

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again

Fr. Archimede Martelli
The Salesian founder in Korea

Br. Marino Bois
Fr. Raphael Hae-Dong Lee



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Foreword

The Salesian Province of Korea is celebrating the 70th anniversary of its presence in Korea this year. The Italian missionary Fr. Archimede Martelli (known in Korea as “Fr. Ma”) was the first missionary sent to Korea from the Japanese Province to establish Salesian roots in the country. His arrival laid the foundation of the Salesian presence in this land. Fr. Martelli passed away in 1984. This year, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of his passing. Therefore, we are publishing Fr. Martelli’s biography in recognition and thankfulness to God for His providence and grace in the 70-year history of our province.

For us Salesians, it is very interesting to see how the Korean Province began through Fr Martelli’s life and work as a missionary on Korean soil. For many of us who met “Fr. Ma” and experienced his love, it is also a trip down memory

lane to look back on a beautiful and happy time. Even if you do not know Fr. Ma, I believe that just looking at the life of a man who dedicated his life to God and to the youth in a strange land will help you reflect on your own life and plan for the future.

As we delve into the history of how Fr. Martelli and other early members of the Salesian Province of Korea lived and laid the foundation for the Salesian Congregation, we discover some interesting facts: there are three distinct ways, or strategies, that God usually takes when he wills something to be done, and we find the following three methods.

The first is that God prepares the surroundings: before sending a person, He prepares people who can help him when he arrives in the mission field or when he meets the

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inevitable difficult situations of a new place. This is so that the person sent can feel the hand of God's presence and providence. In that way, he will not be disappointed and will be able to do God's work firmly. In Fr. Ma's case, there were many such blessings.

Second, God sends the right person for the situation. Fr. Martelli was the right person to become the first missionary to Korea. But even if God had pre-arranged it, creating something new in a completely new environment and culture would have been a challenge. Fr. Martelli's complete reliance and trust in God, his positive and cheerful attitude, his flexibility in dealing with unexpected situations, and his down-to-earth, unpretentious humanity helped him deal with his challenges.

Thirdly, and this may seem contradictory to the second

strategy above, God uses even the weakest people as his instrument to reveal his omnipotence and glory. The missionaries and members of the Korean Province in the early days were not perfect people. They faced some very serious difficulties. But with God's help, they overcame these difficulties one by one and developed the Salesian Society in Korea. I consider God to be even greater because he can do great things with little tools.

It is my prayer that those who read this book will discover the hand of God's providence revealed through Fr. Martelli and feeling the same touch of grace in their own lives, move forward with hope.

Fr. Timothy Won-Cheol Choi, SDB

Provincial

PREFACE

In 1824, a nine-year-old boy had a dream in a rural village called the Becchi in Piedmont, an Italian province. “In this dream I seemed to be very near my home in a very large yard. A crowd of children were playing there. Some were laughing, some were playing games, and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words, I jumped immediately amongst them and tried to stop them by using my words and my fists.” All of a sudden, the children turned into goats, dogs, cats, bears and other animals. The boy was terrified and did not know what to do. Then a dignified man appeared, and said, “You will have to win these friends of yours not by blows but by gentleness and love.” Confused and frightened, the boy replied that he was a poor, ignorant child. He was unable to talk to these

youngsters about religion. At that moment the kids stopped their fighting, shouting and swearing; they gathered round the man who was speaking. At that moment, a lady of stately appearance appeared and said, “what you will see happening to these animals in a moment is what you must do for my children .” The lady left with the words “In good time, you will understand everything!” and the boy woke up.

This dream is the life story of Don Bosco. He later became the father and teacher of youth. In this dream, he foresaw how his entire life would eventually turn out. Indeed, as seen in a dream, the boy, John Bosco, spent his entire life studying, praying, and working only for youth, offering up everything in his life for the young, especially poor young people. He passed away in 1888.

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However, the dream he had at the age of nine did not end with his departure to heaven. Many Salesians would devote their lives to the youth of the world, taking him as their holy spiritual teacher, father, and friend. Even now, this dream continues to become a reality every day among young people in 135 countries around the world where Salesians are present.

How is Don Bosco's dream being realized in this land of Korea, the 'Lantern of the East'? Who brought this dream? When did he bring it? How is it coming true among young Koreans?

Here, we introduce the life and achievements of Fr. Archimede Martelli, who came from distant Italy to this Korean land with Don Bosco's dream fixed firmly in his

mind. It was he who sowed the first seeds of Don Bosco's love and spirituality for young people.

As a poetic saying goes, "The first drop of water is the bravest drop!" Fr. Martelli came to this land as the first Salesian, with indomitable courage, humble wisdom, and abundant love. After the Korean War, Korea was extremely devastated and poor. Yet he shared life with the people and laid the foundation for Salesian activities by showing them the heart and spirit of Don Bosco and by loving and serving the young, especially the poor and needy. We consider it a great joy and an honor to be able to present Fr. Martelli's noble life and share his footsteps with so many people.

In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to those who have spared no effort in the publication of

this booklet. We confess that there was a limit to finding sufficient material to introduce Fr. Archimede Martelli and are sorry that we are not able to better portray the love and service he showed. We would like to mention especially Fr. Vaclav Klement, who motivated us to introduce Fr. Martelli's life, our former Provincial Fr. Stephen Seung-Kuk Yang for his active cooperation, Fr. Henry Bonetti who reviewed the original English text, Mr. Myung-Jin Park who has given us advice from the perspective of the historical flow of the Salesians in Korea, and Fr. Timothy Won-Cheol Choi, the current provincial for his continuous encouragement.

At any rate, we hope that many people will read Fr. Martelli's life and live a 'life of humility, love, and service' like him. In particular, we hope that it would help young

people establish the meaning and value of their lives by becoming acquainted with him through this booklet.

August 6, 2024

On the Anniversary of Fr. Martelli's Death

Author Br. Marino Bois, SDB

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Fr. Marteli on his first return home with his younger brother in the village in 1961 (the only two survivors from the large family)

Chapter 1

A Nostalgic Homeland

Archimede Martelli was born on November 23, 1916, in Comessaggio, northern Italy, an agricultural village in the province of Mantua (Mantova), in the central area of the prosperous Po Valley. He was the fourth of five children – four brothers and one sister.

Thanks to his mother, Ida Grazioli, born in 1887 as a zealous Christian woman, Archimede received a zealous Christian upbringing. His father, Carlo, born in 1877, provided for the large family with great care.

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His father was not a wealthy farmer, but he did have livestock. He was also a cattle dealer and ran the village butcher shop. Thanks to his father, Archimede was able to spend a relatively happy childhood.

Archimede's two older brothers died at a relatively young age: Ugo died at 45, Aldo at 46 and Archimede always remembered them fondly. Only the younger brother, Giovanni, lived to old age (up to 89).

Archimede's elder sister, Massimilla, played an active part

From top left: Elder brother, Father, Uncles. Below left: Younger brother, Giovanni, Mother, Sister, Grandma, Archimede



in the Catholic Movement and earned a great reputation. Fr. Martelli said that his sister tried to enter the convent to become a nun but her dream was not to be realized! She could not enter because of an eye disease. She went on pilgrimage to Lourdes and prayed: “Lord, cure my eyes, or rather bring me to you.”

She returned home hoping to recover but within two months she died in 1935. She was only 28.

Archimede so loved life that he always asked the Lord to let him live longer than his elder brothers. The Lord gave him a life of hard work and called him at the age of 68. He also often prayed for his younger brother, Giovanni, and it seems the prayer for long life was transferred to him!

Mission at that time was a life commitment and meant almost complete absence from home. But with the arrival of easier traveling, things changed. Archimede was sent as a missionary to the Far East at the age of 15 in 1932, and in December 1961, he was able to visit his family for the first time in almost 30 years. When he returned home, everything had changed. He visited his parents’ graves and the graves of his two elder brothers and his sister whom he had so much admired. The only other member of their large family still alive was his younger brother Giovanni,

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who was living in Milan with his wife Lina and son Franco.

But to return briefly to Archimede's childhood: after completing fourth grade in primary school in his hometown, Archimede went to Verona, the famed city of Romeo and Juliet. After he studied in a Salesian boarding school till his second year of junior high school, he applied to the Salesians in Turin and was sent to Ivrea as a missionary aspirant where he finished the aspirantate courses before being sent to Japan.





Cardinal Cagliero Missionary Institute Ivrea

Chapter 2

Missionaries were forged at Ivrea

When Don Bosco started working for the youth and young people began to flock to the Oratory, he needed helpers and educators to assist him in his activities.

Don Bosco began putting his project into action with the young people living in the Oratory. However, the young people who came to the Oratory were street adolescents, and most of them had no education. Although he tried to train them to live a lifestyle of learning skills during the day and studying at night, it was not as easy as Don Bosco thought.

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Don Bosco also turned his attention to the young people from the countryside around Turin, especially those whose families lived a fervent religious life. They already had a basic school education and a good formation in faith from their pastors who were full of apostolic passion. Thus, young people like Dominic Savio entered the Oratory, and from these boys came the first Salesians. They were to become the pillars of Don Bosco's educational work.

As the number of these young people increased, Don Bosco saw the possibility of fulfilling the dream of a Salesian mission to educate young people not only in Italy but also all over the world.

While Don Bosco was dreaming of the missions, requests for missionaries came from many parts of the world, especially from bishops in Latin America and Asian countries. Therefore, Don Bosco began to establish missionary formation houses in Piedmont and in many other places in Italy.

The success of Don Bosco's missionary ventures and his beatification and canonization aroused much enthusiasm for the missions among Catholic youth at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The adventures of Cardinal Cagliero and of many great

Chapter 2. Missionaries were forged at Ivrea

missionaries, as told by the Salesian Bulletin and other missionary magazines, lit a flame in the hearts of many young people. This was the flame of bringing Christ's love to the world and the desire to follow Christ to proclaim His Kingdom to all peoples.

The Salesians continued to open more missionary institutes in many other places. With this, they fanned the missionary flame and prepared young people to fall in love with the missions. There they were trained and prepared to take the great leap forward.

Diligent preparation for the great mission





The Members of The Brass Band and Benefactors

Ivrea

Ivrea's Cardinal Cagliari Missionary Institute was one of these institutions. It was renowned for sending so many outstanding men to the missions all over the world.

It is difficult to know the exact number of missionaries who left this school to preach the gospel and devote their lives until their death in remote lands. If we write the names of the places where they were sent, we will understand how prolific this missionary school had been: Argentina

(Patagonia, Rio Negro), China, Japan, Siam (Thailand), India, Palestine, Ecuador, Brazil (Mato Grosso).

Ivrea is an attractive town on the banks of the Dora Baltea River in the Canavese area and sits at the entrance to the Valle d'Aosta. It is a place blessed for its natural beauty and economic vitality. Those were important factors to encourage young people who came from far away to engage in study.

The Ivrea Institute was the gift of the Venerable Lady Lidia Realis Richelmi, the mother of Ivrea's Bishop Agostino Richelmi. It was a gift to the Salesians through the Rector Major, Fr. Rua (the first successor of Don Bosco). The wonderful villa with its beautiful park initially became an agricultural school. After the First World War, the agricultural school transferred to a new location with more land, and the Missionary Institute was founded in its place.

The place was suitable: sufficiently distant from Turin and the confusion of the big city, yet close enough so that the Major Superiors could often visit the future missionaries to help with their formation by talking to them about Don Bosco and missionary life.

The period of formation lasted four years, and commitment to studies was of great importance. However, by living

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their grand ideal in a fraternal atmosphere where ‘the loving-kindness’ so much desired by Don Bosco reigned supreme, the youthful students were encouraged to continue joyfully along the way to the grand realization of their missionary dream.

Among the countless students who passed through this Ivrea missionary school, there are also several records of Archimede, the missionary aspirant. The name “Archimede Martelli” appears in the 1930-1931 school registers as being enrolled in third-year high. He had already attended two years of junior high in Mantua. His progress in studies was rapid; he finished fourth grade (1931-1932) in second place in the class and was accepted into the novitiate, the first formation course taken to become a Salesian. It was decided that Archimede would be assigned to Japan as a missionary. With that, his novitiate would also be done in Japan.

It was not an easy choice to go as a missionary to another country. Before World War II, leaving for the missions was a life-long choice. It was only after World War II that ocean liners could travel back and forth regularly by sea. This made travel by ship much more convenient for regular people. It was then established that missionaries could visit their homeland every 10 years. Nevertheless, a voyage

from Italy to the Far East still took from three weeks to one month. Of course, all of this changed later with the advent of regular airline routes.

Family

In the days when young Martelli left for the mission, all missionary aspirants were encouraged to exchange messages mainly by correspondence rather than frequent family meetings, according to the Gospel saying, “We have given up everything and followed you” (Mt 19:27) They were allowed to visit their family just before the leaving for their mission.

Holidays

While living at the Ivrea Mission School, instead of visiting home, missionary aspirants spent a month on vacation in a small village of the Vall d’Aosta, a beautiful region of the Alps. It wasn’t very far from Ivrea. One could enter the Aosta Valley from Ivrea by taking the train.

From the train station, they climbed on foot to the highest village of Champorcher. From Champorcher during the two summer months when there was grass at higher elevations,

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The Salesian's Rector Major (Fr. Rinaldi) giving courage to the mission aspirants



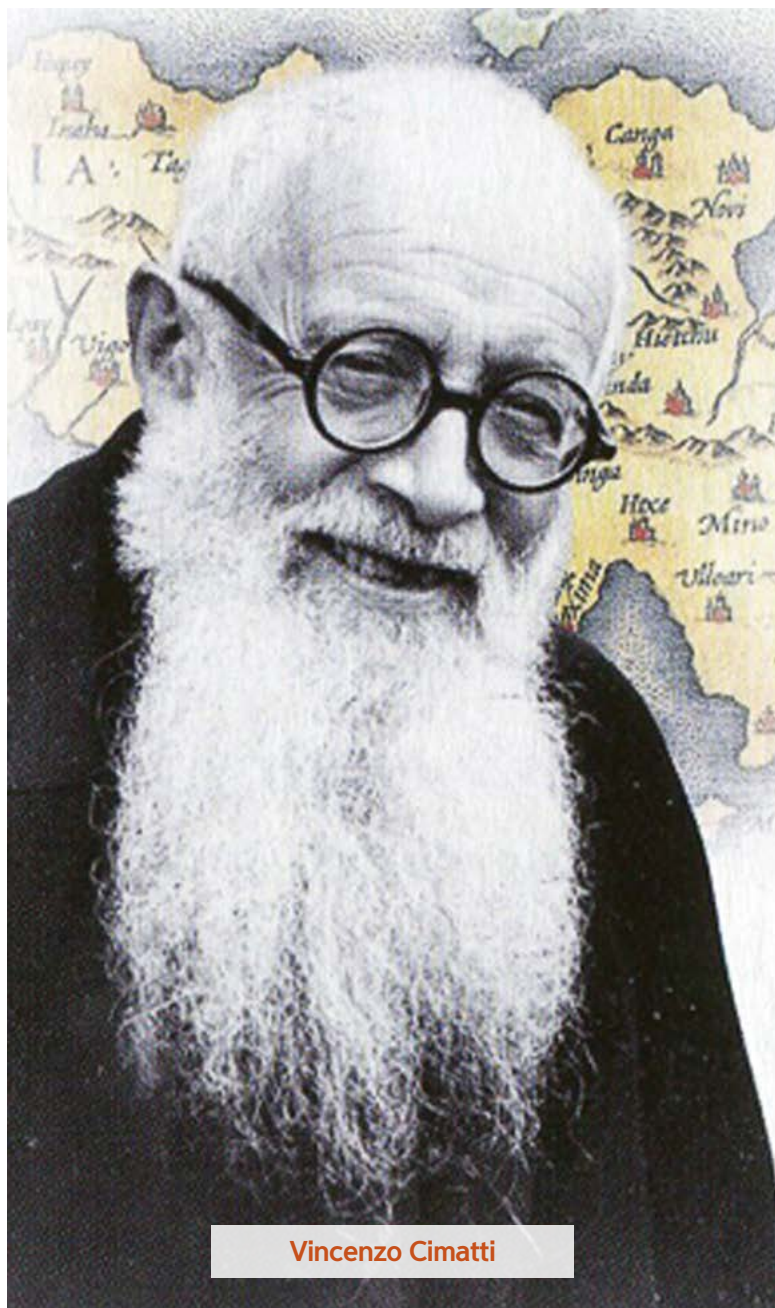
Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Dondena in Champorcher, Aosta Valley

the farmers led the cows to the high pastures. The stables and stalls at Champorcher lay vacant. For the farmers, it was considered a blessing to have the future missionaries occupy the empty barns and stables. They let them turn the place into living quarters to spend a month camping there.

First, the organizing group went up a few days before and had to wash the stables where the cows had spent the winter. It was necessary to channel the water from the stream into the stables and clean them up until one could actually see the wood-colored floor. Then they would put in military bunk-beds and the “hotel” was ready! Barns and other rooms were found according to need.

Getting out from the summer heat for a month, the aspirants could pray more easily than in Ivrea. There was time to review topics that had been less understood. There were also language clubs, especially English, and times for sports. Besides, there was time for walking in nature in small groups and excursions with the whole group to the famous Dondena and Miseren sanctuaries (2200 and 2560m high respectively). The bravest would have liked to climb the high peaks over 3500m, but the lack of suitable clothing, equipment, and qualified people ensured that these peaks were climbed only with the heart.

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Vincenzo Cimatti

Chapter 3

The Salesian Venture In The Far East

On the death of Don Bosco, his successors continued to cultivate the same missionary enthusiasm that he had created. Requests for missionaries came from all over the world, but because all of the various requests could not be satisfied, the missionaries were sent according to the number of people prepared to leave. Over the years, the Major Superiors realized that everything they did was already foreseen by Don Bosco's dreams.

Vincenzo Cimatti – Don Bosco’s Man for Japan

Don Bosco became so famous that in every place he went many people gathered to see him. Once Don Bosco went to Ferrara, a city in northern Italy: a mother among the crowd of people lifted her child saying: “Look at Don Bosco.” It would be the first thing that this young child would remember later in his long life. The name of this little boy was Vincenzo Cimatti. He kept on looking at Don Bosco throughout his life.

So, the young boy Vincenzo applied to join Salesian life. He became a famous musician, and also gained a doctorate in biology. He was Superior of the famous school at Valsalice in Turin when the Salesian Superiors asked him to lead the group of young Salesians who were leaving Italy to start Don Bosco’s mission in Japan. He left his task in Italy and happily followed Don Bosco on such a great adventure.

Two letters on the Desk

In 1923, Salesian superiors in Turin were asked by the Holy See to send Salesian missionaries to Japan. The Pope asked the Salesians to stay in the Miyazaki and Oita regions to

begin their educational activities: one and a half million inhabitants, with three hundred Catholics served by three missionaries.

The invitation from Rome says verbatim: “It is necessary that the missionaries be endowed with uncommon qualities, that they are able to direct high schools and institutes of education.”

That same year, Fr. Cimatti wrote to the Salesian Superiors from the Vasalice Salesian community: “Find me a place in the poorest, most difficult, most abandoned mission. Here it is just as comfortable as Turin for me. I don’t feel that this is made for me. Give me a good answer!”

Fr. Philip Rinaldi, Don Bosco’s third successor leading the Salesian Congregation, found two letters on his desk: the one from Rome asking for missionaries, and the other one from Fr. Cimatti asking to be a missionary. He wondered if this was a coincidence organized by the Lord. He wrote to Rome asking for sixteen months to prepare the missionaries to send.

Thus, the first group of nine Salesians led by Fr. Cimatti sailed from Genova on December 20, 1925 on the Fulda, a ship belonging to a German company.

On the morning of February 8, 1926, the fog cleared in



Second from left in the front line the young cleric Martelli. The long beard in the center Msgr. Cimatti

the port of Moji, and the Salesians could see Japanese land for the first time. Here is the beginning of the great Salesian adventure in the Far East.

Archimede Martelli would arrive in Japan six years later. He would make his novitiate in Japan and would be trained to become a priest and help keep the Congregation remain alive during and after the Second World War. Sometime later he would leave Japan to bring Don Bosco's charism to Korean soil.

Martelli – Young Salesian in Japan

Archimede arrived in Japan as a young student. He completed his early formation there and attended Salesian priestly preparation courses in Miyazaki, completing the basic course with excellent grades. He majored in theology at the Theological Seminary in Tokyo and was ordained priest in 1942. In the same year, the new priest Fr. Martelli was admitted to the prestigious Tokyo University, but he refused this good opportunity. Instead, he asked to go to Miyazaki where he could help the poor with Fr. Antonio Cavoli. He had been appointed headmaster at Miyazaki Junior High School for two years while also continuing his theological studies.

In 1944, Fr. Martelli began full-time work with Fr. Antonio Cavoli, printing and sending out the 'Distant Echoes' newsletter to Italian benefactors. The income was given to an orphanage and a nursing home run by the Caritas Sisters. This new Congregation was founded by Msgr. Cimatti and Fr. Cavoli, involving volunteer girls who used to come to help the elderly. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, everything became much more difficult, but they continued their charitable activities to help the elderly and the poor with confidence in Providence.

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Fr. Cavoli had spent the last ten years in Miyazaki, Kyushu. He lived like a saint, devoting himself to orphans, the elderly, and poor patients who had no one to depend.

He was an Italian, born in the same village as Benito Mussolini, and had a strong will second to none.

Because Fr. Martelli lived under the guidance of such a wonderful priest, it became a major influence on his formation and future life direction.



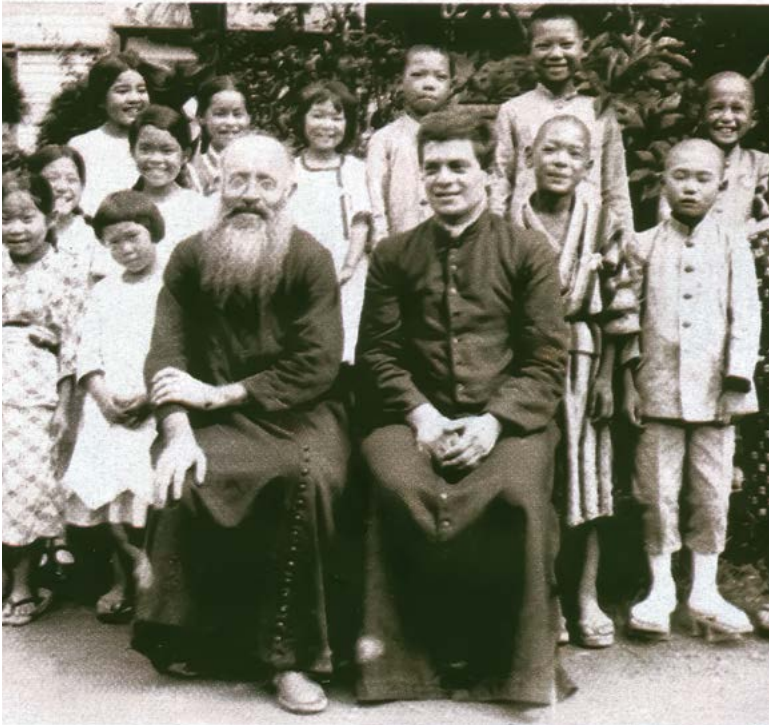
Fr. Antonio Cavoli

Following Fr. Cavoli, Fr. Martelli went to work with the Caritas Sisters in Myaguchi, helping them with building, farming, catering, and publishing newspapers. He was happy to look after the nursing home and connect the sisters with benefactors. One day, however, he was ordered by his Superiors to go to Manchuria to fulfill missionary work there.

Following his Provincial's wish, on August 6, 1944, he set out from Mogi harbor in Japan to Busan by ferry. Arriving in Korea, by railroad he crossed the Korean peninsula from Busan, through Seoul to Pyongyang and then to Dalian through Manchuria. Fr. Martelli never dreamed that ten years later, he would be spending the rest of his life in the country he was crossing at that time.

At that time, Dalian had 400,000 Chinese, 200,000 Japanese and 7000 White Russians, nobles who had avoided the revolution. It was a flourishing city full of life. Fr. Martelli practiced pastoral activities centered on Catholics among these diverse people. He also learned Chinese from a Russian countess and English from the parish priest who later became bishop. At night, he practiced his Chinese by teaching Chinese to a small group of British students. He spent three years in Dalian.

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Msgr. Cimatti and Fr. Cavoli in the orphanage

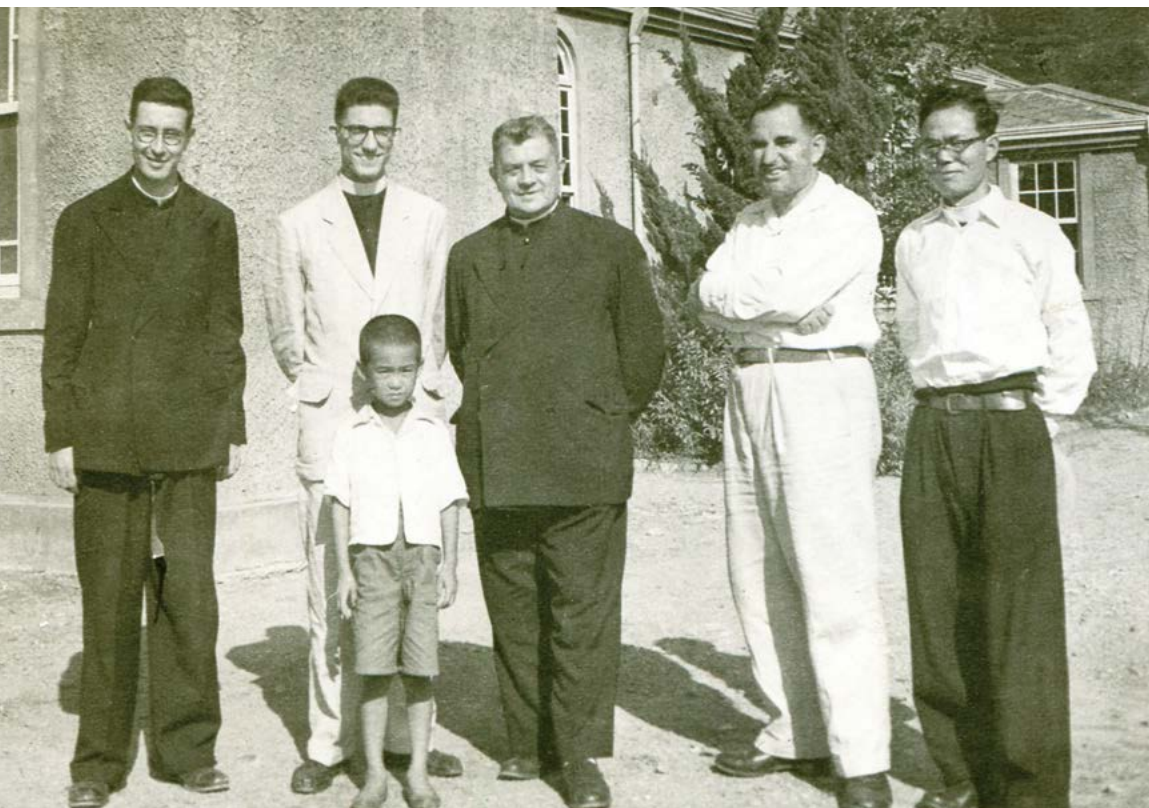
But one day the situation completely changed. The Russian army occupied Dalian and terrorized the inhabitants. Soviet soldiers were of extremely low morality. They rushed into the sister's convents, took over property and churches, and deported nuns and priests.

In this situation, even the parish priest realized he was suddenly in danger and barely escaped by using a secret corridor. Missionaries also were no longer able to stay in

Manchuria, so they all had to return to Japan.

In 1948, Fr. Martelli returned to Japan, and the following year he was appointed Rector of the Kodaira Community in Tokyo, which operated an orphanage, a kindergarten, an agricultural and technical high school, a junior high school and an elementary school.

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The first four confreres dispatched to Korea, back in Japan for the retreat, pay a visit to Fr. Cavoli

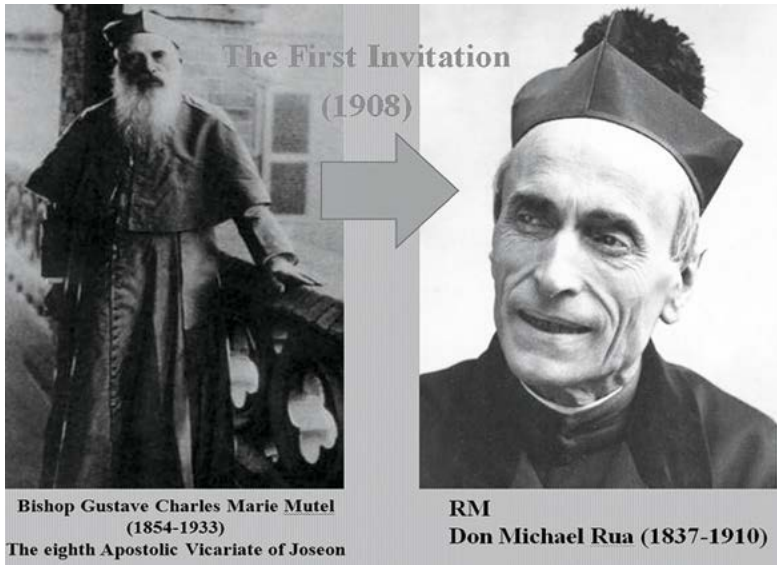
Chapter 4

The Korean Church Asks for Salesians

According to sources, the first time the Salesians were asked to come to Korea was in 1908 (Twenty years after Don Bosco died, and two years after missionaries were sent to India and Macau).

At that time the Bishop of Korea, Gustav Charles Marie Mütel, MEP (1854-1933) was trying to open a teacher training school to obtain qualified staff for Catholic schools. Bishop Mütel, for this purpose, visited a missionary education congregation in several places in Europe. During

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his visit, he met Fr. De Bagneux, the Superior of the Salesian southern French Province. He gave him a brief report on the state of the Korean Church and asked for some Salesians to help with his project.

But at that time the French Salesians were short of personnel and could not send anyone to Korea. However, Bishop Mütel did send a brief report to Fr. Rua, the Rector Major in Turin. Unfortunately, there was no response from Fr. Rua, either. Nevertheless, Bishop Mütel's hope of having the Salesians were continuously taken up by his successors.

After religious freedom was established in Korea in

1904, and even during the Japanese occupation which obstructed the establishment of schools through any number of restrictions, the Korean Catholic Church sensed the importance of education and establishing schools. The Church made every effort to invite foreign missionaries and educational Religious Congregations to establish a school for human resource development and evangelization.

In addition, the church was promoting doctrinal knowledge and faith among believers and youth in Seoul and the provinces through publishing activities, one of which was to introduce the lives of Catholic Saints.

After Bishop Mütel died in 1933, in 1935 his successor, Bishop Adrien Joseph Larribeau M.E.P. (1883-1974) ordered the printing of the life of St. John Bosco and an introduction to the Salesian society in the “Kyeong-Hyang Japji” on the occasion of Don Bosco’s beatification. The life of Don Bosco that was printed in this church magazine gave great impetus to the image of the Salesians as friends of youth.

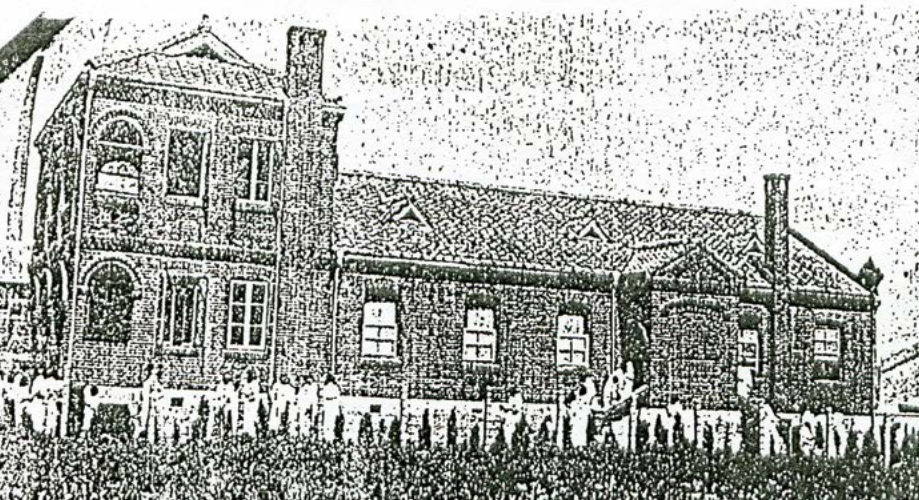
The whole life and spirituality of Don Bosco was introduced by the “Kyeong-Hyang Japji” in 48 episodes over two years from 1935 to 1936. This prepared the ground for the Salesian Society in its future role in Korea. This is also a record that testifies to the truth of Msgr. Cimatti’s words:

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“Don Bosco has gone to Korea before the Salesians.”

In May 1936, Bishop Larribeau built a new parish church in Dorimdong, which was part of a newly developing industrial section of Yeong Deung Po in Seoul. On the feast of Don Bosco, January 31, 1937, Bishop Larribeau gave the church the title of St. John Bosco. He then invited the Salesians to come and take up the pastoral work connected with this zone. But again, the Salesians were unable to respond.

At the end of the Japanese colonial period, as the policy of religious repression became more blatant, Bishop Larribeau (1883-1974) resigned and Bishop Paul Ki-Nam Ro (1902-



January 31, 1937 Inauguration of the Don Bosco Parish Church in Seoul

Chapter 4. The Korean Church Asks for Salesians

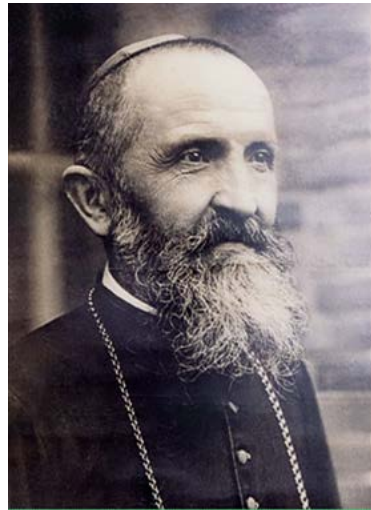
1984), the first Korean bishop, became his successor in 1942. He also asked for the Salesians to come but his wishes were unable to receive a positive response at that time due to World War II.

When the Second World War ended, Korea became an independent nation. But soon the Korean War began in 1950.

Even during the war, again from 1951, Bishop Ro repeatedly asked for Salesians through the Apostolic Delegate residing in Japan, Bishop Massimiliano Furstenberg. With this invitation from Korea during the war, the Salesians slowly began to prepare their hearts for a future Korean adventure.



Bishop Paul Ki-Nam Ro



**Bishop Adrien Larribeau
M.E.P., D.D.**

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Msgr. Cimatti – Big Hopes for Korea

After the Salesians took their first baby steps in Japan in 1926, they had quite a few difficulties in enculturating themselves into Japanese society. At the beginning of the apostolic work in Japan, the Salesians opened various educational and social works. However, they faced many hardships in cultural adaptation and also very little interest by the Japanese in any foreign religion. Those difficulties gave Msgr. Cimatti a bright idea for filling the cultural gap: he was a musician, and Fr. Margiaria, who was with him from the beginning in Japan, had a wonderful voice, so they

現在大連、撫順、奉天、新京、哈爾濱等地可以開催會時空前絕後の大歡迎

◎目的 南鮮水害救濟義捐金募集

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主催 新義州天主教會

最高權威伊太利音樂博士來新

兩博士音樂巡禮的一夕

元伊太利王立大學音樂教授音樂博士
春門三聖羅突特生名演劇！歌手

マツタチ | 神父



The four cities where Msgr. Cimatti gave concert

The advertising leaflet for the concert in Sinuiju

started to give concerts. It was a huge success all over Japan. Korea and Manchuria were all part of the Japanese nation at that time. They were therefore invited by the Catholic church in Manchuria. They went there and gave concerts in the principal cities. When returning to Japan, they had a chance to visit Korea.

Passing through Korea they visited Korean cities: Sinuiju, Pyongyang, Seoul and Daegu. Everywhere they received a huge welcome and were able to meet many Korean Catholics. Thus, Msgr. Cimatti became the first Salesian who visited Korea unofficially according to the documents discovered so far.

From Msgr. Cimatti's Diary

25-26 September 1934: in Sinuiju on the way to Korea. On our return, we accepted going through Korea acceding to the desire of the Bishops there. In this way, we were able to make Salesian propaganda and learn many beautiful things that can serve for a later apostolate. In the Maryknoll house, we have seen a magnificent work for youth: day and evening schools for catechetical instruction (things inconceivable in Japan). There was an assembly of Koreans

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and Japanese who, though few in number, were happy to say they were Catholic. It was precisely on the day of the feast of the Korean martyrs. Men and students were enthusiastic to enroll in the programs.

27 September 1934: we were in Pyongyang with Bishop Morris, of Maryknoll, who works with great enthusiasm and with good results. Even in Korea, we found the well-known cultural difficulties we experienced in Japan. I advised one missionary, who complained that he had no success, to look after the young and do charitable activities.

28 September 1934: in Seoul, welcomed by Bishop Larribeau, a friend of the Salesians of Don Bosco whose life he had translated into episodes in the diocesan bulletin, I visited the magnificent buildings (seminary, commercial school, charity work center, etc.) he set up. The concert was for the charitable works of the diocese, organized by young people who play a fine role in the Catholic movement. Full and very successful.

29 September 1934: in Daegu, incessant rain. The police banned the sale of tickets at the last minute, attended only by one hundred people. However, a good distribution of the Catholic press was made, and therefore good work was not lacking.

From Reports Sent to Turin from Msgr. Cimatti

Following this concert journey, Msgr. Cimatti wrote a long report to the Superiors in Italy explaining to them the possibilities of opening a Salesian School in the cities of North East China, called Manchuria at that time, and the even bigger possibility of beginning Don Bosco's work in Korea. Following this visitation, Msgr. Cimatti continued to receive news from Korea, which he translated and published in the Italian 'Salesian Bulletin'.

One especially interesting piece of news was the blessing of the Parish Church at Dorim-dong dedicated to Don Bosco, in Yeongdeungpo, which at the time was a famous industrial district south of the Han River in Seoul. Another piece of good news was the blessing of the first statue of Don Bosco in the same Parish Church of Dorim-dong on June 9, 1938.

In Msgr. Cimatti's contribution to the 'Salesian Bulletin' in 1939 he introduced Catholicism in Korea thus: "I (Msgr. Cimatti) have already been to Korea when I performed some concerts there. As we passed through, we came to know that the Korean faithful already knew about Don Bosco because they had read articles about Don Bosco in

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the Kyeong-Hyang Japji.

So, Koreans know Don Bosco, and they use his name as a Christian name. Bishop Larribeau of the Paris Foreign Missions Society said this when inviting us to Seoul.

Don Bosco arrived before us. ... We cannot go because our confreres in Japan are few but if the Superiors allow us, we will go to Korea. Bishop Larribeau sent a picture of Yeongdeungpo Church in a poor area where we would like to work. ...”

Msgr. Cimatti finished his long report with the following exclamation: “But when will the Salesians be established in Korea?”

It took 16 years, two wars of unbelievable cruelty, and the complete alteration of the map of the Far East before Msgr. Cimatti’s wishes could be accomplished.

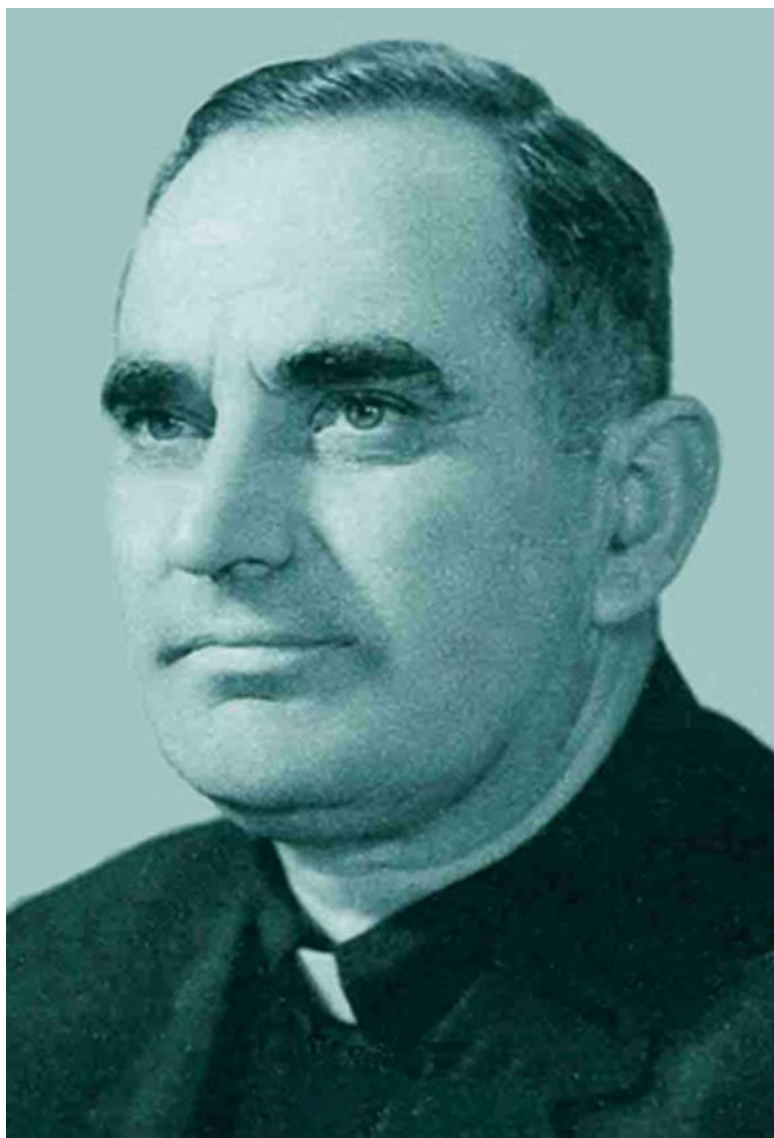
When Msgr. Cimatti’s wish came true, he was no longer superior, and indeed was completely exhausted by the difficult work and the many hardships he had faced, especially during the Second World War.

Chapter 4. The Korean Church Asks for Salesians



The time of foundation of the Caritas Sisters

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Chapter 5

Finally, the first Salesian arrives in Korea

In 1908, the Korean Church first knocked on the door of the Salesians through the invitation of the Bishop of Seoul, Bishop Mütel, and then Bishop Larribeau in 1937.

After this, in 1944, Bishop Paul Ki-Nam Ro continued to invite them, but at that time, due to the circumstances of the war with Japan and the lack of Salesians, it was not possible to send missionaries to Korea. However, even during the Korean War (1950-1953), the Seoul Bishop and the Gwangju Vicar Apostolic continued to ask the Salesians to come to Korea.

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Bishop Harold W. Henry

In 1953, the Diocesan bishop of Gwangju, Harold W. Henry S.S.C. (1909-1976. Even though at that time he was Vicar Apostolic we will continue to call him ‘Bishop’; he led the diocese till it became an Archdiocese) in the southwest of South Korea, made a concrete proposal to the Salesians in Japan. As an American, he was well aware of the spirituality and educational activities of the Salesians since his seminary days, and he personally respected Msgr.

Msgr. Cimatti. When he became Vicar Apostolic in Gwangju, he did not delay and sent a letter to the Salesian Superiors in Turin and to Propaganda Fide at the Vatican, as well as to the Salesian Superiors in Japan, inviting the Salesians to his Diocese in Gwangju.

At the time, Bishop Henry had received an offer of US \$100,000 from a foundation established to set up a school in memory of an American chaplain, Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun

(1916-1951) who was killed during the Korean War. He promised to give this offer to the Salesians.

He asked the Salesian Superior in Japan to send confreres and build a school. In 1953, with the danger of war in Korea still not over, Bishop Henry also urged the Superiors in Turin to send Salesians to his Diocese. Therefore, the provincial of Japan, Fr. Clodoveo Tassinari, visited the diocese of Gwangju to explore the situation.

After visiting Korea, he returned to Japan, saying: “I visited Korea and have observed the keen desire of the Korean church so favorable toward the Salesian Society, the optimistic attitude of Bishop Harold, the benevolent opening to the spirit of Don Bosco so widespread in the Korean church. So I believe we should go there. But I cannot make a decision right away. After a period of discernment, we will decide.

In time, the Salesians in Japan decided to send confreres to Gwangju. Many Salesians, including Msgr. Cimatti himself, wanted to come to Korea. Finally, on August 12, 1954, Fr. Archimede Martelli (1916-1984) was sent as the first Salesian missionary to enter Korea on a permanent basis. It was nearly 46 years after Bishop Mütel had first invited the Salesians to Korea. (1908)

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At the time, Korea had just finished a three-year war. (1950-1953) Korea was devastated, poor, and wretched. There were a lot of orphans and it was a period in which the financial, political and social aspects of Korean society were in great hardship and confusion. Upon arriving in Korea, Fr. Martelli saw the real situation and wrote the following letter:

“Everywhere you can see the destruction of war and so many poor people. There is no order in society. There are many beggars and especially many young people on the street. They don’t even have the basic necessities of life. It is like it was in Japan after World War II...

I have discovered one very surprising thing. There is a large church named after St. John Bosco. It can accommodate over 1000 people. I have also met many faithful whose baptismal name is Bosco. There is even an orphanage named ‘John Bosco House’ and in the parish, there is a group of faithful called ‘The Don Bosco Society.’”

Fr. Martelli, just like Msgr. Cimatti was able to sense that Don Bosco preceded the Salesians in Korea. At the time,

Chapter 5. Finally, the first Salesian arrives in Korea

however, under those circumstances, one can imagine how difficult it was to build a school.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Gwangju, Harold W. Henry S.S.C., and the Salesian Provincial of Japan, Fr. Tassinari, were the two key persons who succeeded in making the mutual agreement to erect the school in Gwangju after

FATHER EMIL KAPAUN, WINNER OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

“If we fail to forgive, we’re rejecting our own faith.”

FATHER EMIL KAPAUN

Read the new book by
Roy Wenzl and Travis Heying
THE MIRACLE OF FATHER
KAPAUN
PRIEST, SOLDIER AND KOREAN WAR HERO

ignatius press facebook.com/MiracleFatherKapaun

many letters and meetings during a long negotiation!

Here we feel the need to introduce Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun (1916-1951) as a great figure who helped the Salesians come to Gwangju at the invitation of Bishop Harold to establish a school and start the education of young people in Korea.

Gratitude to Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun

Fr. Kapaun was born on April 20, 1916. After attending the parish school and high school, on September 11, 1936 he entered Kenric Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

Following his theological studies, he was ordained a priest on June 9, 1940, at St. John's Cathedral in Wichita. After his priestly ordination, he was appointed as the assistant priest of his hometown. From January 1943 until June 12, 1944, he began to serve as assistant chaplain at the Herrington Army Airfield, Kansas and enjoyed his work in the army.

On September 16, 1943, he was appointed pastor of St. John's Cathedral, after Fr. Screener retired due to age. Fr. Kapaun always interested people in Church affairs. He paid special attention to the young, organizing a youth group. Even during busy periods, he enjoyed playing baseball with the kids. He helped everyone without distinction, from

any denomination, and was always willing to help. With this kindness, he became a hero. However, he decided to minister to young souls on the battlefield. In 1944 he graduated from the Chaplaincy School. In 1945 he was sent overseas and worked in northern India. In 1948, he received a master's degree in education from the Catholic University of America.

Fr. Kapaun became a chaplain once more and was assigned to a unit dispatched to Japan, and, following this unit, fought in the Korean War which began on July 11, 1950. During the war he received the Venus Medal from the US government.

On November 2, 1950, unfortunately, he was taken prisoner by the Chinese Army.

For nearly six months, while he was suffering all kinds of torture and abuse from the Chinese Army, he did his best to continue his pastoral work for the soldiers.

He lived faithfully as a servant of the Lord and was happy to be given the nickname "Christ with the crown of thorns." His fascinating life came to an end on May 23, 1951, at Pyoktong Chinese prison camp. In 1953, at a memorial mass in St. Mary's Cathedral in Wichita, Kansas, USA, his lifetime beautiful achievements became widely known to all.

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His sublime life did not end with death but was passed on throughout the United States through the returnees who received his love during their most difficult moments in the prison camp.

Many Americans who heard about his life came to know his amazing love and sacrifice. They took an active part in promoting projects to honor him, celebrate his great life, and let posterity know about his life.

The survivors knew of Fr. Kapaun's plan to remain in Korea and rebuild schools there, so after the war, through a foundation established in his name, they began to finance projects to fulfill his wishes.

Meanwhile, Bishop Harold of Gwangju Diocese who wanted to invite Salesians to his Diocese to entrust them with education, went to the United States for fund raising. And God's providence led him to find the Kapaun Foundation.

Consistent with Fr. Kapaun's wish, the Kapaun Foundation welcomed Bishop Harold Henry's willingness to establish a school, and immediately offered him a large sum of USD 100,000. This large contribution made it possible to purchase land and to start building the school immediately.

When the school building was completed and the historic opening ceremony was held on March 19, 1956: Bishop

Harold said : ... “Really, we must thank God that we can build a great school at this difficult time. This school is to be called the Fr. Kapaun Commemorative Technical School.”

God’s providence, together with the good intentions and constant aspirations of men, yields beautiful fruit in this world. Fr. Archimede Martelli was able to come to Korea as the first Salesian thanks to this mysterious providence of God.

Many men and women who were shepherding the Korean church invited the Salesians to give young Korean people the chance to experience Don Bosco’s spirituality and activity. Among them, we can mention Bishop Mütel, Bishop Larribeau, Bishop Ki-Nam Ro, and Bishop Harold. We can think of the Salesians, Msgr. Cimatti and Fr. Tassinari. They eagerly tried to meet the needs of young Koreans they saw in their visits. And special mention is given to Fr. Kapaun, a great military priest, who made the birthplace of Salesian education for young Koreans possible, even after he died, giving his life through love and sacrifice on the battlefield. We cannot help but be grateful for the hard work of all of these people who have all played a part in helping the Salesian Society to start youth education in Korea.

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Chapter 6

Fr. Martelli Begins Salesian Activity in Gwangju

The first member of the Salesian Congregation to live permanently in Korea, Fr. Archimede Martelli, arrived on August 12, 1954. The Provincial of Japan, Fr. Tassinari, traveled with him. The lengthy negotiations between Bishop Harold and Fr. Tassinari concluded with the arrival of Fr. Martelli in Gwangju.

After arriving in Korea, they lived at the headquarters of the Columban Missionary Society in Gwangju and started preparation work for building the school.

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The school site was already purchased by Bishop Harold with a donation from the United States to build a technical school before Fr. Tassinari and Fr. Martelli arrived in Gwangju. The blueprint for the technical school was a replica of Osaka Salesian High School in Japan built in reinforced concrete (It was earthquake-proof).

As soon as Fr. Martelli settled in at the Columban parish of Bukdong, he immediately began studying Korean, and he wanted to have a Korean name so that he could communicate and act more easily among Koreans in the future. For his Korean name he chose 'Ma' after the first letter of his own family's name, Martelli, and started to introduce himself to the people as 'Fr. Ma.' (From now on, in this booklet, 'Fr. Martelli' will be called 'Ma Shinbu,' shinbu being "Father" in Korean.)

While preparing for the construction of a technical school, Fr. Tassinari and Fr. Ma learned in-depth about the poor availability of construction materials in Korea. We can read the letter of Fr. Tassinari sent to the Salesian Confreres in Japan from Korea.

“In the middle of August, I went to Gwangju with Fr. Martelli who was the former director

of the Tokyo - Kodaira orphanage. He will be the person in charge of preparing the future school in Gwangju. There is already a large plot of land, and the architectural plans are also ready. Many other things, however, need to be prepared for the future.

First, we need to look for a company that can work with steel-reinforced concrete. Currently, there are many things we cannot buy on the Korean market: steel rods, cement, doors, and windows have not been found. And Bishop Harold is now in the United States. He asked us to start building quickly, the Gwangju government is waiting for us to begin construction.” ...

“Local citizens are also expecting a school to be built. (There are two universities in Gwangju.) Gwangju is the second most educated city in Korea, but due to the lack of schools, many young people in Jeolla Nam-do province are unable to receive the education they desire.

We can no longer wait to be in touch with the building company run by some Catholics. The

company has never built a steel-reinforced concrete building, but they say they have the skills to do it”...

“Fr. Martelli has begun looking for the necessary materials. Iron doors and windows will be imported from Japan. For this, Fr. Martelli has to get special permission from the Korean government. There are worries and anxieties about this, but we have started work, believing in Don Bosco.”...

In those lines we can see the difficulties Fr. Tassinari and Fr. Ma faced in this new setting; with courage, they had to solve each problem one by one.

To better understand the situation in Gwangju at the time, it is also good to read a letter that Fr. Ma sent to the confreres in Japan on 1 Sept. when he remained alone after Fr. Tassinari returned to Japan.

A Difficult Language

“... It has been 20 days since I arrived here in Gwangju. I have been studying Korean hard

since the evening of Fr. Tassinari's departure. It is more difficult than I thought. I study two hours a day with a teacher and study the rest by myself. I have already studied Korean textbooks used in the first grade of primary school. I have begun the second grade textbook from today. Korean language is similar to Japanese, even in terms of expression, grammar and detail. That is why it is very advantageous for those of us who learned Japanese. But easy words are completely different from Japanese, and the pronunciation is more difficult than Chinese. If Fr. Liviabella was here, he would do better than me." (Fr. Liviabella was a Salesian who went from Japan to Dalian with him. They worked and studied Chinese together.)

"The Missionary priests who live here do not speak Korean well. This is because they mainly learn only through conversation. By the way, these Fathers earn a lot of respect, even with such poor Korean. Even though we speak the language well in Japan, we do not get respect. Here, with just a few words we can earn much respect.

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During the past two weeks, I thought I might at least learn the language roughly. But now, I think it needs a good memory to learn this language well. Over 30 years, one's memory becomes much weaker. This is what I experienced in Dalian as well. A few days ago, I was afraid and ready to give up studying a new language because I doubted the possibility of this technical school due to so many difficulties. But I just gave myself courage and decided to go forward! ...”

“... I am getting used to customs in this place little by little. My room is convenient. I study Korean several hours a day and also learn English. I can learn English much faster than Korean. Here there is no radio, no newspapers, no car and especially no Salesian confreres to speak with. This place is quiet, and you do not have to worry about the world. A few days ago, I went with a Columban Father to visit a US Military Camp. I saw the newspaper that day and found out that the Italian Prime Minister, De Gasperi, was dead, and I also found out about

a man named Varga who committed suicide. ...”

“... Compared to Japan, Korea’s economic situation is way behind. But if you work as a missionary in Korea, you will immediately be impressed. This is because of Korea’s zealous believers. ...

We are really spreading the Good News among the poor as the Gospel asks us to do. We Salesians especially have a great apostolate ahead of us among the young people of Korea. Salesians in Korea can do the great things God has entrusted to them. In accordance with what Msgr. Cimatti said that Don Bosco entered Korea before the Salesians, we can follow Don Bosco in Korea to accomplish an admirable apostolic achievement. ...”

“..The situation here is a good opportunity for my spiritual life. I have plenty of time to meditate, I have time to think about my soul, and above all, I am helping my faith by seeing the example of fervent Koreans.”

The Groundbreaking Ceremony

In less than a month after arriving in Korea from Japan, Fr. Ma courageously held a ceremony of turning the first sod for the school on September 9, 1954, even in the face of language barriers and poor material supplies without any Salesian confreres. The size of the school building was 75m long and 10m wide. Iron doors and window frames were imported from Japan. The school was built in red brick with the frame in reinforced concrete, the red bricks were made directly on the construction site.

The Golden Anniversary

In 1955 when Fr. Ma was busy in Korea due to the beginning of the construction, he was called back to Japan for a joyful event. After the Second World War, the Salesian superiors began to visit the missions more often to give courage to the missionaries and keep them updated about the life of the congregation still growing all over the world.

The Rector Major, Fr. Ziggiotti's visit to Japan was well planned. He was informed of Msgr. Cimatti's Golden Jubilee of priesthood and he wanted to be present for the

Chapter 6. Fr. Martelli Begins Salesian Activity in Gwangju

Mass and celebration.

On March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, the Rector Major went to the Chofu Theological Studentate, on the outskirts of Tokyo to meet Msgr. Cimatti and bring joy to the great ceremony.

All the directors, many other Salesians and friends took part in the Golden Mass celebration. Among them was also Fr. Ma. He was so happy to be able to meet the successor of Don Bosco and the teacher who taught him how to live as a missionary. How nice to meet up with his Salesian family after so many days in Korea away from the community!

Fr. Martelli – The Rector Major, Fr. Zigiotti – Msgr. Camatti



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Salesians with Fr. Albino Fedrigotti (middle of photo) who visited Korea as the vicar of the Rector Major

Chapter 7

Finally, Salesian School Is Born

Even though the school blueprint and the school site were prepared, when Fr. Ma started the huge construction, he was frightened by the great responsibility which he felt was beyond his capacity. To lay the foundation for the building in the Jung Heung Dong rice fields and transform a 20,000 pyeong*[J7] rice field into a school site without any heavy equipment, only with the efforts of people, was not simple work. The rumors that such a major construction was taking place in the outskirts of Gwangju City circulated through

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the city. The citizens of Gwangju gathered to gawk at this new architectural wonder that they had never seen before.
*(1 pyeong equals 3.24 m². 20,000 pyeong is 64,800 m²)

When Fr. Ma returned from Japan, the construction went well without a hitch. He was also aware of the interest

of the media in the school. The “Catholic Newspaper[J8]” on April 30, 1955, introduced the history of the Salesian’s arrival in Korea and the principles of Don Bosco’s Preventive Education System as the typical way Salesians educate youth. They also explained the purpose of establishing a technical school in Gwangju and the scale of the school.

The same newspaper on November 2, 1955, reported on the arrival of new Salesians.

“In June 1955 the Japanese Salesian Provincial Fr. Tassinari sent Br. John Baptist Cha-Su You, to Gwangju. On November 21, 1955 he also sent Fr. Antonio Young Kyun Kwon. He then sent another priest from Argentina, Fr. José M. Suárez, to help Fr. Ma in his difficult duties.”

The article goes on to talk about the material and equipment for the new building sent by the Salesians from Japan.

The school building was taking shape without interruption day by day, thanks to Fr. Ma’s ability and courage to solve problems and to his good relationship with the church leaders, construction workers, and the

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again

citizens of Gwangju. The new members who came from Japan were also a big help. It was also very providential that the building material arrived in time.

Fr. Tassinari visited Gwangju again in mid-July 1955. He saw the school construction site and was amazed that Fr. Ma was able to achieve so much in such a short time. He was certain that God's providence was behind Fr. Ma and his activities.

A letter sent by Fr. Tassinari to the Salesians in Japan at that time says:

Fr. Martelli is accomplishing difficult things step by step. He had been given permission from the government to receive cement and steel rods for the reinforced concrete and to bring in doors made of iron from Japan. So far, the materials arrived in time. In addition, he has also received permission from the government to import other materials not available in Korea. In obtaining these permissions, Fr. Martelli told me about this episode that had happened to him.

When I went back to Japan leaving Fr. Martelli alone last year, Fr. Martelli immediately had to

prepare the documents for a tax exemption for 40 tons of material coming from Japan. Some friends of Fr. Martelli in Gwangju told him that it would take a month or two to do all this. They advised him to meet directly with the Minister of Education.

He went up to Seoul and immediately went to see the Minister of Education. During his conversation with Fr. Martelli, the Minister's Chief of Staff said: 'My baptismal name is Bosco.' Fr. Martelli answered, 'I am a son of Don Bosco.' By introducing himself as a son of Don Bosco, Fr. Martelli was able to get all the permission needed on the spot. Even in this difficult situation, Fr. Martelli and the new confreres always experienced God's Providence backing them.

Around this time, Fr. Tassinari was called by Bishop Harold who told him: "I can see the way you are working, so I give you full jurisdiction over the school." The Salesians had the full confidence of the Bishop! Fr. Martelli's outstanding ability to overcome adversity made a strong

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impression on the shepherds of the Korean church at the time.

The school was supposed to be completed by the end of November 1955, and the completion ceremony was scheduled to be held on December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception. But the schedule had to be changed – the construction company had gone on strike due to construction costs. However, all problems were resolved and the large building was completed on January 19, 1956. On March 19, 1956, just one year and six months after building began, the opening of the Salesian Middle School took place on the Feast of St. Joseph.

We read the following story in the Salesian community chronicle written during those days.

On 19 March, the Feast of St. Joseph, we had the School Opening Ceremony. On the roof of the school, we hoisted the Vatican Flag, the Korean Flag, and the American flag. Inside, the school building had been decorated with small paper flags of all the nations of the world. We walked through the school. The entrance to the school and the fourth floor were fully covered



Bishop Thomas Quinlan

in photos of the brief history of the school interspersed with photos of Fr. Kapaun.

At 9:30, the cathedral choir came. The Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Thomas Quinlan, arrived at ten o'clock. Many local priests arrived together with Bishop Harold. The Mass was celebrated by the Salesian Provincial, while Fr. Park, the pastor of the Nam-Dong Church, preached the homily. After the greeting and

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congratulations, we served a big lunch to make everybody happy. ...

From 2:30, there was the reception for the VIPs: many respected guests arrived, among them the American General B. Thompson. There was also a Korean General, the Chaplain of the American Forces in Korea, and many other military officers.

The military band played the national anthem and the American anthem. Together



with the Mayor, we cut the red ribbon. Bishop Quinlan and the Provincial Governor were also there. Bishop Quinlan, dressed liturgically, blessed the school, and then everyone moved to the fourth floor and the multi-purpose hall where the official ceremony took place. After the Korean national anthem, Bishop Thomas Quinlan addressed those present. He recalled Fr. Kapaun's generous heart and all the benefactors who had contributed to realizing his dreams. He reminded listeners that the aim of the school was not only to offer knowledge but also to develop spiritual values. Bishop Harold reminded everyone of the huge work accomplished by Fr. Martelli. In the end, the Provincial Governor had words of thanks for the missionaries and the US Army. He said he would help this school so long as he held his position as Governor. Following a few other speeches, there was also the presentation of some gifts. The speeches were translated into English. At the end, there was a simple tea party in the classrooms.

In 1945, the population of Gwangju was 83,000 and by 1956 it had grown rapidly to 214,000. Compared to the rapidly growing population of Gwangju city, educational facilities were poor. Therefore, the new modern building of the Salesian middle school was a big gift to the people of such a fast-growing city. Gwangju citizens fervently welcomed the Salesian School and were proud of it.

Request for School Approval and The First Entrance Ceremony

When the school building was almost complete in 1955, to run the Salesian Technical Junior High School at the will of the Kapaun Foundation, and as agreed by the Salesian Superiors and Bishop Harold, Fr. Ma asked for Salesian brothers who would be in charge of technical education for future youth. On January 16, 1956, Fr. Ma also formally submitted to the Minister of Education the application for the establishment of Salesian Technical Middle School.

When the school building was finally completed on January 19th, Fr. Ma, together with teachers who had already been hired as school staff, went to the elementary schools in Gwangju city to promote the new Salesian

school. Many elementary school students and teachers showed great interest in the new school. In January and February 1956, many students visited the school and asked for information about it. They came not only from Gwangju city but also from rural schools in the Jeollanam-do region. Fr. Ma and the teachers guided them with a friendly heart, and many of these excellent students applied to the new Salesian School.

On March 16, students who applied for the school took the entrance exam with a high competition rate of 3:1, on April 9, about three hundred successful candidates became the first students to enter the Salesian School in Korea.

However, on April 13, unexpected news came from the Ministry of Education. A notification was sent that the Salesian organization was simply recognized as the “Salesian Education Foundation”, not a word about the request for the approval of a junior technical school submitted by Fr. Ma.

The reason was that there was no curriculum for secondary technical schools in Korea. It was an unexpected situation. Fr. Ma then visited Bishop Harold to discuss the situation. The Salesian community also talked about how to operate the school in light of the new situation.

First, even if the school was not accredited, classes

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for students who already entered the school had to be conducted normally. Therefore, in the internal operation of the school, Fr. Ma, the principal, was in charge of English, and other general subjects were undertaken by teachers who had been hired according to their major. Each one taught their own subject.

In addition, Fr. Young-Kyun Kwon, who was sent from Japan to help Fr. Ma, taught ethics, and Fr. Joseph Suarez and Cl. Robert Falk who had just arrived from the United States, taught English.

On the other hand, Fr. Ma discussed the matter of school approval with Bishop Harold, and taking into account the realistic situation in Korea, they decided to open a technical high school instead of a technical middle school three years later. They decided to seek approval for the current Salesian school as a regular middle school in response to the needs of the area. Thus, on December 30, 1956, 10 months after the opening of the school, Fr. Ma officially applied for approval of Salesian Middle School to the Ministry of Education.

Finally, on February 15, 1957, before the start of new semester classes for the new school year, the Ministry of Education sent the Salesian Middle School approval document to Fr. Ma. [The school year starts March 2 in Korea].

Chapter 7. Finally, Salesian School Is Born

During construction problems and the school-approval issue from 1955 to 1957, Fr. Ma did not always find the support he needed. But he did not lose his patience and courage. Every day he did what he could. He trusted God's providence. And he always came up with solutions to all difficult problems at the proper time. When Fr. Ma finished all of the heavy tasks, he seemed like a person who had no fear and no stress at all.





Chapter 8

Gwangju Community Begins

Thanks to Fr Ma's hard work, the Salesian school was up and running with many educational activities.

At the same time, the school's Salesian Community was taking shape. It would become the starting point of the pastoral care of Salesians for Korean youth.

As mentioned already in Chapter 4, Msgr. Cimatti had always been keen to start Don Bosco's work in Korea. During the time he was Superior in Japan, as we know, he received many appeals for the Salesians to come to Korea.

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He took these invitations seriously and began preparing a team of Koreans who were already living in Japan. He was waiting for the time that Providence would indicate, he planned to start the Salesian work in Korea with a team of all Korean Salesians resident in Japan and formed there. The team was made up of Fr. Yong-Kyun Kwon, Br. Cha-Su You, and Br. Yang-Do Kim.

But Fr. Tassinari, his successor, did not begin with the team already prepared. Certainly, he had his reasons. The most important one probably was that after several contacts with Gwangju, Fr. Tassinari understood that the missionary and social environment were no longer the same as Msgr. Cimatti had seen before the two wars. The negotiations had to be done with an American Bishop, and most of the Pastors in Gwangju were still Irish or American.

In the very poor situation after the war in Korea, the possibility of receiving aid was connected with the American Army chaplaincy. Considering this, Fr. Tassinari needed a man with a broad international outlook. Such a man was Fr. Archimede Martelli.

When Fr. Ma was sent to Korea in 1954, Fr. Yong-Kyun Kwon was still under treatment for kidney problems, Br. Cha-Su You, and Br. Yang-Do Kim had just made



their perpetual profession and needed more experience in community life in Japan before being sent for such a difficult assignment.

The next year, on August 22, 1955, Fr. Joseph Suarez was sent to Korea, and Fr. Young-Kyun Kwon and Br. Cha-Su You also arrived on September 8.

In 1956, Fr. Ma became the director of the first Salesian community in Korea. It consisted of four confreres. He helped the young confreres to practice Salesian assistance among the young students. He himself taught many periods of English and was also busy explaining St. John Bosco's Preventive System of Education to the teachers. He

ardently began infusing into them the necessary ideals and spirituality to create an educational community.

Fr. Martelli: A Man for Difficult Situations

From the time he arrived in Korea, Fr. Ma faced a lot of hardship. It was like walking through a path of thorns. He had to build the school, start the classes, and then foster the first community of Salesians. He was able to overcome all difficult moments with his innate character and trust in God. Fr. Ma's life in Korea turned out to be just as Fr Tassinari predicted when he sent him to Japan.

Once Fr. Tassinari said the following in front of the Salesians in Japan during an evening talk:

I sent Fr. Martelli to Korea because I knew of his sincere belief in St. John Bosco and the support of the fervent Korean church. Believers would always stand by him. Although there are many economic, social, and cultural difficulties, I was confident in the future of the Salesians in Korea. Compared with Japan, the social atmosphere

and economic conditions in Korea are way behind Japan. However, when a missionary goes to Korea, he immediately receives a good impression. It is because of Korea's zealous believers.

In 1954, when Fr. Ma arrived in Korea, 3,438 adults were baptized that year in Gwangju. In the two parishes of Mokpo (a port city in the same diocese), 950 people were baptized. The year before in all Korea there were 15,167 people baptized. At the time there were 200,000 Catholics in Korea. Fr. Ma had never been able to experience such rapid growth in any other place he had ever been as in the Korean Catholic Church.

From the official beginning of the community in Gwangju, the confreres began to write the community diary with important events from their daily lives (This is a practice in all Salesian houses.).

This community diary contained regular records up to March 25, 1958. At that time, Fr. Joseph Suarez left for Japan to attend a Salesian Provincial meeting. While there he was appointed pastor of Dorimdong parish in Seoul.

The community diary alludes to difficulties faced by

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the early missionaries sent to Korea and how they overcame them, It speaks about church personnel, Korean government officials, about getting to know US troops and foreigners living in Korea and asking them for help. There are detailed

explanations of various events, relationships with teachers and students, the development of the Oratory, of devotional groups, of the Salesian Cooperators, and vocation activities. It also speaks of the roles and personalities of the confreres. A great variety of stories were truthfully recorded.

For example: on March 27, 1956, the Gwangju community members decided to build a house for the confreres: “On the ground floor, we decided to have the kitchen and dining room for the confreres and dining hall for the boarders, and on the upper floor the confreres’ bedrooms. We gave the work to the builder Kim Patrizio.” Finally, there was a place where the confreres could meet. The community was growing and this was a very important step.

The People of Gwangju are Interested in and Supportive of Salesian Work

The Salesian work in Korea drew the attention of other political and administrative members of Gwangju as well as other Religious Congregations, Dioceses and leaders in the Catholic Church. They visited the school and Salesian community house and encouraged and supported them. The Gwangju Diocese and specially Bishop Harold who had invited the Salesians, always remained close to them and supported them in every need. Thus, Salesians were happy to take an active part in all the activities of the diocese.

On May 5, 1956, the US Catholic Relief Society (NCWC), a Church social work organization, promised to help. Mons. George Carroll MM (1906-1981) visited and helped with clothing, rice, corn flour, and milk powder.

The Community Diary Records as Following:

Every year we sent Christmas cards to the benefactors. The school was also given woodworking machines, tools, and other various stuff. Msgr. Carroll also

helped the school to get cement that American benefactors sent and that we could get through the nearby US military base. We need so much cement to help with the construction of various facilities.

Fr. Ma opens the way for two sisters' congregations to come to Korea.

Thanks to the interest and support of Fr. Ma, Bishop Ki-Nam Ro of Seoul and Bishop Harold of Gwangju, the Salesian Sisters (Founded by Don Bosco in Italy) and the Caritas Sisters (founded in Japan by Msgr. Cimatti and Fr. Cavoli) were invited to Korea.

The two Sisters' Congregations, always very close to the Salesians, were very welcome in Korea and developed rapidly. The Salesian Sisters immediately became involved in education and founded the outstanding Salesian Girls' School in Gwangju, while engaging in many other apostolic activities. The Caritas Sisters developed a wide variety of apostolic works according to their charism.

Many Other Apostolic Activities Carried out by Salesians

As well as the regular school program, the Salesians developed a variety of cultural and apostolic works as missionaries sent to the young: basic ethical and humanistic classes for all students, catechism for Catholic students, and a catechumenate for students interested in becoming Catholic. There were youth groups too. For the Catholics, there were many catechetical activities to help them gain a deeper understanding of the faith.

Fr. Ma got many religious slides and a good projector from Italy. These were a big help for the religion teachers. For youngsters living in the villages near the school, the Salesians opened a Sunday school with religious education and fun and games in the Salesian school building. (This is called an “Oratory” by Salesians). Even though the community diary described so many activities, we, however, have only introduced a simple summary of them above.

More Salesians Sent to Work with Fr. Martelli

On July 11, 1956, when the Salesian residence was completed,

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members who had found temporary shelter in different corners of the school building were able to transfer to the new house.

On August 13, 1956, Jesús Molero Sánchez (1928-2018, Korean name Ji-Ung Mo), a Spanish priest, arrived in Korea as the fifth Salesian missionary. In the second semester, Fr. Molero was appointed Middle School vice-principal replacing Fr. Joseph Suarez.

On September 15, Br. Yang-Do Kim (Francis, 1929-2000), a Korean who joined the Salesians in Japan and received his religious formation there, was asked to transfer to the community at Gwangju. Br. Yang-Do Kim was the sixth missionary to arrive in Gwangju.

On November 14, 1956, an American seminarian, Cl. Robert J. Falk, (1932-2022, Korean name Sung-Pi Ro), arrived full of energy to help the struggling community. He would find himself busy teaching English and spending most of his time with the students from early morning to night. Before Cl. Robert's arrival, Fr. Ma was the English teacher. What a big help this was for Fr. Ma!

On April 24, 1957, Rafael Fernández-Maqueira de Calzada arrived as the 8th missionary (Korean name, Min). When Fr. Raphael Min arrived and the number of members

increased to eight, he was put in charge of the student infirmary. Fr. Raphael Min was a good musician. Later he taught the students Latin, music, and liturgy and then was asked to take charge of Salesian Middle School.

Vocations

Passion for priestly vocations has been a part of the Salesian DNA since the time of Don Bosco. Fr. Ma and all the missionaries who came to Korea had this passion. Don Bosco, however, had experienced great difficulties in finding and forming vocations.

In the days of Don Bosco, many followed Don Bosco to become, like him, a Salesian priest for life for young people, but many of them finally chose the lifestyle of a diocesan priest.



Fr. Martelli presents newly arrived Fr. Molero

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The reason was that to become a Salesian priest, unlike becoming a diocesan parish priest, the candidate had to choose religious life by professing the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, declaring to dedicate his whole life to the education of youth.

Don Bosco was not sorry for the candidates who went to a diocese, but he also needed many Salesian priests to accomplish his mission for youth. The Salesians in Korea experienced similar issues, too.

Fr. Ma and the Salesians were very happy when Bishop Harold asked them to turn a part of the school into a minor seminary. Inside the boarding house, diocesan minor seminarians and Salesian aspirants came to live together. At the opening of the minor seminary, seven seminarians and two Salesian aspirants entered as boarding students. One term later the total number had risen to seventeen.

Salesians formed diocesan minor seminarians and Salesian aspirants with the same passion and love in the boarding house. However, most of them chose to become diocesan priests and only a few of them wanted to become Salesian priests. It was probably too difficult for young Korean seminarians to understand the concept of religious life.

Despite the difficulties Fr. Ma taught the Salesians not to

be discouraged. Thanks to faith, perseverance, and passion for vocations the Salesians became a respected religious congregation in the Korean Church (In 2023 there are 126 Salesians in Korea). Salesians now have a wide variety of pastoral and educational commitments according to Don Bosco's charism.

The First Step of Salesian Cooperators in Korea

Another of Don Bosco's foundations was the Salesian Cooperators. Fr. Ma and the Salesians felt the need to start the Salesian Cooperators. In 1956, on the celebration of the Feast of Saint John Bosco, the first meeting of Cooperators was held in the presence of Bishop Harold in the Salesian Middle School Multimedia Room. On this day nine Cooperators made their promise and received a certificate.

Some months later, the news of the Korean Cooperators was published in the Salesian Bulletin in Torino.

“ ... In 1957, on the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, we elected our leaders: lawyer Thomas Jo was elected president, Patrizio Oh

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became secretary, and Maria Kim treasurer. We also published the translations of the Rules of the Salesian Cooperators so that the members can become faithful Cooperators.” (NB: In 2018, there were about 600 Salesian Cooperators in Korea.)



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The new Dorim-dong Church, consecrated on September 12

Chapter 9

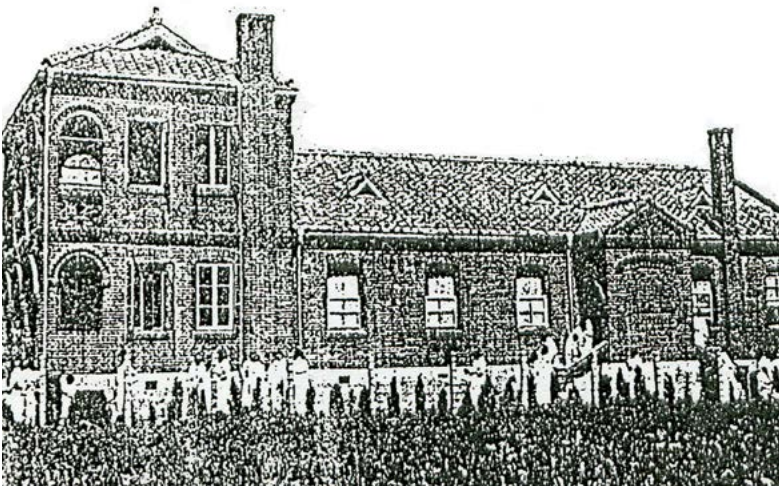
Dorim-dong Parish in Seoul, a Parish for the Salesians

When the Yeongdeungpo missionary station in the Seoul Diocese was erected as a parish on May 10, 1936, St. John Bosco was chosen as its patron. Even though the Bishop of the Seoul Archdiocese had the intention of entrusting this parish to the Salesians, the Salesians had not yet arrived. In 1940, this parish was heavily damaged in a flood, so it had to be moved to its current land (the actual site of the present Dorim-dong Parish). Later, this parish had a new blessing ceremony on July 20, 1941, and was renamed with

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the present name, Dorim-dong Parish, in October 1946.

In 1950, however, during the Korean War, the parish suffered a very sorrowful tragedy. Both the assistant parish priest and the church keeper were martyred by the Communist People's Army that occupied Seoul. The Don Bosco statue in the church was also destroyed. Due to bombardment, the roof and walls of the church collapsed. The faithful suffered much in restoring this damage. However, even among these ruins, believers continued to grow, and after the war, two new parishes, Daebang-dong and Dangsan-dong, were born from it. While this was going



The old Church in Dorim-dong (On July 20, 1941)

Chapter 9. Dorim-dong Parish in Seoul, a Parish for the Salesians

on, Bishop Ki-Nam Ro of Seoul Diocese had been trying to entrust the Salesians with the Dorim-dong parish. In 1956, he also called the Salesian Sisters to the Diocese of Seoul.

In December 1957 he again invited the Salesians to look after the pastoral work of the Dorim-dong parish. At the invitation of Bishop Ki-Nam Ro, two confreres in Japan applied to come to Korea. One was Msgr. Cimatti and the other a Slovakian priest Fr. Stefano Foltyn. Msgr. Cimatti was too old to go and Fr. Foltyn was from a communist country. The South Korean Government did not allow holders of communist passports to enter the country.

In 1958, the Japan Salesian Province held its Provincial Chapter. Fr. Ma from Gwangju community was supposed to attend the meeting, but he could not. Fr. Suarez took the place of Fr. Ma. On June 13, Fr. Suarez, who was present at the Provincial Chapter, was appointed parish priest and director of the new community of Dorim-dong.

Already in 1908 Bishop Mütel, then in 1937 Bishop Larribeau and in 1944, 1953, 1957 and 1958 Bishop Ki-Nam Ro invited the Salesians to minister in the Seoul Archdiocese. Six official invitations over 50 years! Finally, the Salesians accepted apostolic work in Seoul, the capital city of Korea.

Unconditional Invitation

Bishop Ki-Nam Ro's promise to invite the Salesians unconditionally was a great gift to the Salesian Congregation. The Dorim-dong parish had Don Bosco as patron and would become the center of various Salesian pastoral activities in the metropolitan area in the future. On June 22, 1958, in Dorim-dong parish, Archbishop Ro introduced Fr. Seo (Joseph Suarez) to the faithful as the new parish priest and director of the Salesian community. Fr. Jeong-Wook Jin the diocesan parish priest who had resigned, and all 1,800 faithful welcomed Fr. Suarez as their new parish priest. Fr. Suarez and his predecessor were together for 10 days. Fr. Jeong- Wook Jin helped with the takeover of all parish matters by sharing his experience with Fr. Seo. On July 5, 1958, Besides, Fr. Suarez, Fr Young-Kyun Kwon was appointed as assistant priest of the parish.

Archbishop Ro was very happy with the good pastoral work the Salesians were doing in Seoul Diocese. He signed a document to transfer the Parish of Dorim-dong to the Salesians without any conditions. Fr. Joseph Seo, Parish priest, sent the document to the Salesian Headquarters in Turin as we read below.

Chapter 9. Dorim-dong Parish in Seoul, a Parish for the Salesians

Salesian Rector Major

Fr. Renato Zigiotti

Torino 709, Via Maria Ausiliatrice 32

Dear Honorable Father,

For two years your Salesian priests have been working in the Parish of Dorim-dong. The land and the parish were registered in the name of the Archdiocese. But for the future, I give this land to the Salesian Congregation without any conditions whatsoever, so that the Salesians can work more freely. I hope that the Salesians will work hard for this parish and for the education of young people in the area, in the spirit of Don Bosco. I wish the blessing of the Lord on you and all Salesians. Please accept these blessings that I send you from the depths of my heart.

PAUL M. Ro (Signature)

Bishop of Seoul (Seal)

This event became a great joy for all the Salesians. They had a place to spread the Gospel in the capital city of Korea.

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The church, however, was too small, old and also in a dangerous condition. The problem of the church building soon became a pressing issue. It was not a simple one to resolve. While this problem persisted, the faithful wanted to build a beautiful, simple, big new church that would suit the environment and also planned that the existing church be modified as a school for poor children.

The New Church

The financial problem was the number one problem. Fr. Suarez, the parish priest, and Fr. Ma, the vicar of the Japanese provincial in Korea at the time, started to contact



groups that provided aid to Foreign Missions. They also contacted the Holy See and personal donors.

Over two years, Salesians collected about \$30,000 from benefactors across several nations, and permission to start the construction was granted by the Superiors in Turin. The total amount foreseen was a little more than \$50,000.

After it was decided to go ahead with the building, Fr. Suarez and Fr. Kwon made concrete plans for its construction. Courageously, they asked for the ‘widow’s mite’. The parish’s only claim to fame was that it was so poor. The amount the parishioners could give would not be big, but the experience of building a church together was important for uniting the people of God.

They asked for the help of believers with a campaign named ‘bricks-and-mortar’, prepared a construction manual for the work that could be managed by the believers, and with the help of the Cooperators they opened a bazaar and raised funds for construction. Even so, the Salesians continued to look for help everywhere.

Father Fedrigotti Visits Korea

On April 2, 1959 after beginning the construction of the

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again

new parish, the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr. Albino Fedrigotti (1902-1986) visited Korea. During his stay in Korea, Fr. Fedrigotti and some Salesians visited Bishop Ro who told them: “When I built the parish of Dorim-dong, it was the year of Don Bosco’s canonization. So, I chose St. John Bosco as the patron of the parish. ...” He also spoke about the new church building and about the secondary school in the old church.

The next day, when Fr. Fedrigotti met the Apostolic Nuncio, Bishop Righi Lambertini, the Nuncio said the Church needed a technical school in Seoul, and the pastor of Dorim-dong Parish showed the Nuncio the building plans of the Parish church. The Nuncio said that he would be able to receive some help from Rome.

On April 10, Fr. Fedrigotti went down to visit the Gwangju Community. Upon returning to Seoul from Gwangju he was ready to depart for Hong Kong. Before leaving he addressed the new community with this final greeting: “While being among you, I was very happy to see that the spirit of Saint John Bosco is taking root in this land even amid many difficult challenges. I will bring this good news to the Superiors in Turin. ... Always live close to God and be happy with Don Bosco!”

Dedication of The New Church

Several challenges needed to be addressed, but Divine Providence was present in every step. Finally, the construction of the Dorim-dong parish church was completed. In the new church, the main section was built in traditional Romanesque style. It was slightly smaller than Myeong-dong Cathedral. The altar and railings were done with fine marble from Italy. Believers in Dorim-dong held three days of prayer to celebrate the new church, and many of them renewed their hearts by receiving the sacraments, J.O.C. members [The Young Christian Workers Association] brought the Relics of the Martyrs from the old church to the new church.

At last, on September 12, 1963, on the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the honorary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Pyongyang, George Carroll (Koreans called him Bishop Ahn), the United States Ambassador, and many benefactors, priests, nuns, and parishioners attended the dedication ceremony for the new church.

The old church was adapted to be used as an auditorium and classrooms for the poor middle school students and named “Ae-jeon Hak-kyo” which means charity-school.

The dedication ceremony. The priest in the foreground is Fr. Raymond Spies (Fr. Pa in Korean)



Chapter 10

The School Develops Rapidly. Arrival of New Missionaries

Salesian activity began with the arrival of Fr. Ma. It slowly grew in the two areas of Gwangju and Seoul. Now it needed more Salesians to allow Don Bosco's educational approach and spirituality to permeate Korean soil. Fr. Ma was the first. A further seven Salesians whom we have already mentioned were mainly sent from Japan. We now present the list of new Salesians who arrived between 1958 and 1965. As we can see, they came from different countries around the world.



Fr. Ma presents the newly arrived: Br. Trisolini and Br. Gastardello

- May 3, 1958 Fr. Raymond Spies (Belgium) from Japan,
Assigned to Dorim-dong, Seoul
- July 22, 1958 Fr. Rinaldo Facchinelli (Italy) from Japan,
Assigned to Gwangju
- Dec 23, 1959 Br. Gastardello Delfino (Italy) from Japan,
Assigned to Gwangju
- Dec 26, 1959 Cl. John Trisolini (USA) coming from the
USA, Assigned to Gwangju (practical trainee).
- Aug 1, 1960 Fr. Victor Miller (Belgium) from Japan,

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	Assigned to Dorim-dong, Seoul
Sep 24, 1960	Cl. Edward Joseph McNeill (USA) from the USA, Assigned to Gwangju (practical trainee)
Sep 2, 1960	Br. Giacomo Comino (Italy) from Italy, Assigned to Gwangju
Apr 24, 1961	Fr. Alfredo Moreno (Argentina) from Japan, Assigned to Gwangju
Mar 30, 1962	Fr. Vincenzo Donati (Italy) from Japan, Assigned to Gwangju
Mar 30, 1962	Fr. José Maria Blanco (Spain) from Japan, Assigned to Gwangju
Mar 30, 1962	Br. Moses Sung-Cheon Kim, (Korea) from Japan, Assigned to Dorim-dong, Seoul
July 31, 1963	Br. Marino Bois (Italy) from Italy, Assigned to Gwangju
Mar 6, 1964	Cl. Henry Mark Bonetti (USA) from the USA, Assigned to Daerim-dong, Seoul (practical trainee)
Aug, 1964	Cl. Luc Van Looy (Belgium) from Belgium, Assigned to Daerim-dong, Seoul (practical trainee)

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- Feb 22, 1965 Fr. Joop Röttgering (Netherlands) from the Netherlands, Assigned to Daerim-dong, Seoul
- Nov 15, 1965 Cl. Marc Cuvelier (Belgium) from Belgium, Assigned to Daerim-dong, Seoul(1958? Br. Richard Mataconis (USA) from USA.)

Moses Sung-Cheon Kim escaped from the North Korean People's Army during the Korean War and joined the Salesians as an aspirant from the very beginning. He was sent to Japan for novitiate with aspirant Taddeus Byung-Dal Park. Br. Moses came back to Korea immediately after his Salesian profession. Cl. Taddeus continued his studies for the priesthood in Japan, both became key members in the foundation of the Salesian Congregation in Korea.

Like a Tree that Sprouts and Grows Even Amid Storms

In Gwangju, the number of school students increased year by year. From the beginning of 1956, Gwangju School was large enough to accommodate many classes, but now, as the number of students increased, more classrooms were needed.



More classrooms on the East side

Fr. Ma asked the USFK (United States Forces Korea) Civilian Aid Association for help. On July 25, 1956, Fr. Seo (Joseph Suarez) also visited the USFK office asking for help. Thus, on October 5 of that year, they signed a contract for the construction of more high school classrooms with funds the USKF donated.

The next day, October 6, like lightning the Salesians began the construction of new high school classrooms. On November 1, Bishop Harold and some 80 Cooperators and Salesian friends gathered to bless the foundation stone of the new building. A year and five months later, on March 1, 1958,

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again

the new classrooms were completed with a 959m² extension.

The year 1958 was the 100th anniversary of the Apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes. On May 24, the feast of Mary, Help of Christians, the Cooperators suggested that the Salesians should build a Virgin Mary Grotto on the east side of the school. Fr. Ma, Director and Principal, accepted the proposal and in December, the Grotto of the Virgin Mary was erected. The dedication ceremony took place the following year, in 1959. The Grotto was blessed by the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr. Albino Fedrigotti, when he visited the school.

The virgin Mary Grotto



Chapter 10. The School Develops Rapidly. Arrival of New Missionaries

Since 1956 when the school was opened, there had been an intention to establish a carpentry workshop, so an application was posted to U.K.R.A. On November 30, 1956, the agency sent several machines and tools to start a carpentry workshop. On January 22, 1958, six more woodworking machines arrived. Fr. Ma looked for a man to take charge of the woodwork shop and on April 12, 1959, together with the construction of nine high school classrooms, construction of the woodwork shop began: On May 31, Fr. Ma blessed the new carpentry shop which was 36m long and 7m wide.

In 1960, the school auditorium was built and at the same time rooms needed for the community were added. On June 1, 1961, an opening ceremony was held for the middle and high school auditorium. The auditorium is 1,719m², with two floors above ground and one basement. It was the largest and best auditorium in Honam (the two Jeolla provinces of Korea) at that time, and it was built to be used as an indoor gymnasium and entertainment hall (for movies and theater). The blessing ceremony was presided over by the Bishop of Jeonju Diocese, and a large number of local authorities attended the ceremony including Ho-rim Song, the Governor of Jeollanam-do province.

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Political Fever

While Salesian education was putting down roots in Gwangju and growing well, there was political upheaval in South Korea, where democracy was just beginning after the Korean War. The winds of the 4.19 revolution triggered by the illegal election of 15 March 1960 were also blowing in Gwangju. On the morning of April 19, 1960, some students in Gwangju raided the police station and set fire to it. In the evening, martial law was proclaimed, and the army was sent to Gwangju city. On that day, casualties also occurred



The west wing under construction, The main Building finished

Chapter 10. The School Develops Rapidly. Arrival of New Missionaries

in Gwangju, and three students of Salesian School were injured. The Gwangju Salesian community also had to protect 30 students who were seeking refuge. Fortunately, President Rhee's regime at that time withdrew and the city of Gwangju also found peace.

This process of democratization and political tension also brought a different tension between the students and the school.

On May 14, 1960, many students were caught up in the chaotic social atmosphere and made 17 demands to the school. After listening to the students' opinions, the Principal, Fr. Ma discussed the matter with the school council and convinced the student representatives of the good intentions of the Salesians and teachers and reminded them of their obligations.

Most of the students who listened to Fr. Ma's reply asked for forgiveness on the evening of May 15, and the following morning, during the morning assembly, they reconsidered their actions in front of all the students, going to the school principal's office and writing a note to Fr. Ma about the disturbance that took place in school.

Fr. Ma met with Bishop Harold to explain the school situation, and the next day, May 17, classes returned to normal.

All Construction Work Finished

Amid the socially unstable situation and the turmoil of the young students, all the construction work was finished. The students again found the right environment to prepare themselves for the future. It all came about like silently growing mushrooms that appear overnight. Even the political fever of the students had died down; they could concentrate on their studies.

The tremendous achievements of Fr. Ma who had lived in Gwangju for little more than six years demonstrated his extraordinary ability to challenge difficulties and respond appropriately to each situation.

Since he had arrived, he had not had the opportunity to establish long-term projects. Every problem had to be solved on a day-by-day basis.

Events had to be dealt with one after the other, according to the possibilities, solving problems as they came up.

However, like a sailor who had passed through a storm of adversities, Fr Ma still had one thing to do. He had to fulfill the promise he made to Bishop Harold. He had to establish a technical school.

Considering the situation Fr. Ma faced, it was becoming increasingly impossible to establish a technical school. In

the beginning, the Salesians decided to establish a technical high school within three years, because a vocational middle school was not envisioned in Korean education law. Now, the parents of the first graduates of Salesian Middle School were actively opposed to their children studying a vocational-technical curriculum in high school. And, although three of the five Salesian brother technicians requested by Fr. Ma already arrived, the establishment of a technical high school was made impossible because the aid foundation responsible for the technical setup sent news that the machines needed for the technical school could only be sent several years later.

In the face of this reality, both Archbishop Harold and Fr. Ma were disappointed. However, they had no choice but to accept the situation.

New Director – Principal is Appointed

In this situation, Fr. Rinaldo Facchinelli, who arrived in Korea in July 1958, was installed as Rector of the community and principal of Salesian Middle and High School. The appointment came from the Salesian Motherhouse in Turin on

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December 1, 1961.

As a new principal was appointed, Fr. Ma could leave Gwangju with a happy heart after having done a fine job,

Fr. Ma had traveled the Far East, first moving to Japan, then China, then back to Japan, and finally to Korea. He hadn't seen his relatives for a long time, nor had he had much news from his lovely homeland. He was eager to see Italy once more and see how things had changed there.

After losing the war, Italy became a Democratic Republic, and saw a speedy recovery in the postwar "Italian boom". Many things had changed within and outside the Church as well. He needed to visit his dear ones and breathe some fresh air.

Chapter 10. The School Develops Rapidly. Arrival of New Missionaries



Fr. Rinaldo Facchinelli

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The Novitiate House Under Construction

Chapter 11

The Novitiate House – A New Achievement

After visiting Italy, Fr. Ma returned to Korea on July 10, 1962, and took up residence in the Dorim-dong parish community in Seoul. At that time the Salesians in Korea needed new communities in Seoul.

For Fr. Ma a very important task was to build a house for the novitiate that had already opened in Gwangju a year earlier.

In addition to novices, this new novitiate house would also be a place for new vocations and for young Salesians



The Completed Novitiate House viewed From North

attending classes at the Seoul Diocesan Seminary.

The second task was to find land big enough to establish the long-desired Vocational School. While he began to search for two plots of land to build the novitiate house and the vocational school, on November 6, the Provincial in Japan renewed the appointment of Fr. Ma as Procurator for Korea.

On January 17, 1963, Fr. Ma found land in 929-1 Daerim-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul. It was a suitable place to build the novitiate house. On February 1st of that year, he put a down-payment on an 11,868m² plot of land on a small hill. On March 29, he paid the balance. This was where the

novitiate would be built.

On March 30, he received the construction permit and, on June 15, the ceremony for turning the first sod took place.

On September 20, 1963, Fr. Ma began living in the new building which was still in the finishing phases. The novitiate which had begun in February 1962 as a temporary arrangement under the Gwangju school auditorium, finally moved to Seoul on October 10, 1963. Fr. Miller, the novice master, and the second batch of Korean novices were now in the new novitiate.



The building completed, view from south

The First Steps Toward A Vocational School

Purchase of land was the first step for the vocational school, and the start of a long work of preparation. After long research, finally, on Sunday March 26, 1964, Fr. Ma and Fr. Miller (Fr. Baek) found a suitable piece of land for sale. It was on National Route No.1, between Daebang-dong

and Daerim-dong. At the time, Daebang-dong was on the outskirts of Seoul, and Daerim-dong was a small village beyond that with a few thatched-roof houses. Route No. 1 passing through Daebang-dong and Daerim-dong, was an asphalt road connecting Seoul with the southern cities, passing between rice fields and small hills. The land was fitting for the vocational school. The price was also affordable, and the deal was done. So, Fr. Ma bought 43,636m² of rice field in Shingil-dong, Yeongdeungpo-gu.

Gwangju School's Difficult Moments

When Fr. Ma was laying the foundation for the future of Salesians in Seoul, misunderstandings arose in Gwangju between the School Principal and the students backed by local teachers in the school. In May 1965 at a period of high political tension in Korea, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Much of the conflict at that time came from the difference in the way the school was run, different opinions between local teachers versus the Salesians, and also the lack of understanding of the Korean language on the part of the Salesians.

Most of the Salesians had worked in Japan for many years



The church, added to the building by Fr. Facchinelli

before they came to Korea, so even after they came to Korea, they still used Japanese. Even in the process of learning Korean, some Salesians used Japanese to communicate easily in some situations. At such a sensitive period when patriotism was prevalent, the use of the Japanese language by some Salesians while operating the school was shocking to the students and caused resentment against foreigners. The students began to hold protests against Salesians who spoke Japanese at school, and some teachers backed them, thinking that since the school was not a technical school as

foreseen in the beginning, there was no need for Salesians and the school could be run by the diocesan clergy.

In June 1965, after a long period of turmoil, the situation became so bad for the Salesians that they had to leave the school. They left Gwangju and gathered at the Daerim-dong novitiate house which Fr. Ma had prepared just several months before in Seoul. In Daerim-dong there were already eight young brothers who were studying theology and preparing for the priesthood, eight novices, and fifteen aspirants who were preparing for the seminary entrance examination or waiting to begin their compulsory military service. With all the confreres from Gwangju living together there as well, the situation was almost unbearable.

Fr. Ma's New Difficult Task

Amid all this turmoil, Fr. Ma, the former principal, was a man flexible with the people and capable of finding the best solutions to problems.

To resolve the Gwangju problem, Fr. Ma sought cooperation from the Vatican Ambassador and other foreign ambassadors in Korea, the Minister of Education, and ministry officials.

Fr. Ma suggested that the Salesians should create two groups each doing its own work to overcome difficulties stemming from the situation and create a favorable atmosphere once again.

First: one group was to go to Gwangju to figure out how to settle the school problem. Second: another group was to start some activity on the recently purchased land. This group would be led by Fr. Rinaldo Facchinelli who was also staying in Seoul after coming from Gwangju. The painful events in Gwangju helped raise the interest of all the Salesians in establishing vocational schools for working youth in Seoul. This could not be realized in Gwangju. The task of the first group was the most important and urgent. Fr. Ma was the most suitable Salesian to solve the first task, the school problem. Fr. Ma founded Gwangju Salesian School and served as the principal for 6 years. Due to his kindness and educational approach, he was greatly loved by his early alumni, so, he was the best person to tackle the job.

Fr. Ma went back to Gwangju with Cl. Byeong-dal Park, Br. Giacomo Comino, and Cl. Luc Van Looy who had just arrived and begun to learn Korean. They spent almost all of July and August at the Salesian Sisters' school. A lot of

effort was put into finding out the cause of the dispute, analyzing the situation, and trying to change public opinion.

Sizing up The Situation

They came to know that everything had started with some complaints by teachers' concerning the new principal who was very strict in demanding discipline and order and was not able to communicate in Korean.

Some teachers had also come to know from diocesan priests in charge of the administration of the Gwangju Diocese that the archbishop was to some extent disappointed with the Salesians because the vocational school had not been established. So, some teachers thought the archbishop would bring the school under the administration of the Gwangju Archdiocese. In reality, the Bishop had no plans to do this. Some teachers with this in mind asked the diocese to send diocesan priests to the school. Two priests were sent by the administrator of the diocese while the Archbishop was attending the Second Vatican Council. But the situation only worsened.

After Fr. Ma's visit to the Ministry of Education, the

ministry sent a document to Fr. Ma stating that the Salesian school had already been registered under the name of the Salesians. The bishop also knew of the fact. Even if he was discontented because the promised Vocational School did not materialize, he did not want to cause difficult legal problems because he loved and trusted the Salesians and hoped that all problems would be resolved peacefully.

During the months of protests, the school situation became increasingly difficult to control, the students were wasting precious time and the atmosphere of study was severely disrupted.

The parents engaged in a campaign against these tiresome demonstrations. In this situation, Fr. Ma, conceding many things to reach a compromise, made persistent efforts to hold things together. The teachers and students who had caused the disturbance, except for a small group, agreed to the compromise; at that point what had seemed so complicated immediately returned to normal.

After the Ministry of Education investigated whether the missionaries had committed any injustices or engaged in non-educational activities that caused three months of disruption, on September 28, it approved Fr. Ma as the Salesian Junior and High School Principal. That was the

end of all the turmoil.

One day, during the student's morning assembly, Fr. Ma entered the school premises with the Salesian confreres and declared in front of the students:

“This school was legally entrusted to the Salesians, so we have the right and duty to operate the school for the good of our students.”

The small group of protesters, who had not accepted the compromise, were preparing a final blow to insult the Salesians as they arrived at the school. However, their shameful behavior aroused disgust and absolute opposition from the students, and they were forced to leave the school.

The Birth of The Don Bosco Youth Center(A Vocational School)

While the school in Gwangju normalized, our work in Seoul went on as planned without a hitch, The Rector Major of the Salesians in Rome approved the proposal to establish the Shin Gil-dong community.

The land at Shingil-dong, intended for the opening of the

vocational school, was a low-lying rice field. It had to be filled in up to street level to construct the buildings. Fr. Ma asked for help from Seoul City. They promised him 50,000 garbage truck loads at 90 won per truck to fill the more than 2-meter-deep future vocational school and community residential site. In addition to this, 10,000 tons of good quality earth from the Korean textile company were also contracted to cover the garbage. This work of filling the land with garbage and then good quality earth on top of it went on for almost two years.

A Small House in Shingil-Dong

As already noted, Fr. Facchinelli (Fr. Ki) decided to start some activities on the land we had just purchased. First, he filled a corner of the land with good soil well pressed to be able to build the foundation directly on it. After that, he started to build a small house for the new community and some youth activities.

Before starting the project, the name of the new Salesian institution was decided on: “Don Bosco Youth Center”. It was a name intended to bring about what Don Bosco had achieved on the outskirts of Turin, and in a sense, it was

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also a question mark for a future yet to be discovered.

The construction plans show a total construction surface of 590m². On the west side, a second floor was built with five small rooms for the confreres and a laundry room. The rest of the building was single-story.

The total contract price was \$21,291. The building was constructed according to the contract. Fr. Facchinelli did not have enough money on hand to cover the cost at that time. There was, however, one piece of land, an appendix to the larger plot. This piece would not be included in the plan presented to the city for approval. The constructor asked Fr. Facchinelli for the land, instead of cash, for the construction cost. Fr. Facchinelli agreed.

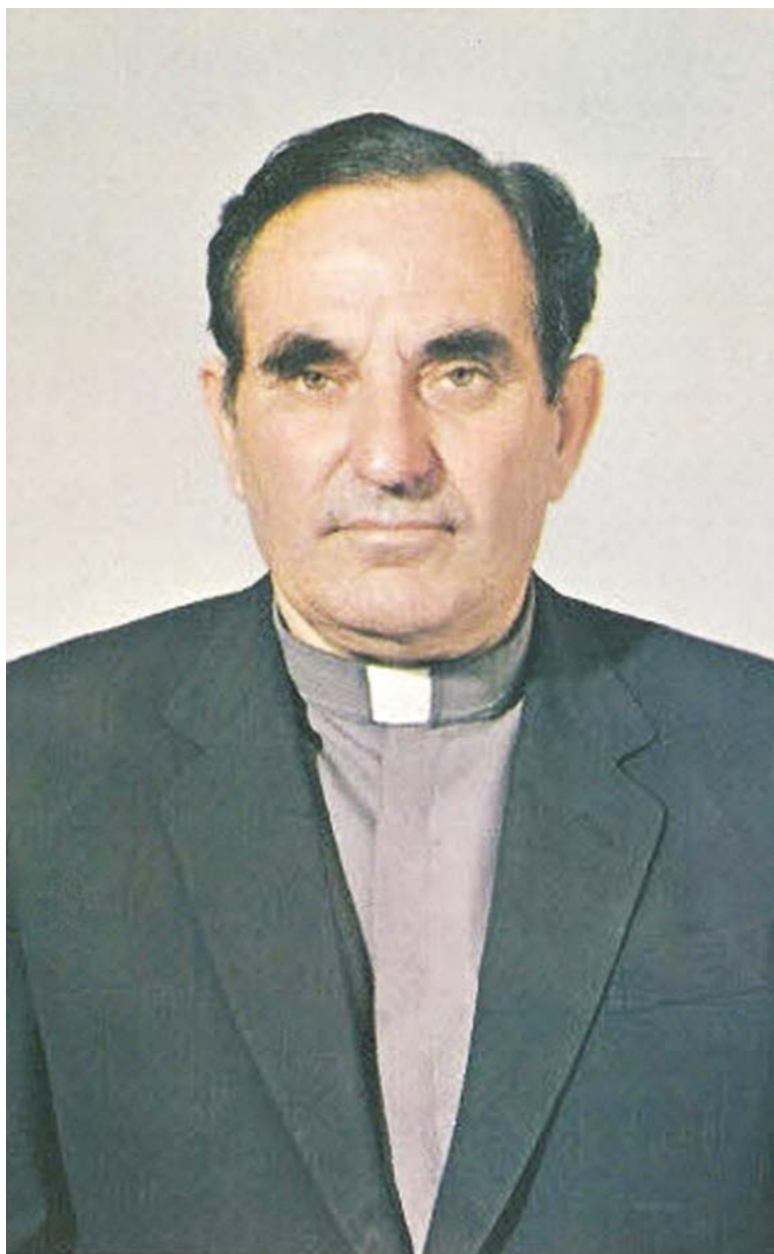
Fr. Ma, who was highly adaptable and flexible in any situation, showed leadership in the crisis at Gwangju school by dividing the Salesians into two teams with positive results on both sides.

Originally, Fr. Ma was the one who started to find and purchase a site for a vocational school. He now left all the work in Seoul to other Salesians and concentrated his efforts on developing the Preventive Education System of Don Bosco and the Salesian spirit at the Gwangju School.

Chapter 11. The Novitiate House – A New Achievement



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Fr. Martelli again Principal

Chapter 12

The First Teacher Returns, Restarting with New Hearts

“The atmosphere at the beginning of the school was lonely and dull, but thanks to the benevolent smile, cheerful laughter and overall activity of Fr. Ma, it would change into a happy and peaceful atmosphere every day. ... But Fr. Ma has left us, and we now are lonely because our hopes cannot be revived again. The sweet, generous and tolerant family life without discrimination remains with me as a dream. The most senior Salesian who shared six

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wonderful years with us - Fr. Ma! I can still hear his laughter in the nearby principal's office..."

Those lines are a part of an essay on the school entitled "Ten Years with Salesians" written by a teacher who worked there for 10 years, from the opening of the school. One can see, after Fr. Ma had left the school, how much the teachers missed him and his work as principal. When Fr. Ma was away from the school, ordinary teachers went through a period of confusion due to the unreasonable actions of some energetic students and teachers and a lack of understanding between missionaries and diocesan priests. Due to these disputes, Gwangju school came to a halt for about four months, from May to August 1965. In September, the students were back at school. The 'typhoon' had passed, and peace and family spirit were returning.

After becoming principal again and returning to the school, Fr. Ma made an impressive speech in front of the students and teachers.

"It's already been 10 years since I set foot on Korean soil, following God's will and inheriting the spirit of love of Don Bosco. ... Looking back on the past, I think of the time when I was standing alone in a field in Jung-Heung

Dong. It was covered only with weeds. ... I had the groundbreaking ceremony for the Salesian School with just a hoe and a shovel. ... Now, with over 1,600 junior high school graduates, 700 high school graduates, and 1,500 gifted enrolled students, we have arrived at this point. ... If I recall the sacrifices that our Salesian confreres and teachers made, tears come to my eyes.

We have come to Korea, a faraway country with a different language, customs, and sentiments, but to follow the will of God it is our duty to keep our hearts open.

The last decade of life for the Salesians and their teachers has been one of sacrifice and service. Even if something unfortunate happened due to a minor misunderstanding or lack of proper communication, the good work we've done over the past decade is far greater and more important.

Now we are over 40 teachers and 1,500 students. On this occasion, as the third principal takes charge, I would like to express my gratitude and ask you to be of one heart, one spirit for a new start.”

Fr. Ma's Dedication to The School

Fr. Ma, who directed the school for 6 years as its first

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principal, was away for 3 years and came back as the third principal. He inspired the teachers and students with a spirit of unity and harmony. Emphasizing the motto “the teacher must be where the students are.” He himself was a living example of this motto. He often moved around the school to prevent any likely problem just as a good father would, taking care of the students and trying to create a family atmosphere. For 15 years since becoming the third principal until he stepped down from his post on February 28, 1981, loved by students and teachers, he was a principal according to Don Bosco’s heart. He raised the level of the school until it became one of the most prestigious schools in the district.

According to his teachers and students, he was a naturally good-natured person who did things for the good of the people he worked with, made careful plans, and always reached good compromises.

During his term as principal of the school, he became a legend in Gwangju city, and students’ parents, in particular, praised him. “My son is getting a Salesian education, and he has improved to the point where I don’t recognize him!”

During the fifteen years of his tenure at the school, Fr. Ma achieved endless accomplishments. First of all, in terms

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of students' grades, over a very short period, Salesian High reached the same level as academic first-class schools with a decades-long tradition in Gwangju. The school also boasted the highest acceptance rate in the top universities and famous academies in the provinces and Seoul. Based on these excellent grades, Salesian High was recognized by parents as a school that nurtures human values in their children. Every year more than 1,100 applicants were vying for 360 places. It was difficult to enter Salesian School due to the high competition rate. Because of these good results, Fr. Ma took every occasion to praise the teachers for their merits, adding that the hard sacrifice of the teachers and the efforts of the students were what brought about such good results.



Sports Activities

In addition, Salesian High became famous all over the nation for its achievements in track and field. From the beginning, Fr. Ma actively supported athletics. As a result, Salesian Junior High and Salesian High School won not only in Jeollanamdo Province but also at the national level for nine consecutive years. Salesian High's remarkable achievements in such a short period surprised the whole country.

So, many of the school's athletes were chosen as players in international games. Because of the importance given to athletics, Fr. Ma's office became decorated more and more with many trophies, gold, silver, and bronze medals, and many certificates and plaques. It was also possible for several students to attend the school with an athletic scholarship.

One year, the media said of the Salesian School: "The Salesian School has won both local and national track and field sports championships, giving the impression that the national sports competition is a Salesian School sports



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competition.” To encourage the athletes, Fr. Ma organized a cheering squad and brought them to the games to follow athletes from Gwangju to Seoul.

To celebrate those activities, the superintendent of education and the Jeollanamdo Provincial Physical Education Association came to the school once on the occasion of the school’s thanksgiving day. They gave him a certificate and a plaque of appreciation, saying that he had made a great contribution to physical education at the Salesian school and to the development of local sports. In the school, the “mens sana in corpore sano” (A sound mind in a sound body) motto expressed the sports educational spirit, and Fr. Ma was recognized as a model of integral education.

In 1972, as first among Korean High Schools, Fr. Ma opened an outdoor swimming pool, 30m x 16m x 1.2m, equipped with a dressing room, a shower room, and a purifier. All Salesian school students could enjoy swimming during physical education class and summer vacation. It was used also for training swimmers. Thus, Salesian school was designated as a swimmer training school by the Education Board.

A Variety of Extra – Curricular Activities

In Salesian High, many club activities were organized; There was a literary club, art club, drama club, debating club, mountain climbing club, book reading club, English conversation club, music club, mechanic club, gymnastic club, swimming club, fencing club, badminton club, tennis club, a social-service club, boys club, science club, etc.

Besides studying, the students were able to learn how to live their future as happy Salesian graduates by carrying out activities for their human, social, and cultural growth through the clubs.

Salesian confreres and teachers helped the club activities of the students. Fr. Ma liked to be working with the Service Club students. They did various activities to help poor people; such as selling bread and sweets to make donations for the poor, rebuilding villages together with flood victims, collecting clothes and books for the poor children in the suburbs and countryside, etc.

Sometimes Fr. Ma took them to visit Hansen's disease patients' villages (leper colonies), to get them interested in people suffering from Hansen's disease, and other social problems. To help Hansen's patients forget their pain for a

moment, these students organized festive activities.

Socially Open Mind

Fr. Ma had a special concern for the poor and did not forget the poorer youth.

Fr. Ma also opened a night school for young people who lived in Gwangju but were too poor to afford junior or senior high school fees. In the daytime, they were newspaper sellers, shoe-shine boys, or did other simple jobs. They came in the evening, tired as they were, to quench their thirst for the study they couldn't have during the day. For these young people, Fr. Ma asked Salesian past pupils from nearby colleges or those alumni who already had a job in society, to teach them. In this way, the 'Don Bosco Evening School' was created.

Passion for Alumni

After graduation, the school's former pupils liked to say "Oh! The good old school days". Fr. Ma would say to students, "Salesian students remain Salesians even after they graduate from school!" As graduate numbers grew to the tens of

thousands, Fr. Ma, together with Fr Won (Vincenzo Donati), supported the development of the alumni association and emphasized the need for graduates to live with pride as Salesians, being the light and salt of the world. They also organized an annual meeting called the “Big Meeting of Friends”, and published a newspaper “The Friends”, twice a year to share news of the school and the alumni.

The newspaper “The Friends”, created a sense of solidarity among graduates and served as a bridge between alumni and students. Graduates visited the school to help the students choose which university to apply to. As a further step, graduates collected money for scholarships for their ‘alma mater’, helping their juniors in need. In fact, in Gwangju City, rumors spread that 20% of the students in the Salesian School received a full scholarship or half scholarship. In the beginning, Fr. Ma asked benefactors in various countries for help, including his own country of origin, Italy. When alumni made a place for themselves in society, they also started to donate to help their juniors.

“New Generation” Movement

Fr. Ma also introduced the ‘New Generation Movement’



Homecoming Day (Big Meeting of Friends)



(GEN – Focolare) which started in Trieste in northern Italy. It focused on making the ‘old man’ into a new person. It became a main social function of the school. Every year, the Salesians and students organized a program of performances such as singing, band, and poetry recital contests. Fr. Ma positively supported such things. The ‘GEN’ Spirit Reform Movement received much praise from students and citizens through its concerts, and sometimes TV stations broadcast such events.

The Major Anniversaries

In 1976, Salesian School celebrated both the 20th anniversary of its opening and Fr. Ma’s 60th birthday. He was feted as a great educator and great social servant to the community of Gwangju City and the Jeollanamdo Province. Many collaborators, friends, and alumni who respected and admired Fr. Ma, flocked from near and far to express their love. Many members of the clergy, students, education officials, and many people from all walks of life gathered in the main hall of the school to celebrate Fr. Ma’s accomplishments and to share the joy with him.

The Mayor of Gwangju also attended the ceremony and presented him with Gwangju Honorary Citizenship. “For

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over 20 years, through his dedication to Korean society. Fr. Ma has made a great contribution to the nation by producing more than ten thousand alumni. Today, many Korean people and Gwangju citizens cannot help but acknowledge such a great educator, Fr. Ma, as a citizen of Gwangju. We consider this a great honor and joy.” With these words the mayor expressed what was in the hearts of those who knew him.

In October 1981, the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr. Egidio Viganò officially visited Korea. He wanted to attend the school’s 25th-anniversary celebration, especially to congratulate Fr. Ma for the great work he had done in implementing the founding mission of the Salesians in Korea. He first visited the Salesians’ Formation House, the Salesian Sisters’ School, the Caritas Sisters Korean Mother House in Gwangju.

The next day he visited Salesian High and watched a mass game program prepared by the students for him. He expressed his happiness for the wonderful work the Salesians had done in 25 years. The Rector Major’s words of gratitude were a big encouragement for Fr. Ma, to fulfill his new plan. He was thinking of finding a successor as principal of the school. He wanted to invest the remaining

Chapter 12. The First Teacher Returns, Restarting with New Hearts

time of his life in the more needy people of the Hansen's patients' villages. He was already doing this work as a weekend ministry.





Chapter 13

The Autumn of His Life for The Least

After retiring as principal of the high school in 1981, Fr. Ma continued to devote himself to pastoral and social activities in the Hansen's patients' villages, for the sick and their relatives.

The Archbishop of Gwangju, Harold William Henry, established twenty Hansen's patient-settlements on the outskirts of the city and in the province of Jeollanamdo for Hansen's patients who could not take part in Mass with ordinary parishioners in the 1950s.



In 1956, Fr. Ma visited one of them, Hyeonaewon, to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. This interest and sympathy for Hansen's patients remained with him for the rest of his life.

Even after becoming principal, he regularly visited such Hansen's patients' villages, and continued these pastoral activities. After retiring from the position of principal, he did not abandon his old friends and became a veritable 'volcano' of burning pastoral love, giving all of himself for his beloved Hansen's patients.

It is a pity that his great activities in this area have not been well recorded. But the photos we have found allow us to understand the extent of Fr. Ma's involvement in his mission during the final years of his life:

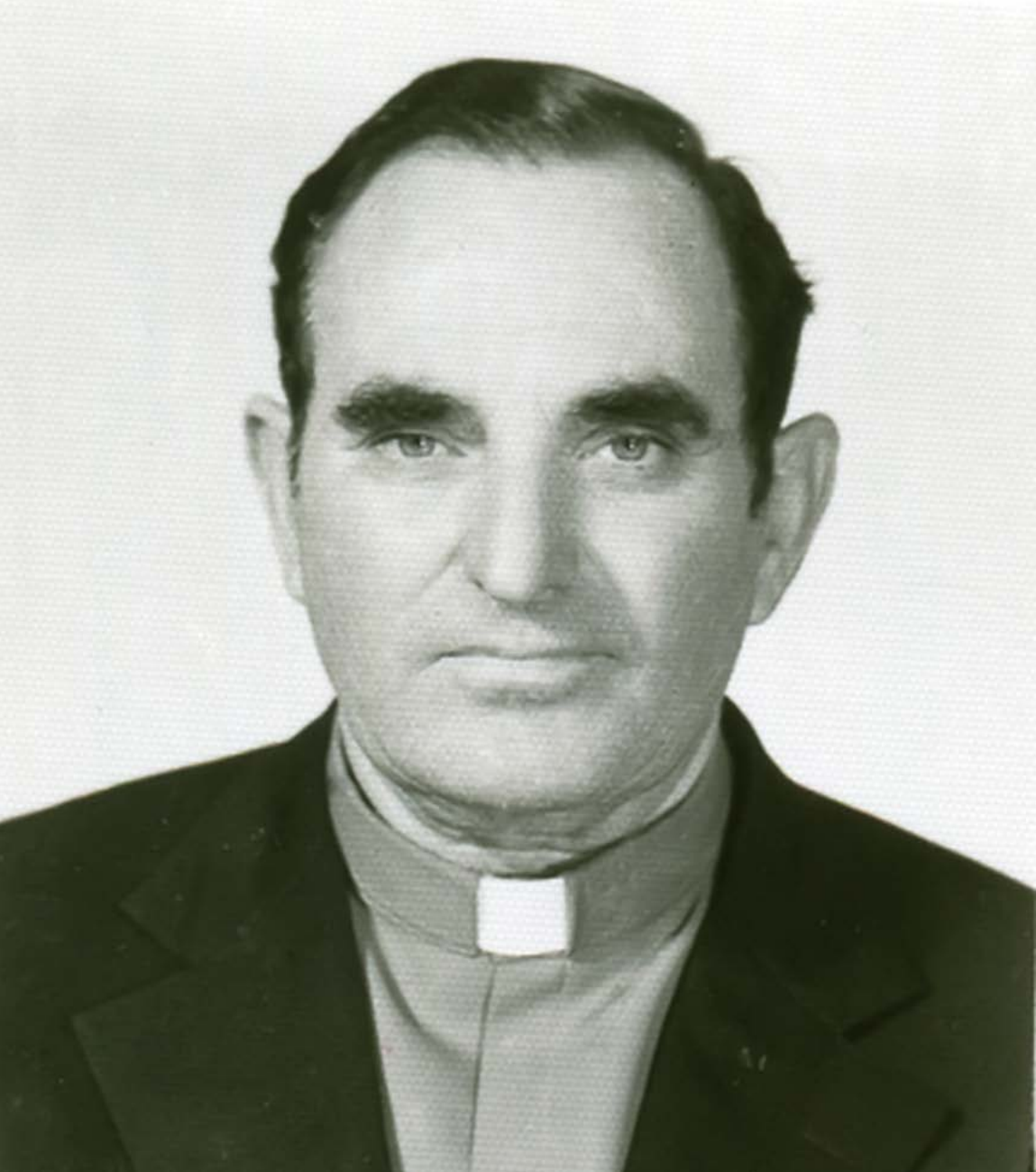
With the help of Austrian Volunteers he revitalized villages. He built social welfare centers in the villages. He



helped in the education of the children of lepers, assisted in teaching them catechism, and helped them attain social skills through group activities. Fr Ma also helped the children of Hansen's disease patients with scholarships, providing for them educational opportunities for their study and skill acquisition, and he fostered activities to help the young integrate into society.

When people saw how many Hansen's disease patients, blind people, and their children attended Fr. Ma's funeral mass and witnessed their tearful farewell greetings, they could understand how much Fr. Ma loved them and how much they loved Fr. Ma.

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again



Chapter 14

Fr. Ma: A Rich Personality Beyond The Ordinary

Here is a familiar image of Fr. Ma: He had a strong physique, not too tall, not too fat, was rarely sick, able to adapt to any place in this world.

He had a very pronounced Italian nose (See Dante Alighieri) well placed between his deep blue eyes with exceptionally black eyebrows and thick, large hands. He wore loose trousers and shoes that he almost never shined. Everybody also remembers the sound of his laughter which was medicine for overcoming tension and problems. His

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Korean was very familiar even though there was a little touch of an Italian accent. Even when very busy, he never showed anxiety and was easy to approach.

Fr. Ma never claimed to be a saint. But his personality exceeded the normal. And it was undoubtedly a great help in realizing the mission that God entrusted to him. He was firmly sure of his mission with all his heart.

Fr. Ma said many times: “I have never regretted having followed my vocation.” This, in the eyes of the people around him, fitted his real life very well, and it was a word of encouragement to all those who decided to live and walk in the footsteps of Don Bosco.

Indeed, throughout his life he was convinced of his calling and did not look for his own benefit, but only for the glory of God and the success of his apostolic work for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. The roots of all this are as follows - The torch of faith he received as a child led his heart to follow Christ, Don Bosco fascinated him, and the Salesians were a solid support for him.

In Turin, the City of Saints, St. Joseph Cottolengo and Don Bosco were close neighbors.

St. Joseph Cottolengo was a man who thoroughly believed in the daily Providence of God. So, he would look into his

desk drawer in the evening and, if he had any money left, he would throw the money out of the window into the streets for the poor. According to citizens of Turin at that time, Don Bosco, who knew Cottolengo's habits, would go there to collect the change for his poor boys.

The episodes of these two saints reveal their characters. They interpreted God's Providence in different ways.

Fr. Ma was likely the man with a third personality, who partially possessed the characteristics of both these two Italian saints. He was a man of prudence in the fulfillment of his mission, but on the other hand, he was a man of great generosity in the service of brotherly love.

One day, Fr. Ma arrived in the refectory late in the evening. Cl. Robert, coming back very tired after giving classes and assisting the students all day long as a young American seminarian, in his first experience in the missions, was finishing his very simple supper. "Bob, I'm very happy. Because I paid all our debts today, and I still have these small coins. Let's go and have a beer". "But how will you make it tomorrow, without any money?" the brother asked. "Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again."

Cl. Robert, who lived extremely poorly after coming to Korea, was worrying about a tomorrow without money. But



With the Mission Superior, Fr. Tohill (center) with the provincial Fr. Dalkman (on his left) and Fr. Ma (on his right)

Fr. Ma was thinking more about the over-stressed young Salesian than about tomorrow since he had overcome everything with God's providence in difficult times in the past.

God had provided him with a superior intelligence, but he did not like to make himself famous as a learned man. He was brilliant in learning languages: English, Latin, German, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean were the languages he could

speak. But he didn't think he was good enough to learn the language. When he started learning Korean, he used to marvel that the provincial should have sent Fr. Liviabella to Korea instead of him because he had learned Chinese much faster than he had in Dalian, China.

He was also tasked with teaching the Korean language to new missionaries because he had excellent language skills. On the first day, he taught the alphabet, on the second day, he taught basic words, on the third day, he asked them to match the syllables, and on the fourth day, he asked them to read fluently. It is said that his quick sense of language made it difficult for him to show patience to missionaries who were late in acquiring the language. He sometimes found other language teachers for new missionaries who were slower in the acquisition of new languages.

For him it was very easy to remember faces and names of people. He had the gift of narrating events of the past with great richness of details. He had carefully written out the "Salesian History Lectures" which he gave to the young Salesian confreres. Unfortunately, these notes could not be found. So, we can't give you any quotations of his words.

Fr. Ma very much loved the outings with the Salesian confreres, going into the woods and putting his feet in

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the clear water of the streams. In summer, if there was an opportunity, he loved the sea, and would swim far away and let himself be carried away by the waves, watching the sky and the hills of the bay that surrounded him. On free days in winter time, in order to improve family spirit, he loved staying in the community spending time playing cards with his confreres.

He enjoyed it when, on school thanksgiving day, students expressed their gratitude. He was very happy with this. His office was impeccably arranged. On official occasion he always dressed as was suited to his role.



As school principal he acted with simplicity without stressing his position, and if needed he performed humble services that people considered not in accordance with his status.

When the toilets in the school were clogged, he put on his faded old work coat (It had a long history!) and immediately found the problem and how to solve it. He was not afraid to get his hands dirty. He would put his hands into the clogged toilet to take out the things the students had thrown into it.

In the days when there were few flush toilets in Gwangju, no matter how much instruction they gave the boys, the toilets would be constantly blocked. With patience, every time Fr. Ma would unblock them. But he never showed discomfort or disappointment. He knew that nobody liked that job in the school, and calling a cleaning company was too expensive, so he had to become the specialist. Dressed that way and doing that job, those who saw him from behind didn't even notice who he was.

“I have never seen Fr. Ma ever get angry.” “He was one with the people. He knew how to cry with them and how to laugh with them.” When people talked about him, all appreciated his peaceful temperament. He liked to be a man among men. His laughter gave joy and hope to a gloomy society in difficult times. He was a real optimist.

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“Impossible!” was not a word he knew. He never told anybody “No!” directly. He greeted everyone kindly and acted to make everyone feel at ease.

The sincerity of his priestly life was well known. His big joy as a priest was when he met the sick, when he heard the confessions of the young and when he was in the small chapels in the villages for the Hansen’s disease patients celebrating Mass with them. He was a man of prayer and loved to pray; he was faithful to community prayers. And even if alone and late in the evening, he was accustomed

Fr. Ma loved to be present at community meetings



to pray till the end, the prayers to be done that day. He also loved to concelebrate Mass with the confreres.

During his last illness, he had to spend several months in the community of Don Bosco Youth Center in Seoul in order to be near St. Mary hospital.

Because of his illness it was painful for him to even bend down; in the morning he wanted to be on time for Mass. But he could not put on his socks unaided. He would go down early and wait, sitting on one of the steps on the staircase, to ask the first confrere passing by to help him put on the socks he had brought with him. Even if confreres wanted him to stay in bed and bring him Holy Communion, he would get up and concelebrate the Mass with them.

When Pope John Paul II came to Korea for the Bicentennial of the beginning of evangelization in Korea, and the Canonization of the 103 Korean Martyrs, almost all the priests in Korea concelebrated Mass with the Pope before an immense crowd of Korean Catholic faithful. That was in 1984. Fr. Ma expressed his big joy at being able to celebrate Mass with the Pope and many priests. He said many times that he felt very happy.

However, he was not a good patient! When sick, if he felt even a little bit better, he said he was cured and went back

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to work. Such a personality made doctors despair when he was readmitted to the hospital for his last illness. He loved life, and even in the worst moments of suffering, he did not like people to talk to him about dying, even if in his heart he felt that death was coming.

He confided in someone that many of his family members had passed away from cancer, but he hoped he wouldn't be one of them. Unfortunately, what happened to his family also happened to him. His final illness came to him while he was still young enough to be at his best, and two years later the Lord called his priest back into his arms.

Chapter 14. Fr. Ma: A Rich Personality Beyond The Ordinary



(From the left) Fr, Ma, Fr. Robert Falk, Fr. Luc Van Loocy

Tomorrow? Providence will take care of us again



Adieu to old friends

Chapter 15

Fr. Ma's Great Achievements

Fr. Ma founded the Salesian Congregation in Korea and formed the first Korean Salesians. He became the first Principal of Salesian Junior High School and contributed to the rapid growth of the school after the establishment of the high school in 1958. Since that time, except from 1961 to 1965, he was Principal of the high school until 1982, contributing to the development of the school. About 13,000 Alumni received graduation certificates from him, including 55 priests.

謹 故馬 아루키메데 마루엘리神父 永訣 吊



He knew about his cancer. However, he was so engrossed in his work that he neglected his health issues. When he returned to the hospital after a period of very busy work, the doctor found out that he had only one month left to live. While lying in the hospital, losing and regaining consciousness, his greatest concern was not forgetting the program for the 200 children of Hansens' sufferers, for whom he had organized the summer programs with the Salesian novices.

All the Salesians, Salesian family members, alumni, Hansens' disease patients and their children and the orphans, who heard the news that Fr. Ma was fighting cancer in the hospital, prayed for his recovery. However, on August 6, 1984, God called Fr. Ma to heaven.

Fr. Ma's remains were moved to Kwangju on the morning of August 7, and the funeral was conducted at 10:00 am on August 8.

The funeral was held in the main auditorium of Salesian High School. Even in the scorching summer heat, Salesian priests and brothers, as well as many priests from the Gwangju diocese, priests from various parts of the country, Salesian Sisters, Caritas Sisters, and many other religious men and women, Salesian family members and

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Salesian alumni, patients from Hansen’s settlements, their children, and many more guests, filled the auditorium to overflowing. All were people who felt Fr. Ma’s great love. So many people came to the funeral that many of them had to stay outside.

Archbishop Gong-Hee Victorino Yun of the Archdiocese of Gwangju presided at the solemn funeral Mass in con-celebration with all the priests present.

After the funeral Mass in the auditorium, there was a farewell ceremony for everyone on the school grounds with a procession along the grounds where Fr. Ma had so often

passed. After the farewell ceremony at the school grounds, the funeral ceremony left the school in a car procession. It passed through downtown Gwangju City, and headed to the Catholic priest's cemetery.

Fr. Ma loved Korea very much, as we know from his statements: "My heart is grateful to the good Korean people for helping me." He also usually said "I will live with the young in Korea and I will be buried in Korean soil." In accordance with his will, he was buried with other priests of the Gwangju Archdiocese in Nam-Dong Cemetery.

He left a great impression on the hearts of so many people so that they felt great pain when he left them to return to the Lord's bosom. People who loved Fr. Ma honored him with letters and poems for his love and his great accomplishments. They felt sorry that they could no longer receive or share the warmth of his love.

Up to now, we have talked about the life and achievements of the Fr. Ma with various records and people's testimonies.

A young boy in Italy was called by God to become a missionary, to become His apostle, to dedicate his entire life to the service of the world and its people.

And in the midst of the rapidly changing world, he left his homeland at a young age and came to Korea, a small,

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poor, and barren country in the Far East. In order to fulfill the will of God who sent him, he educated young Koreans with love and empathy, visited the poor, and gave his life as a gift to those in need. The life story of Fr. Ma who filled his

life with love for God and people is a beautiful life story of a man who dedicated his life to God and people.

12,461 alumni of Salesian school, who are active in all levels of society in Korea for a better society and the world, and numerous Hansen's patients and their children who received special love from Fr. Ma are thought to live their lives in the spirit of love and service learned from Fr. Ma.

Love for Fr. Ma

The last period of his life was spent living a beautiful life with the poor. A well-known writer, teacher of Salesian High School, In-Han Kang composed a poem dedicated to Fr. Ma at his death.

The glory of heaven with you!

I dedicate this poem to the soul of Fr. Archimede

Martelli

1984. 8. 8. A teacher of Salesian school, Poet In-Han

Kang

Father! Fr. Ma.

You came to Korea in 1954



It was thirty years ago when the wounds of war were
not yet healed.

To meet unfortunate Korean youth bereft of parents
You came

To share the pain of their heart.

Father, Fr. Archimede Martelli.

The beautiful city where you spent your boyhood

As Verona's summer sky is blue,

The summer sky in Kwangju also is so blue.

Did you miss the blue sky of your country?

Father, Fr. Ma.

It seems to be heard even now.

When you were the principal of Gwangju Salesian
High School,

Even when you were not the principal,

Every week you visited (people in need) and shared
love.

Father, our Fr. Ma

You shook the hands of the sick men with your big
warm hands.

You don't let your right hand know what your left
hand is doing.

You secretly seek out and share joy with them.

For 30 years, half of your life far away from your country,

You embraced and loved the Korean land,

The children of 'Happy house' and 'Moodeung
nursery home' became high school students.

Those children in Shinaewon graduated from college.

Alas! The blind school children who cannot see are
now crying with blind eyes

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Br. Taddeo Oh, for years the nearest collaborator of Fr. Ma, with two Salesian School teaches pay respect to him on his tomb

hearing the shocking news that you cannot visit them anymore.

Grandpa, Fr. Ma.

Gently you touched the crust of a wound on the kid's head.

Sometimes in an orphanage's pleasant garden you sang for us the song "Black cat, Nero"

From your quiet room in the Salesian community house,

The typewriter sound stopped.

The letters coming from and going to your foreign benefactors,

So many of those letters have no place to go in the future.

Father, Fr. Ma, you devoted your whole life to God's work,

I wish to hear your laughter.

I would like to hear your Korean language again, even with its exotic accent.

Alas, you have gone.

On the night of August 6, 1984, following God's holy calling.

You are really gone, Father.

The glory of heaven is with you.

Fr. Archimede Martelli.

The glory of the blue sky is with you forever.

The last letter from settlement children

At Fr Martelli's funeral, the children from the settlement village, so greatly loved by him, regretted his departure. They left a farewell letter:

Proclaiming the word of God throughout your whole life and working for us, you have done a lot of good deeds in this world according to God's will. Even though our devotion is too little, we pray for you.

You have gone to the beautiful world that all of us believers' desire. However, your human departure makes us sad.

When we think of your sacrifice and service for us for more than 30 years, leaving your country, coming to a foreign land, we feel deeply touched in our heart.

You have been the apostle of love for 30 years in this land, a man of the love of Christ, and the comfort and consolation of those in need. You have

also given hope and aspiration to the children of the settlements.

Fr. Ma, you also did a lot of work for the young. In summer, you prepared a place where we could pray with many other students.

In the meantime, you gave us unspoken teachings. Your teaching to always help others, to love and sacrifice will remain in our hearts forever. So, we'll live according to your lessons. In addition to this, you have always given us generous gifts, and shown us love and an example of personal sacrifice for the development of the settlement.

Fr. Ma, do not be sad now that you are separated from us in this world. We are always where you are, and you are always where we are. How can we say goodbye! If you go ahead and wait, we will follow you, waiting for the day to enter into eternal life by living according to the God's will.

How can we speak of your achievements with

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our small mouths? How can we contain your
accomplishments and love with our tiny eyes?

To You, Father, Ma, the Apostle of Love.

I wish that you rest in peace!

Even after the departure of Fr. Martelli, the Korean Salesians continued to take care of the children and marginalized youth of the settlement villages, with interest and love.



Cl. Falk, Fr. Martelli and teachers enjoyed the Teacher's day program



Chapter 16

Salesian Middle and High School History

- 1951 The late Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun (1916.4.20-1951.5.23) died as a military Chaplain during the Korean War. In his memory, the U.S. Military Chaplain Corporation decides to establish a middle and high school in Gwangju as a commemorative project.
- 1953 the Catholic Archbishop of Gwangju, Harold Henry, invites the Salesian Society

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- to found the school.
- 1956, February 3rd floor of the school is completed at JungHeung-dong, Gwangju, 816 pyeong (2,693m²)
- 1956 April Authorization for the establishment of the Salesian Foundation.
Inauguration of Fr. Archimede Martelli, as first principal of Gwangju Salesian Middle School.
Gwangju Salesian Middle School opens.
- 1959 March Gwangju Salesian Middle School - 1st Graduation Ceremony (219 graduates).
- 1959 April Inauguration of Fr. Archimede Martelli as the first principal of Salesian High School.
Gwangju Salesian High School opens.
- 1962 February Salesian High School 1st Graduation Ceremony (180 graduates).
- 1976 February Salesian Middle School closes (18th graduation, total number of graduates 4,125).
- 1989 March Salesian High School Moves to a new school in Il-Gok-Dong, Gwangju
4 buildings, total floor area of 55,510 square meter.

Chapter 16. Salesian Middle and High School History

- 1993 March Gwangju Salesian Middle School reopens (1st year 4 class).
- 1996 March as 'Salesian Middle School', 'Salesian High School', and 'Salesian Association'
Change of school name and corporation name.
- 2019 March Salesian High School, 11th current principal, Mun-no Han inaugurated,
Inauguration of Young-Tae Jung, the 17th current principal of Salesian Middle School.
- 2021 January Salesian Middle School 44th graduation (132 graduates, total number of graduates 9,467).
- 2021 February Salesian High School 60th graduation (239 graduates, total number of graduates 23,606).



| Appendix 1

Letter from Bishop Mütel to Blessed Fr. Michael Rua

Letter from Bishop Mütel, asking the Salesian superiors in Turin
to send Salesians to Korea.

(A vivid account of the Korean church at the time)

Concerning the establishment of a school in Korea

July 14 – 1908

The first, and perhaps the only time, in the history of the Church, in Korea Christianity was preached before official evangelization activities began. In 1784, the Catholic religion became known in Korea through books related to Christianity brought from Beijing by some scholars from the Joseon dynasty. One of them went to Beijing and finished a catechism course and was baptized. When he returned to his country, he taught his colleagues the doctrine he had received, and baptized them.

Appendix 1. Letter from Bishop Mütel to Blessed Fr. Michael Rua

A Chinese priest, Zhōu Wénmó (Jacob) came secretly to Korea. He was arrested in 1801 and beheaded. From that time on many Korean martyrs were born.

On September 8, 1831, the Apostolic Vicariate of Korea was established. It was entrusted to the Paris Foreign Mission Society. On September 9, 1839, Bishop Marius Imbert, Fr. Philibert Maubant, and Fr. Honor Chastan were arrested and executed.

In 1845, missionary work resumed again. In 1846, the first Korean priest, Fr. Daegeon Kim (Andrea) was martyred. In 1866, Bishop François Berneux, Auxilliary Bishop Antoine Daveluy came to Korea. This brought the number of missionaries to ten. Between 8 to 30 March, these two bishops were arrested and beheaded. The missionaries that survived the persecution could not remain in Korea. There were also a great number of native Korean martyrs.

In May 1876, when missionary work resumed, there were no more than 10,000 Catholics. However, in 1887, the number of faithful reached 63,340 due to newly acquired religious freedom.

In 1898, the Choseon authorities asked me to guarantee the establishment of a technical school, promising to pay a budget of 15,000 francs annually. Since the Marianist

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Brothers have no manpower, I made this request to the Little Brothers of Mary (of St. Genis Laval) At first, they accepted my proposal. However, because of the recent persecution of religion in France, at the last minute they had to withdraw their promise.

Today, this technical school will be very useful for the country. But it will not be possible to receive subsidies from the authorities because of changes in the political environment. ...

The sacrifices made by the Koreans under the pressure of political events, such as the Japanese regicide on November 17, 1905, means that the citizens finally realize the importance of education. Now there is a real enthusiasm that inspires them to establish schools of all forms.

Therefore, we are trying to set up a Catholic Teachers College. I am thinking of a high school or a humanities school for young people from Catholic families, including young people who are not Catholic. They will be the leadership class of this country in the future. There are still no schools of this type. So, trust in this kind of public project makes us hope for good results in gaining the confidence of society.

These various projects are very important to us because

Appendix 1. Letter from Bishop Mütel to Blessed Fr. Michael Rua

we are under pressure from fierce competition from Protestants.

While Catholic missionary work is done by 46 French missionaries and 10 Korean priests, Protestant believers are working with 215 male and female missionaries and 50 times more resources than ours. There are also very active British missionaries. Protestant believers have set up facilities like the YMCA for young people in Seoul.

They are trying to preach even to our young people, and we at least have something to counteract them.

We are inviting you to a place of apostolic wars. We own sufficient land 'extra muros'. You will be able to operate well on that land. ...

The weather in Korea is mild and very healthy. A British Protestant miner who lived in a number of countries and was comparing Korean weather to New Zealand weather told me that he has not seen such pleasant and healthy weather anywhere in the world as in Korea. You can easily come to Korea by ship from Europe or on the Trans-Siberian Railway...

Korea is a country that uses Chinese characters. In Korea, you can study everything related to Chinese characters as well as you can in China. ...

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... The school that will be established would be unimaginable in Japan or Korea, and this type of school will be the first. It can only be an advantage.

It would be enough if there were three or four intellectually well-prepared teachers to start this work. If they were well-trained in Korean and Chinese characters and still young, it would be even better. ...

Most of the missionaries working in Korea are French, so I hope that the people selected would be French Salesians or French-speaking missionaries for better mutual understanding. During the time they need accommodation to study the language, the Paris Mission Society will help them with everything they need.

As for financial matters, it seems to be difficult for us to help more than to procure land. If you need a loan, you will be able to pay it back after a certain time. We will help with all our heart.

July 14 – 1908 Paris

S.C. Mütel

Titular Bishop of Milo

Vicar Apostolic of Korea

| Appendix 2

Profile of Fr. Martelli

Today I want to talk about the brilliant mind of Fr. Archimede Martelli, who opened and developed Salesian Middle and High School. I want to tell you about his wise heart that delighted, inspired, and motivated all those who helped him. People were willing to collaborate with him, even at great sacrifice, whenever he needed help.

Fr. Martelli kept the Salesians of the Religious Community happy, diligent and generous. He was also happy to see the middle and high schools, each with 12 classes, grow and thrive year after year. It grew into a school of 1500 students and 80 teachers always smiling and happy.

Fr. Martelli would care about the happiness of the students using a joyful and loving mood in the “Good Morning Greeting”, a talk given by himself to all the students, every day. The same was true for religious events like Christmas, Easter, and the month of Our Lady. At spring picnics, fall

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picnics, fall sports day, summer camping at the school's beachfront retreat in Gyaemari, and after returning from Gyaemari.

Another way to give the joy and fulfill the expectation of the young was the construction of the Theater Hall, of the Gymnasium, and the Swimming Pool. The Swimming Pool was 20 meters wide by 30 meters long and 1.20 meters deep. It was like a big box made of assembled metal support that held a huge blue-green impermeable canvas full of water. It had a pump system that recycled and filtered the water so that it was always clean and warm. The purpose of the swimming pool was to teach the students to swim well, so that they could survive if they happen to fall into deep water, and perhaps someday they would also save some child in a similar predicament.

Fr. Martelli cared about the teachers and their families. He drew up a document certifying that the teachers were active educators in the Salesian Middle and High School. They could present the document at the schools where their children were enrolled and obtain an official discount given to the children of educators. He also asked his teachers to bring to him the invoices of the expenses that they or their family members incurred at hospitals

and pharmacies. He would reimburse the amount, writing it off as “Charitable work performed by the School” and present it at the Government Financial Inspections and at the Annual Religious Financial Report.

Fr. Martelli also helped his teachers when they needed extraordinary monetary help to move their family to a more convenient house. He would loan them the amount of money needed and the teachers would repay the school by deducting a certain amount from their monthly salary. In this way, in some months or in some years they would pay back their debt. All the while, the teachers and their families could start living in a better house right away.

Fr. Martelli had a sincere interest in the wellbeing and in the happiness of his teachers and students: happiness in the present, happiness in their future social life and eternal happiness in heaven. Attracted by his good heart, every year, several teachers with their families, on their own, while performing diligently their work at the school, would enroll in the catechism instruction at the Catholic Parish of their district and would receive baptism.

Seoul, March 30, 2021

Fr. José M. Blanco, SDB

| Appendix 3

Fr. Ma With His Aquiline Nose

(A Salesian High School 2nd graduate remembers Fr. Ma)

I remember a time when an episode about an Italian priest brought me to a deep reminiscence about him. He may not remember my name, but it will be a great honor for me if he recognizes my face. The relationship with him is nothing more than three years as a student at Salesian School where he was the principal. I just passed through and saw him as principal from afar. But at no time do I feel so faint, so warm, so profound as when I recall memories of him. He is someone who sits deep in my inner pockets and makes me think of other things... . . .

Fr. Archimede Martelli: we just call him Fr. Ma in Korean style after two initial letters of his name. Like most rural people, I thought it would be better to go to a school in the capital or Seoul for high school and college, so I studied in the city at a Catholic school in Gwangju called Salesian

High School, which is a bit of a long name.

At the school, foreign priests from Italy, the United States, Spain and Canada taught Bible and foreign languages such as English and French. Korean teachers were in charge of the rest of the subjects.

We would catch up with them in the hallways and occasionally try to make conversation in French and say, “Comment allez-vous?” to which they would reply, “Je vai tres bien”. It was all new and curious to my eyes from the South Sea coastal countryside, where I had never been on a train or seen a four-storey school before.

However, my memory of Fr. Ma begins with my “pee” event. One day after the entrance ceremony, I was pissing in the sink and someone touched my back. “Hey, you, this is a place to wash your hands.”

I heard a sound from behind and instantly I stopped urinating. His eyebrows were very bushy, and his eyes were very big and bright. It was Fr. Eagle-Nose Ma who looked just like a cow thief.

Having only seen maggot-infested outhouses in my hometown and not knowing about hand-washing sinks and flush toilets, I thought it was a urinal and peed in it. I have never recounted these events to anyone, Unfortunately,

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Fr. Ma laughed lightly every time he met me after that, and I was embarrassed every time. Perhaps Fr. Ma has remembered it for quite some time.

That was 16 years ago. Every time I remember when I stood with my chin up like a man in a western movie and excused myself for pissing in the sink, I can't forget the face of Fr. Eagle-Nosed Ma.

For me, the impression of Fr. Ma was the image of a clumsy worker in a reclamation-area construction site in my hometown, rather than a clergyman who carried the Bible on his side and celebrated Mass or climbed the long stone stairs of the church for confession. His solid body reminded me of a blunt, but generous and broad understanding father, and his image when he opened his mouth wide to laugh as if yawning reminded me of a cousin of my father. Because he had been living in Korea for so long, I don't know if his smile or even his gestures resembled those of Koreans.

Later on I came to know that he had arrived in Korea in 1954. It was said that the priest with blue eyes was a descendant of Saint John Bosco. They said he flew in on a battle-scared US Air Force twin-engine plane to Korea and that had only brought with him in his bag a blueprint to prepare a place for learning in this land.

I was not a seminary student, so I was not staying in the school dormitory. But occasionally I had a chance to get in touch with him.

Was it in second year high school? I pestered him to publish the school magazine called “The Salesian” and I often recited a congratulatory poem every Easter. One day, when I came down from the stage after reciting a poem, he said to me, “Oh, I don’t know. I didn’t understand it well!” But even though he was not able to understand, he gave me the sign that I read it well with his mouth wide opening and laughing like a hippo as usual.

Sometimes I meet my old friends: Mr. S, who was expected to become a priest, but now he is doing very well as a chairman of a company, Mr. P who has unexpectedly become a well-known novelist, and Mr. C who was good at Latin. We always ask if there is some news about Fr. Eagle-Nose Ma. Two years ago in winter I went to Kwangju and visited Salesian High School, my Alma Mater.

The muddy road, where Fr. Ma, rolling up his pant legs and standing in the middle of the rice paddies beckoned us from afar to go back home as we couldn’t have class that day due to the flood, - that muddy road is now paved with asphalt. The teachers were mostly strangers to me except

for the history teacher and the biology teacher, but in the principal's office, the eagle-nosed Fr. Ma was there. "Our principal is still here!" I thought in my heart. For me it was 14 years but for him it was 20 years; but according to a Korean proverb: "during that time the mountains and rivers had changed twice."

"I am a second batch graduate." When I introduced myself, he opened the door of the teacher's office and full of joy he shouted: "Here we have an alumni of many years ago!" And then to me he said: "Welcome! Welcome, Very long time no see!" After that, he dragged me into the principal's office as if he was pulling me. While drinking the coffee prepared by himself that day, I felt his warmth spreading with warm energy like my father's cousin. Above all, I felt the fatherly love of a foreign priest and teacher who was always impressed with me. He looked older than he was, and he had wrinkles at the edges of his eyes.

"Alas! Father you are also getting old!", I thought, but his heart welcomed me consistently like that of an old friend.

That day, when I left the school gate, he followed me driving his old car and gave me a ride. He took me to downtown Kwangju and went back soon. When he left me, he said goodbye with a laugh, with his mouth wide open

Appendix 3. Fr. Ma With His Aquiline Nose

like a hippopotamus, saying, "Goodbye! And come again!" He is said to be celebrating his sixtieth birthday this coming October. Ah! In such nice world, how has he lived for 60 years as an old bachelor! Is it because of his stubbornness? Or is it a joke of fate from the God he believes in? When I think of my Alma Mater Salesian High School, I cannot forget the eagle-nosed Fr. Ma.

