



Australian

Salesian Bulletin

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Embracing the challenges of life



Why the only future worth building includes everyone

To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naïve and ignore the tragedy humanity is facing. Hope is the virtue of a heart that doesn't lock itself into darkness, that doesn't dwell on the past, does not simply get by in the present, but is able to see a tomorrow. And it can do so much, because a tiny flicker of light that feeds on hope is enough to shatter the shield of darkness.

A single individual is enough for hope to exist, and that individual can be you. When there is an "us," there begins a revolution: the revolution of tenderness. And what is tenderness? It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen also to the silent cry of our common home, of our sick and polluted earth. Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart to comfort the other, to take care of those in need.

Yes, tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women. Tenderness is not weakness; it is fortitude. It is the path of solidarity, the path of humility. Please, allow me to say it loud and clear: the more powerful you are, the more your actions will have an impact on people, the more responsible you are to act humbly. If you don't, your power will ruin you, and you will ruin the other. Through humility and concrete love, on the other hand, power – the highest, the strongest one – becomes a service, a force for good.



Cover

We should treasure every moment of our lives. Let us give much more importance to this treasure by sharing it with others who are most dear to us, especially by dedicating our time to them.

Contents

- 3 Editorial: Abounding goodness
- 4 Let us celebrate life!
- 6 John Paul Village, 'A Home that welcomes'
- 7 Fr John Briffa's 60th anniversary
- 8 Kiwi Bosco 2017
- 10 Salesian Spirit shining through sport
- 12 Young Burmese Salesians make Final Profession
- 14 Salesian Community Suva, Fiji
- 16 Life wasn't meant to be easy
- 17 Celebration of thanksgiving
- 18 A gift of hope for Don Bosco Tech
- 19 Winter Holiday Camps
- 20 Cambodia Immersion 2017
- 22 Salesian Cooperators gather in Tokyo
- 23 Annual Formation Gathering
- 24 Salesian College Port Pirie Reunion
- 26 Lives worth living: Two vocational stories
- 28 Regional News
- 30 World News

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Fr Frank Freeman SDB
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What a year it has been so far! We have had our fill of violence, political upheavals, corruption and bribery in high places, scandals amid the pillars of society, massacres on London Bridge, on the streets of Manchester, in other countries, and murders of the aged and defenceless in our own. I think I will give up reading newspapers.

A favourite piece of my boyhood mischief was to hold a magnifying glass about 6 inches above dried grass so as to focus the sun's rays. Within a few seconds, the grass would begin to smoulder and then burst into flame. For the more mischievously inclined, an opportunity was then provided to light up that secretly smuggled cigarette. Ah, how the pranks of boyhood have now become so commonplace and so accepted with no more than a passing admonition of 'Tut! Tut!' Now we mischievous youngsters were misusing a great gift and were focusing it for a destructive purpose. We blissfully ignored the unfocused sun's daily gift of life to our world, sustaining our food crops, and a whole host of beautiful flowers and plants. The sun gave us so many wonderful days in which to enjoy life. And here we were using it for mischievous and destructive purposes!

Yet do not our newspapers with regular monotony, focusing as they do on the negative, do the same thing? Convinced as they are that "good news does not sell newspapers", they marshal worldwide all the spectacular, the disastrous, the violent, and dish it all up to us as our daily fare. After all, to make money is the name of their game; that is their smuggled little cigarette. Just like mischievous schoolboys with a magnifying glass, they distort a wonderful positive force for good.

I have often wondered what is the effect upon regular newspaper readers of such a constant barrage of the negative news. Do they become hardened and insensitive? Do great disasters earn no more than a shaking of the head and a Tut, Tut? And here is the danger. As we become immune to the violent and the negative, our appreciation of the beautiful and the positive becomes dulled. It was the poet Francis Thompson who warned us of such a danger, "Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces that miss the many splendoured thing."

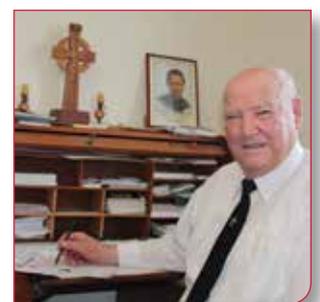
A thoughtful assessment of our daily round will highlight many a pleasant moment, and many a positive element which newspapers would not deem newsworthy. As it is on the local scene, so it is on the worldwide stage. In the daily life of towns and villages of this world, the struggle to raise higher the line between goodness and evil abounds in ordinary hearts.

If we could but highlight and encourage such a struggle, we would have the power to eliminate so many of the world's evils. The Great Russian novelist, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, recognised this struggle for universal goodness.

"The line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, not between political parties either, but right through every human heart." There are plenty of examples to encourage us: the unpaid army of volunteers assisting in famine relief; the heroic efforts of firefighters, the unselfish and comforting work of nurses; the dedication service of teachers; the burdens shouldered by parents. All this goodness is so much food for encouragement and optimistic hope.

This focusing on the good is not ignoring the evil that exists. It is simply maintaining a healthy balance that uplifts and encourages rather than one which demeans and demoralizes. It is an exercise in Christian optimism and hope. The prophet Isaiah proclaims "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace."

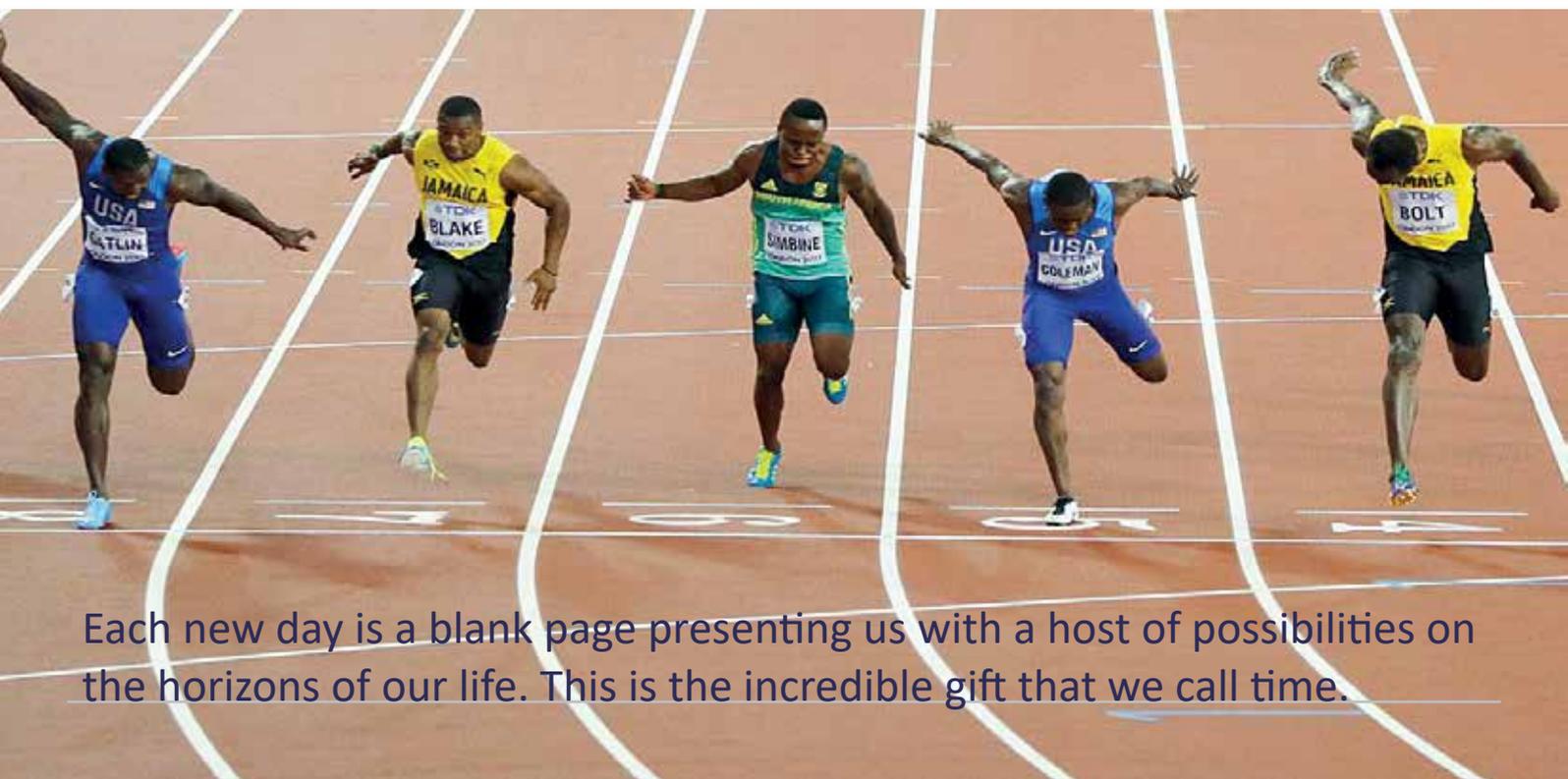
It is indeed a very Christian thing to focus on the goodness that abounds all around us, and then to value this goodness as "we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."



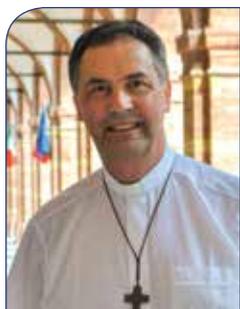
Editor

Frank Freeman SDB,
editor of the Australian
Salesian Bulletin

Let us celebrate life!



Each new day is a blank page presenting us with a host of possibilities on the horizons of our life. This is the incredible gift that we call time.



Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime

Ángel Fernández Arttime is the 10th successor of Don Bosco and the first Spaniard and third non-Italian to become Rector Major of the Salesian Order.

In many countries, September marks the beginning of school, and families organize their life around this reality. In other places, the rhythm of life stays as it was because New Year is at the centre of the calendar and determines the changes. In both cases, however, a host of possibilities is presented to us. It is most natural to think that we will always see a new dawn, that we will have good health, and that life will hold many possibilities – but it is not always this way and neither is it so for everyone.

It is certain that time or, better, life – which has time as its measure – envelops a host of possibilities, relationships, and experiences...

I wish to offer you some reflections about time and its possibilities.

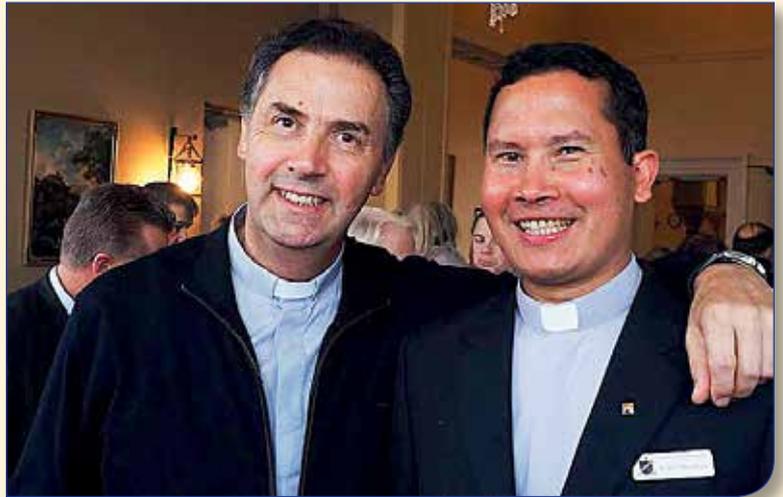
Let's imagine that there exists a bank which adds to our personal account 86,400 dollars every morning. This strange bank does not carry over our funds from one day to the next, but every night it takes out of our personal account whatever we have not used. Every one of us has an account in one of these banks! What is the name on this bank? Time!

Each day this bank, beyond adding new funds, removes whatever is left over from the day before. It never keeps a balance. If the full amount is not used up in one day, what remains is lost. It cannot be reversed.

You cannot make any credit card charges to your account for the income of the following day. You must live in the present with the funds for today. So:

- ◆ To understand well the value of an entire year, ask a student who has had to repeat a course;
- ◆ To understand the value of a month, ask a mother who gave birth to her baby prematurely;
- ◆ To understand the value of a week, ask the editor of a weekly publication;
- ◆ To understand the value of an hour, ask the help of those who are in love and who expect to see their loved one at any moment;
- ◆ To understand the value of a minute, ask someone travelling who missed his or her plane or train by just one minute;
- ◆ To understand the importance of a second, ask someone who avoided an accident by one second;
- ◆ To understand the value of a millisecond, ask the athlete who earned a gold medal at the Olympics by this margin.

New Provincial appointed for the Australia-Pacific Province



Such is the value of time!

Thus, I think we should treasure every moment of our lives. Let us give much more importance to this treasure by sharing it with others who are most dear to us, especially by dedicating our time to them.

Let us not forget: time waits for no one. Let us also remember what is most important of all: as believers, we know that time is not only a measure of life, but the gift of life itself, given for us to share, and in this sharing we are truly happy.

May I wish you, dear readers, that we do not let life just pass us by or live it in any old way. Once we have had the experience of living life fully, enjoying all the beauty and wonderful things that surround us – and even the difficulties which weigh us down at times – accepting this challenge becomes a passion.

May you always be happy!

The Rector Major with the consent of his council appointed on 20 June 2017 as the 11th Provincial of Australia-Pacific Fr William Matthews for the period of 6 years (2018-2024).

Fr William was born in Mandalay (Myanmar) on 3 June 1971 and grew up at St Joseph's Salesian parish. He joined the Nazareth Aspirantate in Anisakan straight after secondary education in 1991. His family migrated to Australia in 1994 for a better future, and to be closer to other relatives who had been in Australia for many years. This happened in the middle of William's Novitiate in Myanmar. William then re-joined the Salesians in Melbourne, Australia, in 1995 and made his first profession in Lysterfield (Vic) on 31 January 1997 and the perpetual profession on 29 November 2003 in Ferntree Gully (Vic). After the postnovitiate in Lysterfield and Oakleigh, he did his practical training in Gawler (SA) and Ferntree Gully and finished his theology studies at Catholic Theology Centre, Melbourne, in 2004.

After the priestly ordination in his second 'hometown' Perth (WA) in 2005, he was involved again in the school ministry as teacher, assistant and chaplain in Ferntree Gully, Gawler and Sunbury.



John Paul Village, 'A Home that welcomes'

The Parish of St John Bosco Engadine was established in 1947 and this year celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of The Shrine of St John Bosco. In the relatively short 70 year history, the Salesians have achieved many things in the Parish. We have established two parish churches, a primary school and a secondary college, with 800 students in each, The Dunlea Centre (formerly Boys Town), several youth groups and John Paul Village.

John Paul Village was commenced in 1985, initially as a joint project with the local Uniting Church. Fr Briffa, Parish Priest at the time, was keen to provide a care facility for parishioners and their families as they aged. The first stage of the village included a 47 bed nursing home and 20 self-care units. However, from inception the intention was always to provide all of the various stages of 'aged care' for our residents. So, in the several years that followed, the village continued to grow, providing more self-care units, a hostel, community care and specialty dementia facilities.

Today the village has grown to provide what is now called Residential Aged Care to 190 people and 167 Independent Living Units. In total, our population is now over 400 and it is noteworthy that a number of the people instrumental in establishing the village are now very happy residents, including Fr Briffa who is now retired – apart from celebrating Mass every Friday afternoon in the main auditorium of The Hub, which is the village's administrative, communal and entertainment centre.

In the spirit of St John Bosco, John Paul Village's Mission is to be: "A home that welcomes; A vibrant community that celebrates each stage of life to the full; A place where friendships are discovered and shared; A living expression of Christ's love for all."

Our Mission is our driving force, under the guidance of our Parish Priest, Fr Michael Court, our Director of Mission, Kim Mannix, and her small but devoted team. We aim not only to 'care' for our residents, but to ensure they know we care.

We have a dedicated team of over 200 staff who are supported by in excess of 200 volunteers. Our management team works together to ensure the very best of health care is provided to our residents. However, aged care is not just about health. It also includes spiritual care, activity based and general well being care. From the very beginning John Paul Village has been blessed with a wonderful group of volunteers. It is the 'extra care needs' for which our management team appreciates the team of volunteers so much; a task they do so well. Many of our volunteers are self-care residents of the village, others are parishioners, and others come from a variety of connections with our community.



Kevin Gurney

Kevin Gurney is the Chair of the John Paul Village's advisory committee



60th anniversary of ordination Fr John R Briffa SDB OAM



The main Auditorium of the Hub is used for Mass

Growth in size is no longer a key driver for the development of the village. We already provide a complete range of aged care needs for not only Bosco parishioners and their families, but other parishes in the region and the wider community. We are now focused on change within the Aged Care Sector which includes rapid growth in 'for profit' organisations. Consequently, we are now redeveloping the village substantially to ensure we remain current and competitive; and to continue to offer the best in aged care.

We have just commenced the redevelopment of our residential care buildings. Major construction work will continue over the next five years, while we continue to care for residents in the village.

On completion of the redevelopment, we will have very modern facilities to continue providing the best in aged care for many years to come. Whilst only increasing in size marginally, we will be better placed to fulfil our mission.

We remain ever grateful to the Salesian Provincial Council which provides support and encouragement to our Parish so that we can continue this amazing facility.



On Friday 7th July, Fr John Briffa celebrated his 60th Anniversary of Ordination and, that afternoon, The Hub at John Paul Village Heathcote, where Fr John resides, was absolutely packed with over 200 village residents, parishioners and others for a celebratory Mass concelebrated by Fr Briffa and five of his Salesian confreres - Fr Peter Carroll, Rector (Engadine), Fr Mick Court, Parish Priest (Engadine), Fr John Walenceij, Rector (St Marys), Fr Guy Riolo, Asst. Priest (St Marys) and Fr Leo Choi, Asst. Priest (Engadine).

Among the others were Fr Gerrit Kraan SDB who also resides at John Paul Village, Sr Edna Mary McDonald FMA who is the Provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians – the Salesian Sisters – of the South Pacific Region, and numerous other Salesian Sisters.

It was a truly amazing celebration for a highly esteemed Salesian who was Parish Priest at Engadine for 27 years and whose many noteworthy works included the establishment of John Paul Village nearly 32 years ago, a retirement complex that is now home to more than 400 residents.

Later that same evening, also in The Hub, Fr John and about 120 of the Village's residents were treated to a very special evening of musical entertainment by Daniel Gough (keyboard) and "The Morrison Family", a highly talented group mostly comprising tutors and/or graduates from the Conservatorium of Music, who are descended from Dr John Morrison and his wife, Beverley, who spent their last years as residents of the Village.

It was an exceptional program of classical and modern music that proved to be a fitting end to a wonderful day of celebration.

*Fr Briffa with Daniel Gough and the Morrison Family:
Klara (violin and compere)
Tom (guitar)
Nina (vocals) and Belinda (clarinet);
Bernadette (cello) was overseas.*

Kiwi Bosco 2017



The history of 'Don Bosco Youth' of St Paul's Massey & Ranui, and 'St Mary's Avondale Youth' started in a dream where a man said: "You will have to win these friends of yours not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness. So, begin right now to show them that sin is ugly and virtue beautiful." With this, St John Bosco dedicated his whole life on street and juvenile youngsters to make their future bright, and therefore created the work of 'Salesians of Don Bosco'.

For the New Zealand 'Don Bosco Youth' and 'St Mary's Avondale Youth', our first Don Bosco camp was in Australia at Salesian College Sunbury in Victoria, Melbourne in 2015. This was an experience we couldn't forget and felt inspired to try and establish a Camp for New Zealand.

With the help and support of our Parents as well as our parish priests Fr Aleki Piula SDB and Fr Mathew Vadakkevettuvazhiyil SDB we were able to have our very first 'Kiwi Bosco Camp'.

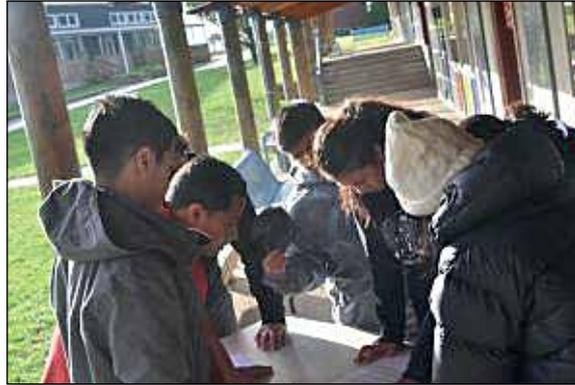
With a few months of meetings we were able to put our plans into reality and held Kiwi Bosco on Friday 7 July and Saturday 8 July 2017 at St Paul's Primary School in Massey, Auckland.

Friday night was filled with lots of activities which helped the oratory groups bond together, to work as a team and to get to know one another. Some of the activities included Riff off, human bingo, Cat and Mouse and so much more. These activities lightened the mood and had everyone participating. As the night continued RC (one of the youth leaders) gave a very insightful presentation as to why and how Don Bosco was introduced to their youth and what his life was about. We ended off the night with a Praise and Worship to glorify his Holy Name and a reflection time before lights out.

Our Saturday morning began with a bit of a Zumba work-out and breakfast afterwards. This was followed by an inspirational talk by one of our leaders (Patricia) and activities/workshops based around our theme – Amazing Race being one of the activities where each group were able to work together as a team and make each other stronger by communicating and supporting each other during each game. Because our theme was FAMILY, the activities and workshops that were included in our Kiwi Bosco camp, were all based around it. We each listened to each other's thoughts on Family, Love and Life during the workshop. As leaders, we wanted the youth to show how they feel about these words and how they lead to one another.



We have always seen the OzBosco Camps to be internationally held events with hundreds of attendees and countless organisers. Holding something similar for our Massey and Avondale parishes did seem farfetched and unlikely for us leaders at first. However, as Father Aleki proposed the idea and we began putting our thoughts together, Kiwi Bosco 2017 was something we all saw as fun and an exciting opportunity we all eagerly looked forward to. Putting together a camp like this was a new experience which took months of planning and preparation.



On the day of the camp, we were all filled with enthusiasm as to what the turnout would have been. We were pleased to see the result of our hard work as the participants enjoyed the workshops, activities, camaraderie and games.



Although we came as separate youths and the camp was only on for a short period of days, it felt like we spent weeks with each other. During this short time we built unbreakable relationships and we all walked away as brothers and sisters in Christ. With Jesus at the centre of it all from the beginning till the very end, we couldn't leave without giving glory and praise back to Him for an unforgettable camp; so we ended it off with Mass celebrated by Fr Aleki Piula SDB.

It was a success. We did New Zealand's first ever Kiwi Bosco 2017. We definitely cannot wait for what the future holds for our Salesian family and what more of Don Bosco's teachings we get to share with our young people, because through God all things are possible.



Salesian Spirit shining through sport



Michael Gartland

Michael has studied journalism and has been a participant in the Salesian Youth Movement for many years. As an avid Richmond fan, this is the first September Michael has something to look forward to.

It's been a big year in sport for Salesian youth in Melbourne; we've walked away from three different tournaments as winners – an unprecedented hattrick. The month of May saw the first step in this treble with long-awaited victory in the Brotherhood Cup, a field soccer tournament contested by seminarians, brothers and connected youth. Two weeks and several hours of dodging, catching and throwing later, the Twilight Dodgeball Party was added to the collection, whilst hundreds of dollars were raised for the Capuchin Community's outreach programs in South Melbourne.

Not even Hollywood could have come up with a better script for the third and final leg of the sporting treble. Two Salesian-based teams were entered into the Archdiocesan Office for Youth's (AOY) mixed indoor soccer tournament; battle fatigue and cramps to survive until the 8th and final stage of the knockout tournament. 4-2 was the final score of the grand final but by then the point was mostly moot: Team Salesian had done it again.

This was the first time any of us had competed in the AOY tournament and it's fair to say our team had been put together at the last minute. We entered the day with very low expectations; the aim was to win at least one game. Somehow, after a shaky start, the wins just started to string together. The biggest win though, came about midway through the day in the most unexpected of places.

Exhausted, we were sucking down equal parts water and oxygen around the solitary drink tap in the venue when a conversation struck up with one of the organizers. She was surprised to find out that only about half of our team play soccer regularly and even then, only for a couple of years. "You're all so good though!" she exclaimed. "But I really like how well you get on with each other; you're all so supportive and involve everyone on the team and I just need to thank you all for that, and for even looking after the teams you play against and the referees". The siren went for our next game so the conversation had to end there but for me, the inference was pretty clear; what we were doing, others were not.

The spirit and intention behind a Catholic social event on each particular day was alive and well throughout all competitions, which meant that behaviour that didn't match up with that was even more noticeable. The problem is, of course, that these then tend to out in first impressions and conversations of the game just played, going against the general feel and overshadowing the meaning behind the day. Perhaps this is just another sport's capabilities; the power to turn people a little bit feral in the heat of the moment.

Incidents of poor sportsmanship such as arguing with the referees for extended periods, keeping the ball with just one or two star players (rather than team-play) or even tackles and bumps intended to bring a player down rather than win the ball weren't the standard but weren't exactly uncommon either. Some teams even left events as soon as they were eliminated; jarring when you consider the intent of the day was primarily to socialize and mingle with other groups of like-minded individuals.

At religious-based sporting events such as these I can never help but to wonder (fairly tongue-in-cheek of course), is the team that wins overall the one that prays the hardest? It's good though, because that always makes me remember something I saw on Instagram, posted by a basketballer, 2x NBA champion and 2x MVP Steph Curry. He said that being a Christian athlete isn't about praying to win and that praying doesn't give you an edge, only hard work can do that. Instead, being a Christian athlete is about competing for Christ and his glory, in a way that represents Him on the court and then giving thanks for the ability and opportunity to do so.

Now I don't know too much about the origins and context of Curry's faith but if there were any traces of Don Bosco in the mix it would not surprise me in the slightest. Across all three teams that I played with, never did we talk about the way we played, or how we wanted to play; we just showed up and played as we always had at camps or at our youth groups. Don Bosco's youthful charm, that spirit that we've come so accustomed to, just came out naturally and it shone through to those around us.

In that vein, I feel like there's been a fourth win this year. The realization that people not only recognize the Salesian spirit shining, but that they appreciate and want more of it. What can we do then, but to ensure we let it shine through us, onto others as much as possible, whenever the opportunity presents itself?



*Team "Dodge Bosco" celebrating the dodgeball win!
(Photo by Capuchin Community)*



*Javier Amaya shoots for goal in the AOY Grand Final
(Photo taken from the AOY website)*

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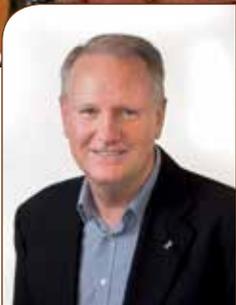
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Young Burmese Salesians make their Final Profession in Clifton Hill



Br Dominic Aung Ko Myint and Br Michael En Lam Pau



Fr Phil Gleeson
SDB

Phil Gleeson is the Rector of Don Bosco House Melbourne in Clifton Hill, Victoria.

On Sunday 13 August in the Salesian Parish of Our Lady of the Southern Cross in Clifton Hill, Br Dominic Aung Ko Myint and Br Michael En Lam Pau, committed themselves forever to God before the Provincial of the AUL Province, Fr Greg Chambers. Originally from Burma, the brothers are resident in Don Bosco House Melbourne, an International House of Formation in the EAO Region, and they are engaged in theological studies at the Catholic Theological College nearby.

Joined by many parishioners, university friends, family, fellow Religious, Salesians and Salesian Family members, and a large number of people from the different tribes of Burma, the brothers happily professed their vows in a vibrant liturgical celebration. With the Word of God celebrated and sung in different languages, all present were delighted to express their faith through song, dance, procession and prayer. The Offertory Procession was a highlight with a traditional Kachin Ma Naw dance involving excited participants in a creative presentation of gifts.

In his homily Fr Greg encouraged Br Dominic and Br Michael to be like Jesus the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his friends. He also challenged them to be signs and bearers of God's love for the young in their lives as poor, obedient and chaste Salesians.

In thank-you speeches to all who had prepared and participated in their memorable ceremony of commitment, the Brothers expressed particular gratitude to their families and the confreres of the Vice Province of Myanmar who had lovingly nurtured their vocations and provided models of life-long commitment. They were also grateful to the Parish Priest, Fr Peter Hoang, for his warm hospitality on this special occasion.

As the Eucharist ended, the whole community retired into the Aikenhead Wing in the Parish School to continue the celebrations with food, dance, music and other festivities. It was a joyous and truly Salesian celebration and a special memory for Br Dominic and Br Michael as they continue their journey and return to the daily realities of student life!



Salesian Community Suva, Fiji



This year marks the 19th year of our Salesian presence in Fiji, and there are lots of changes happening with regards to our work, especially with the challenge of running a new parish.

Our formation house in Fiji is made up of 16 members. We have our new Rector, Fr Pselio, Fr Jim Hoe, Dean of Studies and Novice Master, Br Stan, bursar, and Fr Mika Leilua as our new parish priest. We also have Deacon Tuia Afoa, two temporary professed members: Br Atonio Lealea and Br Sinapati Ioane, and three post-novices: Br Sanele Faapue, Br Leiofi Sueina and Br Falefa Elia. Moreover, we are very blessed to have 6 novices, Duc from Vietnam, Saimon from Fiji, and Sefilino, Silao, Foua, and Damien from Samoa.



Br Falefa Elia SDB

Brother Falefa Elia is a member of the Salesian Community in Suva, Fiji

Our involvement with the young in Fiji is still strong and it is growing. We are so grateful to be able to live together with them in the joy of the Gospel. Moreover, our pastoral works are helpful and active. Currently we are involved in four different places: there are two primary schools (St Joseph's Primary School and St Don Bosco Primary School), Home of St Christopher (boarding home and orphanage) and Hilton (school for children with disabilities).

Beyond this we continue to have our popular Sunday school here at our Salesian house every Sunday morning. Another very important event coming up is our Bula Bosco, where many young people will join us for a day of prayer, games, learning and celebrations. It's a day of joy where the Salesian spirit will be shared among the young people. We are very keen to lead them to Jesus through the teaching and example of our Founder St John Bosco.

Vocation and inspiration

The Novices of 2017 reflect on their vocation so far



Damian Taofinu

My name is Damian Taofinu from the village of Falealupo in Savaii, Samoa. My parents are Catechists who were trained by the Salesians at Moamoa Theological College. I heard the name Salesian many times from my aunt who is a Salesian Sister. I became interested in the Salesian life because of my aunt and her ability of winning the hearts of my little brothers and sisters and even my friends. I entered the Salesian community in June 2015 in Alafua as an aspirant and then as a pre-novice. At present, I am learning about the Salesians – their life, their work, their mission and their Founder St John Bosco. I attend classes in Salesian studies, and also in Scripture to deepen my faith in Christ.

My Novitiate Master, in our monthly encounter, helps me to strengthen my vocation by words of encouragement, by inspiring me to do things in the Salesian way, and by telling me to be a 'Don Bosco of today'.



Duc Nguyen

My name is Duc and I come from Vietnam. I joined the Salesian community in Melbourne two years ago. I completed my aspirantate and pre-novitiate at Clifton Hill and now I am a novice at Don Bosco House, Suva, Fiji. From the beginning, everything was very new for me - the weather, people, diet, and especially culture. However, this was also a great opportunity for me to experience different environments in another part of the world. Living in a multicultural community helps me to appreciate the beauty of each culture.

Among the things that I love and enjoy most are the pastoral activities. Fiji, in fact, is a great place to expand my pastoral experience. Here, the students are very friendly and welcoming.



Foua Tea Peato

My name is Foua Junior Tea Peato. I was living with my mother in the village of Salelologa in the island of Savaii in Samoa. I attended St Theresa Primary school in Fusi, Safotulafai, which is about a 25minute bus ride from my home. The school was run by the Mercy Sisters. My Secondary education was with the Marist Brothers at St Joseph's College next to Don Bosco Technical Centre in Alafua. When the Salesian mission came to my village, Fr Nick Castelyns who was the parish priest at the time told me about the Salesian life and vocation. At the conclusion of my Secondary studies in 2014 I entered the Salesian community in Alafua and now I am half way through my novitiate year.



Sefilino Falaniko

My name is Sefilino Falaniko Tiatele, and I am from Samoa. I want to share with you my vocation story and the inspiration I have found in my Novitiate Year. In 2012 I had started my discernment in the Diocese, but after two years I decided to suspend this experience. The following year I chose to join the Salesian community in Alafua and met the Salesians for the first time. Their kindness, care and encouragement strengthened me to continue my vocational journey with the Salesians of Don Bosco. This year I am in the Novitiate in Suva, Fiji. The Novitiate is an important time for me. It is a year of preparation, instruction and discernment before making a personal commitment.



Saimoni Koronibuto

My name is Saimoni Koronibuto and I am from the village of Wainiyabia in the province of Serua, Fiji. I attended St Thomas Aquinas Primary School for two years and completed my Primary education in Lomary Catholic Primary School. I went to Lomary Secondary School for three years and then completed my studies at Holy Cross College. I come from a family of three: one sister, myself and a younger brother. I first heard about the Salesians from an aunt who sent her two cousins for a "Come and See" weekend at the Salesian community in Nakasi. The stories that they told about their weekend with the Salesian community impressed me in a way that I wanted to try it myself and so I joined the Salesians and here I am now in the Novitiate.

The novitiate has been a very challenging time for me as we learn the way of life and the spirit of the charism of the Salesians.



Sitagisilao Moeloa

I am Sitagisilao Moeloa Vaipuna and I grew up in the Samoan village of Iva in the Island of Savaii. In 2008 the Salesians came to our parish, now known as the Parish of St Francis de Sales, Salelologa. I started to get involve in parish activities like music classes which were taught by Salesians – Fr Paselio Tevaga and Fr Visiesio Muliaga. I joined the 'Come and See' Program of the Salesians at Alafua in 2010. After that, I entered the Salesian community at Alafua in 2015 as an Aspirant and began my pre-novitiate year in July 2016. After six months I was invited by Fr Paselio to present my application for the 2017 Novitiate Programme.

Since the beginning of this year, I have enjoyed being involved with our pastoral work in different areas such as the nearby Primary Schools, the Orphanage, and the Residential Home for young people with special needs.



Life wasn't meant to be easy



I was born in Gorla Minore, Varese, in northern Italy on 20 June 1932 during the Great Depression. For political reasons papà Leopoldo could not find work, so mamma Rosa, four weeks after my birth, had to go back to work, as at that time there were no pensions or social security. Dad took over the care of my 5 year old brother Luciano and me. This went on for a couple of years until dad found work at the Sanitaria, a factory that produced medical supplies. Life became a little easier. Luciano went to school and I went to kindergarten. Mum's sister Margherita who lived not very far from us, with three children of her own, looked after Luciano and me until mum and dad came home. This continued also during the five years of the second World War.



Sr Josephine Salmoiraghi

Sr Josephine shares her story after celebrating 60 years of religious profession to the Salesian Sisters.

My sister Bruna was born in 1939, just before the war started. Again, during the war, times became very difficult. During the nights the siren woke us up and we had to flee, hoping to find the house still standing when we came back.

We were fortunate that, during the war, some technical high schools from the big cities moved to the country and one came to Gorla Minore, my home town. So I was able to complete my studies before I was 14 when I worked in a textile factory for about 7½ years before entering the convent.

Originally my vocation was for the Carmelites but the Lord had other plans for me. My dad was very much against the enclosed life for me, and eventually the Salesian Sisters proved to be the best option. I was accepted and I entered on 24 January 1954 in St Ambrogio di Varese for my aspirantate and postulancy, then I went to Bosto for the novitiate.

During my first year of novitiate dad died, and it took a lot of strength to overcome the pain: I had lost my best friend. My brother came to take me home for the funeral. I was distraught to see my mother's grief, but life had to continue.

In my second year of novitiate, besides the religious studies, I was asked to continue studies for teaching Kindergarten and was successful when I sat for the State exam to qualify. On 5 August 1957 I made my profession as a Salesian Sister with five other companions. On the same night I left the novitiate and went to Turin for one year's preparation to be a missionary.

So it was! And here I am after living in Australia for the last 59 years. Life here has not been easy either. There were five of us destined for Sydney on the ship *Nettunia*, but because the Sisters in Adelaide needed a sister for high school, only four of us arrived in Sydney on 2 January 1959, to open a house in Engadine: Srs Francis Dardanello, Christina Swan, Teresa Fossati and myself.

The Engadine parish already had enough enrolments to start a new primary school. I was asked to take the Kindergarten class up in the hall on Princes Highway as the school was not yet built. The Lord even here worked in mysterious ways. I couldn't speak a word of English but the five good ladies who came to assist me to teach the children, encouraged me to speak and corrected me if I made mistakes. After 8 years in Engadine I went to Brooklyn Park in Adelaide and, with God's help and the kindness of people and sisters, I taught Grade 2 at St John Bosco Primary School.

Celebration of thanksgiving

I knew nothing about spelling or the New Maths, which was different from Sydney, and with Sr Kathleen Hanna I went to Cowandilla after school to learn what we had to teach the next day. Life was not meant to be easy, but it was getting harder along the way. I taught for another 15 years but what I found most difficult was to teach Italian, as it involved moving from class to class.

In 1977, Srs Christina Swan, Teresa Fossati, Doris Barbero and I started the Dominic Savio Early Learning Centre at Clayton which is still going well. After two years I was asked to go to Christ College in Chadstone to upgrade my teaching certificate. Then I went back to Adelaide until my 59th birthday. Returning to Melbourne in 1986 I received the news that my sister Bruna was very sick, so the Provincial suggested I go to Italy to be with her for a while. She died on 4 April of that year. I didn't come back to Australia right away, but my cousins from America suggested I spend some time with them before returning to my usual ministry.

When I came back to Melbourne I started my mission with the Italian people, until I took some time off and went to Perth, where I found work in the city hospital. At the end of the year the Provincial suggested I do a pastoral ministry course. After that I returned to Ivanhoe in Melbourne, and for three years I did parish pastoral work, visiting families and teaching sacramental programmes until we withdrew our presence from there. Back in Perth on my own I continued my pastoral preparing children for the sacraments and visiting people. The Mercy Sisters encouraged me and were very happy to help.

It is now 22 years since I returned to Melbourne from Perth. I took the opportunity to do pastoral work at Monash Medical Centre in Clayton, visiting patients and taking Holy Communion to the sick and home bound.

After 60 years of profession, I now reside at the convent in Scoresby, resting and doing only what I can. I hope that God will be pleased with the 60 years dedicated to His service.

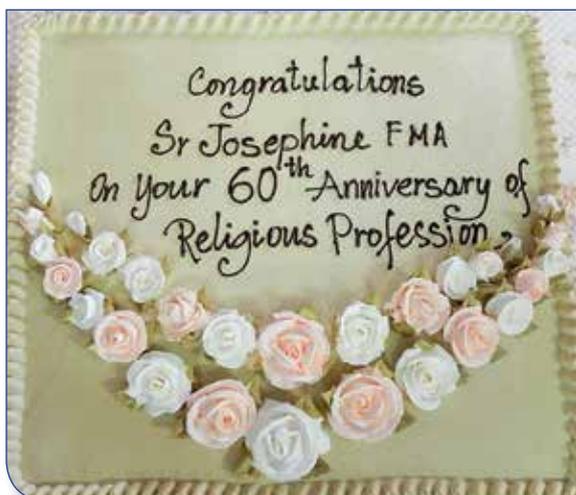


On 5 August 2017, a celebratory Eucharist was held at the Salesian Sisters' Province Centre at Scoresby to mark Sr Josephine Salmoiraghi's 60th anniversary of religious profession. Fr Greg Chambers, Salesian Provincial, was joined by four other concelebrants in offering the Eucharist: Fr John Quinn, Fr Matt McPhee, Fr Frank Bertagnolli and Fr Oreste Cantamessa.

Sr Edna Mary MacDonald, FMA provincial, welcomed all gathered in the chapel to give thanks for Josephine's life, including parishioners from Clayton and Scoresby and Salesian Sisters from the three Melbourne communities.

Josephine had chosen for scripture readings the call of Samuel (1 Sam. 3: 1-9), the spreading of the kingdom with its joys and sorrows (Acts 14: 21-23) and the call of Peter (John 1: 35-42).

Later, during afternoon tea, Sr Edna Mary in her congratulatory speech said that for Josephine, daily Eucharist was sacred, and that she would not willingly miss it. She also praised Josephine's fidelity to God and his people, especially the very young and the elderly.



A gift of hope for Don Bosco Tech



Ash Wednesday was a day of new beginnings at Don Bosco Alafua.

Following a school Mass, celebrated by Fr Sefo, a new addition to the vehicle fleet, our brand-new, all-blue, Isuzu flat deck truck, was blessed. This is the realisation of a dream which began in 2016 during the Australian Siva tour which allowed our students to showcase their finest dancing skills throughout the country. If not for the generosity of our Australian benefactors, we would still be living in hope. Special thanks to Fr Provincial and his Council, our priests, brothers and sisters of the Salesian communities in our province; the principals, staff, brothers and sisters at the Salesian and Catholic schools in Australia; all parish priests and their communities; our Samoan communities in Australia; and all of our families, friends and supporters in Australia and Samoa. Our sincere thanks must also be extended to Fr Chris Ford, Fr Moses Vitui and Fr Petelo Vito Pau for their tireless planning, work and support throughout the journey.



Matt Evans

Matt Evans is currently volunteering at Don Bosco Technical Centre Alafua, Samoa, with the Cagliari Project.

Providing transportation for students to jobsites and extra-curricular activities is important. Therefore, the new addition is very welcome. Don Bosco Tech Alafua provides vocational training programme for as many at-risk and disadvantaged young men as possible. For many, mainstream education options may not have worked but as with all our young people their potential simmers below the surface. Academic subjects such as English, computer studies and maths accompany a comprehensive workshop curriculum. Students can attain qualifications in metal fabrication, plumbing, electrical engineering, wood work and automotive engineering. Every effort is made to ensure students post graduation are work ready to be employed. The Australia-Pacific Technical College has streamlined its entry requirements so as to allow our students to be accepted into their programmes following the completion of our four year programme. This means that attaining internationally recognised qualifications is a very realistic goal.

If students gain enough practical experience here at Don Bosco, they avoid the previous requirement for another full year of work experience following graduation.

A new vehicle is not the only change this year. For the first time since the Tech Centre opened in the 1980s a lay person is at the helm as acting-principal, after Father Chris ended his time with us in 2016. Long-time employee Isitolo Stanley is now guiding us through a period of change. With the development of the Samoan Qualifications Authority in 2010, education providers must ensure that their programmes are accredited and nationally recognised. This is no easy task at Don Bosco Tech. Good luck to Isitolo and the team with this ongoing accreditation programme.

This year also saw another new significant beginning, namely, the our wider Salesian community as the Pacific Delegation, encompassing New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa, was formally established. With increased autonomy over local decisions this is indeed a time of change and challenges.

Providing a quality educational experience for our most vulnerable young men when in some cases all other options have failed does not happen easily or come cheaply. Without the trade and life-skills that our students receive, many would face a much bleaker future. Disengagement and unemployment are key concerns in Samoa's youthful population. We, at Don Bosco Technical Centre Alafua, wish to extend our sincerest thanks and prayers once again to all our supporters and benefactors. Once again, a special mention must go out to those who have provided us with our amazing new means of transport. You provide not only a gift of hope that tomorrow may be better, you are truly changing lives with one new skill and one smile at a time.

Don Bosco Winter Holiday Camps



As the winter school holidays approach, we are often greeted with some of Melbourne's worst rainy, cold and miserable weather – but the show goes on at Don Bosco Camp for its annual Junior and Senior Winter Holiday Camps!

Don Bosco Holiday Camps are unique in their creativity, being led by young people in the Salesian leadership tradition. Camp leaders come together to create activities that stretch the imagination, ranging from beach games in winter to morning dance aerobics, D.I.Y Fidget Spinner making and life size football, just to name a few. Don Bosco Camp is a place where anything goes, with campers continually guessing what's coming next and being able to enjoy all sorts of activities both new and old while on camp, including a memorable trip to the local roller skating rink this winter.

With the Don Bosco Camp Holiday Program now having held a firm mark in many camper's calendars for a number of years, each winter the camp is transformed through the energy and creativity of the campers and camp leaders alike. From morning till night the sound of chants, songs and laughter, together with sports, dance and imaginative games created out of the camp environment, an atmosphere of joy and friendship is formed with campers and leaders, sharing in the fun together.

The Don Bosco Camp team finish up these school holidays muddy and tired, but so very happy to have been able to share in yet another fantastic holiday program.



Teaghan Dolan

Teaghan is a volunteer Leader at the Don Bosco Camp and an active member of the Australian Salesian Youth Community (ASYC) based in Melbourne.



Cagliari Project Cambodia Immersion 2017



Br Tristan O'Brien SDB

Br Tristan O'Brien is a young Salesian in formation from The Basin, Victoria. He spent eight months as a Cagliari volunteer in Cambodia at Don Bosco Technical School, Phnom Penh in 2012. Tristan has also been involved in the Cagliari Project upon his return, recently joining Romina Martiniello to help lead the Immersion to Cambodia.

The Cagliari Project's Cambodia Immersion began many months ago with our formation weekend, and, on a hot and humid July 1st morning, we were greeted at the Phnom Penh airport by Fr Charles and a number of Salesian students. We found ourselves warmly welcomed to Cambodia, the Kingdom of Wonders. These initial moments were a mixture of wonder and contrast as we began to engage with our new surroundings. Led by Romina Martiniello and Br Tristan O'Brien, with Fr Bernie Graham joining to provide Salesian accompaniment and to experience Cambodia first-hand, the Immersion offered an opportunity to engage with every aspect of life at Don Bosco Technical School (DBTS). Our Immersionists came from Salesian works in Hobart, Sydney and Melbourne and included Kellee and Michael (teachers), Jack, Eamon, Jarrod, Ethan, Christina and Chelsea (students), and Michelle, Laura, Clare and Dom (camp leaders).

The evening of our arrival was marked by a celebration and welcome from the whole community, ending with an evening dance party. Our first full day was spent at the Oratory with the local children, participating in their lessons, games and free time. This first weekend allowed our Immersionists a chance to prepare themselves before a busy schedule in the week ahead.

Both Monday and Tuesday were spent working on a drainage construction project to provide safe drains around the school's main soccer field. The Immersionists joined students and teachers from DBTS to clear the drains and make concrete coverings – truly challenging and rewarding work!

During this time in Phnom Penh the Immersionists were offered a deeper cultural experience. A pivotal moment in many of their journeys was living with their host families. From Monday to Wednesday nights all Immersionist were given a unique opportunity to live with DBTS teachers' families, and these nights culminated in a celebratory night boat cruise along the Mekong river. One Immersionist commented:

"I don't know any other way you could get a better idea of how the Cambodian people live day by day. I got an understanding of their daily routine, how they eat, how they sleep and live, how they interact with family and the community. It was a very eye opening and I am very grateful for it."

Complementing the homestay experience were two days exploring Phnom Penh. One day was dedicated to visiting Choeung Ek Genocide Centre (Killing Fields) and Tuol Sleng (Prison). This day was a real encounter with the scars of the Khmer Rouge still affecting Cambodia today, and, despite its confronting nature, it offered a valuable insight into the history of the joyful and hopeful people we knew at DBTS. The second day was an exploration of the brighter sights of Phnom Penh: its bustling markets, relaxed riverside scenes and historical sites – coupled with delicious cultural eating!

These days of exploration and relaxation preceded four days of committed Salesian work. As a centrepiece to the Immersion, we provided a formation weekend for Salesian Youth Animators from all across Cambodia. Our Immersion group facilitated workshops, games, reflections and prayers all imbued with the Salesian spirit. By Sunday evening we had formed close bonds with our new Salesian friends.



The following Monday these animation skills were put to the test! Our Immersionists and the SYC Animators ran a day of activities for DBTS, animating over 400 students! During the morning, our Immersionists displayed their talents in sport, craft, music, games and drama; however, by the afternoon the SYC Animators were running the show. This was a testament to their abilities and willingness to challenge themselves, and a credit to our Immersionists for their ability to model the Salesian spirit in action. The day culminated in a basketball match between the Immersion group and DBTS. Despite giving our opponents a 13-point lead by halftime, we closed the game to lose 42-38 in a thoroughly enjoyable display of skill and joy.

We ended our days in Phnom Penh with another evening of festivities and dancing with the students and the community. Flying to Siem Reap, we began the final four days of the Immersion during which the Immersion group had an opportunity to relax after the fast-paced days in Phnom Penh. We were able to explore the breathtaking scenes of Angkor Wat and experience the tourist side of Cambodia with its restaurants, markets and spectacular scenery and artistry. These final days flew quickly. However each Immersionist had a chance to stop and reflect on how their time in Cambodia had impacted them – a gift, truly!

So, as this reflection on the Immersion closes, I will borrow some significant words which characterised not only how the Immersion may be summarised, rather, how those who participated may be reassembled into our Immersion family once more:

- ◆ **We were a group of honest, brave, enthusiastic and truly present people.**
- ◆ **We accepted our challenges with openness, joy, energy and dedication.**
- ◆ **We engaged Cambodia with insight, perseverance, perceptiveness and generosity.**
- ◆ **We offered our love and service with and for the young of Cambodia.**

From the Cambodian point of view

The Cagliero Immersion Team arrived in Don Bosco Technical School, Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, on 1 July 2017. The team consisted of twelve Cagliero immersionists accompanied by Fr Bernie Graham, Br Tristan and Ms Romina.

The Immersion Team was officially welcomed by Fr Roel Soto, the rector of the Community, during the Community Mass on Saturday evening. The group had two days of community work, working alongside the Khmer students of DBTS during which they cleared the canals and constructed new covers for the canals around the soccer field.

They spent three nights in the houses of the teachers so as to experience what it is to live in a Khmer family. The Cagliero immersion team was also asked to organize a camp for the youth animators of Cambodia from 7 to 9 July. The Camp brought together the youth animators from all our Salesian presences in Cambodia.

The camp highlighted five qualities necessary for a Salesian youth animator: Joy, Gratefulness, Hope, Love and Friendship. Salesian youth animators need to be joyful and radiate this joy to the young people. They need to be grateful to God for the gift of the Salesian Family and the young people whom they are working with. This in turn moves them to give hope to the youth - especially in the Cambodian context where there are many poor young people who think they have no future. And all the animators' activities are to be done with love so as to create true friendship with them.

At the end, the Cagliero immersion group along with the Salesian youth leaders who attended the camp, animated our students of Don Bosco Technical School, Phnom Penh for one day on 9 July. The entire day was filled with activities like dancing, art and crafts, beads and bracelets making, indoor and outdoor games and role play on rotation for all of our 500 students.

The Australian youngsters brought to our school a lot of joy and inspiration. And we believe they returned home with a heart full of joyful memories about Cambodian culture and Cambodia's young people.



Br Joshua Pilaku SDB

Br Joshua, originally from Nigeria, is working as a Salesian missionary in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Joshua is the brother in charge of the Besucco House at Don Bosco Technical School, Phnom Penh. It is a boarding home for local and regional high school aged boys studying locally.

Salesian Cooperators gather in Tokyo



Three hundred twenty seven participants from 19 countries gathered in Keio Plaza Hotel, Tokyo, from 7 to 10 May 2017 for the 9th East Asia Oceania Regional Congress of the Salesian Cooperators. The Japan Province put in their energy and resources to make the Congress a very special event for the East Asia Oceania (EAO) Region.

Archbishop Joseph Chennoth, the Apostolic Nuncio to Japan, presided over the Inaugural Sunday Mass. The presence of the World Delegates of the SDB and FMA together with the World Coordinator of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators (ASC) gave a sense of universality and communion to all the participants. The Cooperators of Japan who were the hosts deserve our special appreciation and gratitude for a work exceptionally done well.

The session with Fr Casti, the World Delegate, was very helpful particularly for me as I learnt much, and this in turn will help me in the formation of our Cooperators in Avondale, New Zealand. The focus on Human, Christian and Salesian formation as outlined in the Guidelines for the Formation of the Salesian Cooperators was certainly a great help.

The excursion to Mount Fuji gave the participants time to see a little of Japan, outside Tokyo. The statue of Mary Help of Christians, erected on Mount Fuji at the initiative of the Salesians and Salesian Sisters to mark the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, stands out even today as a pledge of humanity to work for world peace.

It is heartening to note that the organizers of the Japan Congress gave importance to the involvement of youth and youth sessions in the Congress. The Don Bosco 2000 celebrations in Japan helped them to mobilise the young. The young people showed a wonderful understanding of the vocation to ASC, and the organizers made it a point 'to get many young Salesian Cooperators to attend the Congress rather than seeing it as a venue for the elderly Cooperators to meet and socialise'.

From the Australia-Pacific Province and the Pacific Delegation three of us participated in the Congress: Mrs Lagi Filomena Schwenke, Mrs Anna Siemsen from Samoa and Fr Mathew Vadakkevettuvazhiyil SDB from New Zealand. Our congratulations to Lagi and Anna as they made their commitment to the Salesian Cooperator Association on 9 May together with many other aspirants from the Region and became the first Salesian Cooperators in the Pacific.

The three of us from the Pacific prepared our action plan for the next three years leading to the 10th EAO Congress in 2020. By then we hope to have 15 ASC members in Samoa and work towards recruiting young aspirants and have regular monthly formation meetings. We plan to help the Salesian parish of Suva in Fiji to begin a process of vocation promotion and initiate the Call to the ASC. As ASC is already present in Australia, we would encourage their participation in the next Congress. It is our desire to have a group of ASC members in New Zealand in two years time and plan to begin the 2nd batch of young aspirants to ASC. Monthly formation meetings will include the Call, Mission and Vocation identity of the ASC. The Cooperators are enthusiastic to get involved in the apostolate of the local parishes.

We spoke of having a Pacific Delegation Congress for the ASC in two years time. It is our hope that such a Congress will enable better interaction, build up true friendship and engender a sense of belonging to the Salesian Family among the ASC of the Pacific Delegation.

It is highly recommended that the Province and the Delegation attend the next World Congress of the ASC to be held in Rome in November 2018. The organizers of the World Congress look forward to having the Provincial Delegate, Provincial Coordinator and the Provincial Formator at the World Congress. The focus will be on Formation of the ASC.

Fr Mathew

*Fr Mathew
Vadakkevettuvazhiyil SDB
is the Parish Priest of
St Mary Immaculate
Conception Parish in
Avondale NZ*

Annual Formation Gathering



By Fr Bernie Graham SDB

Melbourne, Australia, 28 August 2017

Fifteen young Salesian confreres participated in the Annual Formation Gathering (Quinquennium) in the Australia-Pacific Province in Melbourne from 25 to 28 August: comprising one Priest, one Deacon, two Brothers and eleven perpetually professed clerics (students of Theology). It was a truly international gathering with participants coming from nine different nationalities and seven different Provinces, Vice-Provinces or Delegations in the EAO Region.

The formation program included two distinct elements. Fr Frank Moloney led reflections on Celibate Chastity from the biblical, theological, historical and ecclesiological perspectives. Fr Bernie Graham led reflections on Salesian Youth Ministry using the documents of the Synod on Youth (the Preparatory Document and the Letter of the Rector Major) and the 2018 Strenna focusing on our Salesian approach to the Young, Faith, Discernment, Accompaniment and Transformation. The wide cultural, linguistic and apostolic diversity within the group brought great depth and richness to the discussions, sharings and reflections.

The Provincial, Fr Greg Chambers, was the main celebrant at the Eucharist which brought the program to its conclusion.

Salesian On-Line Book Shop

In the words of Don Bosco, "Only God knows the good that can come about by reading a good Catholic book."

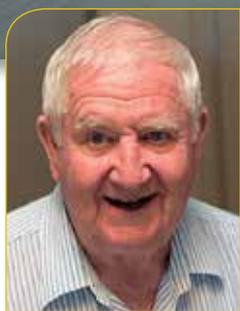
The Australian Province has recently opened an on-line Book Shop as a way of getting more Salesian books into the hands of readers. We have many wonderful authors in the Salesian Family who have published numerous books. This new on-line shop will give Australians an easy way to find them all. The new Book Shop on the Province website will sell a wide range of Salesian and Catholic books, with more being added every week.

Coinciding with the launch of the Book Shop is the release of a new Salesian prayer book. Salesian Youth at Prayer has been compiled by Br Tristan O'Brien and published by the Salesians of Don Bosco Australia-Pacific. The book is a collection of prayers and reflections designed for young people. This is the first of many publications to be published and marketed by the Social Media team.



Book Shop open now at: www.salesians.org.au/bookshop

Salesian College Port Pirie 60th Anniversary Reunion



Fr Lawrie Moate SDB

Lawrie Moate spent many years at St Mark's College in Port Pirie as Principal and Rector. Lawrie is currently the Parish Priest at St John's in Glenorchy, Tasmania.

On the Queen's Birthday weekend in June I had the joy and privilege of attending a special event at St Mark's Port Pirie. It was the 60th anniversary reunion of Past Pupils of Salesian College, (which later became St Mark's). The gathering was the initiative of a group of Old Boys in Port Pirie who did not want the occasion to go unmarked and who spent many months contacting, via social media, their fellow past students. Bob Ward, Brian Carmody, Maurice Dwyer and Hans Vandewater were the driving force behind the reunion.

Seventy five Past Pupils, some with their spouses, attended. The present St Mark's Principal, Mr Greg Hay, pulled out all stops to welcome them. It was obvious that Greg and current staff members wanted them to know that they had established a wonderful legacy and that the spirit of the early days of the College lives on.

Saturday 10th June saw Salesian College Old Boys gathering from interstate, Adelaide and Port Pirie. A warm welcome in the College Assembly Hall, decorated with photographic displays, flags and memorabilia, began the official programme.

In greeting the assembly, the Principal said,

"I imagine you may have asked yourself the questions: 'What really happened back then?' 'Will anyone remember me?' Perhaps 'Where has the time gone?' 'What have I done with my life?' I guess that you bring blurred pictures of a time that was rich and hard, tough and fun. You are war babies, Menzies boomers, post war European migration boys, Molfettese Italians and bog Irish Catholics, you have lived through enormous social changes, seen a Church change, search, implode on itself, seen a country grow, and built it, even as you built a life that I hope has been good. I acknowledge that you bring a little sadness that some of your colleagues could not be here. But it is good to be together and to remember them. The school has been very enthusiastic about this moment and we wanted to share some time with you as part of the welcome. So, in the uncertainty of this gathering, in the vulnerability of returning, in the moments of reminiscence you are finally here. Thank you."

After Greg Hay's welcome, present staff and students took groups of Old Boys on tours of the now magnificent Bosco Campus – the erstwhile Salesian College. In their day it had been a simple L-shaped building comprising 6 classrooms, an office and a toilet. For many of them, the years fell away as they recalled their old school situated in the middle of a large dusty field without a blade of grass or even a tree. No Science facilities. No Library.

The occasion brought back many happy memories for me as I had completed my period of Practical Training at Salesian College (1965-1967), I had taught many of those present, even though I was only 3 or 4 years older than them. I knew many of the others because in those days there were regular Past Pupils meetings, football and cricket matches and trips to Melbourne for Salesian Past Pupils' gatherings. Some of them had been fellow students of Ian Murdoch.

After tours of the Bosco Campus everyone returned to the Assembly Hall, with the ice broken, friendships renewed, stories shared and expressions of admiration for the first class facilities, the Agricultural, Viticultural and Horticultural Skills Centre and the spotless appearance of the school grounds. Refreshments were then served and, as one of the few Salesians still surviving from the "early days", I was invited to say a few words and share some reminiscences. I concluded with a special message from the Provincial, Fr Chambers which read:

"On behalf of all the Salesians of the Australia-Pacific Province, both past and present, I sincerely congratulate you all for 60 wonderful years of growth, progress, joy and optimism at Salesian College/St Mark's College in Port Pirie, South Australia.

May Saint John Bosco, Founder of the Salesians and Father and Teacher of the Young, remain always with you as your model and inspiration as he has done in the past. And may he continue to guide you and your families with 'Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness' all the days of your lives, so that 'you may be happy in this world and the next'."

We then gathered a little more formally at the Port Football Clubrooms. (In the 1960's, 70's and 80's large numbers of Old Boys donned the green and white of the "Bulldog Breed"!). There we toasted our time together and sat entranced by a memorable speech from Greg Hay, who traced the history of the Port Pirie and the College they had known in the fifties and sixties.

Memories were shared of Fr Cornell, Fr O'Leary, Fr Brawley, Fr O'Mara, Fr Ledda, Fr Castelyns, Fr Kerin, Fr Ray and others. Even our old dog Glen was remembered! Popular Old Boy John Pasculli was the key-note speaker and in an entertaining way he recalled his school days with affection and gratitude. Greg Hay brought the evening to a close commending those present on creating an enduring legacy.

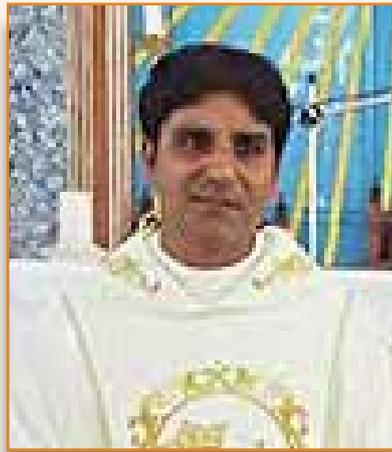
"You," he said, "are the people who have created a spirit that I have learned about today – a Salesian spirit. Your fun, your scholarship, your relationships, your achievements, created and sustained something. You became great men. Salesian men. You raised families and learned about loving and how hard that is. Please know that you individually contributed to building a community, and a wonderful school spirit. You are our foundation. We value it. Your presence is very important. I have delighted in meeting you. We must not lose touch."

The following morning, I was not expecting a huge attendance at Mass at the Benedict Campus. I was pleasantly surprised that by 9:30 a.m. the Chapel was full and the Old Boys and their spouses joined enthusiastically in the hymns and responses. Fr Brian Matthews, a past pupil from the 1980s, joined us. Mass was followed by tours of the Primary campus and we lingered over a hearty bacon and egg breakfast before heading off, each one warmed again by the experience of the Family Spirit still flourishing in Port Pirie.



Lives worth living: Two vocational stories

Fr Samuel Adnan Ghouri, SDB



Entrusted to the Salesian Province of the Southern Philippines, the Salesian presence in Pakistan continues to flourish. On the very anniversary of Fr Noble Lal's priestly ordination, the first Pakistani Salesian priest, which took place in Lahore on the occasion of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, a new Salesian from Pakistan was ordained a priest this year: Fr Samuel Adnan Ghouri, ordained in the town of Quetta which hosts the other Salesian house erected in the country.

Fr Samuel Adnan Ghouri was born in the household of Sadiq Masih and Rehmat Bibi, in the small village of Sargodha, near Lahore. He received his basic education from a government school in his home town. After his 10th grade, he worked actively in a youth group in his village. Because of the family's strong religious influence and his personal interest in the Church's activities, he experienced God's call to work in His vineyard.

Samuel approached the Salesian Community in Lahore in 2003. A few months later, he was sent to the Salesian community in Quetta to learn more about living the consecrated life.

On 10 June 2007, he went to the Philippines to continue his formation in the Don Bosco Formation Centre in Lawaan, Talisay City. He spent a year in pre-novitiate formation and another year in the Sacred Heart Novitiate under the guidance of his Novice Director Fr Godofredo Atienza, who is the current Provincial Superior of the Philippines South Province. His first religious profession took place on 6 May 2009, as a Salesian cleric.

He studied Philosophy for two years in the Don Bosco post-novitiate Seminary in Canlubang, Laguna. He then moved back to Quetta and was assigned to the boarding school as a Practical Trainee for two years.

In 2013 he returned to the Philippines to continue his formation for priesthood as a Theology student in the Don Bosco Centre of Studies, Parañaque. During his second year, he made his perpetual profession as a Salesian on 31 May 2015. The following year, 24 June, he was ordained deacon.

On completing his Theological Studies, Samuel returned to Quetta, Pakistan, where he was ordained a Priest on 24 May 2017, the Feast of Mary Help of Christians.

He is currently serving in Quetta's Don Bosco Learning School and in Don Bosco Al-Falah Boy's Hostel.



The first Salesian Sister from Pakistan

On 23 May 2017, Sr Julia Karen Ashraf made her first profession in the Mornese Centre of Spirituality in Laguna, Philippines, in the hands of Sr Mabel Pilar, the Provincial and delegate of Mother General. Sr Julia is the first Salesian Sister (FMA) from Pakistan. While the FMA are not yet present in Pakistan, Sr Julia came to know of the FMA through the Salesian brothers and priests (SDB) in Pakistan who belong to the Southern Philippines Province. Sr Julia belongs to the "St Mary Mazzarello" Philippine Province and is presently assigned to the community of Mary Help of Christians College in Canlubang, Laguna.

Pakistan, a South Asian country, has had a Salesian presence since 1998 with two SDB communities, one in Lahore and the other in Quetta.

I'm Julia Karen Ashraf. I was born into a Catholic family, originally from Lahore, Pakistan. I have four sisters and two brothers. I am the 5th child. By the grace of God both my parents are still alive. I consider myself very blessed and I thank God that I was born into a Christian family. There are very few Christians in Pakistan. The majority of Pakistan consists of Muslims (97% of the population) while there are very few Christians (both Catholic and other denominations - 1.5%). Being raised in a Catholic family, my grandparents and parents played an important role in my religious formation. They were my first mentors and catechists. Thanks to them there was never any distinction in the treatment of females and males in our family which is unfamiliar in the Pakistani culture. They provided an atmosphere where females and males could enjoy equal rights and mutual respect.

From my childhood I always had the desire to do something worthwhile for poor children and women, inspired by the example of my family despite the little resources they had. When I turned 13, I felt a strong need to search for a deeper meaning to my existence. I started questioning the importance of my life. To find out the real purpose of my life, I involved myself in a variety of volunteer works and started meeting with different religious congregations in my home town and in the city. I was not satisfied with what I found and I was never at peace. However, the urge for this quest never left me, and it kept me serving the Lord in many ways. At times I experienced discouragement, but I believe that it was the Holy Eucharist that sustained me throughout this period.

In 1999 I met the Salesians (SDB) for the first time. My two brothers and one sister worked with the Salesians. I was so impressed by the prayer life, dedication and joy of the first Salesian missionaries, especially Fr Hans Dopheide (may he rest in peace), that I felt the impulse to join the female counterpart of the Salesian Congregation. When I expressed my desire to Fr Hans he said "pray and wait" until the Salesian Sisters come to Pakistan. After some years, another Salesian priest lent me a book about St Mary Mazzarello and, after reading it, my desire to be an FMA sister was confirmed.

I was 15 when I first expressed my desire to become a religious sister. It was a long journey. Now I was 24 and, though I was involved in many parish activities as catechist, secretarial work in the Pakistan Catholic Bible Commission and taking part in many other volunteer works, and although I continued meeting different women congregations, I still felt that I was not called to commit myself to any of them. Deep in my heart I was always hoping to be an FMA sister even though it was still a very unlikely dream as the FMA were not yet present in Pakistan.

A priest close to our family advised me to join one of the female religious congregations which were already in Pakistan or choose the married life. According to our Pakistani culture, when a girl starts her adolescence, the girl's parents begin thinking about and planning her marriage. I was well into my adolescence at this time. Therefore, after much prayer, I said 'yes' to one of my suitors but on the agreement that the marriage would not take place before my 25th birthday. In the meantime, I would wait for the Salesian Sisters either to come to Pakistan or to receive an answer from them. Only after my 25th birthday I would definitely decide whether to enter the convent or choose the married life. Just two months before my 25th birthday, after so many years of waiting, the Salesians invited me to attend a vocation encounter in Quetta. Consequently, I told my fiancé about my decision to pursue my vocation for religious life. He found it very hard to accept, but respected my freedom to choose.

In 2009, after a year of preparation with the Salesians in Quetta, I was finally sent to the Philippines. I was very happy, and felt blessed to be there because it was a Catholic country. The majority of the people I encountered were full of God's hope, faith, generosity, joy and welcoming spirit. At once I felt so much at home. The mixed culture experience gave me a new perspective on the diversity of cultures. As I continued my vocation journey, the desire to belong completely to God was growing stronger. It is my greatest desire to integrate the values of both cultures and the Salesian charism, and bring them to Pakistan to promote the dignity of life, of women and of young people. It is my prayer that God may make me His instrument of hope and encouragement for the youth of Pakistan. I also hope and pray that one day I may see the first FMA community in Pakistan.

I am very grateful to all the Salesians, past and present in Pakistan, but especially to Fr Peter Zago, Fr Julio Orego and Fr Julio Palmieri for their spiritual and material support to help me make my dream realized. I am also very grateful to Mother General for accepting me in the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) and to the Philippine Province for the fraternal affection and acceptance.

My personal message to young people: "My dear young people, God is waiting for your 'yes'. Entrust yourself to Him; He will take care of your concerns. He knows what is best for you. There will be many ups and downs in life; just hold on to God. In the silence of your heart you will hear Him. Trust in Him and He will show you when, where and how it is to be. I keep you all in my prayers even if I do not know you; you are part of my life. May God bless us and our families."



Hong Kong The Salesian Charism in Aberdeen Technical School

I have been working in Aberdeen Technical School (ATS) as Principal for the past 11 months. Working in this school, I have been fortunate to experience Salesian loving kindness and the continual blessings of God bestowed on the school.

The school in Hong Kong faces many challenges. There is an increasing gulf between the living conditions of the rich and the poor and there has also been an increase in the divorce rate. The boarding section is a shelter for students affected by these challenges, providing stable accommodation and education.

The school, led by Fr Simon Lam and Fr Carlos Cheung, provides spiritual experiences each week during our Good Morning talks and our daily prayers. To celebrate Feast Days we have either Mass or Lectio Divina together with a variety of games.

The enthusiasm of the Salesians and our Lay Mission Partners is evidence of the providential hand of God in guiding them to the service of our young. I believe that God's grace is the true leader of our school.

I thank God in giving me this valuable opportunity to work with these two Salesian priests and the SDB community at ATS. They have provided a great insight into the Salesian education system, especially the loving kindness of Don Bosco accompanying the young.



Students celebrating with staff and Salesian priests and brothers

Cambodia Don Bosco Technical School receives sustainable power boost

Don Bosco Technical School will receive training rooms for sustainable electricity and a solar powered water pump system from the French multinational corporation Schneider Electric.

The Rector of the community and Cambodian delegate Fr Roel Soto and Mr Ang Koon San, Schneider's general manager for Cambodia, confirmed the agreement on 7 July in a ceremony at Don Bosco Phnom Penh with the assistance of the educative and pastoral community and representatives of the corporation.

This support to the technical educative projects of Don Bosco Tech School will be a meaningful contribution to the updating of the electrical curriculum, equipment and vision of the school.

Currently, Cambodia depends a lot on importing power from neighbouring countries which can be an expensive process and can often mean that access to electricity is simply out of reach for many impoverished, rural areas. Sustainable energy is an important option for a country like Cambodia and electrical students at the school will receive the training they need to be able to make great contributions to the development of Cambodia.

"Schneider Electric shares the same aim as the Don Bosco Foundation of Cambodia: to develop people and societies through education and skills training in view of empowering people to support themselves," said Fr Roel Soto.



From left to right: Ms Meriem Kellou, Schneider Social Responsibility Manager of East Asia and Japan; Fr Roel Soto, Don Bosco Country Representative; Mr Ang Koon San, Schneider General Manager in Cambodia; Ms Celeste Messina, Schneider VP of Executive Development Program



Don Bosco Technical School staff and students with Fr Roel Soto, Mr Ang Koon San and Schneider Electrical representatives

Vietnam

Growing like the Pinardi Shed - Can Gio



The Salesians can't survive without poor young people. Although the first Salesian work in Hanoi was the Orphanage of St Theresa, in the last two years the Salesian province of Vietnam has been trying to diversify their prevalent parish ministry. The Can Gio community, with Fr Joseph Hing as its Rector, is located within the archdiocese of Ho Chi Minh City.

The canonical community was established ten years ago and now there is a full-fledged Salesian community of six Salesians. Until 2015 there was only a humble missionary parish. The first youngsters in need – orphans, ethnic minority youth at risk and kids from broken families – arrived in 2016.

Fr Dang said that “Starting this summer, in our community there will be 14 ‘old’ boys (from last year) and 16 ‘new’ boys who have arrived just recently. Almost of them are happy and like to live with us. This year, there are more ethnic minority boys. They are friendly, but shy. We encourage them to speak their mother tongue but we also try to help them to speak Vietnamese during ordinary community time. Thanks to God, our family is growing!”

Papua New Guinea

Don't let your batteries control you!

“We are living in a world of technology and it is here to stay!” exclaimed Fr Ambrose Pereira SDB, as he addressed the members of the Mary Our Help (MOH) at Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko. The enlightening workshop cum session on Social Media was entitled “Understanding Social Media Rightly”. All the 80 female students who reside at the Institute were present in the study hall.

Fr Ambrose helped the ladies understand the different types of social networks being used today. The session was facilitated through group discussions, video clips and the presentation of a survey that led all participants to think, discuss and share their reflections and insights.

“People should try to use Social Media in a positive way because what you post or share portrays who you are as a person,” said Joanne Masiri. Several ladies mentioned that they did not realize how their digital gadgets were controlling their lives, tending to spend most of their time holding on to their phones rather than connecting to their companions who are physically present with them.

Philippines

Wolves into sheep through sport!



The Don Bosco Formation Center of Lawaan are celebrating the first anniversary of one of their apostolic programs, run by the Salesian Co-operators and SDB Community of Lawaan. 78 boys and 3 girls are organized into football teams, (with numbers ever increasing) – their little way of spreading Don Bosco's values.

Aged between 7-15, they come from the poor enclaves in Lawaan, Mohon and Barili. The young are trained, coached and fed with the help of donations. Most of all, they are given them religious and moral guidance to be good and responsible citizens.

On top of their football needs (shoes, uniforms, shin guards etc.), the young people also have their school needs (notebooks, pens and other educational materials) looked after, through the giving of generous people.

The Don Bosco Formation Centre in Lawaan are changing wolves into sheep!



Students engaged in a group discussion

Reflecting on the presentation, the ladies committed themselves to ensuring that what they post will be positive and they will be in control of their devices rather than being controlled by them.

Sierra Leone

“I was in prison, you came to see me”



Suffering behind bars in Pademba

“Once a guard told us that we were not allowed to kill cockroaches, because our lives were of less value than that of a cockroach,” quoted an inmate who spent 4 years in Pademba prison, Sierra Leone. The lives of these “faceless men” are an experience of continued suffering. Not by chance is it called “Hell on earth”. Even after leaving, life is not easy, unless someone decides to help you.

Inmates who get their freedom come to the Don Bosco Fambul legal team and receive some kind of support with clothing, food items and financial assistance to facilitate their transportation to villages and homes. One of them shared his concern when he said:

“Coming out was like going from Hell to Heaven. Obtaining your own freedom again is a wonderful experience; but immediately after, when I was out, I realized that I didn’t know whether to go right or left because nobody was waiting for me, with nowhere to sleep. The only chance was to go back to the streets... or to Don Bosco. Thank God, there was a place for me in the Group Home, my only chance for a new start in life!”

Venezuela

In the midst of violence and death, there is a light of hope

The political instability currently rife throughout Venezuela has been well documented. Neighbouring countries of Latin America and The European Union have criticized the Constituent Assembly of Venezuela and some countries such as the United States, Colombia, Canada, Mexico, Panama and Peru have announced that they will apply sanctions.

In the midst of this crisis, Venezuela’s General Prosecutor, Luisa Ortega Díaz, reported that 121 people have been killed and 1,958 others injured since 1 April, when protests began against Maduro’s government. The Holy Father has insistently been asking for all parties to “build bridges and dialogue seriously” in order to reach peace.

Young people are the hope of a country, and a group of 14 have made their request to enter and begin the formation process as Salesians, as true signs of lives given to the needy and to God.

Haiti

Technical-vocational training for young people



Trainees get their hands dirty while learning new skills

According to CNN journalist Laila Abu Shihab, “Haiti seems destined to not be able to recover from natural disasters which time after time, while still fighting for the devastation of the previous catastrophe, fall on the country like parasites and leave it devastated.”

The Salesians, however, have not lingered in the past.

Haiti had not yet recovered from the 2010 earthquake that caused over 200,000 casualties, a consequent cholera epidemic and a massive humanitarian crisis, when on 4 October 2016, Hurricane Matthew came to sow more desolation on the impoverished Caribbean country.

Instead, the Rinaldi Foundation, through collaboration with various organizations, launched a training program in Les Cayes for 200 young people. The program lasts for six months and includes five disciplines: metallurgy, carpentry, construction, hairdressing, and hotel management courses.

At the inauguration of the courses, the provincial, Fr Jean Paul Mésidor, said “the courses are not solely technical, but they also envisage a series of socio-cultural support activities so participants can grow and flourish in a context of human development.”



Hope in a time of struggle- Salesians with 14 recently committed prenovices

“It is true that our country is experiencing a difficult, conflicting and challenging moment,” writes a Salesian, “but this is not a veil of darkness that prevents us from seeing the wonders, such as the 14 future prenovices, that God works every moment.”

India

Don Bosco Ashalayam: A safe haven for the night



A staff member helping some boys prepare for the upcoming mela (festival)

When the night comes, street children become particularly vulnerable. Every evening, Don Bosco Ashalayam in Kolkata opens its doors to all children in need of a safe place to sleep. Young people come and stay the night but have the freedom to leave if they wish. Despite this, their positive experience at the Night Shelter means that some vulnerable young people elect to move to this more stable environment. They can eat healthy meals, wash, receive medical care and enjoy a safe place to study and socialize with friends.

Don Bosco Ashalayam manages two Night Shelters: one for girls and one for boys. The two shelters are located within the vicinity of the Salesian main office in Howrah.

At the end of every month, Ashalayam organizes a “mela” (festival) at the Night Shelter where street children can enjoy a welcome bath and haircut, and change into new clothes. They play games, watch movies and eat. These melas give children the opportunity to discover life in Ashalayam, so they can elect to remain in a safe, supportive environment. Sadly, many street children turn to substance abuse as a coping mechanism. Ashalayam provides regular rehabilitation camps to help break the cycle of addiction and poverty, and where young people can rediscover themselves away from the daily challenges of life on the streets. As they fight their addictions, the young people enjoy the simple pleasures of childhood by playing and dancing in the clean environment. Life skills classes (on hygiene, sexual health, confidence, fear and addictions) provide them with tools for the future, while yoga engages their bodies and minds.

Argentina

“Salí donando”, Donating by eating out

For many “digital immigrants”, smartphone apps (applications) have no clear features or connotations. For “digital natives”, instead, it seems almost impossible to live without them. No doubt, though, digital media is changing people’s lives. And it’s not a novelty that there are apps designed to help and sustain people who have less.

South Argentina’s “Ceferino Namuncurá” Province has created the free “Salí donando” app (literally: I went out to donate), a new way of helping the poor, and also obtaining benefit for oneself. Users of “Salí donando” can eat out with their family or friends at a local restaurant, receive a discount and donate to a specific charity of their choosing, one of which is the Salesian house in the region.

Kenya

A drop of water and education in the desert



Locals from Karare

Plans to build a solar-powered electrical system have been made for Karare, one of the driest areas in Kenya. It will also serve to heat water and include a purification system for drinking water to eliminate diseases afflicting students and missionaries.

Currently, only 35.7% of the region’s inhabitants have access to drinking water. Water supply wells of different types are used where possible; otherwise, rainwater is collected in tanks which are not only insufficient but can also cause diarrhoea and trigger typhus epidemics.

Water shortage has important consequences on hygiene; there is always a girl or nun sick with malaria or typhus. Fr Felice Molino, a Salesian Missionary to Kenya commenting on the plight said that “They have no water and despite the fact that there are two hundred girls, they must make do with the rainwater they collect during the rainy season. They do not have a sewage system and so they boil the little water they drink, and rely on luck for its other uses.”

He added that the Salesian Sisters’ work “is to prepare future teachers for areas that are immense and immersed in the desert. To give dignity and education to these girls is very important. The Sisters are doing their job well and with great sacrifice to themselves.”

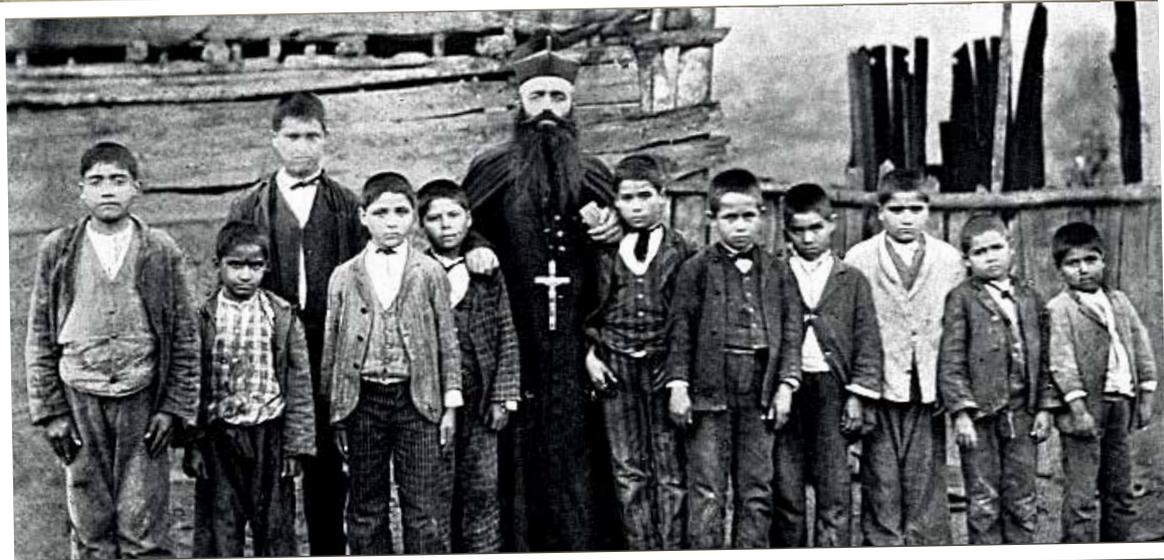
The app works by calculating a percentage (known in advance) of the incurred expense, which then is donated to the user’s charity of choice. When delivering the bill, the waiter provides a code that is submitted into the app, showing how much and to which charity the donation is going.



The logo for the Salí Donando app

Ecuador

The first Salesian missionaries in Ecuador



Ecuador, 1888

The Salesians have been in Ecuador since January 1888 as a result of the agreement signed by Don Bosco and the representative of the Ecuadorian government in Turin (Italy) in 1887. The agreement entrusted the Salesians with the Catholic Protectorate of Arts and Crafts in Quito, so that they could "transmit moral and scientific education to children as well as improve the national industry through the systematic teaching of crafts". Since 1888 educational and apostolic work throughout Ecuador has increased, it has spread into diverse social groups to respond to the needs of young people, especially the poor, through quality education based on the Preventive System and inspired by the values of the Gospel, in order to educate "honest citizens and good Christians. Nowadays, there are around 200 Salesians in Ecuador dispersed in 27 communities along the coast, in the highlands and the Amazon.