

□ Reading time: 4 min.

*The Salesian Family, born from Don Bosco's intuition, has continued to grow over time and has taken on different forms, while remaining faithful to its roots. Among these Salesian realities is the Community of the Mission of Don Bosco (CMB), a private missionary association of the faithful, which has officially been part of the Salesian Family since 2010.*

### **The origins of the CMB**

It all began in 1983 in Rome, at the Gerini Institute, during a meeting of young Salesian Cooperators. At the concluding Mass, a clear inspiration remained imprinted in the hearts and minds of some of the participants: *your life and your faith must take on a missionary dimension wherever you may be*. From this inspiration, the Community of the Mission of Don Bosco was born at the Salesian Institute in Bologna.

We asked Deacon Guido Pedroni, founder and general custodian of the CMB, to narrate the story of its foundation. The CMB is composed of laypeople presently found in various parts of the world. It is a missionary community in style and in preferences, deeply rooted in the Salesian spirit and in the lives of its founders. Alongside Guido Pedroni, four other laypeople have shared the ideal of the CMB from the beginning: Paola Terenziani (who passed away a few years ago and whose cause for beatification has begun), Rita Terenziani, Andrea Bongiovanni, and Giacomo Borghi. Recently, Daniele Landi, who was already present at the origins of the Community, has joined these figures, gathered in the so-called "Mother Tent."

### **A Marian and Missionary Community**

It is noteworthy that the CMB is the only group of the Salesian Family founded by a layperson and born from a missionary and community dream. It is profoundly Marian, as the definitive act of belonging to the Community, the Act of Dedication, is inspired by the life of Mary, who was entirely dedicated to Jesus. As Guido Pedroni recounts, the CMB was born from "an intuition, the Act of Dedication, which for us is a true consecration to God and to the Community after the example of Mary and Don Bosco."

### **Its Way of Life and Spirituality**

The CMB way of life of the CMB is one of living faith, of opening new missionary presences, of carrying out various projects, of establishing educational relationships, and of experiencing community life. It is a way of life marked by

initiative, that can even be described as “recklessness.” It is based on four pillars: *to inspire, to involve, to create, and to believe*. This means to inspire motivations, to involve people in action, to create authentic relationships, and to believe in the Providence of the Spirit that precedes and safeguards every choice made.

For the CMB, living in a “State of Mission” means witnessing to the Gospel at every moment of the day and in every place, whether it be Africa, America, Italy, a nomadic camp, or a classroom. The essential thing is to feel part of the Church’s mission, embodied in the way of Don Bosco for the good of young people.

There are three cornerstones of the spirituality of the CMB:

- *Unity*, built on fraternal dialogue;
- *Charity*, towards young people and the poor in the spirit of communion;
- *Essentiality*, embodied in the simple and familial sharing typical of the Salesian spirit.

Other distinctive elements are the conferral of a specific mandate and the awareness of the “State of Mission.” The charismatic identity is rooted in the Salesian spirituality, enriched by some unique traits of the CMB. In particular, these traits are a spirituality of quest and an attitude of familiarity, which lay the foundations for unity among the members of the Community and of the Association.

### **Missions and Dissemination in the world**

Initially, the CMB was engaged in the Ethiopian missions. However, over time, the commitment shifted from mere leisure time activity to commitment in daily life. These have guided the fundamental CMB options. In a climate of deep friendship, of intense spiritual life rooted in the Word of God, and of concrete work for the poor and for young people, the Dedication emerged. It became clear that the missionary endeavor was meant not only for Ethiopia but for every needy place in the world.

In 1988, the first Rule of Life was drafted. In 1994 the CMB became an Association with its own legal structure in order to continue the missionary commitment and animation initiatives in the Bologna area.

All the missionary presences of the CMB arose from a call and a sign. Currently, the Community is present in Europe, Africa, South America, and Central America. The first missionary expedition took place in 1998 in Madagascar. Since then, it has spread to nine countries: Italy, Madagascar, Burundi, Haiti, Ghana, Chile, Argentina, Ukraine, and Mozambique. The two most recent “adventures” concern Mozambique and Ukraine.

In the coming months, a new presence will be opened in Mozambique. Last September, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin-Valdocco, the

missionary crucifix was handed over to Angelica and, symbolically, to three other young people from Madagascar and Burundi, who were absent for bureaucratic reasons. They will form the first community in that country.

In Ukraine, several CMB members have traveled multiple times to provide aid to this war-stricken place and now, with the help of the Salesians, are trying to understand what new challenge that the Spirit is showing.

### **A Vocation of Trust and Service**

It is evident that the CMB vocation is missionary and Marian within the Salesian charism. But it also possesses its own peculiar identity, forged by history and the signs of the Lord's presence that have emerged in the Community's pivotal events. It is a story intertwined with the life of Don Bosco and that of the people who were part of it. It has never been easy to remain faithful to the call of the Spirit, as he always invites people to widen their horizon and to trust even "in the dark."

The CMB mission is one of testimony and of service, of fraternal sharing and of unrelenting trust in God. The witness of one's life, of educational service, of the sharing of goods, time, and talent resulting from community discernment, and the taking on of responsibility for every project is rooted in that undiminished trust in God after the example of Don Bosco.

*Marco Fulgaro*