

□ Reading time: 6 min.

*On Saturday 17 October, at 3.00 pm, the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco will once again become the place from which the Salesian mission sets out into the world. During the Eucharist presided over by the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard, nineteen Salesians of Don Bosco – the fifteen members of the 157th missionary expedition and four confrères from the 2024 and 2025 expeditions – will receive the missionary crucifix alongside ten Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from their 149th expedition. The confrères come from ten countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and will leave for destinations they did not choose: from Albania to Peru, from Cape Verde to Cambodia, and as far as Vanuatu. Before Mass, a statue of Saint Maria Troncatti will be blessed, one year after her canonisation. As in 1875, the same call goes out from Turin: **set out**.*

On the eve of World Mission Sunday

On Saturday 17 October, at 3.00 pm, the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin-Valdocco will host the Mass for the missionary sending. It will be presided over by the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard, the eleventh successor of Don Bosco. Members of the 157th expedition of the Salesians of Don Bosco and the 149th expedition of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians will receive their missionary mandate.

The celebration falls on the eve of the 100th World Mission Sunday, which the Church will observe on Sunday 18 October, a century after its establishment by Pius XI. The theme chosen by Pope Leo XIV is 'One in Christ, united in mission'. In his message, the Pope recalls that 'communion is both the source and the fruit of mission'.

At Valdocco, that communion will have faces and names. Salesians born in Africa, Asia and Latin America will set out together for countries other than their own, sent by the same Congregation and marked by the same crucifix.

Fifteen setting out, plus four

There are fifteen members of the 157th expedition: nine clerics, four Salesian brothers and two priests. They will be joined by four confrères from the 2024 and 2025 expeditions who were unable to take part in the sending at the time. In all, nineteen Salesians will receive the crucifix, alongside ten Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

They come from ten countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ghana, Madagascar, India, Vietnam, South Korea, East Timor, Chile and Brazil. Eleven of the nineteen are African, six Asian and two Latin American. The places they come from show just how much the face of the Congregation has changed.

Their destinations span five continents. Six confrères will go to Europe – to Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro, Greece and Ireland – a sign that the continent has once again become mission territory. Two will go to Vanuatu, the Pacific archipelago where the Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea-Solomon Islands opened a new mission frontier in December 2025.

None of them chose where to go. Each went through a process of discernment in his own Province and wrote to the Rector Major, offering himself for the mission. His destination came in reply.

Here are their names, following the routes to their destinations.

Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. Two clerics will go to the new Delegation entrusted to the Province of Southern Italy: Jean Paul Muamb'a Kongol, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Jean Gaëtan Tianjanahary Fanevasoa, from Madagascar.

Greece. Three will go: Fr Tushar Gomes, an Indian priest; the Kenyan Salesian brother Alvin Peterson Anditi; and the Congolese cleric Josue Ngusu Nsimba, from the 156th expedition.

Ireland. The cleric Henrique Gomes Belmello will set out from Brazil.

Middle East. Fr Shanborlin Khardewsaw, an Indian priest, will go to the 'Jesus the Adolescent' Province, in the lands of the Bible.

Cape Verde. The Congolese cleric Elisée Chama Besa and the Chilean brother

Isaac Bladimir Aguilera Rebolledo will go to the Atlantic archipelago, which is linked to the Portuguese Province.

Peru. Africa and Asia meet in the Congolese cleric Flavien Mugisho Cirimwami and the Vietnamese Paul Nguyen Hoang Duy Linh.

Paraguay. The same meeting of continents: the Congolese cleric John Kalambilwa Ilunga and the Vietnamese Joseph Pham Duc Hanh.

Brazil. Two Congolese clerics from the 155th expedition, Clovis Muhindo and Jean Kasongo, are assigned to the Province of Porto Alegre.

Cambodia. The Ghanaian cleric Joseph Gilen Impraim and the Timorese brother António de Anunciação Ximenes da Costa will set out for the mission of the Thai Province.

Vanuatu. The Korean brother Moses Minsu Jung and the Congolese cleric Jean Liley Ntumba, from the 156th expedition, will go to this new Pacific frontier.

The Germoglio Course: putting down roots before setting out

In recent weeks, the future missionaries have taken part in the Germoglio Course, prepared by the Missions Sector, led by the General Councillor, Fr Jorge Crisafulli. The course will conclude at Valdocco with Mass and the solemn sending.

The programme covers several areas of formation: introductory, cultural, anthropological, theological and missiological, and the Salesian charism. Lectures and meetings matter, but the heart of the course lies elsewhere: in prayer, dialogue with the Missions Sector team, fraternal sharing and community life.

After a first week in Rome, the group moved to Colle Don Bosco, from where they visited the places where it all began:

- **I Becchi**, where Giovanni Bosco was born in 1815 and had his dream at the age of nine;
- **Castelnuovo** and **Morialdo**, the town and hamlet of his childhood;

- **Capriglio**, the birthplace of Mamma Margherita;
- **Moncucco**, where, as a boy, he worked as a farmhand at the Moglia farm;
- **San Giovanni di Riva** and **Mondonio**, where Saint Dominic Savio was born and died;
- **Chieri**, the town where he studied, founded the Society of Joy and attended the seminary.

Two days in Mornese, visiting places associated with Saint Maria Domenica Mazzarello, gave them an opportunity to explore the Salesian charism as lived by women. The final stop is Valdocco, for the last stage of preparation and a visit to the places associated with Don Bosco in Turin.

Since 1875, the same call

The first expedition set out from here. On 11 November 1875, in the Church of Mary Help of Christians, consecrated just seven years earlier, Don Bosco bid farewell to the first ten Salesians bound for Argentina. They were led by Fr Giovanni Cagliero, who would become the first Salesian bishop and the first Salesian cardinal.

Three days later, they sailed from Genoa aboard the *Savoie*, bound for Buenos Aires. Each carried a sheet of 'reminders' written by the founder. One of them has remained a guiding principle for every Salesian missionary: 'Seek souls, not money, honours or rank.'

Don Bosco organised further expeditions in the following years, up to 1887. The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians joined this missionary drive in 1877, when the first sisters set out for Uruguay. Since then, around ten thousand Salesians have been sent on mission, and the Salesian presence now extends to 136 countries.

Last year, on the 150th anniversary of the first departure, the members of the 156th expedition received the crucifix on 11 November from the Rector Major and the Mother General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The meaning of the gesture has not changed: those who set out take with them only Christ, crucified and risen.

At their side, Saint Maria Troncatti

Before Mass, a statue of Saint Maria Troncatti, a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians and a great missionary, will be blessed. Pope Leo XIV canonised her on 19 October 2025, together with six other saints. A year later, her example accompanies the new missionaries as they set out.

Born in 1883 in Corteno Golgi, in the province of Brescia, she worked as a nurse in Varazze during the First World War. In 1922, she set out for Ecuador and spent more than forty years in the Amazon rainforest, in Macas, Sevilla Don Bosco and Sucúa, alongside the Shuar people. She cared for the sick, educated girls and worked for reconciliation between the Shuar and settlers.

To everyone, she was 'madrecita'. She died on 25 August 1969, when the aeroplane that was to take her to Quito crashed in the forest. An exhibition dedicated to the saint will remain open until 30 October.

During the Eucharist, the nineteen Salesians and ten Daughters of Mary Help of Christians will receive the missionary crucifix from the Rector Major. This is the central moment of the rite: the mandate of the Church and the Congregation entrusted to each of them by name.

A departure that concerns everyone

After the celebration, the new missionaries will go to communities they do not know, face languages they must learn and meet young people waiting for them. They set out from Valdocco like the ten in 1875, with the same trust in Providence and Mary Help of Christians.

The whole Salesian Family has a specific task: to accompany them with prayer. In the centenary year of World Mission Sunday, every departure reminds us that mission is not the concern of a few, but of the whole Church.

How to follow the celebration

When: Saturday 17 October 2026, 3.00 pm (Italian time)

Where: Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin-Valdocco

Presiding: the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard

Before Mass: blessing of the statue of Saint Maria Troncatti

Live stream: ANS – [Agenzia iNfo Salesiana YouTube channel](#)

Exhibition on Saint Maria Troncatti: until 30 October 2026