar of perfection really high. Mediocrity was not in his dictionary and was definitely not tolerated.

As we recall him, we echo the words of his confreres: "How loving God was to him! He often expressed praise and gratitude for all that the Lord had done. He loved Him deeply and gave Him all that he had to give."

The Province of St Francis Xavier, Mumbai, remains profoundly grateful for this noble son of Don Bosco. May the Lord whom he served with heart and hand now grant him eternal rest and joy among the saints.

"Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master." (Mt 25:21)

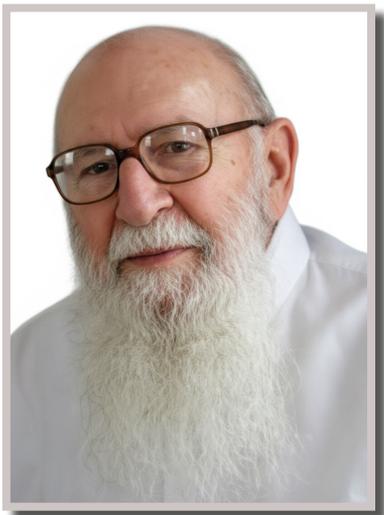


A Life of Quiet Holiness and Enduring Joy:

Fr. Santino Mondini, SDB (1913-2007)

Family of Faith and Vocations

ABorn on November 1, 1913, in Cislago, Italy, Santino Mondini—whose name means “Little Saint”—was the fourth of five children in a devout farming family. His parents, Peter and Rachele Mondini, raised a household steeped in faith and service. Two of his siblings became Salesian priests, and two became nuns, making Santino’s path to religious life a natural continuation of a family legacy. Though never more than an average student, Santino was known for his obedience, athleticism, and prodigious memory. He won the Diocesan Catechism competition in Saronno and loved cycling, races, and outdoor games. His love for Italy’s culture remained with him throughout his life—he once said his favourite meal was “*spaghetti, risotto alla Milanese, and good wine.*”



The Call to Missions and the Salesian Path

Santino’s ambition was bold: he wanted to become a bishop. Inspired by an uncle who was a priest and an aunt who was a nun, he initially applied to the Cardinal Cagliero Missionary Institute at Ivrea. Though accepted, he hesitated, praying the rosary and waiting for clarity.

After finishing school at 14, he worked as a carpenter, painter, and weaver, and joined Catholic Action, which was then flourishing. He recalled singing “*Noi vogliam Dio*” (“We want God”) when Fascists interrupted their gathering. “We obeyed them since we were frightened, they would beat us up,” he said with characteristic simplicity.

In 1930, during a retreat at Gorla Maggiore, Santino made a firm decision to go to the missions. Initially accepted by the PIME Fathers in Milan as a brother, he declined, wanting to become a priest. His assistant parish priest, Fr. Biago Pagani, took him to the Salesians at Ivrea, where his true journey began.

On October 7, 1934, he received the missionary crucifix in Turin, and on December 27, he left for India.

Novitiate and Formation in India

Santino arrived in Mumbai on January 7, 1935, and began his novitiate at Tirupattur on January 10, under the legendary Fr. Carreno. He recalled:

“My novitiate year was a wonderful experience. Though we were novices from 10 different countries, we were all very united. There was no electricity, no water, no proper place to study. The refectory was open and when the wind blew, all the dust would settle on our food. But all this did not make us unhappy.”

He made his first profession on January 26, 1936 and began studying philosophy. In 1938, struggling with Latin, he asked to become a Salesian Brother, believing himself unworthy of priesthood. But the Provincial encouraged him to continue, and Santino persevered.

From 1939 to 1942, he did his practical training at Vellore, where he struggled with Tamil. He recalled: *“My practical training was tough. I didn’t know Tamil properly. Cl. Raj Bagavandha and Joseph Duca helped me a lot.”* He made his perpetual profession on January 29, 1942 and began theological studies—only to be interrupted by World War II.

Internment and Ordination During War

As an Italian national, Fr. Mondini was interned in camps at Deoli and Dehradun from 1942 to 1945. Despite the hardship, Salesian life continued. There were classes, exams, professions, and even sacred orders. A bishop in the camp administered minor orders and the diaconate.

Fr. Mondini was ordained a priest on October 11, 1945, at Tirupattur, by Msgr Louis Mathias. His first posting was as Prefect of Studies at Vellore, where he began his long and fruitful ministry.

Early Ministry and Humble Leadership

In 1952, he was sent as Administrator to Tirupattur, where he nearly sent away a young lad named Joaquim D’Souza—a mistake later corrected. Fr. Joaquim, who would become Regional Councillor for South Asia, often teased Fr. Mondini about the incident, and Santino would blush and apologize like a child.



He remained in Tirupattur for ten years, then moved to Matunga in 1962 as confessor, and later Administrator. In 1976, he was posted to Kurla, where he would spend the rest of his life.

Kurla: A Final Obedience and Lifelong Love

In 1976, Fr. Santino Mondini was appointed Administrator at St Joseph's Technical School, Kurla. Following the sudden death of Fr. Cerato, he also took on the role of confessor—a ministry that would define the final chapter of his life.

Kurla was not an attractive place. It was marshy, noisy, polluted, and lacked the charm of other Salesian houses. But Fr. Mondini made it his home. He once said: *“Father, I am very happy here. I have been here only 26 years. Don't change me.”*

His love for Kurla was not about comfort—it was about presence, community, and mission. He was always available, always cheerful, and always praying. His long white beard, warm smile, and gentle presence became iconic among the youth and staff.

Confessor, Benefactor, and Friend of the Poor

Fr. Mondini was a tireless confessor, bringing peace and healing to countless souls. His words—*“God bless you”* and *“I will pray for you”*—were more than phrases. They were lifelines of hope, spoken with sincerity and love.

He was also a generous benefactor, quietly supporting missions in Gujarat, formation houses, lepers, the homeless, and various Salesian projects. His fundraising was discreet but effective. He followed everything happening in the province and gave wherever he could.

His generosity was matched by his humility. When asked to take on new roles, he often declined with childlike frankness. In 1977, when invited to attend a course for spiritual directors, he replied: *“I do not feel like attending. I am too old, not interested. I prefer to be humble, useless, forgotten, and to work and pray in my dear house of Kurla.”*

In 1984, when asked to go to Pune as confessor, he wrote: *“I am not at peace and cannot concentrate. I feel I am being sent to a cloister. I feel too old and not well enough. The responsibility would be too great and would shorten my life.”*

Fr. Mondini was not avoiding responsibility—he was embracing



his vocation as he understood it: to be present, prayerful, and faithful in the place God had planted him.

Recognition and Humble Gratitude

In 1988, Fr. Mondini was conferred the Civil Italian Honour of “Chevalier”, and again recognized in 1990 for his missionary service to the poor and marginalized. The title was equivalent to a knighthood, and he could rightly be called Cavaliere Mondini, or Sir Santino Mondini.

But he never sought honours. He lived simply, served quietly, and gave generously. His joy came from being with Jesus, serving the young, and living the Salesian spirit.

Final Years: Suffering and Sanctity

As he aged, Fr. Mondini suffered much. He was anointed three times, and often asked God to take him to heaven. But he remained cheerful, prayerful, and grateful. He said: *“I am not in the best of health but I’m not alone in my illness. People visit me, they comfort me—I smile and assure them of my prayers and we part—a little happier for the day.”*

He described his new routine: *“Press, poke, pinch, push; breathe in, breathe out; bathe, blood tests, I.V. drips, tablets. Doesn’t it leave you breathless? It’s difficult! The work routine was easier, but I obey the doctor and the nurse. They say I am making progress. Naturally! Don Bosco’s Kurla is a place of progress. To be here is to progress!”*

Even in suffering, he found humour, hope, and holiness.

He cherished two things above all:

1. His daily meeting with Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
2. His Salesian community—to listen, to laugh, to talk, and to pray

He said: *“They are close to my heart and I am deeply grateful for all they do for me. It makes me feel good to be a Salesian.”*

A Life Beautifully Lived

Fr. Mondini lived out his life as it had been given to him—and he lived it beautifully. He loved God, Mary, Don Bosco, and the young. He enjoyed the good things and good people of God’s creation. He was a wonderful follower of Jesus Christ, full of fidelity, hard work, Marian devotion, and Salesian joy.

As Fr. Joaquim D’Souza wrote: *“Fr. Mondini is surely one of the patriarchs of the province, for from such qualities flows the good health and strength of the province.”*

He died on December 21, 2007, at St Joseph’s Technical Institute, Kurla, peacefully, faithfully, and surrounded by love.

Legacy: From Santino to Santo

Fr. Santino Mondini left footprints in the sand—gentle, firm, and unforgettable. His life continues to inspire all who seek to serve with humility, joy, and love.

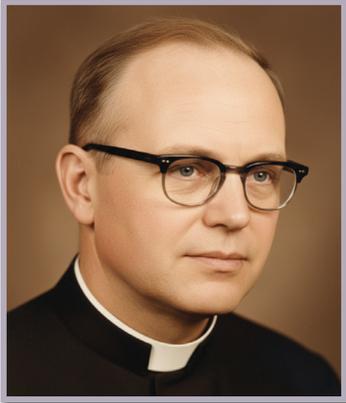
As one tribute said: “*Perhaps up there, he is called ‘Santo’. The Little Saint.*”



A Missionary of Vocations and Pastoral Gentleness:

Fr. John Giacomello, SDB (1911-1985)

On 26 June 1985, in his beloved homeland of Italy, Fr. John Giacomello, SDB—affectionately known as Fr. Jack—returned to the Lord after a long life of missionary generosity, pastoral warmth, and deep spiritual dedication. His journey from the quiet hills of Almissano to the teeming streets of Mumbai mirrored the story of the early Salesian missionaries: men of hope, courage, and faith who brought Don Bosco’s dream to life in faraway lands.



A Call Born in Simplicity

John Giacomello was born on 11 November 1911 in Almissano, Italy, into a family rich in faith and work ethic. From an early age, he displayed a gentle nature and an innate ability to draw others with kindness. The Salesian world soon became his home, and after his novitiate, he offered himself for the missions in India—a destination that, for many young Italians of his time, symbolized both adventure and sacrifice.

Arriving in India as a young Salesian, he continued his philosophical studies while serving at Tardeo, Mumbai. Those were years of youthful energy and humble beginnings—years that would shape his missionary heart. He laboured quietly, serving the boys entrusted to his care, learning local languages, and absorbing the vibrant faith of the Indian people.

But history intervened. The outbreak of World War II brought hardship to many missionaries of foreign origin. Fr. Giacomello was among those interned first at Mawlai, and later in concentration camps at Rajasthan and Dehradun. Far from breaking his spirit, these years of confinement became a school of endurance and prayer. When he was finally ordained a priest on 5 June 1941, it was with the conviction that the Lord can bring grace even from suffering.

A Builder of Institutions and Vocations

After his release, Fr. John spent a short period in Vellore, before beginning

the defining chapter of his life at Don Bosco Matunga, Mumbai. For twenty-three years he served there—first as administrator and later as principal—alongside great pioneers like Fr. Maschio and Fr. Cassaroti. Those who lived under his leadership recall a man of balance and benevolence. He combined efficiency with empathy, discipline with understanding, and authority with affection.

As administrator, Fr. John’s meticulous attention to detail kept the vast institution running smoothly. As principal, he was more than an educator—he was a father. Many Salesians later traced their vocation to the gentle influence of Fr. Giacomello, who had a gift for noticing goodness in the young and encouraging them toward priestly and religious life. His ability to “make others believe in their own goodness” was his truest legacy.

In recognition of his abilities, he was appointed the first Vice-Provincial of the Mumbai Province. In this role he accompanied young confreres with quiet wisdom and fraternal understanding. He believed that Salesian authority was best expressed not in commands, but in presence—being among the young, listening to them, and walking beside them.

Pastoral Heart and Confessor’s Ears

In April 1959, health concerns forced Fr. Giacomello to return to Italy for treatment. Yet, his missionary heart longed for India, and by 1964 he was back—resuming work with renewed zeal. Over the next two decades, he served as Rector at Matunga and Kurla, Parish Priest at Wadala, and later as confessor and spiritual guide in Pune and Borivli.

He became renowned as a confessor of remarkable gentleness. Cardinals, priests, religious, and laypeople alike sought his counsel. Cardinal Valerian Gracias himself considered Fr. Giacomello his regular confessor—a testament to the priest’s spiritual depth and discretion. Those who knelt before him found not judgment, but mercy; not impatience, but understanding. He had mastered the art of “listening with the heart.”

He often spent long hours with people—hearing confessions, offering counsel, or simply being a quiet presence of reassurance. His confreres joked affectionately that he never made it to lunch before three o’clock—so absorbed was he in attending to souls. It was a habit that spoke volumes of his priorities: the person before him was always more important than the clock.

Suffering Offered for Vocations

In his later years, arteriosclerosis limited his mobility. Walking became painful, and his once-tireless missionary body began to weaken. Yet his spirit never waned. Returning finally to Italy for rest, he was lovingly cared for by his sister. She later recalled that her brother offered all his sufferings

“for the increase of vocations in India”—a final gesture of love for the land and people he had served for nearly half a century.

Fr. Giacomello’s death on 26 June 1985 closed a chapter of pioneering Salesian history, but it also opened a new one in heaven. His memory continues to inspire generations of Salesians and lay collaborators who have inherited his quiet zeal for souls.

The Gentle Missionary Spirit

To speak of Fr. John Giacomello is to recall a man who personified the spirit of Don Bosco—cheerful, patient, and deeply pastoral. He was reluctant to dismiss a boarder, preferring to give “just one more chance.” He believed that every boy deserved the opportunity to begin again. Parents loved him for his approachability; confreres admired him for his steadiness; superiors trusted him for his loyalty.

His faith was simple yet strong. His prayer life, steady and silent, was the hidden power behind his effectiveness. Those who lived with him remember his ready smile, his unhurried pace, and the peace that seemed to surround him. He never sought prominence, yet his influence was profound.

Fr. John Giacomello was, above all, a missionary of vocations—a priest who formed hearts by being present, who inspired by example, and who evangelized through kindness. His life teaches that holiness is not found in grand gestures but in the daily fidelity of love given quietly, generously, and without measure.

A Legacy That Endures

When we look back on the early Salesians who built the Province of Mumbai, we find among them men like Fr. Giacomello—men whose greatness was hidden in gentleness. His years of service at Matunga, Kurla, Wadala, Pune, and Borivli left deep roots of pastoral care and educational excellence.

Today, his spirit endures in every Salesian who greets a student with kindness, who spends time listening rather than lecturing, who believes that every young person has a seed of goodness waiting to grow. Fr. John’s life reminds us that the most enduring missionary work is the quiet cultivation of hearts.

May his example continue to bless the Salesian family. And may his prayer—for more vocations in India—be answered abundantly, as young men and women rise to follow Christ in the footsteps of Don Bosco, just as he did so faithfully.

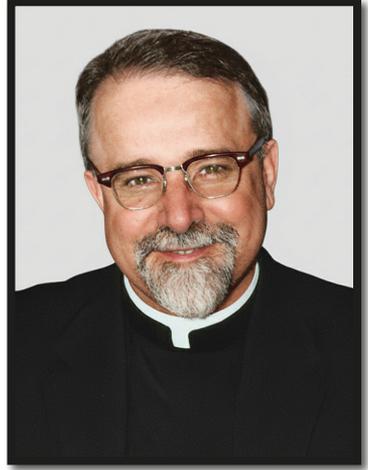
“Vocations are born where love is lived.” Fr. John Giacomello, SDB, lived that love fully—gentle in manner, steadfast in faith, tireless in service, and radiant in hope.

A Missionary of Marian Flame and Apostolic Fire:

Fr. Orpheus Mantovani, SDB (1911-1967)

Humble Beginning in Italy

The story of Fr. Orpheus Mantovani begins in the quiet town of Mena di Castagnaro, Italy, where he was born on October 9, 1911. His early life was marked by hardship and sacrifice. Before entering religious life, he worked tirelessly to support his impoverished family, embodying from a young age the virtues of selflessness and duty that would later define his priesthood. In 1930, he entered the aspirantate of Ivrea as a “Son of Mary.” This title was not merely symbolic—it was prophetic. His life would be steeped in Marian devotion, and his apostolate would be shaped by the maternal spirit of Mary Help of Christians. Even in formation, he stood out for his seriousness, discipline, and spiritual depth.



A Missionary Calling: India Beckons

After completing his aspirantate, Mantovani made a bold request: he asked to be sent to the missions. His superiors responded by assigning him to the newly erected Salesian Province of South India, a land far from his native Italy, but one that would become his true home.

His first ten years in India were spent at Tirupattur, the cradle of the South Indian Province. There, he completed his novitiate and philosophical studies, and was appointed assistant to the novices. Those who trained under him recall the intensity of his formation style—firm, demanding, and deeply Salesian. He instilled in his charges a love for Don Bosco, a spirit of sacrifice, and a burning zeal for souls.

Mantovani’s formation work was not just about discipline—it was about shaping missionaries. He believed that the Salesian vocation was a call to heroic charity, and he lived that ideal with unwavering commitment.

Ordination and Apostolic Beginnings

In 1944, Mantovani was ordained a priest by Archbishop Louis Mathias, a moment that marked the beginning of his formal apostolate. His first assignment was as assistant parish priest in Polur, where he quickly distinguished himself by his pastoral zeal and love for the people.

After just two years, he was appointed novice master, a role in which he formed four generations of Salesians. His influence on these young men was profound. He was not merely a teacher—he was a spiritual father. His training was thorough, his expectations high, and his love for the Salesian charism contagious.

Many of his former novices would later recall his insistence on prayer, discipline, and Marian devotion. He taught them that to be a Salesian was to be a man of God, a servant of the poor, and a child of Mary.

Parish Priest of St. Francis Xavier's, Madras

From 1950 to 1963, Fr. Mantovani served as parish priest of St. Francis Xavier's Church in Madras. This period marked a turning point in his ministry. His pastoral work flourished, and his love for the poor found new expression.

He was not content with routine parish administration. He saw the parish as a centre of evangelization, social upliftment, and Marian devotion. Thousands of people received both spiritual and material assistance from him. He organized missions, reconciled lapsed Catholics, and mobilized lay collaborators.

His health, however, began to decline. Concerned for his well-being, his superiors sent him to Italy for rest, and later to the United States to raise funds for his mission. But his heart remained in India, and he returned in 1964, eager to resume his apostolate.

Marian Devotion: “*De Maria Nunquam Satis*”

If there was one spiritual theme that defined Fr. Mantovani's life, it was his intense devotion to Mary Help of Christians. His motto, “*De Maria nunquam satis*”—“Of Mary, never enough”—was not a mere slogan. It was the guiding principle of his ministry.

As novice master, he encouraged the copying of the Marian Calendar, the celebration of Marian feasts with small academies, and the daily offering of mortifications in honour of Our Lady. He urged the saying of multiple rosaries and constantly preached about Mary's intercession and power.

His efforts bore fruit. He founded and promoted the Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians, enrolling 70,000 members across India. He also began publishing a monthly leaflet titled “*Favours and Graces through*

Mary Help of Christians”, which reached 11,000 subscribers.

His parish in Madras became a centre of Marian devotion. The name of Mary was constantly on his lips—in sermons, conversations, and writings. He believed that Mary was the surest path to Christ, and he lived that belief with fervour.

A fellow Salesian once remarked, “*Fr. Mantovani is perhaps the greatest lover of Our Lady we have had in this Province, and in her name, he worked real miracles.*” It is no coincidence that he died during the novena to Mary Help of Christians, in the month of May. His final words—“*Mamma mia, tienimi per mano*” (“Dear Mother, hold me by the hand”)—were a poignant testament to his lifelong reliance on Mary.

A Man of Fire and Tenderness

Fr. Mantovani was known for his strong and impetuous temperament. He was demanding, intense, and relentless in his work. Those who lived near him often found it hard to keep pace with his energy. He expected excellence, and he gave nothing less himself.

Yet beneath this fiery exterior was a heart of deep tenderness. He loved the poor, the sick, and the abandoned with a father’s love. He saw Christ in the suffering, and he believed that the Salesian mission was to be with those most in need.

He was like a mountain torrent—powerful, unstoppable, and life-giving. He harnessed his energies for the glory of God and the good of souls. His apostolate was not just effective—it was transformative.

A Return to Mission: Tambaram and Vyasarpadi

After his brief rest in Italy and fundraising trip to the United States, Fr. Mantovani returned to India in 1964, reinvigorated and ready to resume his apostolate. He was first assigned to Tambaram, a parish on the outskirts of Madras. But it was in February 1965, when he was sent to Vyasarpadi, that his missionary spirit found its fullest expression.

Vyasarpadi was one of the poorest quarters of Madras—a place marked by slums, sickness, and suffering. For many, it was a forgotten corner of the city. But for Fr. Mantovani, it was a vineyard ripe for harvest. He embraced the assignment with joy, seeing in it a providential opportunity to serve Christ in the poor.

He remained in Vyasarpadi for just over two years. Yet in that short span, he accomplished what most could not in a lifetime.

The Eight Beatitudes Centre: A Sanctuary of Mercy

In Vyasarpadi, Fr. Mantovani founded the “Eight Beatitudes” Social

Welfare Centre, a name that reflected his deep love for the Gospel and its call to serve the least among us. The Centre was not a grand institution—it was an improvised haven, built with limited resources but overflowing with compassion.

The Centre included:

- A hospital, always full, where the sick and dying received care and dignity.
- A dispensary, serving nearly 200 people daily, offering medicine and hope.
- A leper colony, housing 140 inmates, many of whom had been rejected by society.
- An elementary school, educating over 400 slum children, and providing them with daily meals.

Fr. Mantovani's vision was holistic. He believed that evangelization must include healing, education, and social upliftment. He did not separate the spiritual from the material. For him, the Gospel was incarnate in acts of mercy.

He declined offers to serve in wealthier parishes, stating simply, "*There were not enough poor people there.*" His heart belonged to the suffering, and he believed that the Salesian mission was to be with those most in need.

A Tireless Worker for Souls

Fr. Mantovani's zeal for souls was legendary. He embodied Don Bosco's motto: "*Da mihi animas, coetera tolle*"—"Give me souls, take away the rest." His thirst for salvation was unquenchable.

He often sacrificed sleep, food, and rest to reconcile lapsed Catholics, visit slums, and preach the Gospel. He was known to spend hours pleading with individuals to return to God. One story recount how he argued with a man until past midnight, finally leading him to repentance.

He mobilized lay collaborators and Salesian Cooperators, forming branches wherever he served. He ensured they were active in both name and deed. He believed that the apostolate was not the work of priests alone—it was a shared mission.

His pastoral style was direct, passionate, and deeply personal. He knew his parishioners by name, understood their struggles, and walked with them in their pain. He was not a distant administrator—he was a shepherd.

The Final Days: A Life Poured Out

Despite his declining health, Fr. Mantovani refused to slow down. He maintained a punishing schedule, often working late into the night. In his final week, he appeared pale and tired, but dismissed concerns with his usual bravado: "*I am as strong as a lion.*"

On May 19, 1967, after celebrating Mass with difficulty, he retired to his room. By midday, he was vomiting blood and was rushed to a clinic. Though initial treatment seemed promising, a violent relapse occurred by evening. He was taken to the General Hospital but passed away peacefully just as he was being taken from the ambulance—consoled by the presence of a fellow priest.

Strangely, at that very moment, the clock at the provincial house stopped ticking. It was 21:28. His death was sudden, but not surprising. He had poured himself out completely, living every moment for God and for souls. His passing was a fulfilment of Don Bosco's words: "*When a Salesian dies at his post working for souls, the congregation achieves another triumph.*"

Tributes from Across the Church

The news of Fr. Mantovani's death sent ripples across India and beyond. Tributes poured in from bishops, religious superiors, and lay collaborators. The Rector Major wrote:

"It is not possible for me to sing the praises of this generous Salesian. The thousands of people whom he has benefitted are and ever will be his best eulogy."

Bishop Ferrando of Shillong called him: "*A hero of Christian charity.*"

Bishop David Marianayagam hailed him as: "*An extraordinary minister of Christ's charity.*"

Fr. Varaprasadam, S.J., Jesuit Provincial of South India, wrote:

"The good Father has been an admirable symbol of Christ's love of the poor and of the suffering. Your Religious Family has had the unique distinction of having had among its members this great missionary who has sacrificed himself for the people of the land of his adoption."

These tributes were not mere formalities—they were heartfelt acknowledgments of a life lived in radical fidelity to the Gospel.

Legacy: A Call to Imitation

Fr. Mantovani's life is not just a biography—it is a call. A call to every Salesian, every priest, every Christian to live with courage, compassion, and unwavering dedication.

He showed that holiness is not found in comfort, but in sacrifice. That the Gospel is not a theory, but a lived reality. That Mary Help of Christians is not a distant figure, but a tender mother who walks with us.

His legacy lives on in the thousands he served, the institutions he founded, and the hearts he touched. His story is a reminder that the Church is at her best when she is with the poor, the suffering, and the forgotten.



The Teacher and Preacher:

Fr. Peter Gatti, SDB (1911-1995)

On August 7, 1995, in the quiet of an Italian summer, Fr. Peter Gatti, SDB, breathed his last. Though he passed away in his homeland, his heart and legacy remained firmly rooted in India, the land he had served with unwavering love and joyful dedication for nearly seven decades. His life was a tapestry woven with threads of wit, warmth, wisdom, and an unshakable Salesian spirit.



Roots in Faith and Family

Born on March 16, 1911, in Cernusco sul Naviglio, a picturesque town near Milan, Italy, Peter Gatti was the fifth child of Giuseppe Gatti and Maria Valli. His family, though modest in means, was rich in faith and love. Their generosity extended beyond blood ties—they adopted an Egyptian girl, a gesture that reflected their openness and compassion.

Peter's early years were marked by the hardships of war and famine, experiences that shaped his empathy and resilience. One poignant memory he often recalled was of his mother,

who, when questioned by a local mayor about having so many children during such difficult times, replied with unwavering faith: “*God gave them to me.*” This simple yet profound response encapsulated the spirit of the Gatti household—a home where faith was not just professed but lived.

Even as a child, Peter displayed leadership and charisma. He served as an altar boy and class monitor, roles that hinted at the path he would eventually walk. At the tender age of 13, he joined the Salesian Aspirantate at Ivrea, setting his feet on the road to religious life. His decision to become a missionary was not without sacrifice. Having studied carpentry, Peter had already begun contributing to the family income. His mother, though heartbroken, surrendered him to God's call, saying, “*I do not want trouble with God.*” His father, however, struggled with the decision and sadly passed away before witnessing his son's ordination.

A Young Missionary in a New Land

On December 24, 1928, a 17-year-old Peter Gatti arrived in Bombay, en route to Assam, India. Described as “*thin as a blade of grass*,” he was nonetheless brimming with zeal. This was not merely a geographical journey—it was a leap of faith, a total surrender to the missionary ideal that had captured his heart.

His early formation continued in Shillong, where he studied philosophy and later theology, interrupted only by a stint of practical training in Bombay. On September 30, 1939, he was ordained a priest by Msgr. Stephen Fernando, choosing as his life’s motto: “*To share your bread with the poor.*” This scriptural ideal would become the cornerstone of his ministry.

War, Internment, and Witness

The outbreak of World War II brought unexpected trials. As an Italian national in British-ruled India, Fr. Gatti was interned in Dehradun along with other missionaries. For six long years, he endured the confinement of the internment camp. Yet, even in captivity, his spirit remained unbroken. He used the time to deepen his theological knowledge, teach fellow internees, and minister to their spiritual needs. This period, though challenging, became a crucible that refined his character and deepened his commitment to his vocation.

A Teacher, Preacher, and Poet

With the war’s end in 1945, Fr. Gatti resumed his missionary work with renewed vigour. His assignments took him across the length and breadth of India—from Egmore and Nagercoil in Madras to Don Bosco High School, Matunga, where he served from 1952 to 1961. His roles were many: Rector, Parish Priest, Professor of Theology, Principal, and language teacher. He taught English and Latin, and under his guidance, the first Latin scholarship was awarded at Matunga—a testament to his academic rigor and passion for classical languages.

Fr. Gatti’s teaching was never dry or pedantic. His flair for language, love for poetry, and sharp wit made his classes memorable. He was a master of puns and poetic toasts, often using humour to disarm and engage. His students and confrères recall his ability to turn even mundane moments into opportunities for laughter and learning.

A Heart for the Congregation and the Country

Fr. Gatti’s love for India was not superficial. He embraced the culture, the people, and the mission with his whole heart. In a profound gesture of belonging, he took Indian citizenship, affirming his desire to live and die

among the people he had come to serve. This act was more than symbolic—it was a declaration of identity, a missionary’s vow made visible. His deep devotion to Our Lady and his Salesian spirituality were evident in every aspect of his life. He contributed regularly to the Don Bosco’s Madonna magazine, sharing stories that were both spiritually enriching and delightfully humorous. His sermons, especially at the Shrine of Our Lady in Panjim, were known for their clarity, conviction, and pastoral warmth.

The Goan Chapter: A Missionary’s Second Home

In 1975, Fr. Peter Gatti was assigned to Goa, a region that would become his spiritual home for the final two decades of his life. He first served as Rector of Don Bosco, Fatorda, where his leadership was marked by a blend of discipline and deep pastoral care. His presence was magnetic—students, staff, and parishioners alike were drawn to his infectious joy, sharp intellect, and fatherly warmth.

Later, he moved to Don Bosco, Panjim, where he spent the last 15 years of his life as Director of the Hostel and English teacher. Even in his advanced years, Fr. Gatti remained active, teaching with the same enthusiasm that had defined his earlier decades. His classes were more than lessons—they were encounters with a man who had made education a vocation of the heart.

His sermons at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Panjim became a spiritual anchor for many. Parishioners recall how his homilies, though simple in language, were profound in meaning. He had the rare ability to connect theology with everyday life, often using stories, humour, and poetry to illuminate the Gospel. His words lingered long after Mass had ended, not because they were grand, but because they were genuine.

A Pen Dipped in Prayer and Poetry

Fr. Gatti’s literary gifts were another hallmark of his ministry. He was a regular contributor to the Don Bosco’s Madonna magazine, a publication that reached thousands across India and beyond. His articles were a delightful mix of spiritual insight, humorous anecdotes, and poetic reflections. He had a way of making the sacred accessible, of showing that holiness could be joyful, even playful.

His poetic toasts at community gatherings were legendary. Whether welcoming a new confrère or bidding farewell to a departing one, Fr. Gatti would craft verses that were witty, warm, and deeply personal. These moments, though light-hearted, were expressions of a deeper truth: that community life, when lived in love, is itself a form of evangelization.

A Man of Contrasts and Compassion

Fr. Gatti was not without his quirks. He was known to have a quick temper, which could flare up unexpectedly. But those who knew him well understood that beneath the occasional outburst lay a heart of gold. His anger was never malicious; it was the frustration of a man who cared deeply—about people, about excellence, about the mission.

He was affectionate and expressive, never shy to show his love for his confrères. He would often greet them with a warm embrace or a humorous quip, reminding them that joy is a hallmark of the Salesian vocation. His presence in a room could lift spirits, his laughter was contagious, and his concern for others was sincere.

A Salesian to the Core

Fr. Gatti's life was a living embodiment of Don Bosco's charism. He believed in the power of education, presence, and pastoral care. He saw every student not just as a learner, but as a soul to be nurtured. His classrooms were places of formation, not just instruction. His hostels were homes, not just dormitories.

His decision to become an Indian citizen was a profound act of solidarity. It was not merely a legal formality—it was a missionary's vow, a declaration that he belonged to the people he served. In doing so, he transcended the boundaries of nationality and became, in the truest sense, a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

The Final Journey

In July 1995, after years of tireless service, Fr. Gatti was sent to Italy for rest and medical treatment. His confrères hoped it would be a temporary absence, a brief sojourn before his return to the land he loved. But God had other plans.

On August 7, 1995, Fr. Peter Gatti passed away in Italy, far from the shores of India, but never far from the hearts of those he had touched. His death marked the end of an era, but not the end of his influence. His memory lives on in the countless lives he shaped, the communities he built, and the love he sowed.

A Legacy of Light

Fr. Gatti's legacy is not measured in buildings or titles, but in relationships—in the students who found their voice in his classrooms, in the confrères who found a brother in his embrace, in the faithful who found God in his words. He was a missionary of joy, a teacher of truth, a poet of the heart, and above all, a priest of the people.

His life reminds us that the mission is not just about doing, but about being—being present, being joyful, being faithful. In a world often marked by cynicism and division, Fr. Gatti stood as a beacon of hope, humor, and holiness.

A Final Word of Gratitude

In the words of Fr. Joaquim D’Souza, then Provincial:

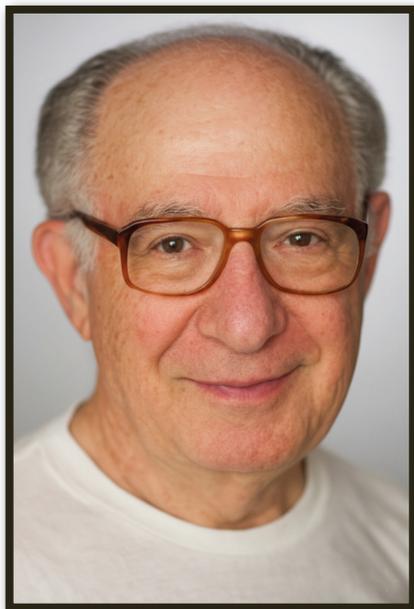
“For the beautiful gifts of heart and mind, which he put entirely at the service of God and the Congregation in his long life of 67 years in India, we owe him a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you, dear Fr. Gatti, for the friendship and love shared with us, for having chosen to become one of us as an Indian citizen, so as always to live and work in your adopted country in life. In death you are not separated from us, although you died and are buried in your own country of birth. Time and distance cannot keep us apart. Till then, may the Lord enfold you in his love, goodbye and thanks ever so much.”



“No Problem, Coraggio!”

– The Gentle Strength of Fr. Daniel Venia, SDB (1930-1995)

On the morning of December 20, 1995, in Rome, as the world prepared for Christmas, Fr. Daniel Venia, SDB, quietly slipped into eternity. His passing, just days before his Golden Jubilee of religious profession, was a moment of profound loss for the Salesian family in India and beyond. Yet, in the silence of his departure, there echoed the gentle refrain that had defined his life: *“No Problem. Coraggio!”*



A Salesian Heritage from Sicily

Born on April 14, 1930, in Bronte, a town nestled in the shadow of Mount Etna in Sicily, Daniel Venia grew up in a home steeped in Salesian spirituality. His uncle, Giuseppe Venia, was among the first Sicilian Salesians, and the family breathed the air of Don Bosco’s charism. It was no surprise, then, that young Daniel felt the call to follow in those footsteps.

He entered the novitiate at Modica in 1945, received the cassock from Fr. S. Manione, and made his first profession on August 18, 1946. His final profession followed on August

16, 1951, at San Gregorio, Italy. From the beginning, his vocation was marked by a quiet resolve, a deep faith, and a readiness to serve wherever he was needed.

India: The Land of His Mission

Fr. Venia arrived in India as a theology student, and it was in Shillong that he was ordained a priest on December 7, 1956, by Bishop Ferrando. Thus began a missionary journey that would span nearly four decades, touching lives across the provinces of Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, and Goa.

His early assignments were humble but formative. He served as Prefect of Studies at St. Joseph’s, Madras, then as Catechist at St. Bede’s, and later as

Confessor at Sonada. He also ministered in Krishnagar, Park Circus, and was a pioneer in Siliguri, where he helped acquire land and navigate the labyrinth of permissions and paperwork with his characteristic calm and quiet determination.

Fr. Venia was not a man of titles. He never served as Rector or Principal. Yet, his influence was immense. He was the kind of priest who left a mark not through authority, but through presence—a presence that was gentle, joyful, and deeply rooted in Christ.

The Bombay Years and Beyond

In 1970, Fr. Venia moved to the Bombay Province, where he would serve in a variety of roles: Confessor at St. Paul's High School, Borivali, Sulcorna, Andheri, Don Bosco Youth Centre in Pune, Salesian Novitiate in Nashik, and Don Bosco Technical Institute in Fatorda, Goa. In each of these places, he was known not for grand achievements, but for small acts of great love. From 1992 until his death, he served at the Aspirantate in Lonavla as Confessor and in charge of Propaganda. It was here that his quiet holiness shone most brightly. He was always available, always listening, always ready to help. His room was a sanctuary for those seeking counsel, comfort, or simply a kind word.

A Confessor and Companion

Perhaps Fr. Venia's greatest gift was his ministry in the confessional. He was a spiritual father to countless confrères, students, sisters, and retreatants. His words were simple, direct, and healing. He did not preach long sermons or offer complex theology. Instead, he spoke from the heart, and in doing so, he touched hearts.

He was the kind of confessor who made you feel seen, heard, and forgiven. His presence in the confessional was not just a duty—it was a vocation within a vocation, a sacred space where the mercy of God flowed through his gentle voice and listening heart.

A Life of Humble Heroism

Fr. Venia's life was filled with small, often unnoticed acts of kindness. He once unscrewed a latch to help past pupils access a locked room, then quietly screwed it back after the meeting. On another occasion, needing to deliver a large poster but lacking a proper envelope, he simply cut the bottom—unwittingly removing the message he had written. When no transport was available to celebrate Mass at a nearby convent, he drove the school bus himself—unaware that the driver was asleep on the roof!

These stories, shared with affection by those who knew him, reveal a man

who was resourceful, spontaneous, and utterly selfless. He was always ready to help, even at the cost of his own comfort or convenience. His motto, “No Problem,” was not a slogan—it was a way of life.

Final Days in Rome

In November 1995, Fr. Venia, already unwell due to a persistent stomach ailment, requested permission to travel to Italy for rest and medical treatment. He arrived in Rome on November 21, writing shortly after from Room 98 of the Salesian Generalate. His letter, filled with his usual cheer and humility, spoke of his journey, the busy atmosphere of the house, and his plans to move to Albano Laziale for treatment at the Regina Apostolorum Clinic—the same hospital where Fr. Maschio had once been treated.

In his letter, he wrote:

“Best wishes from Rome! After a fast and beautiful journey... Don Bosco is also helping me and here I am ready to go... May God bless you all with His infinite love and predilection.”

He ended with a note of apology for his handwriting, adding, “*Sorry for the bad scribbling... I am moving to the clinic.*” It was a simple message, but in hindsight, it reads like a gentle farewell.

On December 18, news reached the Bombay Province that Fr. Venia’s condition had worsened. His heart was failing. Two days later, on December 20 at 6:10 a.m., he passed away peacefully. The news arrived just as students were beginning their Christmas holidays. The joy of the season was suddenly pierced by grief. A beloved confrère had gone home to God.

A Funeral of Grace

Though no one from the province could attend the funeral in person, reports from Rome spoke of a beautiful and dignified farewell. The funeral Mass was held at the Salesian Generalate, presided over by Fr. Juan Vecchi, then Vicar General, with Fr. Thomas Panakezham preaching the homily. Members of the General Council and the confrères of the house concelebrated. Two of Fr. Venia’s cousins, one a Salesian from Turin, were also present.

He was laid to rest in the cemetery of the Generalate, among his Salesian brothers, awaiting the Resurrection. Though buried far from India, his memory remains deeply rooted in the hearts of those he served.

The Heart of a Salesian

Fr. Venia’s life was a testament to the power of simplicity. He never sought recognition, never chased titles, and never demanded attention. Yet, he became one of the most beloved Salesians in the province. His availability,

patience, and cheerful spirit made him a beacon of hope and comfort. In his eulogy, Fr. Joaquim D'Souza quoted Psalm 131, a fitting tribute to Fr. Venia's humility: "*Yahweh, my heart is not haughty... I hold myself in quiet and silence, like a little child in its mother's arms.*"

Fr. Venia embodied this psalm. He was content with himself, happy to serve, and always ready to listen. He never complained, never spoke ill of others, and never turned away someone in need.

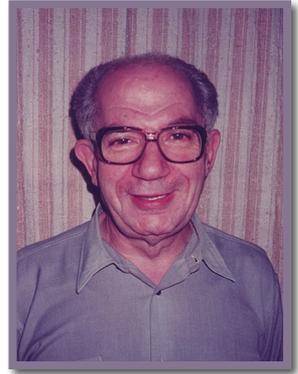
Stories of a Gentle Soul

The stories shared by those who knew him paint a portrait of a man who was extraordinary in his ordinariness. They reveal a man who was spontaneous, selfless, and deeply human. He was the kind of person who forgot himself in service of others, who lived each day with joyful detachment, and who saw every inconvenience as an opportunity to love.

A Confessor and Spiritual Guide

Fr. Venia's most enduring legacy lies in his ministry of reconciliation. He was a confessor par excellence, sought after by confrères, students, sisters, and laypeople. His words were few, but they carried the weight of grace. He listened with the heart, spoke with compassion, and absolved with the authority of Christ.

In the confessional, he was a healer of souls, a quiet presence of whom many encountered the mercy of God. His availability was legendary—he would drop everything to hear a confession, never rushing, never judging, always welcoming.



Faith That Withstood the Storm

Fr. Venia's faith was not naïve. It did not shield him from suffering, illness, or disappointment. But it was a faith that endured, that stood firm in the face of trials. He lived one day at a time, trusting that God would provide. He did not complicate life with worry. His favorite phrases—"*No Problem*" and "*Coraggio*"—were not just words, but expressions of a deep interior peace.

In his final days, he kept a picture in his Bible inscribed with the words: "*Death is a new birth to life everlasting.*" He believed it. And he lived it.

A Life Well Played

In remembering Fr. Venia, many have quoted the words of Grantland Rice: *“When the One Great Scorer comes, To write against your name— He marks not that you won or lost, But how you played the game.”*

Fr. Venia played the game of life with grace. He did not seek to win accolades, but to serve with love. He taught us to live simply, serve joyfully, and trust deeply. His life was a quiet symphony of faith, humility, and kindness.

A Final Word of Thanks

In the words of Fr. Ronald Menezes, his Rector: *“Thank you, dear Fr. Venia, for your cheerfulness and sense of humour, for the fusion of understanding, strength, and charity to all. For teaching us to live one day at a time... for your faith, which stood strong in the midst of storms... Truly you can say with St Paul: ‘For me, life is Christ, and death is gain.’”*

Fr. Daniel Venia may not have left behind grand buildings or titles, but he left something far more enduring: a legacy of love. His footprints remain in the hearts of all who knew him. His voice still echoes in our memories:

“No Problem. Coraggio.”



A Cheerful Servant of God, a Teacher of Hearts, a Friend of the Young:

Fr. Joseph Murphy SDB (1920-1972)

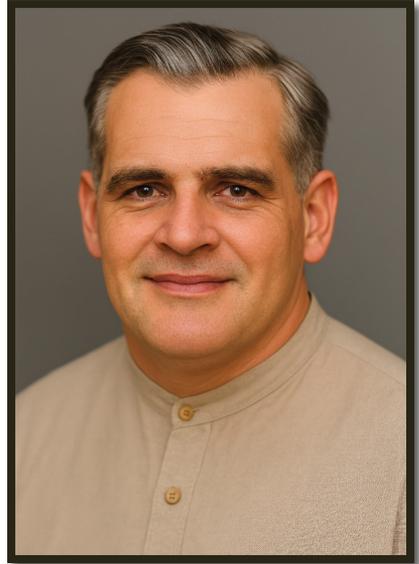
Young Life Offered to God

A Fr. Joseph Murphy was born in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England, on 4 April 1920. His childhood was marked by faith and simplicity. At age nine, his family moved to Yorkshire, and later to Ripon. When his father died suddenly at forty-nine, young Joseph—then an aspirant at Shrigley—faced loss with a maturity rooted in prayer.

His sister, Kathleen, remembered him as “the pious boy who would run into church to make a visit ... even in the middle of a cricket game.” At Shrigley, his bright red cheeks earned him the affectionate nickname “Cherry,” and his good humour made him beloved among companions.

In 1937, Joseph entered the novitiate at Beckford and made his first profession on 31 August 1938. At only eighteen he left for India, the land that would become his home for the rest of his life. Though he visited England only three times in thirty-three years, his heart always belonged to India and her young.

He studied philosophy at Tirupattur and began his practical training in Bombay during the war years, teaching and assisting with quiet dedication. After his theological formation, he was ordained priest on 7 September 1948 in Tirupattur, the house he loved most. His priesthood was marked from the beginning by faithfulness, humour, and pastoral zeal.



Teacher, Rector, and Builder of Communities

From 1948 to 1952, Fr. Murphy served in Bombay, balancing parish duties with studies for his B.A. and M.A. degrees. His keen intellect and natural leadership soon led to a new mission: in 1954, he became the first Principal of Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur.

He proved a strict but beloved leader—firm in discipline, yet just and fatherly. When he left the college in 1962, the entire student body gathered at the railway station, having been told only that morning. Fr. Tuena, Rector, marvelled: “I’ve never seen such a spontaneous send-off.”

After a brief rest, Fr. Murphy was appointed the first Rector of the new Aspirantate in Lonavla. His boys remembered his energy, his laughter, and his fondness for cricket. He saw in the game a metaphor for Salesian life: teamwork, discipline, and joy. “It may not be in Don Bosco’s Constitutions,” he joked, “but it’s very good for the soul!”

Later, he became Rector and Principal of St Bede’s High School, Madras. In 1966, following Fr. Tuena’s death, he returned to Tirupattur as Rector—a full circle in the journey of his vocation. Wherever he went, he built not just institutions, but communities of faith and joy.

Priest, Sportsman, and Friend of the Young

Fr. Murphy’s pastoral style reflected Don Bosco’s own heart: a blend of cheerfulness, firmness, and deep love. He was easily approachable; students trusted him, and confreres found in him a brother. His laughter echoed through playgrounds as easily as his voice resounded in the chapel.

He was passionate about youth and convinced that holiness should be joyful. The way he died was, in itself, a parable of his life. On 14 November 1971—Children’s Day—during a cricket match at Tirupattur, he had just taken six wickets and moved to first slip when he suddenly raised his hands to his face and collapsed. Despite immediate medical help, he was gone.

He died on the field of play, surrounded by his students—doing what he loved, among those he loved most. Schools across Tirupattur closed in his honour. His death was sudden, yet profoundly symbolic: a Salesian who had lived for the young went to God while playing with them.

Humble Servant, Faithful Religious

Fr. Murphy’s personality was marked by simplicity, wit, and humility. Though naturally spirited, he was quick to apologize, generous to the poor, and meticulous in work. His spirit of poverty was evident in his careful management of resources and his own simple living.

As a religious, he was obedient and prayerful. He often visited the Blessed Sacrament quietly at odd hours, finding in those moments the strength for his demanding work. He disliked honours and once wrote:

“No one really likes this job, but someone has to do it. The responsibility is great, and some people are cut out for leadership, and some are not.”

He never sought to be indispensable: “There are more worthy and better qualified people to take my place tomorrow.”

Yet it is precisely this humility that made him irreplaceable. His sermons were brief but powerful rooted in life, not theory. His deep faith found expression in small acts of kindness and in a radiant smile that won every heart.

Death as New Birth

In his final months, he wrote to a benefactor: “We shall also pray for those who passed to the next world—the world we all are meant for.”

And in his Bible, he had written: “Death is a new birth to life everlasting.” His own words, penned in tribute to a retiring professor, serve now as his own epitaph: “Go, valiant warrior, to enjoy your well-earned rest. Go and live again in memory the years which have passed... and may every memory be one of bliss and happiness.”

The Salesian community of Tirupattur engraved on his tomb the phrase: “Defunctus adhuc loquitur” — Though he is dead, his life speaks.

And indeed, it still does—through the laughter of his students, the gratitude of his confreres, and the holiness of a life joyfully spent for God and youth.

“Faithful unto death, he received the crown of life.” (Rev 2:10)

“He lived for the young, he died among them, and his joy is now complete.”



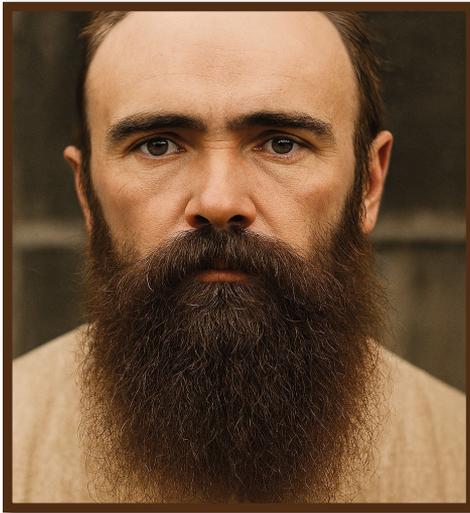
A Faithful Missionary, a Humble Worker, a Sainly Son of Don Bosco:

Fr. Joseph Hauber, SDB (1878-1946)

Life Formed by Faith and Simplicity

Fr. Joseph Hauber was born on 2 January 1878 in Kreuz-Fedd-Zabern, Germany, into a deeply Christian family whose faith and discipline shaped his strong and balanced personality. His parents' quiet piety prepared him for the generous service and endurance that would later define his priestly and missionary life.

Gifted with intelligence and a sense of order, young Joseph excelled in his studies and soon felt drawn to the priesthood. After completing his



classical and rhetorical studies, he entered the Salesian novitiate at Lombriasco on 29 September 1907, making his first profession a year later. He continued philosophy at Ivrea and began his practical training at Gorizia, where he exercised pastoral and educational ministry until his ordination in 1915.

The early years of his priesthood were marked by perseverance through war-time scarcity and uncertainty. Yet his missionary heart longed for a wider field where he could give himself

totally for souls. That opportunity came in 1921, when, at forty-three, he left his homeland for the distant mission of Assam, India—a decision that revealed the depth of his faith and his readiness for sacrifice.

Pioneer of the Assam Mission

For the next twenty-five years, Fr. Hauber's name became inseparable from the story of Don Bosco's mission in Assam. He was among its pioneers—builder, teacher, confessor, and father. His assignments took him to difficult terrains and demanding communities, but he carried each responsibility with prudence, patience, and an unshakeable sense of duty.

Those who knew him described him as a robust man with an iron will

and gentle heart. His temperament was steady, his wisdom practical, and his judgment sound. Whether teaching catechism, repairing machinery, or guiding a fledgling community, he gave his best without complaint. He embodied Don Bosco's motto: "Work and temperance will make the Congregation flourish."

He possessed a quiet leadership that inspired rather than commanded. Even when superiors were once his former students, he obeyed them with humility. Simplicity marked his life; recognition and comfort never appealed to him. His poverty was evangelical, his speech measured and truthful. The Gospel phrase "Yes, yes; no, no" described both his character and his way of dealing with people.

A tireless worker, Fr. Hauber forgot himself in service of others. His days began early with prayer and ended late with pastoral care. He was meticulous in his duties—punctual at the Divine Office, exact in liturgical celebration, faithful to community life. As confessor and preacher, he spoke little but touched deeply. His sermons were brief, direct, and sincere—like the man himself.

The Spirit of Don Bosco in Flesh and Deed

Fr. Hauber was a Salesian of the old school—faithful to Don Bosco's original spirit without dilution. He lived the Constitutions with literal simplicity. The circulars of the Rector Major on poverty and obedience seemed written for him; he practiced them with transparent authenticity.

He could be austere, even frugal to an extreme, yet those who lived with him knew that behind every act of restraint lay a deep reverence for religious poverty. What others might have called exaggeration was, for him, integrity—a way of ensuring that nothing distracted him from God or mission.

Gentle by nature, he was incapable of hurting anyone. His confreres recall how he would stop to lift an injured bird or bless a child with genuine affection. He lived in the presence of God with unassuming peace. Even his silence was eloquent—it spoke of prayer.

Obedience in Suffering and the Final Test

From 1937, his robust frame began to bear the marks of illness. A persistent pain, later diagnosed as cancer, slowly drained his strength. Yet Fr. Hauber continued to work tirelessly, never permitting himself special consideration. "There is still something left to be done," he would say, and return to his desk or chapel.

When the disease worsened, his obedience shone brighter than ever. Even in agony, he answered softly and promptly to any request, the true "vir

obediens”—the obedient man of God. The final months of 1946 were a crucible of suffering. Bedridden and in intense pain, he bore all with serenity and gratitude, uniting his anguish to the Cross.

In his youth, he had once dreamt of St Laurence, Bishop of Dublin, who told him: “You will become a priest and missionary, but before dying, you will suffer greatly.” Decades later, during the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, he recognised the same saint in a painting—confirmation of that mysterious dream. Its prophecy was fulfilled in his final passion.

The last chapter of his life was written in silence, pain, and prayer. Hospitalised in Shillong, he underwent surgery that revealed the full extent of the cancer ravaging his body. The operation failed to heal him but allowed time for confession, anointing, and a peaceful preparation for death. Surrounded by confreres, he surrendered his soul to God on 21 October 1946, aged 68.

His funeral was described as “a triumph of love.” The entire community, students, and faithful gathered to pay homage to a priest who had given everything for them.

A Legacy of Holiness and Work

Fr. Joseph Hauber’s life remains a beacon of fidelity for every Salesian. His hidden sacrifices, silent suffering, and unpretentious holiness built the spiritual foundations of the Salesian work in Northeast India. He showed that sanctity is not the privilege of the extraordinary but the fruit of daily obedience, humility, and hard work.

He was, as his confreres remembered, “a man of few words and many deeds.” His presence inspired confidence; his example formed consciences. For the younger Salesians of Assam, he was both mentor and model—a living link to Don Bosco’s early spirit.

Today, the institutions and vocations that sprang from his mission stand as enduring testimonies to his labour and love. His tomb in Shillong bears silent witness to a life well-spent for God and youth.

May this humble pioneer, who lived and died as a faithful servant, now share in the eternal joy promised to those who love the Lord.

“His life was work; his rest is peace.”

“Defunctus adhuc loquitur – Though he is dead, his life still speaks.”



A Missionary of the World: Fr. Adolfo Tornquist, SDB (1887-1971)

Life of Privilege and Promise

ABorn on December 4, 1887, in Buenos Aires, Adolfo Tornquist was the tenth of thirteen children in a family of wealth and influence. His father, Ernesto Tornquist, was a prominent financier and industrialist, founder of the Tornquist Bank and the town of Tornquist in Argentina. His mother, Rosa Altgelt, was of German Catholic heritage, born in Hamburg and baptized Catholic.

Raised in a household of privilege, Adolfo's early education was cosmopolitan. He learned to read and write from a German tutor, attended the Instituto Vértiz, and later studied in Eastbourne, England, at a Protestant boarding school. Despite the Protestant environment, he remained rooted in his Catholic faith, attending Mass regularly and maintaining a strong spiritual identity.

His First Communion, received privately on September 13, 1901, at the Basilica of Nuestra Señora del Socorro, was a moment of deep personal fervour. Though lacking the communal celebration typical

of such events, it marked the beginning of a lifelong devotion to the Eucharist. He would later frequent the Basilica of the Blessed Sacrament, receiving daily Communion and deepening his spiritual life.



A Spiritual Awakening and a Call to Consecration

The death of his father in 1908 was a turning point. Already inclined toward a life of piety, Adolfo resolved to consecrate himself to God. Though uncertain of the path—whether priesthood or religious life—his heart was set on a vocation of service.

He continued his studies in civil engineering, graduating in 1915, largely out of obedience to his confessor and to please his mother. But his passion lay elsewhere. He began traveling through South America, visiting Salesian

houses in Río Negro and Neuquén, and meeting influential priests like Fr. Pedemonte, who left a lasting impression.

In 1915, with a letter of recommendation from Archbishop Espinosa, Adolfo embarked on a journey to the United States, passing through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Panama, before arriving in New Orleans and eventually New York. There, he was warmly received by Fr. Coppo, Provincial of the Salesians, and sent to the Salesian College of Hawthorne.

Formation and Ordination in the United States

At Hawthorne, Adolfo began his formal religious formation. Under Fr. Paul Zolin, he studied Latin, philosophy, and theology. When the college burned down, the community relocated to New Rochelle, where he continued his studies.

His progression through minor orders was steady. He received them in Newark, N.J., in 1919, was ordained subdeacon by Monsignor Félix Guerra on May 1, 1920, and deacon by Monsignor Hayes on May 24, 1920. His priestly ordination took place on June 20, 1920, in Brooklyn, by Monsignor Walleser, a German Capuchin and former apostolic vicar of the Caroline Islands.

His first Mass was celebrated at the Parish of the Transfiguration in New York, with the Argentine Consul General in attendance. He began assisting at the Salesian parish of Mary Help of Christians, and in July 1920, traveled to Europe to visit his mother in Paris and reconnect with his roots.

A Salesian Vocation: Inspired by Cardinal Cagliero

In Rome, Adolfo met Cardinal Giovanni Cagliero, the first Salesian cardinal and a towering figure in the congregation. The Cardinal's charisma and spiritual depth captivated him. Adolfo spent time in his company, eventually making a spiritual retreat under his guidance.

It was during this retreat, inspired by Fr. Rinaldi, future Rector Major, that Adolfo made the decision to become a Salesian. He entered the novitiate at Ivrea on November 13, 1921 and made his profession in 1922. During his novitiate, he assisted at the festive oratory, heard confessions, and preached—already living the Salesian charism with zeal.

He remained in Rome, studying philosophy and canon law at San Apollinare, though he was unable to complete his exams. His intellectual pursuits were matched by his pastoral heart, and he soon found himself drawn to the missions.

The Global Missionary: Asia Beckons

In 1929, Fr. Ricaldone invited Adolfo to visit Japan. Adolfo agreed on the condition that he could also visit other Salesian missions in Asia.

Thus began a journey that would make him one of the first Salesians to circumnavigate the globe in service of the mission.

He began in the Holy Land, spending Christmas there, then travelled to India, Thailand, Indochina, Hong Kong, Manila, China, and Korea. In Shanghai, he fell ill with typhus, but recovered and continued his travels. In Japan, he founded Salesian houses in Beppu and Tokyo, securing permission from the Archbishop for new foundations.

His missionary tour continued through Mexico, the Caribbean, and Puerto Rico, where he promoted new Salesian houses. He returned to Europe in May 1931, deeply inspired by Asia and eager to return.

India: A New Chapter Begins

In October 1931, Adolfo requested to be sent to India, citing his fluency in English and his enchantment with Asia. He arrived in Bombay, then travelled to Assam, and later to South India. In April 1932, he was appointed Rector of Don Bosco School, Bombay, where he doubled the student population and revitalized the institution.

His tenure in Bombay lasted until May 1936, when ill health forced him to return to Argentina, after a brief stay in Italy. Back home, he continued his ministry as confessor in various Salesian houses, including Santa Isabel, Ramos Mejía, and finally Alta Gracia, where he spent his final years.

Return to Argentina: A Quiet but Fruitful Ministry

After years of global missionary travel, Fr. Tornquist returned to Argentina in November 1936, seeking rest and recovery. Though his health had declined, his spirit remained strong. He was appointed confessor at Santa Isabel College in San Isidro, a role he embraced with humility and dedication.

His ministry in Argentina was quieter than his earlier years, but no less impactful. He served as confessor in various Salesian houses, including Wilfrid Barón College of the Holy Angels in Ramos Mejía, and finally at the Salesian house in Alta Gracia, where he spent his final decades. His presence was a source of spiritual strength for students, priests, and lay collaborators alike.

Though no longer traveling the world, Fr. Tornquist continued to shape lives through his counsel, example, and generosity. He supported vocations, funded scholarships, and remained a benefactor to many across continents.

A Vision for Missionary Formation in South America

One of Fr. Tornquist's most enduring contributions was his vision for missionary formation in South America. In 1944, he wrote a letter to

Fr. José Reyneri, proposing the establishment of a Salesian missionary formation house in Argentina, modelled on European institutions like Ivrea, Penango, and Cumiana.

He believed that South America, after seventy years of Salesian presence, should begin sending missionaries abroad, not just receiving them. He cited Argentina's past contributions to missions in Brazil, Siam, India, and Patagonia, and argued that the continent was ready to take a more active role in global evangelization.

His proposal was bold and prophetic. He envisioned a house dedicated to forming Sons of Mary and missionaries, under the patronage of Ceferino Namuncurá, Argentina's Salesian saint. He hoped the first foundation would bear Ceferino's name, symbolizing purity, dedication, and missionary zeal.

Fr. Tornquist's letter was not just a suggestion—it was a passionate plea. He wrote:

“South America should also cooperate in the evangelization of the world.” He lamented the lack of enthusiasm among some Salesians for foreign missions but remained hopeful. He quoted Fr. Serié, who had entrusted him with the task of founding such a house:

“From there they must move forward, and not be content with the votes of assemblies. We shall see: if they are roses, they will bloom.”

A Life of Detachment and Generosity

Fr. Tornquist's life was marked by detachment from worldly goods. Though born into wealth and privilege, he chose a path of simplicity, humility, and service.

His chosen epitaph reflects this spirit: “Here lie the mortal remains of Don Adolfo Tornquist, Salesian priest, missionary in India.

He chose to forsake earthly goods in order to gain the heavenly ones.

R.I.P.”

He dictated this epitaph to one of his godsons in 1967, expressing his wish to be buried in Fortín Mercedes, near the resting place of Ceferino Namuncurá. His humility was not performative—it was genuine, rooted in a deep understanding of the Gospel.

He was known for his kindness, gentlemanliness, and solidarity. He supported students across Italy, Spain, and the Americas, helping them pursue vocations and careers. His portrait hangs in the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum at La Crocetta, a tribute to his enduring legacy.

The Final Years: A Witness of Grace

In his final years, Fr. Tornquist predicted he would not survive the autumn. But he did, celebrating his 80th birthday surrounded by godchildren, students, and friends whose lives he had shaped. The celebration was not just a milestone—it was a testament to a life well lived.

His godson wrote: “After the celebration, you will be free to do as you please. . . Thanks be to God, Father Tornquist’s predictions did not come true, and instead, the celebration of his splendid eighty years allowed us to continue enjoying — through his presence — the witness of someone who is a perfect example of detachment, kindness, gentlemanliness, and solidarity. . .”

Fr. Tornquist passed away on April 20, 1971, in Alta Gracia, at the age of 83, after 48 years of religious profession and 50 years of priesthood. His death was not a loss—it was a homecoming, a return to the God he had served with joy, courage, and love.

Legacy: A Missionary of the World

Fr. Adolfo Tornquist was more than a priest—he was a missionary of the world, a man whose life embodied the spirit of Don Bosco and the pastoral heart of St Francis de Sales. His journey spanned continents, cultures, and decades, but his mission was always the same: to bring Christ to others.

His story is a beacon for all who seek to live with purpose, faith, and generosity. He showed that missionary work is not just about travel—it is about love, sacrifice, and vision. He believed in the power of formation, the importance of global solidarity, and the beauty of a life poured out for others.

His legacy challenges us to dream big, serve humbly, and live generously. May his memory continue to inspire Salesians and missionaries around the world.



A Faithful Missionary and Gentle Servant of God:

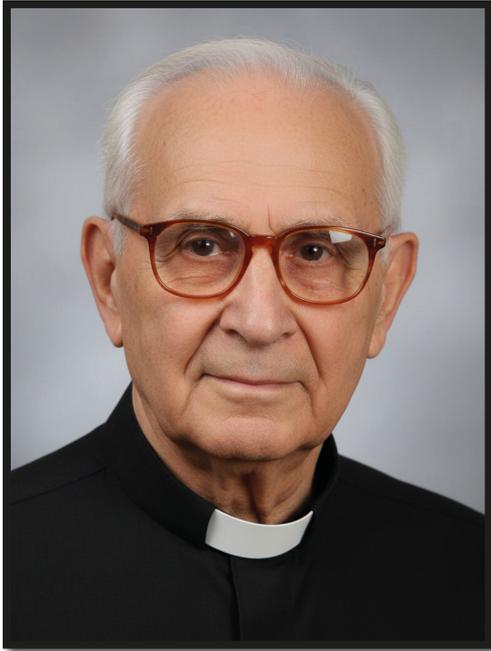
Fr. Raimondo Chanoux, SDB (1915-2003)

Life Shaped by Faith and Fidelity

A Fr. Raimondo Chanoux was born on January 23, 1915, in Pontboset, a serene village nestled in the Aosta Valley of northern Italy. His early years were marked by simplicity, hard work, and deep faith — virtues that would accompany him throughout his long missionary journey. After his initial formation in Ivrea (1935–1936), he responded generously to the Salesian call to the missions, setting sail for India — a land

that would become his home for the next half-century.

Arriving at Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, he entered the novitiate in 1936, professing his first vows on December 25, 1937, on the joyful feast of Christmas. The young Raimondo quickly imbibed the Salesian spirit of joy, discipline, and pastoral zeal. His philosophical studies (1938–1940) were interrupted by the turmoil of war, as he was declared a prisoner of war in 1940. Yet even amid confinement, his spirit remained unbroken. The years that followed, spent in Deoli and Dehradun, became a hidden seminary of patience



and trust in Providence.

In September 1945, upon his release, he resumed his Salesian formation with renewed vigour. Sent to Madras and later to Bombay, he completed his practical training and was ordained a priest on December 21, 1947, in Bombay. It was a moment of profound gratitude — a dream fulfilled through trial and perseverance. His priesthood would become a testimony to quiet fidelity and tireless service.

The Missionary of Many Homes

Fr. Raimondo's ministry unfolded across the vast expanse of India — a living testament to his missionary flexibility and pastoral dedication. In Bombay (1947–1954), he began as an assistant and teacher, soon earning the affection of students for his fatherly presence and serene patience. His talent for administration led to his appointment as economer, a role he fulfilled with honesty and diligence.

From there, his Salesian journey took him to a series of apostolic missions — Madras (1954–1955), Tirupattur (1955–1958), Kotagiri (1958–1959), Bombay (1959–1962), Pannur (1962–1964), and again Kotagiri (1964–1965). In each of these places, Fr. Raimondo left behind the unmistakable imprint of a man who worked quietly, prayed deeply, and served faithfully. As economer in Bangalore (1967), he handled resources not as possessions but as instruments for mission. When he later returned to Kotagiri (1967–1979), he undertook major construction projects for the community and served as a beloved confessor to the Salesian Sisters (FMA). Many remember him sitting long hours in the confessional, listening with fatherly kindness and offering gentle words of mercy and encouragement.

In Irinjalakuda (1980–1983), Fr. Chanoux supervised the construction of a new church and served as parish administrator in Kakiarn, revealing his lifelong passion for pastoral work and practical service. Even as age advanced, his zeal remained youthful. His brief return to Baroda (1983–1985) as parish priest rekindled his affection for the people among whom he had laboured for decades.

A Humble Servant in His Homeland

After fifty fruitful years in India, Fr. Raimondo returned to Italy, but his missionary heart never rested. Incardinated into the Roman Province, he continued his ministry at Sacro Cuore (1985–1986) as sacristy prefect, and later as parish collaborator at Testaccio (1986–1997). His presence there was marked by humility, punctuality, and quiet joy. He became a beloved confessor and a source of wisdom to young confreres.

In 1997, he joined the ICP Province, spending a year in Borgomanero, and then moving to Ivrea, where he remained until his death. There, in the twilight of life, he continued to serve as confessor — a gentle father who, with a listening ear and a kind smile, guided souls to peace.

On October 19, 2003, at the age of 88, Fr. Raimondo Chanoux peacefully entered into eternal life. His confreres, the Salesian Sisters, and the faithful who knew him all remembered him as a priest of unwavering faith, simplicity, and pastoral charity.

The Spirit and the Legacy

Fr. Raimondo lived his Salesian vocation with remarkable steadiness. His 50 years in India were not marked by grand gestures or public recognition, but by daily fidelity — a quiet holiness that revealed God in the ordinary. His missionary service spanned classrooms, construction sites, and confessional booths; his life was a continuous offering to the God who had called him across the seas.

He is fondly remembered for three qualities that defined his life:

His kind, brotherly smile, which encouraged and uplifted even in difficult times.

His fatherly support, which forgave and strengthened all who came to him. His prayerful friendship, which welcomed and loved everyone without distinction.

To his confreres, he was a man of steady character and firm conscience; to the young, a quiet teacher and guide; to the poor, a compassionate father. His was a spirituality of service — lived in silence, offered in joy, and sustained by prayer.

In him, the missionary heart of Don Bosco found an eloquent witness. He was a man who built not only churches and schools, but hearts and communities rooted in faith. His smile, his patience, and his perseverance spoke louder than words.

Epilogue

Fr. Raimondo Chanoux, SDB, embodied the heart of the missionary priest — humble, generous, and faithful to the end. His long years in India and his final years in Italy formed one continuous journey toward God.

Today, his life remains a gentle reminder that holiness often wears the face of fidelity — that love for God and neighbour is best expressed in small, daily acts of service.

May the Lord, whom he served so faithfully, welcome him into the joy of His eternal home and say to him, as to all faithful servants: “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Master.” (Mt 25:21)

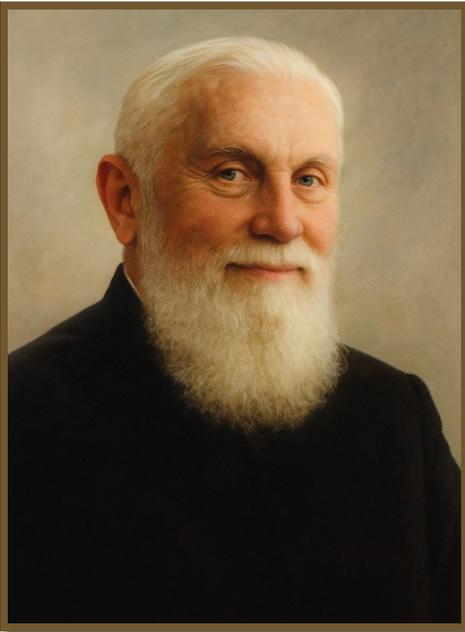


A Missionary of Precision, Compassion, and Unwavering Devotion:

Fr. Alfred Mariotta, SDB (1911-1987)

Early Life and Missionary Call

Rev. Fr. Alfred Mariotta, SDB, was born on April 3, 1911, in Switzerland, into a close-knit Catholic family that nurtured in him a deep sense of faith, discipline, and compassion. His early schooling in a Salesian institution introduced him to the spirit of Don Bosco and the joy of serving the young. Sensing God's call, he entered the missionary aspirantate at Ivrea, Italy, where his vocation took root and matured.



A significant spiritual moment in his life occurred when he received the cassock from Blessed Philip Rinaldi, the then Rector Major. This blessing sealed his missionary identity and instilled in him the heroic zeal he would carry throughout his nearly six decades of service in India.

Responding to the Congregation's missionary appeal, young Alfred set out for India in 1930, joining a valiant band of Salesians destined for service in the East. He made his first profession on January 6, 1931 and was ordained a priest on September 30, 1939. With youthful enthusiasm and a missionary's heart, he embraced the challenges of his new homeland, ready to give his life for the young, the poor, and the Church.

Formation of a Salesian Heart

Fr. Mariotta's Salesian formation was marked by clarity of mind, precision in work, and steadiness of character. His confreres admired his sense of order, disciplined lifestyle, and his serene, prayerful temperament. He believed deeply that holiness rests in fidelity to everyday duties—a belief he would embody unwaveringly throughout life.

Gifted with a methodical mind and an organised spirit, he naturally grew into roles that demanded planning, execution, and structural clarity, while never abandoning the warmth and pastoral sensitivity essential to Salesian life. His devotion to Mary Help of Christians remained a constant anchor, shaping his spirituality and strengthening his missionary zeal.

Educator, Headmaster, and Administrator in Madras

Fr. Mariotta served for many fruitful years in the Madras region, especially as Headmaster of Salesian schools, where he brought together academic excellence and humane formation. He was an educator who believed that character was as important as competence. Under his leadership, schools thrived as centres of discipline, learning, and faith.

His leadership was recognised beyond the Salesian family. He was elected Secretary cum Treasurer of the Indian Catholic Education Society, a position that entrusted him with coordinating major diocesan and civic events. Among them were: Safety Week Celebrations, The Missionary Exhibition, Educational and religious outreach programmes, Formation initiatives for Catholic educators and leaders, all of which showcased his administrative brilliance and collaborative spirit.



As Vicar Forane, he demonstrated pastoral leadership that strengthened parish life and unity among clergy. He played a decisive role in organising two major Marian events that had tremendous spiritual impact:

- The visitation of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima to Madras,
- The grand Rosary Crusade, which drew thousands of faithful and ignited a renewed Marian devotion.

His influence in Madras is remembered with admiration and gratitude.

Builder of Homes and Hope for the Poor

If there was a dimension of Fr. Mariotta's mission that reflected his heart most vividly, it was his work for the poor. His missionary compass always pointed toward the underprivileged. He believed firmly that providing a family with a home was one of the most dignified forms of charity.

He was instrumental in building over 200 houses for the poor across:

Hyderabad, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Meghalaya.

These homes were not merely constructed buildings; they were sanctuaries of stability, dignity, and hope. For many impoverished families, Fr. Mariotta became a father whose generosity changed the trajectory of their lives.

He also used modern means of evangelisation effectively. During his years in Goa, he conducted the Catholic Hour on Radio Goa, bringing catechesis, comfort, and spiritual nourishment to countless listeners.

Champion of Salesian Past Pupils

One of the most enduring contributions of Fr. Mariotta to the Salesian world in India was his leadership of the Salesian Past Pupils Federation. As National Delegate for 20 years, he played a decisive role in shaping, organising, and energising the movement.

His achievements include establishing Past Pupil units in every province, registering

the National Federation as a Trust and as a Society, giving legal, structural and organisational stability to the movement, training and mentoring lay collaborators, organising national conventions and meetings.

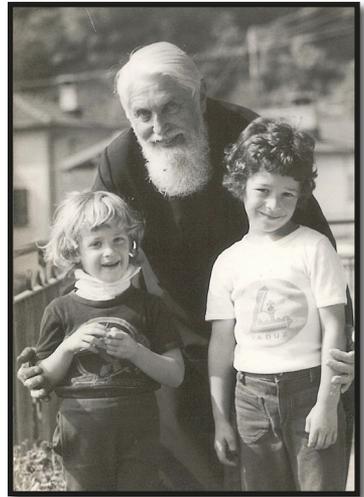
A landmark moment came in 1984, when he successfully organised the 3rd Asia–Australia Congress in Mumbai, bringing together delegates from 13 countries. This congress was a significant milestone in the history of Salesian lay collaboration, and it stood as a testament to his organisational genius and missionary enthusiasm.

Beloved Father at Don Bosco, Matunga

In 1985, Fr. Mariotta joined Don Bosco, Matunga as Vice Principal of the Primary Section. This became one of the most affectionate chapters in his ministry. His fatherly presence, gentle discipline, and cheerful spirit endeared him to both staff and students.

A beloved memory cherished by generations is his role as Santa Claus, a part he played with his blue eyes, soft demeanour, and warm smile. His appearance every Christmas brought immeasurable joy to the children and created a tradition filled with wonder and delight.

Here, Fr. Mariotta was not just an administrator—he was a grandfatherly figure whose kindness left lasting impressions on young hearts.



First Provincial Delegate of the Bombay Province

Fr. Alfred Mariotta had the distinction of serving as the first Provincial Delegate of the Salesian Co-operators in the Bombay Province. His tenure (until 1981) was highly foundational and transformative.

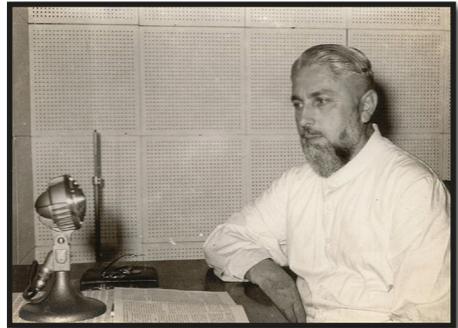
His key contributions included:

- preparing the Provincial Chapter 1975 report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Provincial Chapter 1973,
- issuing practical directives for establishing Co-operators' units across the province,
- helping launch the first three units at Panjim, Andheri, and Lonavla,
- supporting initial meetings and leadership elections,
- guiding local delegates and forming lay leaders.

The first Promise Day of the Bombay Province, held on July 11, 1976, in the crypt at Matunga, saw 14 Salesian Co-operators make their promise—a historic moment, coordinated under his watchful care.

A Man of Devotion, Precision, and Pastoral Depth

Fr. Mariotta was admired for his unwavering dedication to any responsibility entrusted to him. Methodical, meticulous, and highly organised, he ensured that every detail—whether of a congress, a classroom, or a charitable initiative—was handled with care.



He was deeply devout, finding strength in prayer and fidelity to the Eucharist. His reverence for Mary Help of Christians shaped his daily life, decisions, and missionary work. Despite his administrative brilliance, he remained a simple, approachable, and compassionate priest. He never turned away anyone in need. To the poor, he was a provider; to children, a father; to confreres, a trustworthy companion; to collaborators, a mentor.

His Final Years and Peaceful Passing

Fr. Mariotta's later years were marked by serenity, gratitude, and readiness for the Lord. Though physically fragile, his spiritual strength only deepened. He spent his last days in quiet surrender to God, supported by

confreres who admired his courage and constancy.

He returned to the Lord on October 22, 1987, in Mumbai, closing a chapter of a life lived generously for the Church, the Congregation, and the poor.

Legacy of a True Salesian Missionary

Fr. Alfred Mariotta, SDB, leaves behind a legacy that blends precision with compassion, discipline with warmth, and planning with deep pastoral sensitivity. His life is a rich tapestry woven with missionary courage, educational excellence, love for the poor, leadership in lay collaboration, devotion to Mary Help of Christians, fidelity to Don Bosco's charism.

His influence continues in the homes he built, the young he educated, the Cooperators he formed, the Past Pupils he organised, and the confreres he inspired.

Conclusion

A life so rich in service cannot be contained in titles or achievements. It lives on in transformed lives, grateful communities, and the enduring spirit of peace and discipline he brought wherever he went. May Don Bosco welcome this faithful son into the heavenly oratory. May Mary Help of Christians intercede for him. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



A Builder of Faith and a Missionary of Courage:

Fr. Ignatius Rubio, SDB (1921-1983)

Childhood Marked by Faith and Creativity

ABorn on April 8, 1921, in Barcelona, Spain, Ignatius Rubio grew up in a devout Catholic family. His parents, John Rubio and Angeles Moreno, nurtured his early education and spiritual formation. From a young age, Ignatius displayed a lively spirit, full of initiative, creativity, and a deep love for the Church.

At just nine years old, he was already “celebrating Mass” on a makeshift altar he built himself—planks arranged with care and reverence. This innocent imitation of the priestly role was more than child’s play; it was a prophetic sign of his future vocation. His early devotion was not superficial—it was rooted in a genuine desire to serve God. At 14, he entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Tibidabo, but stayed only a month. His mother, unable to bear the separation, called him back home. This brief interruption did not deter his vocation—it only delayed it. The call to religious life remained strong, and circumstances would soon shape him into a man of extraordinary courage and conviction.



The Spanish Civil War: A Crucible of Faith

In 1936, the Spanish Civil War erupted, plunging the country into chaos and persecution. For young Ignatius, the war was not just a political crisis—it was a spiritual battleground. His mother died soon after the war began, and he was forced to work in an ordnance factory, contributing to the war effort while clinging to his faith.

During this time, Ignatius remained active in the Dominic Savio Centre of the Salesian House and in Catholic Action. His involvement made him a target for the anti-clerical forces—the “reds”—who sought to eliminate religious influence. Several times, they came looking for him, intending to give him the “short walk” to execution.

One day, seeing the reds approaching, he hid in an abandoned workshop, narrowly escaping death. These experiences forged in him a courage and

commitment that would define his life. He risked everything to support priests and preserve the faith, constructing altars, tabernacles, and chalices for clandestine worship. He made confessions in secret, walking with disguised priests along the streets. He even hid a Salesian priest, Fr. Francis Serrat, in his home during the war.

His survival was miraculous. On one occasion, while walking to work, aerial bombardments struck the road, killing many. Ignatius was spared. These brushes with death were not random—they were providential. God was preserving him for a mission far greater than he could yet imagine.

Salesian Formation: A Joyful and Artistic Spirit

With the war over in 1939, Ignatius joined the Salesian aspirantate at St Vincent del Horts. His open, jovial character and artistic talents brought joy and enthusiasm to the community. He was not only a student—he was a source of inspiration.

His novitiate and subsequent years of study in philosophy and theology were marked by dedication and creativity. He was known for his artistic abilities, his leadership, and his deep spiritual life. He was not content with mediocrity—he strove for excellence in all things, especially in his preparation for the priesthood.

In 1948, he answered the call to the missions, traveling to India with Fr. John Larrea. It was the fulfilment of a dream—a journey from the war-torn streets of Barcelona to the vibrant mission fields of South Asia. At the time, he was still a theology student, but his heart was already that of a missionary.



Ordination and Early Ministry in India

On August 13, 1950, Ignatius Rubio was ordained a priest in Madras, India. His ordination marked the beginning of a new chapter—a life of service, sacrifice, and construction, both spiritual and physical.

His first major assignment was as Rector of St Joseph's Technical School, Madras. Under his leadership, the institute rose to new heights of efficiency and excellence. He was not just an administrator—he was a visionary. He believed in empowering youth through education and technical training, and he worked tirelessly to improve the institution.

Later, he was appointed Prefect at Don Bosco, Matunga, in Bombay. His organizational skills and artistic flair were put to good use during the 1964 Eucharistic Congress, where he was placed in charge of the photographic section by Cardinal Valerian Gracias. His work was meticulous, and his contribution was widely appreciated.

Fr. Rubio's early years in India were marked by energy, creativity, and a deep sense of mission. He was not content with routine tasks—he sought out challenges, embraced responsibility, and poured himself into every assignment.

A Missionary Builder in Northeast India

Fr. Rubio's most enduring legacy, however, was in the Northeast of India. Appointed Procurator of the Diocese of Dibrugarh, and later of the Archdiocese of Shillong-Gauhati, he became known as a master builder. His projects were not just functional—they were beautiful, inspiring, and deeply rooted in the needs of the Church.

In Dibrugarh, he oversaw the construction of: St Joseph's Minor Seminary, Renovation of the Cathedral, Numerous schools, dispensaries, and churches.

When Mgr Hubert D'Rosario was transferred to Shillong as Archbishop, Fr. Rubio followed, continuing his work as Procurator. In Shillong, his achievements included:

Expansion and beautification of the Cathedral Church, Construction of the Archbishop's House, Building Christ King College, New blocks for Nazareth Hospital, The Novitiate House for the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, Establishment of the Pastoral Centre and Oriens

His work extended to churches, presbyteries, schools, and convents across mission centres. He was instrumental in buying the property at Nashik, residential block at DB Matunga, DB Kural ITI. He was not just a builder of structures—he was a builder of communities, of faith, and of hope.

A Man of Vision and Humility

Fr. Rubio was not only a builder of churches and institutions—he was a builder of trust, relationships, and faith. His work as Procurator in both Dibrugarh and Shillong-Gauhati involved managing vast sums of money, coordinating large-scale construction projects, and liaising with donors across continents. Yet, despite the scale of his responsibilities, he remained deeply humble and personally poor.

He lived simply, never attached to wealth or status. His generosity was legendary. He gave freely, supported countless initiatives, and ensured that every rupee was used for the mission. His network of friends in Europe,

America, and especially Spain, trusted him implicitly. They knew that their contributions would be used wisely and faithfully.

Fr. Rubio's humility was not just a personal trait—it was a spiritual discipline. He saw himself as a servant, not a master. His leadership was quiet, effective, and rooted in love for the Church. He never sought recognition, but his work spoke volumes.

The Final Day: A Quiet Passing After a Life of Service

On April 14, 1983, Fr. Rubio spent the day as he always did—working, praying, and spending time with friends. He had recently celebrated his 62nd birthday, and the evening before his death, he had concelebrated a Requiem Mass for Fr. Joseph Arokiaswamy, who had died a year earlier.

Though tired, he relaxed with his fellow priests, chatting and recreating himself in his usual cheerful manner. He retired to bed, planning to visit a plot of land the next morning. But on April 15, he failed to appear for Mass or breakfast.

His brother, Fr. Joseph Rubio, went to his room to call him. After knocking and receiving no response, he gently opened the door and found Fr. Ignatius prostrate on the floor, already cold. He had died during the night, the victim of a massive heart attack.

The news spread quickly. People from all walks of life—clergy, religious, lay faithful—came in continuous streams to the Archbishop's House to pay their respects. His death was sudden, but not unexpected. He had worked tirelessly, and his passing was a fulfilment of Don Bosco's words:

“When a Salesian dies working, it is a triumph for the Congregation.”

Fr. Rubio's death was indeed a triumph—a testimony to a life poured out in service, sacrifice, and love.

The Funeral: A Celebration of a Life Well Lived

His funeral took place on April 17, 1983, at the Cathedral Church of Shillong. The Mass was officiated by Rt. Rev. O. Marengo, SDB, with Rt. Rev. A. Alangimattathil, SDB of Kohima and Rt. Rev. T. Menampampil, SDB of Dibrugarh among the concelebrants.

The Cathedral was packed to capacity. The faithful came not only to mourn, but to celebrate the life of a man who had given everything for the Church. After the Mass, his body was taken in procession to the cemetery, where it was laid to rest.

The funeral was not just a ritual—it was a moment of grace, a communal acknowledgment of the impact Fr. Rubio had made. His name would go down in the history of the Church in Northeast India, not just for the buildings he constructed, but for the lives he transformed.

Legacy: A Builder of Faith and a Model of Generosity

Fr. Rubio's legacy is visible in the churches, schools, hospitals, and convents he helped build. But it is also present in the hearts of those who knew him, worked with him, and were inspired by him.

He was a man of efficiency, vision, and unwavering dedication. His generosity was proverbial, his humility exemplary, and his faith unshakable. He lived the Gospel not just in words, but in action.

His life challenges us to embrace uncalculatingly generosity, to serve without seeking reward, and to build not just structures, but communities of love and faith. He reminds us that missionary work is not about grandeur—it is about fidelity, sacrifice, and joy.

A Salesian to the End

Fr. Rubio embodied the spirit of St John Bosco. He was a Salesian to the core—joyful, hardworking, and deeply committed to the young and the poor. His life was a fulfilment of Don Bosco's dream, and his death was a triumph for the Congregation.

His story is a beacon for future generations of Salesians and missionaries. It calls us to live with courage, to serve with love, and to die with peace. It reminds us that the greatest legacy is not in what we build, but in how we love.



A Life Rooted in Faith and Service

Fr. Michael Murray, SDB (1899-1981)

Rev. Fr. Michael Murray, SDB, was born on 26 January 1899 in Phort Lavigne, County Waterford, Ireland, into a family marked by deep faith, patriotism and simplicity. His early years were formed on the green fields and rugged coastline of Waterford—landscapes that nourished a steadfast soul who would one day cross oceans in service of the Gospel.

Before discovering his Salesian vocation, young Michael served in the Royal Navy from 1915 to 1918, throughout the bitter years of the

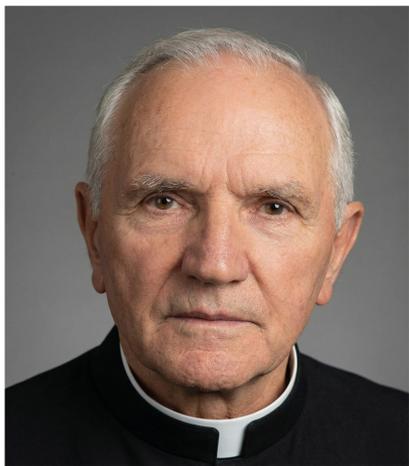
First World War. He rarely spoke of his naval years; he neither boasted of adventure nor displayed any glory-seeking spirit. Rather, he lived those years with quiet discipline—no drinking, no swearing, no tattoos, no ostentation—carrying with him the deep moral clarity of a man reserved for a higher purpose.

After the war, he responded to God’s call and entered the path of religious life. His journey led him to the Champion House of Middlesex, England, known for nurturing “late vocations.” From there, he joined the Salesians of Don Bosco and commenced his philosophical and theological studies, first in Cowley (Oxford) and later at Landsdowne, South Africa, where his novitiate spirit blossomed.

He made his profession in 1922 and was ordained a priest on 16 December 1928 in the Cathedral of Cape Town. The Irish lad who once rode the rough waves of the Atlantic now stood ready to become a missionary of gentleness, zeal and unwavering devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

Missionary of the Blessed Mother and Tireless Supporter of Salesian Works

Soon after ordination, Fr. Murray reached South India in 1934. The Archbishop of Madras entrusted him with what became the burning passion of his priesthood: promoting devotion to Our Lady. It was Fr. Michael



Murray who first envisioned and founded the now-famous Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, Perambur, a flourishing centre of faith that today serves thousands through the parish, shrine, schools, youth centre, dispensary and charitable works. What began as a humble initiative became a vibrant sanctuary, blessed with miracles, built on love for Mary Help of Christians, and sustained by the zeal of Salesians who followed.

But Fr. Murray's missionary heart reached far beyond a single apostolate. For decades, he became a hidden but powerful benefactor of Salesian Missions in India, Goa, the Philippines, and beyond. He fundraised tirelessly—often travelling economy class, crossing long distances by bus, eating simple meals, and turning every journey into a rosary of prayer. The funds he gathered helped build seminaries, workshops, printing presses, farms, youth centres, and innumerable apostolic ventures.

His was a humble generosity. He never cared for accolades or earthly recognition. His joy was to see the Missions grow, especially where vocations were few and needs were vast.

Even in advancing age, Fr. Murray kept supporting South India, Goa and Canlubang (Philippines). Missionaries everywhere knew that “Fr. Mike”—as he was fondly called—would always find a way to help, even with his limited means. His name is woven silently into the foundations of countless institutions, though he rarely allowed it to be publicly acknowledged.

A Life of Poverty, Prayer and Persevering Love

Fr. Murray embodied the spirit of Don Bosco with remarkable authenticity. His life was marked by simplicity, poverty and total availability. His travels, even across America, were by bus; his companions were a breviary, a rosary, and the missionary intentions he carried in his heart. His humour, humility and gentle austerity left an impression on all who met him.

He endured many hardships—fatigue, rejection, criticism, and opposition—especially in his unusual style of collecting funds for diocesan and Salesian works. Yet he accepted everything as a sharing in Christ's mission. He carried these burdens silently, with the patience of a saint and the perseverance of a missionary who believed that every effort was for “the salvation of the young and the poor.”

When age began to weigh upon him, he moved to Villa San José in Spain, hoping it would be his place of retirement. But the harsh climate of Navarra proved too severe. Eventually, he was lovingly welcomed by the Salesian community of Pamplona, where he was cared for with fraternal affection. Later, he returned to Southern Ireland, where the mild breeze of the Gulf Stream eased his declining strength.

His final months were spent at a Home run by the Sisters of St Joseph of

Cluny, near Dungarvan. There he was surrounded by nieces, nephews and family members who loved him dearly. His last days were serene, marked by prayerful preparation for the Lord he had served for more than half a century.

Despite his immense contributions, his final written words reveal a soul of deep humility: “I never achieved anything great... nor anything special.” But those who worked with him knew otherwise. He had achieved something rare and precious—he had given everything to God.

Homeward Bound to the Father

On 14 January 1981, just two days short of his 82nd birthday, Fr. Michael Murray was peacefully called home to the Lord at Portlaw, County Waterford. His earthly pilgrimage, full of sacrifice, love for Mary, and unwavering missionary zeal, came to its gentle conclusion in the land of his birth.

He was laid to rest in the Salesian cemetery at Ballynackill, among fellow missionaries who, like him, had carried the Gospel across continents. The Irish soil now guards the remains of a man whose heart had travelled the world in service of God’s children.

Fr. Murray leaves behind a legacy that cannot be measured by buildings or institutions alone. His true legacy is: the millions of prayers he offered on buses, in chapels and on long journeys; the missionaries he supported, often silently; the shrines and centres he nurtured with Marian devotion; the souls he uplifted by his gentleness, humour and faith; and the Salesian family, enriched by his spirit of humble service.

May his memory inspire Salesians, missionaries and all who read his story to serve with the same simplicity, courage and devotion.



A Joyful Pilgrim of the Salesian Spirit:

Fr. Luigi Di Fiore, SDB (1921-1989)

Life Offered in Joyful Service

AIn the stillness of the early hours of February 12, 1989, at Brunswick, Australia, Fr. Luigi Di Fiore, SDB, returned to his Creator after a massive stroke had left him in a coma. His passing, quiet yet radiant, was a fitting conclusion to a life lived in tireless service and contagious joy. He died, as his confreres remarked, “with his boots on,” ever ready to serve God and the people entrusted to him.

Born on August 28, 1921, in Morcone, in the province of Benevento, Italy, Luigi was one of four children of Bernard and Anna Di Fiore. His childhood was nurtured in faith, family warmth, and the early stirrings of a vocation that would take him across continents. The Salesian school at Gaeta shaped the foundations of his spiritual and intellectual life. Drawn to the charisma of Don Bosco, he received the clerical habit in 1939 and soon embarked on a missionary journey that would define his destiny.



His voyage to India as a young aspirant was a daring leap of faith. At Tirupattur, he completed his novitiate and professed his first vows on December 8, 1940. India would become his second homeland. There, amid the monsoon rains and the vibrancy of youth, he found the field of his dreams—the mission.

The Builder and Visionary

Fr. Luigi's priestly journey unfolded with quiet determination and creative vision. He made his perpetual profession at Kotagiri in 1946 and was ordained a priest in Madras on April 2, 1949. His first assignments were as Scripture teacher and catechist at Tirupattur, where his energy, cheer, and love for students made him a much-loved figure.

His leadership gifts quickly found expression in his appointments as Rector of several major Salesian institutions: Tirupattur, St. Bede's High School,

Madras, and Don Bosco, Bombay. Each of these roles saw his characteristic blend of pastoral zeal, administrative ability, and Salesian cheer. His rooms were always open to students, confreres, and the poor.

In 1965, he was called to higher responsibility as Provincial of the Madras Province, a position he held for six fruitful years. It was a period of remarkable expansion and renewal.

Under his leadership, several pioneering initiatives took root:

- Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, the cradle of Salesian theological formation in India;
- A Retreat Centre at Kotagiri, providing spiritual renewal for generations of Salesians;
- A large school at Perambur, Madras, serving more than a thousand children;
- Land acquisition for an aspirantate in Kerala;
- The Provincial House in Madras, complete with a printing press and aspirantate for brothers;
- Mathias Nagar, a bold social housing project with 85 homes for the poor.

Each venture bore the stamp of his optimism and faith in Divine Providence. He believed deeply that the Salesian mission must touch both soul and society, combining education with compassion and evangelization with justice.

When he attended the Special General Chapter in Rome in 1972, Fr. Luigi found deep resonance in its call to rediscover the pastoral heart of St. Francis de Sales—gentleness, joy, fidelity, and zeal. These virtues, already woven into his character, became even more luminous in his later years.

A Shepherd of Hearts and Nations

Following his term as Provincial, Fr. Luigi served briefly in Bangalore before being appointed Director of Ongoing Formation in Rome (1975–1984). There, at the heart of the Congregation, he worked closely with Salesians from around the world, fostering unity and renewal. His presence was marked by warmth, humour, and fraternity. His laughter could enliven a serious meeting; his wisdom could steady a discouraged soul.

Even while in Rome, his heart remained tethered to India. He corresponded with his former students and confreres, supported mission projects, and carried India's poor in his prayer. But as his health began to falter, he discerned once more the gentle whisper of the Spirit calling him further afield.

In a letter to Fr. Cornell, he wrote, "A strong urge tells me the Lord wants me elsewhere. I am 55, and I hope the Lord will give me at least ten more years of active service."

The Lord gave him thirteen.

He moved to Australia to serve Italian migrants at St. Margaret Mary's

Parish, Brunswick. There, “Don Luigi,” as everyone fondly called him, became a beloved figure—a confessor, counsellor, and friend of all. He visited homes, helped the poor, celebrated the Eucharist with passion, and gave away every gift he received. His parish priest, Fr. Michael Jackson, later remarked: “I thank God that I had with me a real saint. How much he did for this parish in the short time he was here! We are certainly richer for his having lived amongst us.”

Fr. Luigi’s humour was infectious. His jokes, smiles, and twinkling eyes made him a living echo of Don Bosco’s joy. He brought levity without losing depth, laughter without losing love. Even from afar, his love for India never waned. He inspired numerous Australian families to sponsor the education of poor Indian children. After his death, donations in lieu of flowers were sent to the Salesian Missions in India, a testament to his lasting influence.

A Pilgrim’s Homecoming

Fr. Luigi’s final days were marked by silence—a stroke, a coma, a quiet surrender. Yet even his dying was a lesson in discipleship. His earthly journey had crossed Italy, India, Rome, and Australia, but his true homeland was always heaven.

He once confided, “Here below, there is no place or situation where we can be completely happy. However, I accept this message of a return to Australia as the clear manifestation of God’s will.” His life was that very act of acceptance. Whether losing a finger in a rickshaw accident, battling illness, or facing cultural challenges, Fr. Luigi radiated serene surrender. He chose joy as his path, love as his method, and Christ as his destination. In the rhythm of his days, one sensed the melody of resurrection—hope alive even amid human fragility. His life invites us to remember that holiness is not perfection, but fidelity, not grandeur, but grace.

Today, Fr. Luigi Di Fiore is remembered as a joyful pilgrim—a man of prayer, laughter, and boundless generosity. His name lingers in the hearts of those he served in classrooms, parishes, and provincial houses. His smile, even now, seems to whisper Don Bosco’s timeless message: “Run, jump, make noise—but do not sin.”

As we recall his life, we see a missionary who bridged nations and hearts, a priest who transformed every place into a sanctuary of love. His earthly pilgrimage is complete; his eternal Easter has begun.

Epilogue

Fr. Luigi’s story is a luminous thread woven into the Salesian tapestry of India and beyond. His legacy endures not only in buildings and projects but in the countless lives he touched. His death invites us to celebrate not

loss, but fulfilment—the joy of a servant who has returned home. Indeed, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, his heart burned with recognition of Christ in every encounter, in every Eucharist, in every child’s smile. And now, in the fullness of the Father’s house, Fr. Luigi Di Fiore, the joyful pilgrim, rests forever in peace and praise.



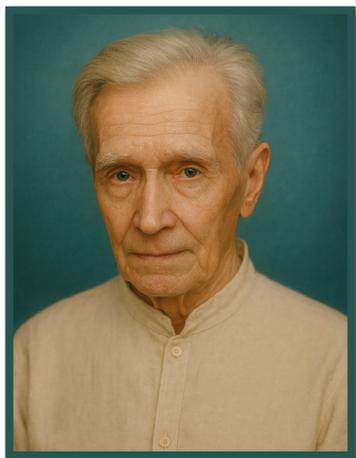
A Heart for the Young:

Fr. Edward Corcoran, SDB (1915-2005)

Family of Faith and Vocations

ABorn on September 8, 1915, in Leigh, England, Edward Corcoran was the second of three children in a devout Catholic family. His parents, John Edward Corcoran and Elizabeth McAndrew, raised their sons in an atmosphere of faith, simplicity, and service. Remarkably, all three brothers embraced the priesthood: Edward's elder brother, Fr. John Corcoran, became a Salesian, while his younger brother, Fr. Joseph Corcoran, entered diocesan ministry. Both remained active in England, continuing the family's legacy of spiritual service.

Edward's own vocation was shaped early. At just 15 years old, he responded to the inner call to serve in the missions, joining the Salesian Mission Aspirantate in Cheshire in 1930. His decision was not impulsive—it was the fruit of prayer, discernment, and a desire to bring Christ to distant lands. He soon proceeded to Cowley, Oxford, to begin his novitiate, and made his first profession on September 7, 1935.



India: A New Home and Lifelong Mission

Shortly after his profession, Edward embarked on a journey that would define the rest of his life. He arrived in India, a land that would become his home, his mission field, and the canvas on which he would paint a life of joyful service.

He completed his philosophical and theological studies in India, and was ordained a priest on May 27, 1947, at the Salesian House in Tirupattur, by Bishop Louis Mathias. His ordination marked the beginning of a ministry that would span nearly seven decades, touching lives across the subcontinent.

Early Ministry: Formation and Education

Fr. Corcoran's early assignments reflected his versatility and dedication. He served as Assistant at the Sacred Heart Seminary (1937–1938), and then at Don Bosco, Matunga, Bombay (1939–1941). After completing his theology

studies in Tirupattur (1941–1945), he returned to Matunga as Assistant (1945–1946), and then as Dean of Studies (1946–1949).

His leadership and pedagogical skills were soon recognized. He was appointed Rector of St Joseph's, Trivandrum (1949–1950), and then of Don Bosco, Pattom, Trivandrum (1950–1951). These roles demanded not only administrative acumen but also pastoral sensitivity, and Fr. Corcoran excelled in both.

In 1951, he became Administrator at Joe Tech, Basin Bridge, and from 1952 to 1963, he served as Dean of Studies at Don Bosco, Panjim, Goa. His work in Goa was particularly impactful, as he helped shape the academic and spiritual formation of countless students.

Yercaud: Two Decades of Formation and Fatherhood

In 1963, Fr. Corcoran was assigned to The Retreat, Yercaud, where he would spend the next 20 years as Professor and Confessor. This period was perhaps the most formative of his ministry. Yercaud was a Salesian formation house, and Fr. Corcoran became a spiritual father to generations of young Salesians.

He was known for his discipline, wisdom, and gentle guidance. His confessional was a place of healing, his classroom a space of inspiration. He understood the challenges faced by young men discerning religious life, and he walked with them patiently, offering encouragement, correction, and love.

His technical skills also came to the fore in Yercaud. He was a skilled technician, capable of repairing projectors, motors, clocks, and musical instruments. He held diplomas in carpentry, electronics, and plumbing, and was the go-to person for fixing anything broken. Often, he worked through meals and rest to ensure that the community functioned smoothly. But beyond his roles and responsibilities, Fr. Corcoran was a joyful presence. His humour was legendary, bringing laughter and lightness to community life. He believed that joy was essential to healing and harmony, and he lived that belief with infectious cheerfulness.

Egmore: A Confessor to the End

In 1983, Fr. Corcoran moved to Don Bosco, Egmore, Chennai, where he would spend the final 22 years of his life as Confessor. Though his health declined over time, his spirit remained strong. He continued to serve, guide, and love the young with unwavering dedication.

His room at Egmore was more like a sports store than a priest's quarters—filled with balls, bats, carrom boards, and snacks for the boys. He trimmed their hair, offered them baths, and gave away clothes, pens, and food to

those in need. He was a friend of the poor, and the boys adored him. Even in his old age, he could be found among school children in the afternoons and night school students in the evenings. His presence was not just physical—it was pastoral, joyful, and fatherly. He lived the Preventive System of Don Bosco with conviction, believing that love, presence, and encouragement were the keys to transformation.

Declining Health and Unwavering Spirit

In the final years of his life, Fr. Edward Corcoran faced increasing health challenges. Yet, true to his character, he bore them with serenity and humour. He had long distrusted hospitals, ever since a failed surgery two decades earlier that, in his view, had triggered his physical decline. Despite periodic illnesses, he would recover with rest and return to his ministry, never allowing discomfort to dampen his spirit.

On January 8, 2005, he missed the community Eucharist and breakfast at Don Bosco, Egmore. Concerned confreres found him in bed with fever, shivering and vomiting. Though he resisted hospitalisation, a doctor was called. As his condition worsened, he was taken to St Isabel's Hospital, where he began to respond well to treatment. Within three days, he was cracking jokes and lifting the spirits of those around him—classic Fr. Corcoran.

But the recovery was short-lived. On January 15, his health deteriorated again. Doctors advised that he be cared for at home, where he would be more comfortable and less exposed to hospital infections. He returned to Egmore on January 22, with round-the-clock nursing care and essential medical equipment.

Back in familiar surroundings, he showed signs of improvement. The community rejoiced, hopeful that their beloved confessor was on the mend. But on January 26, he fell ill again. The next day, January 27, at 12:55 p.m., surrounded by his Salesian confreres, Fr. Edward Corcoran peacefully breathed his last.

A Farewell Full of Love and Gratitude

His death marked the end of an era for the Chennai Province. The grand-old Salesian, who had served for nearly seven decades, was gone. But his memory was alive in the hearts of thousands—students, teachers, confreres, and lay collaborators.

His mortal remains were kept at Don Bosco, Egmore, for public homage. People from all walks of life—Salesians, religious, relatives, students, past pupils, night school children—came in droves to pay their respects. A Requiem Mass was celebrated at 6:30 p.m., attended by a large gathering of mourners.

On January 28, after a second Requiem Mass at 7:30 a.m. for the student community, his body was taken to Don Bosco, Tirupattur, the place of his ordination and early ministry. Bishop Chinnappa of Vellore presided over the solemn funeral Mass, joined by priests, sisters, brothers, and laity.

Fr. Joseph Puthenkalam delivered a moving homily, while farewell tributes were offered by Frs Theophilus, Maria Arokiam, Berchmans Fernandez, and Mr Michael Sunder. After the Mass, his body was carried in procession to the Don Bosco Cemetery, where Fr. James Theophilus, Provincial of Trichy, blessed the tomb and oversaw the interment.

A Salesian to the Core

Fr. Corcoran was more than a priest—he was a Salesian at heart, deeply imbued with the spirit of Don Bosco. He lived the Preventive System not as a theory, but as a daily practice. His presence among the young was constant, joyful, and transformative.

His room at Egmore, filled with sports equipment and snacks, was a symbol of his pastoral style—accessible, generous, and playful. He trimmed hair, gave baths, and distributed clothes and food. He was not just a priest—he was a father, a friend, and a companion.

His work as a confessor and spiritual director was equally impactful. Though he appeared strict, he was gentle and understanding in the confessional. He grasped the realities of modern youth and guided them with wisdom and compassion. His penitents left with hearts full of peace.

He was also a technician, a repairman, and a problem-solver. Whether it was a broken projector or a faulty motor, Fr. Corcoran could fix it. His skills were practical, but his service was spiritual. He used his talents to build community, restore harmony, and serve others.

A Legacy of Joy, Simplicity, and Presence

Fr. Corcoran's legacy is not just in the roles he held, but in the values he lived:

- Joy: He believed that laughter was healing, and he brought humour to every situation.
- Simplicity: He lived without pretension, embracing poverty and humility.
- Presence: He was always there—for the boys, for the confreres, for the Church.
- Love for the Young: His heartbeat for the poor and the young, and he gave them everything he had.

In his homily, Fr. Clive described him as:

“Forthright and straightforward... a life of simplicity and poverty... always with a smile and an encouraging word.”

These words capture the essence of Fr. Corcoran—a man who lived the Gospel with his hands, heart, and humour.

A Final Word

Fr. Edward Corcoran's memory may fade with time, but the spirit he embodied will continue to inspire. He was a true Salesian, a missionary of joy, and a spiritual father to generations. His story is a call to every priest, every educator, and every Christian to live with presence, passion, and pastoral love.

He died as he lived—surrounded by community, at peace, and faithful to the end. May his soul rest in eternal joy, and may his life continue to guide those who walk the path of Don Bosco.



A Life Offered in Silence:

Br Andrew Rouiller, SDB (1915-1944)

Swiss Beginning Rooted in Faith

ABorn on May 9, 1915, in Vanderens, in the Catholic canton of Fribourg, Switzerland, Andrew Rouiller was the son of Emile Rouiller and Magdalene Cosandey. Raised in a devout household, Andrew's early life was steeped in the traditions of the Church and the rhythms of rural Catholic life. His homeland, known for its strong faith and pastoral beauty, would shape his character—resilient, gentle, and deeply spiritual. Andrew's first encounter with the Salesians came at La Navarre, a house intimately connected with the dreams of St John Bosco. It was here that Don Bosco had once seen, in a prophetic vision, squadrons of boys covered by a veil spread by Mary Help of Christians, transforming into Salesian Brothers and Priests. Andrew would become one of those boys—a quiet fulfilment of that dream.

Salesian Formation: A Vocation Blossoms

Andrew entered the novitiate at Prieuré de Binson, receiving the Salesian cassock on September 12, 1935, from Fr. Festou, on the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary. A year later, on September 13, 1936, he made his first profession, committing himself to the Salesian way of life.

Even before his philosophical studies, Andrew had been asked to gain practical experience. He worked at the Salesian House in Caen, France—a place he would always remember fondly. His time there prepared him for the missionary life ahead, instilling in him a sense of discipline, craftsmanship, and community spirit.

In 1938, driven by an ardent desire to serve in the missions, Andrew left Europe for India. It was a bold step for a young cleric, but one he embraced with joy. He arrived at Tirupattur, where he completed his philosophical studies, and began his missionary journey in earnest.

Missionary Work: Bombay, Chetpet, and Vellore

Andrew's assignments took him across India. He served in Bombay, then at the missionary house in Chetpet, and finally at Vellore. In each place, he was known for his humility, hard work, and quiet joy. He was not a man of grand gestures—he was a man of silent service, always ready to help, to sacrifice, and to build.

In 1943, when the Salesian Province was stretched thin due to wartime demands, Andrew was entrusted with a special task: overseeing the

construction of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Tirupattur. While others rested in the hills, Andrew laboured day and night, driven not by duty alone, but by love. His work was meticulous, his dedication unwavering. He was a builder, not just of stone and mortar, but of faith and fraternity.

Yellagiri Hills: A Pioneer's Final Mission

Later that year, Andrew was sent to the newly acquired Yellagiri Hills, a site envisioned for future missions, agricultural development, and a holiday house. He was the ideal pioneer—resilient, resourceful, and deeply spiritual. The plan was for him to stay three days a week, but Providence had other designs.

While on the hills, Andrew developed a minor throat infection. The acting Provincial gave him potassium chlorate pills, which Andrew kept in his pocket. Tragically, the pills ignited, causing a severe burn on his thigh. Unable to walk, he remained on the hills, cared for by a generous Catholic family—the Browns—whose kindness and hospitality were deeply appreciated.

Though the wound healed, Andrew soon developed a fever. He remained in bed, visited by confreres, and received the sacraments several times. He was cheerful, grateful, and full of hope. He planned to return to Tirupattur to witness the celebrations of Novice clothing, Ordinations, and the feasts of St Francis de Sales and St John Bosco.

But on the day of his planned return, his fever worsened. On January 26, the Brown family sent word that his condition was alarming. Fr. Carreno and the Infirmarian rushed to the hills, arriving at nightfall. They found Andrew peaceful and content, ready for whatever God willed.

The next morning, he made his Confession and received Holy Communion with great fervour. Mass was celebrated in the Brown home, and the family joined in receiving the sacraments. It was a moment of grace, a final spiritual embrace before the journey home.

A Sudden Decline and a Soul Prepared

After returning from the Yellagiri Hills, Br Andrew Rouiller was welcomed warmly at the Salesian House in Tirupattur. Though visibly fatigued, he was cheerful, grateful, and hopeful. He spoke with confreres, shared his joy at being back, and expressed deep appreciation for the care he was receiving. No one suspected the gravity of his condition.

On January 29, the feast of St Francis de Sales, the house was alive with celebration—novice clothing, retreat closing, and the presence of the Archbishop. But amidst the joy, Andrew's condition worsened. He collapsed, fell from his bed, and became unconscious.

Dr Jesudasan from Ashram Hospital was called immediately. He postponed a scheduled surgery to attend to Andrew, examined him, and took a blood sample. The diagnosis was devastating cerebral malaria, a severe and often fatal form of the disease. Despite strong doses of quinine and coramine, Andrew remained unconscious.

He was transferred to the hospital in the Archbishop's car, where he received further treatment. On January 30, the day of Ordinations, the community hoped for a turnaround. But Andrew's condition remained critical. Fr. Carreno stayed by his side, hoping for a moment of lucidity to administer the last sacraments. That moment never came.

On the morning of February 1, the acting Provincial administered conditional absolution, Extreme Unction, and the Papal Blessing. Ejaculatory prayers were whispered into Andrew's ear. At 10:33 a.m., he passed away peacefully, without agony, in silence—just as he had lived.

A Funeral of Grace and Fraternal Love

His body was clothed in the Salesian cassock and brought back to the Church of the Sacred Heart, which he had helped build. The entire community gathered to pray the Rosary, and the Archbishop, vested in black cope, imparted absolution and offered words of comfort.

Throughout the day, confreres, aspirants, and boys came in relays to pray. The news of his death spread quickly, and villagers, especially the workmen who had laboured under him, came in tears to pay their respects. That evening, Matins and Lauds for the Dead were sung by the community.

On February 2, a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated by the acting Provincial. With 13 priests present, all their Masses were offered for Andrew's soul. As per Salesian tradition, 30 additional Masses would follow.

Permission had been granted to open a Salesian Cemetery within the compound. Andrew's body was carried in procession to the newly blessed ground—the first Salesian to be buried there. A mortuary chapel would later be built, and his grave marked as a sacred memory.

He was laid to rest in sight of the hills he loved, near the shrine he helped raise, within the boundaries of the Salesian family. His presence would remain—always remembered, always prayed for.

Letters of Light: A Soul in Union with Christ

In his final days, Andrew wrote letters that revealed a soul deeply united with Christ. He offered his sufferings for the healing of Fr. George, a sick confrere in Bangalore. He wrote:

“All these days of sufferings and prayers have been a preparation for me to receive Jesus. I am happy now and am made ready to endure more

sufferings... I would undergo any number of trials provided our dear Father can once more say Mass.”

His reflections were not complaints—they were acts of surrender, prayers of intercession, and expressions of love. He saw his illness as a time of recollection, a chance to grow in patience, humility, and charity.

In another letter, he wrote:

“I have never felt the Hand of God so near to me as in these days... I was glad to be able to suffer myself also and to have something to offer to the Child Jesus... These days have been for me like days of recollection during which I had plenty of time to think of my soul, to try to perfect myself in the virtues...”

These words are not just personal—they are spiritual treasures, revealing the depth of a young Salesian’s heart. Andrew was not afraid of death. He embraced it as a gift, a homecoming, a final offering.

Legacy: A Seed Sown in Sacred Ground

Though he died at just 28 years old, Br Andrew Rouiller lived a life of profound meaning. He was a temporary professed cleric, yet his impact was lasting. He built not only churches, but faith, fraternity, and hope.

His death was not a tragedy—it was a triumph, a fulfilment of Don Bosco’s words:

“When a Salesian dies working, it is a triumph for the Congregation.”

Andrew died working, praying, and loving. His memory lives on in the Yellagiri Hills, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, and the Salesian Cemetery of Tirupattur. He was a quiet flame, a hidden saint, a brother who gave everything.

His story is a call to every Salesian, every missionary, and every Christian to live with humility, joy, and total surrender. He reminds us that greatness is not in age or achievement, but in love offered silently, in suffering embraced willingly, and in faith lived fully.

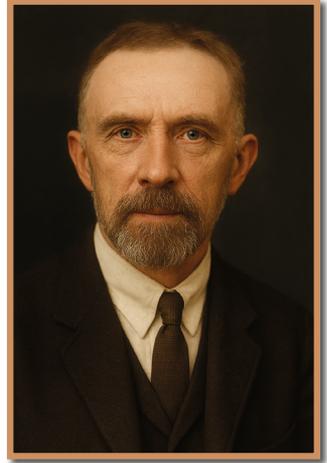


A Quiet Flame of Faith and Cheerfulness: Br. Lawrence Santana, SDB (1872-1943)

Life Hidden in God

AIn the early dawn of January 1, 1943, the Salesian community in Mumbai bade farewell to a man whose life had been a quiet hymn of fidelity and joy. Br. Lawrence Santana, SDB, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a legacy not of grand accomplishments, but of simple faith, hard work, and radiant cheerfulness — virtues that form the bedrock of Salesian holiness.

Born on October 18 in Pinera de Azcos, Spain, Lawrence grew up in a deeply Christian family that nurtured in him a love for prayer and service. Responding to God's call, he joined the Salesian Congregation, making his religious profession in 1905. From the beginning, he embraced the spirit of Don Bosco with humility and total availability. His life would become a testament to the quiet sanctity of the coadjutor brother — the lay religious whose silent labour sustains the mission and sanctifies the everyday.



A Missionary Heart in the Spirit of Don Bosco

In 1922, Br. Lawrence's missionary dream took shape when he set sail for India, arriving in Shillong alongside Msgr. Louis Mathias, one of the pioneers of the Salesian mission in the country. The journey from Spain to the hills of northeast India was not just a change of geography but a transformation of vocation. The young brother threw himself wholeheartedly into his new life among the Salesians and the youth of India.

In Shillong, he served in quiet but essential ways — managing the daily rhythm of the community, assisting in the formation of young Salesians, and caring for the needs of students and confreres alike. He was known for his simplicity, punctuality, and joyful diligence, virtues that made him a beloved presence in the community. He spoke little, prayed much, and worked tirelessly. His joy, as those who lived with him recalled, came from being useful — from doing ordinary things with extraordinary love.

In 1933, he was transferred to Mumbai, where he would spend the last decade of his life. There, too, Br. Lawrence became a pillar of quiet strength. Whether maintaining the house, tending to small repairs, or helping in the

sacristy, he carried out his duties with the serenity of one who knew he was serving God in every task. His gentle humour and smile lifted the hearts of those around him, even in difficult times.

He was, in every sense, a Salesian of cheerful service, embodying Don Bosco's motto: "Work, but let your work be born of love."

The Humility of Hidden Holiness

Br. Lawrence's life did not unfold on public stages or in great offices. He never sought recognition, nor did he leave behind writings or projects bearing his name. Yet, he lived the Gospel in its purest form — through daily acts of love, silence, and sacrifice. He belonged to that quiet multitude of Salesians who, by their hidden holiness, sustain the visible works of the Congregation.

When he passed away in 1943, at the age of 71, his death was deeply felt in the community. His confreres mourned not the loss of a worker, but of a brother whose gentle presence had been a source of peace. His life had been a "hidden fire" — burning steadily, giving warmth to others, and illuminating the Salesian family with its soft light.

One confrere later wrote of him: "He lived his vocation without noise or notice — a man of prayer, a man of cheerfulness, a man of God."

In the simplicity of his life, Br. Lawrence showed that sanctity is not achieved through public success but through quiet fidelity to duty. His story is a reminder that every small act of service, when done with love, becomes a step toward eternity.

A Legacy That Still Speaks

Today, Br. Lawrence Santana is remembered not for great speeches or achievements, but for his presence — steady, cheerful, and kind. He embodied the Salesian charism of joyful holiness and the silent heroism of the coadjutor brother, whose hidden work builds the Kingdom of God, day by day.

His life continues to inspire generations of Salesians who live and work in humble service. Like a lamp placed not on a pedestal but on a workbench, his light still shines quietly, guiding others to find holiness in ordinary work, laughter, and faithfulness.

In him, we see the living echo of Don Bosco's spirit — the joy of the Gospel expressed through simple, faithful love.

"In the small duties of daily life," St. Francis de Sales said, "we find the path to great sanctity."

That path was Br. Lawrence's life — a humble trail of service that led him to the peace of heaven, leaving behind the fragrance of a life well lived.

A Cheerful Heart, a Faithful Spirit: **Fr. Ernesto Clavel, SDB (1917-1983)**

Joy Rooted in Vocation

Joy Rooted in Vocation
On April 3, 1983, in Italy, the Salesian family bade farewell to Fr. Ernesto Clavel, SDB, a priest remembered for his radiant cheerfulness, resilience in suffering, and heartfelt love for the young. His life was a quiet yet profound reflection of Don Bosco's spirit — a life that proclaimed the joy of the Gospel through laughter, creativity, and faithful service.

Born on May 13, 1917, in Eias, Italy, Ernesto grew up in a family of simple faith and generosity. From his youth, he was drawn to the joyful spirituality of St. John Bosco and joined the Salesian Congregation, answering the call to dedicate his life to God in the service of the young.

In 1938, as a young aspirant, he arrived in India, the land where he would spend some of his most formative and fruitful years. His novitiate at Tirupattur shaped his Salesian identity, grounding him in prayer, simplicity, and zeal for souls. His first apostolic experiences were in the Aspirantate House and the Dominic Savio Orphanage, both part of the Salesian House. There, his natural gift for humour and acting became a bridge to the hearts of the boys.

Wherever he went, he carried laughter — not as mere entertainment, but as an expression of inner joy. The young found in him not only a teacher but a friend who made them believe in life and in themselves.

Perseverance Through Suffering

Fr. Ernesto's early years as a Salesian were not without struggle. His health began to deteriorate during formation, and superiors advised that he return to Italy for treatment. Yet, it was Fr. Aurelius Maschio, recognizing the spark of vocation and talent in him, who intervened to arrange special medical care.

That timely support rekindled his hope. Slowly regaining strength, Ernesto resumed his studies with renewed determination. His perseverance culminated in his ordination to the priesthood on October 8, 1949 — a day he would forever cherish as the triumph of grace over weakness.

His illness had refined his spirit. He became more compassionate, more understanding of others' struggles. The cross he carried quietly became a source of light for those around him. In later years, when he spoke to

young Salesians about vocation, he often said that joy is not the absence of pain, but the ability to love even when life is difficult.

A Salesian of Joyful Service

After his ordination, Fr. Clavel returned to Mumbai, eager to give back to the province that had nurtured his vocation. His priestly ministry was marked by creativity, kindness, and the ability to make faith appealing to the young. Whether through drama, storytelling, or simple conversation, he had a way of making the Gospel come alive.

He embodied Don Bosco's belief that holiness consists in being "always cheerful." His laughter was not loud or superficial, but gentle and genuine — the kind of joy that uplifts weary hearts. Those who worked with him remember him as a man of simple tastes, deep prayer, and contagious optimism.

Even as his health continued to challenge him, he never lost his enthusiasm. Later, when he returned to Italy for good, he remained faithful to his priestly duties, serving with humility until his final days. He passed away peacefully in 1983, at the age of 65, leaving behind a memory filled with warmth and gratitude.

The Legacy of a Cheerful Heart

Fr. Ernesto Clavel's life teaches us that holiness is not reserved for the strong or the successful, but for those who live with love, hope, and joy. His was the holiness of daily fidelity — of bringing light to others even when burdened by pain. He taught that laughter, when rooted in faith, becomes a form of evangelization.

His legacy is that of a Salesian of joy, a priest whose smile preached louder than words, whose gentleness healed more deeply than sermons, and whose quiet perseverance inspired all who knew him.

Fr. Ernesto reminds us that joy is not only a feeling — it is a choice, a vocation, a gift. Through his life, he lived Don Bosco's timeless message: "Serve the Lord in holy cheerfulness."

In his laughter, the poor found comfort; in his kindness, the young found hope; and in his faith, the Church found joy.



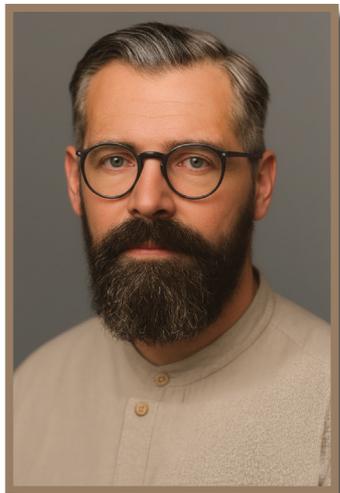
A Missionary of Simplicity

Fr. Hugh Tuena, SDB (1906-1966)

Roman Birth and Swiss Formation

ABorn on December 24, 1906, in Rome, Fr. Hugh Tuena often said he was born “in the shadow of the dome of St Peter’s Basilica,” as the bells rang out for Midnight Mass. This poetic image was more than sentiment—it was a reflection of the deep faith that would shape his life. His birth on Christmas Eve, in the heart of Christendom, seemed to foreshadow a life of service, humility, and spiritual depth.

His family later moved to Switzerland, where Hugh completed his studies and worked as a school teacher. He was known for his intelligence, gentleness, and quiet leadership. But at the age of 26, he heard a deeper call—a call to religious life and missionary service. In 1933, he entered the Salesian House of Ivrea, requesting to be sent to the missions.



Salesian Formation and Arrival in India

Hugh’s journey to India began with his arrival in Mumbai on December 4, 1933. He completed his novitiate at Tirupattur, making his religious profession on January 29, 1935. His formation was marked by simplicity, obedience, and a deep love for Don Bosco’s charism.

He was ordained a priest on September 8, 1940, in Shillong, by Bishop Stephen Ferrando, SDB. His ordination was not just a personal milestone—it was the beginning of a life poured out in service to the Church and the young.

Ministry Across the Province: A Trail of Grace

From 1945 until his death in 1966, Fr. Tuena served in several key roles: Rector of Don Bosco, Vellore, Rector of St Bede’s, Madras, Rector of Salesian House, Tirupattur.

He was also appointed Acting Provincial three times, a testament to the trust and esteem he enjoyed among his confreres. In each assignment, he left behind a trail of affection, admiration, and spiritual fruit.

Salesians and students alike were drawn to his gentle nature, balanced judgment, and mature leadership. He was considered one of the most efficient and respected priests in the province. His style was not authoritarian—it was fraternal. He led by example, with humility and kindness.

A Man of Simplicity and Poverty

Fr. Tuena was known for his strict personal poverty. Though he handled substantial funds for the province—raising money for buildings, land, and development—he never used it for personal gain. He lived simply, gave generously, and practiced detachment.

His charity was quiet but profound. One story tells of a man who came to Tirupattur with a false identity, seeking help. Though advised that the case was likely fraudulent, Fr. Tuena replied, “*Perhaps you are right... still, shall I give him Rs. 5 for the love of God?*” That was Fr. Tuena—a man of Christian charity.

He helped countless poor students, orphans, and struggling families. One past pupil, now successful, wept at his funeral, saying, “*If I am anything today in life, I owe it to him. I was a poor orphan boy, but he took care of me.*” There are hundreds who could say the same.

Salesian Spirit and Obedience

Fr. Tuena’s attachment to Don Bosco and the Salesian traditions was legendary. He spared no effort to make Don Bosco known and loved. Wherever he served, he worked to keep the Salesian spirit alive—through prayer, community life, and joyful service.

His obedience to superiors was exemplary. In a letter to his new Provincial, he wrote: “I shall try to give my Superiors the least amount of trouble, and to be always obedient and loyal. I shall always consider you the representative of Don Bosco and shall cooperate with you in every way possible and in whatever place you might put me.”

Even when he disagreed, he did so respectfully, often apologising afterward. His humility was not weakness—it was strength. He believed that obedience was a path to holiness, and he walked it faithfully.

Final Days: Still at His Post

In the final week of his life, Fr. Hugh Tuena was still actively engaged in ministry. On April 29, 1966, he travelled to Madras to meet some of his countrymen who had arrived on a mission of charity. While with them, he recorded a message for his loved ones in Switzerland—a heartfelt note that would unknowingly become his last.

He returned to Tirupattur on April 30, and spent Sunday in high spirits.

But that evening, he suddenly fell ill. Dr Swaminathan, the devoted house doctor, diagnosed a severe case of gastroenteritis. Fr. Tuena was rushed to the Government Hospital, where Dr Swaminathan stayed by his side through the night.

By Tuesday morning, thanks to the care of Dr Charles from Ambur and Dr Mathew from Vellore, Fr. Tuena seemed to be recovering. He was transferred to the Mission Hospital in Ambur, where better facilities were available. On Wednesday, he was cheerful, though weak. The community rejoiced, believing he had escaped danger.

But in the early hours of Thursday, May 5, he complained of breathing difficulty. By 8 a.m., his condition worsened, with bleeding and respiratory distress. Dr Benjamin ordered an X-ray, suspecting cancer or pneumonia. Oxygen was administered, and every effort was made to stabilize him.

Fr. Tuena remained conscious, speaking, and following everything around him. But minutes later, the nurse felt his pulse and called the doctor. After a brief examination, Dr Benjamin turned to the confrere present and said: “Father is no more.”

It was 9:52 a.m. Fr. Tuena had passed away peacefully, with the same quiet smile on his face. He had, in the words of Scripture, “fallen asleep in the Lord.”

A Funeral of Love and Honour

The news of his death reached the Provincial, who was in Goa, presiding over a retreat. Though he had been told Fr. Tuena was out of danger, he immediately began his journey to Tirupattur, arriving in time for the funeral on May 6.

Bishop David Marianayagam, SDB, of Vellore, presided over the funeral Mass and performed the last rites at the cemetery in the house compound. Over 100 Salesians and many past pupils attended, a testament to the love and esteem Fr. Tuena had earned.

The Provincial spoke movingly of Fr. Tuena’s life and virtues, describing him as a true son of Don Bosco, who had died at his post, working until the very end. His registers showed entries made up to May 1, proof of his dedication and presence.

Virtues Remembered: Humility, Joy, and Charity

Fr. Tuena’s virtues were many and luminous. He was a man of proverbial simplicity, deep humility, and unostentatious behaviour. He was approachable to all—students, confreres, and visitors. He was known for his habitual cheerfulness, cordiality, and hospitality.

He often told humorous stories—sometimes old ones—but always with

the intention of making others happy. His joy was not superficial—it was spiritual, rooted in love and service. There are countless others who could say the same. The charity Fr. Tuena did in secret is known only to God.

Salesian Spirit and Obedience

Fr. Tuena's attachment to Don Bosco was unwavering. He worked tirelessly to promote the Salesian spirit, ensuring that wherever he served, Don Bosco was known, loved, and imitated.

A Builder of the Province

Though he lived simply, Fr. Tuena was responsible for significant material growth in the province. Through appeals to Switzerland, he secured funds for:

- Two monumental houses at Katpadi
- The auditorium of St Bede's
- Land in Coimbatore
- Initial support for the new Aspirantate of Tirupattur

He never used these resources for personal gain. He practiced the strictest poverty, and always used funds according to the intentions of his superiors—even if it meant depriving his own house of something needed.

A Death Prepared in Faith

Though his death was sudden, Fr. Tuena was spiritually prepared. After his first crisis, he called for his confessor, made a general confession, and received the Last Sacraments, saying: "I want to be ready if God calls me to Himself."

Together with his confessor, he repeated the prayer from the Mass:

"May the Lord receive this sacrifice from my hands to the praise and glory of His name..."

It was his evening sacrifice, and we believe the Lord accepted it.

Legacy: A Model for Missionaries

Fr. Hugh Tuena's life is a model for every missionary, priest, and Salesian. He lived with simplicity, joy, and unwavering dedication. He died as he lived—at his post, faithful to the end.

His memory continues to inspire those who walk the path of joyful service, reminding us that greatness lies not in fame, but in faithfulness, humility, and love.



A Missionary Pioneer and Builder of Hope:

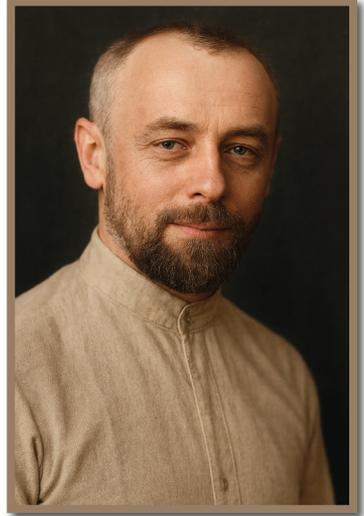
Fr. Austin Dehlert, SDB (1888-1958)

Life Shaped by Faith and Vision

On December 5, 1958, in Mumbai, the Salesian Province of India bid farewell to Fr. Austin Dehlert, SDB, one of its early pioneers and quiet builders. His seventy years of life were marked by courage, simplicity, and steadfast dedication to the Salesian mission among the young and the poor.

Born on September 2, 1888, in Herbigotten, Poland, Austin grew up during turbulent times, but his heart was formed by faith and an inner call to serve. As a young man, he entered the Salesian aspirantate in Penago, Italy, in 1906, where he found his spiritual home in the family of Don Bosco. His vocation blossomed under the influence of Blessed Michael Rua, from whom he received the clerical habit in 1909. He made his first profession on September 29, 1910 and was ordained priest in Turin on June 10, 1922.

Soon after ordination, the fire of missionary zeal burned within him. Responding to the call of the missions, he volunteered for India — then a young Salesian frontier. In November 1922, Fr. Dehlert arrived in Tanjore, ready to begin a lifetime of service in a land that would become his home.



A Missionary of Compassion and Service

In India, Fr. Dehlert immediately distinguished himself by his quiet efficiency and compassionate heart. His early years were spent in the orphanage at Tanjore, where he served with fatherly tenderness. Appointed Rector of the orphanage in April 1928, he worked tirelessly for the well-being of the boys in his care. His ministry was marked not by words but by deeds — daily acts of kindness, patient instruction, and genuine love for the poor.

He saw in every orphaned or neglected child the face of Christ. His was

the gentle authority of a father — firm yet kind, structured yet full of affection. He ensured that the boys were not only cared for materially but also nurtured in faith and moral strength.

Later, his missionary journey brought him to Mumbai, where he joined forces with Fr. Joseph Hauber to establish a new Salesian house at Tardeo. It was a humble beginning, but from those small foundations, a lasting Salesian presence would grow. Fr. Dehlert devoted himself fully to this community, remaining in Mumbai for the rest of his life. His presence was quiet but steady — like the deep roots of a tree that give strength and life to the branches above.

Even as age and fatigue began to weigh on him, Fr. Dehlert never lost his missionary spirit. His room became a place of prayer, welcome, and fatherly counsel. The younger Salesians admired his humility and perseverance, seeing in him a living link to the early days of the mission.

A Life of Quiet Heroism

Fr. Dehlert was not a man of many words. He preferred to serve in silence, to lead by example, and to offer his best without seeking recognition. Yet, those who knew him spoke of his deep faith, discipline, and gentleness. He was exact in his duties, patient in trials, and profoundly compassionate toward the poor.

When he passed away in Mumbai on December 5, 1958, at the age of 70, his death went quietly unnoticed by the world. But for the Salesian family in India, it marked the departure of a man whose presence had quietly shaped its earliest years. His confreres and students remembered him not as a preacher of eloquent words, but as a man whose life itself was a sermon — one of simplicity, perseverance, and holiness.

Fr. Austin Dehlert belonged to that generation of missionary pioneers who built the Salesian foundations in India with prayer and sweat, with courage and humility. Their work was often hidden, their names seldom recorded, yet their faith and labour became the seedbed of today's thriving missions.

The Legacy of a Faithful Servant

Fr. Dehlert's life was a testament to fidelity — fidelity to God's call, to the Salesian spirit, and to the mission entrusted to him. His holiness was not dramatic but consistent; not loud, but luminous. He lived the words of Don Bosco: "Work as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God."

He worked with quiet intensity, trusted with unshakable faith, and loved with a father's heart. In his hidden life, we see the enduring truth of the Gospel — that greatness lies in service, and sanctity in faithfulness.

Today, his memory continues to inspire Salesians and missionaries to serve with humility and joy. He reminds us that the Kingdom of God is often built by those who labour unseen — men and women whose only ambition is to love and to serve.

“The seed sown in faith will bear fruit in its time.”

Indeed, the seed that Fr. Austin Dehlert planted in Indian soil continues to bear fruit — in the countless lives touched by the Salesian mission he helped to build, and in the enduring witness of his quiet, faithful love for God and the young.



A Quiet Flame of Faith and Fidelity:

Br. Carlo Bellani, SDB (1881-1945)

Humble Beginning and a Faithful Vocation

In the spring of 1945, as war and disease cast their long shadows over Europe, the Salesian community at Don Bosco Institute, Sampierdarena (Genoa), grieved the loss of one of its most faithful sons — Br. Carlo Bellani, SDB. His death, after a painful struggle with stomach cancer, came during a typhoid epidemic that had already claimed several young confreres. Yet, even amid suffering and sorrow, his life shone with the gentle light of humility, faith, and missionary zeal.



Born in 1881 in Sant'Angelo Lodigiano, in the province of Lodi, northern Italy, Carlo's journey to religious life was not immediate. He first aspired to the diocesan priesthood, a dream that did not materialize. Yet, Providence had other plans. Drawn by fond memories of his youth spent among the Salesians, he entered the Salesian Congregation in 1913, responding to God's call with simple trust and quiet joy.

Br. Carlo embraced his vocation as a Salesian coadjutor brother — not as a secondary path, but as a full and rich way of following Christ. He served in the background, in roles often unseen but deeply essential: infirmarian,

wardrobe manager, and sacristan. To each task, however menial, he brought care, devotion, and a sense of sacred purpose. His life embodied the spirit of Don Bosco's advice to his Salesians: "Work, but let your work be born of love; and whatever you do, do it with joy."

The Missionary Heart

For years, Br. Carlo harbored a quiet dream — to become a missionary. That dream came true in 1927, when he was sent to India, a distant land he had long admired from afar. His missionary service took him to Calcutta and Bombay, where he supported the growing Salesian presence through his dedicated logistical and spiritual service.

Though his health was fragile, his faith was firm. He found deep joy in serving the young and the poor, offering his simplicity and labour for the mission's success. His work was not dramatic or public, but it was indispensable — a ministry of presence that brought order, peace, and encouragement to others.

His confreres recalled that he often referred to his daily chores as “my way of serving the Lord's altar.” To him, every folded garment, every swept corridor, and every caring act for the sick was an offering of love.

In 1939, illness forced him to return to Italy. Yet, even as his strength declined, his missionary spirit remained alive. He continued to serve quietly in different communities, including with Bishop Munerati in Volterra, and later at Sampierdarena, where he spent his final years. There, he became known for his early rising, his love for liturgical order, and his deep devotion to prayer. His fellow Salesians often found him in the chapel before dawn, silently praying for his community and for the missions he had once served.

The Cross and the Crown

In March 1945, Br. Carlo's earthly pilgrimage reached its final chapter. After undergoing surgery for stomach cancer, he succumbed peacefully on March 5, 1945. His death came at a time of immense trial for the Salesian community. The war had left Genoa in ruins; the parish church had been destroyed by bombings, and a typhoid epidemic, caused by contaminated water tanks, had struck the house. More than eighty members of the community were hospitalized, and several — including young clerics and a priest — lost their lives.

Amid these heavy crosses, the community found in Br. Carlo's serene death a sign of grace. In a letter written shortly after, Fr. Nicolao Raghianti, Director of the Institute, described him as “a man who, though not ordained, lived his vocation with missionary fervour and spiritual depth.” His passing, he said, was “a purifying sacrifice, a seed of faith that will bring new life to the community.”

The Rector Major of the Salesians, too, wrote words of consolation, affirming that such sufferings, borne with faith, would be richly rewarded by God. Despite the devastation around them, the Salesians at Sampierdarena pressed on, continuing to educate more than 250 boarding students, most of them orphans, and many others who came daily for schooling. The quiet heroism of brothers like Carlo sustained that mission.

A Hidden Holiness

Br. Carlo Bellani's life was not one of extraordinary achievements or public acclaim. It was a life of ordinary faithfulness — the holiness of daily work done with love. His simplicity, silence, and devotion reflected the Gospel truth that greatness lies not in doing great things, but in doing small things with great love.

Those who knew him remembered a man of peace, punctuality, and prayer — a brother who never complained, who carried his pain with grace, and who inspired others simply by his presence. His holiness was hidden, like a lamp glowing quietly in a corner, yet its light continues to shine in the memory of the Salesian family.

In his humble life, we find the purest essence of the Salesian vocation: fidelity to daily duty, cheerful service, and trust in Divine Providence. He lived what Don Bosco once said to his first brothers: “God does not ask of you extraordinary deeds, but the faithful fulfilment of ordinary ones.”

Epilogue

As we remember Br. Carlo Bellani, we recall a man who made holiness look simple — because it was woven into everything he did. He lived in the shadows of war and sickness, yet his faith burned like a steady flame. His death, in the midst of suffering, became a quiet testimony to the hope that never dies.

Today, his memory invites us to rediscover the hidden sanctity of everyday life — to see in each act of service, however small, a step toward God. In the humble coadjutor brother who spent himself in silence, we glimpse the enduring truth of Don Bosco's dream: that even the smallest life, lived for love, can light up the world.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master.”
(Mt 25:21)



A Joyful Teacher and Faithful Salesian: Fr. Joseph Deane, SDB (1921-1968)

he Early Years of a Cheerful Disciple

On April 6, 1968, in London, the Salesian family bid farewell to Fr. Joseph Deane, SDB, a priest remembered for his humour, sincerity, and radiant love for young people. His life, though brief, was rich in faith and full of joy — a true reflection of Don Bosco's spirit lived out with warmth and authenticity.

Born on November 15, 1921, in Belfast, Ireland, Joseph entered the Salesian school at Shrigley, England, in 1933, when he was only twelve years old. Even as a boy, his cheerful disposition, quick wit, and gentle

manners endeared him to companions and teachers alike. The Salesian environment shaped him deeply, giving him both the human warmth and spiritual depth that would characterize his life as a priest.

In 1938, he began his novitiate, and just two years later, in February 1940, he set sail for India, a land that would become his second home and the stage for his most fruitful years of ministry.



A Teacher with a Heart of Joy

Ordained priest on August 7, 1949, at Mawlai, Fr. Joseph threw himself wholeheartedly into Salesian work. His

first years were spent at Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, followed by assignments at Don Bosco, Matunga, and Salesian House, Tirupattur. In each of these communities, he left an indelible mark as a joyful educator and faithful friend.

He was known as a teacher who brought life into his classes. His lessons were not only informative but also lively and entertaining, infused with his unique sense of humour and warmth. Students often recalled his quick smile and his ability to make even difficult lessons enjoyable. More than transmitting knowledge, Fr. Joseph formed hearts — teaching honesty, kindness, and a love for God through his own example.

Among his confreres, he was equally beloved for his openness and sincerity. His simplicity made him approachable; his laughter made community life

brighter. He carried no airs of superiority, only the quiet conviction that the priest's first duty was to love and serve with joy.

Fr. Deane embodied what Don Bosco once said: "Let us serve the Lord in holy cheerfulness."

This cheerfulness was not superficial optimism; it sprang from a deep trust in God's goodness. His calm presence often lifted the spirits of those around him, especially in moments of trial or discouragement.

Faithful to His Vocation, Fruitful in His Simplicity

Fr. Joseph took his Salesian vocation seriously. He constantly strove to deepen his spiritual life and to grow in the virtues of humility, patience, and service. Though his work was mainly within classrooms and communities, he approached it with missionary zeal — seeing every encounter with the young as an opportunity to reveal God's love.

In 1963, after more than two decades in India, he returned to England, where he continued his priestly service with the same quiet dedication. Despite the physical and emotional demands of ministry, he remained steadfast, cheerful, and grateful for every opportunity to serve. His health began to decline, yet his spirit remained unbroken. He continued to live joyfully and simply, giving his best until the very end.

Fr. Joseph passed away in 1968 at the age of 46, still young, yet already full of years of grace. His death left a deep void in the hearts of his confreres and students, but his joyful memory continues to inspire.

The Legacy of a Joyful Priest

Fr. Joseph Deane's life was a beautiful harmony of faith and humour, duty and delight. He was a man who saw holiness not in extraordinary acts but in ordinary faithfulness. His classroom was his pulpit; his smile was his sermon; his students were his mission field.

He reminds us that sanctity is not always found in great deeds, but in the love and joy we bring to daily work. His laughter, gentleness, and steadfast dedication remain a living echo of Don Bosco's own heart — cheerful, compassionate, and deeply human.

Though his life was brief, it was abundantly fruitful. The seeds of goodness he sowed continue to bear fruit in those he taught and served.

"Holiness consists in always being joyful," Don Bosco once said — and Fr. Joseph lived this truth to the end.



A Missionary of Precision and Quiet Dedication:

Fr. James (Santiago) Oreglia, SDB (1916-1996)

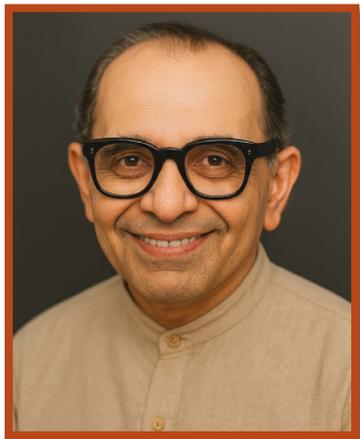
Life Formed by Discipline and Faith

LOn June 6, 1996, in India, the Salesian Province of Madras bid farewell to one of its most faithful sons, Fr. James Oreglia, SDB — a missionary of quiet strength, meticulous dedication, and radiant humility. His life was a testimony that holiness can be lived in simplicity, and that greatness often hides in fidelity to the smallest duties.

Born on October 14, 1916, in Ramona, Argentina, James grew up in a family of deep Catholic faith and industrious spirit. Drawn early to the Salesians, he entered the house of Vignaud, Córdoba, in 1926, and made his novitiate in 1932. The seeds of his lifelong traits — discipline, order, and perseverance — were already evident during these early years of formation.

He was ordained a priest on November 23, 1941, at Lafitta, and spent his first seven years ministering in Argentina. Yet his heart

longed for the missions. Responding to this inner call, he requested to be sent abroad and arrived in Mumbai in December 1947, a humble missionary ready to give himself completely to the people and mission of India.



The Steward of the Salesian Mission

For the next four decades, Fr. Oreglia's life became inseparably intertwined with the growth and organization of the Province of Madras. His talents for administration and precision found their fullest expression in the work he loved — the quiet, behind-the-scenes ministry that sustained the missionary enterprise.

From 1949 to 1952, he served as Prefect of Studies at Don Bosco, Matunga, where his clarity of thought and attention to detail became well known. Later, he was appointed Province Secretary, a role he would hold for an extraordinary thirty years. In that humble office, Fr. James became a pillar of continuity, efficiency, and care.

He was, in many ways, the invisible heart of the province's administration. He

systematized archives, maintained personal files of confreres with meticulous precision, and supervised publications that shaped the identity of the Salesian mission in South India. It was under his supervision that *The Project of Life* was printed at SIGA, and even with failing eyesight, he proofread every line personally, ensuring accuracy down to the smallest comma.

Colleagues often admired his extraordinary sense of responsibility — never hurried, never careless, always exact. Whether it was arranging passports, visas, or travel documents for confreres going abroad, Fr. Oreglia carried out every task with quiet joy and cheerful efficiency. His humility and patience made him approachable; his precision, dependable.

He rarely raised his voice or sought recognition, yet his influence was unmistakable. Those who worked with him often said, “If Fr. Oreglia handled it, you could rest easy — it would be done well.”

A Heart Anchored in Faith and Service

Fr. Oreglia’s life was marked not only by diligence but by deep interior faith. Beneath his calm exterior lay a man of prayer, entirely devoted to Mary Help of Christians and utterly faithful to the Salesian spirit of obedience and joy. His daily routine was his form of prayer — every letter typed, every record filed, every plan prepared was an act of love offered to God.

Even as his eyesight dimmed and health declined, he continued to work with undiminished spirit. When later diagnosed with stomach cancer, possibly malignant, he accepted the news with serene surrender. “I have done my part,” he told a confrere, “The rest is in the hands of Mary.”

His final days were marked by peace. Those who visited him during his illness spoke of his tranquil smile and his gratitude for even the smallest kindness. He faced death with the same precision and composure that had defined his life — every detail entrusted to Divine Providence.

The Legacy of a Hidden Saint

Fr. James Oreglia’s holiness was not dramatic or loud; it was quiet, steady, and enduring. He was one of those Salesians who, without standing on podiums or leading large institutions, built the foundations of the mission through faithfulness to duty and love for community.

He exemplified Don Bosco’s ideal of “honest work done with joy.” His life teaches that sanctity is not reserved for the extraordinary, but for those who, day after day, choose to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

His legacy lives on in every neatly kept archive, every careful record, and every confrere he assisted with kindness and precision. Above all, it lives in the example he gave — of a Salesian missionary whose greatest sermon was his life itself.

“He was cheerful, exact, and quietly heroic,” one confrere said. “He showed us that the mission advances not only by those who preach but also by those who serve faithfully in silence.”

Fr. James Oreglia’s story remains a gentle reminder that in God’s eyes, the small details of love and fidelity are the cornerstones of holiness.



A Joyful Soul, Faithful to His Vocation unto the End:

Cleric Thomas O’Shea, SDB (1918-1941)

 On the morning of 8 May 1941, the angel of death visited the Salesian Province of India for the first time, calling home a young missionary cleric whose radiant joy and simple holiness had touched many hearts—Cleric Thomas O’Shea, SDB. Barely twenty-three years old, he had already lived a full life of Salesian fervour, prayer, and youthful zeal. His passing left a deep void, but also a luminous memory of purity, faith, and dedication to God’s call.

A Vocation Born in Faith and Joy

Thomas O’Shea was born on 15 March 1918 in Buttevant, County Cork, Ireland, on the Feast of the Annunciation—a providential coincidence for one whose life would become a living “yes” to God’s invitation. Educated by the Irish Christian Brothers, he was formed in the discipline of faith and scholarship, where his first stirrings of a priestly vocation took root.

His teachers recognized in him a boy of bright mind and generous heart, cheerful yet deeply pious. He often expressed a desire to serve as a missionary, inspired by stories of the sons of Don Bosco working in faraway lands. That inspiration soon took shape when, on 1 September 1931, he entered the Salesian aspirantate at Shrigley, England. It was there that he began his journey toward religious life, blending Irish warmth with Salesian joy.

Thomas quickly endeared himself to superiors and companions alike. His smile was spontaneous, his obedience unforced, and his courtesy genuine. He loved singing, sports, and laughter—but beneath the jovial surface lay a heart quietly aflame for God. Even in his youthful exuberance, he lived by a guiding conviction: “Holiness is joy made faithful.”

The Making of a Salesian

He entered the novitiate at Cowley on 29 August 1935, eager to deepen his spiritual life. The novitiate years revealed his inner mettle: behind his cheerful humour was an earnest soul striving for virtue. Though he was sometimes mischievous in recreation, his fervour in prayer and study never wavered. His director noted that Thomas’s zeal for perfection was marked by humility—he was never discouraged by correction but took it as a gift. On 5 September 1936, he made his first religious profession as a Salesian

of Don Bosco. With the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he consecrated his youth to God. Soon after, he received the joyful news of his missionary appointment to India—a lifelong dream realized. He dedicated his mission to Mary Help of Christians, to whom he had a tender devotion, and on 11 October 1936, he landed in Bombay.

From there, he proceeded to Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, to begin his philosophical studies. Those who knew him there remember his unflinching cheerfulness and generous service. The boys at the oratory loved him; his companions found in him the soul of recreation and fraternity. His spirit of gratitude was remarkable—he detested murmuring and sought to spread joy wherever he went. His favourite saying was: “Obedience, humility, and joy—these are the three wings that lift us to heaven.”

A Heart Formed in Piety and Simplicity

Cleric Thomas’s spirituality was simple, tender, and intensely Marian. He was rarely seen without his Rosary and had a special fondness for the hymn “Heart of Mary, whom the Angels...” He encouraged companions to stop at churches during walks for brief visits to the Blessed Sacrament. During holidays at Yercaud, he would lovingly decorate the altars of Mary Help of Christians and the Sacred Heart, often rising early to arrange fresh flowers with almost childlike devotion.

His director noted that Thomas’s piety was not sentimental but rooted in sincerity. He accepted corrections humbly, took joy in community prayer, and maintained an attitude of constant recollection through short ejaculatory prayers like “Jesus, I love You, may Your Kingdom come.”

Despite youthful faults, he grew steadily in virtue. His companions saw in him a young man being fashioned by grace—playful yet prayerful, disciplined yet free, ordinary yet radiant. One confrere later wrote, “He was like a bright lamp in the community—small, perhaps, but shining steadily.”

The Final Offering

In January 1941, Thomas was sent to Don Bosco, Matunga, Mumbai, for his practical training. The community welcomed his enthusiasm and tireless energy. However, toward the end of April, a small boil near his ear began to trouble him. What appeared trivial soon turned serious. Within days, infection set in, and he was diagnosed with blood poisoning—a grave condition in those pre-antibiotic days.

Admitted to St. Elizabeth’s Clinic, Thomas bore his suffering with remarkable serenity. His directors and confreres were deeply moved by his peaceful acceptance. On 7 May, his fever rose sharply, and he realized the end was near. In a final moment of lucidity, he spoke tenderly with his

director, expressing total trust in God's will.

On the morning of 8 May 1941, while a priest celebrated Mass nearby, Thomas received Holy Communion, the Anointing of the Sick, and the Papal Blessing with childlike devotion. Soon after, he surrendered his pure soul to God. His death, gentle and holy, marked the first passing of a Salesian in the Indian Province.

“Blessed Are the Pure of Heart”

The news of his death spread quickly. Archbishop Valerian Gracias of Bombay, the local clergy, and Archbishop Louis Mathias, SDB, of Madras all expressed deep sorrow. They had recognized in young Thomas a life of extraordinary promise—a soul fashioned in the spirit of Don Bosco, whose sanctity lay not in years but in depth of love.

Fr. Aurelio Maschio, his director, wrote movingly to the confreres: “He was always the soul of joy and the model of obedience. Even in pain, he was serene. We may confidently believe that our dear Thomas has already entered the joy of his Lord.”

Cleric Thomas O’Shea’s brief life remains a testimony to the beauty of early sanctity. His story reminds us that holiness is not measured in time but in love. He died young, but he lived fully faithful, joyful, and ready.

A Seed That Bore Fruit

Though his earthly mission ended at twenty-three, the spirit of Thomas O’Shea continued to inspire the Province he helped build. His youthful holiness became a beacon for many aspirants and clerics who followed. He taught by example that Salesian life, when lived with joy and generosity, becomes an offering that never dies.

Each year, as Salesians recall his anniversary, they remember him not with sorrow but gratitude. His gentle smile, his devotion to Mary, his love for the Eucharist—all continue to speak to those who seek holiness in simplicity. His short life mirrors Don Bosco’s dream: to make saints of the young. And in Cleric Thomas O’Shea, that dream found its tender fulfilment.

“He lived joyfully, died peacefully, and rests eternally in the Heart of Jesus and Mary.”

May the memory of Cleric Thomas O’Shea, SDB, continue to inspire Salesians to live their vocation with the same youthful ardour and faithful love that marked his brief but beautiful life.

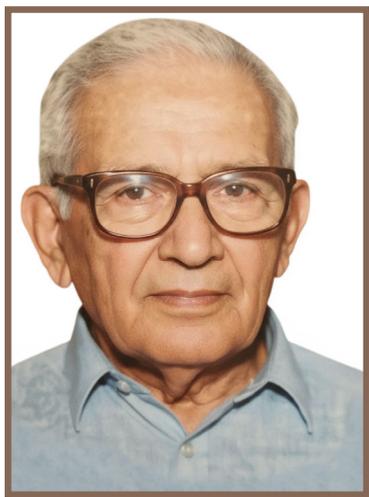


A Missionary of Youth, Sports, and Social Justice:

Fr. Sean McFerran, SDB (1918-1998)

Belfast Beginning and Salesian Calling

ABorn on January 13, 1918, at 142 Cavendish Street, Belfast, Sean McFerran grew up in a devout Irish Catholic family. His parents, John and Catherine McFerran (née Dowling) nurtured his early faith and education. He attended St Paul's Primary School, where his character began to take shape—cheerful, energetic, and deeply spiritual.



In 1932, at the age of 14, Sean entered the Salesian Secondary School at Shrigley, Cheshire, England. It was here that his vocation matured. He was drawn to the spirit of St John Bosco, whose love for youth and commitment to education resonated deeply with him. In 1935, he entered the Salesian Novitiate at Cowley, Oxford, and made his first profession on September 5, 1936.

Immediately after, he embarked on a journey that would define his life—he travelled to India, a land that would become his mission field, his home, and the canvas for his apostolic zeal.

Formation and Ordination in India

Fr. Sean completed his studies towards priesthood at Tirupattur and Sacred Heart College, Shillong, immersing himself in the culture, language, and spirit of India. He was ordained a priest in Mumbai on January 30, 1946, beginning a ministry that would span continents and decades.

His early years in India were marked by versatility. He served as Rector, School Principal, Parish Priest, Sports master, and fundraiser for church and school construction. His leadership was dynamic, his presence magnetic, and his heart always with the young.

Youth Ministry in Madras: Sports as Formation

Fr. Sean's most impactful work in India was in Madras, where he served in several Salesian houses. As Director of the Youth Centre at Broadway, he pioneered the use of sports as a tool for character formation. For him, sports were not just recreational—they were transformational.

He believed that sports could instil discipline, teamwork, self-worth, and leadership in young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Under his guidance, the Youth Centre became a launchpad for national-level athletes and sportsmen. His work earned him recognition across Tamil Nadu, and he was elected to several prestigious positions:

- President of the Tamil Nadu Table Tennis Association
- Honorary Treasurer of the Amateur Athletic Association
- Vice President of the Football Association
- Patron of the Carrom Association
- Vice President of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Madras

Fr. Sean's approach was holistic. He saw sports as a way to build character, foster community, and empower the poor. His vision was ahead of its time, and his legacy in sports ministry remains unmatched.

Scouting and Salesian Pedagogy

In addition to sports, Fr. Sean championed scouting as a powerful means of youth formation. He was instrumental in establishing the Don Bosco District for Salesian Scouts in Tamil Nadu, a recognition granted by the State Association.

In 1968, he proposed introducing scouting to the students of philosophy at Yercaud, believing that its values—service, discipline, and leadership—were deeply aligned with Salesian pedagogy. His efforts helped shape a generation of young leaders, rooted in faith and service.

A Man of Many Missions

Fr. Sean was a multi-faceted personality, whose ministry extended far beyond sports and scouting. He was:

- A lover of youth, who understood their struggles and dreams
- A parish priest, appreciated for his pastoral sensitivity
- An educationist, who expanded access to learning
- A social worker, who fought for justice and dignity
- A religious superior, who advocated transparency and accountability
- A cultural promoter, who celebrated Tamil identity

He provided educational facilities, job opportunities, and housing to the poor of Chennai, often working behind the scenes to secure scholarships and placements. His advocacy was bold, his compassion deep, and his commitment unwavering.

Departure from India: Misunderstood but Undeterred

Despite his remarkable contributions to youth ministry, sports, education, and social justice, Fr. Sean McFerran faced criticism and misunderstanding. His unconventional methods, outspoken advocacy, and bold initiatives were not always appreciated. Deeply hurt, he left India in 1972, after 36 years of service, and returned to Ireland.

But Fr. Sean was not one to retire quietly. His heart remained with the youth, and his missionary spirit was undiminished. In Ireland, he continued to serve, bringing the same energy, compassion, and creativity to new contexts.

Ministry in Ireland: A New Mission Field

Back in Ireland, Fr. Sean became chaplain at Shanganagh Castle, ministering to young offenders. His pastoral sensitivity and understanding of youth made him a beloved figure. He saw beyond their mistakes, offering them dignity, hope, and a path to renewal.

In 1978, he was appointed Rector of Gardener Street Boys Home, where he and his staff pioneered Salesian work for homeless boys. This initiative blossomed into five centres, providing shelter, education, and vocational training. Fr. Sean's vision was always practical—he built systems that empowered the poor.

During this time, he also founded AFRI (Action from Ireland), a humanitarian organisation that became a respected voice for the poor, both nationally and internationally. AFRI advocated for justice, peace, and development, reflecting Fr. Sean's deep commitment to social transformation.

In 1982, he became chaplain at St Laurence's, Finglas, continuing his ministry among the marginalised. His work was tireless, his compassion boundless.

Kenya: A Missionary at 66

In 1984, at the age of 66, when most people retire, Fr. Sean accepted a new challenge. The Salesians, now growing in numbers in India, were ready to find a mission in Nairobi, Kenya, and they asked Fr. Sean to guide their early steps. He accepted with joy and enthusiasm, moving to Kenya and founding a huge technical facility for training young people at Karen, Nairobi. He also established training branches in economically deprived townships, offering hope and opportunity to the destitute.

His work in Kenya was transformative. He built not just institutions, but communities. He empowered youth, trained leaders, and created pathways out of poverty. His missionary zeal was undiminished, his love for the poor as strong as ever.

He remained in Kenya until 1988, then returned to Ireland, where he continued to serve in his native Diocese of Down and Connor.

Final Years: A Pastor to the End

In his final years, Fr. Sean lived at St Columbané's Nursing Home, Helens Bay, Bangor, serving as chaplain. Even as his health declined, he remained a missionary and humanitarian to the very end.

Together with his brothers Dan and Archie, and his friend Malachy Turley, he founded the "We Care" organisation, a missionary aid initiative that continues to flourish. His legacy was not just in buildings and programmes—it was in the lives he touched, the hope he gave, and the love he shared.

Fr. Sean died peacefully on November 12, 1998, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, after months of suffering. His passing was a happy release, a return to the God he had served with joy, courage, and compassion.

Tributes and Funeral: A Life Celebrated

His funeral was held at St Paul's Church, Belfast, attended by a huge crowd from his home area. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. John Horan, Provincial, with two Auxiliary Bishops of Down and Connor concelebrating.

His remains were then taken to Warrenstown College, where a second funeral Mass was held. The love and appreciation shown by his family—brothers Dan and Archie, sister Maureen, nieces and nephews, and countless friends—was a testament to the impact of his life.

He is buried in the cemetery at Warrenstown, where his memory continues to inspire.

Legacy: A Salesian of the Margins

Fr. Sean McFerran was a Salesian missionary of the margins. He went where others would not. He served those others forgot. He believed in the power of youth, the dignity of the poor, and the transformative grace of God.

He was a man of action and contemplation, whose energy came from a deep union with God. He understood the preventive system of Don Bosco not as a theory, but as a lived reality. He spent time listening to youth, interacting with them, and walking with them.

He was a man who dreamed big, loved deeply, and served tirelessly. His legacy lives on in the lives of the youth he empowered, the institutions he built, and the communities he transformed.

His story is a call to every Salesian to go where the young are, to love them as they are, and to help them become what God calls them to be.



A Missionary of Fidelity, Hospitality, and Apostolic Zeal:

Fr. William Haughey, SDB (1908-1984)

Scottish Beginning and Early Calling

ABorn on May 28, 1908, in Maryhill, Glasgow, William Haughey grew up in a devout Catholic family. Though he would spend most of his life far from Scotland, he never lost his love for his native city and country. His early years were marked by a deep sense of vocation. At



just 15 years old, he wrote to the Rector of the Salesian College in Battersea, London: “*For the past four years I have had the desire to become a priest and moreover to serve in the Foreign Missions.*”

This desire was not fleeting—it was the beginning of a lifelong journey of missionary service, spiritual depth, and pastoral care.

After a year at Battersea, he entered the novitiate at Cowley, Oxford, where he made his religious profession. His formation was marked by simplicity, discipline, and a growing love for the Salesian charism. Soon after, he was sent to

India, beginning his missionary journey in Shillong in 1926, and later becoming part of the first group of Salesians to work in Bombay.

He was ordained a priest in Shillong on April 29, 1933, at the age of 24. His ordination marked the beginning of a ministry that would span continents and decades.

Editorial Work and Wartime Witness

In 1936, Fr. Haughey returned to Great Britain, and just before the outbreak of World War II, he was sent to Turin, where he served as editor of the English edition of the Salesian Bulletin. His work in communications reflected his clarity of thought, pastoral sensitivity, and love for Don Bosco’s mission.

His editorial work was not just administrative—it was apostolic. He used the Bulletin to share stories of faith, mission, and Salesian spirituality, helping to connect the global Salesian family and inspire vocations. When Italy entered the war, Fr. Haughey had to return to London. But his missionary journey was far from over.

Hong Kong: Missionary Courage in Crisis

In 1941, at the request of the Colonial Office, Fr. Haughey was appointed Rector of the Salesians in Hong Kong. His assignment came at a time of great uncertainty. When the Japanese army invaded Hong Kong, Fr. Haughey was interned briefly. Thanks to his Irish family connections, he was released and allowed to continue his work.

His resilience during this period was remarkable. Despite the dangers, he remained committed to guiding the Salesian mission in the colony. His diplomatic grace, pastoral courage, and unwavering faith were a testament to his character.

He continued to serve in Hong Kong until the end of the war, offering spiritual support, leadership, and hope in a time of fear and upheaval.

Post-War Ministry and Vocational Promotion

After the war, Fr. Haughey returned to Great Britain, spending a year in Germany before being appointed to the Salesian Missionary College at Shrigley in 1947. Here, he spent 13 fruitful years, first as a teacher, and then for 10 years as promoter of vocations.

His work involved extensive travel, public speaking, and personal engagement with young men discerning their call to religious life. He was known for his storytelling, humour, and ability to connect with people. He participated in many large-scale Vocations Exhibitions, using his gifts to inspire and guide.

His presence at Shrigley was marked by gentleness, wisdom, and encouragement. He was not just a recruiter—he was a spiritual father, helping young men discover their path and embrace their calling.

Scotland and the Salesian Cooperators

From 1960 to 1970, Fr. Haughey returned to his native Scotland, serving at St John Bosco School in Aberdour. This decade was marked by quiet but impactful ministry. He took special care of the Salesian Cooperators, nurturing their spiritual growth and encouraging their apostolic involvement.

He also dedicated himself to preaching retreats, offering days of recollection, and providing spiritual direction. His talks were known for their clarity,

warmth, and pastoral sensitivity. He was not a fiery preacher—but a gentle guide, helping others encounter God in silence, simplicity, and service. During this time, he also assisted with bookkeeping and community accounts, a quiet but essential ministry that supported the life of the house. His reliability and discretion made him a trusted presence in the community.

Shrigley: Confessor and Spiritual Director

After two years as bursar at Chertsey, Fr. Haughey returned to Shrigley in 1972, where he served for eleven years as confessor and spiritual director. His presence was deeply valued. He was known for his brotherly love, faithfulness to prayer, and hospitality.

He made every effort to be present for community prayers, meals, and recreation, even when his health began to decline. He went out of his way to welcome visitors, making them feel at home and cared for.

His ministry at Shrigley was marked by constancy. He was not flashy or dramatic—but faithful, dependable, and kind. He embodied the Salesian spirit in quiet ways, through presence, listening, and prayer.

Final Year at Blaisdon: A Peaceful Passing

In August 1983, Fr. Haughey moved to Blaisdon, having just celebrated his golden jubilee of ordination. Though far from well, he continued to participate in community life, making great efforts to join prayers, meals, and moments of relaxation.

On Sunday, November 11, 1984, he followed his usual practice of studying the Mass readings and a commentary. The second reading began with: “*We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope.*” (1 Thess 4:13)

The Gospel ended with: “*So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.*” (Matt 25:13)

He could not have known that the next morning, Monday, November 12, while finishing breakfast, he would suffer a massive heart attack and die within minutes. His confrères had just enough time to administer absolution and the anointing. He had received Mass and Communion earlier that morning.

His death was sudden, but peaceful—just as he had lived. In his prayer book, he had written out this verse from Evening Prayer: “*Grant to life’s day a calm unclouded ending, An eve untouched by shadows of decay, The brightness of a holy death-bed blending With dawning glories of the eternal day.*” We believe that God heard and answered Fr. Haughey’s prayer.

Legacy: A Life of Fidelity and Fraternity

Fr. William Haughey's life was a quiet triumph. He was a Salesian missionary of fidelity and fraternity, a man whose strength lay in gentleness, whose leadership was rooted in prayer, and whose ministry was marked by presence.

He nurtured vocations, guided communities, and offered hospitality to all. He was a spiritual director, a confessor, a teacher, and a friend. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched, the vocations he inspired, and the communities he served.

He reminds us that holiness is not always loud—it is often found in the quiet faithfulness of daily life. His story is a call to live with gentleness, generosity, and joy, just as he did.



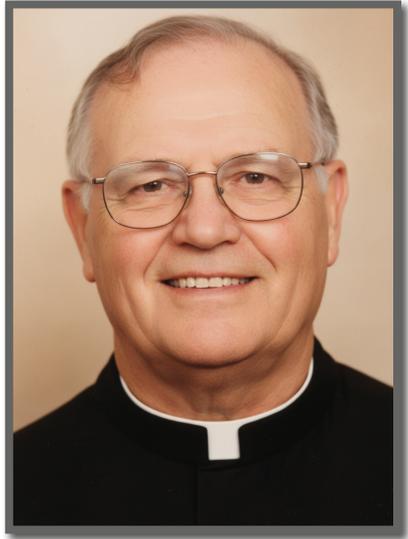
A Missionary of Intellect and Heart: **Fr. Vladimir Ondrasek, SDB (1918-1977)**

Journey of Faith and Learning

A On July 16, 1977, in Sydney, the curtain quietly fell on the life of Fr. Vladimir Ondrasek, SDB, a Salesian missionary whose life was a rare blend of intellectual excellence and deep pastoral warmth. At the age of 58, he left behind a legacy of learning, service, and love that spanned continents — from Czechoslovakia to India, and finally to Australia.

Born on December 12, 1918, in Czechoslovakia, young Vladimir entered the Salesian boarding school at the age of 12, setting his life on a path of faith and service. His keen intellect, discipline, and quiet strength were evident even in his early formation. He made his religious profession in August 1936 and was ordained priest on June 29, 1946.

For two years after ordination, he served in the philosophy, but his heart burned for missionary adventure. In 1948, answering Don Bosco's call to the missions, he journeyed to India, a land that would become both his field of labour and his spiritual home.



The Scholar as Missionary

Fr. Ondrasek brought to India not only missionary zeal but also a sharp and disciplined mind. Realizing the need for higher academic preparation to teach in India's colleges, he pursued further studies with characteristic rigor. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts and two master's degrees — one in English and another in Mathematics — a remarkable achievement for a missionary in those times.

His assignments took him to Tirupattur, Yercaud, Madras, and Kolkata, where he served with unwavering commitment. At Tirupattur College, he was Dean of Studies and later Principal for four years, shaping not only the institution but also the intellectual and moral growth of countless students.

His students admired him for his clarity of thought, his fairness, and his quiet, fatherly approach.

He later taught for seven years at Don Bosco, Matunga (Mumbai), where his precision and love for learning inspired both staff and pupils. He co-authored a book in Algebra with Athavale. In 1969, he was appointed Provincial Secretary of Kolkata, a role he fulfilled with the same order and diligence that marked his entire life.

Yet, despite his many academic and administrative responsibilities, Fr. Vladimir never allowed his intellectual pursuits to overshadow his priestly heart. His weekends were devoted to the pastoral ministry he cherished most — hearing confessions, visiting parishes, and celebrating the Eucharist for the poor and the forgotten. His guiding principle was simple yet profound: “I am another Christ to the people.”

A Heart for the People

Fr. Ondrasek was a man of both mind and mercy. His priesthood was animated by a strong pastoral sense that made him deeply loved wherever he went. His students found in him not just a teacher but a mentor; his confreres, a brother of quiet strength; and the faithful, a compassionate shepherd.

He often reminded young Salesians that intellect must serve faith, and that knowledge, without love, bears little fruit. His classroom became a pulpit, his lectures a form of evangelization. He blended reason with faith, conviction with kindness — truly living Don Bosco’s vision of the “honest citizen and good Christian.”

In 1972, after twenty-four fruitful years in India, Fr. Ondrasek was granted permission to move to Australia, where he devoted himself to serving migrants from his homeland. Despite advancing age and fragile health, he threw himself into ministry with his characteristic energy. He travelled widely across Sydney and beyond, reaching out to those who felt isolated and uprooted. His compassion for the displaced mirrored Christ’s own love for the wandering and weary.

It was in this apostolate of compassion that his health finally gave way. Exhausted by work and burdened by illness, he succumbed peacefully in Sydney on July 16, 1977, having given his last ounce of strength in the service of others.

Legacy of a Faithful Salesian

Fr. Vladimir Ondrasek was a Salesian missionary of intellect and heart — a man who combined the scholar’s mind with the shepherd’s heart. His life reminds us that the mission field is not only in distant villages but also in

the classroom, the office, and the lonely heart of the migrant.

He lived his vocation with humility and precision, never seeking recognition, yet leaving behind an enduring example of dedication. Those who worked with him remembered his calm composure, his exactness in work, and his quiet smile that radiated kindness.

His life is a testimony to the Salesian conviction that education and evangelization go hand in hand — that teaching minds and touching hearts are two aspects of the same mission.

“True knowledge,” he once wrote, “is born of love — love for truth, for youth, and for God.” In those words, we find the essence of his life: a man who taught, served, and loved with integrity and joy.

Fr. Vladimir Ondrasek’s memory lives on as a beacon for every Salesian who seeks to unite faith with reason, study with service, and learning with love.

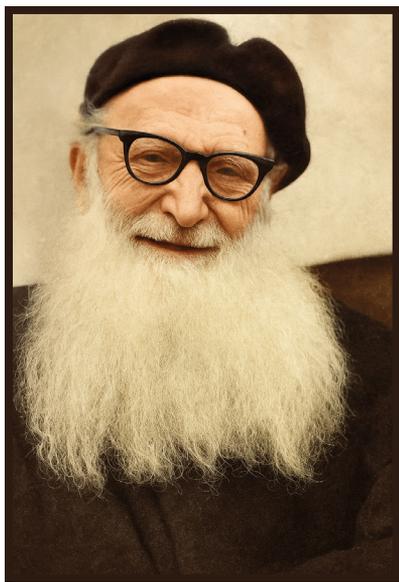


Heart for the Poor:

Fr. Aloysius Ravalico, SDB (1906-1967)

On the rugged frontiers of Manipur, where mist-shrouded hills cradle dozens of tribes and ancient customs linger, Fr. Aloysius Ravalico, SDB, carved out a mission of faith, courage, and compassion. A true citizen of the world, he was Austrian by birth, Italian by conquest, and Indian by choice—a Salesian missionary whose beard, smile, and heart became symbols of hope in a land once feared for its head-hunters. Born on March 6, 1906, in Trieste, then part of Austria, Aloysius became Italian after World War I. He entered the Salesian novitiate in Este in 1923

and was sent to Shillong the following year to begin his missionary journey. He was ordained in 1932, and over the next three decades, served in Goa, Madras, Shillong, and Dibrugarh, before settling in Imphal, the capital of Manipur.



Missionary to the Margins

Manipur, a land of breath-taking beauty and tribal diversity, was long closed to Catholic missionaries. Fr. Ravalico's Indian citizenship allowed him to travel freely through the Naga Hills, where he encountered the Tangkhul Nagas and the Chin tribes. His work was pioneering—he established the first permanent Catholic mission in the region, trained

catechists, and baptized thousands.

He discovered a “lost tribe” of Chins who had migrated from Burma during World War II and had lived in isolation for nearly a decade. When he arrived, they were already wearing rosaries and medals, had built a chapel, and were waiting for a priest. He baptized them and made their Catholic identity official.

A Missionary Among Head-Hunters

Fr. Ravalico's mission field was no ordinary terrain. The Naga tribes had a long history of head-hunting, a practice rooted in superstition and tribal

honour. He navigated this world with wisdom and love, replacing fear with faith. He trained young catechists like George, who returned to his village and prepared dozens for baptism, even building chapels in remote areas. He once joked that his beard gave him comfort in Naga Land—“feeling it reassures me that my head is still on my shoulders.” His humour, humility, and deep respect for local cultures made him beloved among the people.

A Heart for the Poor

Fr. Ravalico was known for his radical generosity. He once gave his shirt to a village chief who needed one, after Bishop Marengo had already given away his jacket. He believed that missionaries must be free of the worry of support, so they could focus fully on conversions and service.

He trained orphans and destitute youth, sending them to Salesian schools in Dibrugarh, where they became catechists and teachers. His work was not just about baptizing souls—it was about building communities, empowering the poor, and planting seeds of hope.

Legacy of a Missionary Giant

Fr. Ravalico’s beard became iconic—not just for its venerable appearance, but for its utility. He used it to amuse children, express emotion, and signal wisdom. Though he considered shaving it to raise funds in America, he ultimately kept it, saying, “It is part of me. My people wouldn’t know me without it.”

He lived with untiring zeal, unshakable faith, and boundless love. His mission in Manipur transformed lives and opened new frontiers for the Church. He was a missionary who gave everything—his time, his shirt, his smile, and his heart.

Fr. Aloysius Ravalico’s story is a beacon for all who seek to serve in forgotten corners of the world. He was a Salesian to the core—a man of God, a friend to the poor, and a true citizen of the Kingdom.



A Life Poured Out in Service: Fr. Douglas Joseph Wollaston, SDB (1902-1979)

Burmese Birth and British Brilliance

Born on December 11, 1902, in Akyab, Burma, Douglas Joseph Wollaston was the second of five children in a devout and humble family. His father was a teacher, and his mother, Margaret Perry, was a woman of deep piety and warmth. Douglas was especially close to her, and her spiritual influence would shape his vocation and character.

A brilliant student, Douglas topped a major Cambridge University examination, earning distinction across the British Empire. His academic

success promised a glittering career, but Douglas felt a deeper calling. He resisted the lure of worldly success and approached Mgr. Louis Mathias, then Provincial of the Salesians in India, asking to be admitted into the Society of St Francis de Sales.

This decision marked the beginning of a lifelong commitment to the Salesian charism—a life of education, evangelization, and pastoral care.

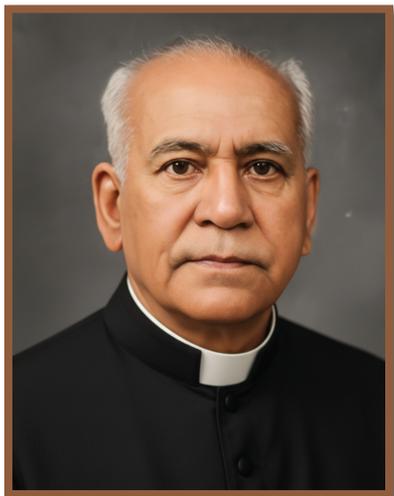
Salesian Formation and Ordination

Douglas entered the novitiate in 1924, alongside future Salesian luminaries like Bishop O. Marengo, Fr. J. Bacchiarello, and Fr. J. Sandanam. He made his first profession on January 21, 1925, and quickly progressed through his studies, completing philosophy in two and a half years.

He then travelled to Crocetta, Turin, for his theological studies, where he was ordained a priest on July 5, 1931, and earned a doctorate in theology. His intellectual formation was matched by spiritual depth, preparing him for a life of leadership, teaching, and missionary zeal.

Early Ministry in Bombay and Shillong

Upon returning to India, Fr. Wollaston began his ministry in Bombay,



serving as headmaster of Don Bosco High School at Tardeo Castle. The school was modest, resources were scarce, and the world was in the grip of the Great Depression. Yet, Fr. Wollaston's warmth and dedication transformed the school into a haven of learning and hope.

In Shillong, he became Prefect of Studies and Professor of Theology at the old Our Lady's House, a formation centre for young Salesians. His teaching style was meticulous and clear, earning him admiration as a gifted educator. He was a born teacher, preparing lessons with precision and delivering them with clarity and conviction.

Krishnagar and the Missionary Heart

In 1936, after a fire destroyed the formation house in Shillong, Fr. Wollaston was sent to Krishnagar as Rector of Don Bosco School, which had just shifted to its present site. It was a time of poverty and rebuilding, but Fr. Wollaston embraced the challenge with joy.

He immersed himself in the study of Bengali and focused on the holistic formation of his students—human, spiritual, and academic. In just three years, he laid a strong foundation for the school's future, earning the love and respect of the community.

His missionary heart found fulfilment in Krishnagar. He was not just an administrator—he was a father, a guide, and a friend to the boys entrusted to his care.

Bandel and Khulna: Leadership in Wartime and Partition

As World War II loomed, Fr. Wollaston was transferred to Bandel, where he served as Headmaster of St John's High School and Prior of the Shrine of Our Lady. His leadership was marked by sacrifice and kindness, winning the hearts of staff and students alike.

After a brief stint in mission work, he was posted to Khulna, where he founded and developed St Joseph's High School. His seven years in Khulna left an indelible mark on the community. He guided the school through turbulent times, including India's Independence and Partition, which led to the withdrawal of Salesians from the region.

Fr. Wollaston chose to remain in India, returning to Bandel to guide aspirants—young men discerning a Salesian vocation. Many of them, now priests, remember him as a model of Salesian gentleness and wisdom.

Shillong and the Burden of Leadership

After years of fruitful ministry in Bengal, Fr. Wollaston was called to Shillong, where he was appointed Principal of St Anthony's College. Though he missed working directly with aspirants, he accepted the role

with humility, always placing God's will above personal preference. The times were hard, and the responsibilities immense. Yet, Fr. Wollaston carried the burden with grace. His leadership was marked by discipline, gentleness, and vision. He was not just an administrator—he was a spiritual father, guiding the college through challenges with quiet strength.

Manipur and the Missionary Heart

Fr. Wollaston's missionary zeal remained undiminished. He accepted a posting to Hungdung in Manipur, a remote and cold region. He joked about living in an "air-conditioned bungalow"—a reference to the freezing drafts that seeped through the wooden walls. His humour, even in hardship, was a sign of his resilience and joy.

Later, he became Rector and Headmaster of Don Bosco High School, Imphal, continuing his work in Marbisu and Tura, despite declining health. His presence brought hope and stability to these mission centres. He was loved by students and staff alike, not for grand gestures, but for his daily fidelity, personal care, and Salesian warmth.

Haflong and the Way of the Cross

While working in Haflong, Fr. Wollaston experienced a major health collapse, initiating a long and painful journey of illness. Yet, even in weakness, he remained committed to service. He would often say: "*Ever better, never well.*"

He asked if he could still be useful, even when confined to bed. His sense of duty was unwavering. He spent hours at his desk, meticulously attending to every detail, offering thoughtful suggestions to superiors, and striving for perfection in all things.

His suffering was not wasted—it was offered, embraced, and transformed into prayer.

A Life of Frugality and Faith

Fr. Wollaston lived in poverty, avoided waste, and kept precise accounts. He would save bits of string and paper, echoing the frugality of Don Rua, one of Don Bosco's early successors. When he died, he had only a few pieces of clothing to leave behind.

His religious observance was exemplary. He was a man of prayer, discipline, and gentle dignity. He had a special love for the poor and the needy, always ready to help within his means.

His prayer life deepened during his illness. Fellow patients recalled hearing him speak to Jesus with childlike trust: "*Why don't you come, Jesus? You don't love me?*"

It was a poignant cry of longing from a soul ready to meet its Maker.

Final Days and Peaceful Passing

Fr. Wollaston received the Anointing of the Sick five times, and on January 17, 1979, Jesus answered his call. At 7:15 a.m., he opened his eyes, looked at the crucifix on the wall of his hospital room at Nazareth Hospital, Shillong, and peacefully closed them forever.

He had literally slept in the Lord, to use the ancient Christian expression for passing from time to eternity.

Funeral and Tributes

The funeral was held the next day, January 18, at the Cathedral of Mary Help of Christians, Shillong. Presided over by Bishop O. Marengo of Tura, the Mass was concelebrated by forty priests. Despite the winter holidays, every Salesian community was represented.

Mr John Deng, Minister for Family Welfare, and Bishop Marengo paid heartfelt tributes, speaking of Fr. Wollaston's immense contribution to the Church and society. They knew him personally and spoke with affection and reverence.

He was buried in the Laitumkhrach Catholic Cemetery, where he now rests in peace.

Legacy: A Salesian to the Core

Fr. Douglas Joseph Wollaston served in a dozen institutions, shaped generations of students, and inspired countless confreres. He was a gifted educationist, a gentle missionary, and a faithful son of Don Bosco.

He followed each student personally, cared for their manners, behaviour, and studies. He was impeccably dressed, stately, yet always friendly and cheerful. He knew how to be little with the little, and his boys never forgot him.

His life was a testament to the Salesian spirit—joyful, sacrificial, and deeply rooted in Christ. He lived his motto: *To be little with the little, and great in love.*

As Fr. Orestes Paviotti, SDB, wrote in his tribute:

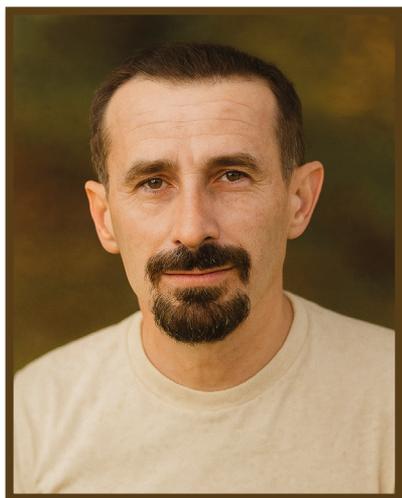
“We keep alive the memory of our confreres now at sleep in the peace of Christ. For the love of our Lord, they have worked in our society... Their remembrance is for us a stimulus to continue faithful in our mission.”

Fr. Wollaston's story is a beacon for all who seek to serve with humility, courage, and love.



A Missionary of Fidelity and Prayer: Fr. Francis Fossati, SDB (1897-1972)

On 24 August 1972, in Kurla, Bombay, Fr. Francis Fossati, SDB, completed his earthly pilgrimage after a lifetime of humble service, missionary zeal, and unwavering fidelity to the Salesian charism. Though his years passed quietly and without fanfare, they were filled with deep faith, tireless work, and the serene joy of a man who had given his all to God.



A Late but Lifelong Vocation

Francis Fossati was born on 5 March 1897 in Monza, Italy, into a devout family that nurtured his faith and generosity. His early years were shaped by the Catholic Action Movement, which stirred in him a deep sense of Christian responsibility and missionary spirit. He served in the First World War, an experience that tempered his character and deepened his reliance on God.

After the war, he discerned a late vocation to religious life. His desire to serve the Church found its home in the

Salesian Congregation, where he discovered the joy of combining prayer, work, and apostolic outreach. Responding to the missionary call, he left for India in 1924 and began his novitiate in Shillong on 24 December of that year. On Christmas Day 1925, he made his first profession—his personal gift to the Child Jesus.

He was ordained a priest on 26 April 1931, beginning a missionary life that would span over four decades and leave an enduring mark on several regions of India.

A Tireless Missionary Journey

Fr. Fossati's missionary itinerary reads like a map of the Salesian expansion in India: North Arcot, Vellore, Pattivaram, Krishnagar, Bandel, Roorkee, and Digboi. In each of these places, he contributed to the establishment and strengthening of Salesian works with perseverance and pastoral wisdom.

He was a man who preferred quiet labour to grand achievements. His mission was not to build monuments, but to build communities—through presence, prayer, and patience. Whether in the classroom, the confessional, or the village chapel, Fr. Fossati was known for his simplicity and constancy. At a time when travel was arduous and resources scarce, he carried the light of Don Bosco to distant corners of the country. Even as he advanced in age, he continued to give himself wholeheartedly. His final posting at Kurla was marked by the same sense of duty and devotion that had guided his youth. There, he served faithfully until his last breath, still animated by the quiet flame of missionary love.

Man of Prayer, Discipline, and Obedience

Those who lived with Fr. Fossati recall him as a man of deep interior life. Prayer was not merely a duty for him—it was his breath. He celebrated the Holy Eucharist with profound reverence, often lingering in thanksgiving long after Mass. His fidelity to the Divine Office and the Rosary was exemplary. Even while travelling, he would not let a single day pass without the Breviary.

His devotion was marked by simplicity rather than sentimentality. There was a quiet constancy about him, the fruit of a disciplined spiritual life. He was also known for his respectful obedience to superiors, to whom he wrote regularly, sharing with humility the progress and challenges of his work. The Salesian Constitutions were his daily rule of life, and he strove to live them in both letter and spirit.

For Fr. Fossati, obedience was not mere compliance—it was trust in God’s will as revealed through the Congregation. His missionary spirit was, therefore, not only geographical but profoundly spiritual: he went wherever God sent him, and he served however God wished.

A Legacy of Quiet Holiness

In a world that often values visibility and achievement, Fr. Francis Fossati’s life stands as a gentle counterpoint—a reminder that holiness is often hidden in fidelity to ordinary duties. His missionary fruitfulness came not from public success but from personal sanctity.

He was, in the words of his confreres, “a man of quiet strength, who prayed much, spoke little, and worked hard.” His serene presence and prayerful spirit influenced those who lived with him far more than his words ever could. He embodied the Salesian ideal: a priest entirely dedicated to God and youth, rooted in obedience and animated by joy.

Fr. Francis Fossati, SDB, was a missionary of fidelity and prayer, a man whose life radiated the silent splendour of holiness. His story reminds us

that the truest apostles are those who serve faithfully in the hidden corners of God's vineyard.

“He served God in silence, obeyed with joy, and prayed with his heart.”

May his memory continue to inspire Salesians and all who labour in the spirit of Don Bosco—to find holiness in fidelity, and mission in love.



A Shepherd with Christ-like Heart and Don Bosco's Spirit: Fr. Aloysius Cerato, SDB (1908-1976)

Life Formed by the Beatitudes

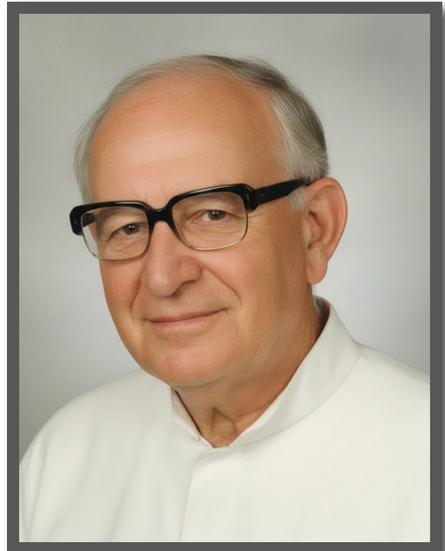
A “Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are the meek... Blessed are the clean of heart... Blessed are those who suffer persecution for my sake.”

If ever these words of the Master came alive in a Salesian missionary, they found their living echo in the gentle, humble, deeply spiritual life of Fr. Aloysius Cerato, SDB. Those who knew him closely considered him a quiet embodiment of the Beatitudes—a man whose simplicity, serenity, and steadfast dedication touched countless hearts across five decades of missionary service in India.

Born on 24 November 1908 in Fonzaso, in northern Italy, Aloysius grew up in a devout Catholic family that nurtured in him deep faith and purity of heart. Even as a young

boy, he showed signs of a call to religious life. At the age of 14, he was sent to the Missionary Apostolic School at Ivrea, where his vocation deepened and matured. His early formation was marked by discipline, prayer, and an unmistakable missionary enthusiasm.

A significant milestone came when he received the cassock from the Servant of God Fr. Philip Rinaldi, then Rector Major of the Salesians. In that gesture, the young Aloysius sensed not only a call to follow Don Bosco but also a stirring towards the missions—a call he embraced wholeheartedly.



The Call to India: A Lifetime Offering

The year 1925 was the Golden Jubilee of Salesian missionary activity. The venerable Cardinal Cagliero, the pioneer of the first Salesian mission to South America, was invited to give the mission crucifix to a new band of missionaries. Among them stood the young Brother Cerato, ready to leave

his homeland and loved ones, never to return.

With a group of 25 companions, he set sail from Italy on 9 December 1925, arriving in Bombay on 31 December 1925. From there, they travelled by train to Calcutta, where Fr. Vendrame—later a legendary missionary—accompanied them to Shillong, the cradle of the Salesian presence in North-East India. The missionaries were among the earliest reinforcements to the new frontier opened by Fr. Louis Mathias just three years earlier.

Fr. Mathias welcomed them like a father receiving beloved sons—young men, most in their teens, ready to begin their novitiate in India itself. Thus began for Aloysius Cerato a 50-year missionary journey of faith, labour, sacrifice, and profound love for God's people.

Formation Under Great Missionary Mentors

The young religious spent his first ten years in Shillong, completing his Novitiate, Philosophy, and later Theology, with Practical Training at Guwahati. He was formed by the saintly Fr. Stephen Ferrando, later Bishop of Shillong, whose missionary zeal left a deep and permanent impression on him. Fr. Ferrando's spirit of total gift, boundless energy, and love for the poor became the guiding inspiration of Fr. Cerato's entire priesthood.

On 8 December 1934, Aloysius Cerato was ordained a priest—the first to be ordained by the newly appointed Bishop Louis Mathias. Soon after, he was sent to Dibrugarh, where he plunged wholeheartedly into missionary touring, evangelisation, and building up the mission school.

Fr. Alessi, his future Provincial, recalled the massive pastoral challenges of the time: “In those years the territory now comprising the dioceses of Dibrugarh, Tezpur, Tura, Nagaland, and parts of Shillong had only one missionary station—Guwahati—with just three dedicated missionaries. They shepherded 2,500 scattered Catholics and increased them a hundredfold. It was the hard work and sacrifice of missionaries like Fr. Cerato that brought souls to Christ.”

Apostolic Labours in the Brahmaputra Valley

Fr. Cerato spent most of his priestly life in the Brahmaputra Valley, labouring with extraordinary calmness, perseverance, and love. After the Second World War, he opened a new missionary centre at North Lakhimpur, laying foundations for a church, high school, and residence.

But on 15 August 1950, catastrophe struck. A devastating earthquake shook the region for six long minutes, bringing down houses and completely reducing the mission buildings to rubble. Fr. Cerato later recalled: “We heard a great noise like that of a goods train running over a steel bridge; then came the shaking with increasing intensity... The houses of the people

collapsed and even our own buildings fell to the ground.”

Yet, with characteristic courage and serenity, he began rebuilding—physically, spiritually, emotionally—supported by benefactors and strengthened by his deep trust in Divine Providence.

Fr. Alessi noted that Fr. Cerato was always calm, always encouraging, and always filled with interest and kindness towards the European tea planters, military officers, civil administrators, and above all, the poor and their children. Though he had little materially, he gave generously: “He had no money, but he gave something much more precious—his love and the love of Jesus.

Trials, Transition, and a New Chapter in Bombay

A turning point came in 1969, when European missionaries were ordered by the Government to leave Assam. Obedient and serene as always, Fr. Cerato moved to the Bombay Province, along with Fr. Fossati and Fr. Frassy. Assigned to Don Bosco Matunga, he became the confessor of the boys, confreres, and innumerable shrine visitors. After the death of Fr. Fossati, he served at St Joseph’s, Kurla, while continuing his weekly ministry at Matunga, Holy Cross Church (Kurla), and Dominic Savio Boys’ Home (Andheri).

His confessional ministry in Bombay was marked by gentleness, patience, spiritual insight, and a fatherly ability to reconcile souls with God. Many felt in him a silent holiness—one that healed hearts and inspired confidence in God’s mercy. Though no longer in the mission fields of Assam, he continued the same missionary zeal through the ministry of reconciliation.

A Life Poured Out in Love

On 24 May 1976, feast of Mary Help of Christians, the Lord called him home—almost like a sign of Mother Mary’s tender reward for a life lived wholeheartedly in her service. He completed 50 years of religious profession and 42 years of priesthood, all spent in India, all spent in the tireless service of souls.

Fr. Victor D’Souza fittingly wrote: “The work he did in the confessional at the sunset of his life was not less precious than the active touring he did in his younger days in Assam.”

Indeed, Fr. Aloysius Cerato was a missionary to the very end—whether in remote villages, disaster-stricken missions, classrooms, tea gardens, or the quiet of the confessional. His life was a testament to Salesian zeal, missionary courage, gentleness of heart, and unwavering fidelity.

Legacy

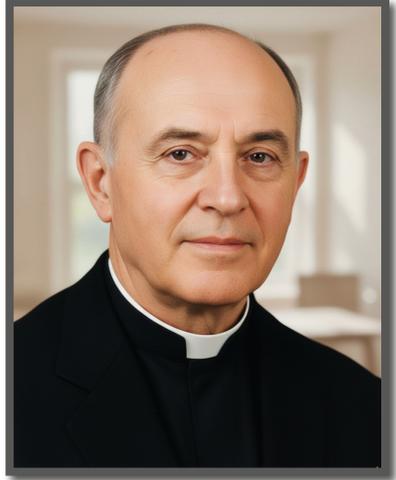
May this humble and dedicated son of Don Bosco obtain for us the same burning missionary zeal that animated his life. May he intercede for vocations, for the missions he served with such love, and for the Salesian communities he nurtured with quiet holiness.



A Missionary of Joy, Sacrifice, and Pastoral Creativity: Fr. Mario Zocchi, SDB (1909-1974)

On Thursday, October 24, 1974, in Vercelli, Italy, Fr. Mario Zocchi, SDB, passed away suddenly at noon due to a myocardial infarction. Though he had returned from India the previous year to recover from declining health, his passing came unexpectedly, just days before his birthday. His death marked the end of a life lived with missionary zeal, artistic flair, and unwavering dedication to the youth of India.

His body was laid in the parish hall, transformed into a chapel of rest, where confrères, parishioners, and students came to pay their respects. Despite having spent only a year in Vercelli, Fr. Mario had already made a deep impression as a confessor and spiritual guide. His funeral was attended by a large gathering of Salesians, youth, and faithful, with Fr. Archimede Pianazzi, his former Provincial, presiding over the Mass and delivering the eulogy. Among the concelebrants was the parish priest of the church where Fr. Mario had been baptized—a poignant reminder of the full circle of his priestly journey.



Early Life and Vocation

Born on October 26, 1909, in Busto Arsizio (Varese), Fr. Mario grew up in a devout Lombard family known for its faith, hard work, and integrity. These values would later shape his missionary spirit and pastoral approach. At the age of 20, he felt a clear call from God, echoing the words to Abraham: “*Leave your country and your father’s house...*” He responded with courage and entered the Salesian aspirantate in Ivrea on September 29, 1929.

He received the clerical habit from Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, then Rector Major, on September 19, 1933, and shortly thereafter departed for India, arriving on October 4, 1933. He was assigned to the newly formed St Thomas the Apostle Province of Madras, where he would spend the next three decades in service.

Formation and Ordination

Fr. Mario began his novitiate in Tirupattur on December 11, 1933 and made his first profession on January 29, 1935. He studied philosophy until 1937 and completed his practical training at Don Bosco, Bombay–Matunga from 1937 to 1939. He made his perpetual profession in Shillong–Mawlai in 1941, where he had begun theology studies in 1939.

However, with the outbreak of World War II, Fr. Mario, along with 150 other Salesians, was interned in Dehra Dun. It was there, in the midst of hardship and uncertainty, that he was ordained a priest on December 8, 1943, by Dominican Bishop Cialeo, also a fellow internee. This moment of grace amid adversity would define the resilient spirit of his priesthood.

Missionary Work in India

Fr. Mario served in India for 31 uninterrupted years, offering his priestly gifts in a variety of roles. He was a founder, administrator, educator, artist, and spiritual guide, whose presence enriched every community he served.

- He was the Founder and Director of the Agricultural School in Sagayathottam (1950–1953), where he endured physical labour and hardship to establish a vital institution for rural youth.

- He became the first Director of the Salesian house in Bombay–Kurla (1967–1969), laying the foundations for a vibrant apostolate.

- He served as Administrator in several houses, a role for which he was especially gifted, bringing order, efficiency, and pastoral sensitivity.

Fr. Mario was remembered for his cheerful personality, sporting talent, and artistic flair. He was a skilled set designer, actor, and singer, with a strong tenor voice that brought joy to countless youth festivals and community gatherings. His ability to combine discipline with delight, structure with spontaneity, made him a beloved figure among students and confrères alike.

Virtues and Legacy

Fr. Mario's life was marked by:

- A tireless work ethic that never sought recognition
- A spirit of sacrifice that embraced hardship for the sake of the mission
- A deep sense of responsibility in every role he undertook
- A loyalty to Don Bosco's charism, lived with authenticity and joy

His friend and fellow missionary, Fr. Giovanni Giacomello, recalled his heroic dedication at Sagayathottam, where he laboured under difficult conditions to build an agricultural school that would serve generations of youth. Despite the challenges, Fr. Mario persevered, driven by love for God and the young.

His Provincial, Fr. Dennis Duarte, summarized his 40 years of missionary

life as “neither easy nor empty.” Fr. Mario faced poverty, illness, and adversity with courage and faith. He was a man who gave everything, holding nothing back.

The Salesian community in India remembered him with deep affection and gratitude. His legacy was not only in buildings or programs, but in the lives, he touched, the vocations he nurtured, and the joy he spread.

Return to Italy and Final Year

In 1973, due to health issues including diabetes and coronary insufficiency, Fr. Mario returned to Italy. He was assigned to the Salesian house in Vercelli, arriving on October 17, 1973. Though he missed the mission field deeply, he continued to serve as a confessor and spiritual guide, offering wisdom and comfort to those around him.

He was hospitalized twice during the summer of 1974, but by October 20—World Mission Sunday, he was well enough to join the community for a meal. His confrères looked forward to celebrating his birthday on October 26. Sadly, just four days later, he passed away.

Spiritual Life and Devotion

Fr. Mario’s priesthood was rooted in deep union with God, nourished by:

- Constant prayer
- Personal intimacy with Christ
- Frequent reception of the sacraments

He had a special devotion to Our Lady, and his life was bookended by Marian feasts: born in October, the month of the Rosary, and died on the feast of Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco’s Madonna. This Marian thread ran through his life and ministry, shaping his spirituality and pastoral approach.

Conclusion

Fr. Mario Zocchi was a Salesian missionary of joy, sacrifice, and pastoral creativity. From the fields of Sagayathottam to the classrooms of Bombay, he gave himself fully to the youth of India. His talents, discipline, and joy left a lasting mark on the communities he served.

Though he died far from the land he loved, his heart remained with the missions. His final year in Vercelli was one of quiet service and spiritual preparation. His confrères remember him as a priest after the heart of Christ, and his legacy continues to inspire.

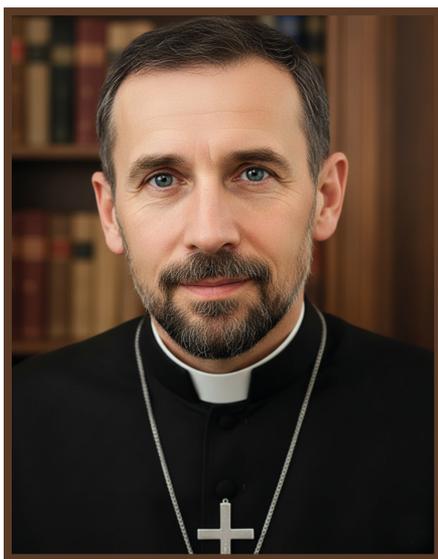
May his life remind us that the mission is not only about doing, but about being—being present, being joyful, being faithful. Fr. Mario Zocchi did all this, and more.

A Missionary of Fidelity and Fatherly Love:

Fr. Joseph Foglia, SDB (1900-1970)

Heart Aflame for the Missions

AOn September 25, 1970, in Goa, a long and fruitful missionary journey came to an end. Fr. Joseph Foglia, SDB, after forty-seven years of tireless service in India, quietly returned to his Creator. His life was a living embodiment of Don Bosco's dream — a missionary who combined



deep faith, joyful simplicity, and unrelenting zeal for souls. Archbishop Stephen Ferrando, his confrere and friend, summed up his life in moving words: “He was a priest and an apostle. I loved him so!”

Born on July 19, 1900, in Alba, Italy, Joseph grew up amid the rolling hills of Piedmont, a region rich in Salesian spirit. From a young age, he was captivated by the missionary stories that animated the Salesian houses of northern Italy. His vocation found its home in the Salesian Congregation, where he made his first profession on October 17, 1921.

Just two years later, in 1923, his long-cherished dream came true — he was sent as a practical trainee to India, then a young mission territory of immense promise. He arrived full of enthusiasm, courage, and missionary passion. There, he assisted the legendary Fr. Constantine Vendrame, learning the heart of missionary work — reaching souls not only through words but through witness. His duties included operating the film projector, a novel instrument then, which became an effective tool for catechesis and evangelization.

From the beginning, young Fr. Foglia understood that the mission was not about prestige or position, but about people — meeting them in their villages, homes, and hearts.

The Shepherd in the Field

Ordained a priest on July 22, 1928, Fr. Foglia set out on his pastoral journey across the north-eastern frontier of India, a region that would become his lifelong home. His early assignments took him to Don Bosco, Shillong, where he served as Rector, and later to Saharanpur, where he became Novice Master and Parish Priest.

Those who knew him recalled his extraordinary dedication — whether climbing the misty hills of Meghalaya or traversing the scorching plains of Uttar Pradesh, he remained undaunted. In the heat and dust of Saharanpur, he was often seen riding a bicycle from village to village, carrying the Eucharist in his bag and a smile on his face. The distances were long, the terrain difficult, but his pastoral heart knew no fatigue.

Later, as Prefect at Don Bosco, Shillong, and in subsequent missions at Cherrapunjee, the Cathedral Parish of Shillong, and Mawkhar, Fr. Foglia became a beloved figure among both parishioners and confreres. His ministry was marked not by grand achievements but by a spirit of fidelity — the quiet perseverance of one who loved deeply and served humbly.

He lived the Salesian ideal to its fullest: “Be where you are needed most.” His presence brought comfort to the sick, courage to the struggling, and joy to the young. His parishioners saw in him not just a priest, but a father — a man who was always available, always listening, and always ready to help. His office door, like his heart, was never closed. The poor, the orphaned, the outcast — all found in him a friend and protector.

The Fatherly Heart of a Salesian

Fr. Foglia’s missionary life was sustained by an intense spirit of prayer and sacrifice. His energy sprang from his union with God. Every day, before setting out for his pastoral work, he spent long moments in adoration — his eyes fixed on the Eucharist, his heart attuned to the needs of his flock. His daily rosary, recited even during his long travels, was his way of entrusting his mission to Mary Help of Christians.

He was a man of deep fidelity — faithful to his vocation, faithful to his community, and faithful to the people entrusted to him. Whether in the hills of Meghalaya or the plains of Uttar Pradesh, he carried the same spirit of service. His was not a missionary life of comfort, but of constancy. He gave himself fully, never counting the cost, never seeking recognition.

His confreres admired his fatherly kindness and steady humility. He had the heart of a shepherd — tender, patient, and compassionate. Many remembered him as a man of few words but great warmth, whose presence brought calm and courage. His smile was gentle, his words measured, and his charity boundless.

Even as years passed and his health declined, his missionary zeal remained undiminished. When the time came for him to rest, it was Goa that became his final earthly station — fittingly close to St. Francis Xavier, whose missionary spirit he had long emulated. On September 25, 1970, the faithful servant laid down his burden. His remains were laid to rest near those of the great Apostle of the Indies — a providential symbol of a shared flame of missionary love.

Legacy of a Missionary Heart

Fr. Joseph Foglia's story is one of quiet greatness. His life was not about numbers or achievements but about fidelity — the daily, unseen faithfulness that shapes souls and sanctifies work. He exemplified what it means to be a Salesian missionary: a man of prayer, presence, and perseverance.

His death marked the end of a long chapter of missionary labor, but his legacy continues wherever faith, kindness, and love for the poor are practiced in the Salesian way. His life reminds us that the mission of Christ is carried not only by pioneers and preachers but by those who stay, who listen, and who love — day after day, quietly and faithfully.

Today, as we recall his memory, we see in him a reflection of Don Bosco's own heart — joyful, tireless, and wholly given to God. His resting place beside St. Francis Xavier is not mere coincidence but divine poetry — for both shared the same passion: "To bring Christ to all, and all to Christ."

May his missionary spirit continue to inspire generations of Salesians to live and serve with the same fidelity, simplicity, and fatherly love.



A Pen for the Missions, a Voice for the Gospel:

Fr. Hugh McGlinchey, SDB (1916-1983)

Life Formed by Faith and Vision

On April 27, 1983, in Dublin, Ireland, Fr. Hugh McGlinchey, SDB, peacefully concluded his earthly pilgrimage at the age of 66. His passing marked the end of a life woven from the threads of missionary zeal, literary brilliance, and gentle compassion — a life



that proved that the written word, when guided by faith, can become a powerful missionary tool.

Born on October 13, 1916, in Belfast, Hugh grew up in a family and culture deeply shaped by the faith and resilience of Irish Catholicism. Drawn early to the spirit of Don Bosco, he joined the Salesians and was among the first group of novices at Tirupattur in 1935, an experience that forged his deep and lifelong bond with India. He made his religious profession in 1941 and was ordained a priest on July 29, 1945, ready to serve God through the charisma of joyful work and creative evangelization. In his early years of ministry, Fr. Hugh served at St. Mary's, Madras, and Kotagiri, where he earned the love

of students and confreres alike. Those who lived with him remembered a man of calm presence, cheerful humor, and disciplined service. But soon, it became clear that his greatest gifts lay not only in teaching or administration, but in the power of his pen and the clarity of his voice.

The Missionary of the Word

Fr. Hugh's true mission field was the realm of ideas and communication. In an era when the Church in India sought new ways to reach minds and hearts, he emerged as one of its most gifted communicators. As editor of "The New Leader," Madras, he transformed the publication into a beacon of Catholic reflection, moral thought, and Salesian optimism. His writings

— marked by faith, clarity, and pastoral warmth — reached beyond the Catholic community, inspiring many to rediscover the human face of the Gospel.

Through the Good Pastor Press in Madras, he initiated the *Varia* and *Biographica* series, small booklets that preserved the memory of Salesian pioneers, saints, and early missionaries in India. These works became invaluable resources, ensuring that the missionary heritage of Don Bosco in India would not fade with time.

His missionary spirit extended beyond print. During his years in Goa, Fr. Hugh was in charge of the Catholic Hour on Radio Goa, a popular radio program that reached countless listeners. His voice — calm, thoughtful, and compassionate — brought the Good News into homes, classrooms, and parishes. With the same pastoral touch that characterized his writings, he taught, encouraged, and evangelized through the airwaves.

Behind his achievements lay a profound simplicity. He never sought attention or acclaim; he simply wanted to serve the Lord with the gifts he had been given. His typewriter, books, and radio microphone were his missionary tools; his message was always the same — love God, love the poor, and live with joy.

A Global Salesian Mind and Heart

Fr. Hugh's love for Don Bosco and the Salesian mission took him across continents. After years of dedicated work in India and Goa, he moved to New Rochelle, USA, where he joined the Editorial Board of the *Biographical Memoirs of Don Bosco*. Under the direction of Fr. Diego Borgatello, he contributed to the preparation and editing of the first five English volumes of this monumental work. His scholarship, precision, and reverence for history gave English-speaking Salesians worldwide access to Don Bosco's spirit in a new and vibrant way.

Later, he returned to Ireland, where he continued his apostolate as editor of the *Irish Salesian Bulletin*, guiding the publication with the same missionary passion and literary grace that had marked his entire career. Even as his health began to fail — he developed a serious skin condition, possibly contracted during his years in India — his commitment never wavered. From his desk in Dublin, he continued to write, edit, and support the missions through correspondence and articles.

Though his physical strength diminished, his heart remained aflame. He quietly used his personal resources to support missionary projects in India and Japan, channelling his modest wealth into scholarships, parish needs, and youth initiatives. He gave not only his words, but his life, his talents, and his means — everything he had — to the service of God.

The Legacy of a Gentle Missionary

Fr. Hugh McGlinchey's life was a synthesis of intellect and charity, prayer and creativity. His missionary field was not only in distant villages but also in libraries, printing presses, and studios. Through his writings and broadcasts, he sowed faith in minds and love in hearts — a missionary not of distance, but of depth.

He is remembered as a man of kindness and integrity, whose calm presence inspired peace, and whose joy reflected the heart of Don Bosco. His confreres admired his quiet diligence and his unfailing courtesy. His readers admired his wisdom. And those who worked alongside him saw in him the embodiment of St. Francis de Sales' motto: "The measure of love is to love without measure."

His life reminds us that mission is not limited to travel or preaching. The true missionary is one who, like Fr. Hugh, gives his whole self — mind, voice, and heart — for the salvation of souls.

Epilogue

When Fr. Hugh McGlinchey died in 1983, his body was laid to rest in Ireland, but his spirit continued to live in the missions he had served, the publications he had shaped, and the lives he had touched. He was, in every sense, a Salesian missionary of the word — a priest who evangelized with ink and voice, with compassion and conviction.

His pen was his pulpit, his words his witness, and his life his message.

May his memory continue to inspire all who seek to serve God through the creative power of the Gospel.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."
(Mt 5:9)



A Missionary of Music, Mercy, and the Margins:

Fr. Serafino Colombo, SDB (1904-1956)

 On 29 November 1956, in Marina di Pisa, Fr. Serafino Colombo, SDB, passed away suddenly at the age of 52, collapsing near the Salesian Orphanage after visiting a gravely ill parishioner. He was found clutching his breviary—his final gesture a prayer, his final breath a benediction. Though rushed to the hospital, he died three hours later. His death, unexpected and poignant, was a mirror of his life: quietly faithful, deeply pastoral, and wholly given to God.

Born on October 12, 1904, in Affori, Milan, to Carlo Colombo and Assunta Melzi, Serafino's vocation was not immediate. He entered the Salesian Congregation at the age of 27, after completing military service. Encouraged by parish priests Mons. Santambrogio and Mons. Trezzi and guided by prayer before the Madonna in the choir of Milan's Duomo, he discerned a threefold calling: Salesian, missionary, and priestly.

He joined the Cardinal Cagliari Institute in Ivrea, completed his aspirantate, and departed for South India in 1936.

Missionary Zeal and Wartime Witness

In India, Fr. Colombo completed his novitiate and philosophical studies at Tirupattur, adapting with humility and dedication. But the outbreak of World War II changed everything. He was interned in a concentration camp for six years, along with other missionaries. It was within this crucible of suffering that he was ordained a priest, a powerful testament to his perseverance and faith.

After the war, unable to remain in India, he was sent to Goa, where he helped establish a new Salesian presence. However, the tropical climate took a toll on his health, and he developed severe arthritis, forcing him to return to Italy.

Pastoral Ministry in Marina di Pisa

Fr. Colombo hoped to recover and return to the missions. He underwent various treatments, and the sands of Marina di Pisa miraculously restored his mobility. From 1952 onward, except for a brief year in Livorno, he served as vice-parish priest and confessor at the Salesian Orphanage and Parish in Marina di Pisa.

His ministry was marked by gentleness, depth, and dedication. In the confessional, his voice was calm and penetrating, offering peace and clarity. He was especially devoted to the sick and dying, often becoming a beloved member of their families through his repeated visits and compassionate presence. He would stay with the dying, praying with them and offering the final blessing: “*In paradisum deducant te angeli*”—“*May the angels lead you into paradise.*”

A Life in Song

Music was a lifelong passion for Fr. Colombo. As a boy, he had studied music and developed a refined taste, knowing the works of many great composers. His voice—normally soft and thin—became melodious and full of joy when he sang. He became the music director of the parish, channelling his love for music into sacred service. Even when the instruments failed, his enthusiasm carried the performance. Singing was his joy, and through it, he expressed his soul.

On the night of his death, he had gone to visit a terminally ill man who also loved music. They sang together, prayed the Rosary, and shared hymns—“*Inno a Roma*” and “*Coelestis urbs Jerusalem.*” Fr. Colombo promised to return the next morning. But on his way back, death met him quietly on the road. His final acts were of prayer, song, and companionship—a fitting end to a life of service.

Legacy and Mourning

The news of his death deeply affected the community of Marina di Pisa. The Archbishop of Pisa, many Salesian confrères, and Directors from nearby institutes gathered to mourn. He was remembered as:

- A good man
- A devout religious
- A zealous priest
- A father to the sick and suffering

His death left a void in the orphanage and parish, both of which were already facing challenges. Yet his memory became a source of strength and inspiration.

Fr. Serafino Colombo was a Salesian missionary of mercy and music, a man whose life embodied the spirit of Don Bosco through pastoral tenderness, artistic joy, and unwavering fidelity. His story is a reminder that holiness often lies in the quiet acts of love, the whispered prayers, and the songs sung in the night.

May his memory continue to inspire us to serve with gentleness, creativity, and compassion, just as he did.

A Missionary Heart That Never Grew Old:

Fr. Emileo Dabove, SDB (1903-1981)

Life Rooted in Faith and Mission

As the year 1981 drew to a close, in the quiet of the Salesian Institute “Preto” in Genoa-Quarto, a faithful missionary completed his earthly journey. On December 31, Fr. Emileo Dabove, SDB, passed away suddenly from a heart attack. His departure was unexpected, but his life had already been a long offering of love — a bridge between Italy and India, a hymn of missionary zeal, and a witness to unwavering dedication to the poor.

Born on November 18, 1903, in Sassello, a serene village in the province of Savona, Italy, Emileo grew up in a deeply Christian family, steeped in the faith and tradition of Ligurian Catholic life. His early education at the Seminary of Genoa placed him among remarkable classmates — Giacomo Lercaro and Giuseppe Siri, both future Cardinals of the Church. Cardinal Siri himself, upon viewing Fr. Dabove’s mortal remains, described him tenderly as “a man of God and of exemplary honesty.”

That early formation gave Emileo both discipline and passion. Yet beneath his quiet exterior burned a missionary fire. He initially joined the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), but soon discerned that his true home

was within the family of Don Bosco. Drawn by the Salesian spirit of joyful service, he entered the Salesian house of Sampierdarena in 1925, assisting artisans and theology students. His novitiate at Strada in Casentino refined his intellect and faith; there, while teaching history and geography, he made his religious profession on November 24, 1927.

From that day onward, Fr. Emileo belonged entirely to God and to the young. His life would span continents, but its single focus would always be — to bring Christ’s love to the poor and forgotten.



The Missionary and the Builder

Fr. Dabove's missionary journey truly began when he set sail for Australia, completing his theological studies at Sunbury and being ordained a priest on July 13, 1930, in Melbourne. His ordination marked the start of a ministry that would soon carry him further east — to Madras, India, in 1931. There, he began as secretary to the archbishop, serving faithfully and quietly, learning the language of service more than of words.

Over the next four decades, his assignments were many and diverse — Director, Parish Priest, Provincial Economist, and spiritual guide. He was respected not only for his administrative skills but also for his pastoral heart. He worked tirelessly to strengthen Salesian institutions, support the formation of young Salesians, and uplift the poor who looked to the Church for hope.

Colleagues remembered him as a man of deep conviction — precise, methodical, and tireless. He lived the Salesian motto “Da mihi animas, cetera tolle” — “Give me souls, take away the rest.” His room was bare, his life simple, and his work ceaseless.

From 1967, he became chaplain to the Salesian Sisters (FMA), a role that revealed another dimension of his vocation — that of spiritual fatherhood. He accompanied the sisters with wisdom, patience, and affection, offering them guidance and encouragement in their demanding apostolic life. Many of them would later say that his words and example sustained their fidelity in difficult times.

When advancing age and health prompted his return to Italy in 1973, Fr. Emileo did not retire from mission. In La Spezia Canaletto, he continued serving the parish, visiting the sick, directing the choir, and hearing confessions. His days were simple but full of grace. Later, in Genoa-Quarto, he assisted Mons. Ferrando, and even after the bishop's death, remained available to all as confessor, counselor, and friend. Through letters, he continued to guide souls far away — a missionary still, though now with a pen instead of a passport.

The Spirit of a True Salesian

Fr. Emileo's spirit was distinctly Salesian — hardworking, practical, and cheerful in simplicity. He was known for his strong personality, sometimes demanding and blunt, yet beneath that exterior lay a heart of gold. Those who knew him well affectionately called him “the benevolent grump” or “the bear”, nicknames that spoke as much of his vigour as of his warmth.

His confreres in India remembered him with admiration:

Fr. Alcide Seeber (Madras): “A model religious, old-style Salesian, hard worker, lover of poverty, and friend of the poorest.”

Fr. Luigi Di Fiore (Provincial): “A benevolent grump — rough on the outside, but full of affection for the poor.”

Fr. Angelo Codello: “Beneath his prickly exterior was a heart full of love and respect.”

Fr. Giovanni Med: “He obeyed promptly and humbly, even when directed by younger superiors.”

Fr. Archimede Pianazzi (Madras): “He was called ‘the bear’ — strong, tireless, and deeply committed to justice and poverty.”

To the Salesian Sisters, he was father, friend, and protector. Sr. Teresa Merlo (Bangalore) called him “a true son of Don Bosco”. Sr. Regina Colombo (Madras) admired his punctuality, love for the poor, and his tireless service. Sr. Cesira Gallina (Madras) never forgot his parting message in 1980: “Continue to help the poor in every way; never reject them from our schools because of their poverty. It is the poor who attract Providence and divine blessings.”

His words echo the Gospel itself — a simple truth lived deeply.

Even in his later years, he lived austerely. His room contained almost nothing — a crucifix, a few books, and his breviary. Yet, spiritually, he was rich beyond measure. Those who lived with him acknowledged that his strength of character sometimes made community life difficult, but they equally admired his unbending honesty, obedience, and his unflinching devotion to the Salesian Rule.

A Legacy of Service and Holiness

On January 2, 1982, family, friends, and confreres gathered for his funeral in Genoa. The Mass, presided over by Fr. Elio Torrigiani, Provincial Superior, was both solemn and joyful — a farewell to a man who had spent every heartbeat for God.

Fr. Dabove’s death was sudden, but his legacy is enduring. Across India, especially in Madras, the memory of his compassion for the poor continues to inspire. His name is still recalled in parishes and communities that benefited from his leadership.

He was a builder of institutions, yes, but more deeply, a builder of souls. His missionary life was not marked by extraordinary events but by extraordinary faithfulness — a virtue rare and radiant. In every place he served, he left behind a trail of prayer, order, and hope.

The “man of God and exemplary honesty”, as Cardinal Siri called him, was also a man of humour, humanity, and heart. His life reminds us that holiness is not an absence of struggle but the persistence of love in the midst of it.

Fr. Emileo Dabove lived and died as he prayed — with his eyes fixed on

Christ, his heart open to the poor, and his hands ready for service. From the seminaries of Genoa to the missions of India, from the chapels of the Salesian Sisters to the confessional of Genoa-Quarto, he was, to the end, a Salesian missionary to the core — faithful, hardworking, and joyfully poor.

Epilogue

The story of Fr. Emileo Dabove is one of mission and mercy. He stands as a reminder of the hidden heroes who quietly build God’s kingdom, not on applause but on fidelity. He lived between two worlds — Italy and India — yet belonged wholly to heaven.

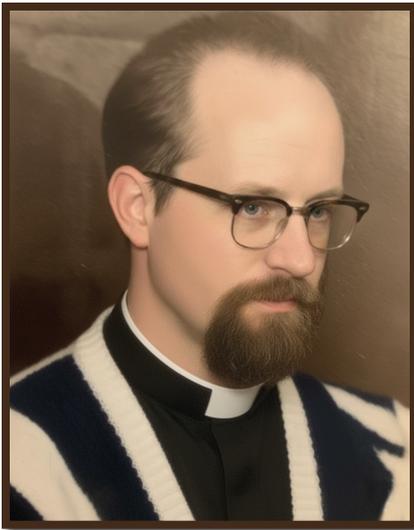
Today, his memory endures as a blessing: a man who gave everything and asked for nothing. His strong voice, his steady faith, and his humble witness still call us to the same missionary zeal that burned in his heart: “It is the poor who attract Providence and divine blessings.”

May that truth, lived and spoken by Fr. Dabove, continue to inspire generations of Salesians to follow the same path of joyful service — faithful to Don Bosco, faithful to Christ.



A Craftsman of Faith and Mission: Fr. Henry Torra, SDB (1920-1982)

On 18 May 1982, in Valencia, Spain, Fr. Henry Torra, SDB, passed peacefully into eternal rest at the age of sixty-two. His was a life that joined skill with sanctity, intellect with humility, and craftsmanship with compassion. From the world of mechanical engineering to the workshop of souls, Fr. Torra lived out his Salesian



vocation with quiet dedication and creative zeal. His hands, which once shaped machines, would later shape hearts—guiding young people toward a life of purpose and faith.

From Engineer to Missionary

Born on 31 January 1920, in Albacete, Spain, Henry Torra grew up with a love for precision, discipline, and invention. He pursued studies in mechanical engineering, excelling in technical design and practical skill. His gifts caught the attention of Fr. Joseph Carreno, SDB, who was then seeking men of ability and faith to strengthen Salesian technical

education in India. Recognizing in Henry both professional talent and a missionary spirit, Fr. Carreno invited him to join the Salesian mission.

Henry accepted the call with courage and generosity. Leaving behind the comfort of his homeland, he embarked on the long voyage to India—a land that would become the heart of his apostolic journey. He began as a lay Salesian brother at the Salesian College of Tirupattur, where his engineering expertise became a cornerstone for the development of the Mechanical Engineering Department.

Fr. Torra's approach to technical education was deeply Salesian. For him, machines were not mere tools, but pathways for human formation. He often reminded his students that "to work well is to pray twice." His classrooms were not only places of learning but also of mentorship and spiritual guidance.

The Call to Priesthood

After several fruitful years as a technical instructor, Henry felt a deeper stirring within his heart—a call to serve God and youth not only through skill but through the sacred ministry of priesthood. Encouraged by his superiors, he began theological studies in Shillong, embracing once again the challenge of growth and renewal.

His ordination on 27 June 1960, at the age of forty, was a moment of profound joy both for him and for the many confreres who had witnessed his humble perseverance. Late vocations often carry a special maturity, and Fr. Torra's priesthood was marked by wisdom, serenity, and industrious devotion.

He would later serve in various communities—Kolkata, Madras, Panjim, and Fatorda—bringing to each place his characteristic simplicity and efficiency. Whether as teacher, confessor, or administrator, Fr. Torra left behind not only well-run institutions but also well-formed hearts.

A Pioneer and Builder in Goa

Among his many postings, Fatorda, Goa, held a special place in Fr. Torra's missionary heart. As one of the pioneers of the Salesian presence there, he helped lay both the spiritual and structural foundations of the community. His technical acumen was invaluable in the design and construction of early facilities, but even more enduring was his witness as a man of prayer and gentle guidance.

Fr. Torra's spirituality was one of practical holiness. He found God in the rhythm of daily work, in the sound of the workshop, and in the quiet of the chapel. Those who lived with him recall his unassuming nature, his punctuality, and his deep reverence for the Eucharist. Though often reserved in speech, his actions spoke clearly: fidelity, diligence, and peace.

The Final Years and Lasting Legacy

In his later years, Fr. Torra returned to Spain, his homeland, where he continued to serve in Salesian communities with the same calm dedication that had marked his time in India. Even as age and frailty advanced, he remained active in ministry—celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, and guiding young people with the wisdom of experience.

His death in Valencia on 18 May 1982 closed a life of quiet greatness. Few of his achievements were public, but many were profound. The mechanical workshops he built, the boys he trained, and the confreres he supported all stand as living memorials to a priest who believed that faith and craftsmanship could coexist beautifully in service of the Kingdom.

Fr. Henry Torra was truly a Salesian craftsman of faith—a man who saw

God's providence in every gear and prayer in every gesture of work. His life teaches us that holiness need not be loud to be luminous, and that the heart of Don Bosco's mission beats even in the humblest tasks done with love. "He built with his hands, but he sanctified with his heart."

May the memory of Fr. Henry Torra, SDB, continue to inspire Salesians and educators everywhere to see in their daily labours a sacred calling—to shape not only skills, but souls for God.



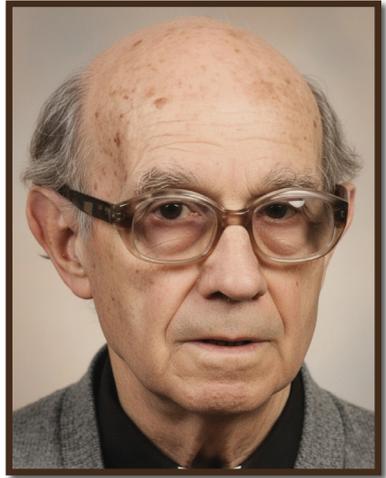
A Builder of Souls and Spaces: Fr. Joseph Boira, SDB (1899-1978)

Life Formed in Faith and Vision

A On April 1, 1978, in Elche, Spain, Fr. Joseph Boira, SDB, peacefully completed his earthly mission at the age of seventy-eight. His life was a beautiful harmony of faith, artistry, and missionary zeal — a life that built not only walls of stone but hearts of faith. His legacy endures in the music he inspired, the schools he helped shape, and the Salesian spirit he embodied with quiet dignity.

Born on June 25, 1899, in Morrel del Camp, Spain, Joseph grew up in a family of deep Christian values. The seeds of his vocation were sown early — nourished by a love for beauty, a sense of order, and a yearning to serve. Drawn by the joyful spirituality of Don Bosco, he entered the Salesian Congregation, making his first profession on September 21, 1924, and was ordained a priest on March 24, 1928.

His talents, both intellectual and artistic, were quickly recognized. A gifted musician and a man of discipline, he was chosen for the missions. In 1932, Fr. Boira sailed for India, ready to dedicate his life to the Salesian apostolate in a land that would soon claim his heart.



The Missionary Educator and Musician

Fr. Boira's first appointment was as Prefect of Studies at Don Bosco, Matunga, where his talents found rich expression. He was not merely a teacher but a formator, shaping both minds and souls. Music became his chosen language of education — a bridge between discipline and joy, intellect and emotion, prayer and celebration.

An accomplished musician, he trained choirs, organized orchestras, and established school bands, transforming the atmosphere of Matunga into one of harmony and creativity. Under his guidance, music became a formative tool, cultivating unity, confidence, and grace in his students. His influence extended far beyond the classroom: he awakened in the young a

sense of beauty, teamwork, and devotion — all hallmarks of the Salesian approach to education.

Fr. Boira believed that music was not a luxury but a ministry — a way to touch hearts and elevate souls toward God. His joyful discipline and artistic finesse left a lasting impression on generations of students who still remembered him not as a strict instructor, but as a fatherly friend who taught them to find God in melody and rhythm.

The Architect of Vision and Faith

After his fruitful years in Mumbai, Fr. Boira was transferred to St. Mary's, Madras, where his creativity found new expression — this time in the realm of architecture and design. Possessing an eye for beauty and a mind for precision, he took an active role in the planning and construction of Salesian buildings. His architectural vision was guided not merely by aesthetics but by the Salesian educational mission: every classroom, corridor, and chapel were designed to foster the values of presence, accessibility, and care.

He often said that buildings should preach — that their very structure should reflect the Gospel of joy and service. His work helped lay the physical foundations for many Salesian institutions in India, spaces that would continue to nurture generations of youth long after his departure.

In 1947, Fr. Boira returned to Spain, where he continued his priestly ministry with the same faith and dedication. Yet his missionary years had left a hidden mark upon him: during his time in India, he had contracted leprosy, a cross he bore with serene acceptance. Even as the disease progressed, he remained active in ministry, transforming suffering into silent service. He once confided to a confrere, “If pain is my instrument now, may it play only for God.”

The Legacy of a Faithful Builder

Fr. Joseph Boira's life was a beautiful symphony of work, creativity, and faith. Whether leading a choir, sketching building plans, or hearing confessions, he poured himself wholly into his vocation. His legacy endures not only in the structures he built, but in the joyful discipline he inspired in those around him.

He reminds us that the mission of Don Bosco is lived not only through words and catechism but through art, music, and architecture — through every human expression that uplifts the young and glorifies God. His life was a living testimony to the belief that beauty evangelizes, and that faith can be expressed as much through sound and structure as through speech. Fr. Boira was, in every sense, a builder in spirit and stone — a priest who transformed creativity into prayer and labour into love.

“Whatever you build,” he once said, “let it help others to find God.”

Today, his life stands as a quiet monument to that vision — a melody of faith that continues to echo in the hearts and halls of the Salesian world he helped shape.



A Zealous Worker for the Young: Fr. Francis Cusini, SDB (1915-1963)

“The just shall be in everlasting remembrance.” – Psalm 112:6

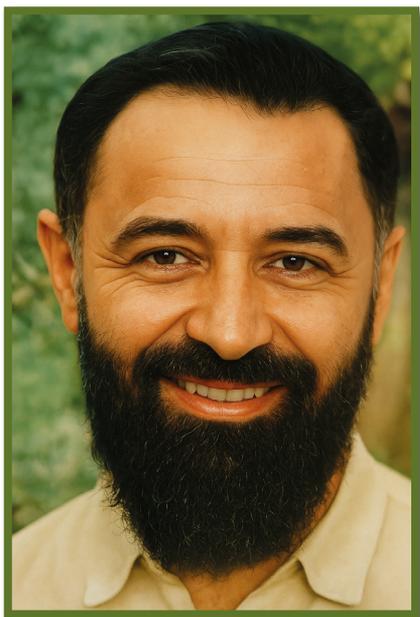
On 3 July 1963, the Salesian Family bade farewell to one of its devoted sons, Rev. Fr. Francis Cusini, SDB, who passed away at the age of forty-seven. His life, though brief, radiated faith, joy, and apostolic zeal. Fr. Cusini’s witness reminds us that sanctity is not measured by length of days, but by the depth of one’s love and the constancy of one’s service.

A Life Formed in Faith

Francis Cusini was born on 6 December 1915 in Livigno, a mountain village in northern Italy known for its industrious and devout people. His family life, steeped in faith, shaped in him the values of hard work, simplicity, and compassion. Even as a boy, Francis was marked by gentleness of heart and a quiet sense of purpose.

The Salesian spirit touched him early. The joyful witness of Salesian missionaries and their love for the young stirred within him a desire to dedicate his life to God in their footsteps. Drawn by the motto of Don Bosco—“*Da mihi animas, caetera tolle*” (“Give me souls, take away the rest”)—he entered the Salesian Congregation, seeking not fame but fidelity. In formation, Francis was known for his cheerfulness, humility, and readiness to serve. He was a companion who uplifted others and a young religious whose enthusiasm was rooted in prayer. When he professed his vows as a Salesian, he did so with a heart full of gratitude and a spirit of joyful commitment.

His ordination to the priesthood was a day of profound joy. It fulfilled his lifelong dream—to become a shepherd after the heart of Christ, especially for the young and the poor. His priestly motto was simple yet deeply



Salesian: “To be a father to the young, a brother to the poor, and a son of Don Bosco.”

A Priest with the Heart of Don Bosco

Fr. Cusini’s apostolic life was characterized by pastoral zeal, kindness, and availability. He was, above all, a man for the young. His presence among them—whether in classrooms, playgrounds, or confessionals—was that of a joyful father and friend. He had an innate gift for making everyone feel loved, understood, and capable of goodness.

His students and confreres remember his cheerful spirit—he was the first to laugh, the last to complain. Yet beneath his humour lay a deep seriousness about his mission. He believed that education was an act of love, and that every young person was a seed of hope waiting to be nurtured.

His care extended especially to the poor and abandoned, whom he regarded as Christ’s most precious treasures. He had the eyes of Don Bosco—always seeing in each boy the potential for holiness. Those who worked alongside him recall how he could turn even an ordinary conversation into an opportunity for encouragement and faith.

A Soul Sustained by Prayer and Devotion

What sustained Fr. Cusini in his active apostolate was his profound interior life. He was a man of the Eucharist, never hurried in his celebration of Mass, always reverent in prayer. His time before the Blessed Sacrament was the source of his serenity and strength. Often, he would be found in the chapel long before dawn, quietly entrusting his day and his boys to the Lord.

His devotion to Mary Help of Christians was filial and tender. He turned to her in every difficulty, and his confidence in her maternal protection was contagious. He encouraged his students to keep their faith simple and strong: “Stay close to Jesus in the Eucharist and Mary will never leave you.” His confreres admired his obedience, humility, and joy, even in moments of fatigue or misunderstanding. He bore challenges with a smile, convinced that fidelity in little things was the surest path to holiness.

A Life Offered in Love

Though God granted him only forty-seven years, Fr. Cusini filled them with extraordinary dedication. His death on 3 July 1963 came as a sudden blow to his community and the many who had come to love him. Yet, his passing was peaceful, marked by the same spirit of acceptance that had guided his life.

He left behind no great monuments or written works, but a far more enduring legacy—the memory of a good and joyful priest who lived for

others. His influence continues in the many young people he formed and the confreres he inspired by his example.

Fr. Cusini's life testifies that holiness often blooms in simplicity, and that faithful love—expressed through daily service—is the truest mark of sanctity.

A Legacy of Joyful Fidelity

Today, as we remember Fr. Francis Cusini, we give thanks for his luminous example. He embodied the best of Don Bosco's spirit: optimism, kindness, and tireless zeal for souls. His life challenges every Salesian to live our vocation not half-heartedly, but joyfully and generously, trusting that every act of service builds the Kingdom of God.

“He lived joyfully, served humbly, and died peacefully—leaving behind the fragrance of holiness.”

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his intercession continue to inspire new generations of Salesians to love God, serve the young, and live joyfully the Gospel of Christ.



A Pioneer Missionary with a Shepherd’s Heart:

Fr. Ivan Chigan, SDB (1910-1944)

“The just shall be in everlasting remembrance.” – Psalm 112:6

In the year 1934, the Salesian Family in Bombay bid farewell to one of its early pioneers, Rev. Fr. Ivan Chigan, SDB, whose life of dedication, vision, and service helped shape the foundations of the Salesian mission in western India. A man of deep faith and quiet strength, Fr. Chigan’s legacy is one of steadfast devotion to God and to the young—especially those most in need of love, education, and hope.

A Missionary at the Dawn of a Dream

Fr. Ivan Chigan arrived in British India as one of the early Salesian missionaries entrusted with carrying Don Bosco’s charism to new frontiers. The fledgling communities of the time faced immense challenges—limited resources, unfamiliar cultures, and vast fields of need. Yet, these difficulties only seemed to deepen Fr. Chigan’s faith and strengthen his resolve.

Animated by the Salesian spirit of joy and optimism, he embraced Don Bosco’s simple but profound belief: “God wants us to be happy in this life and the next.” From his arrival, Fr. Chigan dedicated himself to uplifting the poor and abandoned youth in the region. His ministry took shape not only in classrooms and chapels but also in streets, workshops, and homes—wherever he found young people in need of care and guidance. He understood that education was not just about knowledge, but about nurturing the whole person in body, mind, and soul.

A Shepherd and Educator of Hearts

Fr. Ivan combined the heart of a pastor with the hands of an educator. His work was characterized by patience, creativity, and personal attention to those entrusted to him. He believed, like Don Bosco, that love, and kindness could transform lives more effectively than correction or command.

Whether he was celebrating the sacraments, teaching catechism, organizing youth gatherings, or visiting families in distress, Fr. Ivan was always a man of presence—gentle, approachable, and wise. His words carried warmth and conviction, and his example inspired confidence in those who sought his counsel.

He poured himself out in service, often going beyond his own strength to accompany the struggling and the sorrowful. He had a particular concern for the poor and the working youth, encouraging them to see their daily labour as a path of dignity and grace. Many found in him not only a priest, but a father—a man who believed in them when few others did.

Man of Prayer and Community

Within the Salesian community, Fr. Chigan was known for his simplicity, fidelity to prayer, and spirit of fraternity. He cultivated a home-like atmosphere in community life, rooted in kindness, reason, and faith. The Preventive System of Don Bosco was not merely a theory for him—it was the very rhythm of his daily living.

He was especially devoted to Mary Help of Christians, drawing inspiration and strength from her maternal guidance. His rosary was never far from his hands, and his trust in divine providence was unshakable, even during difficult moments of ill health or discouragement.

His confreres recalled how he bore hardships without complaint, finding in each challenge an opportunity to deepen his faith. When trials came, he would often say with quiet conviction, “Do the good you can today; God will take care of tomorrow.”

A Legacy of Quiet Love

Fr. Ivan’s holiness was woven into the fabric of ordinary life. He was not a man of grand gestures or public renown, but one whose love revealed itself in small, consistent acts of care. A kind word to a confrere, a visit to the sick, an encouraging note to a student struggling in studies, or a discreet act of charity toward a poor family—these were the seeds of grace he sowed daily.

His influence extended far beyond his years. The young men he guided became the next generation of Salesians and lay leaders; the families he supported carried forward his message of faith and hope. His legacy continues in the Salesian works he helped establish, in the youth he inspired, and in the communities strengthened by his quiet example.

When he passed away in Mumbai in 1934, his confreres and the faithful mourned deeply. Yet, theirs was a sorrow mingled with gratitude—for they had lived alongside a man of God who had built not only institutions, but hearts.

A Life Remembered, A Spirit that Endures

Fr. Ivan Chigan’s life stands as a testimony to missionary courage and pastoral love. He lived the Gospel with the joy of Don Bosco, embodying

the Salesian spirit of presence, service, and simplicity. His legacy is not one of great monuments, but of transformed lives.

As we remember him today, we give thanks for his fidelity, his compassion, and his pioneering spirit. May his example continue to inspire all Salesians to serve the young with patience and joy, to build with love, and to find in every difficulty an opportunity for grace.

“He built hearts for God and left behind the fragrance of holiness.”

May Fr. Ivan Chigan, SDB, rest in eternal peace, rejoicing with Don Bosco and the countless sons and daughters of the Salesian Family who have followed his path of faithful love.



SALESIAN MISSIONARIES OF MUMBAI PROVINCE

Date	Name	Place	Year	Age
JANUARY				
01	L Laureano Santana	Mumbai	1943	71
14	P Michael Murray	Ireland	1981	82
17	P Douglas Wollaston	Shillong	1979	76
18	P Antonio Alessi	Mumbai	1995	89
26	P Ivan Cigan	Mumbai	1944	34
27	P Edward Corcoran	Chennai	2005	89
29	P Joseph Casti	Rome, Italy	2022	90
31	P Emilio Dabove	Genoa, Italy	1981	78
FEBRUARY				
01	S Andrew Rouiller	Tirupattur	1944	29
12	P Luigi Di Fiore	Brunswick, Australia	1989	75
MARCH				
05	L Charles Bellani	Sampierdarena, Italy	1945	64
APRIL				
01	P Joseph Boira	Elche, Spain	1978	78
03	P Ernest Clavel	Issime, Italy	1983	65
06	P Joseph Deane	London	1968	48
15	P Ignatius Rubio	Shillong	1983	62
20	P Adolf Tornquist	Alta Gracia, Argentina	1971	83
27	P Hugh McGlinchey	Dublin	1983	67
MAY				
05	P Hugh Tuena	Ambur	1966	59
08	S Thomas O'Shea	Mumbai	1941	23
18	P Henry Torra	Valencia, Spain	1982	62
19	P Orpheus Mantovani	Chennai	1967	56
24	P Aloysius Cerato	Mumbai	1976	68
26	P Giuseppe Moja	Arese, Italy	2009	93
29	P Jose Luis Carreño	Pamplona, Spain	1986	81

JUNE

16	P James Oreglia	Cordoba, Argentina	1996	80
26	P John Giacomello	Legnago, Italy	1985	74

JULY

03	P Francis Cusini	Chennai	1963	48
16	P Vladimir Ondrasek	Sydney, Australia	1977	59
20	P Mauro Casarotti	Mumbai	2007	90

AUGUST

07	P Peter Gatti	Rome, Italy	1995	84
24	P Francis Fossati	Mumbai	1972	75

SEPTEMBER

09	P Aurelius Maschio	Mumbai	1996	87
22	P Joseph Foglia	Panjim	1970	70

OCTOBER

19	P Raymond Chanoux	Ivrea, Italy	2003	88
21	P Joseph Hauber	Shillong	1946	68
22	P Alfred Mariotta	Mumbai	1987	76
24	P Mario Zocchi	Vercelli, Italy	1974	65
30	L Ludvik Zabret	Trstenik, Slovenia	2010	87

NOVEMBER

12	P William Haughey	Blaisdon, England	1984	76
12	P Sean McFerran	Belfast, Ireland	1998	80
14	P Joseph Murphy	Tirupattur	1971	51
22	P Vincent Scuderi	Catania, Italy,	1982	80
29	P Serafino Colombo	Marina di Pisa, Italy	1956	52

DECEMBER

01	P Eliseo Bianchi	Mumbai	1991	71
05	P Austin Dehlert	Mumbai	1958	70
17	P Aloysius Ravalico	Shillong	1967	63
20	P Daniel Venia	Rome Italy,	1995	65
21	P Santino Mondini	Mumbai	2007	94







Grateful Memories is a heartfelt tribute to forty-eight foreign Salesian missionaries who dedicated their lives to God and the young in Salesian Province of Mumbai, Their stories, filled with faith, sacrifice, and missionary zeal, remind us of the spirit that built our Province - a spirit that continues to inspire generations of Salesians and lay collaborators.

Compiled by Fr. Gregory D'Almelda, SDB. this book preserves their memory with gratitude and reverence, inviting every reader to give thanks, to remember, and to relaunch the mission that began over a century ago.



150 GIVE THANKS
RETHINK
RELAUNCH