

A Cardinal on mission...





My name is Eugenio Dal Corso, Bishop emeritus of Benguela. On March 26th, 2018, His Holiness accepted by resignation four years after my 75th birthday. After peacefully reflecting on the inspiration to continue my missionary life in Angola, I often repeat: "As long as Our Lord gives me the strength, I will be a missionary to evangelize and make Jesus known to all, especially to the most abandoned and needy".

With this spirit, Providence moved me to go to St. Josefina Bakhita Pastoral Center in the district of Caiundo, municipality of Menongue in Cuando Cubango Province. Although it is canonically part of the Cathedral parish of the Diocese of Menongue, it is located 140 km away. I arrived on July 22, 2018, after twenty days at the Diocesan Curia of Menongue and after leaving the Diocese of Benguela to Bishop Antonio Jaca on June 12 of that same year.

From 1990 until 2010, Father João Bosco animated the Center on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). He was a Brazilian missionary, well remembered for his zeal and pastoral engagement with young people. For the last 5 years, a diocesan priest has been coming to the Center to

celebrate Mass from time to time, once a month at best. For the most part, general and Itinerant catechists animate the faith life of the Center, which is composed of a main chapel in Caiundo and 12 catechetical stations in the area. The farthest one is about 80 km away and has never been reached by any of the priests. Only the catechist goes there by canoe and on foot. The town of Caiundo has about 3,700 inhabitants and if we add the 15 villages that surround it, there is a total of about 24,000 inhabitants.

In the village there is a chapel that is in fairly good condition. I am in the process of installing a sacrarium, refurbishing the altar and carrying out other essential repairs. Nearby there is a presbytery that, although is reasonably good condition, needs some repairs and refurbishing.

Then there are two rather dilapidated houses and a demolished building that were left to the Church still in the time of Father João Bosco. One of these lends itself very well to welcoming a community of sisters. In place of the demolished building, I am planning to build a hall for parish meetings.

One of the main challenges is travel. One needs a sturdy vehicle to navigate the rough roads and in some places that permit only a motorcycle to pass. The Centre currently has 2 old Land Cruisers belonging to the Diocese of Menongue. I spoke to the pro-vicar, Father Paulino and the chancellor, Father Adriano, requesting some funds to have these vehicles repaired. They met with Monsignor Pio, who remotely gave his assent. If it is not possible to advance in this way, I will try another path.

I am aware that Propaganda Fide has many requests, many solicitations from many parts of the world and all of them are worthy of attention and support. Looking back on the journey I made, first as Bishop of Saurimo and then of Benguela, I can only thank you for the abundance of help you have always provided, allowing me to offer priests and consecrated religious conditions of dignity to spread the Gospel, announcing the love of God to peoples in the most remote places. I write to you with the knowledge that this is probably my last fraternal request for charity on behalf of God's people who hope to receive His Word. I therefore also take advantage of this opportunity to present my apologies if

there was anything lacking in the process of receiving funds and completing the projects. I have always done the best I could.

Here in Caiundo I would like to succeed in improving the chapel, refurbishing the presbytery, getting motorized for visits, restoring at least one of the buildings for use as a parish hall and, God willing, to establish this mission outpost as a parish. In order to do so, and to succeed in attracting a young priest and some dedicated consecrate religious sisters to this mission, I need to create adequate living conditions, which I too will need for the last years of my evangelical mission.



Here is what needs to be done:

1. **In the Chapel:** a sacrarium, a complete paint job, some electrical installations, complete the sacristy, repair four broken windows and acquire some liturgical vestments and vessels.

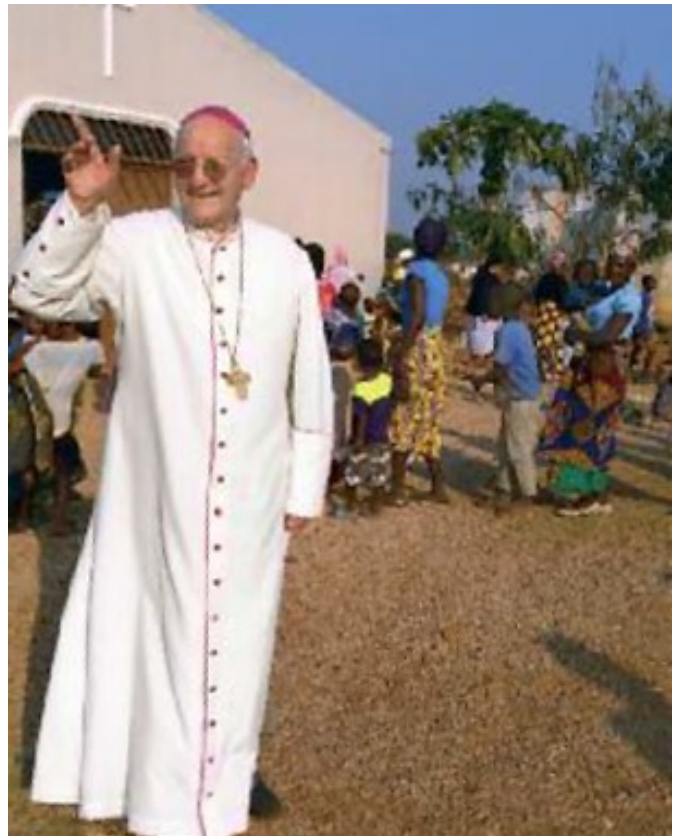
2. **Presbytery:** reactivate the electrical system that was destroyed when the house was unattended; refurbish the plumbing system; refurbish the bathroom by constructing walls and installing a septic tank; build a cistern, purchase a pump, a water heater; construct bathrooms for the existing rooms and add two more rooms with bathrooms. I have already provided a generator and furnished the house, the kitchen with a refrigerator, stove and oven, beds and all necessities.

3. **Parish/Catechetical Hall:** refurbish the tottering structure and equip it for the parish office and parish hall with two desks, 30 chairs, 2 pieces of furniture, a computer, a printer with spare toner, reams of paper, some stationery to make catechetical files, as well as provide the catechists with a motorcycle for visiting the most remote places.

Through the pro-vicar of the Diocese of Menongue, the priest secretary for catechesis in Benguela and with my personal funds, I have been collecting books and publications in local languages and dialects for catechesis. I am also organizing a group of young people and children. In these days, I have begun to visit the 12 catechetical centers. On my first visit, I baptized more than 110 Christians and I was able to see for myself the desire to know Jesus on the part of these humble people and the difficulties they have in gaining access to the liturgy.

I will continue as long as the Lord gives me the strength. I have other visits to catechetical centers on my agenda. After this, I have scheduled confirmations for October and weddings for the last Sunday in December. Personally, I have already put everything I had in my savings to realize part of the work and to set up and carry out my pastoral activities. I did this because I do not know how long my health will allow me to remain to carry out my pastoral activities. Thus, I hope you understand my "sense of urgency".

I would like to share many more things with you, but I think you have already perceived my joy at being here to live this last mission. I, therefore, ask you, dear brothers, to accompany me as you can, trusting also in your prayers!



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