

INRI

Fr. SAL

Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB

October 12, 1938 - January 26, 2023



Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, #54

The community supports with greater love and prayer the confrere who is gravely ill. When the hour comes for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfilment, his brothers help him to enter fully into Christ's paschal mystery.

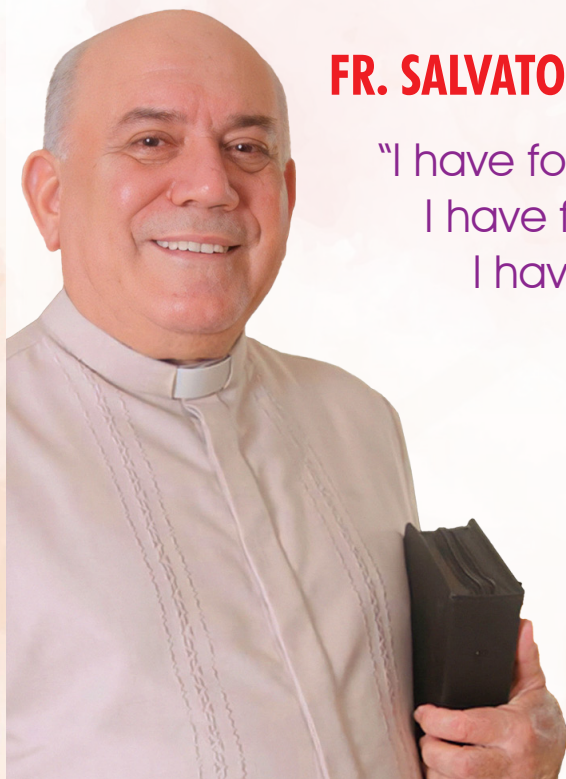
Death for the Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord, and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph.

The memory of departed confreres unites, "in a love that will not pass away", those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ.

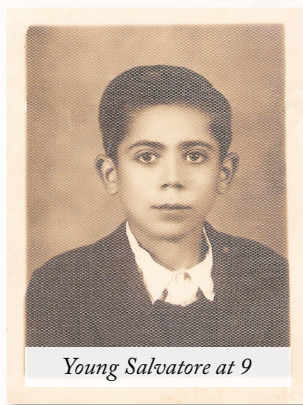
FR. SALVATORE PUTZU, SDB (1938 – 2023)

“I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.”

(2 Timothy 4:7)



Even as a young boy, Fr. Sal already felt the call to the priesthood. In his acceptance speech for the Lifetime Achievement Award given to him by the Asian Catholic Communicators Inc. (ACCI) on September 15, 2022, during the 16th Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards, he explained:



THE EARLY YEARS (1938 – 1959)

Fr. Salvatore “Sal” Putzu, SDB was born on October 12, 1938 to Antonio and Mariangela Putzu, in Nuraminis, Cagliari, South Sardinia, Italy.



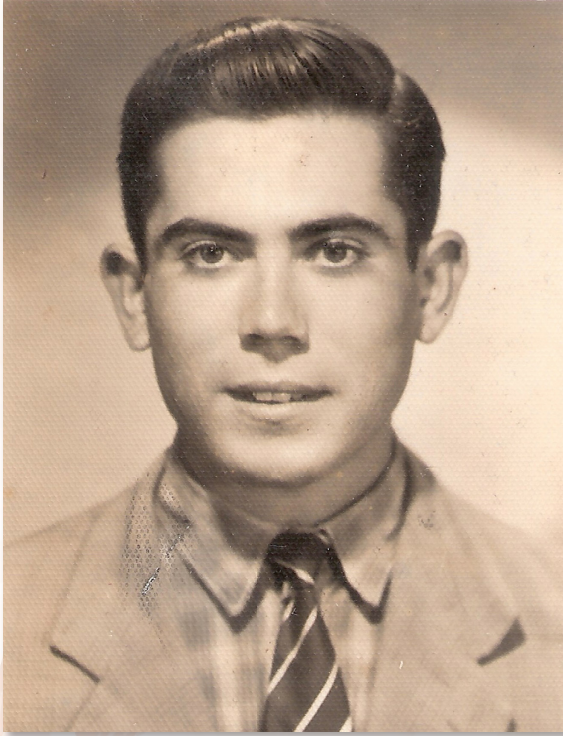
Little Salvatore with his parents, Antonio and Mariangela

“It is the Lord who, since my childhood, has given me a zest, and eagerness to know about my Catholic faith. This eagerness to learn led me to devour books, including the theology books, lives of saints, and journals belonging to an uncle of mine who was a priest and died just two years after his ordination.

It was his library and the learned homilies of my parish priest that enthralled me since my elementary school days, and which ignited in me the eagerness to learn more about the faith, and to share it with others, not only in my native land but even beyond, as a missionary.

This eagerness to learn and share about the faith was accompanied by an extraordinary MEMORY, whereby whatever I heard, read, or saw remained imprinted/recorded indelibly in my mind. This was something that amazed my teachers and made me their darling . . . All these were all gifts from the Lord – gifts that I enjoyed using in the pursuit of becoming a missionary.”

His plan to enter the seminary was put on hold when his father died when he was fifteen. He needed to help the family on the farm to pay for the huge debt that the family incurred for his father's hospitalization. It was only when his family was able to pay all these debts that he again contemplated pursuing his priestly calling.



Salvatore, as a young gentleman

He applied to some religious orders but did not pursue further whenever he learned how much his family needed to pay for his studies and board and lodging. Then a bright light of hope came when he met a Salesian who told him not to worry about money. He only needed to have a generous and cheerful heart and Divine Providence will take care of the rest.

THE INITIAL STAGES OF SALESIAN FORMATION (1959 – 1974)

He left his hometown in 1959, just before he turned 21, and entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Ivrea in Turin. He spent his formation years there

as an aspirant until 1962. He remembers especially one of his teachers as an aspirant, Fr. Joseph Rosso, SDB:

“Fr. Joseph Rosso, SDB, who taught me not only the basics of English but especially to love that universal language that has enabled me to communicate with audiences that are far larger than those I could reach with my mother tongue.”

Before he was sent to the missions, through the efforts of a persistent police friend, Salvatore had the great privilege of attending the Mass and being blessed by Padre Pio (later canonized saint) in San Giovanni Rotondo on September 5, 1962. After Padre Pio gave his blessing, he exhorted Salvatore, then still a seminarian, “Persevere to the end. Persevere at all cost!” Commenting on the unscheduled opportunity of grace to be blessed by Padre Pio, who by then was already prevented from seeing people privately because of his frail health, one of his friar protectors remarked to him, “The Lord must love you very much, young man. Go in peace!”

On October 26, 1962, he left for El Houssoun, Lebanon for his Novitiate year. He made his First Religious Profession as a Salesian of Don Bosco on October 27, 1963. He spent his first three years as a young cleric in El Houssoun, Lebanon where he finished his philosophical studies.



As a novice in Lebanon (first from right)

He spent his practical training years in Tehran (Iran) where he also made the renewal of his vows on September 26, 1969. While in Iran

As a young cleric in Lebanon



As a practical trainee in Iran (first from left)



On September 8, 1971, Fr. Sal made his Perpetual Profession in Pinerolo, Turin. After expressing his desire to learn English that he could use as a missionary, he was sent to Maynooth, Ireland for his theological studies. While in Maynooth, Ireland as a student of Theology,



Fr. Sal, as a student of Theology (first row, 2nd from left)

Fr. Sal received the Ministry of Lector on November 15, 1973, and the Acolyte Ministry on November 22, 1973. He was also ordained as Deacon in Ireland on April 15, 1974.



The Cleric Salvatore with some students

as a cleric, he was assigned to the Salesian school, Andishéh (Don Bosco College Tehran) where he taught English. There he established a group called *"Anjoman-e Shadi"* (The Happiness Society), which engaged in activities like sports, outings, singing, and charitable activities. Aside from Christians, many Moslem boys and some Zoroastrians and Jews were enthusiastic members. With them, he published the youth magazine, *"Sedaye Andishéh"* (The Voice of Andishéh). He also published the life of St. Dominic Savio, which he translated to Persian with the help of the members of *"Anjoman-e Shadi."*



Fr. Sal, as a newly ordained priest

After finishing his theological studies in Ireland, Fr. Sal was ordained a Salesian priest on September 7, 1974, in his hometown in Nuraminis, Cagliari, South Sardinia, Italy.

THE EARLY PRIESTLY MINISTRY (1974 – 1979)

From 1974 to 1979, Fr. Sal's first assignment was at the *Centro Catechistico Salesiano di Torino-Leumann* (Salesian Catechetical Center in Turin-Leumann). While under training for three years in audiovisual communication, he wrote a commentary on the sets of slides based on Franco Zeffirelli's film, "Jesus of Nazareth." In 1978, he received a Certificate of Completion for a two-year course on Social Communication.

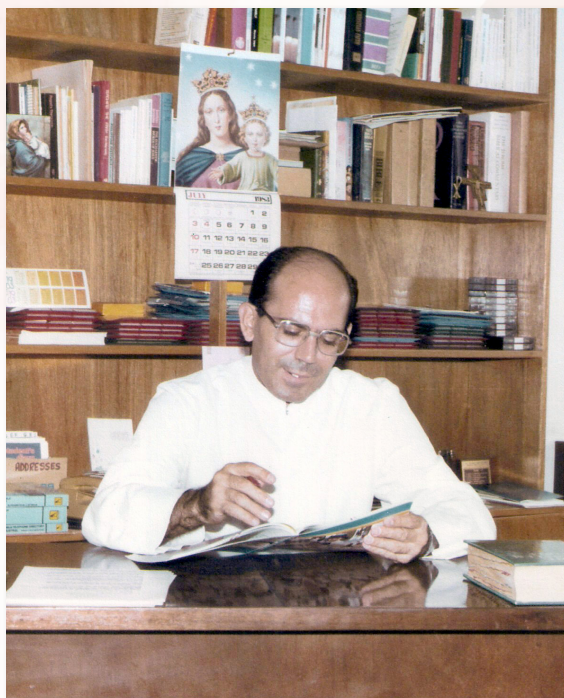
He attributed his initial exposure and interest in catechesis and social communications to a great mentor, Fr. Teresio Bosco, SDB. He recalls:

"The other teacher and inspirer I wish to remember is Fr. Teresio Bosco, SDB, a great writer, who boosted in me the love for writing and who 'made my day' when, commenting on a composition I had written, he stated that he could not have done better. He was also the one who suggested to my superiors that in my first years as a priest, I should pursue my professional preparation as a communicator and I should be assigned to the Salesian Catechetical Center and the LDC publisher – the best institutions in the Salesian Congregation in the areas of Catechesis and audiovisual communication."

It was also during this period that Fr. Sal helped Luciana Frassati Gawronska prepare the materials needed for the canonization process of her brother, Pier Giorgio Frassati (who was later beatified and called "The Man of the Eight Beatitudes" by Pope John Paul II in 1990).

THE FIRST TEN YEARS IN THE PHILIPPINES (1979 – 1989)

In 1979, the superiors in Rome asked Fr. Sal to go to the Philippines as a response to the request of Fr. Jose Carbonell, SDB, the Provincial Superior of the Philippine Province, for a priest who can help the Province in the areas of catechesis and communications.



1981–1983, Salesiana Publishers

Although he wished to go back to the Middle East or to be sent to Korea, or to a mission destination where the Word of God was still quite unknown or unheard of, his vow of obedience made him accept this assignment. Fr. Sal arrived in the Philippines in November 1979 and was assigned to Don Bosco Center of Studies in Parañaque, the residence of the students of Theology who were then studying Theology at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. As was agreed upon, he was immediately tasked, with the help of some students of Theology, to conceptualize and edit a six-volume religion textbook series for the elementary level, titled "*Towards Life*."

Recalling his first years in the Philippines, Fr. Sal shares:

"I felt happy to be in a position to share with the Filipino people my knowledge of the faith and my professional preparation in the areas of catechesis and audiovisual communication. I felt happy to be a 'giver' after having received so much."

Very soon, however, I realized that I needed still to become a 'receiver.'

I needed very badly to learn the history, culture, needs, and aspirations of the Filipino people in general, but especially of the catechists. Over the years I enjoyed sharing with them what I knew but enjoyed even more, learning from them.

They were my teachers, even before becoming my students.

I learned immensely from their dedication to the fulfillment of their mission as teachers of the faith; as 'accompaniers' of the ones they were catechizing. I learned and was edified by their efforts to put into practice the truths they were teaching, even as they constantly strove to know and live the truths of the faith even better. Their prayerfulness, dedication, their spirit of faith, and generosity inspired me immensely.

Much of what I was able to do and write was the fruit of the inspiration they offered me, usually without their realizing it."

In 1981, Fr. Sal was assigned to the Catechetical Department at Salesiana Publishers in Makati City. After a year in the Center of Studies in 1983, he joined the Salesian community of Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati in 1984. In 1987, he was assigned to the Provincial House in Parañaque. In 1989, he was transferred to San Ildefonso Parish where he stayed for the next ten years.

During this first decade in the Philippines (1979 to 1989), Fr. Sal widened his exposure and involvement in the Catechetical ministry in the country by making himself available in the Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE), particularly at the National Catechetical Office of the Philippines (NCOP), the publication arm of ECCCE.

He was convinced that if he wanted to be more effective in his work in the Philippines, he needed to be more in touch with the local Church and the challenges and the demands that the local Church is facing in the field of catechesis. He went around the country to assess



Helping ECCCE in giving Catechetical Formations around the country



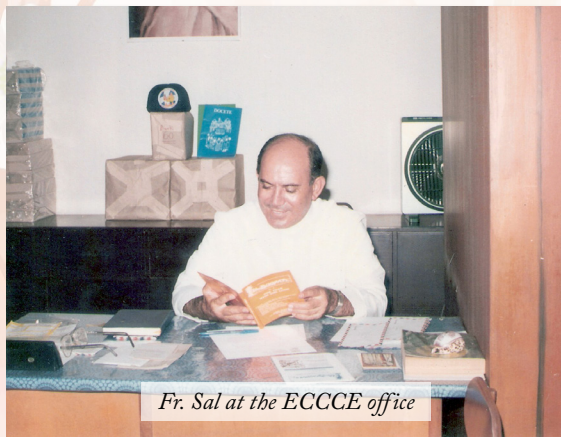
ECCCE Team under Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legazpi, OP

the catechetical situation. Together with Bishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi and Dr. Linda Tacorda, they wrote *The Shape of Religious Education in the Philippines Today (Part I and Part II)*, published by the Episcopal Commission on Education and Religious Instruction (ECERI, the former name of ECCCE).



Fr. Sal, giving Catechetical Workshop

At NCOP, Fr. Sal was active in publishing *Docete*, which he transformed from an educational newsletter into a quarterly catechetical review. He also wrote a Marian Handbook that was published in 1985 during the National Marian Year. In 1986, he started making a weekly liturgical-catechetical leaflet titled “The Spring,” which was published by NCOP, where Fr. Sal served as Coordinator.



Fr. Sal at the ECCCE office

While recalling his early years of involvement in the ECCCE office, Fr. Sal shares:

“Among the thousands who have enabled me to know more about the Philippines and the



With Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP in Rome

catechists, to love them and be inspired by them, there is a master theologian, a great organizer, and catechetical- minded man: Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP. I wish to single him out among the Filipino bishop-catechists, as the one who, more than all the rest, honored me with his trust during the eighteen years he supported me in my apostolic undertakings, due to which this Lifetime Achievement Award is being conferred on me.

I wish to mention also with gratitude Fr. James Reuter, SJ, the great communicator, playwright and catechist for honoring me with his appreciation and guidance, as he reawakened in me the dream to be a stage actor when he made me play a narrator’s role in the stage plays about Blessed Giacomo Alberione, the founder of the St. Paul’s Fathers and of the daughters of St. Paul; as well as in the play about the great St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Daughters of Charity. My participation in those stage plays opened for me many doors and hearts.

This list of inspirers’ and ‘supporters’ would not be complete if I did not include the Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin. He was such a big man, in every way; a superior on whom I could count at all times.

Two instances I’d like to mention among hundreds of others: the big hug he gave me after

the first slide show I gave in Villa San Miguel on my first catechetical book; the second was his calling me and Sr. Rose Celestial, RVM to him, at the start of the National Catechetical Year, to ask us in what way he could help make it a success. And such it became, thanks, especially to the Cardinal's decisive support."

THE FIELD OF IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS (1989 – 2019)



1989, Fr. Sal with the pioneer volunteers of Word And Life Publications at the Holy Family Shrine



The blessing of the first office of Word And Life Publications at Holy Family Shrine, 1989

1989 saw the beginning of Word & Life Publications (WLP) on the ground floor of the Holy Family Shrine in Makati City, then under San Ildefonso Parish. It was the Easter Octave of the National Bible Year. With the support of his superiors, benefactors, and volunteers, Fr. Sal started this humble endeavor with full trust in Divine Providence, just as St. John Bosco did.



While managing the young Word & Life Publications, Fr. Sal continued his service at ECCCE. He was the brains behind the 1990 National Catechetical Year in the Philippines, which ended with a very successful National Catechetical Convention, which marked the beginning of a series of regional catechetical conventions and the observance of a National Catechetical Awareness Week which popularized the motto, "EVERY CHRISTIAN, A CATECHIST." He also contributed much to the success of the many catechetical conventions and catechetical for a in the country while serving at ECCCE. Fr. Sal and Word & Life Publications continued to do the editorial and publishing work on *Docete* for many years (until 2003). And for almost a decade (1993 to 2001), Fr. Sal served as Executive Secretary of ECCCE, working under different bishops, including Archbishop Legaspi.

As a publisher, he promoted a wider circulation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* and the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC)* – both of which were co-published in the Philippines in 1994 and 1997, respectively, by Word & Life Publications and ECCCE. In 2004,

Word & Life Publications also co-published with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) the important Vatican resource, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

Under his leadership as editor-in-chief, WLP received the *Publisher of the Year Award* on September 11, 1995 in the Catholic Authors Awards by the Asian Catholic Publishers, Inc.



September 11, 1995, *Publisher of the Year Award*

for its contribution to the Propagation of the Christian Faith through the print media. This was given a year after his trailblazing effort to publish the *CCC* in the Philippines.

Fr. Sal wrote many catechesis, prayers, reflections, short stories, comics, feature articles, advice columns, and Bible study materials. He also wrote a book entitled *The Lord's Prayer*, with catechesis and reflections. Because of his humility and his desire for Filipino readers to relate to the writer/s of many of those materials, Fr. Sal wrote under various Filipino-sounding pen names, like Jess P. Balon, Mario Collantes, and Christy Villanueva.

One of the booklets written under the pen name of Mario Collantes, *The Litany of the Sacred Heart*, was also published in the US, with special permission from Fr. Sal.

In India, the comics written by Fr. Sal, *The Acts of the Apostles*, was translated to their local language and published there. *The Promise*, a book co-written by Fr. Sal and Sr. Yolanda Iglesias, CM about the Old Testament, as well as their New Testament sequel (co-written with

Fr. John A. Cabrido, SDB, SSD), *The Fulfillment*, were also translated into India's local language and published there.

The Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) has given great recognition to Fr. Sal and Word & Life Publications' works in the field of Catechesis and New Evangelization with the many awards that it has bestowed on him and WLP. In 2008, Fr. Sal received the *Jaime L. Cardinal Sin Serviam Award*, the highest award given by the CMMA,



October 29, 2008, Fr. Sal received the Jaime Cardinal Sin *SERVIAM Award* from the Catholic Mass Media Awards



for his untiring dedication and praiseworthy contributions to the Church, particularly in Catechesis and New Evangelization. Under his

editorship, *Word & Life* magazine also received the CMMA for Best Youth Magazine for five times, capped by the Hall of Fame Award in the same category in 2018.



November 14, 2018, *Word & Life* Magazine received the CMMA HALL OF FAME AWARD as Best Youth-oriented Magazine



Aside from the awards mentioned, Fr. Sal has also won two CMMA Best Comics Story trophies for “Pedro Calungsod: Young Catechist & Martyr” in 2013 and “The Breathtaking Story of Fatima” in 2018. For his practical and systematic Bible study book, *Exploring God’s Word*, Fr. Sal was given a Special Citation for Book in Liturgy by the Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards in 2019.

Fr. Sal pioneered the now very popular “Study Edition” of official Church documents, like the Papal Encyclicals and Apostolic Exhortations, by adding subject indexes and various study aids. Through *Word & Life* Publications, he was also able to propagate *The New Way of the Cross*, *The Trail of Light*, *The Way of Joy*, *The New Holy Rosary*, *The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy*,

The Chaplet of the Sacred Heart, and many other devotions – with most of the meditations (except for *The Way of Joy*) written by Fr. Sal.

He also propagated the Sunday Word of God through periodicals like *Word & Life* magazine, *Exploring God’s Word*, *Ang Bagong Salita at Buhay*, *The Word of God*, and other Bible study materials – most of which he also wrote (except for *The Word of God*). The Sunday missalettes he publishes – *Euchalette* and *Patnubay sa Misa* – have been widely used and of great help not only in the Philippines, but in other countries as well, because they are available online, for free.

As it nears its 34th year, *Word & Life* Publications continues to serve the Church not only in the Philippines but also in many parts of the world through its presence on the internet.



Fr. Sal together with some of the benefactors of *Word and Life* Publications during his 80th birthday

Fr. Sal is always grateful to all the people who have given him the needed financial, moral, and spiritual support since the beginning of Word & Life Publications.

As if his hands were not yet full, Fr. Sal ventured into radio ministry to propagate the Sunday Word of God. On the eve of the First Sunday of Advent 2004, Fr. Sal, together with the Word Media Ministry, a group of lay volunteers that he formed to be at the service of the Church in the media ministry, aired its first radio program, “*Bisperas Sa Veritas*,” over Radio Veritas 846kHz. It is now on its eighteenth year, helping the faithful prepare for a more meaningful celebration of the Sunday liturgy every Saturday from 5:00 pm until 6:00 pm.



Fr. Sal with, Ma'am Lita Jalandoni, one of the benefactors of Word and Life Publications during his 80th birthday



Word Media Ministry pioneering members (circa 2003)

Bisperas Sa Veritas radio program team (circa 2006)

Also under the umbrella of the Word Media Ministry, which Fr. Sal established, is the WOW, which stands for Word on Wheels (volunteers who promote the Word of God and different



Bisperas Sa Veritas (2019)

materials of Word & Life Publications in different churches and venues), Word on Web (volunteers who evangelize through the internet, especially on social media), and Word on Waves (volunteers who spread the word of God in the radio/TV ministry, like “*Bisperas sa Veritas*”).

October 12, 2019,
Word and Life Publications
30th Anniversary

*Fr. Sal presenting a statue of
Mary, Help of Christians
to the Apostolic Nuncio,
Archbishop Gabriel Caccia, DD*



To promote the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Divine Mercy, Fr. Sal published *The Messenger of Divine Love*. He also established the Alliance of Billions of Hearts in order to promote and deepen the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



Fr. Sal, giving his Inspirational Message during the 30th Anniversary celebration of Word and Life Publications

Fr. Sal remembers the poor and lonely and insists on sending the word of God to prisoners and the sick, so Word & Life Publications continues to send hundreds of free copies of its publications to prisons and hospitals nationwide through its outreach activity, “God’s Word to the Lonely.”

As an obedient son of Don Bosco, Fr. Sal accepted his assignment as the Rector of the De Sales Community in 2008. He served this community as Rector for three terms. In 2017, he transferred to the Provincial House Community, even as he continued his work at Word & Life Publications.

On October 12, 2019, Word & Life Publications celebrated its 30th foundation year. It was graced with the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, the Most Reverend Archbishop Gabriel Caccia, DD as the main

presider during the Thanksgiving Mass. Addressing his confreres, benefactors, friends, volunteers, and present and former WLP lay mission partners, who were present during that grace-filled day, Fr. Sal shares:

“I’m sure the Lord has another plan— a bigger plan for me. I will see it when it comes. I believe that my dreams, my visions – I believe that. There are days that I feel totally possessed by the Lord with ideas that I count... (are) too many that I forget even to eat... until I come out with ideas, new ideas I believe, and I share it with you. I know that it is my dream to see the Philippines really becoming the leader of Evangelization and Catechesis in Asia... not just in the Philippines but in Asia!!! That is the calling of the Philippines: (that) many Popes who came here,



October 12, 2019, a souvenir photo of WLP's 30th Anniversary
The Word and Life Publications Team with the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Gabriel Caccia, DD, and Bishop Roberto Mallari, DD.

starting with Pope Paul VI – I was not here yet, but he said: ‘Your mission is Evangelization.’ John Paul II came, and he repeated the same; Pope Francis, likewise.

I believe that the Philippines can do that... must do that!!! Catechesis is very much part ... and (the) soul of evangelization. And I think that Word & Life, in the wider field of evangelization and catechesis, has now its role to play. Word & Life is not my work. It is God's work!!!”

(This is a verbatim account, transcribed from the video recorded on that day.)

pandemic), he still celebrated Holy Mass publicly or privately, assisted by lay people who read the Gospel for him.

Despite his old age and deteriorating eyesight because of cataracts and macular degeneration, he continued his work at Word & Life Publications as its Editor-in-Chief, the work he cherished most in his heart.

As the Catholic Church in the Philippines was looking forward to 2021 as the 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of Christianity in the country, Fr. Sal's heart and mind were full of inspiration in making the event a time to propagate the Faith and make the light of Christ shine so brightly for all to see.

Fr. Sal had in mind a three-volume book that will feature the best contributions of the Catholic Church in the Christianization of the Philippines, from her arrival up to the present. The conceptualization of this big project began as early as 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic slowed it down as everybody became affected by what was happening here and around the world. It started taking ground again in 2021 but slowed down again when the Covid-19 virus hit Fr. Sal on September 23, 2021, the Feast of St. Pio of Pietrelcina. As if this was not enough, Fr. Sal had a minor stroke in November 2021. He survived the stroke and began working again together with his team of volunteers. But in September 2022, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer that

THE TWILIGHT YEARS (2020 – 2022)

Fr. Sal transferred to the Salesian Community of St. John Bosco Parish in Makati in July 2020 as a confessor of the parish. Even with his deteriorating health (and amidst the Covid-19



Sept. 11, 2022, during the Booktable activity of the Alliance of the Billions of Hearts at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Fr. Sal, still working in the hospital despite his illness.



of his exemplary Catholic life and apostolic zeal as reflected in the Christian values and ideals contained in his writings.

As Fr. Sal received his Lifetime Achievement Award, he did not know that he was being prepared by God for his eternal reward. His poor health condition, though, did not stop him from doing some editorial work, especially on the big project already mentioned.

Towards the end of his acceptance speech for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Fr. Sal took the opportunity to thank the many individuals and groups that God sent him while doing the mission he received from God. He shares:

“The list of teachers, benefactors, and supporters would not be complete if I did not mention my Salesian superiors and all the confreres who welcomed me in 1979, and who surrounded me with their appreciation and support, in so many ways, over the past forty-two years.

From among all Salesians included in this heartfelt thanksgiving, I feel I should mention in a special manner Fr. Francesco Panfilo (now Archbishop Emeritus), and Fr. Gianluigi Colombo, (with whom I worked for so many years). These two, more than others, appreciated my work and supported it, especially in the foundation days of Word & Life Publications and Word Media Ministry.

This is also the time for me to thank all the members of the staff of WORD & LIFE PUBLICATIONS and WORD MEDIA MINISTRY; those who joined me in the first days in 1989, and the many more who came to strengthen our team of lay mission partners over the years and up to the present. They have stood by me through thick and thin, in days of joy and days of sorrow, days of achievements and nights of defeats. To all of them, both those who have passed away and those who still share my dreams, burdens, and joys today, my heartfelt thanks as we sing together our institutional anthem, ‘THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM.’ It is my pleasure also to mention the members of the group named ‘Bisperas Sa Veritas’ – the

badly affected his physical strength. As his fragile health took a toll on his ability to read and edit, the big project was very much affected, and Fr. Sal realized that time was not on his side to see its completion.



On September 15, 2022, just a few days before Fr. Sal was hospitalized and eventually diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, the Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards (given by the Asian Catholic Communicators Inc.) awarded Fr. Sal with a *Lifetime Achievement Award*. This Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a Catholic writer whose lifework represents a continuing contribution to the propagation of the Christian Faith through the print media, in recognition

radio program which started being aired on the eve of the first Sunday of Advent in 2004 and continues to be aired every week up to the present. That small cast of inexperienced radio broadcasters started with incredible courage, trekking from their homes to Radio Veritas Tower (at the end of EDSA) Saturday after Saturday, rain or shine, eager to share with their invisible audiences, the fruit of their insights, thanks also to the collaboration of the technical group and management of Radio Veritas domestic programs. Special mention has to be made and honor paid

to Cecilia G. Valmonte, one of the founding members of Bisperas Sa Veritas, and one of its staunchest supporters. A cancer victim, she bravely continued to travel to Radio Veritas until three weeks before she succumbed to the 'big C' and went to her rest in the Lord's arms. To her and all the other members of the Bisperas Team, my gratitude. Their generosity, dedication, and perseverance have been, all along for me, during these past seventeen years, a source of encouragement and inspiration. The Award that is given to me belongs also to all of them!"



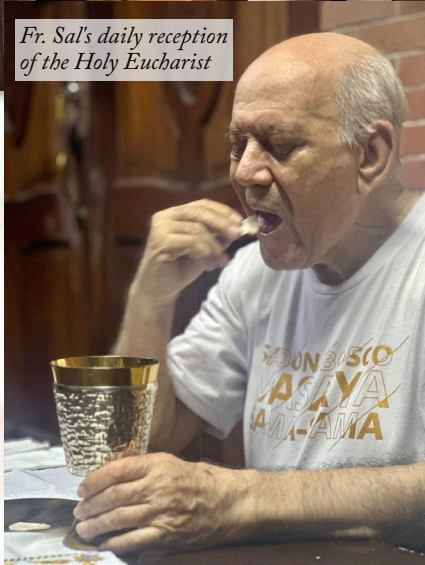
THE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT (2023)



Fr. Sal, at the Zatti Clinic, with his Salesian Community of St. John Bosco Parish



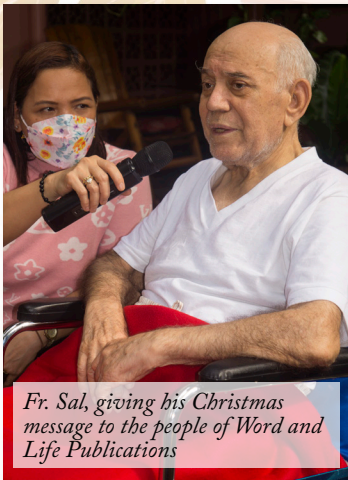
Fr. Sal being visited by his nephew, Roberto Putzu



Fr. Sal's daily reception of the Holy Eucharist



Fr. Sal, visited by His Eminence Jose Cardinal Advincula, DD at Zatti Clinic in DBTI Makati.



Fr. Sal, giving his Christmas message to the people of Word and Life Publications



WORD & LIFE Family@Christmas 2022

In spite of the pain he endured because of cancer and the chemotherapy and radiation treatment, Fr. Sal continued to work, while he can, even in the hospital. However, when it was unbearable, the only thing that would calm him down and give him rest was praying, especially the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

At the gracious age of 84, Fr. Sal peacefully passed on to eternity at the Makati Medical Center in the afternoon of January 26, 2023, the Feast of Sts. Timothy and Titus. Chapter 4, Verse 7 of the Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy fits well with Fr. Sal's departure from this mortal life: *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*

He passed away two days after the Feast of St. Francis de Sales and was buried on February 1, 2023, a day after the Feast of St. John Bosco, at the Salesian cemetery in Don Bosco College – Canlubang in Laguna. Even if he was an Italian citizen and still had relatives in his country, he expressly wished to be buried in the Philippines, whose people he had loved and to whom had given his life.

During his wake at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel in St. John Bosco Parish Makati, from January 27 to January 31, people from all walks of life visited him and thanked him – Apostolic Nuncio Charles Brown, bishops, priests, nuns, young professionals, benefactors, friends, lay mission partners, ordinary people who were blessed to have him as their confessor, and people whom he had encouraged, mentored, counseled, and impacted in one way or another.



During the wake of Fr. Sal, he was visited by the Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Charles John Brown.





February 1, Requiem Mass presided by Archbishop Emeritus Francesco Panfilo, SDB and burial at Don Bosco Canlubang



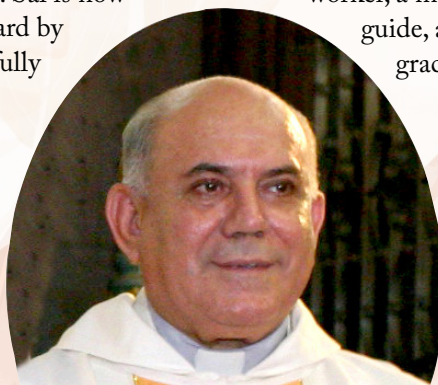
fruitful and grace-filled life as a true son of Don Bosco, the Patron Saint of publishers and the Catholic press. He served the Lord as someone who always had in his heart the spread of the Good News of His Kingdom.

He will always be remembered as someone who had championed the field of Catechesis and New Evangelization; as a Salesian priest who always had a gentle and caring heart for young people, for the poor and the most in need; as a great devotee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and His Divine Mercy as seen in most of his writings; and as a loving son of Mary and propagator of the Rosary. And for those who have known him more personally, he will be treasured as a cheerful friend, a loving father, an encouraging mentor, a dedicated co-worker, a merciful confessor, a wise spiritual guide, and a true bearer of God's gracious love.

Archbishop Emeritus Francesco Panfilo, SDB – his then Provincial Superior when he started Word & Life Publications in 1989 – presided during the Requiem Mass for Fr. Sal on February 1, 2023.

In faith, we believe that Fr. Sal is now being awarded the eternal reward by the Lord Jesus whom he faithfully served all his life. The Master welcomes him with the words: *“Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.”* (Matthew 25:23)

Fr. Sal spent more than 40 years of his missionary life in the Philippines in the field of Catechesis. He lived a very



O Lord, we pray that the soul of Your priest, Your servant +Fr. Sal, who, while he abode in this world, You did adorn with sacred gifts, may ever rejoice in a glorious place in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

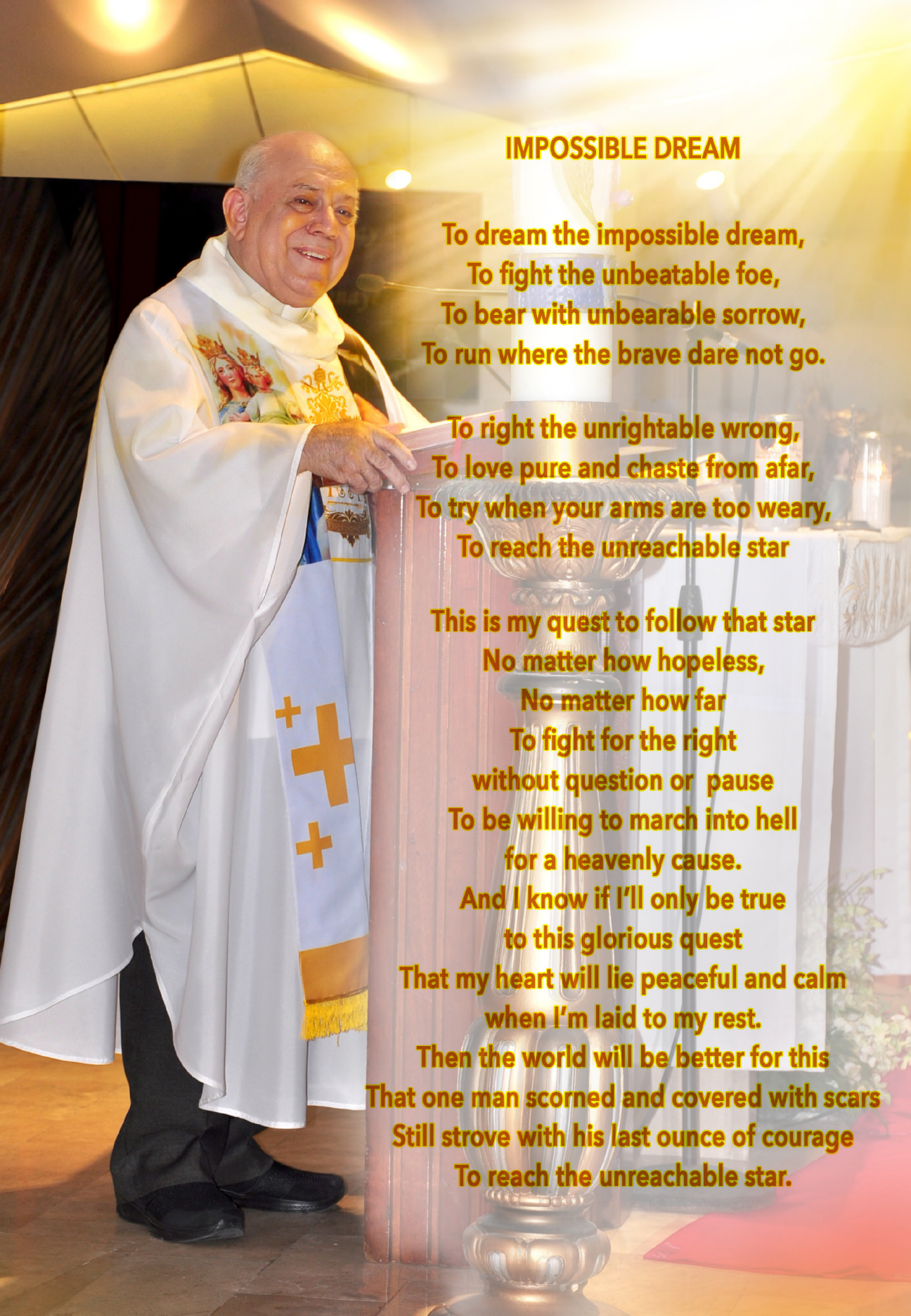


IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE OF

Fr. SAL



- October 12, 1938 Birth at Nuraminis, Cagliari, South Sardinia, Italy
- 1959 Entered the Salesian Aspirantate at Ivrea in Turin
- September 5, 1962 Met Padre Pio de Pietrelcina and received a blessing from the holy man
- October 26, 1962 Left for El Houssoun, Lebanon for his Novitiate year
- October 27, 1963 Made his First Religious Profession as a Salesian of Don Bosco
- 1969 – 1971 Spent his practical training years in Tehran
- September 8, 1971 Made his Perpetual Profession in Pinerolo, Turin
- April 15, 1974 Ordained as Deacon in Ireland
- September 7, 1974 Ordained a Salesian priest in his hometown
- 1974 to 1979 First assignment at the *Centro Catechistico Salesiano di Torino-Leumann*
- November 1979 Arrived in the Philippines
- 1981 Started his involvement in the Episcopal Commission in Education and Religious Instruction (ECERI) that later became Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)
- 1989 Founded Word & Life Publications (WLP)
- 1993 to 2001 Served as Executive Secretary of ECCCE
- 1994 Co-published with ECCCE the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*
- 1997 Co-published with ECCCE the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC)*
- 2004 Co-published with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) the important Vatican resource, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*
- September 11, 1995 Received the *Publisher of the Year Award* by the Asian Catholic Publishers, Inc.
- November 27, 2004 “*Bisperas Sa Veritas*,” aired its first radio program, over Radio Veritas 846kHz on the eve of the First Sunday of Advent
- 2008 Installed as Rector of the De Sales Community which he served until 2017
- October 29, 2008 Received the *Jaime L. Cardinal Sin Serviam Award*, the highest award given by the Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA)
- October 12, 2014 Word & Life Publications celebrated its 25th foundation year
- November 14, 2018 *Word & Life Magazine* received the CMMA Hall of Fame Award for Best Youth-oriented Magazine
- October 12, 2019 Word & Life Publications celebrated its 30th foundation year
- July 2020 Transferred to St. John Bosco Parish in Makati as confessor while he continued working at Word And Life Publications as its Editor-in-chief.
- September 15, 2022 Received the *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the Asian Catholic Communicators Inc. during the Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards
- September 2022 Diagnosed with pancreatic cancer
- January 26, 2023 Passed on to eternity at 1:13pm at the Makati Medical Center
- February 1, 2023 Laid to rest in the Salesian Cemetery in Don Bosco Canlubang, Laguna



IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

**To dream the impossible dream,
To fight the unbeatable foe,
To bear with unbearable sorrow,
To run where the brave dare not go.**

**To right the unrightable wrong,
To love pure and chaste from afar,
To try when your arms are too weary,
To reach the unreachable star**

**This is my quest to follow that star
No matter how hopeless,
No matter how far
To fight for the right
without question or pause
To be willing to march into hell
for a heavenly cause.**

**And I know if I'll only be true
to this glorious quest
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
when I'm laid to my rest.**

**Then the world will be better for this
That one man scorned and covered with scars
Still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable star.**