



CAGLIERO 11

newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation



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Dear friends,

It is May. Let us be inspired by the one who was the first to hurry, to bring the WORD MADE FLESH to the home of Elizabeth, who needed her help. It is a Gospel image that accompanies us in every Hail Mary, right up to that hour for which we always ask her to pray for us, the hour of the AMEN that will bring our mission on earth to a close. When I was in Nigeria this month, we undertook a pilgrimage on foot of some fifty kilometres between Ondo and Akure, to the shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians. Nearly a thousand children and young people, walking, dancing and singing all night long: a 'non-stop' praise for and with the mother of all, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Mary is the first to depart; for her, there are only sons and daughters, brothers and sisters; she will also be the first to await us at the hour of the AMEN. Let us allow ourselves to be accompanied, like John in his dream at the age of nine, from Patagonia to Beijing, until our last breath.

■ Fr Silvio Roggia SDB
General Councillor for
Formation

Palabek: Commitment, adaptability and community support ensure a food supply



When we talk about a refugee camp, images of hunger, crime, malnutrition and so on immediately spring to mind... However, life in the Palabek camp is not defined solely by deprivation, but also by resilience, adaptability and a sense of community. Just as in any society where **people work to earn a living**, food is an important part of daily life; refugee families receive food aid, usually maize flour, beans and cooking oil, which sustains them throughout the month. Although the rations are not always sufficient or varied, they provide a foundation on which people organise their lives. Small markets also operate within the camp, with traders selling vegetables, cassava, peanuts and sometimes fish. Those who manage to earn a small income through casual work, small businesses or support from relatives often supplement their rations with these foods. In this way, meals, though simple, are not always the same. A family might prepare posho¹ and beans one day and add vegetables or tomatoes the next. There is also a clear **effort towards self-sufficiency**. Some families cultivate small vegetable patches around their shelters, especially during the rainy season. Although production is limited, it provides both nourishment and a sense of belonging. Challenges remain, such as the limited variety and quality of food, and basic storage and cooking conditions, yet people continue to organise their lives with hope.

In light of the goal of **ensuring access to food for all**, Palabek reminds us that such access is not just about quantity, but also about quality and consistency, and that this requires both awareness and responsibility. Avoiding waste is important not only in places where abundance is a reality, but also in refugee camps, where every grain counts. From large-scale producers to individual consumers, a shared commitment is needed to ensure that food reaches those who need it most and is used wisely. Access to quality food should not be a privilege, but a fundamental right for every person.

■ Fr Ubaldino Andrade Hernández SDB
Director of the Salesian Community of St Kizito in Palabek,
Uganda, AGL Province

¹ Posho is a traditional African dish made by mixing cornmeal with boiling water until a thick paste forms, which is eaten alongside other vegetables.

FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING

■ What does "eating responsibly" mean to me in a world where not everyone has access to sufficient, good-quality food?



THE "NURTURING" OF YOUNG MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN ITALY



Dear Guy-Roger and Henri, what 'nourishes' you and gives you strength in your mission in Italy?

G-R. - Our strength springs from a very simple and deeply evangelical source: from our daily closeness to young people, especially those facing family, academic or social difficulties; from faithful prayer; from the educational community, which believes that education is an act of hope; and above all from the presence of God, which is revealed in the small acts of kindness shown by the young people, in their progress, and in the smiles that return to their faces.

H. - A mission is like a fruit on a tree that faces storms, wind, rain and sunshine... despite all these challenges, the most important thing is remaining connected to the tree, firmly rooted. Indeed, to remain faithful to the mission entrusted to me, I nurture a personal relationship with God through prayer and the sacraments and then work alongside the people to whom I have been sent.

What do the young people you encounter every day crave most?

G-R. - Young people are hungry for genuine relationships. They are looking for adults who will listen to them without judgement, who will believe in them even before they can believe in themselves. They long for emotional security – as many families are facing difficulties – for hope and opportunities to discover their talents, and for an active spirituality. At the youth club, they find a place where they can be themselves, where no one reduces them to their mistakes, and where joy is not a luxury but a right.

H. - The young people I meet in my daily ministry are eager to shape their own identities within society. I say this because I believe that modern society has placed good and evil on the same scale, so that the true choice becomes a matter of chance. Therefore, an authentic presence is vital in helping them find a point of reference and then guiding them in their choices.

Is there anything personal you'd like to say to the readers of Cagliero11?

G-R. - "Do not be afraid of small beginnings." Every day we learn that mission does not arise from grand projects, but from a kind gaze, from a faithful presence. Where a young person feels welcomed, listened to and respected, the Kingdom of God begins to grow. Continue to believe that every act of kindness, every shared smile, can change a life. And remember: "mission is not first and foremost a place one goes to, but a way of loving where one is".

H. - After these years in the mission, I believe we must not stop speaking to our young people about values, referring to God, the Salesian charism and human values, without forgetting an ethical approach to the use of modern technology. It is up to us to put into practice the words of St Paul to Timothy: "Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. Keep watch over yourself, endure suffering, carry out your ministry as a preacher of the Gospel, and fulfil your ministry." (2 Tim 4:2-5).



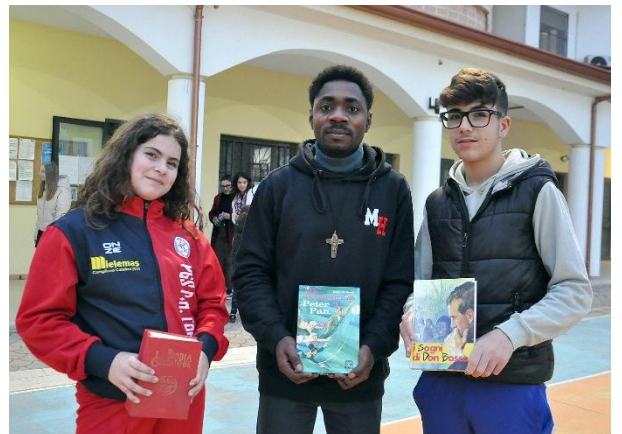
**MUTOMBO Guy
-Roger SDB**

I am originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo – Kinshasa. My first encounter with Salesian life came when I read a book introducing the Salesian charism. This led me to attend a meeting in person in Masina, where the Salesians are active. Before coming here to Italy, I was studying philosophy at Don Bosco University in Lubumbashi. I'm in Vibo Valentia now.



**MUFILE Henri
SDB**

I am Congolese (DRC) and have been a Salesian of Don Bosco since 2021. I first came to know the Salesians in Kinshasa. During my novitiate, and thanks to the guidance of my formator Virgile, I chose to become a missionary, and since 2024 I have been in the Southern Italy Province (IME), specifically for the Calabria and Basilicata project. I am currently a practical trainee in Corigliano Rossano.



**MAY
SALESIAN
MISSIONARY
INTENTION**

FOOD

That everyone might have food

[Prayer intention of Pope Leo XIV]

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

[Salesian missionary prayer intention]

ITALY

