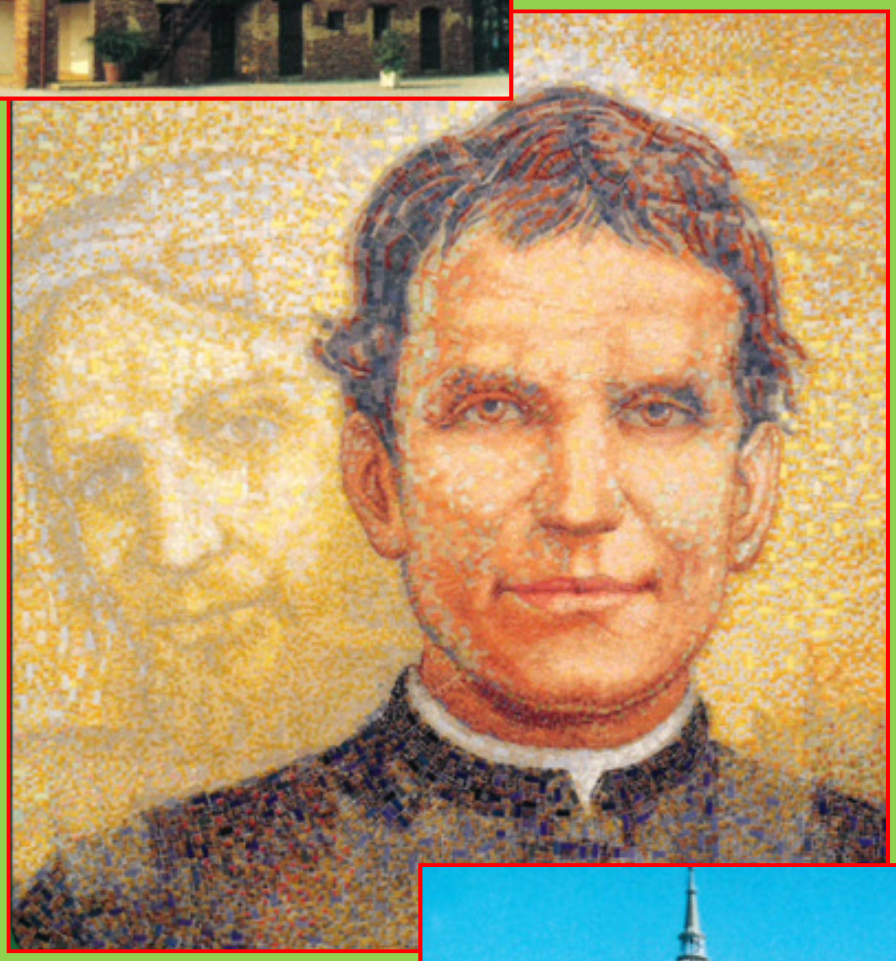
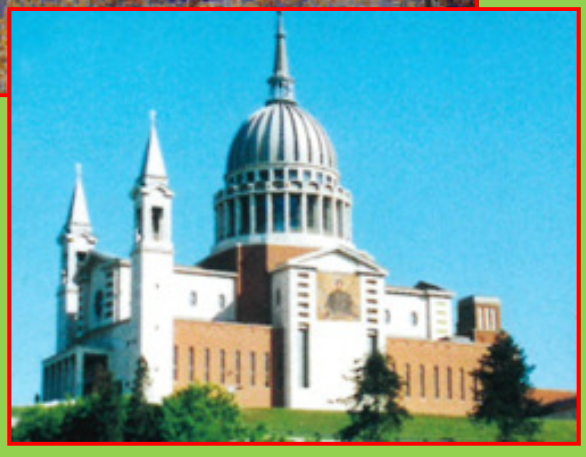
# Colle don Bosco

brief visitor's guide





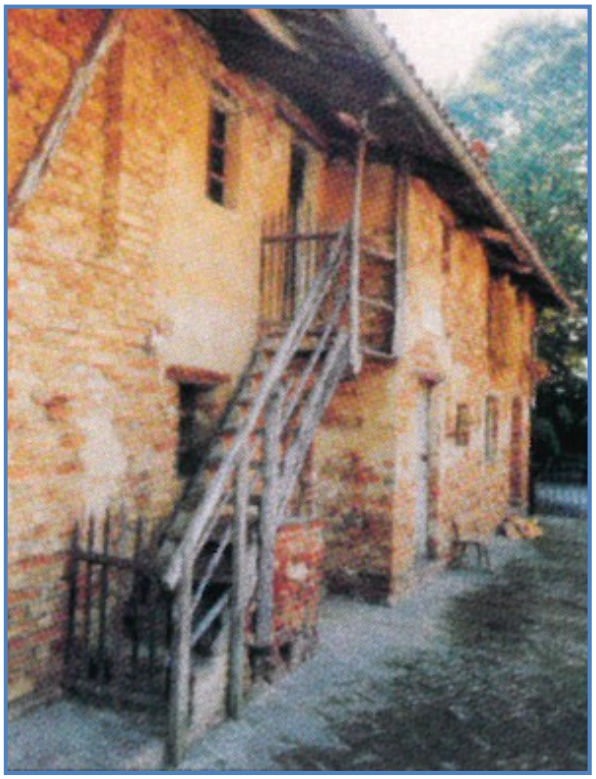

**For Information:**
**Tel.:** +39 011.98.77.162
+39 328.56.27.719
**E-mail:**
accoglienza@colledonbosco.it
info@colledonbosco.it

## BRIEF GUIDE FOR VISITORS TO COLLE DON BOSCO

On this hill (today known as “Colle don Bosco”) in the Becchi hamlet, part of the village of Morialdo in the Castelnuovo district (AT), St. John Bosco was born on 16th August 1815.
A visit to these surrounds means rediscovering the origins of that extraordinary personalità we know as Don Bosco and his by now worldwide work.

## 1. JOHN BOSCO’S COTTAGE

John Bosco lived in this small dwelling since he was two and until he turned sixteen.
His father Francis bought it three months before he died (May 1817) and it was made habitable by Mama Margaret.
It has been kept as it was, other than what was needed to preserve it.
There is not much to it and what there is is poor: a stable, a kitchen, his mother and grandmother’s bedroom, the boy’s bedroom (where the dream occorre when he was 9) and a hayloft.
On the right we find the entrance where today a number of texts and images are on display to help you understand the place better, then a staircase leading up to the bedrooms and the monument to Mama Margaret (by Enrico Manfrini) which recalls the episode where she forgave John when he spilt the oil.



## 2. JOSEPH'S HOUSE

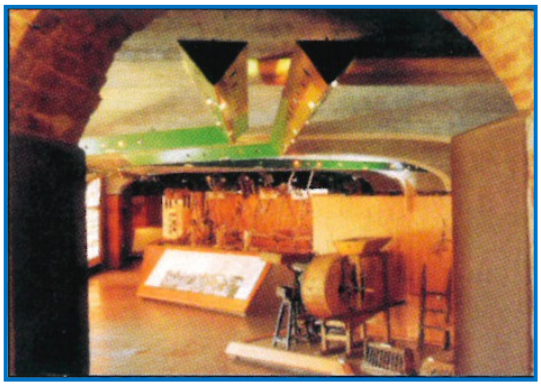
It was built by his brother Joseph at the time of his marriage.
One room on the top floor was kept for don Bosco and another on the ground floor was transformed into Our Lady of the Rosary crape, opened in 1848.
Until his health allowed him, don Bosco came from Turin with his boy sto celebrate Our Lady's feast day together with the people from the hamlet and nearby villages.
Here, as the two claque reming us at the entrance, Michael Rua received his clerical habit in 1851 (he would go on to become don Bosco's first successor).
It was here too that he met Dominic Savio.
Today, access to the house is via the Museum depicting peasant life in Asti and surrounds in the 1800's.
The rooms contain furniture and other reminders of the Bosco family.
The stable and hayloft were only built in 1988.

## 3. MONUMENT TO JOHN THE JUGGLER

When he was 11, John used to entertain his young friends and adults by alternating stories and magic tricks with prayer and catechism.
The monument, the work of Ennio Tesei, represents young John walking on a tight rope between two trees and held up by angels under the admiring gaze of his friends.

## 4. MUSEUM OF PEASANT LIFE

From the courtyard of Joseph's house, to the right, you go down the Museum.
At the entrance there is Joseph's oven and other equipment, especially for wine-making.
The large hall exhibits equipment, tools from farming existence in the 1800's, and photos showing people working together in the fields.
The visit takes you past the cellar, rooms and stable in Joseph's house.



## 5. SHRINE TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

It was built at the time of the First World War (between 1915 and 1918) to honour the centenary of don Bosco's birth, by salesian architect Giulio Valotti in the Piedmontese gothic style (same as the cathedral in Chieri), on the spot where Anthony had built a small dwelling.
The external cornices are decorated with flags indicating the cities of provenance of children who gave offerings to pray for the end to World War I.
Inside you find a wooden statue of Mary Help of Christians donated by the Salesian Technical School in Sarrià-Barcellona (Spain).
The shrine is the scene for continuous adoration to Jesus in the Eucharist led by the CEM (Marian Eucharistic Cenacle).

## 6. FIELD AND PILLAR OF THE DREAM

The field running down to the west is the one seen in the dream at nine years of age.
A pillar recalls the vision which foresaw a life completely given to the young.
A little further on is a well where Mamma Margaret drew water for the family's needs.

## 7. MONUMENT TO MAMA MARGARET

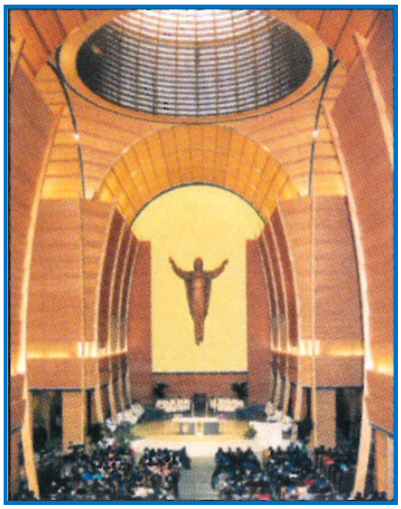
On the small patch of ground facing the steps up to the don Bosco Basilica you find the monument to Mama Margaret.
Five sections in bronze show episodes from life at the Becchi.

## DON BOSCO BASILICA

Built as "The Temple of Don Bosco" where the Biglione Farmstead once stood in which don Bosco's father was a share farmer.
In that farmstead John Bosco was born on 16th August 1815.
Bought in 1929, it was demolished to build the Shrine, composed by two churches one on top of the other.
The foundation stone was laid and blessed on 11th June 1961 and the lower Church was opened for worship in 1965.
It can hold 700 people.
In 2010 it becam a Basilica dedicated to St. John Bosco.

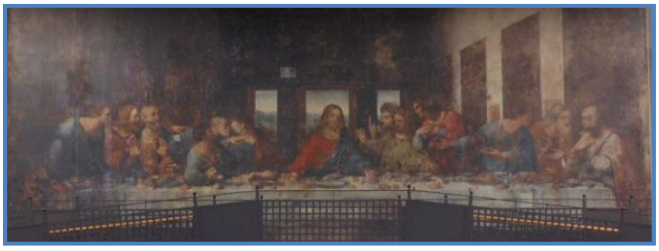
## 8. UPPER CHURCH

The upper Church was consecrated in 1984 by Cardinal Ballestrero but has been rebuilt since 1999 to enable it to be warmer, with better acoustics and given a more unified sense through its internal architecture.
At the top of the steps there is the bronze statue of don Bosco, a gift from Italian teachers on the occasion of the Beatification in 1929. It is the work of Cellini.
Above the entrance doors you find a fresco by M. Bogani showing Salesian mission work amongst various cultures around the world.
The inside, planned and built by the Trucco Studio from Turin, has been covered with beech wood, and ribbed with lamellated beams which rise up to the cupola suspendede above them (Gabella Firm).
The rear wall has a huge statue of the Risen Christ made out of a linden tree (Demetz, Ortisei).
It si 8 metres high, 6 metres wide from finger-tip to finger-tip and weighs nearly a tonne.
It is a remainder of don Bosco's mission as seen in the dream, and his optimistic pedagogy.
Paintings by Mario Bogani recall don Bosco's mission (in the transept) and the gospel account of the Emmaus disciples (at the back).
The stained glass windows by Luigi Zonta recall in stylized form don Bosco's mission and spirituality
The rose window shows the coat of arms of the Salesian Congregations.
Along the sides, 14 panels by G. Dragoni represent the Via Lucis (Stations of Light).
The organ is very valuable – mechanically powered with 47 registers and 3328 pipes (Pinchi Firm).
For the 2000 Jubelee Year, a cluster of 12 bells (Capanni Firm) was installed, and three large external mosaics (by the Bernasconi Company based on work by M. Bogani).



## 9. LOWER CHURCH

The large painting behind the altar (by Caffaro Rore) represents the autumn walks from Turin to Colle which don Bosco held with his boys, Mama Margaret, Dominic Savio, don Ruoa (his first successor), and don Cagliero (first salesian missionary).
In the sanctuary you see the crucifix by Caffaro Rore and the wooden statue of Mary Help of Christians by Muller (Ortisei) from 1936.
The ensemble is completed by the tabernacle, in keeping with the standards of the picture and Mary Help of Christians.
Behind the altar there is a reliquary of don Bosco showing the spot where he was born.
Either side paintings by M. Bogani.
On the left, Margaret and Francis' wedding (he was a widower with his son Anthony) and John's baptism; on the right, Francis' death and the transfer to the cottage.
The side altars have paintings of St. Francis de Sales (Caffaro Rore) and windows showing traditional Salesian and Italian saints.
These help outline the essential elements of salesianity.
The organi s electric, with 31 registers and 2500 pipes, built by Tamburini, and the Last Supper at the back of the Church is a huge photo of the original measurements of Leonardo da Vinci's famous work (by Ilford).



## 10. ETHNOLOGICAL MISSIONARY MUSEUM

The museum recalls the work of Salesian missionaries (beginning from 1875) and is dedicated to Cardinal Cagliero (from Castelnuovo don Bosco), first salesian missionari in Patagonia-Argentina.
The glass cabinet contain manu precious and meaningful items from countries where the Salesians and the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians worked and continue to work for human development and evengelisation of peoples.

## 11. INTERNATIONAL SALESIAN NOVITIATE

The International Salesian Novitiate has begun in June 2019 in the renovated premises halfway up the Colle Don Bosco climb.
The novitiate is the first year of systematic training to consecrate oneself to the Lord in the Congregation founded by Saint John Bosco.

## HOME GROUPS AND PILGRIMS

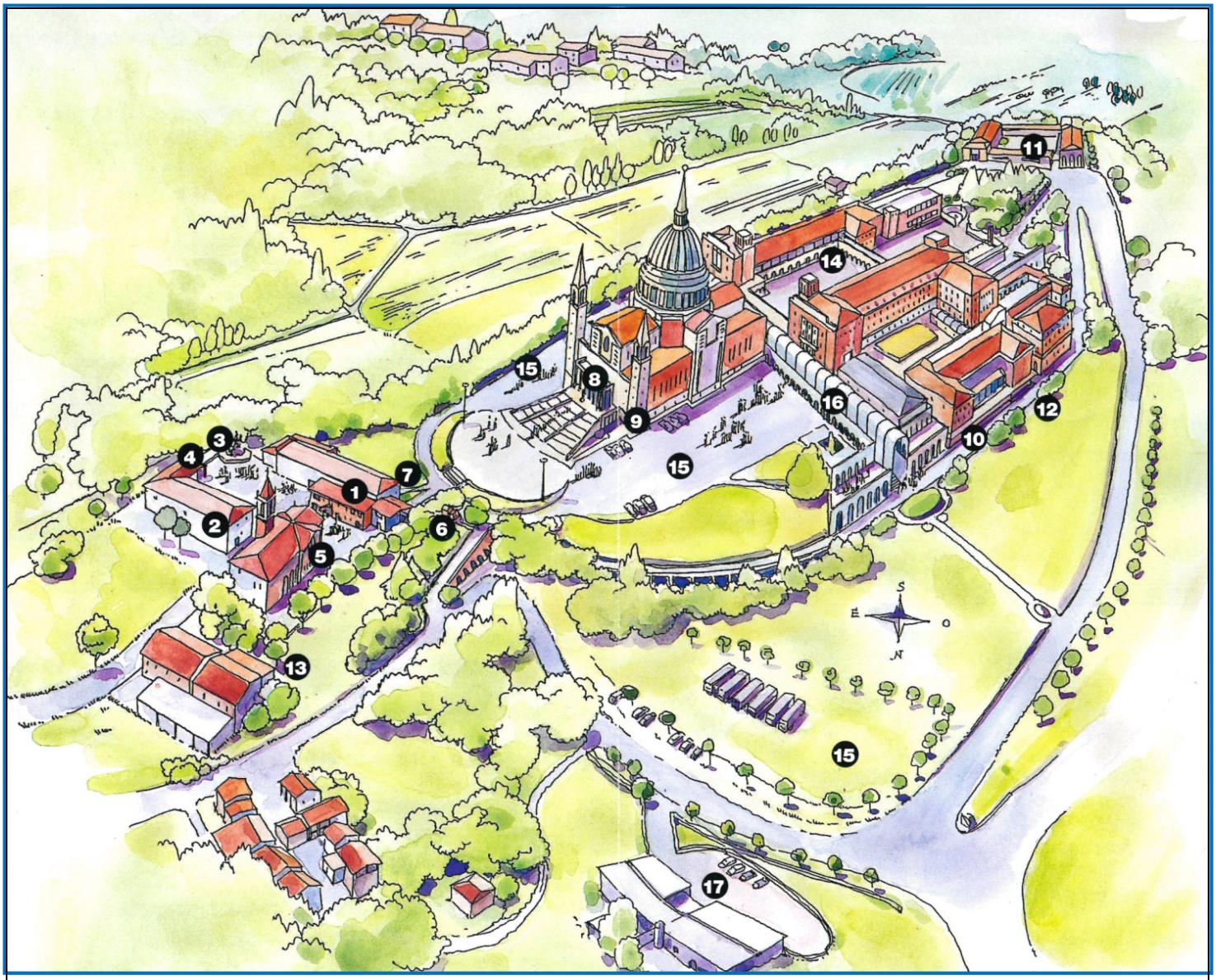
The facilities for the reception of young people and adults for retreats, days of study and knowledge of the place where don Bosco was born are: the “Youth House” (11) which can accomodate 126 people, the “House Mazzarello” (12) and the “House Zatti” (13) with 70 berths.

## YOUTH BIBLE WAY

Located along the “Pope road” between the house of don Bosco and that of Dominic Savio, it is formed by 14 metal piers dedicated to fourteen young protagonists in the history of salvation from the sacrifice of Isaac in the Old Testament to Jesus and the children in the New Testament.
It recalls the continuità of John Bosco and Dominic Savio as instrument of salvation that the Lord still gives today.
The paintings are the work of the brothers Robert and Leszek Kruczek, polish salesians.
It i san ideal course of human and christian formation inspired by the Bible and the lives of our saints.

**YOU CAN FIND, AT COLLE DON BOSCO**

*** Ample parking for more than 300 vehicles (15).**
*** Meeting halls, pilgrims halls and a theatre for 400 people (16).**
*** Bar with table service and automatic vending machines.**
*** Picnic spots.**
*** “Sapori del Colle restaurant” able to take up to 700 patrons under cover (ristorante colle@elior.it; tel +39 348.49.10.928; +39 011.98.72.335). This is at the foot of the hill (17).**
*** Reception office (tel. +39 011.98.77.162) and souvenir shop near the entrance to the lower Church.**
*** The possibilità, by previous arrangement, of a guide for your visit. The service is free.**



## NEARBY SALESIAN SPOTS

### CAPRIGLIO

Mama Margaret was born in the Cecca hamlet.
The house is still there.
In the village you can visit the parish Church (where Margaret received the sacraments of Christian initiation and celebrated the marriage with Francesco Bosco) and the Museum of Mama Margaret, with testimonials on Don Bosco's mother and the life of the country.
Set up by Ecomuseum Basso Monferrato, it is looked after by the Association "Friends of the Mama Margaret Museum".

### CASTELNUOVO DON BOSCO

(until 1930 Castelnuovo d'Asti).
John Bosco was baptised and made his first Communion there.
He went to school there too, walking twice a day from the Becchi (4 kilometres).
Heart of the Christian life of don Bosco and the saints from Castelnuovo (Cafasso, Allamano, Dominic Savio) is the parish Church of St. Andrews and the Church Our Lady of the Castle.

## CASCINA MOGLIA (MONCUCCO TORINESE)

Young John spent 2 years there as a farm hand.
His small room has been kept as it was.
In the village there is the parish Church, where John went to festive Mass and where he worked with the parish priest don Francesco Cottino in the catechism and animation of the boys from Moncucco.

## BUTTIGLIERA D'ASTI

The Church where John was confirmed.
He met don Calosso on the road leading to the Becchi from there.
Since she was a child, there lived the blessed Maddalena Morano, a Salesian Sister, great saint educator in Sicily.

## MORIALDO

The tiny crape where don Calosso was and where John began his studies of grammar.
Dominic Savio lived there since when he was 2 till when he turned 11 (1843 – 1853).

## CHIERI

John Bosco spent ten years there during his youth (1831 – 1841).
The seminary houses, the "Don Bosco Visitor Center", which introduces the city of Chieri and the experience of John Bosco from public school until his priestly ordination.
The Salesian Institute "San Luigi" and the Institute "Santa Teresa" of the Salesian Sisters continue the educational work.

## SAN GIOVANNI DI RIVA PRESSO CHIERI

Dominic Savio's birthplace on 2nd April 1842.
He stayed there until November 1843.
Attached to the house where he was born there is a spiritualità center and hostel run by the Salesian Cooperators and Past Pupils Association "La Casetta".

## MONDONIO

Dominic Savio lived there from 1853 to 1857.
He died there on 9th March 1857.
The interior of the house offers a testimony of the life and family environment.
It was set up by Ecomuseum Basso Monferrato.

## DON BOSCO' S WORK

**Young people**, especially the poor and abandoned, **are the ones who benefit** from don Bosco's work.

**The structures** for this are the Oratories where youngsters come together happily and peacefully, workshops where they learn an honest trade, schools where they are educated. Family spirit guides relationships.

**The motto** is "*Da mihi animas, cetera tolle*" (Give me souls and take away the rest).

**The educational method** is the **Preventive System** based on reason, religion and loving-kindness.

Don Bosco fonde three core groups:
the **Salesians of Don Bosco** SDB, (some 16,000 today in about 130 nations in every continent),
the **Daughters of Mary help of Christians** FMA (14,000 in more than 90 nations in every continent),
the **Salesian Cooperators**, lay people who live in the world (there are tens of thousands of these and they work either with the Salesians or run their own places).

Other than these groups, more than 25 other ones exist as members of the **Salesian Family**.

**2025**
**Jubilee Year**
**"Pilgrims of Hope"**

**November 11, 1875 – November 11, 2025**
**150th Anniversary of**
**the first Salesian missionary expedition**