



Australian

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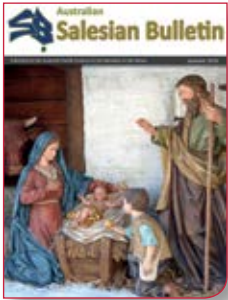


Good News, Great Joy and a Precious Gift



Where God is born

Where God is born, hope is born. He brings hope. Where God is born, peace is born. And where peace is born, there is no longer room for hatred and for war. Yet precisely where the incarnate Son of God came into the world, tensions and violence persist, and peace remains a gift to be implored and built. May Israelis and Palestinians resume direct dialogue and reach an agreement which will enable the two peoples to live together in harmony, ending a conflict which has long set them at odds, with grave repercussions for the entire region.



To our brothers and sisters who in many parts of the world are being persecuted for their faith, may the Child Jesus grant consolation and strength. They are our martyrs of today.

Where God is born, hope is born; and where hope is born, persons regain their dignity. Yet even today great numbers of men and women are deprived of their human dignity and, like the Child Jesus, suffer cold, poverty and rejection. May our closeness today be felt by those who are most vulnerable, especially child soldiers, women who suffer violence, and the victims of human trafficking and the drug trade.

Where God is born, mercy flourishes. Mercy is the most precious gift which God gives us. We are called to discover the tender love of our heavenly Father for each of us. May the Lord enable prisoners in particular to experience his merciful love, which heals wounds and triumphs over evil.

Luke 2:15-16

Cover

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

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In silence and simplicity

We certainly live in a noisy and complex world. Noise has become a permanent backdrop to our lives in modern societies, in our bustling cities with their hurrying crowds as well in formerly tranquil countrysides. The sounds of a technological age are everywhere amid an ever increasing complexity of our lives.

The very means of communication have become involved and demanding of our time and attention. Whether we use mobile phones, or e-mail addresses and websites, all offer us greater information but less and less personal communication. We have become, in many ways, the tools of our tools, and the servants of our servants. Coupled with the noise factor is the fact that we are conditioned to live in a fast moving society that is always looking ahead to the next event. This addiction to new experience, yet another thrill, destroys our enjoyment of the present experience. More and more complex ways are being found to entertain us, to satisfy the insatiable thirst for thrills. Very few experience the enjoyment of reading or homely conversations. The simple enjoyment of a game or social activity no longer satisfies. We must be up and doing.

And with this process simple ways have given away to the more complex. Even in our speech, the simple, straightforward word is bypassed for the lengthy flowery phrases. How often we hear those working in the public arena use such phrases "at this given point in time" instead of the simple powerful "now". The ever-increasing official government reports, conferences, seminars are held with little lasting consequences. The simple idea within the grasp of many is often destroyed by lengthy interpretations, additions and clarifications until a desert of ideas in a sea of words is the result. St Francis of Sales would advise that "There is no method more forceful than a simple explanation." Such are the ways of the noisy, commercial and competitive world in which we live.

In the spiritual realm of faith it is not so: the essentials of great intense moments are marked by simplicity and silence. For Christians there can be no greater moment of spiritual intensity and experience than the moment of Baptism, and yet sheer simplicity marks that moment: "I baptise you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is the same in all the sacred moments (sacraments) where the giving of divine life and pleasure is so marked. Even in that sacrament where the Church ordains its ministers, the power is transferred by the simple laying of hands in silence.

In a few short weeks, we will once more celebrate the great mystery of our faith, the Incarnation, the overflow of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity into time and space and into our history. And yet it happened so simply and in a warmly human way in the surrounds of a country stable in Bethlehem, far from the jostling halls of commerce and political intrigue in Jerusalem. "While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of its course, your almighty word leapt down from heaven from the royal throne." (Wisdom 18.1-15) So it must be with us too: we cannot receive the Word if our lives are filled with bustling noise and confusing complexity.

May we all, as we celebrate this Christmas, forsake many of the empty tinsel practices of the commercial world and find quietness and simple heart-warming ways of strengthening the bonds of friendship and family life.



Editor

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



I dream of a Salesian Family with a missionary heart



Fr Ángel Fernández Artime

Fr Ángel is the Rector Major of the Salesians and the 10th successor of Don Bosco

The 147th Missionary Expedition proclaims that the Lord continues to love humankind that he willed and created and that we, the Salesian Family, feel filled with God's tenderness in a special way. It is precisely this fullness of love that seeks to brim over to all around us and calls forth from us a response of fidelity which is demanding.

Once again, Valdocco has been witness to the joyous and moving day of the departure of new missionaries. On 11 November 1875, Don Bosco sent his first missionaries to Patagonia, in Argentina. This was the legendary "first missionary expedition" headed by the young and courageous Giovanni Cagliero. As we well know, right from his youth, Don Bosco had nurtured the dream of becoming a missionary. Don Cafasso "blocked" that path as he accompanied Don Bosco along his vocational discernment, telling him that going to the missions was not for him. On 25 September of this year, I celebrated the sending of forty-three missionaries, both Religious and Lay, on missionary expedition number 147 because Don Bosco's "secret" dream never paused, not even during the two tragic World Wars.

This time, eighteen young Salesians and seventeen Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are leaving homeland and those whom they love, and are setting off to the most diverse points of the globe. Seven young people (six young women and one young man) join them to do civil and missionary service for one year. Certainly, the Religious, instead, have made the choice "forever." They give the gift of their life: remaining with the poor, with those who feel most abandoned, and with their other Salesian confrères and Sisters who are experiencing difficult times. They do so as members of the Church because God remains close to his suffering children.

Theirs is a gesture that speaks. It proclaims that the Lord continues to love humankind that he willed and created and that we, the Salesian Family, feel filled with God's tenderness in a special way. It is precisely this fullness of love that seeks to brim over to all around us and calls forth from us a response of fidelity which is demanding. For this reason, I told our missionaries that my dream is for a missionary Salesian Family bearing four "petals."

1 TO BE MISSIONARIES OF HUMAKIND

The point of being missionaries in the world is not to make some type of conquest. We are missionaries so as to share life with the people who welcome us. We are missionaries to serve, no matter what the circumstances or the situations. We give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty because it is good to do so, no matter what the consequences.

At the close of Vatican Council II, Blessed Paul VI stressed that the doctrine of that Council was channelled in one direction only: "the service of mankind, of every condition, in every weakness and need." And I said in the Basilica in Turin: "You are sent to serve the men and women whom you meet along your paths: in their diversity, with their intercultural and ancestral riches, in their dreams, in their anguish, and in their hopes. You must bring with you the riches of your own humanity, which you received from your families and your cultures, as well as the profound one that you have nourished daily in your trusting relationship with the Lord Jesus."

3 TO BE MISSIONARIES TO THOSE WHO ARE "LAST"

To be a Salesian missionary today means to have one's eyes and hearts for those who are "the last" and the "little ones". I said to the missionaries: "I recommend with all my heart that you have your eyes wide open to see the people and to look them straight in the eye; have your hearts and your arms open to receive them; and have the courage to give your entire life to them. Just like Don Bosco, you can be close to all but your heart must always be for those 'who are last', and your life must always be for them, too. I invite you to open your heart to so many people who live in precarious, painful and difficult situations; to be close to those who have no voice; to help them gain the justice that they deserve; to care with fraternity and solidarity for those wounded by life; and to stay far from that indifference which – way beyond not being helpful – humiliates.

And in regard to those who are "last" – never forget that we help them in their every necessity, that we have learned from Don Bosco never to neglect the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus who speaks to us of a good and merciful God who is our Father. Don Bosco was, above all, a priest with his heart full of God, with a heart of an educator who always sought to raise up in his young people the sense of God and of confidence in him."

2 TO BE MISSIONARIES OF MERCY AND OF FRATERNITY

The second petal of my missionary dream is a consequence of the first, just as I said to the participants: "Because you are missionaries of humankind, I invite you also to be missionaries of mercy and of fraternity. Today the entire world is suffering everywhere. You will find wars, divisions, extreme poverty, refugees, the hungry, the ill and the abandoned. You will also meet with instances of racism and xenophobia, but you must bring a message of peace, of development, of pardon, and of fraternity - and not only as a discourse or a sermon, but with your very own life, in the way you live your daily life, and in your witness. There can be no Salesian "neutrality" in the face of the sufferings of our people or before the situations of suffering and of lack of every kind. We must respond as quickly as possible, seeking to accompany the people in their lives and searching for possible solutions together with them. Further, our response must always be the one of the Gospel, of the dignity of the human person, and of respect for life and of creation. The world has great need of fraternity!"

4 TO BE MISSIONARIES BECAUSE YOU ARE DISCIPLES

We must never forget that the root and the strength of our being missionaries comes from being disciples. We are essentially missionary disciples, members of the faith-filled community which takes seriously Jesus' commandment to teach in his name and to make all nations come to know a merciful and faithful God who loves each one of his sons and daughters.

We are also the heirs of a tradition which is more than 100 years old - our Salesian Family. Be courageous proclaimers of the measureless mercy and free self-giving on the part of God, which is manifested, above all, among the poorest and the neediest.

May Mary, our Teacher and our Help, the Mother of Mercy, accompany you every day and in your every step. Learn from her to be attentive to the needs of poor people, and of the poorest young people whom, I am sure, you carry in your hearts. Learn from her to praise God for the wonders that he does in every corner of the earth, in every culture and in every nation.

Joy and Sorrow at Christmas



Charles Le Brun - Adoration of the Shepherds (17th century)



Fr Francis J. Moloney

Francis Moloney SDB joined the Salesians in 1960 and was ordained a priest in 1970. He was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy from Oxford University in 1976. Since then he has a wide teaching and research experience in Australia, Europe, Israel and the USA.

Our annual celebration of the Birth of Jesus is full of joy. There is only one moment when something sombre breaks into the celebration: the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28. An atmosphere of joy is generated by the fact that the Churches use the Infancy Story of the Gospel of Luke. The role of John the Baptist, so important for Luke that he is also announced (to Zechariah: 1:5-25), and his birth and naming is described (1:57-80). As both John the Baptist and his cousin Jesus are presented side-by-side across the Lukan story, we hear of the encounter between the two mothers (1:39-56), so that Elizabeth can sing the praises of Mary, and recognise the forthcoming birth of Jesus. No matter how wonderful the conception, birth, and naming of John the Baptist, Jesus is more wonderful, for he “will be called holy, the Son of God” (1:35).

In the midst of such joy, where does the story of the slaying of all the innocent young males at Bethlehem, whose “martyrdom” is celebrated on December 28, come from? The answer, of course, is that it forms an important element in the Infancy Story of the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-2:23), closely associated with the role of the three Wise Men from the East, who play a cameo role at Christmas-time, especially in the many Cribs that are constructed all over the world. They are especially celebrated on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, as the Gentile world worships the newborn King (see Matt 2:2, 11). In many places only the Lukan shepherds (Luke 2:8-14) are placed in the Crib for December 25, and the Matthean Wise Men join the Lukan shepherds later—on January 6.

Seeking a King whose star they have divined in the heavens, they introduce consternation, anger and violence (Matt 2:3, 7-8, 16-18). Warned in a dream, they must return home via a different route, in order to avoid the wicked King Herod (Matt 2:12). Their experience indicates that Jesus' mission will reach out to the ends of the earth (28:16-20), but at what cost?

Luke tells us of joy-filled annunciations, miraculous births and naming of two children, sent by God to transform the human story. He closes his infancy story with two episodes in the Temple, the place where his Gospel will also end (Luke 24:52-53): Mary, Joseph and the child will be "about the affairs" of God (2:49). But Matthew's story is darker: suspicion of an illegitimate birth, a plot to execute Jesus, the slaying of the Innocents, and the subsequent flight into Egypt. After Herod's death, the family returns, only to find a further wicked King, so they flee again to Nazareth.

Much scholarly ink has been spilt over the two Infancy Stories in the Gospels. There are many shared elements in the two stories: Herod, Joseph, Mary, virginal conception, Bethlehem, Nazareth, the name Jesus, and many other details. There is certainly something "back there" in the earliest Christian story-telling traditions that joins these stories. But we simply do not have sufficient evidence to reconstruct any such source. We thus must listen carefully to what Luke and Matthew tell us about God's design in the sending of his Son.

In the end, these wonderful stories proclaim what God has done for us in and through Jesus. But they do it in their own way, and we are blessed to have this narrative diversity. The Infancy Stories of Luke and Matthew are not to be contrasted, but read and meditated side-by-side, so that they might complement one another and thus enrich our Christian tradition and nourish Christian spirituality.

If that is the case, why is there so much "sorrow" in Matthew 1-2? The author of the Gospel of Matthew is very careful in the composition of his story. One of his major concerns, however, was to show, from the very beginnings of the life of Jesus, that this man will be surrounded by conflict, death and difficulty. Indeed, many of the words that appear in the Infancy Narrative about the consternation of Herod and the people when the Wise Men ask about the birth of the new-born King are repeated when Matthew tells of a similar consternation among the people and their leaders at Jesus' trial and execution.

But is it all "sorrow"? Blended splendidly into Matthew's story of Jesus' origins (1:1-17), conception (1:18-25), birth (2:1-12), and subsequent experiences (2:13-23) is the indication that the coming of Jesus, for all the difficulties that it may produce for those who commit themselves to him (Joseph, Mary, the Wise Men), is the long-awaited fulfilment of God's promises to Israel: "this was to fulfil the Scriptures" (see 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15, 17-18, 23).

It is common Christian experience that the ways of God, indicated to us in and through the fulfilment of Sacred Scripture, are often not the ways of our contemporary society and culture. Crucial, in this respect, is the promise of the Word of God that opens the Gospel of Matthew, and the Word of Jesus that closes it. Despite the conflict that can emerge from a courageous Christian presence in today's secular society, the birth of Jesus fulfils the promise of Isaiah: "'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be Emmanuel' (which means God with us)" (1:23). Jesus' final words in the Gospel of Matthew indicate that this promise shall not be thwarted: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (28:20).

Although Matthew highlights the darkness and Luke highlights the light, the contrasting Infancy Accounts of the Gospels of Luke and Matthew proclaim the same message: the never failing presence of the love of God whose Son came "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).



Flight into Egypt, by Gentile da Fabriano



Moments of Mystery

Christmas again! How quickly another year has passed! Yet I do not mind. As I sit alone reflecting, and having passed the biblical age of “threescore and ten”, the Christmas season brings not only a host of cherished memories but deeper thoughts. As the decorations go up, as Christmas trees are installed and much loved traditional carols are heard, as cards start arriving bearing greetings from distant loved ones, somehow and very mysteriously a child arises in this old mind and body. This rebirth is betrayed in clearer and glistening eyes, in increased cheerfulness and in a quickened step. It is the buoyancy derived from a sense of expectancy. Behold now, how the child of childhood’s dreaming is reborn.



Frank Freeman

Fr Frank Freeman SDB has been the Editor of the Australian Salesian Bulletin since 1983

The cribs in churches holding, as they do, a defenceless newborn babe lying in a manger surrounded by gentle beasts and humble shepherds, the exciting strangeness of midnight Mass, all these are waves of wonderful memories which wash upon the shores of present reality. Now, across the passage of the years, as the child is reborn in me, all the childhood magic and mystery remain. Yet there is a difference now; I sense a two-fold mystery, a double birth. Mary gazes at her newborn child while a God sees for the first time his mother’s eyes. Such moments of mystery are moments so few. In this annual glory of the Incarnation, I also am born anew and I see my God and Mother with new eyes.

Each year, as I reflect upon and am influenced by this mystery, I rejoice that I follow a religion which had its beginnings in the birth of a child. Not for me the teachings of fiery soldier prophets of the deserts, nor the wisdom of a rich prince enlightened under the Lotus, nor the wise insights of the great sages of the East, nor simple religions which rightly honour the deserving dead. I find immense comfort knowing that the Timeless Divinity, “in the stillness of the night, when quietness was on the land” leapt into time, in the form of a newborn child.

He came among us as we came by that same process, born of a woman, which He in the very beginning blessed and pronounced good. Now the birth of any baby is God’s judgement that life is good and the world should continue, but the birth of this child was to change the world.

Unless you become as a little child you shall not enter the Kingdom

So I treasure my annual rebirth. In my Christmas walks, especially in the evenings, it seems to me that Bethlehem’s star still shines upon our streets, and echoes of angelic choirs wishing peace to all people of good will are still to be heard in much loved Christmas carols. Humble people still go over to the Bethlehems of their churches to “see the marvellous things that have been told to us’.

I know about all the commercialisation tainting this warm, holy feast, yet it is the time of giving, and giving is surely a sign of love. It seems to me that especially in the shops with gifts for children, three tall kings with their gifts still walk our market places.

So this Christmas, love me O Babe of Bethlehem and I, like you, will be born anew. Yet let it not end there. Grown to manhood, and busy about your Father’s business, you travelled along the dusty roads of Samaria and Judea, your life was taken up by the sick, the outcasts of society – a very long call from the wonders and mystery of the night of your birth – you proclaimed the fact that underwrites my yearly rebirth in this mystery, “Unless you become as a little child, you shall not enter the Kingdom.”

So welcome Christmas.



On service



It's with a sense of trepidation that I walk into work at this time of year. Sure, the store I work at has been selling fake trees, tinsel and gingerbread houses for the past couple of months but we are still enjoying the last bit of calm before an exceptionally hectic storm. It could be tomorrow, the day after or maybe even next week – I don't really know – but once I hear that first Christmas carol of the season played over the radio, I'll know for sure Silly Season has hit again.

Christmas, Xmas, Chrissy, Silly Season – whatever you want to call it – for the retail worker the next month and a half look pretty daunting. Struggling to find a carpark anywhere near the shopping centre. Several truckloads of merchandise that has to be opened and crammed onto the shop floor a day. Understaffed checkout areas because the managers need to keep to a strict budget, or someone called in sick at the last minute. Endless lines of increasingly frustrated, self-entitled customers just waiting for the chance to complain about something, anything and everything. Grown adults hurling abuse at freshly employed teenagers who are learning how to do their first job. It can get pretty nasty at times.

It was only very recently that I discovered that, despite all this, I actually really enjoy my job. A friend of mine was incredulous at the fact that I was still working in service; two years had been far too much for them. I laughed this off saying it was all worth it once payday came around but I realized later on there was more to it than just that. Upon reflection, I understood that at its absolute core, my job is to serve someone, to help them out. Don't get me wrong; I'm well aware that in the background another big business just gained a bit more profit, but on a tangible, day-to-day basis, the brief interactions I have during work hours with other human beings is for their benefit, not mine.

For the most part, our society has a poor understanding of what the act of service is actually all about, and we are all the worse off for it. Human beings, by our very nature, are communal and social creatures. It is in our best interests to work together and to aid one another (it always has been, ever since the earliest days of survival). As people living in contact with each other, we serve and are served every single day in countless different ways, whether we acknowledge it or not. Service isn't just a one-off grand act, nor is it a mindless job that requires you to wear a name badge; it is a frame of mind that allows us to find joy in assisting someone else's existence, in whatever small way that may be.

In a recent interview for Humans of New York, outgoing U.S. president Barack Obama was asked about a time during his career he had felt the most broken. He spoke about a string of tough times earlier on, which culminated in him running for congress in 1999 and getting thoroughly beaten. He almost gave up on politics then and there, but a perspective flip reignited his career.

"It's about the work. Because if you're worrying about yourself – if you're thinking: 'Am I succeeding? Am I in the right position? Am I being appreciated?' – then you're going to end up feeling frustrated and stuck. But if you can keep it about the work, you'll always have a path."

Of course, the work he is referring to by its nature is service – service to his constituents and then later on, to the American people. At the risk of perhaps putting words into his mouth, our day-to-day lives and our menial tasks about service will always have a path.

There is, of course, another reason to think about service at Christmas time; it is the celebration of the birth of a man whose entire existence and every act was one of service. In celebrating his birth, we are celebrating the life that is to come; we are celebrating a life that was, in its entirety, an act of service for us. What better way to celebrate then, than to do our best to live out that life as well?



Michael Garland

Michael has been involved with the Salesians for a number of years mostly through the Don Bosco Camp and the Australian Salesian Youth Community (ASYC). In his spare time, he has also completed a bachelor's degree in Media Communication and a master's in Journalism & International relations.

Returning home



With the influx of migrants from Italy in the 50s and 60s, the need for pastoral care became urgent, and Fr Julian answered the many requests for assistance by dedicating his full-time energies to this ministry – which went well beyond the Sunday Mass in the parishes of Oakleigh and Clayton. Over the years, with the support of a Committee of Italians (and helped partly by the Federal Government), Fr Julian raised sufficient funds to establish the Saint Dominic Savio Child Care Centre at Clayton, staffed by the Salesian Sisters. Then he turned his interests and endeavours to providing a venue for the social gathering of many Italian migrants, and the “Freccia Azzurra” Club was built in Springvale. For many years, the Saturday Italian classes organized by Fr Julian were frequented by hundreds of children. As the population began to grow in age, Fr Julian decided to open up a “Senior Citizens” venue which he named after Don Bosco at Oakleigh. His zeal and dedication, his strong voice and well delivered homilies, always attracted large crowds at the various “festas” that he either organized or at which he took part as Celebrant, not only in the parishes of Oakleigh and Clayton, but also in various rural centres in Victoria. His last project was the building of the Lourdes grotto to Our Lady in the garden in front of the parish church at Clayton.

Large crowds attended the many farewells during the months of September and October, from the “Trevisani” Association to the Veneto Club, from the Freccia Azzurra club to the parish celebrations, from the Salesian College community to the Salesian Province.

At the farewell celebration of the Australia-Pacific Province, Archbishop Hart sent his deeply-felt expression of gratitude for Fr Julian’s ministry in the Archdiocese of Melbourne: “For more than 50 years Fr Julian has provided remarkable service to the Italian community with joy, enthusiasm and encouragement of people. The Archdiocese is deeply, deeply grateful to him, and his service among the migrant chaplains is without compare in a whole lot of areas”. Archbishop Hart’s words and sentiments were echoed by Archbishop Tim Costelloe SDB of Perth, who attended the Province farewell celebration and acknowledged his debt of gratitude to Fr Julian who was one of his teachers at Salesian College Chadstone. And the expression of gratitude was seconded by Fr Greg Chambers, Salesian Provincial, and also a past pupil of Fr Julian at Salesian College.

From the pages of this Salesian Bulletin, the Salesian Family and the Italian Community in Australia wish Fr Julian a happy retirement.

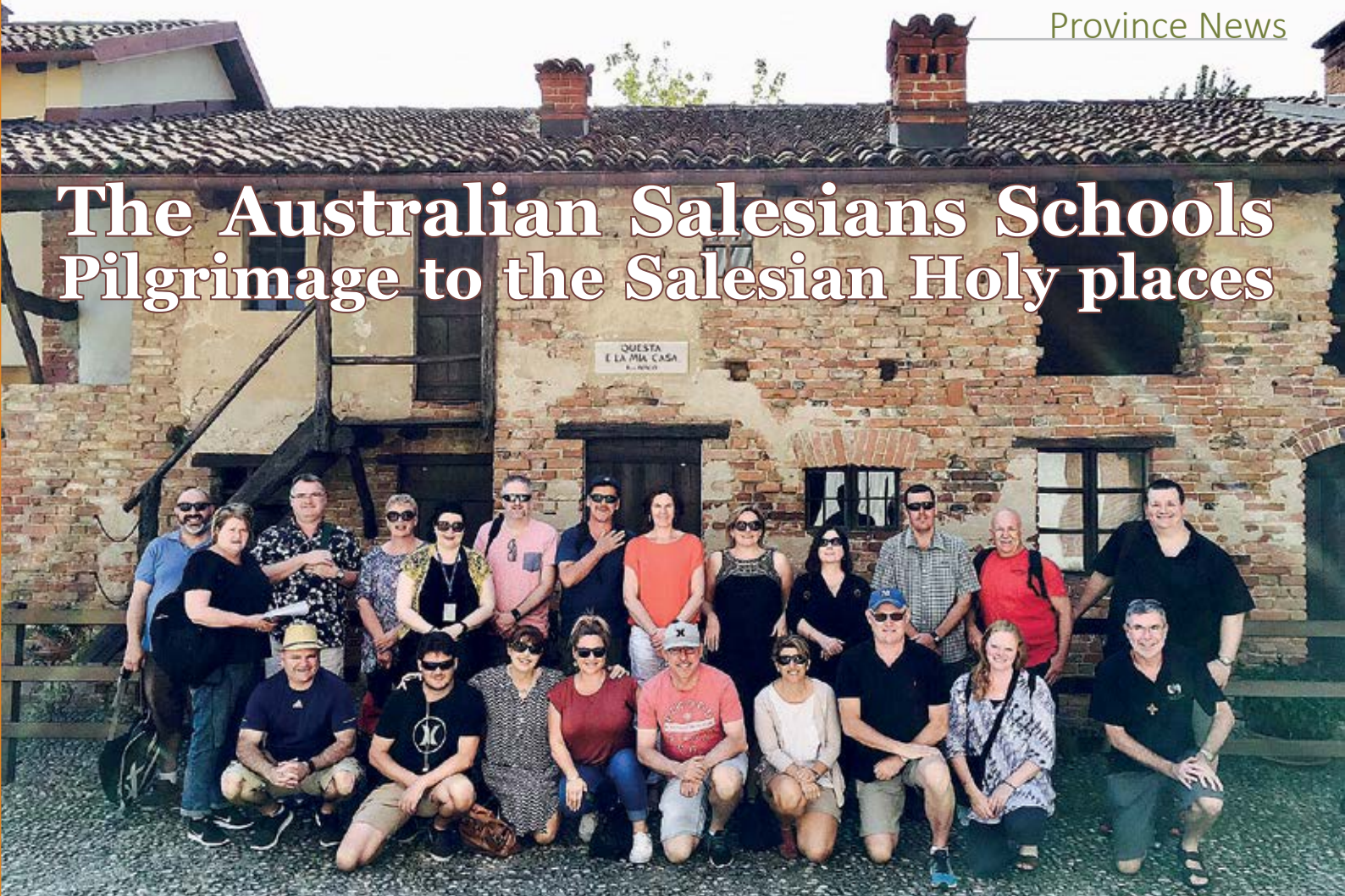
At the end of October this year Father Julian Cavarzan boarded a plane for Venice (Italy) to join the Salesian community at Castello di Godego (near Venice) in part-time retirement. After 60 years in Australia, 52 of which were spent at Salesian College Chadstone as teacher and later as full-time Chaplain of the Italian community of Oakleigh-Clayton, Fr Julian decided to return to his Province of origin based in Venice. To welcome Fr Julian home there will be his large family – among others his eight sisters and two brothers, and many nephews and nieces, some of whom he has hardly known.

Fr Julian’s years in the classroom and in the playground as soccer player and coach have become legend at Salesian College. In the days when the Italian language was being introduced in schools in Victoria, and soccer was considered a “foreign” game, Fr Julian’s enthusiasm and energy attracted many youngsters to his classes and to play the “world” game. There were some memorable results in the intra-school competitions in those early days...

Fr Julian Cavarzan

After 60 years in Australia, Fr Julian has decided to return to his Province of origin based in Venice, Italy.

The Australian Salesians Schools Pilgrimage to the Salesian Holy places



Rome, Italy, 3 October 2016. After nearly fourteen days the Australian Salesians Schools Pilgrimage to the Salesian Holy Places came to a conclusion. It has been a wonderful experience for all involved and we have met some very enthusiastic and dynamic guides who have energetically 'opened our eyes' at the various places we have visited. Of note were the guides at the original Visitation Convent at Annecy, at the museum at the former seminary at Chieri, Sr Luigina FMA at Mornese and a very entertaining guide at the Museum at Sacro Cuore in Rome! In all these places, these wonderful people brought the stories of their particular setting alive for us. We even met in Chieri Cathedral, by pure chance, the 98 year old widow of the grandson of the famous Jonah, the Jewish friend of Don Bosco who converted to the Catholic faith following his friendship with John Bosco during his years in Chieri!

The opportunity to visit and celebrate Eucharist in so many different significant Salesian settings (the Basilica of the Visitation and the Church of St Francis de Sales in Annecy, the Pinaridi Chapel, the Chapel of Mary Help of Christians, the St Francis of Assisi Church in Turin, the Basilica of Maria Domenica Mazzarello in Mornese and that of the Sacro Cuore in Rome), as well as in the Chapel of Peace in the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi in Assisi, the Polish Chapel in St Peter's Basilica in Rome and in a Chapel at the San Callistus Catacombs, have been wonderful moments of grace and privilege.

The pilgrimage group outside Don Bosco's family house in Becchi, Italy.



In Mornese, birthplace of Maria Mazzarello

Each day a different member of our pilgrimage group offered a reflection relevant to the place we were visiting and each of these were unique, inspiring and uplifting.

In our final days in Rome the visits to the major Basilicas allowed us to reflect on how our Salesian heritage, which we have received from St Francis de Sales, St John Bosco and St Maria Domenica Mazzarello, requires us to respond faithfully to the call of us all to be evangelizers and educators of the young, within the Church and for the Kingdom of God.



Bernie Graham

Fr Bernie Graham SDB is the Youth Ministry Delegate and Vice Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province.

Grassroots Ecumenism at its best

Catholics and Baptists go on pilgrimage together



Paw Paw Po grew up in Mae La refugee camp in Thailand, a few kilometres from the border with Burma. Life was hard. Refugees survived on a monthly ration of rice and fishpaste, and grew vegetables themselves. Any kind of meat was a luxury. The refugees often heard the noise of gunfire from across the border, and they dug bunkers next to their houses in case the camp was hit by rockets or mortar shells. Paw Paw Po's father disappeared during the war, making her life harder still.

Not surprisingly, Paw Paw Po's mother taught her children a deep faith in God and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Most refugees in the camp were Buddhist. While relations between Buddhists and Catholics were generally good, relations between Catholics and protestant Christians could be difficult. 'Because we have pictures of the Virgin Mary,' Paw Paw Po explains, 'some of them said we were idol worshippers'.

Christian missionaries arrived in Burma in the 19th century when ecumenical relations barely existed. One hundred years later, the Catholic Church in Burma had embraced the spirit of Vatican II and reached out to other churches. But some protestant denominations, particularly in remote rural areas, still refuse to recognise Christians of other denominations as fellow believers.

In 2007 Paw Paw Po and her family were granted 'Woman at Risk' visas, and the Australian government resettled them to the western suburbs of Melbourne. But Paw Paw Po found that even in Australia respect between Burmese Christians from different traditions is lacking.

To tackle the problem, Father William Matthews SDB partnered with Westgate Baptist Community in Yarraville for a one-day pilgrimage. One chilly morning in October, thirty Catholics and Baptists, mostly of Burmese background, gathered beneath the cross on Mt Macedon. They started by reading from the Gospel of St John: 'I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world may believe that you sent me. (John 17:20-22)

Father William and a Burmese Baptist Pastor, Gail Moe, led the group in prayer. The temperature was a cool 3 degrees and the view obscured by cloud, so, after taking photos together, the group jumped into their cars and drove to Bendigo.

In Bendigo the group went to Sacred Heart Cathedral. At the cathedral the group was met by twenty Buddhists from Bendigo's Burmese Buddhist community. The abbot of the Buddhist community, Venerable



Moonieinda, explained why he was there. 'In Burma I came from an area where there are very few Christians, and I never knew anything about Christianity. When I came to Australia I met many Christians but no one ever explained Christianity to me.'

In the cathedral Father William gave a talk about Catholic faith and the meaning of Christian symbols. Some of the young people had grown up in the refugee camp and spoke their ethnic language, so a Baptist pastor translated into the Karen language.

After having lunch outside the cathedral, the group drove from Bendigo to Heathcote. In the bushland outside the township there is the Coptic Orthodox monastery of St Anthony.

Monks welcomed the visitors to the monastery with tea, coffee and sweets. In the monastery's dining hall the visitors listened to a talk from the abbot, Father Matthew, about the history of Egypt's Coptic Christian. They then went to the beautiful monastery church where a younger monk, Brother Anthony, spoke about Orthodox faith. Burma's small Orthodox community mostly fled the country after the military takeover in 1962, so Orthodoxy is almost unknown.

Joining the group was Pastor Tee Toh, a lecturer visiting from the Baptist theological college in Mae La refugee camp. 'This is very exciting for us,' he said. 'We learned about Orthodox faith in our study but we never experienced it. Now we are experiencing Orthodox faith as a living reality.'

Paw Paw Po returned to Melbourne excited. 'I have learned so much more about my faith, and I hope now Baptists and Catholics will understand each other more. Now Baptists will understand we are not idol-worshippers.'



70 years since the arrival of the Salesians in Glenorchy, Tasmania



Beth Gilligan

Ms Beth Gilligan began as Principal in 2009. She is the College's first lay Principal and first female Principal since the school was established in 1946.

On Wednesday, 26 October, the College held a very special assembly to mark a significant anniversary - in November it will be 70 years since our first Salesian brothers and priests came here to Glenorchy and established a home and school to educate children and young people.

Current members of our Salesian community joined us: our Rector Fr Peter Rankin, Br Michael Morrow and Fr Nick Castleyns, Fr Bob Curmi and our Parish Priest Fr Lawrie Moate. This group of wonderful, dedicated men continue the commitment made 70 years ago to be an active presence here and support the children and young people of Hobart.

Fr Bernie Graham, our Vice Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the chairman of our College Council and former Principal of Dominic College, also attended to celebrate and bless our special student badges.

When Fr John Brennan, our first Principal and Rector of the Salesians, came here 70 years ago, this school was a farm. Our ovals were used for grazing cows, sheep, an apple orchard and there were hay stacks. There were ducks, wallabies and snakes... Some things haven't changed.

The love and care and happiness in the hearts of the Salesians and students of 70 years ago has not changed – it is like a strong energy force from the past to the present. Dominic as a family and home continues.

I think Fr John Brennan would be proud that the Salesians are still here, still present, still working here, still praying and still serving in the name and spirit of Don Bosco. He would be very proud of our students – still learning, still playing, still aiming to fulfil their dreams. As we gathered, we remember those days of 1946: there were 36 students here as our first school; today there are 926 students.

We remember those early days, the Salesians who built and developed our school, and our former students who made this school a great place to be.

Founders Link at Dominic College



On Monday, 24 October, the Dominic College 'Family' hosted a large gathering of people for the official Blessing and Opening of refurbished facilities in the Bosco Wing and the new structure providing a covered walk and integrated gathering areas that link existing science and classroom wings. The Bosco Wing is the original Savio College facility that included dormitories for boarders on the first floor and classrooms on the ground-floor opening out onto the lawns and quiet recreation area. Upgrading that building, bringing it into a twenty first century learning facility, has been a significant step forward not only in the physical facility but has also provided a very contemporary style of teaching and learning.

The new Founders Link at Dominic College is a covered walkway connecting the newly refurbished Bosco classrooms of the second floor in the Boys' Town building to the Guzman classrooms opposite.

The connection is not just physical though. The name Founders Link celebrates the founders of the two religious orders who combined to establish Dominic College: St John Bosco, the Salesians and St Dominic Guzman, the Dominicans.

Up to six years prior to 1973, the boys at Savio College and girls at Holy Name School had shared some senior matriculation classes in a bold, forward-thinking move towards coeducation. The two schools officially united as Dominic College under the leadership of Fr Elio Proietto SDB and Sr Pamela Davis OP, so the Link is celebrated both for the founders of the religious orders, and the founders of Catholic coeducation in Hobart.

This Link improves student movement, provides sheltered amenity and helps define the active ball sports area, with stepped seating and the grassed sitting area with a sunny sheltered plaza feel. The Bosco classrooms were the final phase of a multimillion dollar upgrading of all classrooms.

Dominic College Principal, Ms Beth Gilligan, says students love the newly developed facilities.

"These contemporary teaching spaces are expertly nestled inside the fabric of our heritage. Whether inside or outside, learning or playing, students appreciate the style and substance. The Link also updates wheelchair access to these classrooms."

On Monday, 24 October, Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz, representing the Federal Government, who partly funded the refurbishment under the Capital Grants Program, officially opened the Founders Link with Fr John Papworth SDB, a former Principal and Rector of Dominic College, who blessed the classrooms.





The grand opening of the Salelologa College Hall

26 October 2016 was indeed a big day for the Salesian community of Savai'i, Samoa, for it saw the grand opening of Fr Elio Proietto Hall in Don Bosco College and Vocational Centre of Salelologa.

A hall built from sweat, hard work and a wheelbarrow march throughout Savai'i, was officially opened yesterday. As a result, 300 students of Don Bosco, Salelologa, will have a much better learning facility with the completion of the "Father Elio Proietto Hall."

From early morning the Salesian Community, the parish of St Francis de Sales and the Salelologa College and Vocational Centre were ready to welcome guests, students and local people who would gather to mark this special event for the island of Savai'i. They welcomed Archbishop Alapati Lui Mataeliga, Archbishop of Apia Samoa, the Minister of Education Mr Loau Keneti, representative of the Prime Minister Lupesoliai Malielegaoi Tuilaepa Sailele, the Minister of Finance Mr Sili Epa and the Australian High Commissioner, Sue Langford.

At 9.30 a.m. there were about a thousand people – students, parents, staff and guests. Fr Visesio Muliaga, Rector of the Salelologa community, officially welcomed the guests and then invited Archbishop Alapati to bless the hall. In his introduction, the Archbishop reminded everybody that people were the living stones of the building, and that today marked another important milestone for the work of

the Salesians of Don Bosco in Savai'i and in Samoa. Archbishop thanked Fr Mosese and his confreres for their untiring work in favour of young people.

The project started last December with the College's Principal, Father Mosese Tui, initiating a Walk for the Hall fundraiser.

Father Anthony Nguyen, a member of the Provincial Council and provincial bursar, represented Fr Greg Chambers, the provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province at the opening. In his address he spoke of the help and sacrifices needed to make the hall a reality.

The Salesians are now in Savaii in the parish of St Francis de Sales and have opened a new high school and vocational centre. During 2010 and 2011 the Salelologa Don Bosco College was built by Fr Mosese Tui. Fr Mosese created a miracle! He turned the jungle and rocky areas into the beautiful school we have here today.

He is a hard working man who received much help and assistance from parishioners, friends and many overseas benefactors – from Australia, Germany, Italy and the United States of America.

In May 2015 Samoa was visited by our new Rector Major Fr Angel Artime.

He promised Fr Mosese that he would help to raise funds to build a new school hall and name it 'Fr Elio Proietto Hall' to honour and remember this Salesian

pioneer. I was privileged to live with him in the last eight years of his life. On account of his sickness he could not travel and visit Samoa before his death, but Samoa was always in his heart and in his prayers. I am sure that from heaven he looks on us all and asks the Lord to bless us.

The whole project of the hall was budgeted to cost €573,378.00 or WST\$1,595,700.00. The Rector Major arranged for funds amounting to €350,000.00 or WST\$974,050.00 to be provided by the Don Bosco Mission Centre in Turin, Italy, and the Salesian Mission Centre in Madrid, Spain. Fr Mosese and the local school community then decided that they would undertake another fund-raising walk around the island of Savai'i to get the extra money required. The Walk raised €39,350.00 or WST \$109,510.9. The Australia - Pacific Province provided the balance of €185,678.00 or WST\$516,731.00 to ensure the project could be completed.

I thank especially the local people of Savai'i for their generous and impressive support and for helping to make this dream come true!

Congratulations to Fr Petelo Vito Pau, the new Delegate from next year and particularly to Fr Mosese Tui, Principal and Parish Priest, and to Fr Visesio Tovia, Rector of the community here, for their untiring commitment to work for the young according to St John Bosco's charism and spirit. I would like to congratulate Fr Mosese and the college for the Grand Opening of the Hall today.

After the speeches, the students of Salelologa College and Vocational Centre presented entertainment with dances and songs. This was followed by the presentation of gifts to the VIP by Fr Mosese. Fr Mosese thanked all those who were involved in this special event. He insisted that the use of the hall itself would not be limited only to the school but it would be open to everyone.

"We are opening the hall for everyone. We might also play a bit of bingo in this hall. This hall is for everyone; if you want to get married here, or if want to use it for other purposes then it's OK. We will make the payment very affordable because we need to pay for electricity."

Asked if they have any other future project for the school, Father Mosese said, "No. This will be the last project because there is no more land left to build on."

"This is enough for us because we don't want to expand any further. We just need to finish off our fence. So we'll do a little fundraising for that. This is the end of our project and now it's time to focus on school work," said Father Mosese.

The ceremony was followed by a big lunch provided by the school staff and parents.



Salesian College Chadstone



Blessing and opening of “Garelli” VCAL Building



A new Applied Learning Centre was opened at Salesian College Chadstone on 8 November 2016. For several years the College has provided opportunities to learn practical trade skills in a building named “Valdocco”. The new building, adjoining it, will further enhance these opportunities with facilities specifically designed for applied learning.

While the College has continued to enjoy strong VCE results in the academic areas, a growing number of students expressed a keen interest in pursuing an applied learning program. This growing demand has created the necessity to establish a PreCAL and a VCAL program, also inspired by what Don Bosco himself had done in teaching and developing practical skills for the boys of the Oratory in Turin. It was soon realized that dedicated facilities were required in order to deliver a program that could challenge the students to achieve their full potential.

The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) is a hands-on program for Years 11 and 12 (Salesian College offers a pre-VCAL program for Year 10 students). It provides practical work-related experience, as well as literacy and numeracy skills, and the opportunity of developing personal skills that are important for life and work.

Paula Hanley

Ms Paula Hanley is the VCAL Coordinator at Salesian College Chadstone



Fr Frank Bertagnoli, College Rector, welcoming guests and explaining the significance of the name “Garelli”.

One of the projects of the VCAL program this year at the College was the complete re-building of a large caravan – the frame and structure, the materials and the technical advice being provided by the Caravan Industry Association of Victoria. The completed caravan was put on exhibition at the Victorian Caravan Show, and then raffled for the benefit of the Breast Cancer Foundation.

With the support of the Principal Mr Robert Brennan and of the Leadership Team, plans were drawn up for a building where the boys could be fully engaged. Thus through the consultation of Staff and the boys themselves, the Applied Learning Centre was created. The facility is multi-functional, and includes classrooms with IT equipment, indoor and outdoor workshops with power tools, Staff amenities and a storage area.

The Applied Learning Centre has been named the “Garelli” Centre, after Bartholomew Garelli, the first boy who encountered Don Bosco, and with whom the Salesian apostolate began. Bartholomew was a 16-year old boy working in the building trade in Turin. With the help of Don Bosco, he acquired new confidence and new skills for life. It is hoped that the boys who attend the VCAL program will imitate young Garelli in acquiring both practical and moral skills to make a positive contribution to society as honest citizens.

The Garelli Centre was blessed and formally opened by the Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province, Fr Greg Chambers, who, as a past pupil of the College himself, expressed his delight and appreciation for the provision of this new facility.



Mr Robert Brennan, College Principal, explaining the value of the VCAL program and expressing his delight in the new facility.



The completely renovated caravan, with VCAL students and Staff, together with Directors of the Caravan Industry Association of Victoria at the Melbourne Leisurefest, Sanddown Racecourse, Springvale.



Fr Greg Chambers (Provincial), Stefano Mascaro (College Captain in 2017) and Mr Brennan, at the blessing of the new building.

Farewell to Bairnsdale

the Salesian Presence ends after 26 years



At the end of the Mass Mrs Sharon Buurman, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Welfare, recalled the coming of the Salesians to Nagle College and went on to highlight the special educational emphasis of their founder St John Bosco that “with reason, religion and kindness all our pastoral care is directed to the young.” In keeping with the spirit of St John Bosco, whereby “education is largely a matter of the heart” that leads young people “to know they are loved”, the Salesian school community today is challenged to be: a home that welcomes, a parish that evangelises, a school that prepares for life and a playground where friends meet and enjoy themselves. At Nagle College, we will ensure that we will continue to animate the Salesian educational philosophy in our school... Indeed, we have been fortunate to have had the presence of the Salesians among us.”

Fr Greg Chambers, the Provincial superior of the Salesian province of Australia-Pacific, in his homily also spoke of the coming of the Salesians to Nagle College and the contributions of the various Salesian confreres to the college community and the local church over 26 years.

He also highlighted the special features of Don Bosco’s educational system that Father Freeman and Father Bernie Graham sought to instil within the college community during their time as principals. He then went on to say, “However among the time-honoured characteristics of the Salesians of Don Bosco is gratitude to God and to others, so at this time, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks on behalf of my fellow Salesians, both living and dead, to all those who have made our 26 years at Bairnsdale such happy and successful ones.”

In late 1989 the Nagle College Community was informed that the Salesian Society had been contacted by the Bishop of Sale to provide a Principal for the College and Fr Frank Freeman SDB took up that responsibility at the start of 1990. The initial agreement was for three years only, but resulted in the Salesian principalships lasting 16 years until 2006. During this period the College continued to grow, develop and diversify to provide a very wide range of subjects and courses for the students. The Salesian years were marked by consolidation and then by the diversification of College administration and activities in accordance with the basic Salesian educational policies of Reason, Religion and Kindness.

To mark and honour the presence of the Salesian community for over a quarter of a century, both at Nagle College and the parish, two Masses were celebrated in thanksgiving. On Friday 25 November, the Nagle College community came together to celebrate the years of Salesian Leadership and involvement in the College. The College Mass was presided over by Fr Michael Willemsen, parish priest of St Mary’s Bairnsdale and canonical administrator of the College, while Fr Greg Chambers, the Salesian Provincial, was the homilist.

The Provincial then invited both staff and students to continue their involvement with the organised activities of the Salesian Family. He assured them that there would be place for them in College Captains conferences, OzBosco, World Youth Day pilgrimages, the Cagliari Missionary volunteer Project, and events organised by the Australian Pacific Salesian Principals' Association. He then announced that the Salesians would establish a special Salesian Scholarship for Nagle College from the beginning of 2017 to assist needy students during the course of their schooling at Nagle.

On Sunday 27 November at the 9.30 a.m. Mass at St Mary's, Bishop Patrick O'Regan celebrated Mass in recognition of this period of service by the Salesians to the Diocese. Salesian priests concelebrated while Brother Noel Hannabery and Brother Barry Parker attended. To a large congregation Bishop O'Regan expressed the gratitude of the whole diocesan community to the Salesians for their 26 years of service to the diocese. He referred to them especially as "prophets of hope" in keeping with the beginning of the Advent season.

In 2005 the Salesian Provincial Council deemed that the Salesians had completed their mission in Bairnsdale and it was time for the Church to entrust the administration of the College to the increasing numbers of very dedicated and capable lay people. So in 2007 the College welcomed Mr Robert Brennan as Principal, with a smaller Salesian Community, namely Fr Joe Pulis and Brother Noel Hannabery remaining as a pastoral presence. Mr Brennan was eventually succeeded by Mr Neville Powles, the present Principal.

Father Dan O' Sullivan

In his later days, upon retiring from the Nagle College staff, he kept busy with chaplain duties in the local parishes, especially among the elderly, a much appreciated priestly apostolate.



Father Ted Cooper

Returning from the Northern Territory in 1989, he continued to plant and nourish God's seed through attentive ministry and pastoral care in parishes. He served for three years as assistant parish priest of Bairnsdale.



Father Joe Pulis

Fr Joe Pulis joined the Nagle College community in 1996. Besides his priestly and pastoral presence, he was the coordinator of the expanded language faculty. He inspired students with a love of languages and has been the driving force behind the wonderful partnership with our sister schools in Japan.



Brother Noel Hannabery

Br Noel Hannabery came to Nagle College in 1998 and spent countless hours tutoring students in mathematics. So many students throughout the years have commented on how much they valued his efforts and appreciated his friendship.



Fr Eddie Murphy

Fr Eddie Murphy succeeded Fr Ted Cooper as assistant priest in the parish of Bairnsdale. He was a man of learning with a great sense of compassion which he showed to others. He had time for all, a man of service, commitment and dedication.



Fr Peter Rankin

With Fr Freeman and Fr Brawley, Fr Peter was one of the pioneers of the Salesian Presence at Nagle College. In those early days Fr Peter and Fr Dan had a very visible pastoral presence among the students.



Salesian confreres who have been members of the Bairnsdale community

Father Frank Freeman

Fr Frank Freeman, Principal 1990 – 1999: As a Salesian educator he believed strongly that the staff needed to understand the teachings of Don Bosco and then be able to apply these to their work if they were to be true to the Salesian charism.



Father Bernie Graham

In 2000, Fr Bernie Graham was appointed as Principal and he continued to strengthen the pastoral and religious education program and develop the work of his predecessor.



Father James Brawley

For many years Fr Brawley fulfilled chaplain duties at the College and it was a rare weekend if he did not have Mass supplies in the various parishes of the diocese.



Dare to pause

The Salesian Sisters (FMA) conduct a weekend of prayer, reflection, fun and visiting asylum seekers and refugees in the Broadmeadows Detention Centre Melbourne



On the Saturday, our day began with the Eucharistic celebration in St Judes Parish Church, followed by an inspiring and challenging input by one of the group, Moira Tauilili. Moira studies Theology at Melbourne Catholic Theological College. Her topic was 'Who do we say God is?', based on the Gospel of Matthew 16:15 – 'Who do you say I am? Time was given for the participants to reflect and really take this in, and to think deeply of who God is to each one of us. It was a very prayerful and uplifting session. Thanks to Moira for her willingness to contribute to this event by sharing her message and experience of God's merciful love for her and each one of us.

On 19 and 20 February 2016, the community of Scoresby hosted and were wholeheartedly involved in the 'Dare to Pause' program. Once again, a time for young people to come together to pray, reflect, have some fun and do some acts of kindness for those in need. In the light of Pope Francis' Jubilee year of Mercy, the young people and the Sisters who engaged in the planning, decided to explore the theme 'The God of Mercy'. The event started on Friday night with a hearty meal. This was followed by an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, prepared by Sr Thuy Linh Nguyen and the Salesian good night given by Cindy Tran and Julia Nguyen. Later on, the film of Don Bosco was screened and enjoyed by the group.

After the morning talk, we all prepared our lunch together and then off we went to visit the Broadmeadows detention centre in a convoy of cars. This visit was offered to these young people to have a hands-on experience to meet, for the first time, the asylum seekers and listen to their stories. The idea was suggested by Sr Emema during the core team's meeting, and it was readily accepted and acted on. Some of the young people shared how much they appreciated this experience of reaching out to the poor and marginalised. As FMA we have witnessed and experienced how young people are eager to respond and contribute in some small way to cheer up, smile, give a hug and encounter people in need.



Samoa: Papal Award bestowed on Sr Doris Barbero FMA

This year the Salesian Sisters in the South Pacific Province have had the great joy of having one of their members, Sr Doris Barbero, receive the prestigious Papal Award for her contribution to Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Samoa over so many years. The award was presented to her by Archbishop Alapati Lui Matailinga at an evening Mass on 28 March at the Divine Mercy Church in Malololelei.

Cambodia: Experts in encounter

Annual Retreat of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians 2016, Cambodia and Myanmar.

‘Experts in Encounter’ was the theme chosen for the Annual Retreat of 25 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) from Cambodia and Myanmar who gathered together from 26 July to 3 August at the Provincial House of the FMA in Teuk Thla, Phnom Penh (Cambodia).

Fr Eligio Cruz SDB, from the Philippines North Province (FIN), guided the Sisters with spiritual wisdom and depth. As he prayed for the Sisters to be experts in encounter at the beginning of the retreat, he let himself be guided by the Holy Spirit. With his well-prepared and integrated materials for the daily *Lectio Divina* and conferences, he was able to challenge the Sisters to be experts in encounter with Christ, with the community, with lay people, with the family, with the peripheries of the mission, with youth and with life in Mary. His conferences were always integrated with touching video clips. It was a great help for the Sisters for he was able to harmonize the Word of God, the FMA Constitutions, the challenges of the previous General Chapters, the life experiences of Don Bosco, Mother Mary Mazzarello, Salesian and other lay women Saints of the Church in sharing his input.

Vietnam: The Salesian Sisters welcome new postulants

On the feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary, 7 October 2016, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) in Vietnam welcomed 14 new postulants as a great gift from God through the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The ritual of the entrance into the postulancy took place at Vespers at the Provincial House. Responding to the question of Sr Rosa Vu Thi Kim Lien, the Provincial, 14 aspirants expressed their desire “to acquire a deeper personal intimacy with Christ, to serve the young people... and to live the Gospel with Salesian joy.” The Provincial accepted them to the postulancy, gave them medals of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello and invited them to persevere on the road to holiness – a beautiful but also rough road. In order to follow this path, there is a need to practise choices Gospel choices in daily life.



Cambodia: Third Cambodian FMA sister to profess

Sister Sopheak Teresa Phim became the third Cambodian to profess as a FMA Sister at the Cambodia-Myanmar Province (CMY). Sister Sopheak made her first profession before Mgr. Enrique Figaredo SJ, Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, at the Chapel of the Salesian Sisters at Teuk Thla Commune in the Cambodian capital.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians arrived in Cambodia in 1992 with the mission to support the education and wellbeing of Cambodian children and youth, especially young women.

The Sisters are committed to a variety of works but they always aim at the education of the poorest children and young women. Human development is pursued through kindergartens, primary schools, promotional centers for young women, youth centers and after-school care. A formative strategy is also fostered in hostels and in their visits to families. The Sisters also work in parishes and offer their collaboration at diocesan level.

Outward Bound



Vocation story of Brother Sylvester Kuli SDB

Being a typical village boy (tok pisin - ples man), I never ever dreamt of being a religious or a public servant in my childhood. My ideal was to live an ordinary life as a villager.

My Vocation Story began when I entered Don Bosco Vanimo (PNG). I was impressed by Fr Wie and Fr Dan. The curiosity of who they were, eventually led me to discover the 'Salesians'. I then thought to myself, "I want to be like them".

Before long I found myself at a "Come and See Program", led by Br Joseph Quang SDB, who gave formation programs on Fridays. The thought of their great wisdom aroused in me a curiosity to pursue what I felt deeply within. Though that was my personal interest out of admiration, the motivation grew when I was assigned to be sacristan. I would wake up before the boys to prepare for the Mass. There was something special in those moments as I went to collect flowers and decorate the altar. The fragrance of the flowers, the contact with nature and the celebration of the Eucharist left in me a good feeling. I vividly remember how, after the Eucharistic Celebration, Fr Dan and Fr Wie would give me a tap on the shoulder and whisper to me, "Well done, Syl". These encouraging words left a deep impression on me and I wished to be able to speak to others with similar words to keep their spirits high.

Every morning I did the same thing. This eventually became a habit and I realised that even during the holidays I would hardly go to my relatives' house because I feared missing the Eucharist. One Saturday I was weeding around the Salesian residence. Fr Roger Miranda made a visit to Vanimo and saw me. He whispered to Fr Dan, "This boy will become a good Salesian". Those words entered my mind and I pondered over what they meant?

After the exams, though I was not good at studies, I was selected to study at Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko. A great miracle!

During the first three years I learned so many things: music, sports, self-confidence, organising and animation skills and qualifications as an educator. I had in mind to leave after my fourth year to be a journalist. Towards the end of the fourth year I was struck with a severe attack of malaria. I was on the point of death. The sickness was a time of great reflection for me. "Was I called to continue my vocation and become a priest?" I pondered. I decided to continue my vocation.

I went home and stayed there for half a year, until I fully recovered. The following year I returned to Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko, and without any hesitation I continued my discernment. I then proceeded to the Philippines for my Pre-novitiate and Novitiate. In 2014, together with Br Bernard Kaiau, I made my First Profession.

Even today I ponder on my vocation and ask myself, "What is my best response to the Lord in regard to my vocation?" And every day I thank the Lord for the gift of the Salesian vocation. I now know that my vocation is not only to save souls but to save my own soul too.

Homeward Bound



A veteran missionary, Fr Peter Zago, retires

Fr Zago left the country of Pakistan for good. He has gone back to Italy, the country of his origin. At the age of 20 he left his beloved Italy in order to contribute to the missions of Don Bosco around the world. Fr Peter Zago has a long experience of mission and he has done a lot for the youth of different countries - India, Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

Fr Peter arrived in Pakistan in 1998 to sow the seed of St John Bosco's spirituality. He introduced the spirit of St John Bosco to Pakistani youth and in return Pakistani youth fell in love with this Salesian. They never met Don Bosco in person but in the face of Fr Zago they really thought: 'If Don Bosco were alive then he would be like Fr Zago or perhaps Fr Zago is like St John Bosco'.

He did lot of work for Pakistani youth. He is a pioneer Salesian together with some other Salesians but unfortunately no one was able to survive for 18 years in Pakistan. Many Salesians came into Pakistan to join the mission of Don Bosco but they could not manage to stay for any long period of time due to variety of reasons. Fr Zago, together with Fr Hans Dopheide, started the mission of Don Bosco in Lahore and in Quetta.

Fr Hans, a recently deceased member of the Australia-Pacific Province, established the community in Lahore while Fr Peter established that in Quetta. He worked for 14 years in Quetta where we have a beautiful school, a hostel for boys and girls, schools for Afghan refugees and different other works. Today the Salesians in Quetta are enjoying this apostolate because of Fr Zago's hard work. In 2013 Fr Peter was given an obedience to move to Lahore. He stayed there for three and half years working very hard and not paying much attention to his advancing age.

He received the charismatic spirit of Don Bosco to save souls. It is true that he set up many works but at the same time he never forgot that he was in Pakistan to save the souls of Pakistani youth. For that purpose, he continued to hear confessions, celebrate the Eucharist for the boys and girls, go out for excursions with the young and work for vocations.

I had the privilege to live with him and to have him as a father, friend and teacher. Fr Zago loved to work for vocations without distinction between girls or boys. They were all same for him. I am a living proof of his love for vocations. I am a Salesian today because he supported me throughout my journey.

For me he is a great Salesian. I personally feel that Pakistan has lost a great Salesian. After 18 years with us, he decided to leave Pakistan and to settle in Italy where he wants to spend the rest of his life, considering his age (82 years) and his health. We consider him the Don Bosco of Pakistan. The day he left, all the eyes in Don Bosco School Lahore were in tears.

His last words before leaving Don Bosco campus were: "Ciao, Ciao Don Bosco, see you all in Heaven." I think we will miss him a lot and he will remain in our hearts till the end of our lives. Pakistani youth will never forget him and Pakistani youth will always remember his sacrifices for the mission of Don Bosco.



Papua-New Guinea: First Religious Profession celebrated

On 7 October 2016 the new Salesian Vice Province of Papua New Guinea was blessed with a Salesian brother in the person of Francis Mallol. Francis made his First Salesian Religious Profession and was invested at the Mary Help of Christians Shrine at Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea during the Eucharistic celebration on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, 7 October 2016.

Francis completed his Novitiate at Cebu in the Philippines, and pronounced his vows for a year to live obedient, poor and chaste as a Salesian of Don Bosco. The rites of First Profession were presided over by the Superior of the Vice Province, Fr Peter Baquero. Fr Alipio Añano SDB represented the Formation Community of Cebu. He was among the 11 priests who concelebrated at the Eucharistic celebration. The celebration was attended by various members of the Salesian family, staff and students of Don Bosco schools, and a large number of members from the Salesian parish of Mary Help of Christians at Sabama. Francis hails from the parish where he has been actively involved as a young person. Br Francis Mallol will soon return to the Philippines to start his post novitiate formation.

Timor-Leste: New Salesians welcomed

The confreres of the Salesian Vice-Province of Timor Leste-Indonesia give thanks to God for his gift of a vocation to eight young men from Timor Leste who made their first profession and to 15 others who began their novitiate year on 8 September. The General Councillor for Formation Fr Ivo Coelho SDB accompanied by the Provincial of the ITM Vice-Province of St Callistus Caravario, Fr Apolinario Maria Neto SDB, received them into the Salesian congregation in the name of the Rector Major.

In the homily Fr Ivo Coelho pointed out that a call to the religious life is a call from Jesus. God calls each one to serve and to be holy. To the newly professed brothers, he emphasized that to be good religious priests and good religious brothers according to the charisma of Don Bosco, each one should constantly pray and reflect. Their experiences in the novitiate should continue in the years to come.

Before the end of the Mass, Salesian cleric Vitalino SDB, on behalf of his companions, expressed his deep sense of gratitude to all those who made their First Profession possible. In a special way he thanked God for the graces they received, their parents and relatives, novice master, members of the Salesian community of Fatumaca, young people/students and all the Salesians engaged in their formation.

In the evening during the Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Mother, Fr Anacleto Pires SDB, the Rector of Don Bosco Fatumaca and Novice Master, presided at the Rite of Admission to the Novitiate and officially welcomed 15 new novices to begin their formation. It was a fitting gift for the Blessed Virgin Mary's birthday, indeed!



Timor-Leste: The 11th Asia-Oceania Congress of Don Bosco Past Pupils

The 11th EAO Congress of the Salesian Past Pupils was held in Dili, Timor Leste on 6-7 October 2016. Also the ITM provincial delegate for the Past Pupils expressed his satisfaction. A total of 380 participants from 11 countries and from 8 Provinces of the EAO region (Korea, Japan, Philippines North and Philippines South, Australia, Thailand, China, Timor Leste-Indonesia) attended the congress. The delegates were overwhelmed by the wonderful hospitality of Timorese Salesian Family in Dili, who really did everything possible to make them feel at home. As regards the Congress theme, it was a very good insight into the social teaching of the Catholic Church, very meaningful for our situation. On the last full day of the Congress the delegates in a final workshop formulated a set of Resolutions and proposals.

Resolutions of the 11th Asia-Oceania Congress of Don Bosco Alumni

We, the Alumni of Don Bosco of the Asia-Oceania region, commit ourselves to the care of the world, making it a worthy dwelling place for us and for those coming after us, and with a clear social concern for justice, taking into consideration the seven key priorities of the World Confederation Strategic Plan.

We resolve that every national federation prepare by 31-01-2017 their development or strategic plan, indicators and timeframe based on the seven key priorities of the Past Pupils Association.

We resolve that every national federation work actively on the networking of their Past pupils by preparing or completing a database within one year, based on the format suggested by the World Confederation of the Past Pupils.

Attached to these resolutions are the proposals from the group discussions for consideration and the implementation of the seven priorities by national federations.

The national presidents and delegates of Asia-Oceania Region shall meet with the regional councilors in 2018 for the midterm evaluation of the resolutions, and discuss issues pertaining to the Region.

Signed by representatives of the following countries: Australia, Cambodia, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Macau, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and the World Confederation Presidency members.



Salesian World News



Burundi: How much is the life of a poor child worth?

If you live in some parts of the world it is not easy to protect a twelve-year-old girl and enable her to grow up, without deep wounds and trauma. This story comes from Buterere, a suburb of Bujumbura. It is a true story, told by one who witnessed it.

Buterere is a district in Bujumbura. For years it was an open rubbish dump. The water supply is polluted and thousands of homeless people roam around every day looking for something to sell.

At the end of July 2016, some girls had gone back home, leaving the care home where they usually lived. One afternoon some of them gathered together to spend some time enjoying each other's company. A man entered the house, accompanied by a woman. He violated the girls, one after the other, and left, leaving them in tears under the threat of the machete carried by the woman.

A complaint was lodged. The rapist was arrested and taken to the police station. The judicial police officer examined the record of the complaint and investigation. He sent the children to the Seruka Medical Centre where the rape was confirmed. All that remained was the transfer of the rapist to the Central Prison in Mpimba.

But the file disappeared. The judicial police officer was transferred elsewhere. The rapist was released. The girls remained without justice.

An investigation was opened into the people involved in this latest episode of violence. The girls have no father; they are daughters of the road. Some also have no mother. Therefore they are destined to suffer.

How much will the rapist have paid to avoid ending up in Mpimba? And yet, the Burundian Criminal Code is clear; Article 385: prison from 5 to 20 years for each offence of rape carried out with threats and violence. The penalty is aggravated when the victims are minors.

The work of searching for the truth and for the culprits has begun. The so-called head-officer says no one has reported anything to him. Yet every week they hold a security meeting, as everyone knows, with the commander of the police station and the head-officer when they try to flush out anything that might endanger the stability of the area. Evidently, a triple rape of underage girls implemented under the threat of a weapon is not considered a relevant fact. The police commander says he recalls something vaguely, as if he were speaking of the theft of a chicken.

Of what importance is a little girl who is from a poor village in the hills, with an old torn dress and a future already predetermined by others?



India: Salesian College launches Web Radio

Salesian College Sonada, established in 1938, launched its web radio on Friday, 28 October 2016. The college is the first to launch a full-fledged web radio with 20 different programmes in the Nepali language. It is also the first Community/Campus Radio in West Bengal and entire northeast India to be run by a college.

A member of the Legislative Assembly from Darjeeling, Prof. Amar Singh Rai, was the chief guest. "It is our Diwali gift to the Nepali people worldwide," said Principal Dr George Thadathil speaking of the possibility on-demand radio provides for people everywhere to access programmes of their choice at their own convenience.

"Our Community Radio will serve geographic and ethnic communities of the region with broadcast content that is popular, relevant and often overlooked by commercial or mass media broadcasters," Dr Thadathil added.

Commenting on the launch of the web radio Prof. Rai said, "It is a small step for Salesian College but a giant step for the [hills] community." Radio Salesian 90.8 FM is a non-profit venture, which provides a mechanism enabling individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own stories, to share experiences and, in a media-rich world, to become creators and contributors of media.

The web radio may be accessed on computer or mobile phone by clicking on Community Radio at www.salesiancollege.in

Mexico: Haitians in Tijuana; “We have given hospitality and help wherever we could”

Every day, hundreds of Haitian migrants arrive in Tijuana and try to enter the United States. And since the start of this situation the Salesians have been offering the best possible care to all these people

Makena Morego is 14 years old and never stops laughing. She talks and gesticulates and then starts laughing again. She arrived in Tijuana ten days ago from Haiti because, she says, her native country “has many problems.” Makena is waiting for her turn to enter the United States. Until that time, she says that they are treating her very well, thank God, and she does not stop dancing and laughing.

Thousands of migrants from Haiti have arrived in Tijuana and Mexicali. Fr Felipe Plascencia, Director of the Salesian Centre, explains that the situation is confusing: “The US Senate announced that they would give preferential treatment to Haitians in giving residence. Every day, however, about 400 people reach the border with Mexico, while US authorities let in only ninety people. This means that there is now a backlog of about 4,500 Haitian migrants.”

One of these is Agne Jean who has been in Tijuana for a week. She says she came to “seek a better life” and she is accompanied by her five-year-old son.

Both Agne and Makena spend the night together with another 150 people, men, women and children of all ages, in the “Father Chava Salesian Refectory”. Located at 700 Avenida Ocampo, this building has recently changed its way of operating. At first it was attended on average by 80 Mexican and Central American migrants, but now it receives mainly Haitians. For Fr Felipe Fernández, Economist of the Salesian Community in Tijuana, this situation is “a humanitarian crisis that has awakened the will of society.”

At seven in the evening they will close the doors of the refectory. Those who were able to enter are looking for food and a place to stay. Inside there are young people from the University Pacific Center (Unipac) who organize songs and dances. Other volunteers are preparing and serving food.

“We have given hospitality and help wherever we could,” says Fr Plascencia, while acknowledging that the situation is not ideal. Some estimates suggest that by the end of the year the influx of Haitians should subside, but everything seems to indicate that the current trend could last up to nine months.

Brazil: The Salesian Oratory - a place of formation of good Christians and honest citizens



One of the most important activities of the Salesian mission is the work of the oratories. Although the oratories were founded by St Philip Neri (1515-1595) in Rome, Italy, one might say that Don Bosco was a great reformer and supporter of the oratories, giving them a new form, but keeping the same pastoral educational objectives: to evangelise by educating and educate by evangelizing, which is another way of saying: “to form good Christians and honest citizens”.

Don Bosco lived in Turin about three centuries after St Philip Neri and popularized the oratory as an educational experience. His deep knowledge of the situation of thousands of poor young people, immigrants, suffering from various addictions, without family, without a religious education, left to themselves, wandering around the streets of Turin, prompted him to start a new kind of Oratory. What he proposed was an experience open to young people of all faiths combined with a variety of educational programmes. At first he offered the young this religious and educational experience on Sundays and public holidays, and later he began to offer it every day.

An oratory without God, where there is no mention of Jesus Christ, where the Word of God is not proclaimed, where no one speaks of Our Lady, and where there is no educational environment... is not a Salesian Oratory.

To be faithful to the ideals of Don Bosco the Salesian Oratory must preserve its identity as a socio-educational and evangelising centre through sport, music, theatre, dance, good friends, groups, prayers and positive messages.

The oratory of the Salesian mission of Santa Isabel of Rio Negro, Amazonas, is a regular part of the afternoons of many young people who gather there to play, talk, and listen to good music and good messages. At the present time the Salesians and their collaborators are working in particular to prevent addiction, violence and crime in general.

Salesian World News



Sierra Leone: “Count on me.” The story of Alpha

Here is a story of life and faith that deserves to be shared in this year of mercy. It is best to start with a few lines of St Teresa of Avila, mystic and Doctor of the Church: “God has no body on earth but yours. He has no hands but yours. He has no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of God looks at the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks when he goes out to do good. Yours are the hands he uses now to bless us.”

by Fr Jorge Crisafulli SDB

As a Salesian missionary, I am convinced that the first task of the Church and the Christian community is to proclaim mercy. But it is not enough just to preach it in words. We preach mercy and at the same time we are extremely hard and rigid with the poor, with ‘sinners’, with the ignorant and the outcast of this world.

Here at Don Bosco Fambul, we are in contact every day with the suffering of all kinds of young people. This is the story of Alpha.

A few nights ago, I was sound asleep when the phone rang at 2.00 a.m. Outside the cathedral there was a young man bloodied and unconscious. He had a broken arm, his face disfigured by punches, an ear cut in half and many wounds and blows all over his body. We took him to the hospital at full speed. The nurses and the doctor told us that, given the signs, he must have been a thief caught ‘in flagrante’ and that he was barely alive. Here, thieves are judged and sentenced to death on the spot.

The nurse said: “Father, why waste time and money on these people? They are a social evil. Let them rot in prison.” I replied: “In Don Bosco Fambul we believe in young people. We know that in everyone there is a good streak, and that ‘nothing is impossible for God’. His grace can turn a thief into a saint in an instant.” She looked at me in disbelief and continued to sew back the severed ear with indifference and, moreover, without an anaesthetic.

At 5.30 a.m. we brought Alpha, the “hunted” thief, to our house and we gave him a plate of food, some medicine for pain relief, and a mat to sleep on.

Alpha is 22 years old. He is an orphan and has tuberculosis. Already he has started treatment. He wants to study to learn a profession and change his lifestyle. Today, his disfigured face is back to normal, and I am able to discover so much inner beauty through his eyes. When his arm is healed, he will begin studying to learn a trade in a workshop in Freetown and will continue his rehabilitation process.

As Don Bosco used to say, there are no bad boys. There are only boys that no one has yet seen the potential of love and goodness that exists in their hearts. What is the difference between Alpha and me? In his eyes I see myself. By his silence he is saying implicitly to me that in my heart there is also immense potential for good and for evil, for violence and for peace, for selfishness and for self-giving.





India: Green light for 56 street children in Delhi

On New Year's Eve, while he was stopped on a road through a rundown area of Palam in Delhi, the Salesian Fr Thomas Koshy noticed a little girl playing with some coins and then running as soon as the traffic light turned red. As he watched he noticed that there were many other children begging at the traffic lights. That was how his friendship with the street children started.

Sonia used to work in a hotel before she decided to devote herself to these youngsters. "Want to be friends?" she asked them. The children with all their innocence replied "yes" straightaway, and from that moment Sonia became a regular visitor to the area of Palam.

The initial response from the parents, however, was not immediately welcoming, but her daily visits, her friendly approach and concrete help in some difficult circumstances led to her being accepted. They understood that her only purpose was to help the children.

Sonia soon began to give informal evening classes to the children in a park. This went on for eight months, until the city authorities of Delhi asked her to terminate her activities. Meanwhile the staff of the Salesian Forum for Youth at Risk (Don Bosco Young at Risk) and the Holy Family orphanage joined her in her efforts. They even organized games, dancing, singing and distribution of prizes, all of which filled the children with joy.

After the objections raised by the municipal authorities, Sonia's school became itinerant. The Salesian Youth at Risk forum conducted thorough research in the slum area and went back to the Department of Education to ask to be able to use the school in the evenings and provide informal education to children, with a view to their subsequent inclusion in formal education. But their demands remained unheeded by authorities and party leaders.

When all attempts failed, Fr Swanoop Choudhry SDB, Director of the work for street children at Don Bosco Asahalayam, granted the use of some space for the informal education of children from the slums, and the lessons continued there in the same area of Palam.

Now, after months of regular education, 56 street children have been included in the formal education classes in state schools. Thanks also to the help of the Salesian NGO "Bosconet", the children have been provided with all the necessary equipment and 14 of them were also equipped with identification documents which they did not have previously.

Continuous monitoring programmes are now under way to continue to support these children, who used to rejoice when they saw red at the traffic lights, because it gave them a chance to survive. Now, thanks to the Salesian Youth at Risk forum and the support of many people of good will, they see the green light for their future.



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The Gift of Christmas

By Edgar Guest



**Christmas is the one day of the year
that carries real hope and promise for all mankind.
It carries the torch of brotherhood.**

**It is the one day in the year when most of us
grow big of heart and broad of mind.**

**It is the single day when most of us
are as kind and as thoughtful of others
as we know how to be;**

**When most of us are as gracious and generous
as we would like always to be;**

**When the joy of home is more important
than the profits of the office;**

**When peoples of all races speak cheerfully
to each other when they meet;**

**When high and low wish each other well;
And the one day when even enemies forgive and forget.**