**Bosco Speech- Cl. Joseph George**

**MISSIONARY SPIRIT OF DON BOSCO**

Good evening respected fathers and my dear brothers. For us salesians it is an honor and privilege to speak about Don Bosco and to continue the mission which was entrusted to him by the Lord. Though unworthy, I take the privilege of speaking on the missionary spirit of Don Bosco.

Article 26 of our constitution says like this “The Lord made clear to Don Bosco that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young, especially to those who are poorer.

We are called to the same mission and are aware of its supreme importance:young people are at the age when they must make basic life choices which affect the future of society and of the Church.

 With Don Bosco we reaffirm our preference for the young who are poor, abandoned and indanger, those who have greater need of love and evangelization, and we work especially in areas of greatest poverty”

The missionary spirit of Don Bosco was veryevident from his childhood onwards. Little Johnny never spared a chance to talk on spiritual matters to his listeners. He made use of all his talents and skills to attract children so that he would share with them the Sunday’s homily. During his school class he gathered his peergroup and made the Merry Company to live an honest Christian life. The little group used to pray the rosary and sing the litany. Festive days and the holidays used to be a time of gathering of children and young people. He was also able to bring a Jewish friend to the Catholic Church. The vigor of his missionary spirit grew as he became a priest. As a young priest he would never remain idle. He went out to the street as an angle to receive the boys who were lacking both spiritual and material things. His zeal to save poor souls which had a spark in his childhood became like a wild fire. During his final preparation for his ordination Don Bosco wrote like this: “A priest dies not go to heaven or hell alone, if he lives well, he will go to heaven together with the souls he saves with his good example; if he gives scandal with an evil life, he will go to hell together with the souls dammed because of his scandal.”

Don Bosco had no attraction towards wealth and pleasure that is why he neglected al the wealthy offers he had received soon after his ordination. During his stay at the *Convitto*, with the help of his spiritual guide Fr. Caffasso he assessed the situation of the young boys who were wandering in the city of Turin without job and food. Don Bosco was not a philanthropist but a priest, his concern was that they should meet God. He used to talk to the youngsters wherever they are. Even though they were big in size they were ignorant in faith. He understood that boys not only need bread and work but also faith that nourishes even when bread is scarce.

The beginning stage of the existence of the oratory was for Don Bosco a deseret experience. But he continued with persistence with his zeal for souls which was never burned out. Moved by the Sprit of God he was able lay the foundation for three organizations: Society of St Francis De Sales, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Salesian Cooperators which would in the later years grow into the Salesian Family.

It was the missionary spirit of Don Bosco that made our congregation spread across the globe. Fr. John Paul SwaminathanSDB a missionary from INT province to FRB province would say about his missionary vocation in these words. “My inner happiness is doubled by the grace and gift to be a Salesian missionary in Europe. I never chose or wanted to be in France. “In an interview he was asked this question “ Is theSalesian Project Europe still in vigor?” this was his answer “Confreres coming from different continents to work in Europe should not be seen and interpreted that most of the conferees are elderly here and therefore congregationis sendingthem. We are an international congregation, receiving and sending conferrers to the places where they are needed. This is something that is part of our congregation’s DNA.”

My dear confreres,we all share from one chalice, eat the same bread and possess the same sprit from above. As we are in our effort to mirror Don Bosco in our daily life let us keep the missionary spirit of Don Bosco alive in us and let us ignite others through our life. Let us bring to our mind the spirit of the first Salesian missionaries to India who worked very hard to lay a good foundation to build up the kingdom of God here in our midst. Let relive the spirit of the first salesian martyrs Mgr. Louis Versiglia and Fr. CallistusCaravario. Bl. Michael Rua Don Bosco’s first successor, reminds us: “when Don Bosco sent this first sons to America he had himself photographed in the act of handing to Fr. John Cagliero, who headed the expedition, the book of the Constitutions as though to say: “I would like to go with you myself, but since I cannot do so these Constitutions will take my place. Keep them as you would a precious treasure!” These words of Don Bosco will make us more clear about his missionary spirit even at his old age. So as young salesians let us live the spirit of our father and founder and become a missionary where we are.

**Thank you**