



Australian

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● Christmas, the time for God's love and joy to shine forth from young people



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My Brothers and Sisters

Christmas is the time to "once more discover who we are". A time for us all to allow the simplicity of the child Jesus, born into poverty in a manger despite his divinity, to infuse our spirit and inspire our lives.

I urge all who are intoxicated by possessions and superficial appearances to return to the essential values of life. In a society so often intoxicated by consumerism and hedonism, wealth and extravagance, appearances and narcissism, this Child calls us to act soberly, in other words, in a way that is simple, balanced, consistent, capable of seeing and doing what is essential.

Pope Francis Christmas Message



Cover

Salesian young people choir spreading Christmas cheer throughout nursing homes in Fiji.



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The things that divide



Photo by Matt Collamer

Have you ever stopped to think how often in life the very things that are meant to unite us instead become the things that divide us? We seem to have a shadowy iconoclastic corner in our minds from which rises the urge to disrupt. For the most part, the motivations have nothing to do with the usual reasons given for causing such dissension.

Examples abound. A nation's flag; revered by generations as a symbol of the citizens' unity and love of their country. Yet witness now how our Australian community is divided over this very symbol of unity as new voices have the chance to air what it means to them. In families, how often moments of gathering and celebration can turn into moments of conflict in the blink of an eye. I have witnessed many tense wedding day situations between families, unable to rise above personal gripes for the sake of the young couple. An event, which by its very nature should be the wellspring of happy memories for years to come, turns out to serve as little more than a nurturing ground for continuing coldness into the future. In the moment, both sides forget what it is all about.

Christmas, above all, is a family day, a day of coming together, of peace, love, friendship and good will. Yet each year, as police records can verify, there is a marked increase in family violence at Christmas. The root cause is often the focus on self and more often the monotony and superficiality of family's Christmas celebrations. The same old Christmas tree, tinsel decorations, what's for Christmas lunch, and maybe even how to best fit in a church service. How boring Christmas can be!

Last year a letter reported how a family, with three teenagers and a younger lass, came up with a solution. A pre-Christmas table discussion evoked, "boring! boring!" "Well, let's do something different" suggested Dad. A beach party, a picnic were the instant suggestions. "But that is all still about us; what about those who are doing it hard: the homeless ones away

from their family. What can we do for them?" After much discussion it was decided that the family would have its Christmas meal in the evening, and during the day they would go along to a charity providing a meal and Christmas cheer to the homeless and be present amongst them.

The boys decided to take along their guitars and provide some entertainment, the others assisted with meal provision. All family members were to make sure they gave a personal present, their affirming encouraging presence to those at table.

As they sat down for their Christmas meal that evening, there was much exciting talk about their varying experiences, the personalities they met, how good their efforts had made them feel and the mutual gratitude and good will shown. "A great Christmas for them and a great Christmas for us" was the consensus.

Then suddenly one remembered: "Hey, what about our presents!" The distribution of the same seemed an anti-climax; they had already received a great present from the homeless and the lonely: a sense of wellbeing and good will and great family bonding. The oft-repeated phrases "It is in giving that we receive" and "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to people of good will" took on entirely new meanings.

Following Pope Francis, who spends a good part of his Christmas day with the poor, the homeless and marginalised, let us this Christmas give some thought, time and affirming support to the same. The mutual presents given and received will be a sense of wellbeing, good will and an appreciation of the presence of Christ.

May the Peace of the Christ Child, a Blessed Christmas and Joyful New Year be with you and your loved ones.



Editor

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

We must give priority to Young people



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.

The Synod is an opportunity to talk about young people and with young people, but the Church also has a lot to learn from them.

A feature typical of Don Bosco was the constant creativity he used to approach young people. This leads us to a much debated topic, that is, the digital world.

What has often emerged from this subject is that we are immigrants in the digital world. Young people, on the other hand, are born in it and handle it in a way that can also leave us perplexed. But this means that they, the young people, are the ones who can best communicate in this world. We are not the ones who have to teach them how to communicate. What we can do is walk beside them. In any case, we cannot pull out of the digital world: it's as if someone, thirty years ago, said, "No, I do not need a typewriter."

Speaking as a Salesian of Don Bosco, I would like that young people were told that the Church has open doors for them, that whatever their personal history, we are there. I would like them to be told that if they allow us, we want to accompany them on the journey of life. I would like to say, and this is very Salesian, that we believe in them. They can be witnesses in the world. The young would more willingly listen to their peers rather than the Rector Major of the Salesians. So I would say to them: you go, you tell your friends that there are so many reasons to live life passionately!

Most of the Synodal Fathers are Bishops and, therefore, are of an age and authority that does not always bring them into close contact with the young. So what can you do to get to these young people?

In life I have learned that the heart of every young person has a key, but it opens from within. Nobody can enter if they do not first allow it. And so, what can we do? When everyone returns to his place of origin, to his diocese, we must give priority to young people, make sure that no one feels set aside or pushed away.

Young people

to rejuvenate the face of the Church



At the end of Vatican Council II, the Council Fathers addressed a message to the young, indicating that the Council had sought to 'rejuvenate' the face of the Church to better respond to Jesus Christ, eternally young; to question itself on how to better respond to the call to be light and hope for the world.

The first goal of the present Synod is that of making the whole Church aware of its important task of accompanying every young person, no one excluded, towards the joy of love. This is certainly not new in the Church, but it gives continuity and importance to the great conciliar intuition: cultivate a gaze of trust towards the young generations. The young can, with their presence and their word, help the Church to rejuvenate its face, because it is typical of the young to believe in great dreams, and work for an ideal with freshness and newness.

However, it is not enough to listen to the young people. They wait for explicit invitations and proposals. Even if they seem sure of themselves, in reality they hide fragility and insecurity, and thus, expect that we adults be interested in them and offer them a clear proposal of commitment. Accompaniment is therefore, aimed at involving the young in the mission, but not as 'executors' of what has already been decided and planned, but rather as active and indispensable protagonists. This means listening to their ideas, entrusting them with responsibilities and commitments, and lastly, evaluating with them.

A favourable opportunity for the accompaniment of the young is the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM). This year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of its birth as a world movement. We ask ourselves: does SYM offer the young an intense fraternal life, challenging spiritual journeys, meaningful service experiences, spaces for appropriate accompaniment, and competent people for discernment?

Sr Yvonne Reungoat

Sr Yvonne Reungoat is the 9th successor of St Maria Mazzarello and is French, making her the first non-Italian to be elected as Superior-General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

The winds of war... and the sign of the Child



Pope Francis

Now approaching his fifth Christmas as Pope, Francis reflects on a theme that has characterized much of his papacy; Jesus' presence in and amongst the poorest children of this Earth.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy Christmas!

In Bethlehem, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. He was born, not by the will of man, but by the gift of the love of God our Father, who “so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

This event is renewed today in the Church, a pilgrim in time. For the faith of the Christian people relives in the Christmas liturgy the mystery of the God who comes, who assumes our mortal human flesh, and who becomes lowly and poor in order to save us. And this moves us deeply, for great is the tenderness of our Father.

The first people to see the humble glory of the Saviour, after Mary and Joseph, were the shepherds of Bethlehem. They recognized the sign proclaimed to them by the angels and adored the Child. Those humble and watchful men are an example for believers of every age who, before the mystery of Jesus, are not scandalized by his poverty. Rather, like Mary, they trust in God’s word and contemplate his glory with simple eyes. Before the mystery of the Word made flesh, Christians in every place confess with the words of the Evangelist John: “We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

Today, as the winds of war are blowing in our world and an outdated model of development continues to produce human, societal and environmental decline, Christmas invites us to focus on the sign of the Child and to recognize him in the faces of little children, especially those for whom, like Jesus, “there is no place in the inn” (Lk 2:7).

We see Jesus in the children of the Middle East who continue to suffer because of growing tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. On this festive day, let us ask the Lord for peace for Jerusalem and for all the Holy Land. Let us pray that the will to resume dialogue may prevail between the parties and that a negotiated solution can finally be reached, one that would allow the peaceful coexistence of two States within mutually agreed and internationally recognized borders. May the Lord also sustain the efforts of all those in the international community inspired by goodwill to help that afflicted land to find, despite grave obstacles, the harmony, justice and security that it has long awaited.

We see Jesus in the faces of Syrian children still marked by the war that, in these years, has caused such bloodshed in that country. May beloved Syria at last recover respect for the dignity of every person through a shared commitment to rebuild the fabric of society, without regard for ethnic and religious membership. We see Jesus in the children of Iraq, wounded and torn by the conflicts that country has experienced in the last 15 years, and in the children of Yemen, where there is an ongoing conflict that has been largely forgotten, with serious humanitarian implications for its people who suffer from hunger and the spread of diseases.

We see Jesus in the children of Africa, especially those who are suffering in South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Nigeria.

We see Jesus in the children worldwide wherever peace and security are threatened by the danger of tensions and new conflicts. Let us pray that confrontation may be overcome on the Korean peninsula and that mutual trust may increase in the interest of the world as a whole. To the Baby Jesus we entrust Venezuela that it may resume a serene dialogue among the various elements of society for the benefit of all the beloved Venezuelan people. We see Jesus in children who, together with their families, suffer from the violence of the conflict in Ukraine and its grave humanitarian repercussions; we pray that the Lord may soon grant peace to this dear country.

We see Jesus in the children of unemployed parents who struggle to offer their children a secure and peaceful future. And in those whose childhood has been robbed and who, from a very young age, have been forced to work or to be enrolled as soldiers by unscrupulous mercenaries.



We see Jesus in the many children forced to leave their countries to travel alone in inhuman conditions and who become an easy target for human traffickers. Through their eyes we see the drama of all those forced to emigrate and risk their lives to face exhausting journeys that end at times in tragedy. I see Jesus again in the children I met during my recent visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh, and it is my hope that the international community will not cease to work to ensure that the dignity of the minority groups present in the region is adequately protected. Jesus knows well the pain of not being welcomed and how hard it is not to have a place to lay one's head. May our hearts not be closed as they were in the homes of Bethlehem.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, the sign of Christmas has also been revealed to us: "a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Lk 2:12). Like the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we welcome in the Baby Jesus the love of God made man for us. And may we commit ourselves, with the help of his grace, to making our world more human and more worthy for the children of today and of the future.



“The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to dream”



The Synod of Bishops on young people began in a difficult, unfavourable context for the Church, amid tensions, disbelief, decline in vocations and open challenges to the Church’s teachings on important social issues such as the right to life and other human rights. On the other hand, despite the complex circumstances surrounding this event, there are positives; one such sign of communion and hope is the presence of two continental Chinese bishops who can participate in a Synod “for the first time”.

The Church is aware that the world of youth has changed radically: young people today live in a globalized world, a network of interconnections and relationships, suffering and contradictions. Young people send a clear message: “we struggle to unite the threefold experience of growing up, maturing to adulthood and religious journey together.”

The Church also knows that without the strength of the young it will end up losing its capacity for enthusiasm and strength. Without exaggeration, this synod is a key moment for the Church. The Pope continues: “This Synod has the opportunity, the task and the duty to be a sign of a Church that really listens, that allows herself to be questioned by the experiences of those she meets, and who does not always have a ready-made answer.” At stake, says the pontiff, is the prophetic role of the Church before the new generations. “A Church that does not listen shows herself closed to newness, closed to God’s surprises, and cannot be credible, especially for the young who will inevitably turn away rather than approach.”

In this atmosphere of dialogue, the Pope invites the Synodal Fathers not to allow themselves to be “extinguished or crushed by the prophets of doom and misfortune, or by our own shortcomings, mistakes and sins,” but to find the grace and memory “capable of enkindling our hearts and of discerning the ways of the Spirit.”

This synod is a milestone for the Salesian Family, as it aims at the core of our charism and will certainly offer us elements that will help us to discern new methods and ways of serving young people.

Let all children live in happiness and peace!



Dear Readers of the Salesian Bulletin,

Christmas is a time of pure wonder; a time of expectation of something good to come, and of something new and precious to be received. It is a time for the innocent of heart to enjoy gifts and to celebrate in the happiness that comes with such blessings.

A gift is an expression of love. Often, the specialness of a gift is not actually wrapped up in what the gift itself is. Rather, the significance comes as an epiphany from the heart of the giver. In the act of gift-giving, we are communicating something profound, we are saying to the receiver of our gift "I would love to give you some meaningful part of myself".

One's availability to another person is a precious gift. It is good to give gifts to others, not necessarily as an exchange, but when we wish to show genuine love and care. We know that parents give love to children not only at Christmas time, they give love every moment of their parenthood when they are available and are good examples. Children know and feel when they have been gifted with love from their parents. They return love and respect to their parents and they pay it forward to their siblings and friends, not just in those moments of early childhood, but throughout the remainder of their lives.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son (Jn 3:16). This is the most precious gift of all; the person of Jesus Christ, born into humility in the manger. This gift God gave to all of us serves as a reminder and a guide; the primary reason we give gifts is to show love, and the primary way of showing love is through the constant giving of ourselves to others.

As Salesians, we express our love to God by giving our lives for the good of all children, especially those in difficult circumstances. We expect nothing in return, other than for them to take steps towards becoming 'good Christians and upright citizens.' We have promised to give our lives to safeguard them from all dangers, and to lead them to a better life in genuine happiness. Our absolute priority as Salesians is to safeguard all young people even at the cost of our own life. This is paying forward the gift of love from God.

In this Christmas season and beyond, I hope and pray that all of us Salesians and lay collaborators dedicate to giving of ourselves for the good of all children, the innocent of hearts, to the best of our ability, wherever they may be in this world.

May all children receive love and live in happiness and peace!

Merry Christmas!

Fr William Matthews SDB
Provincial



**Fr William
Mathews
SDB**

*This year, Fr Will
will celebrate his
first Christmas as
the Provincial of the
Australia-Pacific region*

Why youth representative's faith unaffected by scandals!



Sebastian Duha

Sebastian is from St Andrew the Apostle Catholic Parish, Marayong, in the Diocese of Parramatta. He is one of only 36 people from around the world chosen to be speaking at the Synod.

“I’m definitely disappointed, I’m disappointed in the Church, and to an extent, angry that these things have happened,” says Sebastian Duha. He remains connected to the Church “not because of priests and bishops and the people of the Church,” but “because I believe in Jesus and what he’s done in people’s lives.”

Sebastian Duha, aged 22, is Australia’s representative (amongst 36 other young people) at the synod, which is dedicated to the topic of youth, the faith and vocational discernment. He said that he wants to make the Church a reflection of Jesus’ action, and he wants “to create a Church that is a reflection of the great and positive things that he can do in people’s lives.”

The synod is the process of a mutual journey taken by a wide variety of members of the clergy and laity of the worldwide church, with the intent of responding to some of grave challenges facing the modern church. The synod will culminate in a series of councils led by Pope Francis and in calling the synod, he explained that the synod is an exercise in discernment, and therefore “to speak frankly and listen openly are fundamental”.

Sebastian agrees with this sentiment. “If we are to create a Church that is in positive relationship with people, and a Church that does begin to establish trust again, we need to be more transparent, we need to be a Church that is open and honest, and which is accountable for its own mistakes,” he said.

As part of his role in the Synod, Sebastian participated in small group discussions, deliberations and was given a four minute to make a speech on issues affecting the youth of today. In his speech, he focused on his own experience of being welcomed into the church, and the lessons that can be derived from that.

As a fourteen-year-old, I attended one of my first music practices at my local parish, with my saxophone in hand, excited to be able to share my gift of music. I quickly learned, however, that if I wanted to be able to play alongside the youth choir, I would have to learn to play by listening. One of my youth ministers quickly came to my aid, supporting me and giving me the tools to learn how to do this. He later told me that one of the people who had given him these same tools years earlier was in fact my deceased grandfather.

Many things happened in this moment. Firstly, I was invited into a space where I wasn't judged for playing ability, and it was okay if I made mistakes. A space where I was able to share my music and know that it was truly being listened to, and even adding to sound that, as a whole, we were creating.

The Church needs to create similar spaces, where young people can voice their opinions, their hopes, their needs and their struggles, without being judged. The Church, like I had to, must learn to use its ears, to listen to the world around it, to listen to what is required of it, and most importantly, to listen to the voices of young people, because we have something offer.

Secondly, I was invited into relationship with a person, in which I was accompanied in my musical growth. I was not expected to know anything more than I already knew, and I was encouraged to learn at my own pace. It was in the context of this relationship that I developed a desire to know more.

The Church, similarly, needs to accompany young people, providing them with opportunities to encounter Christ, and inviting them into personal relationship with him. The Instrumentum Laboris speaks of 'a more relational church', but too often, we try to teach young people the rules, before we introduce them to the person of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I was led and mentored by a young person, who had been empowered to do so by my grandfather. In this space, I was encouraged not only to learn, but to help lead the congregation through my music, and to lead other young musicians when I was capable.

The Church must empower young people, giving them the opportunity and tools to lead at all levels. We young people bring with us a visible sense of joy, hope and enthusiasm, and it is these things that the Church currently needs. The Church must open its doors and become a Church that is led not only by the ordained, but by all of us, together and alongside one another.

I stand here today asking you to see me as an example of what can be done when the Church enters into authentic relationship with young people, accompanies them through their lives, learns from them, allows them to use their God-given potential, and invites them to encounter and enter into personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Delivered by Sebastian Duhau on Sunday,
7 October 2018 (Abridged)



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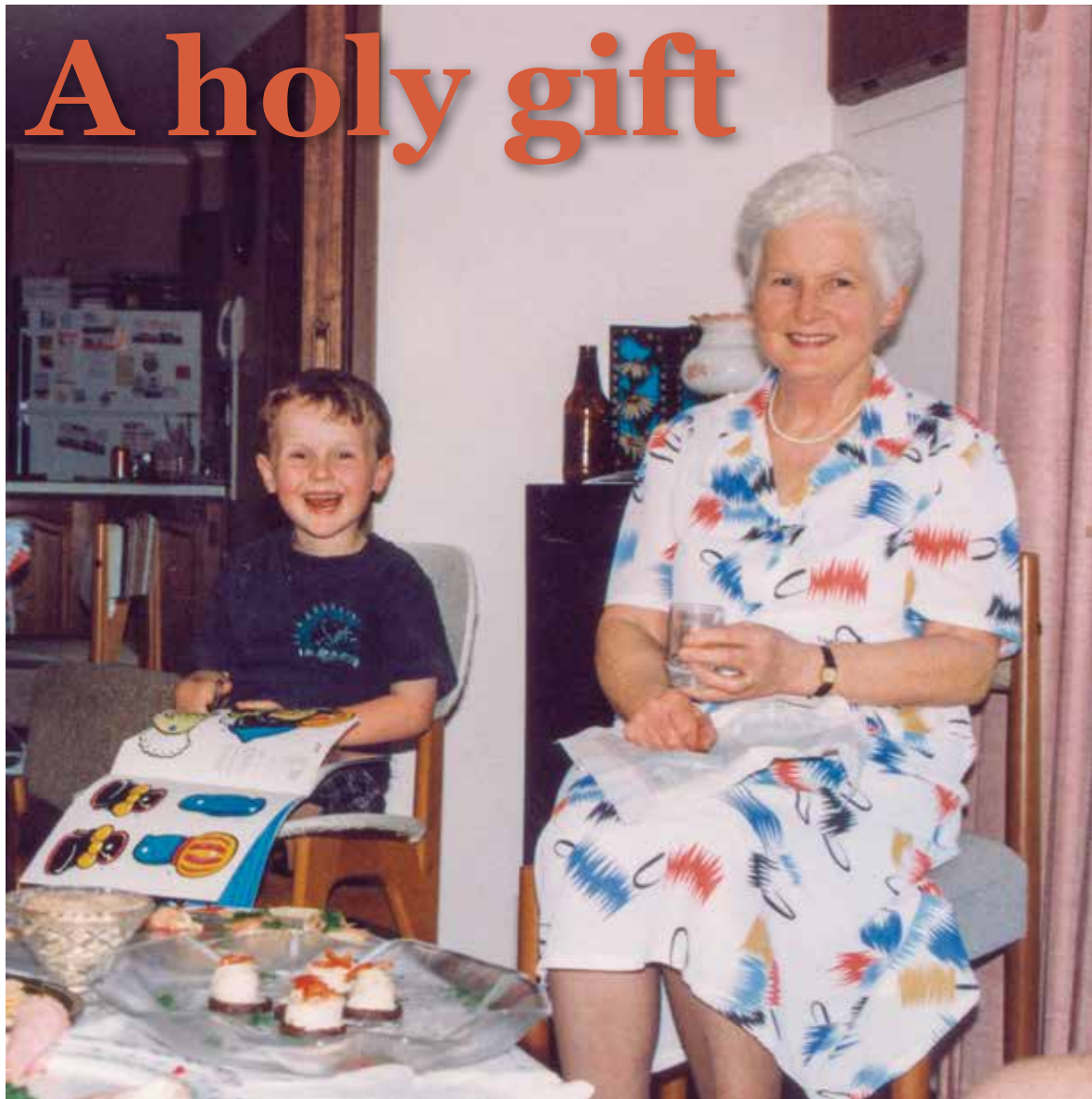
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A holy gift



Micheal Gartland

Michael is a part-time journalist with the Salesian Bulletin and is low-key quite impressed that he managed to write a Christmas reflection without mentioning his experience working in retail

Loyal readers may remember that, sometime ago, I wrote about the profound influence and many gifts that the relationship I shared with my grandmother had bestowed upon me. Recently, her family and friends filled all the pews in her parish church, as they joined together to celebrate her special-ness. But dear reader, do not console me for my loss, nor offer your assistance in whatever way you can help – for I have already received something far greater than you could give!

I've only ever heard my Grandma raise her voice once. I was visiting her house with my dad and my sister, and it was time to go. As we opened the door to leave, a voice called out from the hallway "Wait, don't go yet"! We could hear the slow, yet deliberate shuffle that indicated Grandma's approach; her walker came into view, she stopped, gathered herself, and then continued around the corner. She walked past us, took the lid of the ornamental glass vial and taking a bit of the water on her thumb, she dabbed everyone of us.

She had always had this vial of holy water sitting by the threshold, as long as I can remember. Unfortunately, on this particular visit, we had lost track of time and had to make a quick departure as other commitments were pressing. Dad, a little bit frustrated at the delay, said "Ma, you know this won't actually stop a car crash, right?"

"Michael," came Grandma's stern reply. "We've had this conversation before, and I *will not* have it again."

On the night when my family were preparing their individual parts for the funeral, tensions were a little strained. We were under the pump in trying to get the booklets to the publisher; it was a late night and everyone wanted the service to be absolutely perfect – we all had different ideas on what that looked like though! Eventually, while she was redrafting her assigned prayer of the faithful for the fiftieth time my sister exclaimed "I just want to say that Grandma believed in God, and that made me do it as well".

How profound! What gift could be greater? The thing is though, Grandma never really did make any explicit intent of forcing this gift onto us. Growing up, whenever we visited we were never told that we had to believe in God or speak about what we thought of faith. We were never forced to sit still while she said the rosary, nor were we dragged along to mass. We were never told that we should have a vial of Holy Water in our home by the threshold and make use of it whenever we left through the door. Grandma simply lived her life how her faith inspired her to, and this is what we experienced and then took on. Perhaps this is the mark of true holiness within a person; a campfire on a cold dark night, that inherently draws others in to share in the warmth and brightness?

Coming into the Christmas season, I am reminded of a similar experience, albeit in a very different context – one we will hear about in the last week of Advent. We will be told about how Mary, now an expectant mother, journeyed to visit her cousin Elizabeth and as the result of Mary's presence (completely enriched by her faith), incredibly, not only was Elizabeth also filled with the Holy Spirit, but even her unborn son left for joy in the womb!

Fast-forward back to 2018 and try as we might to ensure that our Christmas' revolve solely around Christ, it will seem like an inevitable fact of life that we must give gifts. We will no doubt get stuck trying to figure out what will be the best, most perfect gift for our friends, co-workers, families or those in need. We could put in a double effort and buy something that our recipient would really like to show that we care for them, or we could pick up something that they mentioned in passing a little while ago to show that we listen, or we could just settle for a gift card because we're not sure what they are into but want to show we at least put a little thought into the gift. Or, perhaps practicality and an innate need to cause no offence will win the day and will just rely on the usefulness of cash, chipping in on something that our recipient was already planning on purchases, whether that end up being some kind of new technological toy, or that week's groceries.

However, just as Mary did when she travelled a long distance to visit her cousin.. Elizabeth and my Grandma did when my sister visited her, there is an alternate option. Presence: the gift of ourselves in every minor interaction throughout every single day of this Christmas period and afterwards. For, when we are present, truly present within ourselves and with others, we begin to become luminous and it is this luminosity that fosters peace, love and joy amongst our various communities. And this, perhaps, is the most authentic expression of holiness that we can ever hope to achieve during our time here on Earth; a presence that fills those around us with the Holy Spirit.



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“Goodnight, older brother”



Cagliero Project

Lay volunteers are formed and sent on long-term placements to work with young people in overseas missions such as the Don Bosco Technical School in Phnom Penh, where they also share in the life of their host communities.

Kakada was an exceptionally quiet boy; shy and very hesitant to do anything that would make him stand out. Of course, this is only natural for any boy of his age at a new school and seeing a foreigner for the first time! Yet, all it took for him to come out of his shell was just a moment of interaction, a mere second or two of interest.

“It was during study hall,” reflects John Gartland. “I saw he was struggling over some English work and sat next to him and asked if he needed help.” The result from this moment has shocked John; now, Kakada asks questions, engages in conversation and seeks out company for leisure times. “Of course,” John laughs with a self-deprecating twinkle, “it could just be that I’m the first foreigner he’s ever seen, and to be fair I am unnaturally tall so maybe it’s like being at the zoo for him!”

John is a long-term volunteer with the Cagliero project, primarily working as an assistant to the border boys as well as an English and Music teacher at the Don Bosco Tech School in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Originally from Melbourne, Australia, John’s daily life now revolves around the comings and goings of the school, where his main role at the school is as an assistant to the border boys, caring for between 80-120 people, depending on the time of year.

A typical day involves waking the boys up at 5 a.m. to prepare for the morning study period. As the students go off to their morning classes, John takes the role of English teacher to the young Salesians in training at the school. Come 11.30 a.m. John rejoins the boys for the fun and games of their lunch break, and it is only once the bell rings and they resume their classes that he finally has a moment or two of brief solitude, to breathe, to reset the mind and to refill what is usually by now, a rather empty stomach! Having fun is a universal language, and the local dialect involves a lot of soccer, uno, table tennis and laughter. At first, it was just a couple of the border boys who would engage during the lunch break, but those who affectionately referred to John as “tev” (pronounced tey-o), meaning “funny man”, quickly brought more and more into the fold.

To resist the urge of dozing off to sleep whilst supervising during these study times, John makes a point of walking around the room, helping students wherever they need it. “It’s so inspiring to be able to walk around the room and actually see them progressing in their study... especially when I realize there’s no way I would have survived this schedule at my school!” In Cambodia, social structures are very heavily informed by family values and can appear to be quite hierarchical. The role of the parent is sacrosanct, and respect filters down from there,

with older siblings having an air of respect, earned through their increased responsibilities. Education is so highly valued that teachers can come to be a part of a family, earning their place through the great gift they provide. It was momentous then, when the boys started to say “goodnight, bongpro” to John as they went off to sleep; “goodnight, older brother”.

In the end, it is these culture differences that pip the busy workload as the biggest challenges facing Cagliero volunteers; the need to completely re-learn what is considered socially acceptable throughout a myriad of complex situations. Games where people take on the roles or mannerisms of any animals are simply unplayable; the level of insult is just too high. Tragically, Cambodia is still very much haunted by the spectre of the Khmer rouge, both on a national level in terms of economic and industrial growth but also on a very personal level. Talking politics is quite simply a “no-go zone” and committing anything political into writing on social media can have very heavy consequences. On top of this, John has gradually become acutely aware that whenever one of his students seems sad, or has something on his or her mind, it may well be that even after all these years, the deep pain of losing a mum, a dad, a sister or a brother has not yet fully healed.

Even in the classroom, there are profound differences that must be understood and yet, aren’t always. There is one story in particular that some of the students shared with John, that still shocks him whenever he thinks about it. A volunteer (who had been sourced from a different pathway to John) lost her cool in the classroom and raised her voice to the students. John, however, something of a class clown during his own school years, wasn’t perturbed by the teacher; it was the reactions of students that shocked him. Tears could be seen welling up in eyes, a real palpable sense of pain etched on their faces even as they retold the story. For many of the students, aged into their late teens and early twenties, this was literally the first time they had ever been yelled out, and simply did not know how to react nor cope with it; a complete rupture of social norms.

When a volunteer has undergone less than adequate formation, it shows through and brings a lot of pain to all involved. Frustration abounds if a volunteer is rigid and refuses to adapt to their new environment or was not properly informed of what to expect and what is expected of them.

“I can’t stress the importance of that formation with Lauren (Hichaaba, Director of the Cagliero project) and Romina (Martiniello, Assistant Director of the Cagliero project). They really make us understand that we are going to a new place and because we’re only there for a short time, we’re not there to turn the country around or flip its culture,” muses John, “even if we don’t agree or find it hard ourselves to adapt.”

Of course, a journey such as this doesn’t come without significant changes to the individual. Some of them seem fairly mundane. Having only ever worked part time and lived with his parents, John has found that he is capable of work in a full-time capacity and is quite capable of dressing himself. In fact, during a recent visit from his parents and sister, it was with a sense of surrealism that he realized that he was the responsible adult of the group; responsible for their safety, ensuring they had enough to eat, making sure they knew how to behave, double checking they wore culturally appropriate clothing – the whole lot!

Having crossed the half way mark John’s stay in Cambodia, questions started to arise that led to even more “out of character” behaviour. What he should do next year in terms of study or work were clouding his brain, and the anxiety associated with unknowing was a constant presence. One night, after the customary night prayer, he returned to the chapel, in complete silence. Only the faintest flickers of light amongst the inky blackness of the room around him could be seen, and it was here that John found a new sense of awareness, an appreciation of his place in a big wide world.

“I finally felt pretty good about just going with the flow (of the school) as I really took time to think about all the boys I was looking after and how they must have been feeling over the last 18 years, and realized that ‘everything will be alright’ in a sense, which brought peace”. There are Buddhist teachers who are firm followers of their faith, yet also say that they are ‘followers of Don Bosco!’ There is, of course, a simple wisdom in this: Don Bosco’s method of loving kindness and presence will not just follow John in whatever paths he treads, it will be explicitly a part of the mark left by John in every step that he takes for the rest of his days.



Salesian Schools

“Education is a thing of the heart”

(Don Bosco)



Dominic College Glenorchy

Founded 1946

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Dominic College is a Catholic co-educational school providing education for students from Kindergarten to Year 10, located in Glenorchy, Tasmania.

www.dominic.tas.edu.au



Don Bosco Technical Centre Alafua

Established 1988

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Don Bosco Technical Centre is a boy's school providing technical education located in Alafua, Samoa.

P O Box 124, Apia, Samoa



Dunlea Centre Engadine

Founded 1939

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco since 1952

Australia's Original Boys' Town. Dunlea Centre is a Year 7 to 10 co-educational Special Residential and Day School and Family Preservation Service Agency located in Engadine, New South Wales

www.dunleacentre.org.au



Don Bosco College Salelologa

Founded 2011

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Don Bosco College is a Catholic co-educational High School and Vocational School providing technical education located in Salelologa, Samoa.

P O Box 7125 Salelologa, Savai'i, Samoa



Nagle College Bairnsdale

Founded 1958

Governed by the Diocese of Sale

Nagle College is a Catholic co-educational school offering an engaging and diverse curriculum for students from Year 7 to Year 12, located in Bairnsdale, Victoria.

www.nagle.vic.edu.au



Salesian College Chadstone

Founded 1957

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Salesian College Chadstone is a Catholic School for boys in the Salesian tradition, providing education for students from Years 7 to 12.

www.salesian.vic.edu.au



Salesian College Sunbury

Founded 1927

Governed by the Salesians of Don Bosco

Salesian College Sunbury is a Catholic co-educational school providing education for students from Year 7 to Year 12, located in Sunbury, Victoria.

www.salesiansunbury.vic.edu.au



St John Bosco College Engadine

Founded 1978

Governed by the Archdiocese of Sydney

St Bosco College is a Catholic co-educational school providing education for students from Year 7 to 12, located in Engadine, New South Wales.

www.boscocollege.nsw.edu.au



St Joseph's College Ferntree Gully

Founded 1965

Governed by the Association of Canonical Administrators of Bayswater, Belgrave, Boronia, Ferntree Gully and Scoresby Parishes

St Joseph's College is a Catholic boy's school providing education for students from Year 7 to 12, located in Ferntree Gully, Victoria.

www.stjosephs.com.au



St Mark's College Port Pirie

Founded 1957

Governed by the Diocese of Port Pirie

St Mark's College is a Catholic co-educational school providing education for students from Reception to Year 12, located in Port Pirie, South Australia

www.stmarkspirie.catholic.edu.au



Xavier College Gawler

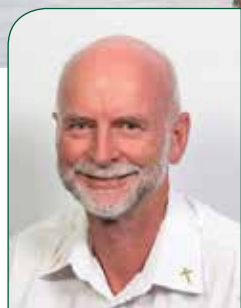
Founded 1995

Governed by the Archdiocese of Adelaide

Xavier College is a Catholic co-educational school providing education for students from Year 8 to 12 (Year 7 to 12 from 2019), located in Gawler, South Australia.

www.xavier.catholic.edu.au

40th anniversary celebration at St John Bosco College



Fr Peter Carroll

Peter is the Chaplain to St John Bosco College and the Dunlea Centre in Engadine, NSW

2018 marks the 40th anniversary of St John Bosco College in Engadine, Sydney. To mark such a momentous occasion, two Masses were organized; a full college Mass at St Mary's Cathedral and a 'Back to Bosco' Mass and BBQ for former students, staff and friends of the College. Both Masses were concelebrated by Fr John Briffa (the original founder of the college), present College Chaplain Fr Peter Carroll, Fr Leo Choi and former principals Fr John Papworth and Fr Bernie Graham.

To get the entire current college community to the Mass at the cathedral, a specially chartered train had been organized, with many staff and students remarking that it was an experience they won't soon forget! The 'Back to Bosco' Mass and BBQ were held in recently built College Hall.

As a part of the mass for ex-students, tours were offered to show off all the recently completed developments. These included a Multi-purpose Hall with an attached Fitness Lab; a Technological & Applied Studies Block and previous facilities that had been refurbished and converted into music rooms, a recording studio, a drama space, a science lab and a number of bright modern classrooms.

These two key landmark events were held with the intent of allowing all participants "to honour our past, enjoy the present and fill us with hope for our future".



Salesian Family Dinner 2018



Ann-Maree Pagan

Ann-Marie is a much loved teacher and REC at St. Joseph's Ferntree Gully, and has now taken on even more responsibilities as a member of the inaugural Salesian Family

To help commemorate Don Bosco's 203rd birthday, the inaugural "Salesian Family" dinner took place on 25 August. It was an opportunity for the many aspects of the Salesian family to come together and celebrate their common vocation to the mission and vision of St John Bosco.

Festivities began with the celebration of Mass by provincial Fr Will Matthews at St Margaret Mary's in Brunswick North, concelebrated with many other SDBs. Afterwards, the celebration moved into the parish hall, where the hospitality and fraternity of our great Salesian family was on full display. Generously hosted by the parishioners and parish priest Fr Anthony Quang, a smorgasbord of food and drink was on offer, as well as a game or two! Upon entering, all participants had been assigned a "lucky number", and if they were fortunate to have their number called out, all kinds of prizes were on offer. In his hilarious capacity as emcee, Fr Anthony ensured that everyone had a laugh, the biggest of which came when he announced the grand prize - a couple of hours of personal servitude carried about by Fr Provincial!

The Australian Salesian Missions Office was also heavily involved in the preparation of the night, conducting a fundraising raffle to support two student scholarships in Samoa. The Missions Office also decorated the hall, showing off some of the highlights from their burgeoning Facebook page.

The parish hall was filled to capacity, as friends from around the many Salesian works mingled and caught up with each other. "It was so good just to spend time with people you usually only see at the office or in some other work setting" said Michael Gartland, journalist with the Salesian Bulletin. "Being Salesian is more than just hard work, it's about having fun and sharing joy amongst one another... and nights like this really go a long way to making that happen."

Earlier this year Fr Will Matthews established the Salesian Family Team to support the Delegate, Fr Elio Capra, in the mission to build up the opportunities to share and celebrate each work that currently occurs in the province. The "Salesian Family Team" together with Fr Will hope to ignite a renewal and a shared understanding of all the great works that are ongoing in the province, acknowledging the incredible hard work of the people that make these works possible and creating opportunities for them to gather together and celebrate Don Bosco's joyful charism.

Salesian Family Mandalay



Just prior to the Salesian Family Day, I was privileged to travel to Myanmar to represent the Australia-Pacific Province at a regional meeting for the Salesian Family. Thirty-one people from all over the region came together at the Salesian Retreat Centre in Anisakan Village to discuss the importance of the Salesian Family, the need for communication and animation across all the groups that make up the Salesian Family and how the different arms could learn from each other.

Each day began early with prayers, mediation and Mass.

Over the three days, the areas put forth for our consideration were the Salesian Family, the Past Pupils and the Co-operators. In the discussions we shared our current experiences of the Salesian Family, how things operate and ways that may inspire and help a renewed understanding of how we can collaborate and raise awareness of this part of our Salesian charism.

It was an enriching experience to meet other Salesians, Priests, Sisters, Co-operators, Past Pupils and many others. Each evening also included a celebration of culture with music, dance and prayer: a wonderful opportunity to get a glimpse of the very generous spirit of the Anisakan community and of the culture of Myanmar.

Thanks

We thank all those who attended the evening and joined the celebration of our work, including representatives of the SDBs, FMAs, Co-operators, Salesian College Sunbury, Salesian College Chadstone, St Joseph's Ferntree Gully, Nagle College, Salesian Missions Office, Salesian Provincial Office, Cagliero Project, ASYC, Don Bosco Youth Centre (Brunswick), Don Bosco Retreat Centre (Lysterfield), Don Bosco Camp (Dromana), Salesian Past Pupils, Youth groups and the Parish of St Margaret Mary (North Brunswick).

Spiritual encounters on Project Mornese



Sr Faye Aboghazaleh

Faye is a key member of staff at the Don Bosco Youth and Recreation Centre, St Marys, NSW, and a passionate Sydney Swans fan.

During the month of September, I was privileged enough to take part in Project Mornese, a pilgrimage following in the footsteps of Don Bosco and Maria Mazzarello. Our first stop was in Rome, the home and heart of the Church, as well as the institute of the Salesian Sisters.

Every day of the pilgrimage had its own theme, leading to a special moment of insight and reflection. Given that the Project involved sisters from every continent, it was only appropriate that the first theme was that of encountering the Salesian Sisters as a worldwide community! In Rome, we were present at St Peter's Basilica for Sunday Mass and we visited the old ruins of Rome, the Catacombs and the church of St Francis of Assisi. The highlight of Rome was our Wednesday audience with Pope Francis; to be in the presence of the head of the Catholic Church was a very surreal feeling.

Rome also included some significant sites for our Salesian heritage. Our visit to the Basilica of the Sacro Cuore (Sacred Heart) for a celebration of the Eucharist in the room of Don Bosco was a moving experience that allowed us to grasp the struggles Don Bosco had when he visited Rome as a part of his ministry, yet was bedridden for most of his 18-day visit.

Afterwards, our journey moved north to Turin, so we could garner a greater appreciation for the lives of Don Bosco and Maria Mazzarello. The visit to Colle Don Bosco, where Don Bosco was born and raised, was special for me as I was able to take some time to sit in peace and reflect on my own Salesian journey, right in the birthplace of the incredible Salesian story. This feeling was amplified at Valdocco where Don Bosco spent most of his life's work. Here, I was able to contemplate how far the Salesians have come, and what Salesianity means for me in 2018 - this was the place that the missionary disciples of joy and hope, that we are called to be, flourished into life.

After Turin, we travelled for two hours to Mornese, where we spent the last two weeks of our journey, right in the heart of our founder Maria Mazzarello's territory! Our first evening prayer here involved the making of candles, a symbolic reflection of how we must always be rekindling the fire that Maria Mazzarello asks of us. It was also here in Mornese that we were privileged to have an encounter with our Mother General Yvonne, that included the celebration of the Eucharist with her and the European Provincials that had gathered for meetings.

Before our pilgrimage commenced, we had been asked to bring a small amount soil from our home countries with us. During our visit to Mazzarelli, the birthplace of Maria, we laid our soils out in the field together and planted some wheat. We then reflected on how our extraordinary journey from many different origins was one that had turned into a mutual growth for all of us participants. While in Mazzarelli, we also had a Mass with Fr Ángel, Rector Major of the Salesians, as well as a range of SDB provincials and lay people.

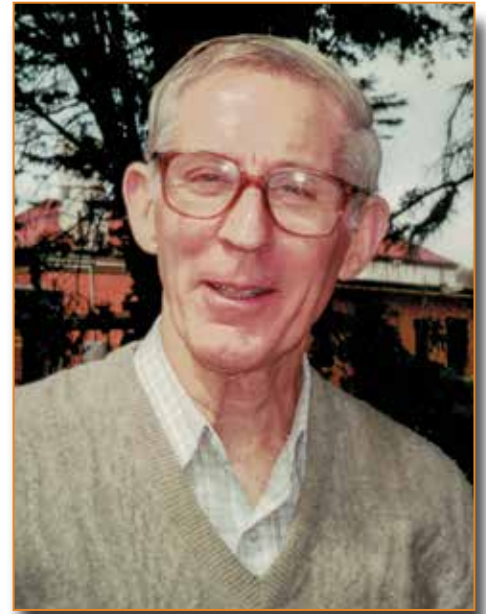
It was also incredibly special to just be able to see and feel all the places that we had heard so much about, through the countless stories passed down to us. We went to the Valponasca where Maria spent many years tending to the vineyards with her father. We walked by the old well that Maria used to gather water in the early hours of the morning, before she would go to church.

I will cherish the memories of prayer and reflection, of drama and thanksgiving but, for me, an especially significant memory will be the incredible amount of service and hospitality that we found at each community and every church or chapel that prayed at or visited. This beautiful hospitality facilitated a real encounter with Maria Mazzarello and Don Bosco and showed me a different side of our Salesian heritage.



A life worth living:

Vale Fr Brian Diamond SDB



"As a young man I gave my heart to India. I do not intend taking it back."

Thus spoke Fr Brian Kevin Diamond who passed to his eternal reward on Sunday, 16 September, at Don Bosco Alaknanda, New Delhi. He was a genuine missionary, who loved his adopted land and its people. He lived with dedication and love 64 years of missionary life.

Father Brian was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1933. After responding to the call of the Lord and taking the first religious vows as a Salesian of Don Bosco in 1954, he as a 21-year-old was sent with a group of 13 from the Australian Province for initial formation at Sonada, India. After visiting some of the missions of Assam, especially Guwahati and Shillong, and witnessing the wonderful technical training being imparted to the poor tribal youth, he decided to volunteer for a missionary life. He wrote: "I found myself warmly accepted and even welcomed by the Indian people. Over the years I have imbibed their culture and friendly ways. In short I found myself much at home in their midst."

So, he, with his friend Fr Leo Heriot, requested permission to remain in India. While Fr Leo was involved with the formation of young Salesians, being for many years Novice master, Fr Brian always had a keen interest in technical education. Such interest was influenced by Don Bosco who began his apostolate running trade schools for poor and abandoned youth. It proved to be his main missionary apostolate in India. Over the next 30 years, apart from 12 years involvement in the formation of aspirants, he would be actively involved in technical schools and colleges in North India in Kolkata, New Delhi, and Ranchi.

Many past pupils of these technical schools eventually emigrated to Australia and on Fr Brian's visits back to Australia, they would gather in numbers to welcome him with enthusiasm: an experience which he always found affirming and encouraging. "They are extremely grateful for the opportunities which have enabled them to 'come up in life'. They show deep appreciation for Don Bosco's all-round human and Christian formation which together with an academic or technical education has enabled them to take a meaningful place in church and society." For this reason, he wrote, "I will always follow Don Bosco to my last breath! He has been responsible for a vast multitude of dedicated disciples, not only Salesians but also laypeople, who have perpetuated and lived his spirit throughout the world."

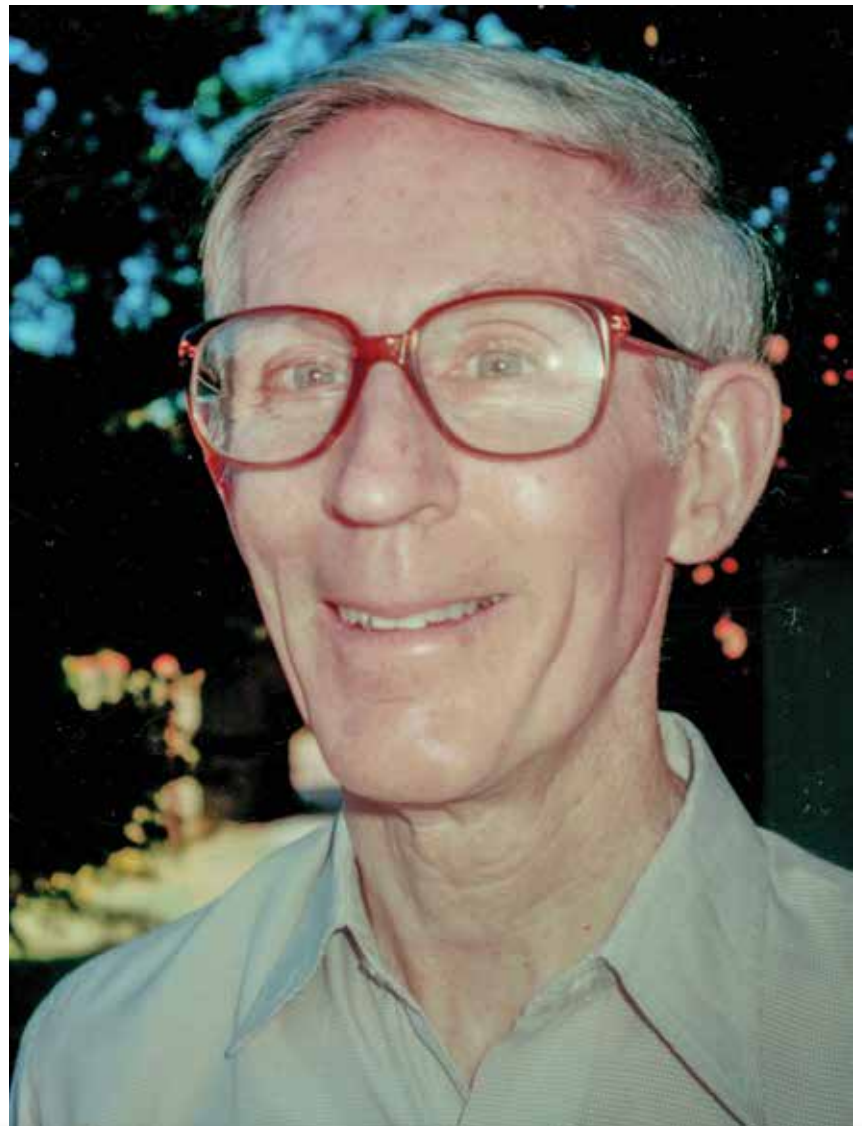
In 2015 he visited Australia to see his ailing sister Beth. During that visit he suffered his second stroke at the community table and was hospitalised. It was suggested to him that he could remain among us but nothing would keep him from his beloved India. After three months of rehabilitation, he returned with some difficulty to his Alaknanda Community, Delhi, “to be at home”. And at home he was.

Despite the impairment of his stroke, he remained cheerful, resigned and prayerful and spending as much time as he could with his confreres and sitting with the students in recreation time.

A truly great Salesian and Missionary. He was farewelled at a Requiem Mass celebrated by Archbishop Emeritus of Delhi, Vincent Concessao, with approximately 100 priests concelebrating. After Mass, Fr Brian’s coffin was carried from the church to the Salesian Cemetery Okhla by the young priests of the Delhi province who were taught by Fr Brian during their Salesian formation.

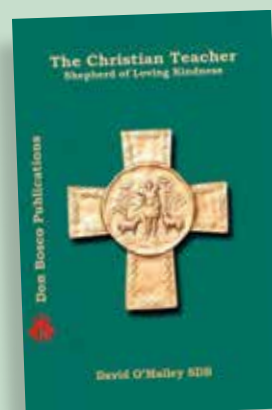
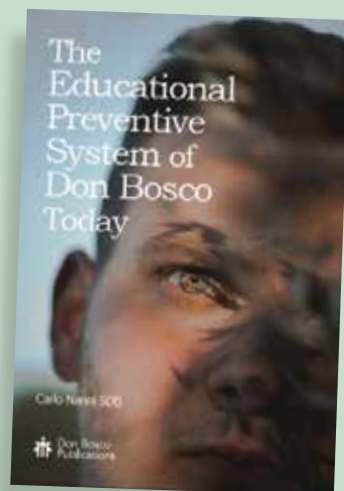
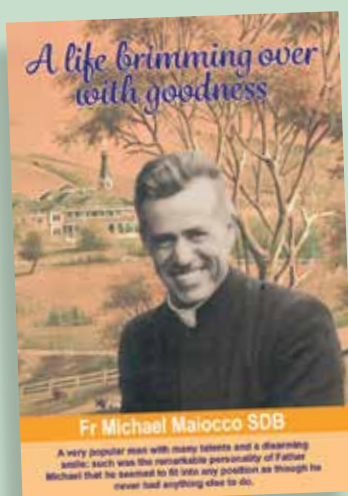
May the soil of his beloved country, India, forever rest gently upon him.

May his soul rest in peace!



Salesian On-Line Book Shop

New Books!



We have many wonderful authors in the Salesian Family who have published numerous books. Our on-line shop gives Australians an easy way to find them all. The Book Shop on the Province website will sell a wide range of Salesian and Catholic books.

Available at: www.salesians.org.au/bookshop

Cagliero 10 year reunion



On Saturday the 27th of November, the Cagliero Project celebrated 10 years of international volunteer placements. Over 40 people gathered to participate in Mass held at St John's, Clifton Hill, celebrated by vice-provincial and Cagliero board chairperson Fr Bernie Graham, as well as Fr John Papworth, (board member), Fr Mosese Tui (rector and parish priest in Massey, Auckland) and Fr Frank Moloney (Provincial at the time of Cagliero's inauguration).

As such, pre-recorded messages from volunteers who could not make it were played, as well as messages from some of the children in the overseas countries that the Cagliero project has served. Fr Mosese also spoke on behalf of Samoa, where he had been stationed and seen many Cagliero volunteers.

Cagliero Project

For ten years lay volunteers have been formed and sent on long-term placements to work with young people in overseas missions.

Afterwards, the celebration moved to a nearby function room, as past volunteers caught up with one another, shared what they had been doing since their overseas placements and fondly reminisced about their volunteer days. Proceedings were hosted by Cagliero Directors Ms Lauren Hichaaba and Ms Romina Martiniello, who had worked hard to ensure that not only volunteer voices would be heard, but also the voices of the host communities and even those of the young people whom the volunteers had worked with.

In 10 years, countless young people around the world have been served. On top of this, however, an incredibly affectionate, tight-knit community has been formed, forged through the similar experiences as volunteers representing the Salesians of Don Bosco. As one volunteer said:

"The major thing I got from my experience was it taught me how to love more. By actively practising Salesian values of listening and being present, it taught me how to love young people through loving unconditionally... Being in Zambia helped me to appreciate life and what is and is not so important."



Nojiriko, Japan

Lord, give me this water

By Fr Daisuke Kitagawa SDB



Sixty-Six boys aged 10-18 took part in the annual bible camp, encouraging young people to find their true vocation

It was by the shores of the Sea of Galilee that Jesus called the first of his apostles. By the shores of Lake Nojiriko, located 280 km to the North of Tokyo, Jesus continues to call young people to him through a Salesian lifestyle. Sixty-six boys aged 10-18 took part in the recent bible camp, an annual event aimed at encouraging young people to find their true vocation.

The program was driven by the theme “Lord, give me this water” and included Eucharistic celebration, rosary, group work, bible study, recreation, mountain climbing, sharing of vocation stories, meditation and reconciliation. A large number Salesian priests, lay brothers, seminarians, post-novices, novices and aspirants take part in the program, many of whom trace their own roots back to their early days attending the camp.

Only 1% of Japan’s population identifies itself as Christian and so it is quite hard for young people to find fellow young Catholics in their schools and communities. This makes it very difficult to find safe spaces in which they can openly discuss their faith and their life’s journey, and so the camp plays a vital role in allowing these young people to understand that they can walk as sons of Christ with dignity, pride and joy in their daily life.



Boroko, Papua New Guinea

“Wokabaut Wantaim”

By Dr Catherine Nongkas



The celebration of cultures in Papua New Guinea is very important for our young people

Recently, Don Bosco Technological Institute (DBTI) in Boroko staged a cultural show with the theme “Harim Tok, Wokabaut Wantaim”, which, in the native tongue, translates to “Let us cultivate the art of listening and accompaniment”.

The cultural show was in fact the concluding celebration of Don Bosco Week, which had been a week of festivities, consisting of sport and technological contests, fashion and talent shows and other such activities for young people to express themselves.

“The celebration of cultures in Papua New Guinea is very important for our young people. As a people, we need to maintain our indigenous cultures to anchor the young people within their culture, so that they do not lose their cultural practices, dances and songs, food and language,” said Dr Catherine, principal of DBTI.

Over 20 groups took part in the cultural show, covering the four regions and 21 provinces of Papua New Guinea. The students had spent a long time preparing their performances and so it was with great pride and skill that they displayed their culture through dance to one another.

Throughout the entire week, all students displayed and reflected on the spirit of the theme as their teams performed and worked together to achieve the targets that had been set.



Chiang Mai, Thailand

Coffee, young people and Don Bosco!

By Fr Philip Somchai SDB



DiBosco Coffee was opened in response to youth in need

DiBosco Coffee is the project of Mr Phaisan, a man from rather poor beginnings. Twenty years ago, he graduated from Don Bosco Technical School in Bangkok and ever since, has made a life based on his three loves: coffee, poor young people and Don Bosco!

DiBosco Coffee was opened in response to youth in need. Short courses are offered with the intent of getting young people trained as soon as possible (without sacrificing quality), so as to get them into the work force.

Mr Phaisan explained: "We control the whole process from coffee trees through to the table, from harvesting, to roasting and brewing. We control each process with machines and the human skills of our team, ensuring consistent quality. Our products have been recognised by five star hotels, cafes and movie theatres".

In bringing this project to life, Mr Phaisan twice travelled to Italy: first on pilgrimage to Becchi and Valdocco, and then to Florence to obtain a coffee specialist international certificate. DiBosco is indeed a global brand, as it has expanded from a single outlet on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, to another in Thailand, as well as outlets in New Zealand and England!



Jakarta, Indonesia

Bible Quiz: Family Edition

By Fr Peter Tukan SDB



Seventy-two parishes compete in family bible quiz

For the Catholic Church in Indonesia, every September is the Month of the Bible. To help celebrate it this year, the Archdiocese held a competition open to all its 72 parishes - a family based quiz contest!

Each parish held its own contest to determine which family would earn the honour of representing the parish at the wider competition. The contest in the St John Bosco parish was organised by Fransiska Murly who is in charge of bible ministry in the parish. The parish's contest was quite close, as all families showed considerable ability in answering the questions. This also meant the spectators had a lot to offer: they cheered and applauded throughout the contest, all day long!

When announcing the winners, Fransiska also acknowledged the competence of the participating families; often when one member of a family could not answer, other members of the same family were able to jump in and help out!

In the end, the winner of the quiz came from the community of Saint Jerome, "Santo Hironimus".



San Fernando, The Philippines

“Don Bosco and the Lost Boys”

By Alex Cadiz

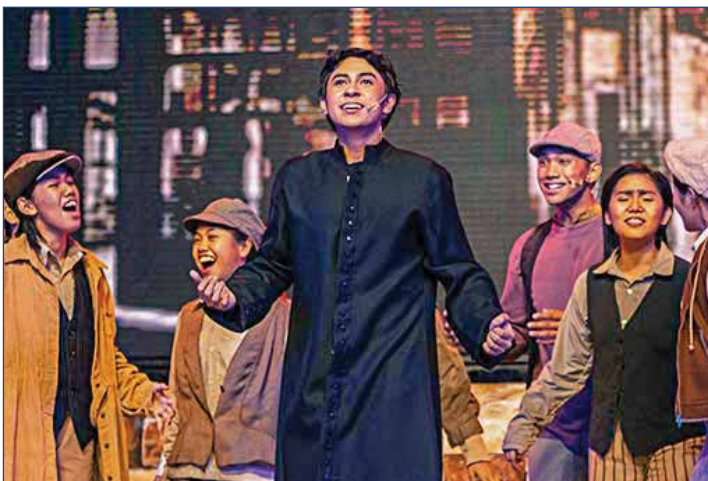


The musical “Don Bosco and the Lost Boys”

“Run! Jump! Make noise, but do not sin” is Don Bosco’s famous rhythmic refrain for the young. Recently, Don Bosco Academy-Bacolor in conjunction with producer Teatru Kapampangan and the Laus Group of Companies collaborated to host the original musical “Don Bosco and the Lost Boys” It was directed by Mr Andy Alviz, a well-known director of different musical plays.

The musical revolved around the early life and vocation of St John Bosco, bringing his story to the audiences in a new way. All songs and choreography were original compositions, lifting everyone’s spirit and appreciation for Don Bosco.

The musical was very well received. With the closing curtain came the thunderous applause of a standing audience. Notable amongst these were Archbishop Florentino Lavarias and Archbishop Emeritus Paciano Basilio Aniceto, as well as Fr Anthony Paul Bicomong SDB, FIN Provincial Superior.



Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Don Bosco Tech School

By Fr Charles Michael Arun SDB



The new school year begins at Don Bosco

In Cambodia, the new year begins mid-October and so the school year for the Don Bosco Tech School in Phnom Penh, along with the 14 other Salesian-affiliated schools in the country.

The students were excited as their time at Don Bosco Tech began with their first ever good morning talk, followed by the allotment a little slice of home - a bunk to call their own in a dormitory of over 100 boys. No fewer than 20 of Cambodia’s provinces were represented amongst the new students, as they mingled and began to accustom to their new study and, indeed, roommates!

The welcome and orientation for the 210 first year students was carefully prepared by the pastoral team of the school, with the assistance of the leaders of the 2nd year students. The introduction included a brief look at Don Bosco’s way of doing things (including the preventive system), the traditions of the school and even greetings and tips from successful Alumni.

Amidst the fast-changing socio-political scenario of Cambodia, the Don Bosco Technical School community is looking forward with hope, and ensuring that the young people who pass through its doors will be agents of change for the betterment of the country.



Lusaka, Zambia Share the Light

Source: ANS Lusaka, Sophie Astles



Porridge Club

Share the Light is a charity organization created and maintained by the bonds formed by the staff and students of Salesian College Farnborough, England, with young people in Zambia. The project emphasises the importance of empowerment by supporting several initiatives and is based on the vision of Don Bosco's four keys for working with young people: Home, School, Church and Playground.

The City of Joy is an orphanage in Mazabuka, home to an ever-growing number of girls and young women who, for a variety of circumstances, are unable to live with their families. Share the Light aims to help cater for the medical requirements of the girls and young women, provide clothing and school uniforms, school equipment, and help to meet their nutritional needs. In addition, it helps to provide transport to enable groups from the City of Joy to travel out together and in safety, as well as in the maintenance of fencing to keep their boundaries secure.

The Porridge Club's concept is simple: providing as many of the 700 pupils of the Luyobolola Community Primary School as possible with a nutritious meal every day. The porridge provided at the school has had a welcome side effect on top of providing vital nutrients; attendance is up and so are the students' ability to concentrate and learn.



Rukago, Burundi Building futures for young women

Source: ANS Rukago



Buterere focuses on the educational, vocational and professional development of women

In the eyes of the global media, Burundi seems to be a forgotten country. According to a UN report, on top of being one of the poorest nations, Burundi is "the second most unhappy country in the world. Burundi is facing a humanitarian crisis characterized by economic deterioration, extreme food insecurity and a malaria epidemic, and, yet, it is in this lost corner of the world, that the Salesians bring hope to the people, through their work with young women.

"Buterere", a Salesian vocational training centre, focuses on the educational, vocational and professional development of women. This training opportunity has allowed 40 young people to receive quality training in the hotel and restaurant sectors, facilitating their entry into the labour market. In addition, an employment office was created, which accompanies and assists the students who have completed the courses.

The centre has been provided with all the equipment and materials necessary for practical lessons in the kitchen and in the hall. Thanks to the collaboration of various public and private bodies in the area, various rooms have been renovated, and refrigerators, kitchen utensils, foods and other related goods delivered. The centre has also begun to offer professional training courses, literacy and recreational and leisure activities that can all be undertaken in a safe environment.



Medellin, Colombia

Accompaniment through the National Salesian Games

Source: ANS Medellin



The 13th edition of the National Salesian Games in Colombia

Despite the staggering rise in the quality and quantity of technology, there are still only but a few children who wish to deprive themselves of time for sport! Indeed, at the 13th edition of the National Salesian Games in Colombia, participation was well over 300 people, aged between 15-17. Over 30 teams participated in volleyball, indoor soccer, basketball and table tennis.

Over 1000 people were gathered for the opening ceremony of the games, which included players, families, students past and present, as well as members of the public and, of course, Salesians. The opening ceremony included an artistic show that featured dance, song, and a dramatization of some of the key moments of Don Bosco's life.

Central to the whole games were the values promoted by Don Bosco: joy and friendship. "I created myself with all the games possible: horse, swings, sticks, gymnastics," he says in his Memoirs of the Oratory. For this saint of youth, sport was an essential part of the educational project. He made the courtyard a close and spontaneous meeting place, suitable for personal relationships and friendship.

For the Salesians, then, it is undoubtable that games and sport can characterize the educational environment, strengthening the fruits of accompanying the young through their developmental periods. It will be impossible for all who were involved to forget these words from Pope Francis: "With sport, build the culture of the encounter between everyone, for a world of peace."



Lille, France

Summer camp among the young Roma

Source: Don Bosco Aujourd'hui



During the summer break ESPERE runs a three week camp-like discovery and play to Roma children in the slums of Lille

ESPERE (Salesian Hope for Roma Children) is an organization that is dedicated to promoting the education of Roma children according to the pedagogy of Don Bosco. During the summer break each year, the organization spends three consecutive weeks offering intimate moments of sharing, informal education, discovery and play to Roma children in the camp-like slums of Lille.

The program ran every afternoon and covered a wide range of activities, such as educational games, board games, artistic workshops, excursions (like a visit to the zoo), music education, knitting classes, mini-courses in mechanics and even a night tour of the city of Lille. From the beginning of this initiative, the welcoming spirit of the families was warm, and soon there was an atmosphere of mutual trust that broke down prejudice and facilitated true sharing and closeness in every circumstance.

The animators of the program were about to experience the destitution of the deplorable living conditions that the Roma children and their families live in. However, they also discovered the 'riches' of the Roma: hospitality, courtesy and the simple joy of being alive. In everything they did, the animators were aiming to transmit the pedagogy and spirit of Don Bosco onto the young people they encountered



Bethlehem

International nativity museum



The International Nativity Museum lies at the heart of the town of Bethlehem, located on the ground floor of the historical Salesian convent of Bethlehem. The Museum has a collection of over 200 nativity scenes of different styles and dimensions from different cultures around the world – a showcase of customs, liturgy, rites and culture. Each nativity in the museum is inspiring and unique in and of itself, portraying the birth of Christ through a myriad of cultural and artistic lenses. Visitors can witness the artistic taste of almost all the cultures the world at the same time, as all continents of the world and many indigenous cultures are represented.

Endorsed by UNESCOs and sustained by the Palestinian National Authority and the Italian Ministry of foreign affairs, the Museum has been officially inaugurated on Christmas Eve in 1999. All nativities on display have been kindly donated by international artists, museums and private collectors. Today, the International Nativity Museum welcomes Pilgrims every day and guided tours are provided by the Salesians themselves in a variety of languages.

www.salesianbethlehem.com/museum

