

Preparations for the 150th Anniversary of the First Salesian Missionary Expedition (1875-2025)

written by P. Alfred MARAVILLA | April 5, 2024

Next year, 2025, is the 150th anniversary of the departure of the first Salesian missionary expedition. In view of this anniversary, the Salesian Missions Department wants to prepare for the event and launches an introduction for the Salesian communities. This event is proposed as: Give Thanks, Rethink, Relaunch.

Give Thanks: We give thanks to God for the gift of missionary vocation which enables the sons of Don Bosco today to reach out to poor and abandoned youth in 136 countries.

Rethink: This is an opportune occasion to rethink and develop a renewed vision on the Salesian Missions in the light of new challenges and new perspectives which led to new missiological reflections.

Relaunch: We have not only a glorious history to remember and be grateful for, but also a great history still to be accomplished! We look to the future with missionary zeal and enthusiasm so that we may reach out to even more poor and abandoned youth.

The official logo: The *globe* crossed by waves which symbolise courage and new challenges, but also energy and boldness. At the centre is a *ship*, symbol of the first Salesian Missionary Expedition (1875), and, at the same time, the *fire* of a renewed missionary enthusiasm. The *shape of the wheel* alludes to unity and mutual connection. *The logo may be used only in the official version without making any changes or alterations to any part of the logo.* It is available in different formats and can be downloaded (<http://tinyurl.com/33nt6y3b>) or requested by email (cagliero11 @ sdb.org).

Objective of the 2025 celebrations:

Keep the missionary spirit and enthusiasm alive in the Congregation in

order to foster greater missionary zeal and generosity among the Salesians and the whole EPC (Educational and Pastoral Community) (cf. [Rector Major's Guidelines for the Salesian Congregation after General Chapter 28, no. 7, ACG 433/2020](#)).

Not an event but a *process* of missionary renewal

The 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition ought not be only a commemorative event but a *process* of missionary renewal that already started with the drawing up of the six-year plan of missionary animation. Its high moment is 2025 but continues in the succeeding years. This takes place at three levels.

1. At the province level

Celebrations will be mainly at the Province level. Through the RCMA (**R**egional **C**oordinator for **M**issionary **A**nimation) the Missions Sector will continue to follow-up on each Province's Plan of missionary animation, of which the initiatives at the Province level for 2025 are part of.

In the context of the celebration, through the PDMA (**P**rovincial **D**elegates for **M**issionary **A**nimation) each Province will be actively encouraged to evaluate how it has put into practice the *Rector Major's Guidelines* Nos. 2, 5, 7.

"It is urgent that we give absolute priority to the commitment to evangelise the young with conscious, intentional, and explicit proposals. [...] We respond to the **"urgency of offering initial proclamation with more conviction**, because 'Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation' (*Christus Vivit*, no. 214) (*Guidelines*, n. 2)

Let all Provinces make the *radical, preferential, personal and institutional option – meaning on the part of every Salesian, on behalf of the most in need, boys, girls and poor and excluded youth, giving particular attention to the defence of those who are exploited and victims of what-ever abuse and violence ("the abuse of power, the abuse of conscience, sexual and financial abuse")* (*Guidelines* n. 5).

We made the missionary appeal concrete by inviting *each Province to open a missionary project* (refugees, immigrants, border crossings, exploited children...) during the previous six years, giving priority to the significance and the real requests for help from today's youth (*Guidelines* n. 7)."

Each Province is asked to make a concrete initiative for 2025 (e.g., the Provinces of ARS and ARN are preparing a Historical Congress; the ZMB Vice Province has

initiated the opening of a new presence in Botswana, etc.). This will be made known through [ANS](#), etc.

2. At the missions sector level

2025 will be an occasion to make known the result of the work now underway on refugees, gypsies, Identity of Salesian Missionary Museums, Identity of Provincial Mission Offices, conclusions of roundtable discussion of missiologists and theologians on Salesian missions today, Salesian Missionary Volunteering, *Bosco Food* (to create an intercultural mindset), Missionary Animation materials, SMD (**S**alesian **M**ission **D**ay) 2025, etc.

3. At the Congregation level

Missionary send-off (156th missionary expedition) on November 11, 2025 in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Valdocco. This is a celebration through which the Congregation renews its missionary commitment in front of Mary Help of Christians.

The Rector Major invites each Province to send the PDMA for the celebration. They will spend a few days (9-12 Nov 2025) in Valdocco and Genoa to “Give Thanks, Rethink, Relaunch.