

# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

1924-2024



## THE FOUNDING SALESIANS Part 2

*Maurizio Bondioni* was born in 1904. Like his older brother Bartolo, he too became a Salesian Brother and after making his profession on the 4<sup>th</sup>



October 1924, together they set sail with Fr Cerutti for South Africa.

Maurice first worked on the farm in the newly opened agricultural school at Lansdowne and was a key figure in its early development. In the late 1940's notice was received that the farm had to be closed as livestock could no longer be kept in the area. After a great deal of consultation, land was purchased in Daleside in the

Transvaal and all the livestock and equipment was sent up by train.

It is impossible to accurately describe the tremendous responsibility and workload that he accepted in building up a new farm and at the same time providing for the needs of the young school boys and Salesian community. Later he became a legend in the area around Bosco and was a true expert in farming the land. Aware of the need for water for the sustainability of the farm and the school, he made provision for bore holes, which still operate to this day! Here again, his work on the farm and the sale of milk was of great financial assistance to the house.

He never forgot his Italian roots and he had an excellent tenor voice which he often used to sing "O sole mio" (with handkerchief in hand!) on Feast days. Always a devout and regular religious, he was exemplary in his devotion to the Holy Mass and his spiritual exercises. He died in Daleside, on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 1981 aged 77 and is buried there in the cemetery.

***Bartolo Bondioni*** was born at Niardo, an Alpine village in Brescia on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1898, not far from the Swiss border. He was born into a hard-



working, honest and industrious family. Unfortunately, his mother died when he was very young. Between 1917 and 1920, he served in the army. He joined the Salesians in 1921 and became a lay-brother. In 1925 he was asked by the superiors to go to South Africa with his younger brother, Maurizio, who was also a Salesian lay brother and to the community of Claremont, where an agricultural school had been opened the previous year. They arrived on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1925.

Bartolo was to spend the next twenty years as an exemplary religious in the community of Lansdowne. He used his many talents to look after all that needed doing to the fabric of the house and the farm. In order to bring in much needed funds, he had a milk round, making deliveries of fresh milk, to convents, presbyteries, co-operators and friends of the Salesian community, including Princess Labia! Thus he became a very well-known personality in the area and diocese, much loved and respected by all who knew him.

Bartolo suffered from diabetes and, from July 1944, he was no longer able to do the milk deliveries. On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1945 he took ill and collapsed. He was anointed by Fr Millen, the Rector and died in the presence of his confreres. Bartolo was the first Salesian Brother to die in South Africa. He was 47 years old and is buried in the Salesian plot in Maitland.



*Da mihi animas, caetera tolle*

"Give me souls, take away the rest"