



Australian

Salesian Bulletin

Published by the Australia-Pacific Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco

Autumn 2018



Young people reaching out to the future

- I have a future, Nothing is lost
- Listening to the young as Church
- We live in a world hard pressed for time



Youthful enthusiasm

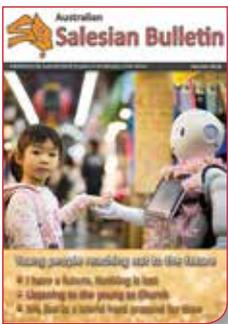
Pope Francis speaks to young people at Notre Dame College in Bangladesh

Dear Young Friends

There is something unique about young people: you are always full of enthusiasm. I always feel rejuvenated in your presence. This youthful enthusiasm is linked to a spirit of adventure. Young people are always ready to move forward, to make things happen and to take risks. I encourage you to keep moving with this enthusiasm in the good times and the bad times. Keep moving, especially in those moments when you feel weighed down by problems and sadness, and when you look out and God seems to be nowhere on the horizon.

But as you move forward, make sure that you choose the right path. What does this mean? It means “journeying” through life, and not “wandering aimlessly”. Our life is not without direction, it has a purpose given to us by God. He guides and directs us with his grace. It is as if he placed within us a computer software, which helps us to discern his divine programme and, in freedom, to respond. But like all software, it too needs constantly to be updated. Keep updating your programme by listening to God and accepting the challenge of doing his will.

Dear young friends, may God’s wisdom continue to inspire your efforts to grow in love, fraternity and goodness. As I leave your country today, I assure you of my prayers that all of you may continue to grow in love of God and neighbour. And please, do not forget to pray for me!



Cover

Today's Young people are reaching out to a future with technology

Photo by Andy Kelly on Unsplash

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Printed By Brougham Press
Member of the Australasian Catholic Press Association

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Future melodies

I had dropped in by invitation on a rehearsal of a college band to hear a special composition by two senior students entitled “Future melodies”. A lively piece of music was being played with the percussion instruments well to the fore. “Typical modern music”, thought I, a devoted lover of the great classical musical masters, “nothing but monotonous rhythm”. “Great”, said one of the young players eagerly as he lowered his cornet, “Did you pick up the melody?” Embarrassed, I had to confess that I had been blissfully unaware of any melodic theme. “Well, it’s there! You’ve just got to listen for it.” When they began again, I ignored the sound and fury of the drums. The melody was there alright as my young friend had said.

For many of us, life is a cacophony where the drum beat echoes are deafening. Our young people especially are caught up in a quick exciting succession of events. We do well at times to drop out and forget about the noise and fury of the drums and, in quieter moments, pick up the underlying melodies of our lives to relish them for future enrichment. The coming days of Lent could offer us opportunities to do so.

As parents, pastors, teachers and friends during this Lent, as a sign of our love and deep commitment, let us wherever possible invite the youth we work with to listen and to share these melodies. Inviting them to pause and focus, not so much on the beat but on the underlying Christian melodies of ours and their lives, will be fruitful. And what a variety of melodies are to be found in our lives! For them the same melodies are in the future. The joyous music of happy family events, of births, weddings and gatherings, the sorrowful melodies of difficult distressful days of tragedies, pain and bereavement,

and in the peaceful times of life’s evening hours the contentment as all become blended into harmony. We will be amazed how interested and pleased young people will be to think that they have been invited to share something of ourselves with them. That will be a precious, bonding moment because love opens both the hearts and minds.

The end result will be more love and greater joy. Then, the youth we work with will pick up the divine melody being played throughout our lives, and, as we accompany them, let us both listen to the harmony of these newly blended melodies. ‘I touch, by the edge of my spreading wing of my life’s song, those whom I could never aspire to reach...’ [Rabindranath Tagore] On this idea, Henry Ward Beecher also has a meaningful quote: “Of all earthly music that which reaches farthest into heaven is the beating of a truly loving heart...”

Ultimately, as the Grand Conductor, it is Christ who composes all the melodies and arranges all the harmonies which enrich our lives. These need to be listened to with a quiet heart, away from the fury of the drums of hectic activity. “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.” (Aldous Huxley) Let these days of our Lenten observance be the “listening hours”. The deep meanings and the underlying mysteries of our life will only be revealed to us when

*“With an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things...”*

(Wordsworth)



Editor

Frank Freeman SDB,
editor of the Australian
Salesian Bulletin



I have a future

“I have a future. Nothing is lost. I am here, and I have a future.”



It is most certain that Don Bosco is alive today, alive in so many different realities where thousands and thousands of people carry his dream forward in the name of Jesus. And he is still alive because he continues to be their inspiration.

This is what that little 12-year-old girl read:

At this moment during Holy Mass, we give thanks to the Lord and to you, Don Angel. Your presence has helped us celebrate life and friendship. Our hearts have swelled while celebrating with you who carry many children and young people from all over the world in your heart. Dear Don Angel, father and friend, thank you for having celebrated with us. May the Lord bless you, wherever you may be. We will pray for you, and we know that you will never stop praying for us. We would love to travel with you and help you in your work, but you know very well that we have to study hard, help in our homes, and prepare ourselves so we may do much good for many people. One day, when you return, we will have more time to show you all the good that we have discovered and that we have done. Don Bosco taught us that God wants us always to be happy and to do all our duties well. Bring with you a hug from us to all the children of the world. Wherever you may be, you will feel in your heart our friendship becoming prayer for you, and our joy becoming peace when you feel tired. Carry us in your hearts for we, in ours, are already with you. Sing with us this song, Don Angel, for this is what God wants of us, I am happy because Jesus wants me to be.

Dearest friends, many things have happened during this past month and a half. (It is the end of November as I write this January greeting to all of you, but I have firmly in mind the month of Don Bosco.) In October and November, I spent 14 very intense and beautiful days in Brazil – in São Paulo and Recife. The 11 days spent in India – in Bangalore, Guwahati, Assam, and Mumbai – as well as the 10 days spent in Angola and Mozambique were very special, too.

Today, in Matola, while we were bidding farewell in a very simple and humble place celebrating Sunday Mass with 200 adults and children – many of whom were shoeless and not wearing their “Sunday best” because they do not have any – one of them, in the name of everyone, read this “thank you” message that I transcribe below for you. I found it sweetest when she said it was a message that was not intended for me alone. It was a message so full of life that it raised my thoughts to something very certain: by God’s grace, Don Bosco is still very much alive in all parts of the world.

There ends the message which I received from all the boys and girls accompanied by their youth leaders.

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.

While listening to the girl's words and watching all those youngsters around her, I was deeply impressed by the innocence and need written on their faces, and I said to myself once again that we Salesians and our Salesian Family around the world truly were born for them – for the poorest and simplest. It is here where we feel best and where we help others feel their best. And I was thinking of the thousands of little boys, girls, teens, and young adults whom I have come to know in this past month and a half during my travels – and that all of them, no matter what their culture or customs, all said the same thing.

I also thought that it is most certain that Don Bosco is alive today, alive in so many different realities where thousands and thousands of people carry his dream forward, in the name of Jesus. And he is still alive because he continues to be their inspiration.

As I write these lines now, something else comes to mind that completely confirms what I have been saying. A week earlier, I was visiting one of our houses in Luanda, Angola, where they take in street children. That day there were 42 – of whom the most recent arrival, a six-year-old child, had come in only one week prior; the “veteran” had been there for five years. One of them, who had a great gift for singing rap, composed a song for the visit. Its words were: “I have a future. Nothing is lost. I am here, and I have a future. I have a future.” This boy had already spent two years on the streets when Divine Providence willed that we should make contact with him. Looking at them, with a heart filled with emotion, I said to myself: Don Bosco lives! Don Bosco lives in this house and in every one of my brother Salesians and in the lay educators who today welcome these children with word, gaze and open arms as friends, brothers, and fathers!

That little girl in Matola was right when she asked me to carry them in my heart. I cannot but carry them in my heart after having come to know them. And, just like me, so do you, my dear friends and very good people who continue to believe that together we can do much good in a world in which many do not trust anything or anyone.

I can assure you that what I share with you is life itself, as St Mother Teresa of Calcutta said. For every poor person whom we encounter – and I say this in her name – for every little boy, little girl, adolescent and young adult whom we encounter, that meeting is not only not indifferent but can change their lives for the good.

Therefore, thanks be to our Good God for such beauty. Thanks be to our Good God for them, the smallest and simplest, who count for nothing in this world but who continue to do us so much good. In Don Bosco's name, “Thanks!”



Listening to the young as Church



For us, it is always a source of awe to recognize that the Salesian Congregation and our Institute were born in the Church thanks to the freshness of the commitment and the generous collaboration of the young accompanied by the wisdom of the Founders. Our missionary history also has its origins in a group of young women between 17 and 25 years of age who had the courage to bring Jesus to faraway lands.

The choice of remaining with the young continues to be for us as well a call to open ourselves to reciprocal giving and to God's surprises. The most precious gift we can give them is to walk together to meet the Lord so they may feel chosen and loved by Him. We believe that Jesus is the expression of fully realized humanity and His presence in history can respond to the deepest expectations of every man and woman, of every culture, religion, and faith.

Our presence among the young and our commitment to accompany them in their life choices open them to the encounter with Him. We live our vocation in the playgrounds, in the classrooms, in the social networks, in the places where the young, especially the poorest, find themselves living. We thank our elderly and sick sisters who, with their offering of prayers, unite with us on the journey of preparation for the Synod event.

In this graced time, we wish each of you to renew "the decision to let yourselves be met by Him, to seek Him each day without pause" (EV, n. 3). Each of us has her or his own encounter with Jesus and we cannot ever forget it, but we must preserve its freshness and its beauty (Pope Francis, meditation at Santa Marta, 24 April 2015). The encounter with Him is contagious. It generates life and reawakens joy in others. This is the condition so that the young may be accompanied to meet Jesus who can transform their life into a gift of love for others.

Circular Letter of Mother Evonne Reungoat



Evonne Reungoat

Mother Evonne Reungoat, Superior General of the FMA (Salesian Sisters)

We live in a propitious time also because of the attention the Church reserves for the young, especially through the 2018 Synod on "The Young, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment", which intends to listen to the young, to all young people, excluding no one, because they all have the right to be accompanied on their journey and to feel themselves as protagonists in the outgoing Church (Cf. Preparatory Document).

We, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, consider ourselves particularly involved in the preparation for this Synod because our love for the young and our giving of ourselves for their fullness of life are part of our DNA. Like our Founders, we trust them, the generosity of their heart, their capacity to dream and to spend their life for great ideals.

As Church, we are convinced that the Holy Spirit acts in the heart of the young and invites them to respond to His plan. He called us by grace to accompany the young in recognizing His voice that invites them to the joy of love and sustains them in responding with decisive choices. In whatever area we work, we place ourselves alongside them to support them on the journey of faith, guiding them to the encounter with Jesus so that they may place their life at the service of others.



Pope on TED



I am thrilled to be participating in your conference. I very much like its title “*The Future You*” because, while looking at tomorrow, it invites us to open a dialogue today, to look at the future through a “you.” “*The Future You*,” the future is made of you, it is made of encounters, because life flows through our relations with others.

First and foremost, I would love it if this meeting could help to remind us that we all need each other, none of us is an island, an autonomous and independent “I,” separated from the other, and we can only build the future by standing together, including everyone. We don’t think about it often, but everything is connected, and we need to restore our connections to a healthy state.

Many of us, nowadays, seem to believe that a happy future is something impossible to achieve. Happiness can only be discovered as a gift of harmony between the whole and each single component.

And this brings me to my second message. How wonderful would it be if the growth of scientific and technological innovation would come along with more equality and social inclusion. How wonderful would it be, while we discover faraway planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters orbiting around us. How wonderful would it be if solidarity, this beautiful and, at times, inconvenient word, were not simply reduced to social work, and became, instead, the default attitude in political, economic and scientific choices, as well as in the relationships among individuals, peoples and countries. Only by educating people to a true solidarity will we be able to overcome the “culture of waste,” which doesn’t concern only food and goods but, first and foremost, the people who are cast aside by our techno-economic systems which, without even realizing it, are now putting products at their core, instead of people.

Solidarity is a term that many wish to erase from the dictionary. Solidarity, however, is not an automatic mechanism. It cannot be programmed or controlled. It is a free response born from the heart of each and everyone. Yes, a free response! When one realizes that life, even in the middle of so many contradictions, is a gift, that love is the source and the meaning of life, how can they withhold their urge to do good to another fellow being?

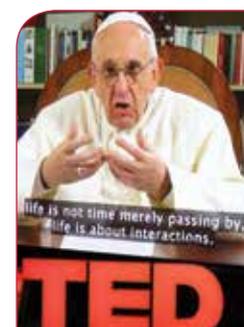
We have so much to do, and we must do it together. But how can we do that with all the evil we breathe every day? Thank God, no system can nullify our desire to open up to the good, to compassion and to our capacity to react against evil, all of which stem from deep within our hearts. Each and every one of us is irreplaceable in the eyes of God. Through the darkness of today’s conflicts, each and every one of us can become a bright candle, a reminder that light will overcome darkness, and never the other way around.

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. Hope is the door that opens onto the future. Hope is a humble, hidden seed of life that, with time, will develop into a large tree. It is like some invisible yeast that allows the whole dough to grow, that brings flavor to all aspects of life.

The third message I would like to share today is, indeed, about revolution: the revolution of tenderness. And what is tenderness? It is the love that comes close and becomes real. 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 connect your power with humility and tenderness. Through humility and concrete love, on the other hand, power – the highest, the strongest one – becomes a service, a force for good.

The future of humankind isn’t exclusively in the hands of politicians, of great leaders, of big companies.. But the future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a “you” and themselves as part of an “us.” We all need each other. And so, please, think of me as well with tenderness, so that I can fulfill the task I have been given for the good of the other, of each and every one, of all of you, of all of us. Thank you.



His Holiness Pope Francis Filmed in Vatican City First shown at TED2017. Each year TED, a media organisation, holds a conference on a specific theme and invites prominent people to speak about it. TED2017 focused on the future of humanity with the title “The Future You”. Pope Francis was also invited to present his ideas.

*Watch video:
www.tinyurl.com/mwz2cx9*



On time



Michael Gartland

Michael is a member of the Salesian Media Team and a frequent contributor to the Salesian Bulletin. He is currently trying to think of a witty comment to go here before he runs out of time

Today, we live in a world where everyone seems to be hard pressed for time. There's not enough of it in the day and what's worse, it just flies past and there's absolutely nothing we can do to stop that. As such, there is a growing proliferation of solutions that will allow us to attain health and happiness with minimal effort spent and, most importantly, minimal time consumed. Some of course, are mere fads, someone looking to go viral or to make a quick buck, whilst others are a bit more universal, carrying some weight and depth. Recently I was a part of an intensive, three-week youth program which reminded me of a common methodology for increasing health and happiness - the directive to be more open to the inner-child, to be more childlike.

It is a topic that is fascinating in its vagueness – what is it exactly about the child that we are meant to emulate? How old is the right age to latch onto? Is it the lack of institutionalized education or social conditioning that we're after? Is it the ability to break down into a tantrum and rely on expressions of pure emotion to fulfil needs what we're looking for? Is it the ability to look at the outside world and interpret it with eyes full of untainted curiosity, trust and innocence? Maybe it is a risk-taking approach to life that comes without having no conceptualization of what a 'consequence' is. Or perhaps it is just the liberation that having no responsibilities or expectation brings.

One of the most amazing, hilarious and astounding things that comes with talking to young people who are in their first couple of years of primary school is that they live day-in, day-out with a complete and utter absence of any meaningful grasp of what time actually is. They know all the words – second, minute, day, week, year; yet haven't quite grasped how long each of these periods is and nor it would seem, the hierarchy in which they exist.

In the second week of January, a young boy told me very matter-of-factly that he had already had three birthdays this year and now that he was 6 years old he would be beginning school in two weeks' time. A similar aged girl asked me when it was time to go home, to which I replied "in about 30 minutes", only to be left without a clue how to answer her next line of questioning: "ohhh... but how long is that? Seconds or tomorrow?" Indeed, I even remember when my younger sister used to get cranky at our parents for choosing to drive on the freeway at night because it "takes so much longer than all the other roads!"

Time, for the very young, isn't something that can be quantified into a unit of measurement; rather, it is a lot closer to something that resembles a different mode of thought entirely, another state of being. Asking for something to happen in 5 minutes is useless; instructions need to be given as a series of events – "Our excursion is about to begin so I need everyone to go to the toilet, then wash their hands, then get their hats and their bags, then line up at the door, then we'll get on the bus and drive to the zoo".

It is very hard to picture the reality of the entire world following this experience, wherein the past is just static and everything yet to happen is just one overwhelming grey fog. Indeed, such an existence would be infuriating and impede any progress towards anything, assuming progression is even possible in such a realm. However, it is worth considering how, for such young people, life is not lived on a smooth, linear spectrum of time but rather, as a sequential series of 'nows'. It allows us to understand the impatience and subsequent misbehaviour of the young person who is asked to just wait another five minutes before leaving the shop. It helps us comprehend the disobedience of the young person who is cautioned they only have another five minutes in the playground. Although, it'll probably never make the persistence of the child who asks for the fourth time "are we there yet?" just three minutes and twenty-three seconds into the promised ten-minute period any less frustrating.

More to the point, there is a valuable lesson to be learnt and adopted from the young person's experience of time. If we can learn to catalogue our past experiences as a series of nows, it creates a rich tapestry that forms a solid launching pad for our future nows. By planning for the future as a series of nows, it breaks down a daunting, unknown mystery into a series of experiences to be lived. And by living, mindful of the now that is the present moment, it frees up all the time we could possibly need in order to enjoy, cherish and fully experience every single moment that life throws at us, whether it be good or bad.

And so, in the immortal words of Gandalf the Grey, all that is left to us is to decide what to do with the time that is given us.



Farewell to Fr Greg Chambers



Fr Greg Chambers

Fr Greg Chambers was the 10th Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province. Prior to his appointment as Provincial, Fr Greg served as Rector and Principal of the communities and colleges of Glenorchy, Tasmania, Chadstone, Ferntree Gully and Sunbury in Victoria

Following the final sitting of the Provincial Council on 15 December 2017, the out-going provincial, Fr Greg Chambers, was given a fitting farewell for his leadership and service to the Province of Mary Help of Christians in the past six years.

Many Salesians from the province, a number of lay collaborators and the staff at the Province Centre gathered in the dining hall of the Province Centre with a prayer service at 6:00 p.m. During the prayer service, Fr Greg Chambers handed over some gold coins to the incoming provincial, Fr Will Matthews, as a traditional handing-over gesture of the leadership.

During dinner a few Salesians and lay collaborators paid tributes to Fr Greg Chambers and thanked him for his outstanding, difficult, exciting and meticulous leadership in the last six years.

Fr Greg officially finished his role as Provincial on 31 December 2017, and will spend a year with no specific responsibility with the Salesian community at Glenorchy, Tasmania. He is also hoping to do a renewal course in 2018.



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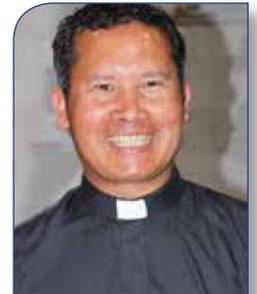
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Installation of new provincial



In the evening of 30 January 2018, many Salesian priests, brothers, sisters, members of the Salesian family and parishioners from Australian, Italian, Vietnamese and Burmese communities gathered at St Margaret Mary's parish in Brunswick to celebrate the Feast of St John Bosco and the installation of the new Provincial, Fr William Matthews.

The Mass was presided by Rev. Vaclav Klement SDB, the Councillor of East Asia-Oceania. Among the concelebrants, there were some former provincials like Fr Frank Bertagnolli, Fr John Murphy, Fr Frank Moloney and many other Salesian priests, diocesan priests, including Fr Peter Myo Aung the parish priest of St Joseph's parish in Mandalay, Myanmar, where Fr Will grew up as a boy.

At the beginning of the gathering, Fr Anthony Nguyen, parish priest and Rector of the Brunswick community, welcomed all faithful to join in the celebration by singing "Here I am Lord" together.

The hymn reflected well in the celebration as Fr William starts his new role and duties as the provincial of the Australia-Pacific province.

Fr Klement then greeted the community and passed on the greetings from the Rector Major. Fr Klement said he was happy to be with the Australia-Pacific Province to celebrate the feast of St John Bosco and this very important moment of the province. He also invited the congregation to pray for the young Brothers in Fiji who would be professing their first vows as Salesians.

The First Reading was read by Sister Helen McMahon FMA and the Second Reading by Agnes Thang from the Burmese community. Deacon Lourenco Soarez, a Timorese Salesian studying in Melbourne, read the Gospel and assisted in the Eucharist.

In his homily, Fr Klement reflected on the inspiration from the Word of God into the life of St John Bosco who passed it onto the present Salesian life. He also presented a book of Don Bosco with many original photos of Don Bosco to Fr Will encouraging him to live like Don Bosco in his mission to the young in Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Fiji.

Following the homily, the rite of the Installation of a New Provincial with the Profession of Faith and the signing of the official documents took place before Fr Klement.

Magically, the Don Bosco Vietnamese choir sang many hymns both in English and Vietnamese. The congregation was also very impressed with a liturgical dance performed by a group of young people from the Salesian Youth Club of the parish.

After Communion, Fr Will Matthews expressed his gratitude to God and to those who attended the celebration, particularly to Fr Klement, Fr Anthony Quang and all the members of the Salesian Family. The Eucharist was concluded with the hymn to Don Bosco composed by Sr Rochelle Lamb FMA.

The celebration continued with a variety of food provided in the Parish Hall where all shared a happy moment together in honour of St John Bosco.

Fr William Matthews

Fr William Matthews is the 11th Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province. He was born in Myanmar and migrated to Australia in 1994. He joined the Australian Province in 1995 and made his novitiate in 1996. After completing his studies for the priesthood, he was ordained by Archbishop Hickey in Perth in 2005. His priestly apostolate since then has been at St Joseph's, Ferntree Gully, and Xavier College, Gawler, South Australia. In 2012 he was appointed Rector of the Sunbury Community and in 2018 Provincial.



Fr Tuia's ordination in Samoa



The laying of hands by Archbishop Alapati of Samoa

On Friday 5 January 2018 at the Immaculate Conception Church in Satau village in Savii, Samoa, the family members, friends and Salesians gathered for a Eucharist to witness the priestly ordination of Reverend Tuia Afoa SDB. Tuia was ordained by Archbishop Alapati of Samoa in his native village.

The traditional reconciliation ceremony at the beginning of the Eucharist was truly moving. Tuia, being accompanied by his mother and father, knelt under a fine Samoan mat while the congregation sang 'Lord, have mercy.'

The newly appointed Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province, Fr Will Matthews, presented Tui for ordination to the Archbishop before the homily during Mass. The archbishop in his homily encouraged Tuia to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and not to be afraid of the ministry he is called to do.

At the end of the Eucharist, Fr Tuia expressed his thanks particularly to God, to the Archbishop who ordained him, his family and the Salesian family, and the many friends from Samoa, Fiji and Australia for their presence.

Fr Tuia's first appointment as a Salesian priest is to the Alafua Community in Samoa where he will be looking after the pre-novices, the community's finances, assist at Don Bosco Technical Centre and be of help in the Salesian parishes on the weekend.

Professions in the Australia-Pacific Province



By Fr Bernie Graham SDB

Suva, Fiji, 31 January 2018 -- The Feast of St John Bosco was again the occasion of great celebration in the Australia-Pacific Province when five novices made their First Profession as Salesians of Don Bosco.

After completing their novitiate in Suva under the direction of Fr James Kyaw Hoe, Damian Taofinu'u, Duc Nguyen, Foua Tea Peato, Sefilino Falaniko and Silao Moeloa Vaipuna pronounced their First Vows in the presence of Fr Bernie Graham, Vice Provincial.

The simple but profound ceremony took place during a large tropical thunderstorm, typical of the Pacific at this time of year, but this did not dampen the sense of occasion or the wonderful Pacifican music and singing and festivities.

Many friends and fellow novices from the Internovitiate program joined them for this special occasion of the commitment to Don Bosco in the Salesian Congregation.

Commencement of the Novitiate in Fiji



On 1 February, two new Novices from Samoa began their novitiate at Don Bosco House in Fiji

Suva, Fiji, 1 February 2018 -- During a simple ceremony in the community of Don Bosco House Suva two new novices, Afia Enosa and Lisona Lafaele, were admitted to the 2018 novitiate program in Suva and were entrusted to the direction of Fr Jim Kyaw Hoe. Both hail from Samoa where they completed their Aspirantate and Pre-novitiate programs at Alafua.



Fijian mothers united in prayer

A group of mothers in the new St John Bosco parish in Nasinu near Suva in Fiji celebrated the conclusion of their novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary on Tuesday, 9 January 2018. This celebration was held in a poor old church of the local community.

The newly appointed parish priest, Fr Mika Leilua SDB, was the main celebrant of the Eucharist to conclude the novena. He was joined by the Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province as a concelebrant.

During the Eucharist, Fr Mika thanked the mothers for their arduous prayer for their new parish, and also the many men who willingly gave a hand to meet the needs of the parish.

The Salesians in Fiji have signed up with the Archdiocese of Suva to begin a new parish ministry in Nasinu. A large piece of land has been prepared for a new parish church, a youth educational centre and a presbytery for the Salesians.

Nasinu is a poor area of Fiji where Salesians will dedicate their mission for the good of the children, young people and families.

Please, contact directly the Salesian Province Centre in Ascot Vale in Victoria, Australia, if you would like to contribute in any way to the development of this new parish.

Farewell to Brooklyn Park

Giving thanks for the Salesians at Brooklyn Park, S.A. (1943-2017)



A special Mass of Thanksgiving and light refreshments, symbolic gifts, a cake and a large gathering of parishioners and old friends were the markers of the celebration of seventy-four years of service by the Salesian priests and brothers in Brooklyn Park, South Australia.

Members of the Salesian Family present included Salesian Co-operators and Salesian Past Pupils. At the celebration there were numerous current and past staff members of St John Bosco School Brooklyn Park and Tenison Woods Catholic School Richmond as well as past parents from the college; and present students and parents of the parish schools.

The principal celebrant of the Mass in St John Bosco Church was the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, Father Philip Marshall. He was representing Archbishop Philip Wilson who was on leave. Representing the Salesians of Don Bosco was Fr Greg Chambers, the Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province. Other Salesians concelebrating at the thanksgiving Mass were the former parish priests, Fr Germano Baiguini, Fr Michael Keogh and Fr Nicholas Castelyns, current parish priest Fr Joseph Lee, and a former Rector of Salesian College Brooklyn Park, Fr Michael Ledda. The ceremonies took place on Sunday 26 November 2017.

The co-chair of the Parish Pastoral Council of the parish of St John Bosco and St Aloysius at Brooklyn Park and Richmond, Mr John Mahoney, welcomed everyone to the Mass, particularly the Salesian priests, brothers and sisters from interstate. Towards the end of Mass, Fr Marshall conveyed the thanks and affection of the Archbishop and the archdiocese. He noted that the Salesians were not leaving the archdiocese. Instead they are consolidating their presence at Gawler.

Then the other co-chair of the Parish Pastoral Council Mrs Eva Cooper recalled the early years of the Salesians in Brooklyn Park and their subsequent ministry. She concluded by presenting a monstrance to the Salesians. This was the idea of the parish council, to present a symbolic gift to the new Salesian parish of Saint John Bosco, Nasinu, in the Fiji Islands. It was thought that the monstrance would be a positive and spiritual means of retaining a link of the Brooklyn Park/Richmond parish with the Salesians' missionary work overseas.



Fr Joseph Lee SDB

Joe has been parish priest of St John Bosco, Brooklyn Park and St Aloysius, Richmond since 2009

Other visiting Salesians were Br Michael Lynch, a past Principal of Salesian College Brooklyn Park, and Br Michael Harris, the foundation Director of Don Bosco Youth Hostel Brooklyn Park. They were joined by visiting Salesian Sisters: Sr Jenny Doudle and Sr Patricia McCusker, who shared in the leadership of Don Bosco Youth Hostel, and also Sr Helen McMahon, a previous principal of St John Bosco School Brooklyn Park.

Then Fr Chambers accepted the monstrance with gratitude on behalf of the Salesians. He particularly acknowledged Archbishop Matthew Beovich who invited the Salesians to come to Brooklyn Park. They arrived in 1943. The Provincial also paid his respects to Archbishop Philip Wilson and previous archbishops. Fr Chambers then presented a framed portrait of St John Bosco to the parish, one of the more popular paintings of the “father and teacher of youth.”

During the refreshments, the parish priest Fr Lee gave the vote of thanks to all who assisted with the Mass and hospitality. He invited Fr Chambers, representing past and present Salesians, to cut the cake from the parish. Parish volunteers served this cake out to all gathered.



Above: Fr Chambers presented a framed portrait of St John Bosco to ??? and the parish. Fr Chambers accepted with gratitude a monstrance on behalf of the Salesians



The co-chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, Mrs Eva Cooper, recalled the early years of the Salesians in Brooklyn Park and their subsequent ministry



Fr Joseph Lee and Fr Greg Chambers cut the cake

Photos by Ben Macmahon from The Southern Cross

JUBILEE ANNIV



Fr Gerrit Kraan
60 years of Ordination

13.07.1958
Melchet Court, UK



Fr Stephen Dubovsky
70 years of Religious Profession

6.08.1948
Slovakia



Fr Greg Chambers
40 years of Ordination

10.06.1978
East Bentleigh, Victoria



Fr Phil Gleeson
25 years of Ordination

25.08.1993
Warrnambool, Victoria
and

40 years of Religious Profession

23.02.1978
Lower Plenty, Victoria



Fr Brendan Murphy
40 years of Ordination

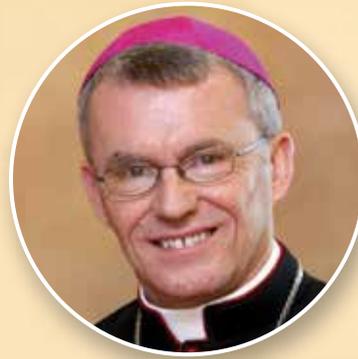
10.06.1978
East Bentleigh, Victoria

ANNIVERSARIES 2018



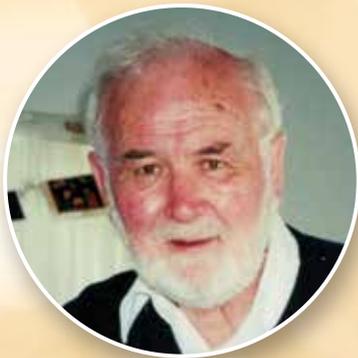
Fr John Briffa
70 years of Religious Profession

8.09.1948
Beckford, UK



Archbishop Timothy Costelloe
40 years of Religious Profession

31.01.1978
Lysterfield, Victoria



Fr Norm Ford
65 years of Religious Profession

31.01.1953
Sunbury, Victoria



Fr Kelly Kam
40 years of Religious Profession

31.01.1978
Lysterfield, Victoria



Fr Michael Ledda
60 years of Religious Profession

31.01.1958
Sunbury, Victoria

Gizo, Solomon Islands

“The Church is called to go to the ends of the earth, to the peripheries of our times” (Pope Francis)

..and the Salesian Sisters of the SPR province respond to this call



Sr Edna Mary MacDonald

Sr Edna Mary MacDonald is the Province leader of the South Pacific Regions

The 11th January 2018... God's time and chronological time met as the FMA Institute in the SPR province founded a new community in the Diocese of Gizo, Solomon Islands. On arrival at the Gizo airport, Salesian Bishop Luciano Capelli, some Italian volunteers, adults and children from the parish welcomed the four Salesian Sisters in true Solomon Island tradition! A taxi awaited... a 'water taxi' named 'St Peter' ferried all to the mainland. The Gizo airport comprises one whole small island and therefore everyone leaves the airport by boat!

Once ashore in Gizo proper, after only a 10-minute ferry ride, all disembarked and walked to the diocesan compound which is very near the shore. The Sisters were welcomed into their new house, the second floor of a building called 'the whitehouse'!

After settling a few things (however, there are many, many boxes to unpack in the coming days) Anna, Regina, Joan and I went to the cathedral in the same diocesan compound and thanked God for this day which encompassed thousands of days of dreaming 11 January 2018 into reality.

Mary, Seat of Wisdom and Cause of our Joy, was invoked as companion on the journey at the end of the prayer. Around 8 p.m. all joined Bishop Luciano and the Italian volunteers for tea where the bishop welcomed all, thrilled to thank God for the permanent arrival of the FMA in the diocese of Gizo after so many years of asking and waiting and waiting and waiting! Anna, Regina and Joan have truly felt the presence of all in the province in one way or another. This new venture belongs to us all as we continue 'be mission' wherever we find ourselves!

The 14th of January 2018 is another historical day for the Sisters' community in Gizo.

The new community was officially welcomed into the diocese by the parish community in the St Peter's Cathedral at the 9 a.m. Eucharistic celebration.

The Sisters' house is in the diocesan compound which includes the cathedral. It is a fairly new construction since the old one was destroyed in a tsunami around 2007. The new cathedral was built by the Italian volunteers under the direction of Bishop Luciano Capelli. So the church has a sacramental, ecclesial and Salesian touch. The stain glass windows are magnificent and come from the Philippines as does the image of Jesus behind the tabernacle which is in the shape of Jesus' heart.



At the beginning of the Eucharist the Sisters were officially welcomed by Jerome, the Pastoral Co-ordinator of the Diocese of Gizo. Fr Phil (a diocesan missionary from the Philippines) presided at the Eucharistic celebration in the absence of the bishop who had to use his own two-seater plane to fly to a parish centre to install a new parish priest. However, the welcome received by the Sisters was very heartfelt. At the end of the Eucharist I was invited to speak to the community present and I individually introduced Anna, Regina and Joan. After the celebration we mingled among the people.

Yes, the diocesan compound is only about 50 meters from the Gizo pier where there is an open market. Water transport of many descriptions dock there: from small motor boats to fishing boats, to ferries. Even to go to the airport one has to take a five-minute motor boat ride to get there, luggage and all!

The religious congregations within the diocese are few - they comprise the Dominican priests, Brothers and Sisters who have been in this diocese for decades, a few missionary diocesan priests, two local priests, a Guanelliani priest and a Verbo Incarnato priest and now the FMA, the Salesian Sisters.

*“The harvest is plentiful,
the labourers are few”,
but together much can be
achieved in God’s mission!*



Here we are Lord, Sr Anna, Regina and Joan ready to embark to their mission at Gizo

Left: A warm welcome to Gizo from Bishop Luciano Capelli

Gizo a land of hope Sr Anna Gervsoni, Community Leader

The Salesian sisters have been asked to take care of the direction and administration of the Urban Training Centre which is located in the Diocese Compound. There is a very small technical school, well-furnished but has a very small number of enrolments. Like other young people the world over, the young people of Gizo dream of one day going to the capital city to study and to enjoy the facilities that are not offered on the island.

Attached to the school, there is the urban kinder garden where Sr Joan, our newly professed Sister, will help out, while she will continue to undergo her on-line studies.



The beautiful cathedral is a centre of the Gizo Province and is a parish with all the activities that the Sisters can engage in – catechesis, youth groups, oratory.

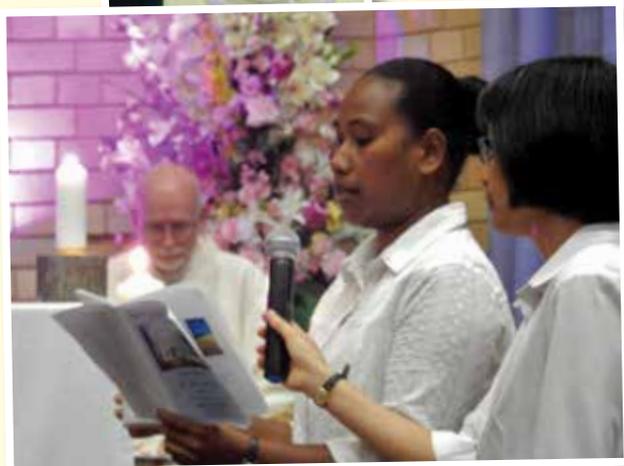
Sr Anna Gervsoni settling in at Gizo

We are grateful to Sr EdnaMary and the South Pacific province for taking the risk to respond to the invitation to broaden our horizons and go to the peripheries... We journey here with trust, creativity and the spirit of Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello in favour of the young of this island.

This is our golden opportunity Sr Regina Varghese

Though it is a small Island, the needs of this people are enormous... The people are very friendly and hospitable. There is a willingness to collaborate and work together in the school or in the parish. We do not lose heart at the vast mission but thank God for choosing us to be part of this challenging mission. This is our dream land and this is our golden opportunity to give Christ to many young people who are still searching for meaning in life. They are the neediest and most marginalised, according to the mind of Don Bosco. So I believe, we FMA, are in the right place. We pray that the Lord of the mission is already at work in the heart of the young people to whom we are sent.

The South Pacific Province of the Sisters welcomes its newest member



Monday, 4 December 2017, was indeed a red letter day in the SPR Province, as they welcomed a new member as an FMA, in the person of Sr Joan Levi from the Solomon Islands.

In the presence of Fr Greg Chambers, Salesian priests, Salesian Sisters, young people, friends and parishioners of St John Bosco parish, Engadine, Sr Joan Levi made her first profession. It was indeed an inspiring and joyful celebration, with the parish choir adding to the solemnity and joy of the day with their uplifting music and singing.

With the words "I, Sister Joan Levi, in response to God's call, make the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience", Sr Joan embraced a life totally dedicated to Christ, living in community in the Spirit of Mary Mazzarello and working for the young, especially the poorest and the most abandoned.

In congratulating Sr Joan on responding to God's call and making her first profession, Sr Edna Mary MacDonald, Province leader, had this to say:

In a few more hours, Sr Joan Levi, you will pronounce your YES to the God of your journey. May it be a loud and clear yes for us to hear from here where your parents, siblings and families are praying for you today.

Welcome Sr Joan among us all in the SPR province and in the whole Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. You are the newest member of our wonderful Congregation!

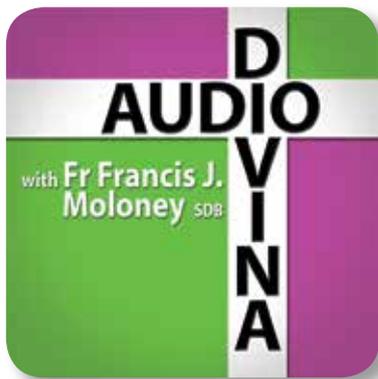
May your YES of Monday, the 4th December, be the same YES you say on every day of your life. May you, as you proclaimed today, always have "God as the centre point of your life". May you experience, in the joys and sorrows and dreams and disappointments of life, the "support of your Sisters"!

May you continue to be grateful to God who gave you life through your wonderful parents and called you to respond to religious life as an FMA, and truly live "from the inside out"!

After the simple yet profound Eucharistic celebration, the joy and happiness of this day continued with the celebrations in the Sisters convent, with afternoon tea and entertainment provided by our first year novices.

With the new mission opened in Gizo, Solomon Islands, in January 2018, Sr Joan returned to the Solomon Islands to join her new community and prepare for her ministry with the youth and people of Gizo. May the joy of 4 December remain with you.

Podcasting the Gospels, One Week at a Time



World-renowned biblical scholar Rev. Professor Francis J. Moloney SDB AM is headlining a brand-new podcast, Audio Divina. New episodes are released each Wednesday of the week, featuring a Lectio-Divina styled reflection on the coming Sunday's gospel, as provided by Fr Moloney. Audio Divina is being produced in Australia by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Speaking about the project, Fr Moloney explained that his intent is to "follow each Evangelist's account of the story of Jesus, week by week, so that we can develop within us the thirst that marks all sincere Christians: to walk the way Jesus walked".

Fr Moloney is a Salesian who has worked closely with the Gospel texts for many decades. He has taught biblical studies in a range of settings across Australia, Europe, Israel, South East Asia and the USA. He is the author of many books, both scholarly and popular. He has always had a passion to make the sacred texts come to life for those who hunger for the gift that comes to from knowing and understanding the Word of God.

Audio Divina will help bring the sacred texts alive through a medium that is easily accessible to all ages in the modern world. By tuning in once a week, listeners will be able to share in Fr Moloney's joy as he expertly guides them through the Scripture

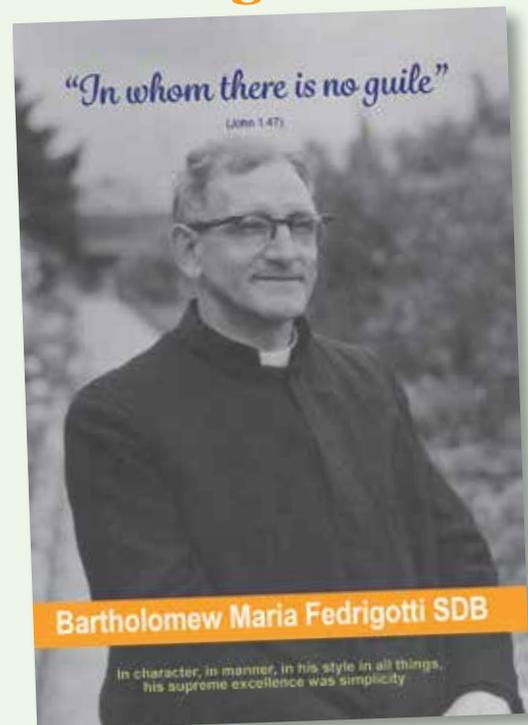
The podcast will eventually cover every Sunday reading over years A, B and C of the liturgical calendar, offering a fantastic resource to those who are studying, or simply hunger for the gift that comes from listening and understanding the Word of God

The podcast is available on iTunes, Spotify, Facebook and from the Salesian Australia-Pacific website.

This podcast has been produced by the team of Fr Moloney, Ashley Trethowan, Jeff Miller and Michael Gartland here in Australia. Since its launch on Ash Wednesday 2018, it has been listened to by over 1000 people in 46 countries. Such a wonderful achievement.



"In whom there is no guile"



The Salesians are preparing to celebrate first hundred years of Salesian presence in Australia (1923-2023). There are already quite few publications about the Salesian history in Australia. The Australia-Pacific province was officially established 60 years ago in 1958.

Fr Frank Freeman, editor of the Salesian Bulletin in Australia-Pacific (AUL), has published a book on the history and his personal fond memories of Fr Bartholomew Fedrigotti, the first Salesian Provincial of Australian Province, entitled 'In whom there is no Guile'



Copies of this book can be obtained of the On-Line Bookshop
www.salesians.org.au/books

Fr Felice Molino SDB



“My heart told me that I had to leave as a missionary”

Fr Felice Molino, 70 years old, is a Salesian “of doing”, and has spent 37 years as a missionary in Africa. “My life is dedicated to others,” he says. “Over the years I have carried out many activities for children, for street children and for the support of mothers in difficulty. They are the centre of my activity, and for them over the years I have refined an intervention strategy aimed at recovery and integration into society.” This is his story.

I am Fr Felice Molino and I have been in Africa for many years now. I was immediately assigned by my superiors to the missions in Kenya. In 1981, the first destination was Siakago, where I helped to make some improvements to the mission. In November 1982, I was transferred to Embu, where a large vocational training centre now stands. In 1987, it was the turn of Makuyu, and I remained there for 21 years as a parish priest. A large centre was born there, with a parish, a house for Salesians and the nuns, a dispensary, an orphanage, a vocational training school with many activities and even a typography.

In 2008 I was called to head the Utume centre, Nairobi, where young people from different nations and cultures are formed to become Salesians. And finally, in 2011, I was entrusted with the role of director at the “Don Bosco Missions” in Nairobi: a delicate task, because I have to find the help and resources necessary to support the Salesian houses of Kenya and Tanzania.

Africa has always had a special charm for me ... Already at 17, I started selling small things to help the missionaries. Thanks to “Project Africa” started in Makallè, Ethiopia, I began organizing marches to Turin, crowded and joyful ... that reclaimed the duty to help those in need anywhere in the world.

My heart, however, told me that I had to leave as a missionary.

The young and the poor have been and are my great passion and the true motivation of my being a missionary. My first experience in the oratory of Turin taught me to love young people deeply and to want to work for them, for their wellbeing and to give them a future...

In facing suffering, to those who are last, to those who are defenceless, we are all called to be missionaries.

Sr Joan Levi FMA



I am Sr Joan Levi, a Salesian Sister from the Solomon Islands and one of eight children. Both my parents are Catholic and they have had a great influence on the development of my faith.

The thought of becoming a religious sister came to me when I was in high school, and started just as a joke among my group of friends, teasing each other about becoming a “Nun”.

Though I wasn’t serious about becoming a Sister throughout my years in high school, it was a thought that always popped up in my mind and heart, amid the “questions”, the “what ifs”, and the “why nots” of becoming a sister, though I hardly knew any Sisters at this stage.

But in God’s own providence, I had my first encounter with a Salesian Sister towards the end of my last year in high school at our class retreats. I had never heard of the name Salesian, but I did know of the Don Bosco School in town.

These class retreats, however, left me with the desire and a great curiosity of wanting to know more about these so called Salesian Sisters; however, I didn’t have the courage to approach them. I prayed about it a lot and only after three years of deep thought, praying and discerning, did I have the courage to approach the Sisters and speak to them about my intentions.

It was suggested that I participate in their “Come and See” program if I wanted to know more about what God wanted me to do. I participated for two years in the “Come and See” program with the Sisters in Henderson, after which I expressed my desire to continue to follow my dream of being a Sister.

So I was invited to live with the Salesian Sisters in the Henderson community for two years, exploring and discovering more and more about the Sisters, the Salesian Charism and what God was asking of me.

Thus began the first step to achieving my dream of becoming a Salesian Sister. I then went to Australia to continue my formation as a postulant and eventually my novitiate leading up to my first profession on 4 December 2017, at St John Bosco parish, Engadine, Sydney.

Throughout these past years of this journey, I have come across many challenges... but most of all I found great joy and peace of mind and heart. Although I am really happy with my choice and my effort to get where I am now (a happy Salesian Sister), I don’t know what lies ahead of me. I certainly don’t know what the future holds – only God knows. However, I believe that through my prayer, trust in God and journeying together with my Sisters in community and the SPR province, I can live each day to the best of my ability and respond to what the God of my journey is asking of me.

As a newly professed Salesian Sister, I am excited and look forward to sharing the Salesian Charism with the people of the diocese of Gizo (a remote island in the Solomon Islands), particularly among the young.

Gizo is quite an isolated town with many good people of God particularly the young who lack the basic material things in life, especially education. My ministry will be helping out in the kindergarten in the parish of Gizo. Classes will commence on 1 February and we are expecting around seventy plus children, from three to five years old, to attend. This is indeed a difficult mission, but with trust in God and the guidance of Mary Help of all people, we believe that this mission will bear fruit in abundance.

I give thanks and praise to God for His unconditional love that has helped me reach this stage on my journey and ask for prayers that I may persevere to the end.

The Philippines

Don Bosco's doors remain open to fire victims



The devastating fire that erupted in Pasil, Cebu

By Joint SC-YM team

In the afternoon hours of Sunday, 14 January, a devastating fire erupted in the suburb of Pasil, located in the Cebu province. After three hours, firefighters were able to bring the fire under control, but it had already claimed four lives and affected approximately 3260 others and damaged 283 houses including the San Roque chapel and a large portion of Don Bosco Youth Training centre.

Although the fire also destroyed part of the community house and the Youth Centre, our confreres were free of harm and worked tirelessly to aid those who lost everything in the fire and now seek refuge in the DBYC's facilities.

The Youth Ministry Commission of the FIS Province immediately began to organize emergency relief and a Facebook appeal with many videos and photos provided by the other seven Salesian communities and rest of the Salesian Family in Cebu. The emergency relief and rebuilding of nearby houses and the SDB community has already begun!

Amazingly, the statue of Don Bosco in front of the youth centre survived the inferno, despite the damage all around it. Just like this statue, Don Bosco will never leave Pasil, and his Salesians will always continue to journey with the local population in spite of all odds and challenges!



Solomon Islands

Inaugural "SoloBosco" is a big success!



Sr Matalena enjoying a cuppa and the company of the young people at SoloBosco

By Sr Matalena Leota FMA

History was made on 10 and 11 November 2017 when the first SoloBosco (Salesian Youth Gathering) took place for all young people under the guidance of the FMAs and SDBs in the Solomon Islands. The theme was "We Are Family", echoing the thoughts of the Rector Major's Strenna.

There were a wide range of activities offered to the participants, such as games, dance, prayer, Taize and Marian devotion, each of which was enthusiastically taken up by the participants. Salesian Bishop Luciano Capelli was present to provide inspiring and challenging content, which was also available through a range of workshops about the different aspects of the Salesian Family. Of course, there was a great deal of food sharing amongst everyone and, most importantly, the Eucharist was celebrated together with great devotion.

Although their time together was only brief, it was enough to open the eyes, ears and hearts of the youth, as they openly expressed the following sentiments:

"Best time ever",

"It's the best time of my entire life",

"Thank-you Salesians for organizing these days for us young people"

The Salesian spirit was well and truly instilled into the hearts of these youngsters through the various activities that were organized for them.



Pakistan

Akash: a symbol of hope for all!



By Fr Francis Gulzar SDB

Two and half years after the suicide bombings in our Christian community of Youhannabad, life doesn't just go on; it flourishes! Every year there are approximately 800 newly baptized and our Catholic schools, community centres and Caritas services are shining expressions of the vitality of our Catholic community.

Amongst our beacons stands Akash Bashir, our hero and martyr of the 2015 bombings. We have frequent visitors both from abroad and Pakistan, who come to pray and ask his intercession. We have published a small booklet both in English and Urdu with a few testimonials and prayers.

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw OFM of Lahore said that "Akash is a symbol of hope for all of us: there was a hope in his heart that, by sacrificing his life, he would actually be going to give life to many... He had a heart bigger than his dreams, a heart that made him surrender his very own life for the love of his Christ."

The Archdiocese of Lahore and the parish community of Youhannabad have started to collect the necessary documents and testimonials for the first Dossier needed to start the preliminary stage for the Cause of Martyrdom with the Congregation for the Saints in the Vatican.

The situation of the Christian community in Pakistan (2% of the 200+ million population) remains full of challenges. However, with a light as strong as that of the model of young Akash, young Catholics and their families can be inspired on their daily journey!



Korea

Dream community in Seoul



By Fr Gregory Park SDB

Every year some 180,000 youth and their parents pass through the "Dream Centre" in Korea's capital, Seoul. The Dream Centre is a youth outreach initiative that concentrates on keeping youth off the streets.

Due to the low birth-rate in South Korea the number of young people is decreasing, however the number of young people in need (family or social issues) or youth at risk (conflict with law) is actually increasing. It is for this reason that the Salesian presence is so vital for those vulnerable youth.

Four SDBs and 44 lay mission partners work together to provide a "one-stop-service" style system, where all youth in need and at risk are provided under one roof. Services offered include special needs schooling, internships, oratory, arts festivals, individual, group and family court counselling, sex-love education courses, diversity programs, sexual harassment transformation and temporary shelter.

The Dream Centre is a unique government institution that is the fruit of decades-long Salesian involvement with out-of-school youth and dialogue with city and government officials. The Dream Centre and its staff work very hard to gradually improve the lives of all the youngsters who are in any form of need.



Thailand Ninth Salesian Games



By Br Saraphan Kaeser Abraham SDB

Salesians from around the Thai Province gathered together in December to participate in the 9th Salesian Games at Hua Hin Vithayalai school.

In total, there were almost 3,000 participants from around the province's various schools, colleges and houses. The opening ceremony featured a marching band that had representatives from all the schools, as well as other performances from all schools that were participating. The ceremony ended with a good night talk from the provincial, Fr Dheparat Pitasant.

The purpose of the games is to encourage the physical, emotional and social development of all the participants competing against one another. The competition is not limited to just students but to their teachers as well. In total, there were 14 sports, including soccer, basketball, golf, swimming and cycling.

After the sport competitions, the joint Salesian band also performed in the Hua Hin Market Village for all nearby people.

During the closing ceremony, it was announced that the next host school for the prestigious Salesian Games would be Don Bosco Vithaya Udonthani.



Mongolia Coming together in the name of Don Bosco



By Fr Mario Gaspar SDB

In order to celebrate the month of Don Bosco's feast more meaningfully, this year the Salesians and teachers of the Don Bosco Tech School in Ulaanbaatar organized the first annual full day Don Bosco's Youth Activities. About 100 young people of the Salesian mission from Darkhan, Hutul, Showoo and Ulaanbaatar gathered together for this event.

The Sports Day was started with the Mongolia National Anthem, followed by the opening speech by Fr Paul Leung. "We initiate this activity in order to make the month of Don Bosco more meaningful. Even though we are from different places we are but one family. Our main purpose here today is not to win awards but rather to deepen our relationship with each other, to come to know each other more. Indeed, right now, Don Bosco looks down and is happy to see his children joyfully gathered together."

The youth were then divided into six teams – the teams' names being Savio, Laura, Magone, Besucco, Cagliari and Namuncura. The youth were enthusiastic as they competed in a range of games and sports; blind drawing, tug of war, the horse game, dance and basketball were amongst the favourites!

All who participated were filled with the joy that is brought through the experience of the family spirit of the Salesian Youth! Viva Don Bosco!



Vietnam

Meet and Go as Missionary!



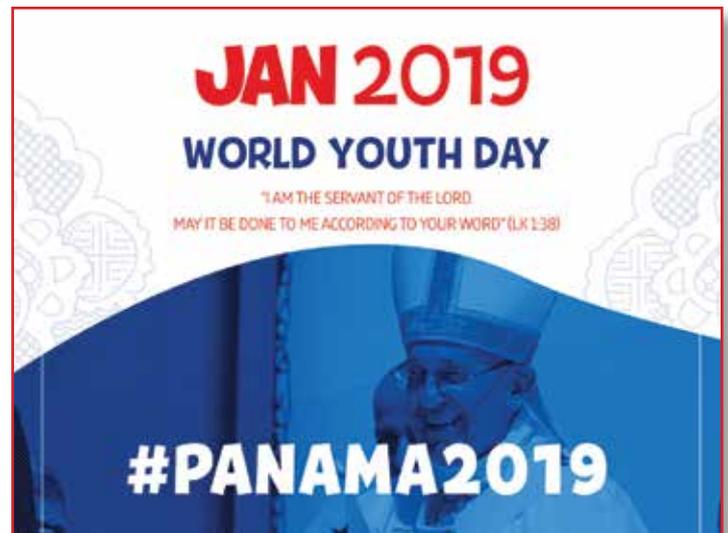
By Sr Anh Thi FMA

At the beginning of every year, the FMA sisters of Vietnam host a camp intended to pass on the charism of the institute to the younger generations. These camps create an opportunity for the girls in vocational formation – pre-aspirants, aspirants, postulants and novices – to meet, learn and share their lives together.

This year was the 25th anniversary of the camp, coinciding with the 140th Anniversary of the first FMA Missionary Expedition. Both of these facts were celebrated with the theme: “Meet and Go as Missionary”. To highlight this theme, Sr Maria Concetta, the Vice Provincial, shared some words from the 2018 Strenna: “Let us make the experience of meeting each other with God’s love and fraternity so that we may welcome and understand one another and have confidence in each other, and that all our encounters may bring about formation and transformation of life.”

Everything that happened was focused on the evangelical spirit, helping the participants understand and love missionary life, learning to live with gratitude and follow in the beautiful footprints of the first missionaries. Naturally, there were a wide range of activities, such as cultural performances, poetry and songs, tent building contests, arts and crafts, casual fun and games, camp fires and even a catechism-themed gameshow!

The days of the camp were full of much fun, whilst the participants were able to learn many new things, benefiting also from the opportunities of overcoming themselves through risky adventures and building missionary spirit and love for their vocation.



Salesian Youth Ministry Australia will pilgrimage to World Youth Day in January 2019. World Youth Day will take place in Panama City, Panama. The Pilgrimage will also travel to Los Angeles, prior to WYD and Tijuana, Mexico, after WYD for a Salesian immersion experience.

The WYD pilgrimage is open to young people over 18 who have a connection with a Salesian work in Australia and the Pacific.

Contact Lauren (lhichaaba@salesians.org.au) if you would like to participate in the pilgrimage of a lifetime!



Bookings available at:

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Sannerz, Germany

Abdullah forging a new life after escaping the Taliban



(Kinzital Nachrichten Agency)

When he was just 15 years old, Abdullah was kidnapped by the Pakistani Taliban, with the intent of training him to become a suicide bomber. Only three days after being kidnapped, however, the boy bravely escaped from a window and immediately fled towards Europe, covering a distance of over 7,000 kilometres. "I travelled for 45 days by car, by train and on foot," recalls Abdullah.

Having arrived in Frankfurt's refugee centre, Abdullah was then sent on to the Don Bosco house in Sannerz, where he has managed to reconnect with his birthplace of Gardez, Afghanistan, through his love of cricket. Several times a week Abdullah travels by train to Berlin to train and play for the Riedberg Cricket Club. The boy proudly displays the trophy he won for "Best Bowler" in his room, presented to him by cricket stars from Afghanistan who had come specifically to present it to him.

It isn't just in cricket where Abdullah excels. After arriving in Germany, Abdullah, young and full of energy, soon graduated from junior high school and also attended several German language courses. He is now attending the second year of a vocational training course in Carpentry. "At the moment, as part of our integration project, nine young people from Sannerz are attending courses for carpenters, painters and metallurgical workers", explains the director and head of the formation project, Fr Clemens Schliermann.

Abdullah also regularly keeps telephone contacts with his family – his parents, two sisters and three brothers he had to leave behind in Afghanistan. However, after recent developments he can now speak only with his mother and four of his five brothers. "My father and one of my brothers have disappeared without a trace. They were probably kidnapped by the Taliban," says the boy sadly.

Kouba, Burkina Faso

Establishing a Women's Centre for the future



(ANS)

Thanks to the joint efforts of numerous Spanish Salesian entities, a Women's Promotion Centre is taking shape in Kouba, Burkina Faso. Kouba is currently in the second construction phase of the large socio-educational, cultural and sporting complex for children, girls and young people that the FMAs have planned over a period of 5-10 years.

The project includes a nursery, primary and secondary schools, a shelter for girls who have limited resources, an oratory, sports facilities and educational workshops of various kinds. Perhaps most importantly, the Women's Centre will be offering apprenticeships and fostering literacy, so that the many women and young people who live in such a precarious situation may escape poverty.

The educative-pastoral community of the Spanish 'Mary Help of Christians' Province and of the Salesians of Don Bosco play key roles in supporting this project through the "Sowing opportunities in Burkina" campaign, which amassed and sent over 50,000 euros towards the community.

The first phase was recently completed, which included a tower water tank that will supply the entire complex. A training course in horticultural techniques for a hundred women has also begun; this was of particular importance as the area is quite arid and the optimization of resources is essential to ensure good and proper nutrition for the local families. The whole facility is expected to be completed in 10 months' time.



Democratic Republic of Congo

An archetypal story



(ANS)

“Joseph arrived at ‘Bakanja Ville’, the Salesian centre in Lubumbashi dedicated to the reception of street children”, says Delphine Morin, a volunteer at the same centre. “The child was in a bad state: he had continuous epileptic seizures which left him weakened and frightened, and a nasty wound to the tibia that prevented him from walking. Communication with him was hard due to mental difficulties; he barely spoke.”

With the help and work of many people, Joseph was healed and started to feel well at the centre. During the child’s recovery, social workers tried to establish dialogue with him, but Joseph only ever repeated the word ‘Mwambui’ - the local language term for a woman who has had twins.

Elie, a young boy who came to the centre six months later, said he knew Joseph’s mother, a street vendor at the M’zee Kabila’s market. Social workers went out to look for her days on end but couldn’t find her. Later on, another newcomer said he knew her for he had been a neighbour to Joseph and his family. The social workers got back on their feet and, in the end, they managed to track down Joseph’s family, who was preparing his funeral, believing him to be dead.

What a miracle, the child who had become lost and was presumed dead, to be returned to his family alive!

What would have happened to Joseph if he had not been welcomed to Bakanja Ville? Where would he be today? Every day we welcome dozens of children with stories similar to Joseph’s. They are children marked by life, abandoned and on the margins of society, who rely on us for help.

Montevideo, Uruguay

Music is a powerful method of evangelization



(ANS)

Diego Melano and Francisco Romero, two young musicians from Montevideo, have found that their music is an art that can evangelize and transmit the essence of the Salesian charism.

Their inspiration came from a group of animators they witnessed at Mary Help of Christians, who decided to change the rhythm of the Mass songs. Francisco explains that “they were not a musical band, but a group of animators playing instruments who tried to entertain others, conveying joy and above all the Salesian charism.”

When they first started playing and performing, the audience response was an immediate success. Both artists agreed that was the way they liked to live the faith, and in which they felt most comfortable when it came to doing animation: to live in the art world as a vehicle for evangelization.

“I realized,” says Diego, “that young people listened to what I would say on the microphone. I understood then that what I say and do has to be what God tells me.”

Both artists agree that sharing the Salesian charism reflects directly on their art. “My Salesian spirit is tied to the theme of joy. The music I play transmits my values. I try to be myself at all times with my Salesian spirit and rejoicing in what I do,” says Francisco.

“I can present songs that talk about life itself,” Diego explains, “and this is really God. My story could not be any other way. Being a Salesian and being a musician is the same reality.”

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

Damascus, Syria Surviving war through education



(Misiones Salesianas)

As the ongoing war drags on, the Salesians in Syria have increased their efforts to develop the skills of young people, so that they can find a job and generate income for themselves and their families. To this end, the Sons of Don Bosco have developed new initiatives, mainly in offering real economic help to support the costs and fees of university courses and vocational training.

In 1928 the country's schools were completely nationalized, which means that the Salesians do not have any formal education centres in Syria. 25 young people have benefitted from the initiatives offered, allowing them the opportunity to enrol in technical and vocational training courses, (mostly related to I.T. and English), whilst another 20 young people have received financial support to graduate from high school and attend university.

Another six people have received support through the supply of equipment and tools to start or develop an activity or firm in various small business sectors - such as hairdressers, restaurateurs, pastry chefs and other such hands-on roles.

The Salesians of Damascus monitor the beneficiaries monthly and foster their awareness of the significance and relevance of this program: a long-term investment in them and the future of Syria.



Soyapango, El-Salvador Learning to live Without Barriers



(ANS)

A group of 87 young people completed their 1st Sign Language Course as a part of the project "Sin Barreras" (Without Barriers). The group was formed by teachers, students, staff of the "Universidad Don Bosco" (UDB) and external students.

Edwin Campos is one of the young students of the class. Due to an ingestion of pharmaceutical drugs for children, he gradually lost his hearing, leading him to enrol in the project. The knowledge of Sign Language keeps Edwin's dream alive: to study at the Don Bosco Institute, a Salesian institution that will grant him a full scholarship to attend its three-year course in Automotive Mechanics.

"We have committed ourselves to the Don Bosco Institute to help people like Edwin; as a project we have chosen to create a mentoring program for them. For example, some higher-level students help Edwin translate messages during the course" said Mariely Rodríguez, coordinator of "Sin Barreras."

This social inclusion initiative was launched in 2016 by the Association of Salesian Students of Thought and Civic Education (AESPEC) and the Salesian Association of Students in Aeronautics (ASEA) of the UDB.

This project also corresponds to the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, which demands "quality education" and promotes inclusive education.

Caracas, Venezuela

Saleians remain defiant in the face of gang violence



(ANS)

The political, economic and social situation in Venezuela has seen an increase in corruption, prices, scarcity of goods, insecurity and violence. In the face of all these hardships, the Salesians have remained defiant in their mission to take care of the children living on the streets and to recover those who have fallen into criminal gangs.

The “Red de Casas Don Bosco” in Venezuela provides 10 houses across the country that offer shelter to over 1,300 street children. Mr Leonardo Rodríguez, a lawyer and director of the association, is concerned that every day adults come “in search of their children who have fled their homes or ask us to welcome their children in one of the Don Bosco houses because they have no way to feed them.”

In the 20 years of experience with the Salesians, the Director of “Red de Casas Don Bosco” has met minors who had been members of criminal gangs, and despite the effort to bring these kids together and help them in all possible ways, often in less than a year they end up in jail or even killed.

One particular case that stays in Dr Rodríguez’ memory is that of two brothers aged 11 and 13. “They were taken to an uncle who lived in Caracas. While in that city they began to frequent one of our centres where they received help for two years. However, their lives ended in a terrifying manner. One day the younger boy was killed in a gang battle and the other boy was hit in the head and remained deaf. It was pitiful to see him that way, but he continued to come to Don Bosco house. The following year the gang found him and killed him.”

Since 2013, the Salesians have started new initiatives in the poorest neighbourhoods to prevent children and adolescents from joining criminal groups.

Madrid, Spain

A wave of solidarity to support the poor



(ANS)

The Christmas season has just passed, a most meaningful period of the year, in which the Salesian Family intensifies its commitment to the neediest, renewing hope, setting new goals and persevering in the mission of caring for the young.

In recent weeks, in collaboration with Caritas, tons of non-perishable food and hygiene products have been collected in many Salesian houses throughout schools, youth ministry centres and parishes.

The “Kilo Solidario” was promoted right across the country, from the ‘Mary Help of Christians’ to the ‘Saint James Major’ Provinces. “Open the door of solidarity” was the motto of the Salesian house in Cadiz which collected over 8,000 kilos of food; while “Sowers of Stars” was the motto chosen by the Youth Centre ‘Puertobosco’ for the collection of goods in favour of the neediest families in Puertollano.

Also worthy of mention is the “Food for Africa” campaign, for Sierra Leone, which collected 8,000 kilos of food. In the Salesian centres of Andalusia and Extremadura, the “Potito Solidario” campaign was carried out, aimed mainly at the collection of products for children, especially for newborns and babies.

Other examples of solidarity initiatives carried out in Spain’s Salesian centres in view of the Christmas season were the solidarity week of Huesca or the beneficial “Sonata of Zambomba” in Huelva, organized by the Salesian Youth Centre “Carabela” for the benefit of ‘Banco Alimentare’, the food bank.



Ecuador

The 130 years of Salesian presence



The first missionaries photographed with Don Bosco before departure for Ecuador

The first Salesian missionaries landed in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on 12 January 1888. For this reason, on the exact day of the anniversary, the "Sacred Heart of Jesus" Province of Ecuador commemorated its 130 years of educational and pastoral work in favour of the young and the needy families.

The work of the Salesians began on 28 January 1888, when missionaries arrived in Quito and managed the Catholic Protectorate of Arts and Crafts at the request of the then President of Ecuador, José María Plácido Caamaño.

The news of this event reached Don Bosco the following 30 January, a day before he passed away. It was, indeed, the last mission that Don Bosco blessed. The death of the Founder, however, did not stop their work; on 5 February, they welcomed the first student in the Protectorate and on 18 February inaugurated the festive oratory with many children attending.

On 30 August 1896, the first Salesian house opened in Quito, the first of many. In 1893, the Salesian houses of Ecuador became a Vice-Province and, in the same year, it was elevated to a Province with the canonical decree, however, published only in 1902.

Today, the Province of Ecuador includes 24 centres that host 159 Salesians, including 110 priests. There are also 31 Salesian educational centres (CES) teaching approximately 32,000 children and young people, and 40 oratories with about 1,200 animators and over 11,000 young people.