

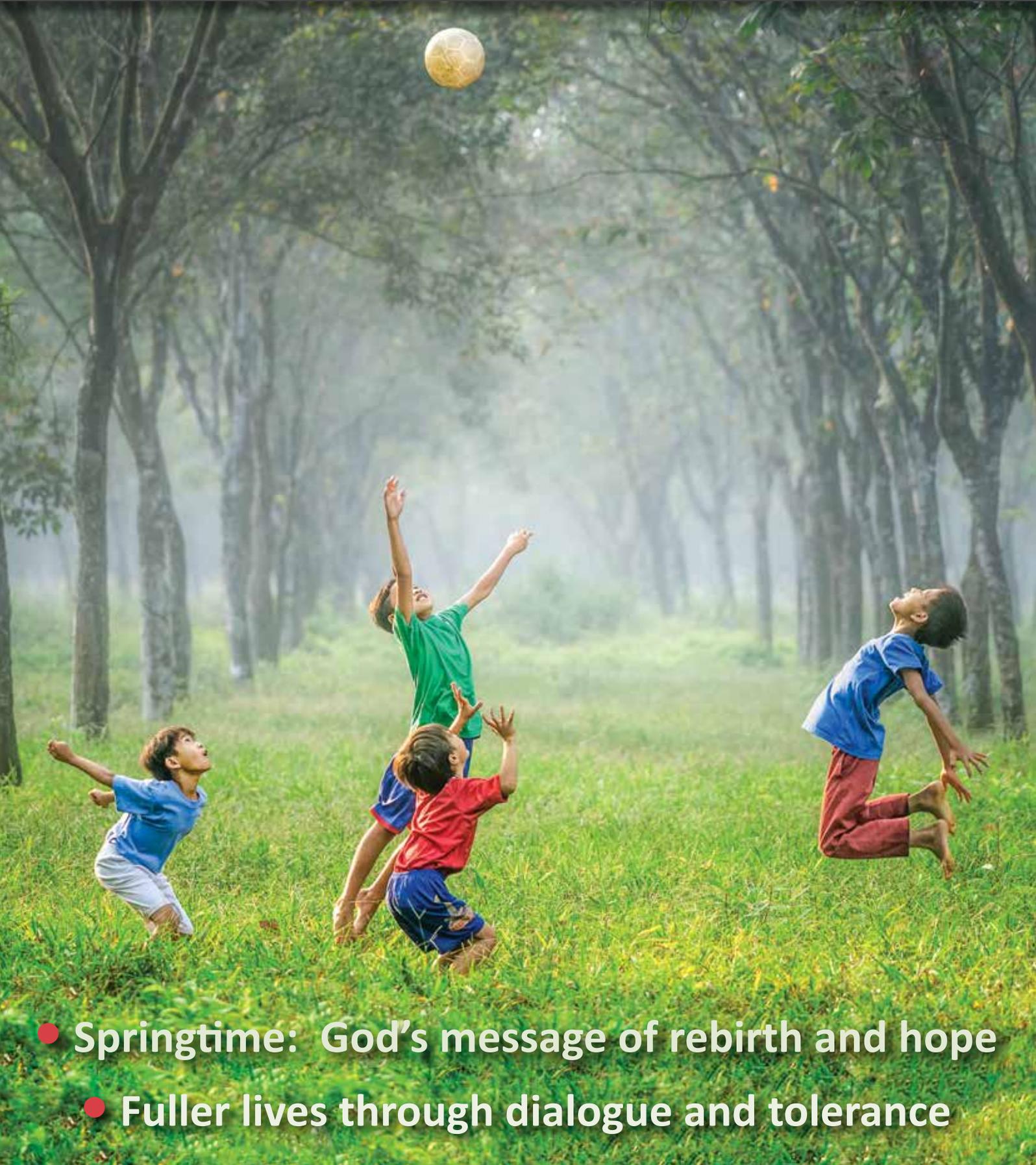


Australian

Salesian Bulletin

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Spring 2018



- **Springtime: God's message of rebirth and hope**
- **Fuller lives through dialogue and tolerance**



Respectful dialogue

“Dialogue is born from an attitude of respect for the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say. It assumes that there is room in the heart for the person’s point of view, opinion, and proposal.

In order to dialogue it is necessary to know how to lower the defences, open the doors of the house, and offer human warmth.”

“The language of Christians who cherish the Holy Spirit, who was given to us as a gift, is special: they don’t have to speak in Latin, no. It’s another language: it’s the language of gentleness and respect,” the Pope said May 21.

Reflecting on these two points can help each of us to reflect on our own attitude as Christians, he said, asking “is it an attitude of gentleness, or of wrath? Or bitterness?”

“It’s terrible to see people who say they are Christians, but who are full of bitterness,” “We must cherish the Holy Spirit and not speak like the devil teaches us,” he said, adding that gossip “hurts my heart,” and is the sin “that destroys our communities the most.”

“Let’s not throw stones at each other. The devil has fun, this is a carnival for him,” the Pope said. Instead, “let us ask for this grace: to cherish the Holy Spirit that is within us, not sadden him, and that our attitude be one of gentleness and respect.”



Cover

The annual rebirth of nature gives hope for betterment reminding us that, after the wintery problems in our lives, our church and nation, we should never despair.

Photo by Robert Collins on Unsplash

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So that's what you think

Many people attempt to settle differences of opinion by force. They are angered by those who hold ideas that contradict their own, yet no person, no political, economic or religious faith is the repository of all the truth. Every thoughtful and long-held belief has something to contribute to the sum total of human knowledge. Great wisdom is often to be found in the most unlikely places.

The wise person does not shout out his disagreement in angry, hurtful tones. He states it clearly and quietly, because he has a lurking suspicion that perhaps he may be wrong after all, or at least, not wholly right. It seldom happens that there is not some truth, some grain of wisdom in the opposing view point.

When we respect the view point of others, we grow in stature and understanding. How often those who insist on their right to dissent deny that very right to others. The truth is not revealed by the noise and hysteria of slogan-shouting mass demonstrations, as we have recently witnessed on our television sets, or the angry and intemperate individual disturbing the peace of the family, causing disruptions to schools, and tension among members of clubs and associations. The truth comes only through the process of serious thought and tolerant discussion.

On the world scene, and on the national stage, there are indeed great differences of opinion. The unwise and self-interested feel threatened and resort to violence and dissension. In the end no one gains. How a nation, a church, a group or an individual handles a difference of opinion shows to all the degree of tolerance, understanding and civilization reached. In church history I have often wondered how many "heretics" were forced to dig into fixed positions because of confrontation rather than affirming discussion.

Over the last few weeks, we have heard the word 'peace' used many times. Peace in families, peace in our nation, and peace in the Middle East, the only problem is that the word has as many meanings as the individuals using it. There are those who believe that peace can be won by force or will just happen. Peace demands more than that. Surely it stands for a mental attitude which discounts differences for the common good. The greater emphasis we give to differences the more we are enslaved by them. We entrench ourselves in self-righteous attitudes and the end result is conflict. When we are prepared to discount differences we move towards people, becoming more understanding. Harmony, not conflict, is the result.

In interpersonal relationships, friendship, and marriage, the ability to discount differences in character, to rise above irritating personality traits, creates understanding and tolerant sensitivity, thus cementing the bonds. The inability to do so breeds conflict, tension and dissolution.

In social groups, schools, factories and associations, discounting differences of race, creed, social status is all important if harmony is to reign and communities pacified. Some for sure will be found ready to highlight and exploit these differences as a road to power. Theirs is a path to selfishness and conflict, not a path to peace and harmony.

So peace starts with the mental attitude of individuals. "Peace is not made at council tables, or by treaties: it is made in the hearts of men" (Herbert Hoover). Pope Paul VI once stated "Peace demands a mentality and a spirit which, before turning to others, must first permeate the soul of him who deserves peace. Peace is first personal before it is social."



Editor

*Frank Freeman SDB,
editor of the Australian
Salesian Bulletin*

Full lives



I believe that this is what we have most at heart, dear readers – to feel that we are living a life that is full. It seems that this is a very human aspiration. It is with this thought that I must tell you that I have come to know in my life many persons who live and have lived full lives. I propose to follow this path myself.

Fr Ángel Fernández Artime

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

I will begin by recounting two life events that seem to be significant on account of the age of the persons involved and, therefore, deserving of attention.

Following the precious feast of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco (Turin), I began my travels this May with a visit to the Salesian presences in Croatia. The solid faith of those Croatian Christian communities and of those young people hit me directly in my heart. The hundreds of young people whom I met – who are the youths of today, so modern, so up-to-date, so much in the digital world, just like all the young people around the world who have access to that world – still are solid in living their Christian faith. This made a great impact on me, so I took advantage of this message to tell you about that now, before diving into the focus of this writing.

We arrived at one of our Salesian houses at 10:00 p.m. On entering the patio of the building, we heard the music of typical Croatian folk dances and saw a group of about 150 little children, teenagers, young adults and some parents awaiting us there and, of course, the Salesian community. Great was my astonishment and emotion at seeing among them one of our Salesian confreres who, at 92 years of age, dressed in his old cassock – it seemed to be from Don Bosco's times – and with a smile and a most peaceful face, was dancing with the young while waiting to welcome us.

On the following day, during the various celebrations that were held, this nonagenarian confrere of ours was frequently acclaimed by the young, who clapped for and called out to him, and he smiled and gave in to the many things that the young said and did. I thought to myself: Here is a Salesian who has had and still has a full life. He did not have an easy life (including having survived hunger and the struggles of World War II – which I came to know when he told me), but it was still a life filled with meaning and with happiness in what was essential.

“Next year in Paradise”

A few days earlier, during the celebrations at Valdocco, there was another Salesian there with us – he was 94 years old. To celebrate the feast of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco is always a great gift for him. Even though he always jokes that “next year” he will celebrate in Paradise, still this year we had the gift of celebrating together this wonderful day. Again, I was astonished to see how, at 94 years of age, he still offered himself at various times to accompany pilgrims from Argentina – Salesians and laity – and acquaint them with some of the more meaningful sites of Turin, such as the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation (La Consolata). He returned worn out and yet, for several days he shared his joy at being in Don Bosco’s house with those people, and helped them understand what that means.

I kept asking myself: Whence comes this strength, this motivation? Who knows how many of you are already giving me the response to that question.

I will add one last testimony that I think has an impact on the entire world. Pope Francis will celebrate his 82nd birthday in December, *Deo volente*. He touches everyone’s heart because of his choice to live a simple life, one filled with the Gospel. In the field of morality, everyone recognizes him as the most influential man in our world at the present time. His messages are filled with simplicity and the search for authenticity, as he invites anyone to be touched by Jesus’ power.

This is where the source of the fullness of these lives and the lives of many others can be found. This is the key to a full life – whatever that may be: living our life for love and with love. Let us hope that ours will be such.



The need for an open mind and heart



Pope Francis at a December 2017 meeting with interreligious leaders in Bangladesh

Photo: Ed Pentin/CNA



Elise Harris

Elise Harris is a Denver native who currently works as a Senior Correspondent for the Catholoc News Agency in Rome, covering the Vatican and the global Church.

In his speech to the interfaith leaders, Francis said there are three essential elements of the “openness of heart” that allow us to really encounter others: a door, a ladder and a path.

The door, he said, “is not an abstract theory but a lived experience” which enables one to have real dialogue, “not a mere exchange of ideas.” And going through this door requires “good will and acceptance,” he said, but stressed that this attitude is “not to be confused with indifference or reticence in expressing our most deeply held convictions.”

Pope Francis then turned to the image of the ladder, saying it is one “that reaches up to the Absolute.” By looking to this transcendent aspect of interreligious activity, he said, “we realize the need for our hearts to be purified, so that we can see all things in their truest perspective.”

Finally, he said the path they must take is one that leads “to the pursuit of goodness, justice and solidarity.”

“It leads to seeking the good of our neighbours,” he said, explaining that when religious concern for the good of others comes from an open heart, it “flows outward like a vast river, to quench the dry and parched wastelands of hatred, corruption, poverty and violence that so damage human lives, tear families apart, and disfigure the gift of creation.”

This spirit of openness, acceptance and cooperation among believers doesn’t just contribute to a culture of harmony and peace, but is “its beating heart.”

The world desperately needs this heart to beat strongly, he said, in order “to counter the virus of political corruption, destructive religious ideologies, and the temptation to turn a blind eye to the needs of the poor, refugees, persecuted minorities, and those who are most vulnerable.”

“How much, too, is such openness needed in order to reach out to the many people in our world, especially the young, who at times feel alone and bewildered as they search for meaning in life!”

In missionary work,
prayer comes first



By Elise Harris

In defence of human dignity

These days we are witnessing a complex and dramatic situation of human migration due to poverty, ethnic-religious persecutions, injustice, climatic change and the changing ideologies of governments in different parts of the world, including the persecution against Christians with a deafening silence and often explicit complicity of governments, international organizations and the mass media. Taking advantage of this confusion that abounds, mafias surface and profit from human despair and pain. As a response to these scenarios, each organization tries to respond in its own unique way: sometimes offering proposals for a comprehensive solution or on the other hand closing themselves in ideologies and building walls thus isolating people in effect.

Faced with this reality, our communication cannot be neutral or tepid. We must align with the Church and with the teachings of Pope Francis, our communication criteria to be a reliable prophetic alternative in a society that brings hope to the weakest. Therefore, we invite all members of the Salesian Family to:

- ◆ Give visibility to those who, due to the colour of their skin, culture or creed are marginalized on the stage of the world community.
- ◆ Give voice to that minority part of the society whom the governments want to silence by ignoring their right to freedom of expression and the right to be heard.
- ◆ To be a clear and strong prophetic voice according to the Gospel, the Social Doctrine of the Church, the teachings of Papal magisterium and that of the Salesian mission.

◆ To officially stand against the attacks on human life in all its expressions, against the rights of children, of young people, the poor, the women and of the family.

◆ To present the truth, while retaining professional quality and guaranteeing the reference to sources, and making our communication meaningful and contextualized in reference to the important events that unfold around us.

◆ To take seriously the importance and the role of the "Spokesperson" and to give importance to institutional communication with a pronounced slant in favor of human rights -especially of those who do not have the possibility of defending themselves, their own development, and in favor of creating a "common home".

◆ To make visible, at the international level in an official manner, whatever is good in the promotion and defense of the rights of minors, of the poor, of the women, in our Provinces and through our Salesian Agency ANS.

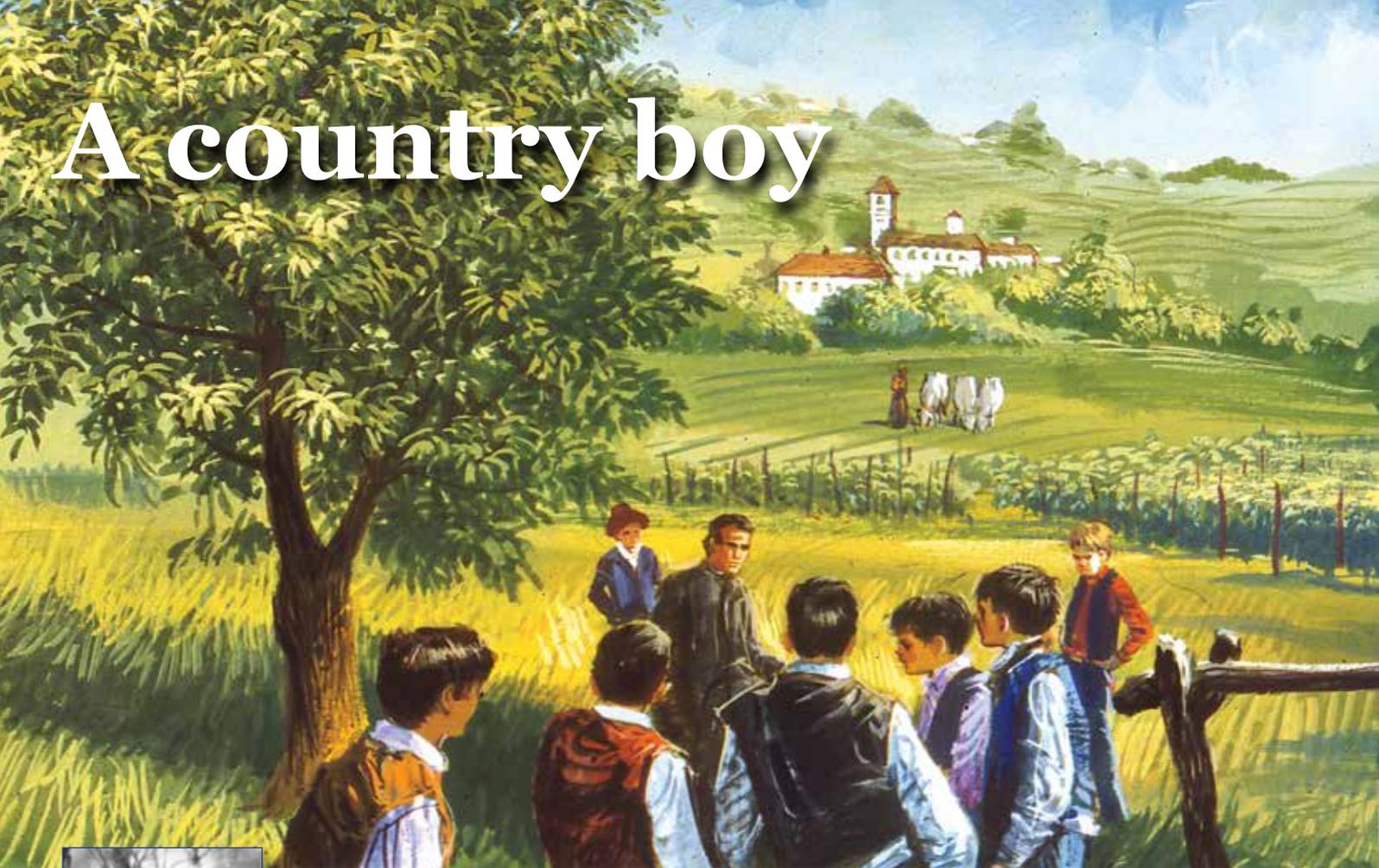
The truth, the unity and professionalism of our communication will be a seed of hope for those who suffer in their own flesh and those in different ways, suffer discrimination, exclusion, denial of their dignity and their human rights: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25, 35...).



**Fr Filiberto
Gonzales
SDB**

*Fr Filiberto Gonzales
is the General
Councillor for Social
Communications*

A country boy



Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si* (“Praised Be”), on the care for our environment honours his patron, St Francis, as one who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. The late Fr Hugh McGlinchey’s essay on Don Bosco’s love of the beauty of the natural environment is well worth revisiting. - Editor

Fr Hugh McGlinchey SDB

Fr Hugh McGlinchey became a Salesian in 1935, and volunteered for the Indian missions. He showed a flair for journalism and became editor of the South Indian Catholic Weekly. After some time in the United States working with Salesian Publications, he returned to Ireland in 1969 and died aged 67

We are accustomed to reading of Don Bosco’s life planted in an urban situation with cobblestoned streets, drab monotonous buildings and his tree-lined avenues, But Don Bosco was a lover of the great outdoors.

We can imagine the young Bosco rising from his straw mattress in the morning. He stretches his arms, knuckles the sleep out of his eyes, pulls on his rough corduroy trousers and woollen shirt, and then slips down to the kitchen. A breakfast of polenta, bread, and sparkling fresh water await him. Then he gets his "orders" for the day and walks out into the sunshine.

It never ceased to amaze him - the panorama that he saw from the hill of The Becchi. Eastwards lay Morialdo and further on the village of Castelnuovo; westwards lay Capriglio, northwards was the upper reaches of the Asit valley, and he knew that over that horizon was the Big City.

He had never any hankering to visit Turin. He was a farmer’s son, a child of the countryside. The things that he desired were to be found among the trees, the meadows, the farms, the vineyards, the orchards, and the dusty roads that criss-crossed the valley. He loved it all, even when it changed its seasonal overcoat.

A natural education

Every cow he took out to graze in the fields, every furrow of land he dug, every grape he gathered from the vine, every horse he forked juicy hay to – all was part of his way of life, and part of him. It surrounded him and gave him that touch of nature which the great outdoors implants in those who love her.

As a child John Bosco was a fearless little 'watchdog' of the vineyard, staying awake all night to guard the family's precious vines. On one occasion he foiled a stranger who tried to pilfer a turkey! He learned a lot from the blackboard of the countryside and it was from this same blackboard that he was able to write (and authentically too!) a delightful biography of Saint Isidore the farmer, a treatise on oenology, and a "Code of Conduct" for farmers. The last-named book (published in 1854) aimed at placing the lowly tiller of the soil on the right level of importance according to God's plan. Here is what he writes among other things:

"My dear friends, I wish to help you appreciate your state of life as one that is of the utmost importance. I want to help you understand that your way of life is most honourable, blessed by God, and a sure route to Paradise... You are servants and workers who reveal the power of God the Creator. Once you lay down your tools, all life in the country stops! Your career is all the more dignified and respected, because God created our First Parents cultivators of his fields and gardens."

Country outings

We are constantly being reminded nowadays that walking, jogging and marathoning are super means for keeping fit and healthy. Don Bosco knew all this. He went to his native place, The Becchi, when he fell ill and took several of his schoolboys with him, so that they could fill their lungs with the fresh air of the countryside. The old farmstead, silent and sombre after the split-up of the family, became once more the centre of a cheerful atmosphere that was to be repeated year after year.

"My main occupations," he wrote to that ever-remembered friend, Father Borel, "are eating, singing, running, jumping, and things like that!"

Then he went on to speak about the vine-gathering and how good a harvest his family was having that year, while, sad to say, several other families had their crops partly or totally destroyed by hail and insects. Yes, "out in the countryside" was just as much part of Don Bosco's make-up as was the urban situation, the stage of his apostolic mission. He blended both into one huge harmonious benefit.

"The rustic life and poverty", as the poet Campbell wrote, "grew beautiful at his touch."

It was on these hikes with his schoolboys that he revealed how he "flung his soul into the air like a falcon flying." Generally, they walked the distance from Turin to Morialdo, about 20 kilometres, but there were times when an omnibus was used. The vehicle soon became too small for the numbers of boys on the hike, so it was then used for the

slightly handicapped and for carrying equipment and utensils. The route lay through some of the most beautiful scenery in Piedmont.

The first lap was Turin to Chieri where kind friends handed out refreshments. On leaving the ancient medieval town the hikers continued their merry way eastwards towards Riva, Buttigliera, and finally Morialdo and The Becchi. The old farmhouse where Don Bosco had grown up and spent his childhood never ceased to amaze the lads – it was so poor, so dilapidated, so ready to fall apart. Don Bosco's brother Joseph had built his family home nearby and supplied the crowd with fresh straw for bedding. It was not the ideal situation but the kids loved to "rough it", and their extra help in the fields and about the gardens brought grins of joy to Joseph and his family. The boys nicknamed the old house "Don Bosco's barony"!

In those traditional country outings Don Bosco was a happy man. It could not be otherwise, for the countryside was in his blood. The boys eagerly crowded around him on the walks through fields and lanes, as he expertly told them about farming, vine-growing, the various sorts of trees, the best places for bird-nesting, and the names of this and that wild flower and shrub.

The fact that many of his dreams included so many varieties of animals, wild and domestic, fruits, flowers, and rural scenes; the fact too that he strongly suggested that his followers go find ecclesiastical vocations among the farming community – all point to this, that you can take the man out of the country but not the country out of the man!

**"Among the clove-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay
Among the hushing of the corn
Where the drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born –
Out in the fields with God!"**



Seachange



Emily Walter

Emily lived and worked at the Don Bosco Camp at Safety Beach for six years facilitating Retreats, holiday camps and school groups. Nowadays she is running her own Drumming workshops business

Many people dream about moving home closer to the ocean and enjoying a seachange. I was fortunate to do just that when I took on a job at Don Bosco Camp, a delightful beachside holiday camp on the Mornington Peninsula. For six glorious years I lived a block away from a beautiful bay beach where I walked and watched the waters drift in and drift out, day in and day out. When I first moved away I was asked if I would get lonely living so far from all my family and friends. I was never concerned about this being an issue though, because, for one thing, the sea really is such a fast and steady companion and, secondly, you are never too long without visitors when you have such a compelling habitat! As a popular summer migration destination I thoroughly enjoyed witnessing the ebb and flow of human traffic, transforming my own personal sleepy beachside winter solitude into a bustling mini metropolis. I loved how the summer regulars would swarm in and lord over their temporary home, filling the car parks and populating lines at the supermarket. The knowing glances shared between locals during the busy summer really made me feel as though I was a part of a secret society of some sort, banding together to brave the bombardment. There was excitement in the air, though, and new, happy energy. The holiday makers brought with them a sense of joy and revelry that was missing in a way during those cold but cosy winter months.

Working at Don Bosco Camp, we had schools from all over Victoria coming for their retreats and camps. A lot of inner city school children had never seen the sea. It was a such a privilege being there and feeling their awe and wonder when they first walked cautiously towards the water along the sand. I wish I could have witnessed their thoughts at that moment – were they scared or confused, or was it just a completely natural, familiar experience? I like to think of them as amphibian creatures, walking towards their home, after years lost on the land.

One of my earliest memories of going to a beach as a youngster was of walking along the sand at Wilsons Prom, on Squeaky Beach. It felt like an eternity, traversing that giant beach with my tiny feet. I remember not knowing much about the plan, but just that my feet were bare, I was holding my mother's hand and I felt a true sense of excitement preparing for the thrill of a swim to come.

I feel so grateful that my parents were able to take us on a beachside holiday each summer when we were growing up. Again, going away on those trips felt like an exotic dream – beach time meant no school and pure fun. Beach time meant staying up a little later as a treat to play cards with the adults. It meant eating fancy fruits and ice creams and fish and chips! Beach time meant going to Mass in a new and exotic church, with a range of new statues and new people to look at. Beach time meant building sandcastles and then destroying them, the summer sand mandala of sorts. It meant doing somersaults in the sea, swimming happily, weightless and free.

When working at the holiday camp, one of my favourite things to do was walk down to the beach and have a quick swim during my lunch break. Even though it was quite an inconvenience – getting changed, walking down the road, getting saturated and needing a shower – there was no question ever if it WASN'T worth it. The crisp, refreshing SPLASH I found always helped me to shake up my mental Etch A Sketch and reset. I particularly enjoyed watching dogs when they had a swim. I loved seeing them bounding towards the water and then frolicking around before excitedly running back to their owner, dripping, dopey and over the moon.

Now that I live back in the city, it seems like such an exotic idea that I could simply duck down during lunch and have a dip in the sea! While at the time I did not take it for granted, sometimes I wish that I could travel back in time and relive those halcyon days.

My grandfather passed away at a devastatingly young age, and following this tragedy, my Grandma took mum on ship across the Pacific to visit her sister who had met and married an American soldier. This was a massive undertaking, my mum was only two at the time, but my Grandma was longing to be in the comforting presence of her older sister.

I have a dream of going on a long journey across the seas. There is something quite romantic to me about months on a ship, looking out across the infinite blue and having nothing else to do except be there; present and peaceful. I know, though, that after a couple of weeks the novelty may wear off and "present and peaceful" could turn into "trapped and irritable". When I was living in England, I nonetheless looked into getting on board a cargo ship for transportation home rather than an aeroplane. The journey well over a month though and I would have had to get an American visa. It would have been so slow and tedious but I like to think would inspire a lot of creativity and poetic imaginings - and probably a whole series of sea sicknesses!

What is it about the sea and making us feel peace? Is it its perpetual motion, its unknown depths, the sense of limitless space? Or is it something deeper, a recognition of its power – a similar feeling that comes from looking out into a broad starry night sky; the infinite abyss. I have spent so many nights with friends, family or just alone, sitting on the shore looking out and up. The darkness of night gives the sea an impenetrable feel and a greater sense of mystery. We can't help but feel small when contemplating the vast, inky depths of both the sky and the sea.

'Think of me when you look at the sea.' My mother says that to me every time I am visiting a seaside town. Sometimes I think of her as a two-year old with the seaspray in her face, looking over the infinite blue. Her love of the water has definitely been passed directly to me. Whether I am floating on my back, staring at the clouds with my mind switched off and my heart full; or splashing and giggling in the crashing waves with my nephews and nieces, I feel utterly alive when in water. I am so thankful that I had the fortune to be born into a country that is so handsomely girt by sea!

Melbourne Catholic

25th Birthday of the Don Bosco Youth and Recreation Centre



Each year over 70,000 jubilant children play on the extensive sporting facilities at the Don Bosco Youth and Recreation Centre, St Marys. The popular birthday venue celebrated its own 25th anniversary on the last weekend of June. The value of this free, safe and happy place for children, especially the disadvantaged, was recognised at the large anniversary celebrations attended by State and Church dignitaries, including the Mayor of Penrith, John Thain, Bishop Bede Heather (former Bishop of Parramatta), Fr Peter Williams, Fr Bernard Graham SDB, Vice Provincial of the Salesians in Australia, Sr Edna-Mary MacDonald FMA, Provincial of the Salesian Sisters in Australia and Tanya Davies, Member for Mulgoa and the NSW Minister for Women, Mental Health and Ageing, representing the Premier Gladys Berejiklian.



Jordan Grantham

Jordan Grantham writes for the Catholic Outlook, the official publication of the Diocese of Parramatta. Reprinted with permission.

“The idea is to provide a safe place for unprivileged kids,” Fr John Walenciej SDB, the Director of the Centre, said. “Instead of going around and looking for trouble, they can be here”.

During the anniversary celebrations, Fr John paid tribute to the dedicated volunteers, generous benefactors and visionary leaders who made the Don Bosco Centre a success, and ongoing operations possible. The centre is a joint initiative of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the Diocese of Parramatta and Penrith City Council. He also shared a challenging quotation from St John Bosco, that “if you don’t give money willingly to the young people in need, one day they will take it from your pockets themselves.”

While Fr John explains the centre to Catholic Outlook, dozens of overjoyed young people flip and jump on four gymnastic trampolines, shoot balls through the many basketball hoops, play billiards, table tennis, outdoor tennis, soccer and volleyball.

This experience of freedom and fun is deeply transformative for many of the children.

Michael Power is one person whose life was changed by the centre. “If it wasn’t for Don Bosco and the staff, I wouldn’t be the man and father that I am today,” Michael told revelers at the centre. He saw peers fall “on the wrong side of the tracks” but “Br Stan Rossato, Fr Peter Kerin and everyone back then always tried to keep us out of trouble and keep me positive as well.” He continues to live this philosophy. “Fr Peter taught me how to do a backflip on ground and trampoline. I can’t do them on the ground anymore but trampolines are a different story,” he said cheekily.

The children come from a wide range of communities, including the Caucasian, Islander and Indigenous communities. In recent years, the children of refugees from Sudan have become one of the largest groups attending the centre. The centre is open to people of all faiths and none.

“The first thing with unhappy kids is to make them feel welcome and comfortable. It’s the gospel of joy and the pedagogy of kindness,” Fr John said.

Br Thuy Nguyen SDB is a former refugee who works in the centre. He spent three years in a refugee camp in Malaysia. “After school the Sudanese come in a big groups, especially on Friday,” Br Thuy said. “I enjoy being someone who makes their lives a bit cheerful with sport.”

Sr Jenny Doudle FMA is co-director of the centre. “Don Bosco Youth Centre is a place where young people feel at home and that they belong,” she said.



Fr John Walenciej SDB, Br Thuy Nguyen SDB, Sr Kim Nguyen FMA, Sr Faye Aboghazaleh FMA and Br Jeff Miller SDB, at the Don Bosco Centre, St Marys. Photo: Diocese of Parramatta/Jordan Grantham

Sr Faye Aboghazaleh FMA began her journey to joining the Salesians when she had “a midlife crisis in the Holy Land,” she joked. She has now been at St Marys for ten years.

“My personal mission is to continue to help young people and be there for them,” she says with clear passion.

Sr Faye values being spontaneously available for young people’s needs, such as quickly helping one young person find a holiday job and giving another a lift to a Grandparent’s funeral.

Sr Kim Nguyen FMA is also a new member of the Salesians and, apart from discerning God’s will through prayer, she looked at the gifts God had given her, such as a strong desire to serve.

“I feel happy helping other people,” she said. She also has a gift for craft that allows her to make artworks the children can enjoy.

The Catholic motivation behind the centre is subtle, the only traces being a few statues, images of St John Bosco and small crucifixes worn by the Salesians over their sportswear.

Br Jeff Miller SDB is the youngest Salesian in practical formation in Australia and has been at St Marys for 18 months. He attended a similar centre in Melbourne during his teens.

“Something important for people to know is that most of the good work is not seen. We don’t explicitly evangelise the children. People might just think it’s a bunch of kids running around and jumping on trampolines. It’s not until they realise that people have given their whole lives to making themselves and the centre available to the young that they begin to appreciate its value.”



The cutting the birthday cake by the Don Bosco Team



Sr Kim Nguyen FMA with the Book of Daniel crafted into the shape of a heart

Photo: Diocese of Parramatta/Jordan Grantham.



By Br Jeff Miller, SDB

On the 23rd and 24th of June this year, the Don Bosco Youth Centre, St Marys, celebrated its 25th anniversary of service to needy youth in Western Sydney. The 23rd ran as a family fun day, with extra attractions, a BBQ, and DJ, attended by approximately 500 people who have frequented or volunteered at the centre throughout the past 25 years.

The 24th was a more formal occasion, commencing with a thanksgiving Mass at the neighbouring church of Our Lady of the Rosary, presided over by the youth centre's initiator and founding director, Fr Peter Kerin SDB. The formal celebration was an opportunity for both the youth centre directors to thank the many staff, volunteers, and benefactors who have supported the centre's mission, and for representatives of the local church, government, and Salesian family (Vicar General Fr Peter Williams and Bishop Emeritus of Parramatta Diocese, Bede Heather; Mayor of Local Council, John Thain, and Member of NSW Parliament, Tanya Davies; SDB Vice Provincial, Fr Bernard Graham and FMA Provincial, Sr Edna-Mary MacDonald) to thank and congratulate the centre for its invaluable contribution to the community.

The anniversary weekend was also graced with the presence of Br Stan Rossato SDB, the centre's longest serving director (17 years), who made a special trip from Fiji to catch up with his many friends, as well as the first FMA co-director, Sr Matalena Leota FMA.

The youth centre's current directors, Fr Jan Walenciej SDB and Sr Jenny Doudle FMA, expressed their sincerest gratitude to the team of parishioners who spent months organizing the logistics, catering, decoration, and supervision of the large and joyous occasion.

Today, the youth centre continues to operate 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, 45 weeks a year, to provide safe and friendly recreation facilities to thousands of local young people each year.



Two Provincial Councils meet and plan



By Fr Bernie Graham, SDB

On Friday August 15, the Salesian Provincial Council of the Australia-Pacific Province which includes Australia, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand, hosted a meeting with the Salesian Sisters Provincial Council of their South Pacific Region, which includes Australia, Samoa and Solomon Islands. The combined meeting was held at the Salesian Province Centre at Ascot Vale.

The two Councils usually meet once a year to share news, to review ministries that the two congregations jointly participate in, to acknowledge the contribution each Province makes to the other, and to plan future initiatives. The two provinces have a wonderful rapport with each other and together participate in many events and occasions.

The meeting concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist and a festive meal.



Blessing of the foundation



By Br Sinapati Ioane, SDB

History has been made on the 26th of May so for our mission here in Fiji. It is the blessing of the pouring of the first load of concrete for the foundations of the new hall as well as the house for the parish priest. The whole Salesian community and over 50 parishioners, including some of the workers, were present to witness this memorable event. The ceremony began at 10.30 in the morning and was led by Fr Mika Leilua (parish priest). The work is now in progress and Fr Mika entrusted the project to the care and guidance of our blessed Mother Mary the Help of all Christians.



Mother Yvonne visits Salesian College Sunbury



Mother Yvonne Reungoat with Sr Lucy Rose Ozhukayil and the Sisters of the SPR province were invited to a secondary Salesian school, Salesian College Sunbury, on the outskirts of the city of Melbourne, to celebrate the feast of St Maria Domenica Mazzarello with the Year 9 Mazzarello Campus Students and staff. As a matter of fact, Mother Yvonne arrived in Australia a day early to be able to participate in this celebration.

When Mother Yvonne, Sr Lucy and all the Sisters arrived, they were welcomed by the Rector, Fr Joe Binh SDB, the vice Principal, Angela Romano, Mr Stephen Connelly, Director of Faith and Mission at Salesian College who had planned this event with Mark, the principal, and other key staff in the school, together with Sr Rochelle Lamb FMA, Pastoral Assistant, and the School Captains from the senior level, Year 12 (17-18 year old students).

The Savio Campus students and staff formed a joyful, truly Salesian, welcoming guard of honour, with signs of welcome, as the Sisters made their way for morning tea. Unfortunately, the principal, Mark Brockhus, was at an all-day meeting of principals from other Salesian schools in the state of Victoria.

The Sisters were treated to a beautiful morning tea, and Mother Yvonne met with the staff during recess and affirmed the staff in their mission of education, sharing that their mission as educators among the young was of great importance as they assist young people to be faith-filled and active citizens of today for tomorrow.

This was followed by a visit by Mother Yvonne and the Sisters to what is known, at Salesian College, as Mazzarello Campus. It forms part of the many buildings at the College and houses the Year 9 students (14-15 years of age). These students have as their patron, St Maria Mazzarello, and their building, composed of eight classrooms, is named after St Maria Mazzarello. Mother Yvonne and the Sisters mingled among the students visiting their classrooms, as the students gladly showed all the work they were doing. The atmosphere was very cordial, friendly and formative. Before lunch a lively and meaningful Eucharist was celebrated in honour of St Maria D. Mazzarello.

As the Eucharist began, a student introduced the Mass by sharing that the well of Mornese and the window of the Valponasca meant a lot to the students

as they try to deepen their faith (symbol of the well) and reach out to others in the spirit of Jesus (the window of the Valponasca). The Eucharist was presided by the Rector, Fr Joe Dinh. Sr Rochelle Lamb, who works at the school, led the music, and the Year 9 students enthusiastically joined in the singing. At the homily Fr Joe stressed the ordinariness of the life of Maria Domenica but also shared with the students about Maria's strong relationship with Jesus which helped her to reach out to anyone in need. They, as students in a Catholic Salesian school, are called to do the same.

After Mass Mother Yvonne, Sr Lucy and all the FMA Sisters were invited to take a photo at a replica of the Mornese well which has been constructed near the Year 9 classrooms. This was followed by a delicious lunch prepared by the student body for all the Sisters. The grounds of Salesian College also contain the SDB-FMA cemetery. After lunch Mother Yvonne and all the Sisters went to pay their respects to all the Sisters who have died in the SPR province.

Lastly, and fittingly, Mother Yvonne, Sr Lucy and all the Sisters participated in a senior student assembly where students studying the Italian language welcomed Mother Yvonne in word and song in Italian. Angela, the vice provincial, then spoke and thanked Mother Yvonne for her presence on behalf of all the staff. Mother Yvonne was asked to speak and she stressed the Salesian aspect of forming lasting and genuine relationships with God and others as would Don Bosco and Maria Mazzarello. She also emphasised the necessity to have a zest for life and passion to live life to the full in such a vibrant, welcoming Salesian environment as Salesian College.

Mr Stephen Connelly then presented a new flag with the image of Mary Mazzarello to mark this auspicious occasion. This flag would be flown on special feast days. The school already flies a flag of Don Bosco and now, in the presence of Mother Yvonne, the Sisters, students and staff he asked Mother Yvonne to come forward and unveil a Maria Mazzarello flag that would also be flown for special school celebrations.

Coupled with this, Stephen presented Mother Yvonne with a special Salesian College candle as a memento of her visit. The whole day concluded by all the Sisters of the SPR province singing a song for the students.

Mother Yvonne, Sr Lucy and all the Sisters are extremely grateful to Mr Brockhaus, the College Leadership team, in particular Mr Connelly, the driving force behind this event, and all the staff and students of Salesian College for their enthusiastic welcome and for allowing us to spend this special day in honour of St Maria Mazzarello, our founder, among the young people of Salesian College, Sunbury. It was indeed a very meaningful, memorable and truly joyous Salesian day. Even the sun shone brightly all day, in spite of the dismal, cold and wintry day that was forecast.





Saint Paul Massey Youth Retreat

Friendship

Saint Paul Massey Youth Retreat



Shirleen Fuimaono

Shirlee is an active member of the St Paul's Parish youth team

The sixth of July marked the first ever St Paul's Parish Youth Retreat at Te Mahurehure Marae in Point Chevalier under the guidance of Fr Mosese Tui SDB with the support of the Core Team, Group Leaders and parents.

The retreat occurred during the weekend of 6-8 July. The theme of the retreat camp was "Friendship - let's make a change". For years, we have had many youth groups: the Tongan youth group, the Filipino youth group, two Samoan youth groups, and a combine youth group that consisted of a few Filipinos and Samoans.

However, Fr Mosese saw the need to unite all these groups, regardless of their ethnicity, to work for the betterment of the parish as they are its future. So, more than 70 Samoan, Tongan, Filipino and Burmese boys and girls gathered together, not only for fun and games but mainly for prayer, praise and worship, and learning to become friends. Many of our youths see each other at church but do not really know one another since their different cultures tend to keep them apart.

Thus the youngsters were divided into four groups, each group given the name of an evangelist and a colour: Matthew (Green), Mark (Yellow), Luke (Red), and John (Blue). Each group consisted of a mix of ethnic individuals, thus paving the way for building bridges.

As Father Mosese stated: "How is it possible to make a change if we cannot build friendships? The retreat provided opportunities for friendship during the various games that each group competed in, and enabled many young people to gain confidence and to believe in themselves. There was not only competitive mini Olympics, team chants and talent quests, but also sharing meals together and even all of us sleeping in one hall as one family.

They always say that food brings families and friends together, and it certainly did, as no one felt hungry with the quantity and variety of delicious food on offer prepared by our Core Team with the help of the parents.

Mass was celebrated on Saturday at the Marae, and an inspiring video was viewed by everyone. The video, *The Rebirth of an Eagle*, shows the dramatic and painful bodily changes that an eagle has to undergo to extend its lifespan. Fr Mosese suggested that young people need to face similar choices and decisions if they wish to attain a fulfilling and constructive life. The message was reinforced in our Candlelight activity where we shared moments of silence and reflection. In the Talent Quest activity the singing of Michael Jackson's song, "Man in the Mirror": "If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make a CHANGE!" conveyed further inspiration.

The Retreat concluded on Sunday with the newly established St Paul's Youth Group singing at the 8.30 a.m. parish Mass celebrated by Father Mosese. Our parishioners were astounded to see a great sea of young people in maroon colours nearly filling up St Paul's church and being quite unique in their ability to sing as a choir without the backing of any musical instruments but relying solely on voice harmonization in 'a capella' style.

We thank our parents for their support in making the St Paul's Parish Youth Retreat possible. We are looking forward to our next Retreat in 2019.



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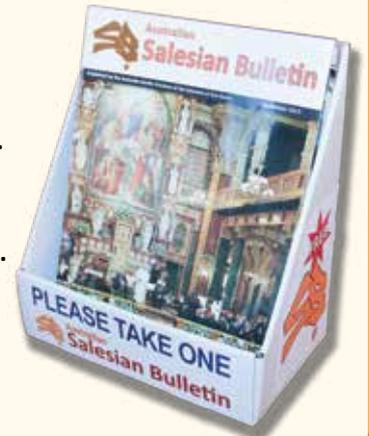
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Our Salesian mission in Fiji



This year our mission among the youth, especially the poor, in Fiji is based on the 'Strenna' for 2018: "The art of listening, and of being a good companion and role model for the young, especially those who are entrusted to our care." Our pastoral mission is carried out in three different areas.

1. On Thursday afternoon we get the chance to spend quality time with the children in an orphanage and with children with disabilities. Our mission among these children is to bring hope by spending time with them, helping with their homework, sharing our talents through music, songs, games, and most importantly by sharing joy and happiness with them. The Brothers always look forward to go and have fun with these kids.

2. Our second pastoral session of the week takes place on Friday afternoon. At St Joseph's school, and at St John Bosco Primary School we have a chance to play and mingle with the children during their game time. As Don Bosco always insisted, 'we should make our playground a place where we can meet and make new friends'. It is indeed a golden opportunity for the Brothers to interact and share our Salesian charism with these children through fun games. According to our Rule of Life, 'We, Salesians, must be signs and bearers of the love of God for young people'. Sometimes, when it is raining, we go inside their classrooms and assist the teacher with various activities, and at the same time help the children with their faith and prayer life.

3. Sunday is our main opportunity to carry out apostolic work among the young. It is a time when we become a prophetic voice for the young by teaching them catechism, sharing stories and playing games with them. We always welcome everyone who is willing to join our Sunday school, and we see new faces every Sunday. Some just come to enjoy the Brothers' company. In our Salesian ministry we endeavour to be shepherds for the young by leading them into rich pasture through evangelization and education. We aim to transform the lives of the young by listening to their stories, sharing our talents and leading them to Jesus through our Salesian charism.

During the course of this year, we as a community, have opened our doors to everyone needing help. During the Lenten season our community committed itself to helping out at the Home of the Age and the Old, run by the Sisters. We cleaned their compounds and their gardens, and we also helped with the cassava plantation.

It has been indeed a challenging year for us, as we now have our own Salesian parish. We are now looking into ways of becoming involved in youth ministry there. But our main duty is to attend to full time studies. So we take one step at the time, as Fr Mika, the parish priest, always reminds us: 'Our parish is just a baby, so we crawl; then we walk, and later we run when we are fully developed.' We continually pray for our mission asking our Mother Mary to be our guide.



Br Silao Moeloa

Siitagisilao Moeloa is a Salesian brother, originally from Samoa. He is a first year student studying at Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji



Don Bosco winter camps, Safety Beach



Bridie Keily

Bridie is an active member of the Salesian Youth Movement and a frequent leader on the Don Bosco Camps. When she's not perusing a second-hand book store, she can be found working as a youth minister for St. Macartan's parish, Mornington.

Ah, winter school holidays – a time to relax and rug up nice and tight to escape the cold... maybe for some, but not for the leaders and campers at the Don Bosco Camp in Safety Beach! There are games to be played, fun to be had and friendships to be made - with rain coats fastened and big smiles worn, everyone contributed to make sure the 2018 winter camps were the best ones yet!

There were two camps held: a junior camp for ages 9 to 13 and a senior camp for ages 13 to 16, each of which went for 4 days. Throughout camp season, the shouts of joy and laughter fill the air, as activities, games and chants are run with only one intention: to give the young people the best holiday possible!

Over the two weeks there were many highlights, most notable of these, in the spirit of the season, was the Don Bosco World Cup, where everyone was a winner! On top of this, there were visits to a local roller skating rink, movie nights and a chance to bust out some massive dance moves at a disco! We were fortunate enough to celebrate Mass together with Fr Peter Hoang, providing us with a magical celebration on Junior Camp, and Fr Will Matthews, the Salesian Provincial, on Senior Camp.

Don Bosco Camp is a special place to be during the school holiday season, as this is where the Salesian spirit and mission is truly alive. For many of the leaders, going on camp is the purest expression of joy imaginable and a way to give back to such an important community.

Senior camp co-ordinator Patrick McPhee said that it "was awesome to be part of creating an environment that promotes so much happiness!", whilst long-term volunteer and ex-camper Dominic O'Day added that he keeps coming back because he gets "a lot of joy and happiness in giving back to a place that impacted on me so greatly as a child."

These holiday camps would not be possible without the months of planning and love provided by the team of volunteer leaders. By walking alongside the young, they are instrumental in ensuring that a camp that is populated by young people from widely varying walks of life into a singular community can come together to create such a cohesive, joy-driven community.

As we hung up our gum boots to say goodbye to the Winter Camps for another year, we are left with fond memories, full bellies (the food was beyond delicious!) and a sense of accompaniment shared across the two weeks. What a wonderful season of camps it has been – we already can't wait to see what this summer brings with Leadership, Junior and Senior Camps to look forward to!



My life journey as a Salesian

Br Sinapati Ioane SDB



Growing up as a child, I had no concept of religious life and no idea what Sisters, Brothers, or Priests did all day. I grew up Catholic and my parents were regular Sunday churchgoers, but religion never attracted me. Even as a young adult, church bored me, and I couldn't understand why my parents required our weekly attendance. When going to church became a choice, I skipped it. Even as a college student I avoided church, so of course the idea of becoming a brother or religious priest was never even a remote possibility.

Now that I am already in final vows, I pray, contemplate, meditate and reflect on my decision, and I realize how marvellous has the love of God been in my journey so far. Not one day has passed in which I have doubted it. This is not to say I haven't faced challenges, because there have been many. Despite them, I'm excited to be a Brother in the Salesian Congregation in the Australia Pacific Province, paving my way to the Priesthood which is the main aim of following this vocation: to be a shepherd for God's people especially for the poor and the young who are entrusted to our care.

The beginning of my journey into this life proved difficult, with my own background being the biggest obstacle. The situation of poverty helped me realize that education, including college, was the key to changing my life. Through hard work, perseverance, and my parents' support, I succeeded in high school. My parents were delighted at the prospect of having one of their eight children achieve some of their biggest dreams. I had my own dream of being able to earn enough money to get my parents out of the backbreaking work in the fields. There was no greater gift I could return to them than succeeding to free them from their poverty. This desire and the harsh realities of life as a farm worker made a religious vocation difficult to choose. As a Brother or a priest I would not be able to help my parents financially; but I now believe that my prayers support them spiritually.

When I told them about my decision to join the seminary, they were confused and upset. It came as a complete surprise to them, as it was for me. That first conversation was painful. Explaining my decision to my friends was also a challenge. Never had I spoken with them about becoming a Brother or joining religious life; or even acted in a manner that might lead them to believe I had a religious vocation. It was not easy for my parents and friends to understand my decision, but I did manage to convince them.

To be honest, joining any religious community in this day and age is a risk. Many sisters, brothers, and priests are concerned about the decline in vocations. Our community, like many others, is always discussing what it means to belong to a religious family.

Religious vocations may be lacking in this technological age, but not around the world. One of the greatest adventures and experiences that I encountered so far in my religious life is the possibility of meeting young religious from around the world: this gives me a real sense of hope. At first I thought cultural barriers would prevent us from developing a close fraternal bond. But once we begin to talk about our hopes and fears in our individual situations, we see we have much in common. We all wonder what our ministries will be, what kind of service we will be asked to do, if we will ever see each other again. We share similar struggles and blessings in being young adults who have taken vows. It still amazes me how I have come to meet people from different Asian countries and islands of the Pacific, and been able to develop friendships.

Community experience

So why did I choose to pursue a religious vocation? The answer is simple but profound: community life. The priests and Brothers, living together, were my first experience of a Christian community, an experience that triggered my search for religious life and ended up in my joining the pre-novitiate. In their communal life, I felt comfortable and enjoyed sharing my life experiences with them. It was these initial community experiences that prompted me to discern on a deeper level God's calling in my life.

My own relationship with God was growing at the same time. I began asking the question, "What brought these men into community?" Pondering this question made me more willing to share my own story and discover religious life with all the Salesians that I have met so far in my journey. Sharing community with a small group of men is what began my journey with the Salesians, and community is what continues to nourish it. Community life allows me to learn and grow as a person. It's a risk because the members of a religious community do not choose the people they live with; or dictate to other members how to live community life.

Our differences of opinion can cause tensions, but with good communication we usually reach a middle ground. In the process, I learned a lot, not only about my brothers, but also about myself. Self-knowledge is essential to any vocation, be it single, married or religious. As I come to know myself, I discover the God who created me. Self-knowledge, along with a healthy dose of prayer, allows us to experience a freedom in which choices are not risks but opportunities to learn more about what God has in store for us.



Strong foundation in Jesus

As these experiences with international friends multiplied, I began to realize that the most important link that binds us together is our relationship with Jesus Christ. The longer I live religious life, the more my love for the Lord intensifies and my fears lessen. Jesus becomes the foundation of every experience because it was the decision to follow the Lord that has brought me so many blessings. God places many opportunities or "risks" in our lives, and with his help they can become life-enriching experiences.

That's why I encourage anyone interested in religious life to visit a community and just talk with the members. There is no such thing as a risk-free vocation. Every vocation in life has its own challenges. Even though I faced obstacles early on, I decided to follow God's call into the Salesian life. I have no regrets because my experiences have helped me grow in faith and self-understanding. I now have a clearer image of the person God wants me to be.

Already I have come a long way from the fields where I spent my childhood harvesting crops. I'm excited about the possibilities as I look towards a future spent with my brother Salesians and share my life and talents with the young entrusted to our care.



Hong Kong Salesian Youth Day

By Miss Phyllis Tang



Salesian Youth Day at Yip Hon Millennium Primary School

Recently, the Yip Hon Millennium Primary School held the annual Salesian Youth Day. Over 100 participants from six schools came together to celebrate the theme of “We Are Family”, aimed at strengthening the ability of the young to communicate with their families.

The day began when students from the host school led the crowd in dancing, singing and even performed some juggling. Afterwards, teenagers from the Salesian Youth Movement animated the rest of the day, the highlight of which were four special activities that explored different communication techniques with family members: face-to-face communication, showing concern for the others, being attentive and engaging in dialogue.

The day concluded with a prayer service which began with a conversation between a young John Bosco and his mother Margaret. Afterwards, Fr Antonio Leung suggested that putting family members as the number one priority is the best way of communication. Sharing food, giving up the best seat, taking the initiative to call with phone or message are examples of ways in which we can show our love, rather than just telling it. On top of this, the young were invited to pray one Hail Mary for their families every night, asking for the protection of their heavenly mother for their earthly families.



Myitkyina, Myanmar Myitkyina Vocation Training Centre

By Fr Victor Nawki, SDB



Students from Don Bosco Training Centre in Myitkyina

During last school year, the small yet dynamic community of Myitkyina saw the completion and acquisition of many fantastic new facilities for the Don Bosco Training Centre: two open-air workshops, 10 laptops and renovations to increase the size of the study spaces and bedrooms.

In the past 11 years, over 500 young men and women aged between 18 and 25 years of age have graduated from the Don Bosco Training Centre. Already, a fresh batch of students have completed their orientation and begun the new school year, whilst the second-year trainees work hard at their on-the-job placements. The fields of study include carpentry, electricity, automotive, welding, mobile phone repair, tailoring and beautician courses.

Each year, most new students are Catholics, with a few from other Christian denomination and even fewer Buddhist. Despite this, Fr Victor and his two Salesian Brothers, Ambrose and Dominic, experience the same feeling of Don Bosco with Bartolomeo Garelli; many of the newcomers don't even know how to make the sign of the cross, or if they've received their first Holy Communion! Therefore, the first three weeks of the year are dedicated to 'prayer school'. Students learn how to pray the Rosary, how to participate in the Eucharist and how to say the daily prayers in Kachin, Burmese or English.



Quelicai, Timor Leste

Don Bosco in the mountains of Timor Leste

By Fr Jacinto Gusmao, SDB



People gather around the Quelicai Oratory

The smallest Salesian community in Timor Leste is Quelicai. It consists of only two permanent Salesians, shepherds to over 23,000 faithful who are scattered across dozens of mountain villages around the Matebian, a traditionally sacred mountain of all Timorese people.

The Salesian spirit, the preventive system of Don Bosco and evangelization through education is the trademark of Quelicai, reaching 2,100 students across 13 schools and more than 15 pastoral centres! There is also a boarding house for 60 students and an Oratory vibrant with the many active groups of the Salesian Youth Movement and its animators.

The Quelicai parish's biggest challenges come in the form of large distance and difficulty to reach the remote villages, connecting to the global Salesian Family and only a small amount of pastoral workers.

Recently, an open forum was held for over 72 participants of varying ages, to express their gratitude for what has happened, and hopes for the future. It concluded with a concise statement from one of the lay leaders: "Sixty years ago Jesus sent the sons of Don Bosco to Quelicai and we believe in God's Love. We are very grateful for the gift of faith and Salesian spirit and we would like to be accompanied by the Salesians also in the future!"



Lang Son, Vietnam

Don Bosco Youth Day

By Fr John Baptist Phat, SDB



600 youth sent to witness Jesus Christ in North Vietnam

Over 600 young people from 13 groups from around northern Vietnam gathered together for the annual Don Bosco Youth Day in the My Son parish. We know that nothing can stop Don Bosco youth when they gather together for a Salesian festival, and the heavy rain and muddy conditions weren't an obstacle here!

Fr John Le Quang Viet, head of Youth Ministry for the Ho Chi Minh archdiocese, gave a striking presentation following the theme of the Youth day, which was "Youth – Faith and Discernment." This was followed by group activities and group sharing, allowing participants to deepen the bonds with one another.

After the lunch break, a different group put on a range of beautiful presentations involving dance, song or magic tricks, all full of colour, cultural references and fun. Everyone present was very grateful for the opportunity to be at the festival.

The day concluded with a ceremony that served as a send-off for mission. The young people were sent just as Jesus sent the apostles; to be witnesses in their ordinary life environment through their service to God.



Turin, Italy

From refugee boat to youth animator

Source: Ans - Italy



Ousman arrived in Italy aboard a refugee boat and is now a youth animator at the summer oratory in Turin

Ousman arrived in Italy in March 2017, aboard a refugee boat that came from Gambia. As with many others, he went through many trials and tribulations, until he found himself (whilst still a minor) sleeping in the "Porta Nuova" train station. He did some work as an illegal street vendor until his life was changed forever. Salesian educators intercepted him and welcomed him into the oratory for a chat, something to eat, a shower and some clean clothes.

From then on, Ousman was no longer "invisible"; accompanying him was, and still is, the Salesian community of "San Salvario" as a part of the national project "I Care About You". Now, Ousman is a youth animator at the summer oratory in Turin, where many children, teens and families look up to him for both inspiration and advice.

"Here is the beauty of the courtyard as Don Bosco intended it, where everyone can meet in an educational place. We ask the kids to help with the different activities, to get involved. In this way they feel even more part of a community, their home" explained Fr Mauro Mergola, director of the oratory, which cares for about 50 foreign born young people.

Ousman's story is just one of many examples of successful integration, the result of the dedication, perseverance and loving kindness of an educational community and, of course, of Ousman himself.



Palabek, Uganda

Salesians vital source of hope in refugee camp

Source: ANS -Uganda



Salesian missionaries live in the refugee camp, instilling hope and accompanying the families

After a year of caring for those who have fled the violence of the South Sudanese civil war, the Salesians have won the trust of the people in the Palabek refugee camp. These are the poorest of the poor who have nought but the clothes they wear and a dream of returning to their homes in an atmosphere of peace. The Salesians are the only organization that resides permanently inside the camp, and Don Bosco is already a moral role model for the refugees.

The camp is situated amongst 400 km² of forest land that will eventually accommodate about 150,000 refugees. The generosity of the Ugandan government has led to numerous refugee camps and various forms of support and attention, such as issuing work permits in Uganda for those who are ready to make a new start.

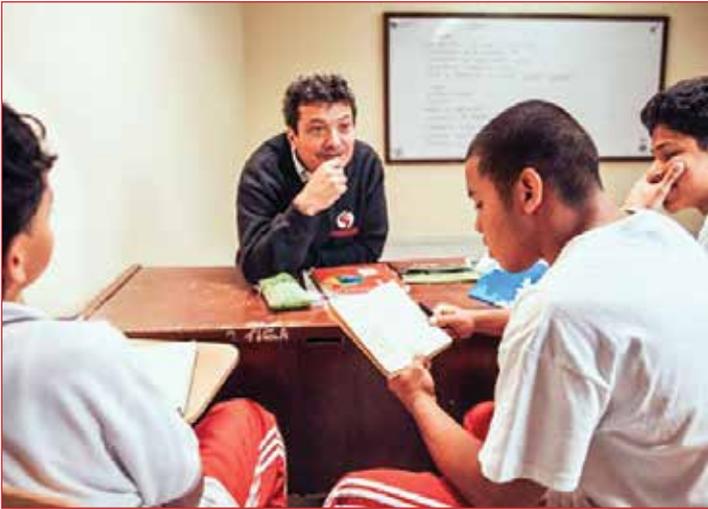
Four missionaries live in the camp, instilling hope and accompanying the families through educational and technical formation. "They are doctors, engineers, lawyers ... These young people have great potential and accept all the activities that are offered to them, but unfortunately in the camp they all have the same title: refugees," reports Fr Ubaldino Andrade.

Work is also undertaken for the benefit of locals in the neighbouring villages and there are plans in motion to build a vocational training centre.



Medellin, Columbia Life Outlook mending lives

Source: Ans - Columbia



Many of the students in this program were once living on the streets or living at risk of violence, drugs and exploitation

The “Life Outlook” program works with youth between 15 and 17 years of age who are involved in an internship through Don Bosco City in Medellin, where violent drug wars routinely tear families apart. The program provides youth with adult support and access to formal and technical education so that these young people will have the skills needed to enter the workforce successfully.

Many of the students in this program were once living on the streets or living at risk of violence, drugs and exploitation. Workers meet the young people on the streets and encourage them to visit the program. Once this occurs, the rehabilitation process can begin by meeting the young person’s most immediate needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

Several levels of education are on offer, as required by the individual. Once ready, they can advance to specialized technical skills training. Afterwards, students have the option for internship placements in areas such as auto mechanics, woodworking, furniture making, and clothing.

On top of all this, Life Outlook also provides a safe space for rest and lodging and offers opportunities to belong to youth clubs that foster cultural, environmental, artistic and other beneficial aspects of youth culture.

Abidjan, Ivory Coast Defending the vulnerable

Source: Ans – Ivory Coast



Eight out of ten children in Ivorian society have been victims of violence

This year, the Salesians in Abidjan have chosen two main focuses: protection of children and the environment, both of which are quite vulnerable. Sadly, the scourge of child abuse is still a huge factor in Ivorian society: according to a 2016 investigation done by the government and UNICEF, “8 out of 10 children aged between 1 and 14 years have been victims of violent disciplinary action (psychological, emotional or physical).”

To help counteract this, the Salesians have run centres that protect children, including a home for those who have fled their family homes due to mistreatment. In conjunction with this, an awareness-raising campaign was launched; many children dressed in traditional clothes marched along the streets of Koumassi, under a banner that said “It is our responsibility to protect children from violence.”

Regarding the environment, another march through the city’s main streets was organized. Carrying garbage bags, young people collected waste found on the streets and explained the importance of a healthy environment to those they met. The march passed by an area which holds a large shantytown, where the population deals with pollution produced by industrial plants such as wastewater sewage and piles of trash dumped on the streets.

Salesian On-Line Book Shop

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.

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

Guayaquil, Ecuador Salesian street world cup

Source: Ans - Ecuador



Don Bosco House hosts mini world cup for young people of South America

For the past year, street children from different cities around Ecuador have been training hard and listening to their coaches, preparing for the 11th “mini world cup”. This hard work came to a head recently, as over 160 young people from all around the country gathered together at the Don Bosco House for a three-day tournament, characterized by fierce yet friendly competition.

Soccer is such a huge passion in South America that it plays a major role in the lives of many adolescents in Ecuador. So much so, the Salesians working with the street children in the area have found that it is a key tool that fosters not only good use of free time but has a flow-on effect that encourages teamwork and empowerment in a young person. During training sessions, young people are kept out of dangerous places whilst also learning about skills and talents that they never knew they possessed!

The tournament is also a great chance for young people who would otherwise have no means of travel to experience new places, locations and landmarks. The children are also quite proud of their home areas; many even celebrate and share the culture of where they came from, with the people they come across. The tournament also involves meeting some of the professional athletes that serve as role models for these youngsters, a major highlight for many!



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 10 years of rescuing street children

Source: Ans - Ethiopia



The “Bosco Children Project” providing street children with a means of rehabilitation through education

This year, the “Bosco Children Project” celebrates its 10th year of existence. The project is aimed at helping solve the problem of children living on the streets, which has grown exponentially in the last fifteen years. The socio-economic situation, broken families, different ethnic conflicts and the spreading of HIV are all contributing factors of this phenomenon.

The Salesians, alongside lay volunteers and other collaborators, strive to provide street children with a means of rehabilitation through education, reintegration into family and society, wherever possible, and daily sharing in a general counselling service.

The “Bosco Children Project” operates on a three-step basis. The first step is to make contact with children in an informal way on the streets, building a relationship between the child and the worker. The second step is (with respect to the wishes of the individual) to include them in the orientation program, providing opportunities for safe accommodation with daily meals, counselling, health care, literacy and numeracy training and other such skills.

Finally, one-on-one follow up and counselling is provided, as skills training courses (bamboo, automotive, leather, metal work, woodwork, and food preparation), personalized rehabilitative programs, academic programs, guidance and follow-up sessions on social integration progress.



San Salvador, El Salvador

Don Bosco students win international prize

Source: Ans - El Salvador



University students from the Don Bosco university win award for water filtration system

University students from the Don Bosco university have been awarded by the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, for their project, “Design for Vulnerability”.

The project was inspired by the sheer amount of people around the globe who still do not have access to safe drinking water. However, it was the plight of the local El Majahual community, where 75% of the population can only access water from natural sources that is often contaminated with biological and/or solid waste, that inspired the design.

The students joined forces with some students from another university as well as professionals from different sectors to form a multi-disciplinary team. Together, they designed a water filtration system that purifies water and makes it suitable for human consumption.

Impressively, the team developed the filter consisting of three layers of materials that were all extracted from the existing resources in the coastal area where the El Majahual community is situated. Thus, the filter is a low-cost and easy-to-produce product, and it is hoped that in the future it can be replicated in other areas that also experience difficulty in accessing safe drinking water.



Madrid, Spain

A Salesian Summer for 20,000 young people

Source: Ans - Spain



Summer holiday activities for 20,000 Spanish youth

For the Salesians, a school break does not mean a holiday! In fact, it is estimated that around 20,000 children will participate in a myriad of summer holiday activities and initiatives, assisted by 2,500 youth animators and accompanied by 350 Salesians.

Most of these children will be the ones who usually attend youth centres; however, there are also plenty of spaces made available for other children, those that are at risk due to social exclusion, or for other reasons. Naturally, all programs are adapted to suit the needs of the neediest young people. For example, the Salesian Social Platforms offer leisure activities to hundreds of young people at risk, through summer camps, urban camps and pilgrimages.

There are also programs on offer that include collaborative, socio-educational curricula. Participants in these will undergo an experience of solidarity as they take part in voluntary mission work in countries around Latin America and Africa, as a part of Salesian works in those areas. In conjunction with the Salesian Youth Movement in Portugal, over 650 young people will be taken on “Campobosco”, a pilgrimage that will take its members to the special Salesian sites of Barcelona and Turin.



Mexico First Salesian Missionaries to Mexico



The first Salesians sent to Mexico City, Mexico - 1892

In 1892, Fr Michael Rua, the first Successor of Don Bosco, sent the above group of missionaries to Mexico. Due to the anti-clerical laws of the governments of the time, religious habits were forbidden to be worn in public. So the first Salesian dressed as civilians. They were welcomed on 2 December 1892, by Mr Ángel Lascuráin, President of the Catholic Society.

Salesian Presence in Mexico today

The Lord has certainly blessed the work of the early missionaries. Over a hundred years the Salesians have worked for youth, and today the Salesian presence in Mexico involves two provinces with 310 members in fifty seven communities and apostolic works. Indeed, the crowning glory was the election of a Mexican as Rector Major of the worldwide Salesian congregation in the person of Father Pascual Chavez Villanueva.