

## Fr Luigi Bolla's SDB. Called "Yánkuam" by the Achuar



Fr Luigi Bolla's SDB lived a mission of grounding the Gospel in the heart of the amazon rainforest, among the Achuar people with whom he lived. He identified deeply with the Achuar people, spending much time investigating their customs, ethnology and culture, aiding his work in proclaiming the Good News to them.

Don Bolla, called "Yánkuam" by the Achuar, **was born in Schio, Vicenza**, on 11 August 1932 to a very devout family. At the age of 7 he began attending the Salesian oratory. The stories of missionaries inspired him from a vocational point of view and at the age of 11 or 12, he heard a voice saying: "You can be a priest and a missionary. You will walk a lot in your life ". His dream was to live forever in some remote forest of the earth, with the sole purpose of making Jesus known and loved.

**With great emotion, on 22 November 1953, he left the port of Genoa for Ecuador.** He was 21 years old. He quickly learned Spanish and the Shuar language to work with the natives of that ethnic group. Ordained a priest, he asked the Lord to be able to learn indigenous languages, to always go to the most distant and difficult places among the indigenous peoples, to be instruments of the Lord so that they may have the gift of God's grace to save themselves.

When he saw that whilst Shuar tribe already had missionaries the Achuar were left to themselves, enlightened by God he asked to be able to give himself to those people. He told his superiors that he did not want to go on a mission as a "conqueror", but to respect and defend their lands, to be able to live like them, while preserving his priestly and religious identity, and to trust fully in Providence without asking his province for anything.

He thus obtained permission to establish the Wichim mission together with the Achuar.

**He spent 30 years in Ecuador and 30 years in Peru.**

In this second country he arrived in 1984, to work in the Apostolic Vicariate of Yurimaguas. Years of loneliness and isolation awaited him, due to the distance and lack of a religious community.

Don Bolla did not limit himself to announcing the Word of God, but did his best to accompany the Achuar people in their organization: he promoted education and took care of the health and alternative development of this people. He also wrote many books about their cultural identity as well as the work of bringing the Gospel to cultures that have not yet known it.

Source: <http://www.infoans.org/en/sections/special-reports/item/7361-peru-you-can-be-a-priest-and-a-missionary-you-will-walk-a-lot-in-your-life-fr-luigi-bolla-a-missionary-who-knew-how-to-inculturate-the-gospel>