

1/2018

In memoriam

Xaverian biographical profiles



Fr. Bruno Marchetti

31 August 1935 ~ 10 January 2018

In memoriam

Fr. Bruno Marchetti

Cusinati di Rosà (VI – Italy)
31 August 1935

Vicenza (Italy)
10 January 2018

Bruno Marchetti was born on August 31, 1935, in Cusinati di Rosà, Vicenza province, Veneto region. On the 25th September 1947, Bruno decided to enter the Juniorate School of Vicenza, where he attended the first three years of the junior course. From Vicenza he moved to Zelarino (Venice province) where he attended and concluded the 4th and 5th year of Juniorate High School.

At the age of 17, on September 11, 1952, Bruno entered Novitiate in S. Pietro in Vincoli (Ravenna province) to begin the standard Xaverian formation course. At the end of the year of Novitiate he made his First Religious Profession on the 12th September 1953. With regard to this, on the 2nd August 1953 he wrote to the then Xaverian General Superior Fr. Giovanni Gazza:

“I have long desired this moment of the Profession to donate myself to the One who has given me everything. My sacrifice is meant to be the total offering of myself and of my things in order to continually aim at the sanctification and to the salvation of the non believers.

As this solemn day is rapidly approaching, I wholeheartedly ask to be admitted to the religious-missionary First Profession, aiming at the priesthood in the Pia Società di San Francesco Saverio.

I feel confident that you will not deny my request as you too will surely desire what I am asking for. Thanking you in advance from the bottom of my heart.

While asking your paternal blessing, I offer you my warmest greetings.”

After that, he moved to Desio (Monza and Brianza province, Lombardia region) where he concluded Lyceum, that is three years of Senior High School specializing in classical studies (1953–1956). Thereafter he was prefect in the Juniorate School of Ancona (1956–1957). With regard to that, the then Rector Fr. Luigi Bernardi wrote in his assessment of the prefect:

“Marchetti Bruno has performed his task with enthusiasm, even though at the beginning he was acting more like a college instructor rather than as assistant in a Junior seminary.

He treated absolutely everybody with fairness.

Loving sport, he organized races and competitions for the boys. These events helped to keep the boys busy and use their exuberant energy. He was always obedient.

He has always accepted advice and rebukes, while however very respectfully giving his reasons and opinions.

At first he was a bit absentminded and excessively avid to get news on politics and sport, but gradually he got taken up by his work and became detached from what could have been an exaggerated interest in the above mentioned politics and sport.

By nature he was more inclined to active life rather than study so that he preferred to use his free time doing manual work and light readings rather than applying himself to study school subjects.

With regard to his religious life, I can say that he lived it in an outstanding way. He underwent a radical changed for the better after the visit of the General Superior to our House.”

Thereafter he studied theology in Parma, where he made his Perpetual Profession on November the 3rd, 1957, and was then ordained priest on October the 16th, 1960. Concerning the Perpetual Profession, he wrote the following to the then General Superior Fr. Giovanni Gazza:

“During the past three years I have made my best efforts and assessed my strength and possibilities in becoming an excellent Xaverian. Therefore, if the very reverend Superiors who have known me have nothing to the contrary, I ask to be admitted to the Perpetual Profession trusting in the help of Jesus and the protection of His holy Mother Mary.

I have reached this moment of grace not through any merit of mine but for the maternal blessings of the Holy Mary which have always accompanied

me. I have gradually come to feel very near me the presence of the Madonna. I have often faced difficulties which seemed to be insurmountable but then I came to feel them light even though great sacrifice was required of me.

Sure of her maternal protection, feeling serene and joyful, I desire to become a Xaverian Missionary with perpetual vows.

Please accept me in the Xaverian Family not because I deserve it, but because Jesus and Mary want it.”

Father Bruno was appointed to the Italian Region. He worked as vocational promoter in the Junior Seminary of Alzano Lombardo (1961–1967), then as responsible of the Printing Section of the CSAM, Parma (1967–1970), finally as responsible for the exhibition (display and sale of objects from missionary territories) in Desio (1970–1974).



In November 1974 Fr. Bruno was assigned to the Xaverian Region of North Brazil, Amazon, in the Pará State.

A bit of history or rather background information on this Region. The first Xaverians to reach this area were Frs. Mario Lanciotti, Tarcisio Facchinello, Remo Augusto Cardin and Leone Occhio. They had left the South Region of Brazil and formed the first group of the Abaeté do Tocantins Prelature (Pará State) on March 4, 1961.

«The Xaverian Fathers reached here not by chance but because they had followed the charismatic call of their vocation. What they knew or had imagined of this extremely wide Amazon region is found written in documents and letters. Their basic idea was that the presence in the South Region did not fulfill their missionary expectations»¹.

Later however, the Xaverians in the Amazon region were not only in the Abaeté do Tocantins Prelature. Open to newly emerged spaces of evangelization, they began offering their pastoral services to the Belém diocese, to the Xingu territorial Prelature, and most lately to the Santíssima Conceição do Araguaia diocese, regions where the population rapidly increased, coming from all over Brazil looking for land and better future.

¹ RENATO TREVISAN, “Brasile del Nord: Annuncio e testimonianza”, in AA.VV., *I Missionari Saveriani*, Parma, Istituto Missionari Saveriani 1996.

In this environment where conflict escalated to become also very violent, the Xaverian Fathers clearly took the side of the poor, of the indigenous people and of the landless people.

Until today, the Xaverian Missionaries are committed to the formation of communities and their leaders, to the pastoral service of the landless and of the poor; also they are engaged in the defense of the culture and the rights of the indigenous people.

In this place evangelization means working in the most fundamental realities of the Church: creating and furthering the basic Christian communities, rousing the engagement of the laity and catechists, encouraging the use of “social media”. All and always at the service of the Gospel.

We return now to Fr. Bruno. After a few months of study of the Portuguese language, he worked in the pastoral field in Tomé Açu (1975–80) and in Barcarena (1980–1985).

People remember him as “the priest of the streets”, a real witness of his times, a man of faith always ready to help out “the last ones, the little ones”.

While in Brazil and especially in the Amazon, he spent most of his years living in a small house on the outskirts of Belem, allocated to him by the Xaverian Fathers working in the diocese.

His task was to take care of a parish, dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle, in a small village and to gather young people showing interest in religious and missionary life. Most of these young people came from the surrounding parishes where other Xaverian Fathers worked. He shared the hardship of the poor without ever drawing back.

Fr. Ferdinando Vignato shared the following impressions in an interview released to *Missionari Saveriani* / August-September 2016:

«Fr. Bruno Marchetti was known in the Amazon Region as “the missionary of the *bom bom*”, which in Portuguese means “a sweet”. His way of approaching people and endearing them to him was to give sweets to everybody, children, young and adults of every age.

Every morning he would put three or four pounds of sweets in his bag and start walking the streets of Belém, particularly the poorest areas where even the police did not dare to enter, marginalized places where drug was peddled and where crime and prostitution were ripe. These are the vast slums of Belém, the great metropolis at the estuary of the Amazon river.

He would go everywhere and approach everybody with his gifts: the *bom bom*! And so he would start chatting, asking about the family, how things were going and so on. It was the evangelization through the sweet, a way to say a good word and maybe to encourage to put aside a dubious behavior. Father Bruno was quite straight in his approach, speaking clearly. He knew

everybody and would call them to the right behavior, to leave drugs dealing which only brought damage and death.

His invitation at times gave results with real “conversions”, when someone would leave the bad life and started attending the Christian community.

Of course Fr. Bruno did also other valuable pastoral work. He did this activity living in the parish and in the Xaverian community. He knew the families in the poorest slums. He would talk to everybody, children and parents alike».

In April 1977 Fr. Bruno started talking about a possible phlebitis and stopped eating a variety of food “because he felt to be allergic to it”, an allergy apparently already present before arriving in the Amazon region. However he kept on with his pastoral activities. The Superiors decided to send him to the São Paulo Hospital for detailed medical examinations, “with the order not to return until fully cured”. And so it happened.



Fr. Bruno was asked in July 1985 to return to Italy for a period of “avvicendamento”. He first worked as missionary animator in the Scuola Apostolica (Junior seminary) of Cremona (1985–1987) and then in the Scuola Apostolica of Alzano Lombardo (1987–1991). He also attended all the courses on Ongoing Formation at Tavernerio (Como province). After that, he was reassigned to the North Brazil region in the August of 1991 and worked in the pastoral activity in Tomé Açu (1991–1996), Belém (1996–1998), Concordia do Pará (1998–2003), Belém (2003–2014) and Ananindeua (2014–2016).

In connection with this period of ministry, Fr. Bruno wrote to the then General Superior Fr. Rino Benzoni: “While living in faraway places and busy with parish problems, we tend to forget or rather there is not much time to think about anything else, I am not a good Xaverian, but I always give thanks to the Lord for being a religious, because it is in the Religious Family and through you that I have kept myself faithful to the ideal that is Christ”.

The then General Councillor Fr. Lugi Zucchinelli, when sending to Fr. Marchetti his destination for the second time to the Amazon region wrote:

“I wish to convey you all my gratitude and the gratitude of the Xaverian Family for what you have done so far for the Kingdom of God. Your sensibility for the poor and your feeling with the Brazilian Church has characterized your presence among us during these years. Sometimes

you have not been completely understood and at times you have not expressed yourself clearly.

If this has produced suffering, this suffering has been the fruit of a searching together for a better future. We give thanks God for that.

I offer you my best wishes for this new period in your life.”

Due to illness, Fr. Bruno was called back to Italy on June 2016 and sent to Vicenza Community. Although himself under medical treatment, he willingly but within the limit of his energy, helped in the missionary animation.

«Subito muore il rumore dei passi
come sordi rintocchi:
segni di vita o di morte?
Non è tutto un vivere e insieme un morire?
Ciò che più conta non è questo, non è questo:
conta solo che siamo eterni,
che dureremo, che sopravviveremo...».

So in one of his last poems, Fr. David Maria Turoldo, ready to remind us, even on the eve of death, that life never ends.

God has called to Himself Fr. Bruno Marchetti, “the missionary of the *bom bom*” on the 10th January 2018. May he rest in peace.



Fr. Pino Leoni — who worked with Fr. Bruno in Brazil and was in the same Xaverian House of Vicenza assisting him in his last days — on January 22, 2018 wrote to Fr. Bruno the following moving words:

“My dear Fr. Bruno,
12 days have gone by since your death. Your sister Anna and your brothers Francesco and Angelo with their wives have come to visit us here at the Vicenza community. We prayed together and then had dinner together eating *crustoli* (cookies typical of the season before Lent) and the so many other sweet delicacies that they brought us.

We have remembered you as if you yourself were here present serving us at the table. I am sure you are now well! Instead I am left with a strange feeling while constantly recalling the night of the 6th and 7th of January. You were restless and I was trying to calm you down, while I myself was becoming more restless than you were. And I was calling on the nurses, who also were firmly telling you to calm down. Clearly you had your good reasons, absolutely, to feel restless. Then you gradually calmed down. Until the last

breath. You have left us in a hurry! I wonder if you have heard me telling you I was sorry the way I treated you.

I see you again and again, when you make the sign of the cross, and I keep hoping that you will look benevolently at me from within the merciful heart of God the Father.

And how can I forget you and your poor, for whom you felt so intensely! Your niece Emanuela is telling me that there is a new foundation being born, bearing your name, with the intent to create grants for the most needed. This also is a way in which the words of Jesus “unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies...” become reality.

Are you still in your office which was the road, wearing your so-called uniform (shirt and worn out trousers) and carrying your tools (your bag, in the morning filled up with sweets and completely empty at night)?

Taking a virtual walk with you, we once again see you as missionary at the exhibitions, in the sale of books, in the vocational animation, unique in your prophetic courage saying to a family father: “If you don’t allow your son to go, you will have to answer for it to the Lord who calls his missionaries”. And then the Amazon: Barcarena, Tomé-Açu, Concordia do Pará, the slums of Belem do Pará, the hospital and its 6th ward (the cancer ward), full of sick children.

Wherever you went you left not so much your name but your heart, a heart who defended the poor and organized the Pastoral da Crianca, taking care of the children, especially those from 0 to 6 years old, a heart which encouraged mothers and so many other volunteers to get involved in the visit to families and in the weekly meetings for check-ups.

Many times you took part in the festivals of the *Pastoral da Crianca* and of the poor people. You were so good that when with them you were even eating with gusto.

Then there is your return to Italy, to Vicenza, where you continued — in your own way — to preach the beatitudes, until that last Eucharist, the Eucharist of farewell at Rosà. Yes, just ten days before going to Heaven with a *bom bom* for everyone.

Muito obrigado, my dear Father Bruno!”

Edited by Fr. Domenico Calarco SX

IN MEMORIAM: PROFILI BIOGRAFICI SAVERIANI

Direttore Responsabile: Javier Peguero Pérez
Redazione: Domenico Calarco, Gerardo Caglioni, Gabriele Ferrari
Impostazione grafica: Gian Paolo Succu

Edizioni: CDSR
(Centro Documentazione Saveriani Roma)

Pubblicazioni: Missionari Saveriani
viale Vaticano 40 – 00165 Roma

Roma 2018

Digital Edition Only

EDITED / PUBLISHED: 29 OCTOBER 2018

Profili Biografici Saveriani 1/2018

CDSR Centro Documentazione
Saveriani Roma

