



TUGBOATS

...an additional help to steer a willing heart and mind into the harbour of life or out into the sea of living, as did Don Bosco, with and for the thousand of young people of his time.



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CELEBRATING THE BICENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH



LAY COLLABORATION AND THE FUTURE OF SALESIAN INDIA



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Sr Alice Chacko FMA (INK)

Lay collaboration! Has this idea become a cliché? Documents are written, seminars are held, directions are given. Yet how far has this become a reality? Perhaps we need to consider this seriously during this bicentenary year of Don Bosco's birth.

When we look around the world, nay in our own country, and see courageous lay men standing on the pulpit and playing their role as ministers of the Word with such passion and zeal, and see lay women in the vanguard of social reform, in their fight for justice in favour of the poor, we have to admit that the laity has crossed their adolescence stage. Though they may not have the degrees and the opportunities that we religious and priests have, they are showing to the church and to the society that they have grown up. Today they are asserting themselves here and there with a louder voice demanding their rightful place.

I happened to read what Shri Chhotebhai asked once, "Was Jesus afraid or reluctant to empower his disciples? He empowered his disciples, he did not feel threatened by them". Why are we afraid to share responsibility with our laity?

Fr Pascual Chavez, our former Rector Major, during one of his visits to India warned us to be aware of the future and not to suffer the crisis that Europe is facing today. In the face of the declining number of vocations and the quality of those who enter into the institutes, and the humiliating situation of hearing about the scandalous stories of some priests and religious, we have to admit humbly yet realistically the fact that the light of the lay men and women is shining far brighter than ours in the task of liberation and evangelization.

Future of Salesian India! I begin to dream and hope of a future India: when we will walk humbly side by side with the laity like the two disciples of Emmaus in our educational and evangelizing journey; when the seat of power and position in schools and colleges

will be handed over to the lay collaborators; when sdb's and fma's will be found "in the peripheries of our country where the poor awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, those who are rich in the world's goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life thirsting for the divine"; when they will seek counsel from the laity who have practical wisdom to offer; when they will be in the lead to spread "the spirituality of communion first in their internal life and then in the ecclesial community"; when they will give priority to becoming "experts of communion" rather than holding degrees from A to Z; when they will make the church grow by "attraction" becoming attractive through their smiling faces and happy disposition; when there will be mutual edification and learning of the science of God and of our charism.

Don Bosco trained his boys to be his collaborators. Can we train the youth in our campus and the lay collaborators and trust them with responsibility? Today when Christianity is attacked and religious life is questioned in India time is not far off for us when we may have to quit our big institutions. Of course the Church and religious life will not end. Pope Francis time and again is appealing, requesting and even demanding a change. Are we ready?

We need to take a strong stand on preparing our lay collaborators to give them the needed formation and trust. Our mission is pastoral – to heal, to give hope, to lift up, to witness... May be we can reduce the investment in money, time and opportunities for courses, seminars and input sessions for us and conduct more sessions and seminars for laity to prepare them for the future. Time is up when they will take up roles, which we are afraid to give up. Let there be a gradual moving out of the religious and a coming in of the laity!



LAY COLLABORATION AND SALESIAN INDIA

Fr Martin Kuruvanmakal SDB (INK)

Don Bosco was eager to involve numerous members of the lay faithful in his spirit and works, even beyond his own works. During his life he was supported by a vast movement of persons (priests, religious and lay people). In fact the activities of the Oratory in its first years were carried out with the assistance of numerous collaborators, beginning with the help of his own mother, Margret Occhiena.

Don Bosco chose the collaborators from among those who showed an aptitude and availability for the education of needy youth. All those willing to 'help Don Bosco' were welcome! He used them principally for the animation of free time, in recreation, in assistance, and in the teaching of catechism. He involved them in the life of the Oratory and entrusted to them specific tasks. Such collaboration and availability have been evident from the beginning in varied forms. Don Bosco planned for them a programme of continued formation, for which he had frequent meetings with them.

“The lay person is a person of the Church in the heart of the world and a member of the world in the heart of the Church,” declared the Latin-American Bishops at Puebla. In our Indian context, we have widely varying Salesian activities in our institutions. In almost all our settings there is a considerable space for many persons all of whom we call 'lay'. Some are true and practicing Catholics. But many belong to non-Christian religions. All of them play a part in the activities of our works according to the possibilities either by active participation in the work itself or by their adherence to the Salesian spirit and mission. They can be loosely termed as 'Friends of Don Bosco'. Anyone who wants in some way to share with us our educative and evangelizing perspectives should find a place in our institutions. Some of us find personal difficulty in visualizing the sharing of responsibility. Many a times we are willing to accept collaboration, but not shared responsibility. A change of mentality is needed...in the first place in the Salesians themselves.

Failure to share the vast riches with large numbers of the lay faithful committed in the secular area of Don Bosco's mission would be a kind of mutilation of the charism which would impoverish the educative outlook for very many youngsters. The more we extend the understanding of the term 'lay person' as one who draws inspiration from the spirit and mission of Don Bosco, the greater becomes the obligation of the Salesian community to help and follow up the formation of those close to us.

Know Don Bosco

1. Who started the VDBs?
2. When was the national federation for past pupils found?
3. What is the full form of ADMA?
4. Disciples were founded by whom, and when?
5. How many members are there in the Salesian family?

(Names of those who send the right answers will be published in the next issue. Please send your answers to manunsdb@yahoo.com)

Answers for the November 2014 Issue

1. Who ordained Don Bosco a priest?
Archbishop Louis Fransoni
2. What did Leo XIII say about his work?
“Your work is undoubtedly God’s work, hence go forward courageously and fearlessly.”
3. Name the Pope who guided the church at the time of Don Bosco’s birth?
Pope Pius VIII.
4. What did Leo XIII tell DB’s music master about Don Bosco?
“I know that you have little time for your self, Don Bosco is not the kind of man to let you stand about wasting your time.”
5. When was Mary Mazarello canonized? By whom?
On 24th June 1951, by Pope Pius XII.



FORMATION OF LAY PEOPLE: THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Fr Joe Mannath SDB (INM)

The Catholic Church in India has for centuries been a witness to – and functioned as – a clergy-dominated structure. In such a situation, it is natural that the religious and clergy feel reluctant or even threatened by the mere prospect of lay people taking charge of things which were so far considered the sole-privilege or duty of the clergy alone. One might even add that some sections of the clergy are afraid to be transparent and fear being challenged by the laity.

The Salesian mission, within the Church, is no exception to this situation. And like most Indian Priests and religious, we Salesians too find it difficult to adjust to the new trend of lay collaboration in the mission. Even though we speak a lot about lay collaboration, we still need to go a long way in our basic attitude. However, the Salesian mission in India can have a bright future, if it prepares the lay collaborators, before it is too

The Salesian mission in India can have a bright future, if it prepares the lay collaborators, before it is too late.

late. As it is we are late in preparing good leaders and efficient lay persons who can carry on the mission, and man our institutions, based on Gospel values.

One might wonder if there are sufficient number of lay Salesian apostles to take forward the dream of Don Bosco. More than the number, the quality and fidelity of the members is important. The Salesian family ought to wake up and empower the lay people to come forward and take up responsibilities. This could be one of the key areas of our apostolate, namely to facilitate this shift, especially as spiritual directors.

Salesian Family in South Asia presences and numerical strength

S No	Name of Group	Year	Number of Province	Presences	Members	Novices	Total
1	SDB	1906	12	356	2751	154	2905
2	FMA	1922	6	181	1280	75	1355
3	MSMHC	1942	5	163	1068	47	1115
4	SMI	1948	4	78	637	16	653
5	VSDB	1983	1	19	112	14	126
6	SMA	1976	1	31	122	7	129
7	Disciples	1973	-	119 [#]	410	10	420
8	VDB	1989	-	11	10	4 ^c	14
9	ADMA	?	-	11	-	-	-
10	Cooperators	1906	-	166 units	3034	-	-
11	Past Pupil	1964*	-	96 units	50000	-	-

*Salesian educational institutions in South Asia had past pupils' associations long before 1964. However, it was in 1964 that the National Federation was established.

[#] Disciples working in Mission Centres.

^c Candidates



ENVISIONING NEW HORIZONS

Sr Teresa Joseph FMA (INB)

Lay Collaboration and the future of Salesian India is indeed a very apt topic to reflect upon today, as the Salesian Family is busy with a variety of initiatives to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco. Who can think of Don Bosco without thinking of the vast array of lay people who inspired, sustained and carried to the four corners of the world the spirit and charism of Don Bosco, father and teacher of young people?

The Salesian India can definitely make a difference in shaping the minds and hearts of young people today with a well-planned and wisely carried out lay collaboration. Don Bosco is no more just the father and founder of the Salesian Family alone. He is a universally acknowledged saint of the young. The Salesian India today has a specific role to play. The history, pedagogy and spirituality of Don Bosco are gifts that Salesian India has received and which need to be shared generously with the world. The laity need to be empowered in every way possible making them active collaborators in the Salesian mission among the young. They need to be made partners in moments of prayer and taste the spirituality of Don Bosco.

The mighty transformative mission Don Bosco was able to accomplish in his time challenges the Salesian India to wake up. Together with the laity, the Salesian India can dream of a future that sends out prophets, missionaries and effective ambassadors of the spirit and charism of Don Bosco to the World.

Lay collaboration and the future of Salesian India opens new horizons to be explored in the field of education and accompaniment of young people. Committed lay collaboration can dream of a vibrant Salesian India, well known for its positive impact on the young and ready to share the charism of Don Bosco in the 21st century.

Salesian Family in World Numerical Strength

S No	Name of Group	Members
1	SDB	15176
2	FMA	**14655
3	MSMHC	**1050
4	SMI	500
5	VSDB	122
6	SMA	**110
7	Disciples	**400
8	VDB	1308
9	ADMA	80000
10	Cooperators	24873
11	Past Pupil	* 97357

Source:

*Statistical data, GC26, Rome 2008

**Annuario Pontificio 2008; other figures are updated by individual institutes from time to time

Here is a list of the groups in chronological order of their membership updated on 16.01.2011

INSPIRATION

Greetings from the Philippines on the way around the EAO region.

I have one question always in my mind: Is there a future for the Salesians in India without a strong move towards the Lay element in our charism - number of brothers? Number of Salesian cooperators? Just 15 VDBs in the whole country? Could you contribute something in this sense to the TUGBOATS...?

Fr Vaclav Klement sdb (Former Councillor for Missions)



LAITY: A SLEEPING GIANT

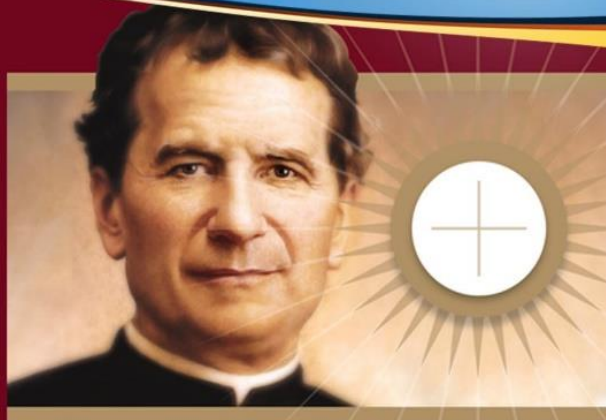
Fr Joe Kokkandathil SDB (INK)

Our world stands in need of collaboration with the laity, especially the Salesians in India, which will necessarily lead us to unity, harmony and effectiveness. The laity is regarded as passive recipients of the Church's ministry. Yet they are well equipped with knowledge and skill. This has made the laity into a sleeping giant, since the resources of the laity in India remain untapped. Time is right for us to leverage on the resources of the laity.

We Salesians need to be sensitive to the world around us as Don Bosco was and to the promptings of the Spirit. Lay collaboration will definitely usher in enthusiasm, faith and induce charity and hope, provided we are ready for a radical change in the style of governance and attitude. This requires an overhauling of the heart of every Salesian in India through the power of faith, love and trust in Jesus our Master. Jesus himself evolved an ideal collaborating model.

I conclude with the prayer of St Thomas Aquinas:

'O God, grant that whatever good things I have, I may share generously with those who have not, and that whatever good things I do not have, I may request humbly from those who do. Plant deep in me, Lord, all the virtues, that I might be devout in divine matters, discerning in human affairs, and burdensome to no one in fulfilling my own bodily needs. Order me inwardly through a good life that I might do what is right and what will be meritorious for me and a good example for others.'



SALESIAN VOCATION

THE LAITY AND SALESIAN MISSION IN INDIA

Ms Cheryl Bartholomeusz

I think the Salesian calling of working with the youth, especially those disadvantaged, is highly relevant in today's world. While the fundamental principles of Don Bosco are relevant even today, the Salesians need to reinvent themselves to be able to apply those principles effectively.

Gone are the days in which the Salesians could easily build on the foundations of the family values and culture of young people who come in touch with them. In cities, parents and teachers struggle to get through to their children and youth, and to keep up with the pace of change today. Therefore, it's hardly probable that the average religious in their insularity can get close enough to make a difference. In the smaller towns and rural areas, things might be a little different but the pace of change is similar. Given this fact, a closer collaboration and greater networking is warranted, if we are truly interested in the welfare of the young. Even in cases where young people have had not the right to the care and support of a family, the Salesians ought to reach out – not the SDBs alone but the whole Salesian family.

If the Indian Salesian mission is to succeed, there must either be a miraculous resurgence in the congregation or at least a courageous humility on the part of the religious to accept that the mission cannot move forward without the laity. Genuine, equal partnership with the laity can make a huge difference to the way the Salesian system is interpreted, extended and implemented to bring real transformation in all the players – the religious, the laity and the youth they seek to impact.



SHARERS OF THE SAME SALESIAN CHARISM

Fr Ashley Miranda SDB (INB)

The apostolate of the Salesians in India is a wonderful story of initiatives, selflessness, team work and trust in Divine Providence. Over these years we Salesians have spread to the far corners of India and have done much for the welfare of the young. We have achieved all this not only because of the inspiring and dynamic leadership and vision of our pioneers and the dedication of the ordinary Salesian, but also because of the support and cooperation of innumerable lay people. Their contribution to the mission has not always been recognized and appreciated but one can say without an iota of doubt very little would have been achieved without them.

We all know what the cooperators meant to Don Bosco and how they helped him in the mission. The cooperators were not merely generous lay people or diocesan priests who volunteered their services to help Don Bosco in his rapidly expanding works, but more specifically people who felt called by God to be like Don Bosco, signs and bearers of his love to the poor and the young. They were people who not only helped in Don Bosco's mission but also

shared in his charism and his commitment, albeit in a way proper to their status.

For us Salesians in India working together with lay people is not something we can choose to do or not to do according to how comfortable we are with the idea. Don Bosco's own example and the teaching of the Church spell out in no uncertain terms the path we have got to take. Working with lay people is not something new for us; what we have got to get used to is working with them as collaborators as sharers in the mission. We are all co-workers; we have a common charism (of course we have a special responsibility to help them understand this charism and grow into it); we have a common goal – establishing the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the young.

If we Salesians truly appreciate and value collaboration (in the true sense of the term) with lay people, there is no limit to what we can achieve. The future is full of promise – there is no way we can realize this promise without genuine collaboration with all those who share in the charism of Don Bosco.



Merry Christmas
Happy New Year

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Topic for the Next Issue:
Living Boscós

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