

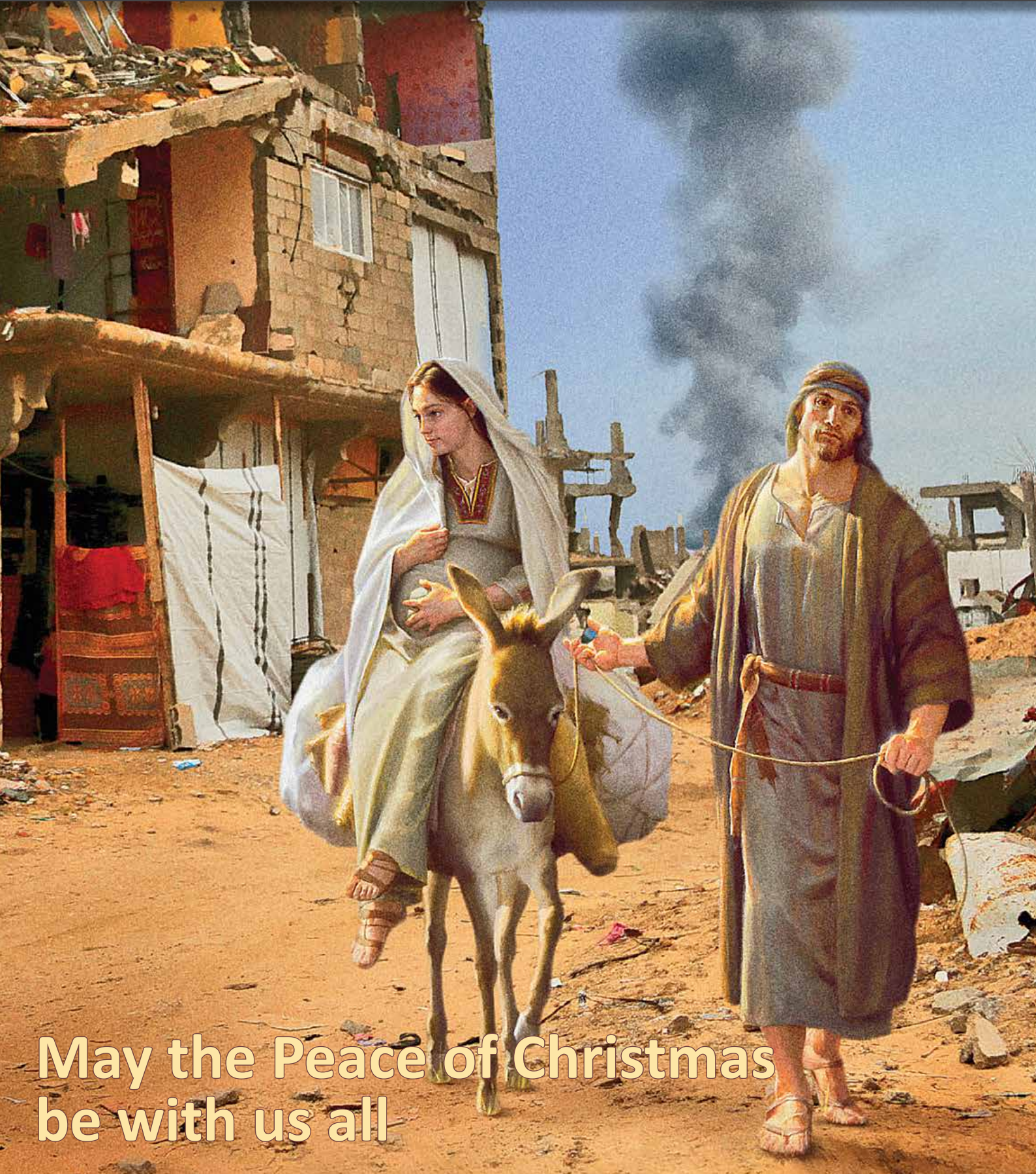


Australian

# Salesian Bulletin

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Summer 2017



May the Peace of Christmas  
be with us all



## Every day an opportunity

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

**T**oday I wish to speak about that dimension of hope which we can call attentive waiting. Jesus tells his disciples to be like those who await the return of their master, with lamps alight (cf. Lk 12:35-36). As Christians, therefore, we are always attentive, awaiting the Lord's return, when God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). Every day is a new opportunity to be attentive to God, to welcome the day as his gift, and to live that day by offering our good works to him. Such attentiveness requires patience, however, if we are not to lose sight of God's grace when our days are monotonous, or our difficulties many. For no night is so long as to make us forget the joy that comes with dawn.

As Christians, we know that Christ will return; that no matter what we may suffer, life has its purpose and deeper meaning, and that the merciful Lord will greet us at its end. Thus we can look upon history and our own lives with confidence and hope, knowing that the future is not guided solely by the work of our hands but by God's providence. May we repeat every day the words of the first disciples: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). And in our most difficult moments, may we hear the consoling response of Jesus: "Behold, I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:7).

[General Audience 11/10/2017]



### Cover

*The Doctors of the World UK's Christmas cards starkly juxtapose vintage biblical nativity scenes with modern-day photos of Middle East conflict zones.*

*This "#RealityXmas" campaign aims to bring in funds and awareness for medical work in the region.*

[www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk](http://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk)

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**Fr Frank Freeman SDB**  
PO Box 264,  
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# Afterthoughts: Every day an opportunity

**W**e were finishing a meal in a restaurant. My jocular and rotund colleague, pushing aside a well cleaned plate, the best compliment to a chef, remarked "Now tell me: from what book do you get all those ideas for your articles?" And this, accompanied by an all-knowing wink suggesting "You can trust me. "

A damaged ego is a terrible thing. I was about to take the bait but realised the question was a valid one. The source of ideas was the Book of Life whose daily page is crammed full of human experiences, rich gold-bearing lode, waiting to be mined. The only trouble is that, such is the pace of our lives, we rush from one moment to the next, never having time to sit and think back over the day's events.

I remember my novice Master insisting on the practice of ten minutes examination of conscience each night, to discover the wrongs of the day. I often felt I would rather first spend ten minutes on the goodness of the day.

To relive the day, to enjoy once again its highlights, to regret the wrong turnings is to doubly live. And when such thoughts father more thoughts, we are reading from the Book of Life.

What a tragic loss it is when beautiful experiences are forgotten. Surely the role of warm memories is to enrich our lives. How many friendships would have endured, how many marriages would have been enriched, how many lives would have been less lonely, if only the day's joys had been relived, the sorrows re-shared.

I recently visited a family whose members for years have used the beautiful custom of writing a note each week for the family mantelpiece. Often the notes contained a "thank you" for kindness received, an appreciation of another's efforts, a regret for some failure. These notes would be read by the family at a meal, in order to relive joyful moments, to share disappointments and to grant and receive forgiveness.

In the play *The Rainmaker*, there is a character by the name of Starbuck who is always terribly unhappy with life but has never quite succeeded in working out why. His friend, Lizzie, says "It is all your own fault. You never pause long enough to look at life and to see what it is all about and that's why you are unhappy". I suspect that the Gospel verse, "they look but do not see, and hear but do not listen or understand" (Mathew 13:13) would aptly apply to Starbuck, and many of us, as we race about our day's activities.



I love the scene in John O'Brien's poem, *Making Home*, in which Dad relives the events of his daughter's wedding day;

*"But you don't feel much like sleeping... so you get out in the cool,  
Where you light your pipe and smoke upon the old verandah stool,  
Thinking matters slowly over when you're home,  
Winding back the skein that some how's got entangled on the spool."*

Sweet afterthoughts are the flowering of potted plants. Some talk about an ordinary life, some of a humdrum existence, yet each of us is a never repeated value in the universe and there are wonders enough in each day's round if only we took time to see them. The very commonness of everyday things holds the eternal marvel and silent mystery of God and, strange as it may seem, they are graceful as long as they retain their commonness. "If your daily round seems unrewarding, don't put the blame on it; blame yourself for not being able to evoke the riches that are to be found in it." [Relke]. An unexpected reply, an unlooked-for kindness, an unannounced visitor, are often occasions for freshness in a regulated day. It is indeed an enriching habit to re-tread the day, to savour once again the pleasant moments, to regret the moments of failure, to be grateful for kindness and then leave all before our God.

Oh yes, I said to my colleague, I have a special book right enough. It's called the "Book of Life". But I am afraid, it is a one-off edition, and I am unable to let you have a copy.

His compliments were generous. Pity I had to pick up the tab for the meal, though!



**Editor**

Frank Freeman SDB,  
editor of the Australian  
Salesian Bulletin

# Having deep roots, being flexible, and being rich in what is essential

Who we are, how we are, and how we develop and mature are in play



## 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.*

**G**reetings to you all, dear readers and members of our Salesian Family.

I wish to offer you a reflection that I made from a very concrete experience I had recently – a lesson from nature. I shall never forget the wise life lesson which the fir trees of the beautiful forest of Vallombrosa gave me.

In July I had the opportunity to spend a peaceful and pleasant week of spiritual retreat with the members of the General Council. We stayed at the monastery of Vallombrosa, near Florence. It is a simple, austere place where one can find the beauty of nature 3,300 feet above sea level. It is a place that invites prayer; it is very cool, surrounded by thousands and thousands of fir trees – many of them more than 20 metres tall. It is one of the most important forest areas of Italy, for it breathes a lot of oxygen back into the atmosphere.

It was here that I learned a lesson in botany that left its mark on me. I noticed that those pine trees were very tall and stood very straight, but their foliage was very sparse, with few branches and few needles. It is almost as if to say that they have only what is essential to live and grow through the proper functioning of their leaves and cells.

I asked an expert about these details and he told me that those pine trees have three special characteristics. They have very deep roots, very flexible trunks, and very small canopies (branches and leaves).

The reason for all of this made me marvel all the more.

The roots of these fir trees must be very deep to enable them to find moisture and water, especially in summer when the soil is arid due to soaring temperatures, even in the mountains.

The tall trunks, many even 30 metres tall, he told me, require that they be very flexible so that they can sway when at the mercy of bad, windy weather. If they were stiff or rigid, if they lacked flexibility – made even more critical due to their great height – they would easily snap in high winds.

Finally, very skimpy canopies are an evolutionary trait acquired to protect the trees during heavy snowfalls. If they were large, i.e. with many branches and leaves, they would break under the weight of the snow and put the trees in danger.

I was awestruck. Explained in this way, the reason for their structure was obvious. My thoughts turned immediately to us. I said to myself: what an incredible metaphor! What a life lesson from nature for us humans!

If we can learn how to live according to these three characteristics – roots, flexibility, and lightness – we also may grow tall and straight and have endurance. With deep roots and a great interiority which allows us to find the “fresh water” of calm and peace, even in difficult days or times that we really do not like, we will not collapse.

If we are able to be flexible in what matters, and versatile when something important is at stake; if we can replace intransigence with dialogue, listening, patience and closeness born of love, we will not easily break.

If we truly seek only what is essential, what is authentic, what is absolutely necessary and what fills us the most, many other things would become totally irrelevant, and we would feel fuller and richer – filled in every sense of the word.

It seems to me that this lesson taken from nature comes at a very opportune moment, for this year’s motto invites families to be schools of life and of love. The lesson is valid for personal relationships, for family life, for educational environments and for the accompaniment of children.

Indeed, it is most fitting for all love relationships and friendships, even in work environments.

I believe I will not easily forget this lesson whenever I contemplate a forest, especially one with tall and straight fir trees.

I invite you to treasure it yourselves as well. What a beautiful footprint the Creator has left on our world.

May you be happy!



# Towards the Synod on Youth



**W**e are living a special time of grace in preparation for the Bishops' Synod that will take place in October 2018, on the theme: "The Young, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment". This event brings us deep joy and challenges us as an Institute whose mission is the education of the young people. What is foreseen is a Synod in step with the young and for the young, a precious resource for the Church herself and for society; certainly not a problem.

It is important to listen to the young in the context in which they live, where they face a complex reality that is fluid and in rapid movement, never before experienced. It is a reality that makes them collide with a scientific culture often dominated by technology. In this situation, they find themselves living the experience of insecurity, unemployment, corruption, exploitation which sometimes drags them into drug abuse, prostitution, meaninglessness. The conditions of vulnerability multiply their forms of sadness and of solitude, of poverty and of exclusion. They do not trust their abilities and do not see a future in the precariousness that characterizes them. The challenge of multi-cultures and multi-religions crosses the youth world and provokes disorientation and relativism. However, it is also a precious opportunity for comparison and reciprocal enrichment.

## Listening to the young

Pope Francis, in his letter to the young people in view of the Synod, exhorts them to participate actively in the synod journey: "The whole church desires to listen to your voice, to your sensibilities, to your faith; even to your doubts and your criticism. Let us hear your cry, let it resound in the communities and make it reach your pastors" (Letter of Pope Francis, 13 January 2017).

In regard to the Church or to religion in general, the young are not against them but, in some contexts, they are learning to live without them. Many nourish distrust of the Church as happens with other institutions that they perceive as distant. Even in places where Christian communities are growing and show great vitality, we must evaluate their coherence of life and the capacity to let themselves be involved through their sense of belonging to the Church. They feel themselves questioned by the conversion of young Catholics to other religions and also by those who have no faith horizon. Relationships among the young often occur in a virtual way, which undoubtedly offers great communicative possibilities but at the same time presents real risks.

Listening to the cry of today's youth is a challenge for the church, for society, for the Institute. It is an essential challenge to be able to accompany them along the sometimes-tiring roads of research and discernment to discover their project of life and accomplish it with joy. This requires a knowledge of the reality in which the young are immersed and in which they intend to be protagonists and not considered as a disadvantaged category or a social group to protect, but rather to have an active part in the processes to change the present.



**Evonne Reungoat**

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

# My Christmas wish for you

## To help them decide and choose

The insecurity of today's world and the continually new possibilities offered by technology place the young in front of the challenge to choose among the various opportunities and not renounce any choice. As a consequence, they often remain undecided and have real difficulty in directing themselves to a project of life. From here stems the importance of discernment that begins with daily choices. Adults are responsible for favouring a climate in which the young can perceive the certainty of being cared for in love. Through their presence, adults help them to be oriented to deciding, choosing, favouring participation. They encourage them to take on responsibility and the consequences of their actions, promoting a journey of healthy autonomy and of personal and social responsibility.

We know that the young fear assuming responsibility, especially for definitive choices. However, we need to admit that often adults do not facilitate this effort. Sometimes they are too protective; other times, they abandon the young to themselves when they are not yet sufficiently mature to be autonomous. There are parents who do not really know their children because they have little contact with them. They sate them with things, but are not always able to transmit the Good to them.

Finally, choosing implies the exercise of the freedom and responsibility of the person, ready to be involved, to translate the interior decision into concrete action. It is precisely in this phase that we need to encourage them to put aside their fear of making a mistake that can be paralyzing and leave them in eternal indecisiveness.

We know how difficult it is for young people to arrive at a choice. Vocational accompaniment is fundamental in helping them understand, decide, and follow the journey that is indispensable to identify what the Holy Spirit is arousing in their heart, without, however, forcing it toward a direction or conditioning their choice.



My Christmas wish for you, my friend  
Is not a simple one  
For I wish you hope and joy and peace  
Days filled with warmth and sun

I wish you love and friendship too  
Throughout the coming year  
Lots of laughter and happiness  
To fill your world with cheer

May you count your blessings, one by one  
And when totaled by the lot  
May you find all you've been given  
To be more than what you sought

May your journeys be short, your burdens light  
May your spirit never grow old  
May all your clouds have silver linings  
And your rainbows pots of gold

I wish this all and so much more  
May all your dreams come true  
May you have a Merry Christmas friend  
And a happy New Year, too ..



# Nostalgia



## Frank Freeman

*Frank Freeman has been editor of the Australian Salesian Bulletin for 35 years. During that time he has been a member of the Australasian Catholic Press Association and is now a Life Member. Over the years he has regularly contributed articles for Catholic publications*

“Ah Christmases are not what they used to be”; “In the good old days...”

“I remember how...”; and so with a tinge of sadness we look back to the magic of the Christmases of our youth and pine for what no longer exists. Christmas is not the only event that churns up our nostalgia. While living in the present and seeing every day as an opportunity, nostalgia does play a part in our lives. As so-called progress pushes on and historical memory is lost, there are many relics of the past around us.

There is a brooding atmosphere of sadness over disused railway lines. As I walked along the grass covered tracks, and lingered on an ageing trestle bridge recently, my thoughts quickly travelled back to bygone days. Memory dredged up many a cherished scene of the days of steam before we learnt to worship the ‘god’ car. The bustling railway station was a focus for local communities; the scene of many a coming and going, a meeting place where one caught up with friends while waiting for the train to come in. There was something very warm and personal about, “I have to meet the train tonight; Mary is coming home”. Then came the welcoming party on the platform, the eager greetings, the taking

in hand of the luggage, quick mentioning of the news with details to be filled in later. Or, from the same platforms, the sadness and awkward expressions on departure of loved ones, when words were all too insufficient to convey what was really in the heart, only to then linger and watch the train go out of sight. If our old railway stations only had voices, what stories they would tell! But all that is past now. The slowly rusting rails stand in silent testimony to the flight from the countryside, the decay of warm vibrant communities and the growth of our large, impersonal cities.

Old abandoned homes in the countryside, sitting forlorn among unpruned orchards and long overgrown garden plots, also fill me with nostalgic wonderings. If only they could speak and, like Old Dan in Judith Wright’s Poem, South of My Days, relive the past by ‘shuffling the years like a pack of conjurors cards’, what a wealth of human experience would they tell. Generations have been reared beneath their aging timbers but now all are silent or, as an old Irish song would have it,

**“Gone are the old folk,  
the house stands deserted,  
no light in the window,  
no welcome at the door.”**



Some years ago when in Wales, I visited the ruins of Tintern Abbey in the picturesque Wye river valley. It was once a great centre of Cistercian life before rapacious hands were laid on its lands and wealth. All in the name of God of course! In the quietness of evening in the old Abbey Church, it seemed to take on a timeless beauty. I sensed that this was still sacred ground, and the spirit of what had been still hovered over it. I stood where the main altar used to be, and in my heart I could almost hear once again the rising chants of the monks echoing throughout the Gothic structures. The age-old wonderings surfaced. Why did all this beauty, this ordered and simple life, have to pass away? Could not we return to an age when people prayed, not only in their minds and hearts, but in the creation of structured beauty, works of their hands?

Nostalgia plays a part in our lives. Our minds tell us that all is transitory, that the law of the universe is that all things come to birth, grow to maturity, then age and die. Yet, as Cardinal Newman says in his great sermon, *The Second Spring*, "Frail and transitory as is every part of the universe, restless and migratory as are its elements, never ceasing as are its changes, still it abides. It is like an image upon the waters, which is ever the same, though the waters ever flow."

Despite all this, our hearts treasure the loved things of the past. They are the stuff of our dreams, the raw material of our songs, and the themes of our poetry. Or as the poet Shelley would have it:

**"We look before and after  
we pine for what is not.  
Our sweetest songs are those  
which tell of saddest thought."**

This longing for the past and its glories is very warm and human. Moreover, the ability to treasure and appreciate what has been once held dear, tends to increase the older we grow. We all feel secure

within our accustomed ways while change brings new and strange surroundings. Change is always hard to accept and especially so, when we feel so secure within the present situation. How difficult it was for many to change from our old ways of worship, with all our well-loved rituals, to the present's more open and flexible rites. There are still many among us, as I am for one, who in moments wistfully recall the simple beauty and rising sincerity of Gregorian chant and the sense of mystery over all its accompanying warm ceremonials. But all that is gone now, and like our grass-covered train tracks, like the old deserted homes and the ruins of great abbeys, they live only on in our treasured memories.

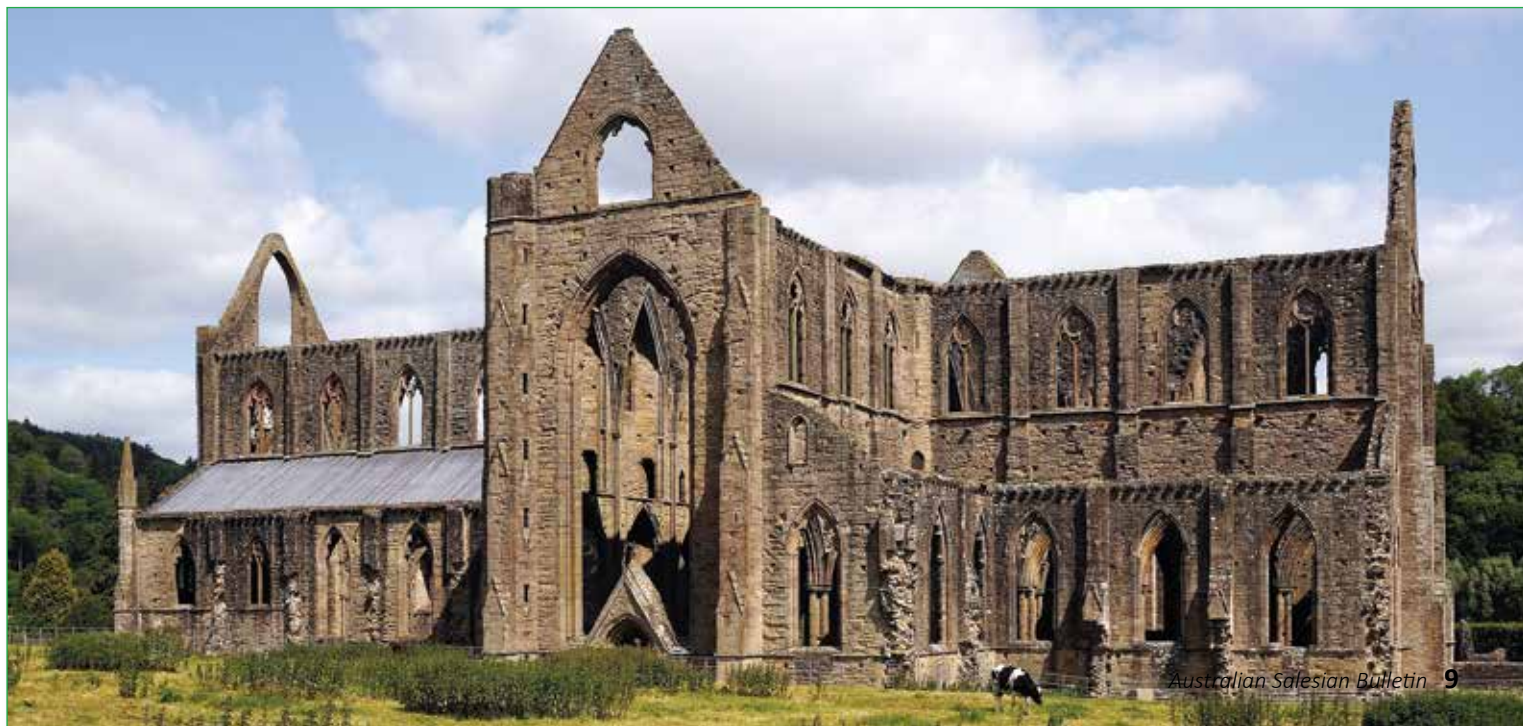
We are creatures of the ever-fleeting moment with its constant and unforeseeable change. Born into time, we are carried along on the stream of its quickly passing days, weeks, months and years, through childhood with all its wonder, through youth with all its idealism, through adulthood with its maturity, to old age and its serenity. We try to hang on to what has been and, because of our inability to do so, we believe there will be a place beyond this scheme of things where all this restlessness, where all the meetings and leavings, the building and the abandoning, will cease. That belief echoes St Augustine's cry.

"You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and restless are our hearts until they rest in you." Only when we will step outside time and reach the presence of God, living as He does in the blinding instant of now, will our yearning hearts find fulfilment for all our longings. In the meantime, we pilgrims upon the face of the earth rely heavily on that same God for comfort and support in our journeyings, and we pray in the words of the old traditional hymn:

**"Change and decay in all around I see;  
O thou, who changest not, abide with me."**

## Tintern Abbey

*Tintern Abbey was founded by Walter de Clare, Lord of Chepstow, on 9 May 1131. It is situated adjacent to the village of Tintern in Monmouthshire, on the Welsh bank of the River Wye. Falling into ruin in the 16th century, the remains were celebrated in poetry and often painted by visitors from the 18th century onwards. Today the site welcomes approximately 70,000 people every year.*





# A simple gift

Photo by Josh Boot



## Michael Gartland

*Michael is a frequent contributor to the Salesian Bulletin and the SYM in Melbourne. As a part-time retail assistant he is eagerly awaiting/dreading the upcoming peak gift-giving season.*

**T**hey say that talk is cheap. That a picture paints a thousand words. Looking to the natural world we see that it is lightning that strikes, not thunder. And just to be sure, we've all heard that actions speak louder than words.

The English language has gifted us a wide range of sayings that help articulate the same general sense; mere words are rarely sufficient on their own to convey the true intent that leads us to interact with one another. Naturally, this feeling is not solely bound to the English-speaking world, rather, it seems to be as much a part of the human experience as anything else, transcending time, space and culture.

What then, can we as humans do, that clearly shows to one another that our words are strong enough to carry the weight of our intents? We can follow up on promises, we can maintain a sense of consistency. Perhaps most potently, we can give and give we do. We use gifts to say congratulations on your achievement or milestone, to say I appreciate what you did for me, to say I'm thinking of you during these tough times, to say I'm terribly sorry for what I did and of course, to profess I love you, right when that person needs to know it most. Knowing when and what to gift others is a skill in itself. What is or isn't appropriate? What's too much? Too little? What's just an outright faux pas waiting to happen?

There is of course, another angle to giving, that doesn't get as much airtime in the hustle and bustle of modern, over-commercialized, over-capitalized life when trying to find that perfect gift becomes the be-all end-all. It's a fairly common experience that many people have experienced and spoken about – how giving something, usually results in a better feeling than receiving something. Studies have been done to show that genuine giving will enhance mental health by aiding self-esteem and alleviating loneliness, yet it has also shown to have positive impacts on physical health by reducing blood pressure and boosting the nervous system. Admittedly, there's a study for just about everything these days and such studies seem to be able to prove just about anything that they choose to; but there's one in particular that I can recall.

A psychologist asked a large group of students whether they would feel better if they had money spent on them, or if they spent money on others. The majority said they would be happier if they had money spent on them. Then, further down the track after an extended period of time, the psychologist gave out envelopes to the same group of students with one instruction: spend the contents as you see fit, on yourself or someone else, by 5 p.m. The envelopes had varying amounts of money and yet, across the board, students reported higher happiness scores when they spent their money on someone else. This was regardless of the amount spent, the economic backgrounds the participants found themselves in, and, interestingly, it even overrode their own prior, self-focused predictions.

Incidentally, the word gift is also used in a slightly different context, to describe a natural talent or ability, an affinity for a task that requires a specific set of skills. The implication then, for better or for worse, is that these intrinsic qualities were assigned to us at our birth by design, fate or chance; by someone, something or no one. Of course, there is a risk associated with such thinking: that we may inadvertently turn a blind eye to countless hours spent training by an individual, in an attempt to hone their natural gifts even further.

I was involved in a conversation with some friends recently which started off as a bit of a laugh but became a bit more involved as a general hypothesis developed. The gist of it was, if you could take control of anyone here as a pilot, of sorts, who would it be and what would you do? Essentially, we were asking each other, what is it in a particular person that you would like to experience as they do?

I was caught off-guard when a good friend told me she would like to get into my brain, so she could find out what it's like to write an essay. What a boring way to utilise such a revolutionary experience was my first thought! Upon further explanation it made a bit more sense to me. The ability to coherently express thoughts and ideas into text with (relative) ease was something that was actually pretty impressive, not to mention very useful; something that she wasn't quite so flash at. Not too much else was added to that, as our group conversation moved onto a new topic fairly soon thereafter, as these sorts of discussions are wont to do.

At the present moment in time (and for the foreseeable future) this sci-fi ability to live in another's place, maintaining what makes "you" you but also picking up what makes "them" them is little more than a fascinating thought experiment. However, it does offer some valuable lessons. For whatever reason, be it physical, mental or something else, I don't think I could necessarily impart the full scope of my abilities onto someone else even if I wanted to, any more than a league footballer could coach me into the highest levels of athleticism and agility.

Fortunately, there is something quite a bit more formidable, not to mention practical, that I could do, that we could all do. It would encourage us to excel for a mutual benefit in our relationships and our societies, rather than to compete with one another, to outshine and cast a shadow over others in a hierarchy.

It's simple really: we could give of our gifts; use what comes naturally, what was given to us, for the benefit of others.



Photo by Gareth Harper

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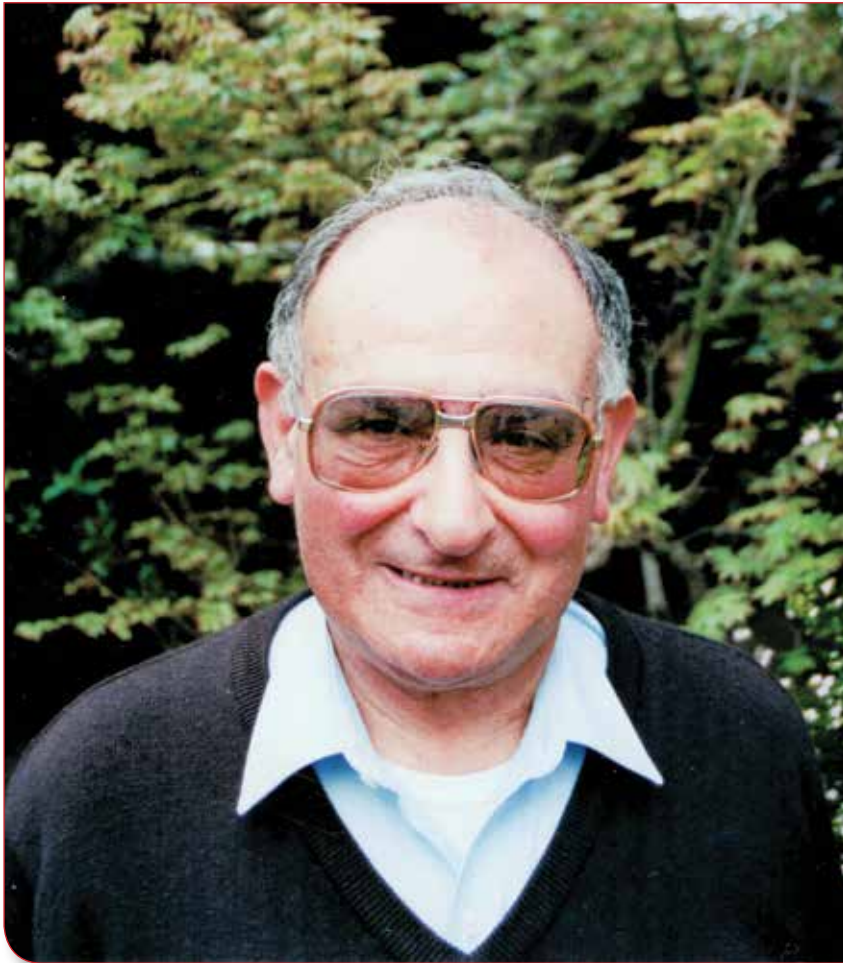
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# ‘Vale’ Fr Joseph Pulis 1932-2017



After his pre-Novitiate at Oakleigh, Joe was accepted into the Salesians, making his novitiate at Sunbury in 1951. He made his first profession on 31 January 1952. He was ordained a priest in Naples, Italy, on 25 March 1962.

He lived his Salesian vocation and mission to the service of the young in school education with whole-hearted and single-minded devotion, spending almost 60 years in schools in three States, as a Brother and as a Priest.

Fr Joe is fondly remembered as a humble and unassuming Salesian priest and Teacher – much loved by his pupils for his gentle and supportive presence, not only in the classroom but also in the playground, on excursions, on fishing trips and generally around the school. He was always available to help the students, and made a special impact in the celebration of group Masses and in teaching Religious Education. He spent most of his Salesian life in the teaching ministry at various Salesian colleges, including Salesian College Sunbury, Salesian College Brooklyn Park, Dominic College Tasmania – the last post being Nagle College in Bairnsdale, Victoria. Fr Joe was instrumental in introducing second languages during his ministry, teaching Japanese and Italian in addition to Religious Education studies.

He retired from teaching at the end of 2016 as the Salesians moved out of Bairnsdale due to the shortage of confreres. He died at Cabrini Hospital surrounded by his family on 28 August 2017, at 85 years of age and 55 years of priesthood.

## **Joe Pulis** **SDB**

*Born in Sliema, Malta  
30 August 1932*

*Religious Profession at  
Sunbury  
31 January 1952*

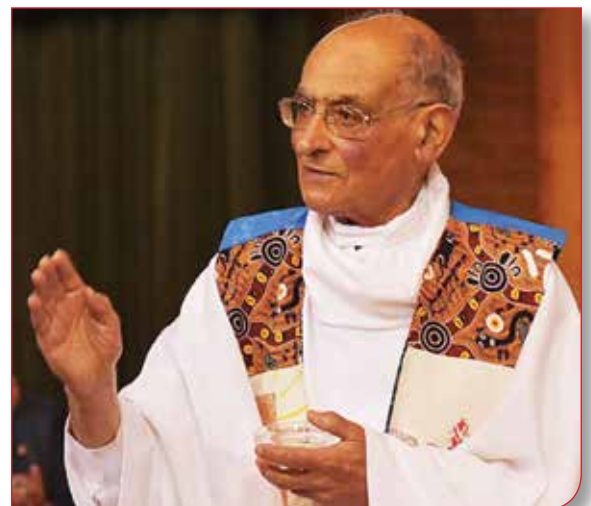
*Ordained a Priest in  
Naples, Italy  
25 March 1962*

*Entered Eternal Life  
28 August 2017*

**J**oseph Francis Pulis was born in Sliema, Malta, on 30 August 1932. His parents, Vincent Pulis and Teresa Sammut, were closely connected with the Salesians in Malta. Joe frequented the Salesian Oratory regularly, and came to know many of the Salesians who were already friends of the family.

Having been born in 1932 into a family with deep Catholic roots, and raised in a culture steeped in Salesian values and traditions, the call to follow Jesus in religious life as a Son of Don Bosco found a ready and joyful answer.

As they were actively involved in the daily activities of the Salesian Oratory, Joe and his cousin Joe Ellul, were invited in 1948 to join the pre-Novitiate in England, but God intervened. Fr Ciantar visited his homeland Malta that year to recruit personnel for the Salesian presence in Australia. He wanted especially young personnel to set up the pre-Novitiate at Oakleigh. He convinced Joe and his cousin to join him in Australia.



# 'Vale' Fr Jeremiah Breen

## 1930-2017

**J**eremiah Christopher Breen was born in the village of Knocknagoshel, County Kerry, Ireland, on 12 December 1930, the youngest child of Richard and Margaret.

Jerry's father, died when Jerry was eleven. His early life has been described as one of extreme poverty. Reminiscent of young John Bosco, Jerry began his secondary schooling at the age of eighteen, sitting in class with twelve and thirteen year olds at the Salesian Agricultural College at Palleskenry.

Jerry remembered the kindness and support of the Salesians at Palleskenry with great gratitude; they encouraged him to become a Salesian. Thus encouraged he went to the Salesian novitiate at Burwash, England, and made his first religious profession as a Salesian on the feast of Our Lady's Birthday, 8 September 1953.

Having finished his philosophical studies and having volunteered for the missions, he was eventually assigned to Australia.

After spending three years as teacher and assistant in the Boys Home in Brooklyn Park, South Australia, he went to Italy to do his theological studies at Castellammare di Stabia, Naples.

Ordained on 6 April 1963 in Rome during the Vatican Council, Fr Jerry returned to Australia and undertook studies in mathematics at Monash University.

After two years at Savio College, Hobart, Jerry was then, at the age of 37, appointed to the ten-year old Salesian College Chadstone in Victoria, as Prefect of Studies.

Even with the responsibilities of maintaining discipline in a large secondary school, Father Jerry had a magnetic quality that attracted young men to him, particularly the livelier and even more wayward element.

He was a true pastor who would visit families, schools, nursing homes and cemeteries to spread God's love and mercy. He was also a promoter of Salesian vocations, inviting young men to consider Salesian life.



One of his qualities was being hospitable to all visitors. He would welcome anyone to the community to share a meal or a 'cuppa'. A friend and a former colleague commented that Fr Jerry was a real stirrer but always great fun. He was always ready for a chat and a laugh.

Fr Jerry lived out his religious life seriously. He was prepared to move from one posting to another with a suitcase. He was never attached to worldly belongings.

By virtue of his warm humanity, his authenticity, his love of conversation, his humour, his genuine holiness of life, Jerry won the hearts of all with whom he came in contact.

Fr Jerry was 86 years old, and had been a professed Salesian for 64 years and a priest for 54 years

### **Jerry Breen SDB**

*Born in Knocknagoshel,  
Ireland  
12 December 1930*

*Religious Profession at  
Burwash, England  
8 September 1953*

*Ordained a Priest in  
Rome, Italy  
6 April 1963*

*Entered Eternal Life  
28 August 2017*

# 'Vale' Br Cahill Gleisner 1930-2017



He was known for his gentle manners and optimistic views on people in his life. Yet, behind his innocent face, Br Cahill was renowned for being a practical joker. He was always happy to share a joke, play a joke and take a joke with anyone.

During his service at Salesian College in Sunbury, he looked after the Vegies Patch at the back of the college, where a variety of vegetables flourished under his green hands. In those days, students who were feeling homesick or not travelling well in classes were sent down to Br Cahill's Vegies Patch to unwind and to recover under the care of this simple and gentle Brother. Many past pupils still talk about wonderful experiences they had with Br Cahill down at the Patch.

It is a great and sad loss for the Salesian Province. Br Cahill will be fondly remembered for many gentle little ways he interacted with different people.

The requiem Mass for Br Cahill Gleisner was celebrated by the provincial, Fr Greg Chambers and concelebrating priests on Monday, 16 October at St John Bosco chapel in Salesian College Sunbury. Fr Joe Binh, of the Salesian community at Sunbury, preached the homily in which he paid homage to Br Cahill's dedicated religious life, his gentleness and respect for all things living.

Eternal rest grant unto Br Cahill, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen



## **Cahill Gleisner SDB**

*Born in Melbourne  
5 February 1930*

*Religious Profession at  
Sunbury  
31 January 1951*

*Entered Eternal Life  
28 August 2017*

**O**n 7 October 2017, the second oldest Salesian Brother of the Australia-Pacific Province of Mary Help of Christians, Br Cahill Gleisner SDB, returned to the Lord after suffering a short but painful illness. Br Cahill, who had a great devotion praying the rosary all of his life, died on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Br Gleisner was 87 years of age, and had been a professed Salesian Brother for 66 years.

Known for always being a smartly dressed and a gentleman, Br Cahill spent most of his Salesian life at Rupertswood in Sunbury. He undertook his novitiate with Br Joe Ellul and Fr Frank Freeman at Rupertswood in 1950 under the direction of Fr Joseph Ciantar. Br Cahill also spent a short time at Salesian College in Chadstone and Don Bosco Youth Centre & Hostel in Brunswick. His last appointment as an Assistant was at Rupertswood in Sunbury in 1974. He spent the last 43 years in the same community before moving into Goonawarra Aged Care Facility in Sunbury at the end of 2016.



**D**ear Brothers and Sisters, We were speaking lately about hope; but today, I would like to reflect with you on the enemies of hope because hope has its enemies: just like any good in this world has its enemies.

The ancient myth of Pandora's box comes to mind: the opening of the box unleashes so many catastrophes in world history. Few people, however, remember the last part of the story which reveals a glimmer of light: after all the evils have come out of the open box, a tiny gift appears to turn the tables on all that evil that is spreading. Pandora, the woman who had the box in her custody, sees it at last: the Greeks call it *elpis* which means hope.

This myth tells us why hope is so important for humanity. It is not right to say that "while there's life there is hope". If anything, it is the contrary: it is hope that supports life, that protects it, safeguards it and makes it grow. If men and women had not nurtured hope, if they had not held on to this virtue, they would never have come out of the caves and they would have left no trace on the history of the world. It is the most divine thing that can exist in the heart of humankind.

Hope is the force that drives the hearts of those who depart, leaving home, their homeland, at times their relatives and families — I am thinking of the migrants — in search of a better life which is worthier of them and their loved ones.

Hope is not a virtue for people with a full stomach. That is why the poor have always been the first bearers of hope. And in this sense, we can say that the poor, even beggars, are history's protagonists. In order to enter the world, God needed them: Joseph and Mary, the shepherds of Bethlehem. On the night of the first Christmas, the world was asleep, lying upon a bed of acquired certainties. But humble, hidden people were preparing the revolution of goodness. They were poor in everything; some remained afloat just above the subsistence level but they had a wealth of the most valuable asset that exists in this world: that is, the desire for change.

Having an empty soul is the worst obstacle to hope. It is a danger from which no one can say they are exempt; because to be tempted against hope can happen even along the journey of Christian life. When this happens, the Christian knows that that condition must be fought against, never accepted with inertia. God created us for joy and happiness and not to wallow in melancholic thoughts.

Brothers and sisters, we are not alone in fighting against despair. If Jesus overcame the world, he is capable of overcoming in us all that opposes goodness. If God is with us, no one will steal from us that virtue which we absolutely need for life. No one will rob us of hope. Let's go forward!



### **Pope Francis**

*The words of Pope Francis from his general audience address on 27 September 2017*

# “SamBosco 2017” Salesian Youth Day in Samoa with great joy



**T**he theme of this year’s gathering was taken from the 2017 Salesian strenna, “We are a Family: Every home is a school of Life and Love”. SamBosco 2017 began on Friday, 8 September, with the Eucharist led by Fr Petelo Vito Pau (Pacific delegate), assisted by Fr Filippo Kapeli, Fr Nuku Leafai and Fr Taisali Leuluai who delivered a very powerful message in his half hour homily based on the theme of this year. For the first time SamBosco was fully planned and organized by the Youth Leaders. The program on the Friday evening was mainly about meeting new people and involving them in some activities.

Saturday morning began with Zumba exercises and then breakfast. This was followed by a very inspirational talk by His Highness Tuiatua Tupua Tamsese Efi, former Head of State of Samoa, and by three other speakers, Salausa John, from the ministry of Health, John Schuster, former Manu Samoa and All Blacks player (1987-1999), and a member from the ministry of youth, sport and culture. Each presentation and workshop took its inspiration from the theme and allowed young people to reflect more deeply on the meaning of family and to share their experiences about it.







The gathering was filled with the Salesian spirit of joy as the young people interacted with each other through discussions, games, dance, song and prayer. The evening was a wonderful opportunity to further develop new friendships and spend quality time in the company of like-minded young people, creating memories that will no doubt last a lifetime.



# 140th anniversary of the First FMA Missionary Expedition



**O**n 24 September 2017, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, Valdocco, 13 FMA new missionaries received the missionary crucifix from Mother Yvonne Reungoat, Superior General of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The Rector Major, Ángel Fernández Artime, presided at the Eucharistic Celebration with the participation of many young people from different groups of the Salesian Family. The introduction recalled the 140th anniversary of the First FMA Missionary Expedition to America and the words of Don Bosco, “Desire nothing else but to gain souls for God”.

## The Salesian Sisters in the South Pacific Region

**T**his province is dedicated to Mary Help of Christians and is called the South Pacific Region, comprising Australia, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. There are three communities of Salesian Sisters (FMA) in Melbourne, two in Sydney, two in Samoa and two in the Solomon Islands. The sisters carry out a variety of activities for the welfare of young people: parish work, work with migrants, schools, hostels, youth centres, retreat work, child care centres, camps, etc.

In January 2018 a new FMA foundation will be established in the Diocese of Gizo, Solomon Islands. It will be a genuine, living commemoration of the 140th anniversary of the first FMA Missionary Expedition to South America in 1877.

# Happy 100th birthday



The fruit of fidelity – the ability to preserve a deep faith for a lifetime, pushing through all doubts, naysayers and outside influences to remain fully committed to a profound trust in God and his mercy.

The fruit of hope – One of particular importance given that the Spanish word for hope is “esperanza”, a grace that Sr. Esperanza has carried with her since her baptism (she was born in Mexico).

After mass, the jubilant mood of the congregation spilled into the nearby hall where all who gathered enjoyed a festive meal together. Immediately prior to the cutting of the cake, Sr. Edna Mary gave a tribute to Esperanza by recalling the wonderful human and Christian values that she acquired in her childhood from her parents. Several amusing episodes of her childhood were shared, highlighting the ways in which Esperanza and her siblings grew up in an environment of faith, hope and love.

Well-wishes and congratulations were even received from the local member of the Parliament of Victoria, as well as mother general Yvonne Reungoat. In particular Mother Yvonne thanked Esperanza for a life of fidelity and joy.

**S**r. Esperanza Machuy recently celebrated her 100th birthday, surrounded by friends and family from around the globe. Over 75 people travelled from as far as Hong Kong and Singapore to Melbourne in order to join in the celebrations, whilst messages of congratulations were sent from as far as family members living in the USA.

Alongside the special guests, the parishioners of St Jude’s in Scoresby celebrated Eucharist together, led by Fr. Frank Bertagnolli and Fr. Oreste Cantamessa. In his homily, Fr. Frank spoke of a deep sense of gratitude to God for the gift of someone like Sr. Esperanza, a person who has latched onto the gospels as a stem connects to a tree, drawing the life and strength that is vital in flourishing as she has over the past century. This metaphor of the long-established vine of Esperanza’s life became particularly apt when he considered the fruits that Esperanza has provided in her time:

The fruit of witness - witness through a life dedicated to the love that God has for all people, witness through participating in the sufferings of Jesus and of course, witness for the love of Don Bosco, Maria Mazzarello and the Salesian mission.



# Sr Doris Barbero

## FMA Missionary laid to rest

**A** pioneer missionary who spent well over twenty years in Samoa was laid to rest at the Salesian Cemetery in Sunbury on Monday, 18 September. Sr Doris Barbero FMA passed away on Sunday, 8 September in Sydney at 83 years of age and 56 years of profession. Sr Doris died peacefully in hospital while the Vice-Provincial and her sisters kept vigil in her last moments. Her requiem Mass on 18 September was led by Fr Greg Chambers and concelebrated by a number of Salesians, including the Pacifican Delegate, Fr Petelo Vito Pau. Immediately after, Sr Doris was interred in the Salesian Cemetery within the college grounds.

Prior to the Mass, Sister Delma Lamb, Vice-provincial, addressed the congregation: On behalf of Sr Edna Mary MacDonald, our Provincial of the South Pacific Region, I welcome you all here today, priests, sisters, family and friends as we gather to celebrate and thank God for the life of our dear Sr Doris. United in spirit are our sisters from Samoa, Solomon Islands and those who are unable to be physically present with us today, as we say good-bye to our first Australian born FMA.

Welcome to our Salesian priests and brothers, Fr Greg Chambers, Provincial, Fr Bernie Graham Vice-provincial, Fr Will Matthews, Rector of Sunbury, for allowing us to use your chapel, making the necessary arrangements for the burial, and Fr Petelo Vito, Pacific Delegate.

I welcome in a special way Doris' family. The three nephews, Mark, Alan and Neil Savina from Cairns, and Patricia Savina, the wife of the late John Savina from Townsville. Trish was also in Sydney on Thursday. From Doris' beloved Samoa, welcome to Sr Lavalea, a member of staff Moe, and the two students Ruta and Fatima, Mary Grace from New Zealand, Cathryn Birchmore from SA.



*Sr Doris with Mother Evonne Reungoat, Superior General of the Salesian Sisters*

At the request of Sr Edna Mary, I would like to mention that condolences were received from Our Mother General in Rome, Mother Yvonne, who visited Samoa last year.

In his homily, Fr Petelo Vito Pau stated that 'Sister Doris was one of those generous souls who has given to the Lord, to the Congregation and to the Samoan

Church a service "characterized by enthusiasm, generosity and joy." She was like the wise virgins of the Gospel parable: her lamp was always burning brightly with the oil of her good works.

Of course, while we remember Sister for all that she did – and we are grateful for the many kindnesses she had shown us – we remember her for who she was. And who was she? She was "sister", a nun, a woman consecrated to the Lord by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. I am certain that many young people of Samoa who were her students, were privileged to have Sister Doris as their teacher and model of Christian living. How privileged they were to have known this dedicated religious sister.'

Three nephews of Sr Doris from northern Queensland also came down to Melbourne to pay their last respects to their much-respected Aunty Doris. Also in attendance was her niece-in-law, Patricia Savina from Townsville, wife of the late John Savina.

The principal of Dominic Savio primary school in Samoa, Sr Lavalea, also flew across with two students to farewell Sr Doris who spent the last 15 years in their community. The two students sang a beautiful Communion reflection song, paying tribute to this amazing woman. A number of Samoan friends also attended and paid respect to Sr Doris who spent a good part of her life in their homeland. Sr Doris' coffin was draped with a Samoan fine mat during the Mass, and the mat was buried with her at the grave.

## Her life story

Doris was born in Babinda on 16 March 1934, near Cairns in far north Queensland, Australia. Her parents Giuseppe and Onorina and sister Elide emigrated from Italy before she was born. Doris was born into this hard-working family. Her parents knew the value of study and Doris did well at school. She studied the piano and later did a secretarial course.

In 1958, at 24 years of age, she was received into the postulancy of the Salesian Sisters. A year later, she began her novitiate at Newton, USA. She duly made her first profession there two years later, on 5 August 1961. One month later she returned to Brooklyn Park, SA, to begin her ministry.

Sr Doris taught at St John Bosco Primary School, Brooklyn Park. In February 1967, she was entrusted with starting a new school in the adjoining parish of Lockleys. In 1973 Sr Doris was sent to teach in Engadine for a year, then sent to Italy to study at the Teresianum in Rome. In 1977 Sr Doris was a pioneer member of the Clayton community which began a new ministry, the Dominic Savio Early Learning

Centre. She was then Bursar in the Scoresby community from 1980 to 1984, and then returned to Clayton as Directress of the Centre. She loved the children and demanded a high standard from the teachers.

In 1992 Sr Doris was sent to Le'auva'a in Samoa as part of the then combined Moamoa-Leauvaa community. From 2000 to 2008 she was community leader at Moamoa where she took care of the boarders and helped the temporary professed Sisters and candidates with their studies. From 2009 she remained at Le'auva'a.

Sr Doris loved Samoa and felt very much at home there. Coming from the tropics in Australia she acclimatized well. The Sisters were amazed at her stamina, even as she advanced in years. Sr Doris took care of a lot of business in Le'auva'a, such as fulfilling the role of bursar in the community and the school. In the 1990s she organized successive working groups from Rotary Clubs in Australia to upgrade and maintain school and community buildings and facilities.

Sr Doris was responsible, sensible, self-assured without being ostentatious, hard-working and generous. She did her best wherever obedience took her. She took delicate care of Sisters when they were ill and gave first aid to pupils and families of Le'auva'a.



During the annual retreat in Samoa this year, Sr Doris became disoriented but she put off going to Australia for a health check. Only when her condition worsened and the Sisters had done all they could for her, she left her beloved Samoa. Once in Australia she was taken directly to hospital with very high blood pressure. Fortunately the John Paul Village parish nursing home at Heathcote welcomed her and looked after her to the highest standard.

May her generous soul rest in peace.



# The Saint John Bosco Pastoral Project in Fiji has begun



## Br Sinapati Ioane SDB

*Pati is from Lotofaga in Samoa. He is currently a member of the Salesian Community in Fiji and studying Theology at St Peter Chanel Seminary*

**A**t last! The long awaited work of clearing the land for our new Salesian pastoral centre in Fiji began on 7 September 2017, Constitution Day (a public holiday). Fr Pselio Tevaga (Rector) and Fr Mika Leilua, the parish priest, together with the confreres and novices were on site to witness the heavy machinery get into action at 10.20 a.m.

The Mass of the Feast of the Birthday of Mary (8 September) was dedicated to our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians. She must have been watching over us. After many rainy days, three beautiful sunny days made the work easier.

The first stage of the project is to clear the difficult terrain and making it suitable for building the Saint John Bosco Youth and Educational Centre (which will also serve as the parish centre before the church is built), the presbytery and the parish church. It is located along the Suva-Nausori corridor in the developing suburb called Wainibuku.

As we express our thanks to God and to our Blessed Mother, we thank our Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, for initiating this Salesian Pastoral Project in Fiji, Archbishop Peter Loy Chong (Archbishop of Fiji), Fr Greg Chambers (Provincial), Fr Petelo Vito Pa'u (Pacific Delegate), and all those who have provided their support and encouragement.

This is a new beginning! Please, continue to pray for the completion of this important Salesian work for the youth and people of Fiji and the Pacific.



# A brief history of the Salesian presence in New Zealand

Ever since the Salesians established a mission presence in Samoa (1979), consideration was given about a presence of New Zealand, especially in Auckland, since the Samoans had a large presence there already, and often flights from Australia to Samoa passed through Auckland. As vocations from Samoa began to join the Salesians, and as another Salesian presence was established in Suva (Fiji), the idea of a Salesian presence in New Zealand was seen as the next project for the Australian Salesian Province.



In early 2009 the Salesian Provincial, Fr Frank Moloney, contacted Bishop Patrick Dunn of Auckland with a proposal to establish a Salesian presence in his diocese, or in another Diocese in N.Z. if the diocese of Auckland could not provide a suitable offer. Bishop Dunn replied assuring Fr Moloney that the Salesians would be very welcome in his diocese.

Later on that year, Fr Moloney arranged to go to Auckland to meet with Bishop Dunn. Together with Fr James, the Bishop showed Fr Moloney several parishes where a Salesian presence could be established, the most likely being St Paul in Massey.

Fr James Adayadiel SDB, who had been in Samoa from the beginning of the Salesian presence there, and had already visited N.Z. on several occasions, was asked to contact Bishop Dunn in Auckland and to make himself available for some parish work, while at the same time exploring various possibilities for a permanent Salesian presence. In March 2009, Bishop Dunn appointed Fr James as Assistant Priest in the parish of St John, Parnell.

While Fr James continued to serve as Assistant Priest in Parnell, another Salesian priest, Fr Mathew, arrived in Auckland from Africa, and took up residence in the parish of Papakura.

In January 2010 Bishop Dunn entrusted the parish of St Paul, Massey, to the Salesians. On 31 January, the feast of St John Bosco, the Founder of the Salesians, Fr James was officially installed as Parish Priest, with Fr Mathew and Fr Mika Leilua from Samoa, as Assistants.



Visiting Salesians from Thailand with the Confreres in Avondale

# Fifty year milestone is a gift for the offering



## Fr Michael Court SDB

Fr Michael is currently the parish priest at St John Bosco parish in Engadine, NSW

**T**he Parish of St John Bosco, Engadine, celebrated its 50th anniversary recently in a cross-generational expression of faith.

“It was a great celebration of looking back with gratitude and reflecting on the gifts that have flowed from our church,” parish priest Fr Michael Court said.

Fr Michael said he was delighted at the way the youngest and eldest parishioners contributed to the day. They included Ed Noack, the 19-year-old chairman of the organising committee, and also Jack and Susan Van Duuran, the couple who brought in the offertory procession. Jack and Susan did the same when the church was first blessed 50 years ago.

When the church was built, the parish priest at the time, Fr Joseph Ciantar, was firm in his resolve that it be made a national shrine to St John Bosco.

The parish committee advised the priest that there was no way the parish could afford such a monument. “Have faith, all ye of little faith,” Fr Joseph replied, encouraging a reliance on “God’s bank”.

Fr Michael reminded parishioners about this story of generosity and trust and dared those present to do the same — for those around them and for future generations. The parish is a thriving community in the care of the Salesians of St John Bosco.

It is home to a substantial number of ministries and groups including Youth Matters, Antioch, Connect Youth Group, the St Vincent de Paul Society, and many other pastoral groups.

Peter Halpin of the pastoral council opened the celebrations saying: “Winston Churchill once said that ‘We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape you’. I can confidently say that once those who were responsible for planning and building this Shrine had finished shaping it, it started shaping and continues to shape the lives of us who have entered it over the past 50 years.”





# Don Bosco Camp new facilities

**I**t is with great excitement and enthusiasm that Don Bosco Camp would like to announce that fantastic new facilities will be added in 2018!

This project will include a chapel, three multi-purpose halls, a half court gym, a reception building, additional toilets and showers and a large open-decking area. The facilities will replace the old white buildings and the brick toilets.

These new buildings will be in addition to our existing dining room, hall and 4 dormitories, which will not be affected during construction. A temporary marquee hall and games shed will also be provided to allow the camp to continue operating during the construction period.

If you would like to stay up to date with the progress of the construction, we will be providing updates and photos through our Facebook Page:

[www.facebook.com/DonBoscoCampSafetyBeach](http://www.facebook.com/DonBoscoCampSafetyBeach)

This is an exciting time in the 72 years history of the camp site, and we look forward to sharing these fantastic new facilities with you in the years to come as we continue to offer many opportunities for the young through our Salesian Camps and for school, parish and community groups.

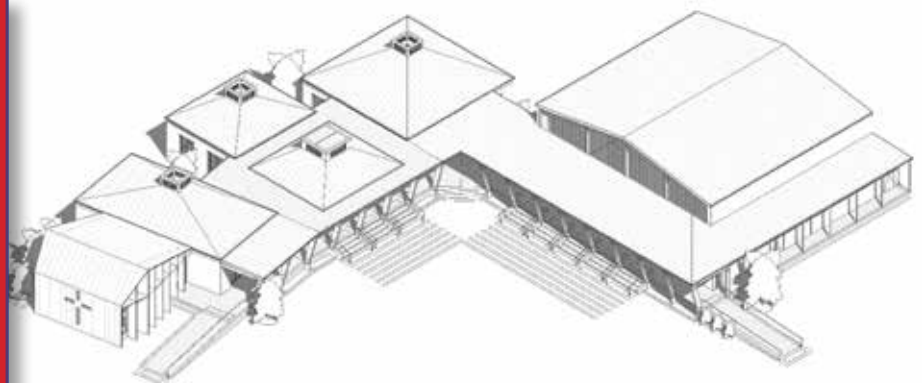


## Don Bosco Summer Holiday Camps

Welcoming all young people from 9 to 16  
to a fun, exciting beach holiday

January School Holidays  
Cost: \$160 per camper

For more information and to register  
[www.donboscocamp.org.au](http://www.donboscocamp.org.au)





*Fr Jaroslav with some young people*



*Students enjoy their break with origami*

## Mongolia

### A secure place for education of the heart

*By Emmanuel, a volunteer from Canada*

It's a simple room. Beige wooden panelled walls, big white ceramic tiles on the floor, lit by cool neon lights. Yet on every afternoon at 4 p.m. it gets filled with laughter, bursts of joy and positive energy as children, mostly aged between 4 and 16, flock to its small locale. As many as 40 young people gather to play board games, draw pictures, compete at table tennis or basketball, and participate in many other activities. This is the oratory of the Don Bosco centre in Darkhan.

The attentive care of Fr Jaroslav ensures that the competitive spirit of the children is channelled correctly, away from conflict. As well as being the main caretaker of the oratory, he is also a referee, games master, participant, friend, and paternal figure.

For many children this is the first contact with Don Bosco and the Church. Fr Jaroslav's goal is to make sure he is able to use his time with the children to build a relationship that helps and nurtures. The new comers, at the end of the day, leave with a sense that they matter, that someone cares about them enough to offer them some time for fun. They certainly will be back. For the regulars, it is a confirmation that they have a place to go to, every day, a place that will welcome them, rain or shine.



*Young people enjoying games together*

## South Korea

### Lunch breaks are the best times at school

*By Fr Joseph Sin Minsoo, SDB*

As in every 'Don Bosco' School, the break for lunch time is the most precious time for all involved, as Salesians are present among the students as fathers, older brothers and friends.

On the large campus, immersed in the Il Gog Dong Valley, there are almost 1400 students (grade 6-12) who experience the heart of Don Bosco in their daily life. In spite of the strong competitive educative system of South Korea (the main focus is the university exam every November) the 9 Salesians and over 100 lay mission partners are also fostering the human aspects of the youngsters.

Do you know of K-Pop (Korean Pop music)? Here in Salesian High School, every Friday during lunch time the S-Pop Stars (Salesian Pop) take the stage, with both improvised and well-prepared songs, dances or other games. Anyone amongst the 1400 students is welcome to contribute!

The family spirit is expressed on campus in hundreds of different ways – origami, some teachers take their classes next to the Grotto of Our Lady to talk or for walks around the green hills, playing different table games or just simply joining in on the football or basketball playgrounds.

For the Salesians it is in the break time that the best way to the heart of the young can be found: by "wasting" time with young people, listening to their hearts. In these moments our students can feel they are really loved, and thus our education becomes truly Salesian.





*The procession makes its way down the street*

## Taiwan

### Month of the Holy Rosary, procession in the streets of Tainan City

*By Fr Mathew Tri, SDB*

The Catholic Church in Taiwan is a tiny minority (about 1%) amongst over 20 million people, most of whom are Buddhist or of other traditional religions. The city of Tainan has a population of one million and more than 400 Buddhist temples. Despite that, the Salesian parish of Mary Help of Christians celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary in a special way.

At 1:30 p.m. the Rosary was said in multiple languages in the compound of the technical school. Following this was a procession through the local streets with the statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of Mary Help of Christians as well as with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

At 4:00 p.m. the Eucharist was celebrated, presided over by the Bishop of Tainan, His Excellence Bosco Lin. As with every other year, this strong moment of public devotion to Our Lady was a great encouragement to live our faith with humility and determination also in the public space.

A large number of our parish community members are migrant workers from the Philippines and from Vietnam. The multi-cultural nature of our Salesian community is the source of many events and activities which enrich the life of the parish.



*The procession continues on its way through Tainan*



*Mass at the Assembly*

## Philippines

### Salesian Youth Animators Assembly

*By Jessa Mariel Dela Peña*

This year's Salesian Youth Animators and Leaders Assembly (SYALA 2017) gathered 300 leaders and animators of the various clubs, sodalities and youth groups from various Salesian settings in the Philippines North Province. The two-day event was an occasion for the youth leaders to sharpen their skills, foster stronger bonds for collaboration, and celebrate their commitment and mission as a movement. SYALA 2017's theme comes from John 12:23, "I will draw everyone to myself"; and is well-captured and encapsulated in the word CONVERGE.

After the energy-filled and ecstatic opening program, one of the highlights of the event was the address by Ms Patricia Evangelista who shared stories straight from her experience as a news reporter on the night shift, covering 'the dead of the night' in the on-going 'war on drugs' in the Philippines. The stories put the assembly into a sombre mood. They listened intently to stories of real horror and utter violence, tinted with love and hope.

Patricia challenged the Assembly participants to take a stand, to extend help based on one's capacity, to speak and not succumb to silence. "Our silence is also consent." She shared stories of the church, documenting the violence and aiding the victims, giving a glimmer of hope in the blinding darkness.



*Young people joining in for a dance*

## Ghana

### Shata, the street child the Salesians taught to laugh



**S**hata is a street child who was abandoned at birth by his parents when they realized he was disabled. Shata does not speak English, but understands the local language and can make himself understood. He has a head deformity and leg problems, but he runs and jumps like any child. He was found and taken from the streets of Sunyani by Fr Ubaldino Andrade SDB, or Father “Uba”, as he is known by hundreds of young people.

Shata is much loved for his generosity. “More than once I’ve seen him share what he has with his mates, and when he returns from school, he changes his clothes and cleans everything he finds without anyone asking him to”.

Recently, Fr Andrade accompanied Shata to the town where he had been abandoned, to locate the boy’s mother and obtain some documents that would show his age. To the Salesian’s surprise, “many people recognized Shata and were themselves surprised, perhaps because they considered him dead. Shata recognized them and greeted them”. But the real surprise was to find out that they did not call him Shata, but with many other names including, shamefully, “Ebola”, from the time he was dirty, sick and abandoned on the streets.

“Even without being professionals, and although sometimes we do not know what to do, to kids like Shata we are offering the best possible medicine for their lives: love,” concludes Fr Andrade.



(ANS - Sunyani)

## Belgium

### Saidi, the grateful child



*A large group of unaccompanied boys such as Saidi*

**S**aidi was just 13 years old when he left his home in Kabul, Afghanistan, fleeing the Taliban. “I did not know where to go, but I could not continue living in my country,” he explains. The fear of the Taliban forced him to leave everything behind, embarking on a long, perilous journey without accompaniment from adults.

Eventually, after a year of travelling, he came to Belgium, where he was welcomed in one of the Salesian programs for unaccompanied minors.

Saidi lives in the Don Bosco Institute of Tournai. “Here young refugees find a place to live. They receive food, clothes, attention, and, most importantly, education,” the Salesians explain. “They attend French and English courses, maths, science, physical education, music, drawing classes ... The older ones want a job right away and most want to live in Belgium,” says Flore Dubois, a teacher at the Institute.

The journey of young refugees like Saidi is not easy. He has to face different cultures and customs. However, “most young people arrive with the desire to learn and help,” says teacher Annie Michel.

“I wish I had never had to leave my country. But no doubt I am very grateful for the opportunities they are giving me,” Saidi concludes.

(ANS - Tournai)



## Senegal

### Salesian Professional Training: The pursuit of excellence



*A student of the Don Bosco Centre*

**T**hiès is an industrial city with a growing population, located 70 km east of the capital, Dakar. The Salesian presence here dates back to 1978 when they founded a centre in the area and later built a vocational training school, the Don Bosco Centre, which has been operating for almost 30 years.

In a city with a strong industrial vocation, the Salesian Vocational Training School represents a vital opportunity for the area's young people, especially for those from the working-class neighbourhood that hosts the school. Despite Senegal's unemployment rate being around 48%, the Salesian Centre offers professional growth opportunities that translates into jobs – 60% of the students who attend and graduate from the carpentry, mechanics, or electro-technical courses manage to find work in the city.

Currently attended by 115 male students and 20 female students, the school forms not only skilled workers but also honest citizens and good Christians who can contribute to the development of their country without seeking alternatives in illegal migration.

At present, the machines and tools of the workshops have either become worn out due to their over-extended use, or obsolete. To counteract this, the Salesians found a good solution to continue offering high-level training: a technical school in Poitiers, France, is willing to donate machinery, tools and utensils.

*(ANS - Thiès)*

## Egypt

### Schools, oratories, outskirts: The Salesian presence in Egypt



*Young people from the Don Bosco School in Alexandria*

**H**igh-quality vocational schools, oratories appreciated by young Muslims and Christians alike, and services to refugees or the impoverished – these are the salient features of the Salesian presence in Egypt.

In Alexandria, the Salesian House was founded by Fr Michael Rua, the Successor of Don Bosco, 121 years ago. Today, the Don Bosco school in Alexandria is attended by about 900 pupils, ranging from elementary to vocational training.

The peculiar element of this school is that it is attended almost exclusively by young Muslims who recognize, with their parents, that Don Bosco and his educational system are a great gift for them. The courtyards and playgrounds of the Salesian School, when the students leave in the afternoon, do not remain silent and empty for long. To bring life and happiness to the playgrounds are the children of the day oratory. The animators are also all Muslims.

The Salesian presence in Cairo has similar features: there is an excellent vocational school with nearly 800 students from across the country and, when there are no classes, the courtyards are filled with teens – this time, with young Christians, so they too, may have the opportunity to grow not only in social skills but also in their Christian faith in a country wherein they are a minority and often marginalized.

Egypt's third Salesian centre is in Cairo's peripheral district of Zaitun. The Salesians have been present there for about 30 years with an oratory, a youth centre and now a parish. Their ministry is mainly directed to Sudanese refugees and street children.

# Salesian On-Line Book Shop

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

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

**Book Shop open now at: [www.salesians.org.au/bookshop](http://www.salesians.org.au/bookshop)**



*Some mothers produce items whilst others sell them*



## Rwanda

### Crafts exhibition and sales from workshop for young mothers

**R**wanda's "Don Bosco" Technical & Vocational Centre, and the local NGO "LUTI", organized an exhibition, presenting the local products made by some of the vulnerable groups of the area, aiming to provide and guarantee a financial autonomy.

The opening speech of the exhibition was provided by the Executive Secretary of the administrative sector of Mukura, highlighting the importance of this event. The exhibition "demonstrates the will of our local population to affirm and empower itself alongside the enthusiasm of our partners in combating poverty through vocational training," he said in a warmly applauded speech.

The leading role of the exhibition were mothers who attended the courses the Salesian vocational training centre provided. They sold a range of products such as blouses, skirts, dresses, lingerie, trousers and bags.

"This initiative has motivated the local administrative authorities to support our activities. It was a good way to let ourselves be known and make known the products of our girls," commented Fr Raphaël Katanga, Director of the Salesian Centre.

"This event was an opportunity to present one of the goals of the Salesian Centre to the general public: to give hope to the girl-mothers marginalized by society by promoting their social and economic development," concluded Fr Katanga.

## Haiti

### Quality training for future bakers

**S**alesians from Haiti and the Haitian cereal company "Les Cereales D'haiti S.A." have started a 10-month training course for young bakers. The first vocational training school for bakers in Haiti opened on Monday, 9 October, and is animated by the Salesians. Eleven boys and nine girls are the first students who will become the first bakers in the country to learn the trade before entering the workplace itself.

The Salesian Provincial in Haiti, Fr Jean Paul Mésidor, emphasized the importance of this new initiative, recalling that "training is a tool for the reduction of poverty and for social development." The Salesian emphasized that in 10 months there will be a sweeping wave of innovation in the industry, thanks to the new professionals formed through the bakery course.

Everything has been taken into consideration: in addition to providing the correct industry-standard spaces, Les Cereales D'haiti S.A. will handle and supply all necessary materials. The company has chosen to leave the training itself to the Salesians, impressed with the good reputation they have for working with young people.

During the presentation of the course, it was also noted that the bread industry is, indeed, a very important sector in the country, enabling intense economic activities at different levels of society and in various areas of the country, both urban and rural.

*(ANS - Port-au-Prince)*



*Students and officials at the inauguration of the training course*

## Sakha Republic (Russian Federation)

### Young people marginalized within society

By Fr Pavol Michalka SDB

Young people marginalized within society is one of the themes for the Yakutia Catholic Mission Silver Jubilee, which is being celebrated this year.

Salesians are actively present in the town of Aldan which has a population of 16,000 for the past 25 years. Currently they are active in the Oratory, by visiting Catholic families, by being close to the scattered Catholics around nearby villages and also in the second largest Yakutia city of Neryungri. Summer youth camps and retreats are run – another humble way of reaching and visiting the families of their small diaspora church.

Encouragement can also be found in Pope Francis' writings to the young people about the upcoming Synod on Youth. During these two months the Salesians, led by Fr Pavol Michalka, "try to get closer to our youth, to serve them better and find more time in order to listen and talk to them! We pray for each one of our children and youth, name by name!"

"As Don Bosco's sons and daughters, we have learnt the positive attitude of our Holy Founder. We try to follow Jesus and Don Bosco in educating youth, by being ready to sacrifice ourselves in order to bring the young on the correct path to salvation", explained Fr Pavol.



Participants at a youth camp



Campers on a nature walk

## Nicaragua

### We are hearts with hope

"We are hearts with hope" is the theme chosen to promote the solidarity campaign that the sixth-grade pupils of the "San Juan Bosco" College in Granada have organized. The campaign is for the benefit of 100 children attending the special needs school "San Vicente de Paúl" located in the nearby "La Sabaneta" district, one of the Granada's most vulnerable districts.

In the last week of August, the students of San Juan Bosco organized and celebrated a party with the special needs students. On top of this, the students also prepared cookies, candies, games, notebooks, coloured pencils and other teaching materials they donated to the pupils of the special needs school. "San Vicente de Paúl". Visiting were several student representatives accompanied by Fr Augusto Gutiérrez SDB, the centre's Head of Pastoral Care, as well as teachers and the pastoral team who lent their support.

During their primary and secondary school education, pupils are taught values such as altruism, generosity and especially solidarity. The college offers an oratory for children, adolescents and young people. Hundreds of young participants, including those from neighbouring areas, arrive in the Salesian Community Centre and are assisted by Salesians with catechism, education and accompaniment.



Students of the San Juan Bosco college

# Christmas in the trenches

My name is Francis Tolliver. I come from Liverpool.  
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.  
To Belgium and to Flanders, to Germany to here,  
I fought for King and country I love dear.

It was Christmas in the trenches where the frost so bitter hung.  
The frozen field of France were still, no Christmas song was sung.  
Our families back in England were toasting us that day,  
their brave and glorious lads so far away.

I was lyin' with my mess-mates on the cold and rocky ground  
when across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound.  
Says I "Now listen up me boys", each soldier strained to hear  
as one young German voice sang out so clear.

"He's singin' bloody well you know", my partner says to me.  
Soon one by one each German voice joined in in harmony.  
The cannons rested silent. The gas cloud rolled no more  
as Christmas brought us respite from the war.

As soon as they were finished a reverent pause was spent.  
'God rest ye merry, gentlemen' struck up some lads from Kent.  
The next they sang was 'Stille Nacht'. "Tis 'Silent Night'" says I  
and in two toungees one song filled up that sky.

"There's someone commin' towards us" the front-line sentry cried.  
All sights were fixed on one lone figure trudging from their side.  
His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shone on that plain so bright  
as he bravely strode, unarmed, into the night.

Then one by one on either side walked into no-mans-land  
with neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand.  
We shared some secret brandy and wished each other well  
and in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell.

We traded chocolates, cigarettes and photographs from home  
these sons and fathers far away from families of their own.  
Young Sanders played his squeeze box and they had a violin  
this curious and unlikely band of men.

Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more.  
With sad farewells we each began to settle back to war.  
But the question haunted every heart that lived that wonderous night  
"whose family have I fixed within my sights?"

It was Christmas in the trenches where the frost so bitter hung.  
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung.  
For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work of war  
had been crumbled and were gone for ever more.

My name is Francis Tolliver. In Liverpool I dwell.  
Each Christmas come since World War One I've learned it's lessons well.  
That the ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame  
and on each end of the rifle we're the same.

