



Australian

Salesian Bulletin

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A vision for today's young people



Young people are the ones who hold the future

Dear young people of the world

I know that you, young people, don't want to be duped by a false freedom, always at the beck and call of momentary fashions and fads. I know that you aim high. Is that true, or am I wrong?

Don't leave it to others to be the protagonists of change.

You, young people, are the ones who hold the future! I ask you to be builders of the world, to work for a better world. It is a challenge, yes, it is a challenge. Do you accept it?

Pray with me that you, young people, may respond generously to your own vocation and mobilise for the great causes of the world.

Pope Francis

April 2017



Cover

Pope Francis has called young people to build a better world as a result of their efforts, and generosity, to make their voices heard, and to make a mark.

Photo by
Alessandra Tarantino

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Fr Frank Freeman SDB
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A vision for today's young people



Recently Pope Francis has issued to today's young people a call to action, a challenge and a vision. "Dear young people, we didn't come into this world to vegetate, to take it easy, and to make our lives a comfortable sofa to fall asleep on. The times we live in do not call for young couch potatoes, but for young people with walking shoes. No, we came for another reason: To leave a mark.'

We, in the Christian Communities need your youthful idealism with walking shoes on or better sneakers to shake us out of the comfort zones we have created for ourselves. We offer you the following vision of the Christian life with all its enriching life-giving elements. It comes with life-long guarantee, underwritten by Christ Himself. "Do this and you will live..." (Luke 10:27)

◆ Amid the many personal difficulties and temptations which surround you, trust in God's unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness; discover a loving God by living in the state of forgiveness in what is generally an unforgiving world. This is the surest way of living in His presence.

◆ While many around you are caught up in nets of frustration and aimlessness, even to the point of ending it all, stand firm and give meaning and purpose in life by Gospel living.

◆ Surrounded by friction and violence as you are, be peacemakers promoting reconciliation and healing in families and communities. You yourselves will find peace. You have Christ's assurance: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

◆ Because we are bequeathing to you a much polluted world, be good and better stewards of God's creation. With all your youthful enthusiasm join the forces crusading against the selfish destruction of the earth's resources so you may leave your children a cleaner planet to inhabit.

◆ We have created a materialistic consumer society which is perpetrating a grand hoax that possessions and power give happiness. Resist it and expose it. You will regain your freedom by living a life of simplicity freed from the shackling chains of consumerism. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

◆ You are growing to maturity in a world that has little respect for human life and basic rights. Become passionate promoters of human dignity, personal worth and equality of all people by demanding 'in season and out of season' the recognition that people are created in the image and likeness of God.

◆ In these days of unemployment, discrimination and poverty, become champions of social justice by making sure that the essential human and material needs of all people are met in a world free of poverty and oppression of all kinds.

◆ Amid the selfishness and cruel sensitivities of authorities and individuals, be compassionate and serve those in need. You will need to develop a special sensitivity to human suffering and fragility, and then the courage to respond. "Blessed are the merciful for mercy shall be theirs."

◆ You have witnessed a tragic breakdown in loving relationships and the abandonment of life-long commitments. Do not give up nor despair. You have it within you to change this sorry state of affairs. Develop loving relationships built upon commitment, faithfulness, honesty and a concern for the other person. "Blessed are the pure in spirit for they shall see God."

It has been said by a modern sociologist that, if you want to get a message across, wrap it up in a person. May the Gospel message of Christ be wrapped up in your idealism and youthful enthusiasm. May it ripple out from you to many others thus creating a better world for you and your children. God, grant it may be so.



Editor

Frank Freeman SDB,
editor of the Australian
Salesian Bulletin

LIKE POPE FRANCIS

The message of the Rector Major Fr Angel Fernandez Arttime



“My dear young people:
I trust in you and I pray for
you. Have the courage to
be counter-cultural.”

Pope Francis

In a world where quite often we silence God and where He is pushed aside, we need the witness of young people for whom the Lord is truly the Lord of their lives and the path to happiness and authenticity.

I recently returned from the Antilles, or more exactly, from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Cuba, where I encountered some magnificent young people.

Just like Pope Francis, and I know just like many of you, dear readers and friends, I trust in the young; I pray for the young; I encourage them to be courageous, to be the protagonists of their own lives, and to swim against the tide – to be countercultural.

I met with many bright young people who are capable of being animators of other youths, of other boys and girls; young people who were already working or who were still studying while working; young people, who have no qualms about helping with liturgical celebrations as servers, or taking part in a magnificent choir in the church, or performing at the evening recreation, demonstrating their magnificent talents as actors and dancers.

To these young people I say that there are many adults like us who place great hope in them; that there are many adults who encourage them to be courageous in their life, recognizing that the world which we offer them is not an easy one and that opportunities are scarce. I also tell them that this is no fault of their own. We adults, too, must be self-

critical. So, together with Pope Francis, I encourage them to have the strength to “swim against the current,” to be countercultural when the call to be faithful to themselves and to Jesus resounds mightily within their hearts.

Dear young people, the world needs you. It stands in need of those great ideals which are proper to youth and to your youthful dreams. The world, everywhere, now more than ever, needs young people filled with hope and with courage, who do not fear to live, dream and seek a profound and true happiness in which God inhabits their hearts.

I also remind you young people of today that we need you because other young people need you. You are the ones who can best understand and help them because there are many young people who are “tired, bored or disenchanted,” or who simply never get excited about anything. There are young people who are very weak and fragile, and need other young people to speak to them about life using their language, so as to show them that there are other paths and possibilities open to them. They need others who will help them truly believe, that running away from the challenges of life is never a solution.

Hence, my invitation in these pages seeks to help many young people of the world to be generous. It is also a call to us adults to stand beside them, place our bets on them, believe in them, trust in them and pray for them – for those whose faith is alive, as well as for those who are seeking or simply feel lost. God never abandons any of His sons or daughters. Be happy!



**Fr Ángel
Fernandez
Artime**

Fr Ángel during his recent visit to Cuba



Build a better world

A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity.

Pope Francis



My Dear Young People,

I am pleased to announce that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to treat the topic: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." I wanted you to be the centre of attention, because you are in my heart. Today, the Preparatory Document is being presented, a document which I am also entrusting to you as your "compass" on this journey.

I am reminded of the words which God spoke to Abraham: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Gen 12:1). These words are now also addressed to you. They are words of a Father who invites you to "go", to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

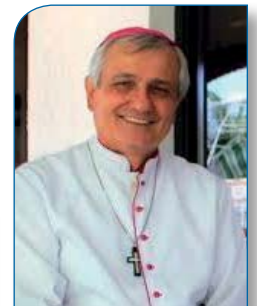
In Krakow, at the opening of the last World Youth Day, I asked you several times: "Can we change things?" And you shouted: "yes!". That shout came from your young and youthful hearts, which do not tolerate injustice and cannot bow to a "throw-away culture" nor give in to the globalization of indifference. Listen to the cry arising from your inner selves! Even when you feel, like the prophet Jeremiah, the inexperience of youth, God encourages you to go where He sends you: "Do not be afraid, [...], because I am with you to deliver you" (Jer 1:8).

A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master. The Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls. St Benedict urged the abbots to consult, even the young, before any important decision, because "the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best." (Rule of St Benedict, III, 3).

Such is the case, even in the journey of this Synod. My brother bishops and I want even more to "work with you for your joy" (2 Cor 1:24). I entrust you to Mary of Nazareth, a young person like yourselves, whom God beheld lovingly, so she might take your hand and guide you to the joy of fully and generously responding to God's call with the words: "Here I am" (cf. Lk 1:38).

With paternal affection,
FRANCIS

Solomon Island Earthquake Victims



**Bishop
Luciano
Capelli**

A 5.2 magnitude earthquake shook the western region of the Solomon Islands on 28 January.

Gizo Bishop Luciano Capelli, a Salesian, said that 63 houses in local villages, built with traditional materials, have been damaged and others will have to be rebuilt. Poor telecommunication infrastructure in the area makes it difficult to quantify the full extent of the damage caused by the earthquake. In Nila (Shortland Islands) the Kindergarten and local water system were completely destroyed. Quakes of such magnitude are common in the region which sits on the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire", a hotspot for seismic activity due to friction between tectonic plates.

Bishop Capelli is seeking support for children and families directly affected by the earthquake. In the short run, he said, supplies such as tarpaulins, water purification tablets, buckets, soap, sanitation products, mosquito nets and tents are needed. "The kindness and support of people abroad strengthens and encourages the local people in the face of adversity, and helps to restore a sense of optimism in families as they recover from their losses. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a real difference," he added.



Donations can be sent to Bishop Capelli via



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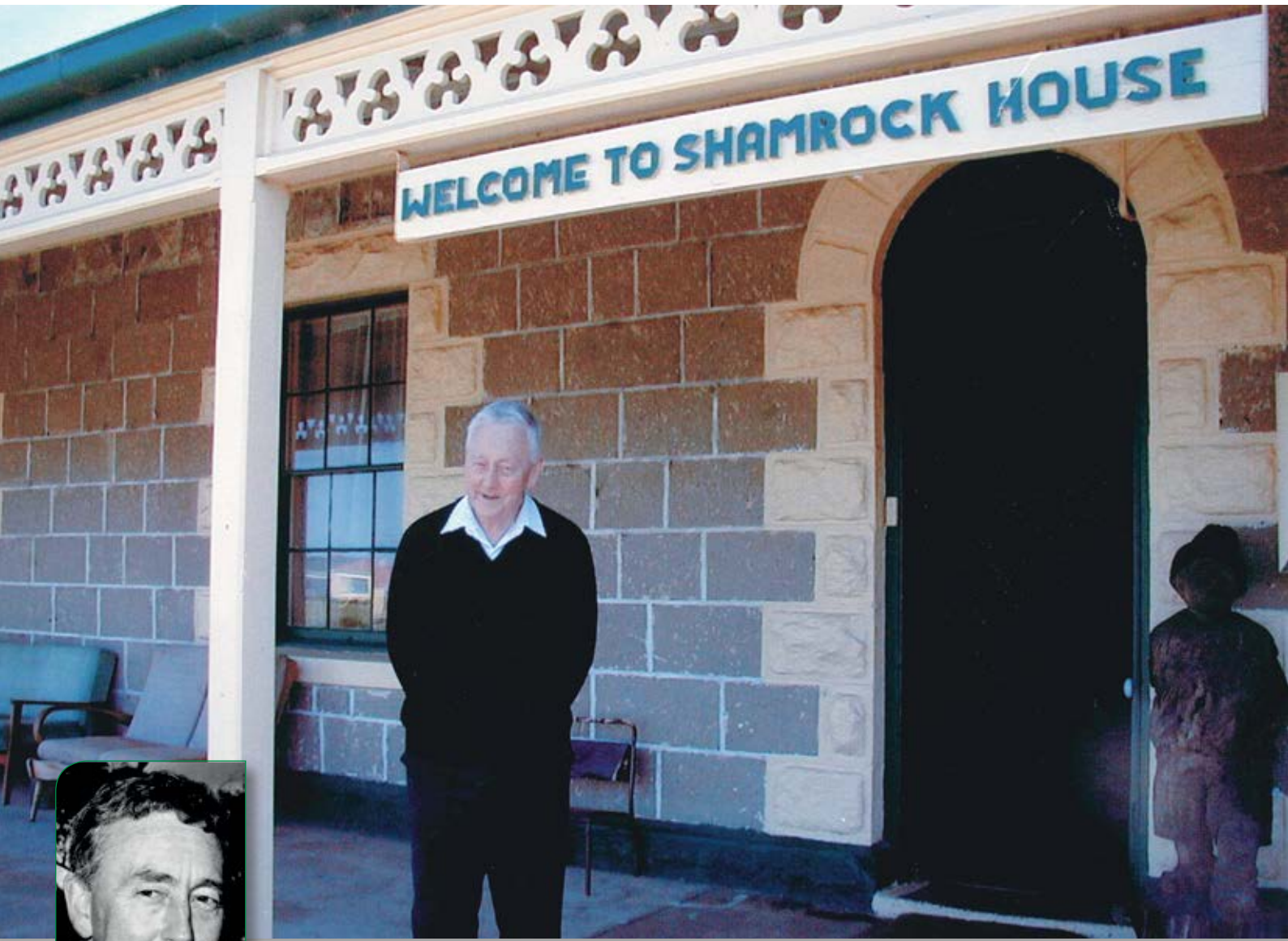
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Bishop Luciano Capelli, 70, was born in Cologna di Tirano, northern Italy.

He has been Bishop of Gizo (western regions of the Solomon Islands) for the past 10 years. About 150,000 people, of whom about 10 per cent are Catholic, live within the Gizo boundaries.

Vale Fr John Murphy



Fr John Murphy SDB

*Born in Middle Park,
Australia, on 15 May
1924*

*Religious Profession at
Sunbury, Australia,
31 January 1942*

*Ordained a Priest at
Turin, Italy, on 2 July 1950*

*Entered Eternal life at
Warrnambool, Australia,
30 April 2017*

Fr John Murphy, who was the oldest Salesian confrere in the Australia-Pacific Province, passed to his eternal reward on Sunday 30 April 2017 at Mercy Place in Warrnambool, Victoria, within a few weeks of his 93rd birthday.

He was a Salesian for 75 years and a priest for 66 years. His Requiem Mass was celebrated at Salesian College Sunbury on Friday 5 May. Father Greg Chambers, the Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province, warmly welcomed members of Fr John's family, the Salesian confreres, the Salesian Sisters and members of the Salesian Family. He extended a special welcome to a group of John's friends who travelled from Warrnambool where for

over 40 years he conducted a place of peace and refuge for the marginalised ones of our society. He became a much beloved figure in the Western District for his love of the poor, the wounded and the destitute. Concelebrating the Requiem Mass were many Salesian priests and the parish priest of Warrnambool West, Fr John Fitzgerald.

Fr Frank Freeman, who from the 1940s had known and worked with Fr John Murphy, gave an overview of his life in the homily. At the end of the Mass the final commendation was given by the Vice-Provincial, Fr Bernie Graham. The students of the college then honoured our departed confrere with a long, very reverent guard of honour which extended from the chapel to the cemetery gates. Fr Peter Varengo, a former novice of Fr John, read the committal prayers at the grave side. May he rest in peace.

The homily

It is a common belief, and I have heard members of the medical profession attest to the validity of the belief, that a few moments before death, there is a burst of intellectual energy when with great clarity of memory the more meaningful moments of life are relived, in quick succession like flicking through a packet of conjurors' cards.

The experience is often likened to a candle when a few moments before it goes out flares up on the last remaining wax.

Be that as it may, after a long life what were the thoughts of Fr John before slipping over in timelessness into the ever-presence of the Divine Reality? In those fleeting moments, did he travel back on a journey of 92 years to 1924 to his birth place and family home in Middle Park? And were those moments enriched by memories of happier years growing up in the wonderful family home of Thomas, his father, Beatrice his mother, and five sisters and four brothers?

Did John re-live in those departing moments the reminiscences of his childhood which he gave to the local newspaper, 'The Standard'? Yes, in that interview he spoke all about the times when, as the second oldest of ten children, he roamed around the home turf with them, playing at the beach and in the park; how they utilised the light pole outside the house as wicket for games of cricket, or yabbing with them at the nearby Albert Park lake; and how they were hearing the roar of the crowds from the nearby AFL games on the weekends, although they never had enough money to attend them.

Did the memories of his primary school days at the Christian Brother College, Middle Park, and secondary studies at the then Parade College arise in those quickly passing moments of review?

For John, entering the priesthood, let alone a religious order, was never a part of plans for his future. Did he recall coming home from school one evening to find a priest with a strange name of Ciantar, talking to his parents? That priest, Fr Joe Ciantar, eventually invited him to visit the Salesian community at Rupertswood during the school holidays. He did so and decided to join the Salesians. Did he smile as he remembered how he took the bait?

Surely his homing thoughts then centred on his early formation years as a Salesian. After spending a year of pre-novitiate involved in youth work at Don Bosco Club and Hostel in 1940, he and three companions – Kevin O'Leary, Wallace Cornell and John Neale – made history in those years. They were members of the first Australian Novitiate in 1941, the first Australian Salesian Religious Professions in 1942, and the first to complete three years philosophical studies at Rupertswood. Again they made history in 1944 by becoming the foundation members of the newly opened Salesian work in Adelaide for disadvantaged youth where they completed their practical training under the gentle guidance of the much revered Fr John Biloni. Well I remember, as a student at the time, the farewell to the youthful team of Brothers departing for Brooklyn Park, South Australia.

Our paths crossed once again when in 1947 he came for a year's theological study at the newly opened Oakleigh community. Certainly his recalling thought must have centred on the years he spent in Italy preparing for his priestly ordination and sweet remembrances of that great day in 1950 when, in Don Bosco's Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, he was ordained by Cardinal Maurilio Fossati.



Fr John Murphy and a faithful friend

On his return from Italy, his first appointment was for six years as Prefect of Studies at Oakleigh. It was there that we linked up again, as members of the small community where only we two were responsible for the intellectual and pastoral care of some 20 aspirants. They were enjoyable years as each day we were in constant contact; he found the role of formation very fulfilling.

After a four years' service as Catechist at Rupertswood, he returned to Oakleigh in 1967 as Rector and Novice Master for another six years. They were busy years for John, filled as they were with many responsibilities. Besides being Rector and Novice Master, he fulfilled various roles in the governance of the province. He, working with the Salesian Sisters, founded the 12 Star Club for girls for which he is still well remembered by many of its former members, especially in Queensland, where he was instrumental in founding Co-operators groups as well. Often letters arrive at the Salesian Bulletin office from former members, now mothers or grandmothers, recalling his newsletters and frequent and much appreciated visits to that state. He was a man of great vision but, as often happens with such men, others find it difficult to share the full realization of such visions.

Yet, as for many of us, when the youthfulness of our ideals passes and the gold of our vocation goes grey, the shadow of the Cross looms large over life. John's brief appointments to the communities of Port Pirie, South Australia, and Glenorchy, Tasmania, failed to give fulfilment, and so he returned to Oakleigh to take up a 14-year responsibility as Director of the Salesian Co-operators.

*Fr John Murphy and
Fr Vigano a former
Rector Major of the
Salesians.*

In those final transient moments did he at last realise that the pebbled road of doubt and misunderstanding, and a sense of non-fulfilment in his vocation, all of which came his way, were, in hindsight, mere stepping stones by which the Lord led him to a very priestly apostolate? An apostolate, which for the next 39 years would occupy his advancing years, namely setting up Shamrock House Crossley not only as a centre for Salesian Co-operators' activities and 12 Star Camps, but also as a place of peace and refuge for the marginalised ones of our society? He became a much beloved figure in the Western District for his love of the poor, the wounded and the destitute.

Several times I visited him there and marvelled at the genuine unadorned hospitality of the place with its doors always open to those in need. One evening I saw him sitting on the veranda talking to a newly arrived group of very troubled souls, and there immediately jumped into my mind the scene narrated in the gospels of Mark (1:32): "At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were deeply troubled. And all gathered together at the door."

Accolades and praise indeed came his way but he shrugged them off as no more than rain drops from a passing shower on the green grass that surrounded Shamrock House. In an interview with The Standard's Weekend Magazine in 1999, he said: "There is a lot of goodness in the people who come here; I find I experience a great affection for them. I find all human beings are good, really; there is no one who is really evil. I accept everybody for who they really are. I try to respect them and treat them with dignity".



Again The Standard reports: “Fr Murphy, as one of those rare gems who is a genuine good person regardless of who walks into Shamrock House, sees them as one of God’s children and is aware of the good in them.” Surely such a priest would easily win the heart of Pope Francis for his predilection for the poor.

But the ravages of time take their toll. With advancing age and ill-health, the time came when, after 39 years calling Shamrock House his home, it was time to retire and, in 2010, Shamrock House was destined for closure.

As his life’s tide ebbed to join the eternal boundless sea, did he remember with gratitude that, since there were no religious personnel to continue his work, groups within the local community did join forces in an effort to establish a new community refuge and continue his work?

His retirement years were healing years: quiet hours filled with prayer when Blessed John Henry Newman’s prayer was surely applicable: “May He support us all day long, till the shades lengthen and evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last.”

Finally at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday 30 April 2017, at Mercy Place in Warrnambool, Victoria, his life’s candle flared up for an instant and then went out, but only, as our faith teaches us, to light a Paschal Candle to burn forever in the presence of God.

Yes, John, this is a moment of reunion with many confreres whose hallowed dust still consecrates a special place in grounds of this College, there to rest with them awaiting the resurrection.

Therefore, Fr John, in the name of all members of the Salesians Family and all those marginalised, disturbed people who over the years you loved and gave back some dignity; in their names and in the Name of God the Father who created you, in the Name of His Son who loved and redeemed you, in the Name of the Holy Spirit who sanctified you with the sacred chrism of baptism and priestly ordination, go, go now in peace.



The students and staff of Salesian College Sunbury pay their respects with the traditional Guard of Honour.

OzBosco 2017



Romina Martiniello

Romina is a current member of the province Youth Ministry Team and the assistant director of the Cagliari Project. In her spare time, she is completing a double bachelor's degree in sociology and global studies at ACU.

For those of us who work in the area of Salesian Youth Ministry in Australia, the planning and running of OzBosco is a rather significant affair. It serves as our national Salesian gathering for youth; the only official occasion where our young people from all across the country are invited to come together in the name of friendship, fun and Don Bosco.

This year OzBosco celebration was hosted by St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully, from 28 to 30 April. About 150 young people came from the many different settings that both the Salesians and Salesian Sisters animate. We came together in the spirit of the 2017 Strenna: 'We are a family: every home a school of life and love.'

From Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, we listened to insightful guest speakers, played awesome games and shared interesting conversations and reflections. We acknowledged the fact that we each come from our own human families and that this experience not only shapes us as individuals, but intimately informs our journey through life as young people as we walk the terrifically tumultuous path to adulthood. On Saturday morning, Lauren Hichaaba gave a very personal keynote presentation that demonstrated the deeply formative nature of her own experience of family. She spoke about her search for love, community and belonging – something that we could all relate to at one level or another.

On Sunday, we heard from a panel of people representing different parts of the Salesian family. Br Tristan O'Brien SDB, Sr Louise McKeogh FMA, Ms Bronwyn Dean, Mr Ashley Trethowan and Mr Michael Walter reflected on their experience of living the Salesian charism. We were able to learn about their distinct experiences, many of which mirrored our own.

In true Salesian style, the weekend was filled with plenty of opportunities to run, jump, laugh and play. On Saturday evening, we all competed in an 'amazing race' around the school, where we were able to showcase our skills and talents to complete some epic team challenges. We were rewarded with an awesome food truck dinner before finishing the night with a celebratory bush dance! What a joy it was to dance and sing together in the name of all that is good about being Salesian!

Our weekend culminated in the celebration of Mass on Sunday afternoon, where we gave thanks for our Salesian friendships and connections, and all the richness, support and depth that they add to our lives. As we all went our separate ways once again, goodbyes were softened by the knowledge that we are family, brothers and sisters in Christ, brought together by the spirit and teachings of Don Bosco.



Final Profession during Parish Feast Day Mass Br Thomas Nattawut Kitsawad



Br Por *sdb*

Br Thomas Nattawut Kitsawad, known as Br Por, is from Thailand and he joined the Salesians in 2010. He has been studying at Don Bosco House, Melbourne, since last year. Currently, he studies first-year theology at the Catholic Theological College (CTC). After his study, Br Por will continue to work among the young back in Thailand.

On Sunday 21 May the Salesian Parish of Our Lady of the Southern Cross (an amalgamation of the parishes of St Joseph's Collingwood and St John's Clifton Hill) celebrated its Feast Day with a special remembrance of Mary, Help of Christians, the National Patronal Feast of Australia. In this Marian context, one so close to the heart of our Founder, Don Bosco, Br Thomas Nattawut Kitsawad (known as Br Por) made his Perpetual Profession. The community was delighted by the presence of Fr Aaron Alcosoba, Vice Provincial and representative of the Thai Province, who received Br Por's vows in a liturgy presided over by the Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province, Fr Greg Chambers.

The liturgical celebration reflected a vibrant multi-cultural community with members of the Salesian Family, along with parishioners from Samoa, Vietnam, Italy and Australia, engaged in a powerful expression of their faith through song, dance, procession and prayer. The students of Don Bosco House Melbourne, from Myanmar, Vietnam, Australia, Madagascar, India, Timor Leste, Cambodia and Thailand, united as one joyful voice with these parishioners in the celebration of Mary our Mother and in support for the commitment of Br Por to live forever as a Salesian; poor, chaste and obedient.

The Parish Priest, Fr Peter Hoang, was very welcoming and, on behalf of the parish, warmly congratulated Br Por on professing his vows. In his speech of gratitude Por was especially indebted to his mother and grandmother for their ongoing love and support and to his Salesian confreres in Thailand and Australia who had nurtured his vocation and provided a model of life-long commitment.

As the Eucharist ended the whole community retired into the Church grounds to continue the celebrations with food, games, music and other festivities. It was a wonderful and truly Salesian celebration and a special memory for Br Por as he continues his journey, and the prospect of essays and exams in the month ahead brings him firmly back to the reality of everyday life.



Fiji: Diaconate Ordination

A day of great joy!

By Fr Kyaw Hoe James SDB

Suva, Fiji, 12 March 2017. In the presence of family members, thirty concelebrants and a packed cathedral, Salesian Brother Tuia Penese Afoa was ordained deacon by His Grace Archbishop Peter Loy Chong. Father Taisali Leului represented the delegate of our newly established Pacific Delegation. At the beginning of the ordination rite, Father Pselio Tevaga, Rector of the Salesian Community in Suva, presented Tuia to the Archbishop for ordination.

Present at this important event was Tuia's father, Inosio Afoa. After the ordination Mass, the tearful father shared that when he heard the news of his son's ordination, he dropped all his plans, booked his ticket and flew across to Fiji last Friday. "I am here," he said with a big smile, "to give my blessing for my boy. He is the first to take up the yoke of charity in the family. He has my heart, my love as a dad."

Tuia is in his last year of theological studies at the Pacific Regional Seminary. We wish him, Vio and Patrick, every blessing in their ministry of love and service for the young and all God's people.

**Australia: Renewal of Temporary Profession**

By Fr Bernie Graham SDB

At the conclusion of a day of Recollection during Holy Week three confreres from Don Bosco House, Melbourne, clerics Nattawut Kitsawad (Thai Province), Dominic Aug Ko Myint and Michael En Lam Pau (Myanmar Province) renewed their Temporary Vows before Fr Phil Gleeson, their Rector. All three are in the process of preparing for their Perpetual Profession which will take place in the coming months.



Don Bosco Winter Camp

Junior Camp

Dates: Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th July 2017

Age: Young people 9 to 13 years old

Senior Camp

Dates: Monday 10th to Thursday 13th July 2017

Age: Young people 13 to 16 years old

Cost: \$155

For more information on the holiday camps and to register, please visit the website

www.donboscocamp.org.au

Or on 03 5987 2692 or dbc@donboscocamp.org.au



The Solomon Islands



May 12, 2017

Dear Friend,

Thank you for the support you have given, over the years, to the two Don Bosco co-educational schools and the Salesian Sisters in Solomon Islands.

The Technical Centre at Henderson, the Rural Training Centre at Tetere and the Sisters' Hostel for Young Women in Henderson are well organised and are providing a very valuable service to students.

They cater for students from families who struggle financially and who rely upon subsistence farming and fishing to survive. Because of the costs involved, financial support from outside is needed to help cover expenses.

The Solomon Islands has a 'young' population demographic with about 55 per cent under the age of 25. The young face great pressures negotiating traditional social structures in a modern, rapidly changing world.

Education and training that leads to meaningful employment is the most effective way for them to escape poverty and disadvantage.

Your support of the Don Bosco Schools in the past, and the future, is very much appreciated.

Wishing you every blessing,

Yours sincerely,
Br Michael Lynch
Director



Fr Srimal Priyanga Silva, Rector of The Don Bosco Technical Institute in Henderson

The Don Bosco Technical Institute, Henderson

The Don Bosco Technical Institute, Henderson, continues to provide basic skills training for more than 365 young men and women.

Certificate Courses are offered in Automotive, Building Construction, Electrical, Information Technology, Maintenance Fitting and Machining, Welding and Fabrication, Hospitality and Tourism. Young men and women with these skills are able to secure employment.

The provision of Technical education is costly - equipment and workshop items have to be purchased and instruction is in small groups. A large proportion of students are from families that are subsistence farmers and they have considerable difficulty paying school fees.

Urgent needs include the provision of additional classrooms and workshops, increasing the toilet facilities and the installation of a tank to collect rain water for drinking.

As funds cannot be sourced locally, we have to look for outside support for these projects.

Fr Srimal Priyanga Silva
Rector



Don Bosco Rural Training Centre Tetere, Solomon Islands

Don Bosco Rural Training Centre Tetere provides basic agricultural training for young men and women, aged 18 – 25, from a rural background.

The aim is to provide students with skills to improve food production when they return home to their villages. Courses are provided in care of livestock (cattle, goats, the piggery, ducks and poultry), the cultivation of crops (rice and vegetables), basic carpentry and life-skills. The Centre also has two ponds for fish farming.

There are 40 women and 44 men enrolled, who have had limited prior schooling; they live in the boarding house on campus.

The students learn to care for trees – there are coconut trees on campus and a cocoa plantation that the Training Centre administers in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Every effort is made to make the Centre self-sufficient. Food produced is consumed by the students in the boarding houses or sold to provide funds to cover the running costs.

We urgently need outside support to build additional classrooms and install solar panels which will help reduce the cost of electricity.

We are grateful for help we have received in the past via Salesian Missions and the Rotary Club of North Balwyn (Vic).

Fr Albert Lenon
Principal



The Salesian Sisters' Laura Vicuna Hostel Henderson

The Salesian Sisters' Laura Vicuna Hostel, Henderson, provides safe accommodation for 36 young women from remote rural villages, most of whom are studying at Don Bosco Technical Institute. Our residents participate in a human development, life-skills and youth leadership program.

As there are never any vacancies, and always a 'waiting list', we are planning to expand the Hostel to provide accommodation facilities for an additional 12 students.

Sr Anna, at the local market, meets mothers who live nearby and have had limited formal education. To them the Salesian Sisters offer classes in literacy, numeracy, dressmaking, cooking and health awareness. The women learn practical skills with textiles and sewing, home and small business management.

As covering costs is always a battle, offers of financial assistance are always welcome.

Sr Anna Maria Gervasoni



Fr Albert Lenon is the Principal of the Don Bosco Rural Training Centre in Tetere



Sr Anna Maria Gervasoni from the Laura Vicuna Hostel in Henderson

The Salesians in the Solomon Islands are working with people who are living in extreme poverty. Financial help can be sent to them via



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The first Vietnamese Salesian, Fr Isidore Le Huong (91 years), passed away!

By Fr Joseph Phuoc SDB

On 7 April, in the presence of more than hundred Salesians SDB and Salesian Family members, in the Salesian cemetery in Cau Bong (HCM City), was buried the first Vietnamese Salesian of Don Bosco, Fr Isidore Le Huong. He went to his eternal reward on 4 April – his feastday and birthday – after 60 years of Salesian consecrated life and 56 years of priesthood.

Isidore Le Huong joined the Salesian Society with his first religious profession in 1957. He was in fact the first fruit of toil and work of ad gentes missionaries after seven years of the Salesian foundation in Vietnam. He continued his post novitiate in Hong Kong and his practical training in Victorias, Mandaluyong (Philippines) as Vietnam and the Philippines were then in the early stage of their existence. He studied theology in Italy and returned to Vietnam afterwards.

Since 2012, he lived in the community of the post-novitiate as a senior member. Yet, in spite of his old age, he was still the example for the young confreres in consecrated life with his good sense of humour and his dedication to service. In particular, he daily offered his ministry of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to confreres, lay people and priests of Dalat City.

Moreover, as the first Vietnamese professed Salesian, Fr Isidore's first step to engage in the Salesian charism and mission meant a lot for the Vietnamese Salesians. They believed that Don Bosco's charism could be inculturated and embodied in this beloved country of Vietnam. It is absolutely true, as they witness that more than 400 living Vietnamese Salesians follow this way of life as Fr Isidore Le Huong had done!

May Fr Isidore rest in peace and intercede for the Vietnam-Mongolia Province to grow in the Salesian Charism and Mission!

Mongolia: another Salesian presence in the Land of the Blue Sky



Don Bosco Youth Development Centre – Khutuul, Selenge province

By Fr Simon Lee SDB

Two years after the starting of a humble Don Bosco Development Centre in Khutuul, near Darkhan, the Salesians are meeting again with the mayor of the town to discuss future plans for this new outreach. Khutuul is a vibrant town of 10.000 people, made up mostly of young families, and with a quite consistent local industry (cement factory) and a wheat agriculture zone. The local schools are not enough to accommodate all the children and the young people – the three kindergartens and the only high school are overcrowded due to lack of space.

The present newly elected mayor of Khutuul, in her first meeting with Fr Paul Leung, Delegate of Mongolia, shared with pride the giftedness of the local youth (sports like taekwondo, arts and music). There is a lack of free time activity venues for children and youth. Since the previous town administration, there is growing interest for a more stable Salesian presence in the town. The former mayor went to meet the Rector Major to Darkhan in October 2017, asking to send more Salesians to start another community in Khutuul. The new mayor met today with our small delegation from Darkhan Don Bosco and confirmed the keen and firm interest of the civil authorities in our ministry.

We pray for wisdom and courage and for human resource in starting another Don Bosco presence in the Land of the Blue Sky.



Hong Kong: Salesian Vocation Day 2017

*By Fr Carlos Cheung SDB,
Vocation Director*

The feast day of Saint Dominic Savio is the day which is chosen by the China province as Vocation Day. It was a great joy in the Salesian House of Studies (Shaukiwan, Hong Kong) to see more than 100 enthusiastic young people from seven Salesian schools from Hong Kong and Macao together with more than ten Salesians to celebrate the joy of being a Salesian. This activity was preceded by a week of prayers for Salesian vocations and culminated in the celebration of Vocation Day.

Every year the Vocation Director invites a Salesian to share his vocation story and produce a short film for Vocation promotion. This year we have invited Br Paul Li to share his reasons for becoming a Salesian and to give some reflections on what it means to be a Salesian Brother. During his sharing, Br Li asked all participants to consider their future to find out whether the Lord is calling them to dedicate their lives to serving and guiding the young. After the sharing, gifts were presented to Br Paul Li and Fr Francis Che, the parish priest of Mary Help of Christians parish, Tokwawan. Both of them will celebrate their golden jubilee of profession in August.

Let us pray for more Salesian vocations by asking the Lord, through the intercession of St Dominic Savio, to call more young people to join our Salesian congregation for the salvation of the young.

Korea: Priestly Ordination

By Fr John Bosco Lee SDB

On 20 April, the Salesian Province in Korea held the joyful ceremony of the Ordination of four priests and one deacon. Bishop Luc Van Looy SDB, Bishop of the Diocese of Gent, Belgium, who in his youth worked for some 20 years as a Salesian missionary in Korea, was the celebrant, accompanied by some eighty priests.

At the closing of the Ordination Ceremony, Fr Isidore Hong pronounced a heartfelt talk, thanking the many friends, who were present that day, for their generous help and their prayers. (ANS)

Vietnam: "A very dynamic province, working essentially with poor youth"

During his visit to Vietnam the Rector Major met about 250 Salesians - with specific meetings for the educative communities - and thousands of members of the Salesian Family and young people. At the end of a week spent crossing the entire country from south to north, Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime took stock of what he had seen and left some valuable advice on how to continue to nurture the Salesian charism in the country. "Now I know your province better" he said. "We have a very dynamic province, working essentially with poor youth, in simple, unsophisticated works. It is a young province – thanks be to God – and one that is growing with many vocations. The province has more than 300 Salesian members, with an average age of 42, and with two beautiful traits: the great treasure of more than 60 Salesian Brothers, and great missionary generosity that reaches the whole Congregation!"

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Philippines: First Profession of eleven new Salesians in Lawaan,

By April Jerome Quinto SDB

The feast of Saint Dominic Savio saw the solemn profession and investiture rites of eleven new Salesians in the Chapel of Don Bosco Formation Centre, Lawaan, Cebu. There were nine clerics and two brothers, coming from three provinces and two delegations.

Fr Atienza expressed his joy in the gift of new Salesians professing the evangelical counsels on the feast of Dominic Savio. "It is good to celebrate the profession publicly, in front of the community, in front of your families, your parents and the Salesians."

Fr Atienza accepted and welcomed the newly professed in the name of the Rector Major, Fr Angel Fernandez Artime. The provincials and delegates present served as official witnesses.

We rejoice in such a gift of eleven new confreres and stand faithful to the same profession we made which fittingly closes "with the help of my brother Salesians, keep me faithful day by day."

May our prayers and humble sacrifices accompany them as they begin to live their consecration in the Salesian mission.



Papua New Guinea: Araimiri, the first house of the Salesian mission

By Fr Joseph Thanh SDB



Obviously there is no best mission place in the world, but every mission place is always beautiful. Don Bosco used to travel a lot in order to look for and establish mission places, even in his dreams. However he was not looking for the best mission places but every place he went or he sent his sons to, he always wanted to make those places beautiful.

Araimiri is the first house of the Salesian mission in Papua New Guinea. It may not be a very attractive place if I look at it with my eyes, but it is truly a beautiful mission if I try to appreciate it with the heart.

This year, my new assignment as parish priest of Mary Help of Christians parish, Araimiri, gives me an opportunity to acknowledge the beauty of the mission in this place. Just simply imagine: when evening comes, children in the area gather in front of the parish church, walking up and down, in the darkness, on the sand, bare foot, all praying the Rosary loudly. Another beauty I can see is the people just happy and enjoying the simple things of life.



Don Bosco Agromechanical Technology Centre

Philippines: Twenty years of journey with the rural youth in Bicol

By Br Luigi Parolin SDB

Dear Friends and Benefactors!

I'm happy to share with you some information about our humble rural Don Bosco vocation training centre again. For the past 20 years, the Don Bosco centre has been sharing the life and poverty of the people who live in the Bicol region, a remote area in the Northern islands of Luzon.

The many agricultural products, vegetables and fruits, have been grown with the sweat and hard work of our village people and our Don Bosco trainees. Thousands of them were prepared for their life in our Training Centre - both with agricultural skills, faith and human formation.

Although I have passed the responsibility for Don Bosco Agromechanical Technology Centre to younger Salesians last August 2016, I'm still here sharing my life with our youth and the local people. Our work for and with the 200 young trainees has a simple goal: to prepare them for life making their agriculture more effective for a decent livelihood. Besides the vocation training centre, there is also a 'Don Bosco Cooperative' that does the marketing for our agricultural products.



Missionaries of joy and hope



Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change

The Salesian Sisters' community in Malololelei, Samoa, respond to a great need in favour of young people, especially the marginalised. "Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change" is a youth group that brings young people together empowering them to make changes in their lives for their betterment and growth.

As Youth Pastoral Coordinator of the Province, Australia, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, I was keen to know more about this newly organised group begun in our newest foundation in Malololelei, Samoa.

To get a better idea of this amazing venture, I put a few questions to Sr Emema Iakopo, spokesperson for this project.



Sr Rochelle Lamb FMA

Sr Rochelle is the Youth Pastoral Coordinator of the Province - Australia, Samoa and the Solomon Islands

Q1 What inspired you and the Malololelei community to commence this group?

In keeping with the Salesian Charism – namely, to work with and for the young especially those most in need – the Sisters have responded to a great need in favour of young people. As in many other countries, young people in Samoa have no jobs and often have left school at a very young age with no means of even finding jobs or having positive experiences in their lives.

Like other concerned adults, the Sisters fear for their future. From the age of 15 to 25 they just roam the villages. Some already have been in trouble with the chiefs of the village because they have been hanging around and starting fights.

By establishing the group 'Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change', we seek to offer them some skills so that they can eventually provide for and help their families.

Q2 What inspired the name 'Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change'?

The name Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change came up when the group and I discussed the fact that often youth groups that are started continue to do the same old thing, without any change occurring when the young people leave the group. These young people feel the need and want to make a difference in their own lives and thus make changes.

These changes should be positive changes, so in our program we try to teach them some skills such as Samoan designs, develop their talents in music and art. The Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change youth want to be people who can help other young people move away from the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Q3 What is the purpose of this group?

The purpose of the group is to enable and empower young people who no longer attend school to find meaning and purpose in their life, as many of them feel abandoned. Some have shared that they want to belong to something that will help them provide for their families. They also want to learn more about God and our Salesian way of living.

Q4 What age group and what category of young people are targeted?

At the moment we don't actually have a specific age that we target. We try to cater for any young person who is no longer at school for any reason. The ones attending this group are between the ages of 15 and 25.

Q5 How often does the group meet? And is there a place to meet?

We do not have a set place to meet. Often I go to the city centre or the shops wherever the young people are and meet them there and engage them in various activities in the fields around the town. Sometimes the group meets at the Sisters convent at Malololelei. This year we meet every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and also Saturday if needed during the school term.

Q6 Is there a specific program or format for these meetings?

At the moment we are starting to fundraise because we do not have funds for the projects we want to begin for these young people.

During this year 2017, we will be running some art workshops, gardening, cooking if possible, and help them in the spiritual side as well. But for the first couple of weeks we are going to run some fundraising events to help buy equipment and materials we need to run these workshops. We are grateful to the Leadership team of our Province who have kindly donated a substantial amount to purchase some much needed equipment to get us started. We will be grateful for any financial help we can receive.

Q7 In what ways is the community involved?

While our FMA ministries are always mandated by the community and try to meet the needs of the local area, the support of the Sisters is important and very much appreciated. The Sisters in the Malololelei community help us with transport and occasionally provide us with food. The Sisters also help with talks, reflections, friendly chats and a listening ear, especially for those young people who experience difficulties and who need someone to listen to them.

Reflections from the young people of the Salesian Sisters Youth for Positive Change

Palogi Tuasivi – I am forever grateful for the opportunity given by the Sisters for us to come here and enjoy life. I have never met anyone so kind like the Salesian Sisters before. I thank God that Sr Emema saw me in town that day and she invited me. I was raised by my grandparents but both of them died and I am living with my uncle. Most days I feel left behind and sad, missing my grandparents. This youth group gives me the true meaning of life. The Sisters talk to us about being a human being and how we can contribute to society. But the best thing I've learnt is respect: respect for myself, for others and the world I live in; simple as that but deep and important. Thanks again Salesian Sisters; looking forward to our journey this year.

Atonio Dominic Savio Esekia – This youth group has helped me gain confidence. I really want to thank the Salesian Sisters. I feel so free when I'm with them. Before I was always afraid to go to the Sisters' place because I have never been to one before, but these particular Sisters are very friendly. They always seem to be happy. I learnt to be happy ever since I joined this group. The Sisters are kind and always welcome us into their home. We are very lucky to have them in our lives. Thanks Sr Emema who invited me, and Sr Caroline who drives us around and gives us a smile every time we meet.

Mckay Tuia – My name is Mckay Tuia; I'm from the village of Utualii. I am not a Catholic but I was roaming around in town. When Sr Emema saw me she invited me to come and play with them. When I met Sr Emema, straight away I felt so accepted, never met a person like her before apart from my own mother. The first day I joined the group I felt like I was found. Then I met the other Sisters and it's so amazing that I don't even know them but it feels like we knew each other a long time. It's really like a blessing God has given me. I look up to them and I want to follow their example.

Silia Iakopo – I am 15 and I'm from the village of Faleasiu. I am no longer at school because I was expelled last year. I will go back to school this year and I am looking forward to it. Thanks to Sr Emema for bringing me into this group. It always makes me happy. When I joined I didn't know the people but now we are like family. I made good friends and I feel so accepted. I am going back to school but will still join SSYFPC when I can because it's part of me now. I learnt so much about respect in the short time I joined the Salesian Sisters' Youth for Positive Change. I love the Sisters because I can feel their love for us too.



Xavier College - A NEW ERA IS BORN



By Janine Atkinson

A new era was born when Xavier College in the Gawler Belt, just north of the city of Adelaide, recently opened their latest stage of development, a brand new gymnasium, student services hub and plaza, in front of a whole-school assembly and seventy invited guests.

Local Gawler parish priest, Father Germano Baiguini, blessed the new facilities at the College and Federal Minister of Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham officially opened the Saint Mary MacKillop Centre and Plaza.

Senator Birmingham, who attended nearby Gawler High School as a student, commented on the college's "incredible new facilities" and the ethos created by Xavier in its short history.

The Sir Douglas Nicholls Gymnasium was opened by Aunty Pam Pedersen, daughter of the late pastor, sportsman and former Governor of South Australia.

Principal Lynn Martin said "the College Board decided to establish the tradition of naming buildings on the school site after people who have had a significant impact on the history of S.A. This has resulted in a walk around Xavier College being a South Australian history lesson."

The gymnasium will now be used for whole-school Assemblies with room for all 900 students, 100 staff and guests to be seated in comfort with substantial acoustic treatment and access to the latest audio visual equipment. The capacity to conduct internal physical education classes has more than doubled. The student service hub is a very contemporary resource, information and service centre, which incorporates all student services, including adaptive education, counselling, indigenous education, ICT services, library services and vocational education. Opening onto the student services area are three flexible teaching and learning spaces with transparent and operable walls. More like a University hub this building is designed to be a meeting place and "one stop shop" for student services which is adjacent to the new outdoor space. The external Plaza links the new facilities and incorporates multiple large canopies, a terraced amphitheatre and additional student seating areas alongside the new buildings and new garden beds which encourage more interaction and community building amongst our staff and students.



Principal Lynn Martin addressing the school assembly and invited guests for the opening of the new gymnasium, student services hub and plaza

Members of the Salesian community, Fr Joseph Lee, Rector of the South Australian Salesian community, local Parish Priest, Fr Germano and College Chaplain Fr Brian Ahern were also in attendance. Principal Lynn Martin said “Xavier College identifies strongly with the Salesian Charism, and the pedagogy and practices of the College have been richly flavoured by the Salesian influence.”

Mr Martin then went on to explain “Such is the life of a living community and the resources that are developed to nurture it. Mr Michael Johnson, together with a group of local Catholic parishioners, lobbied hard to have Xavier College established. They, along with the founding principal, a Salesian priest by the name of Fr Dennis Handley, watched over the development of this site from its infancy in 1994. The College was opened in 1995 and developed quickly; generations of families have benefited from the facilities that were established then, yet we knew that those who had benefited from the foresight, the investment and commitment of those gone before had to now strategize a plan to ensure a legacy for the future generations who will come to Xavier College.”

Built by Badge Constructions, ahead of schedule and on budget, the facilities will play an important part in ensuring the College is ready to accommodate Year 7 students in 2019.

Xavier now moves onto the third stage of its redevelopment project which will include the refurbishment of its former gym into an auditorium, the former library into a staff centre and the creation of a music facility.



College Captain Jackson Furst, Minister Simon Birmingham, Aunty Pam Pedersen, Principal Lynn Martin, Father Germano Baiguini and College Captain Kiara Rawlinson.

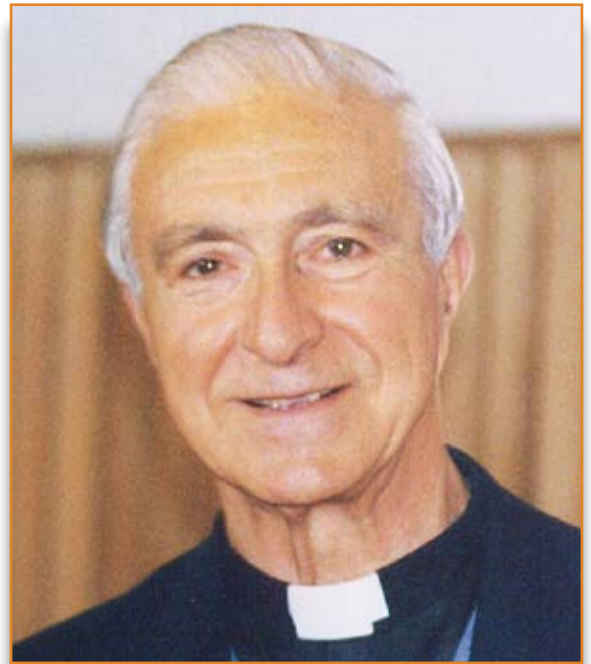


Local Gawler parish priest, Father Germano Baiguini, blessing the new facilities at the Xavier College



90 years old missionary in Japan returns to the Father

By Fr Mario Yamanouchi SDB



In Kyushu, Japan, on 24 April, Father Joseph Di Prinzi at the age of 90, after 70 years of Salesian life, 65 years as missionary and 61 years as Salesian priest, passed to his eternal reward.

Fr Joseph was born at Chieti, Italy, on 23 March 1927. His family migrated to Argentina – a promised land. After his studies in an agrotechnical school, Fr Joseph began his secondary studies at the Bernal Salesian School. In 1946 he became an aspirant and entered the novitiate the following year. On 31 January 1947, on the feast of St John Bosco, he made his first religious profession as a Salesian which was followed by three years of practical training at San Jose.

Missionary life in Japan

(1952-2017)

He arrived in Japan as a missionary on 31 October 1952 and, after initial studies in Chofu, Tokyo, was ordained in Tokyo in 1953. His long priestly ministry saw him assume many roles: in the initial years it was teaching and football coaching, but from 1959 he started his long pilgrimage as pastor in May Oita Prefecture Catholic missions, bearing many responsibilities as Rector, Parish Priest, College Principal and Confessor.

Since 2013 he was a resident of Salesio House in Beppu, base camp for the Kyushu missionaries and house for old and sick confreres. During the past four years Fr Di Prinzi spent many hours in prayer and received many letters, especially from the people he baptized during his lifetime. Fr Joseph died peacefully surrounded by members of the local community and Friends of Don Bosco.

The Vigil Mass on April 24 was celebrated by Fr Provincial who stressed his missionary spirit, while the Funeral Mass was presided over by Oita's Bishop Paul Hamaguchi Sueo. Many members of the Salesian Family, the Salesian Sisters, Caritas Sisters and many Catholics from Kyushu and Tokyo were in attendance.

A long-serving Salesian pastor and educator goes to his reward

By Fr Lanfranco Fedrigotti SDB



Hong Kong, 24 April 2017. Rev. Fr Francis Wong Kin Kwok SDB of the Salesian China Province died in St Paul's Hospital in Hong Kong on Monday 24 April 2017, surrounded by his relatives, confreres, friends and parish faithful. He was 75 years old: 55 years as a Salesian of Don Bosco and for 36 as a priest.

Most of his life was spent serving youth as a school teacher, school principal, counselor and friend. In the last five years, half of them signed by an ongoing incurable sickness, he served as parish priest of St Anthony's parish.

His educational and pastoral service extended to Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mainland. He served 15 years in the Aberdeen Technical School, Ng Siu Mui, (1980-1982) and in Tang King Po School (1986-1992). His ministry in Taiwan involved three years as Rector of Tainan Salesian Technical School, and five years as Executive Director of Chaochou Boys town. His final years of priestly ministry were 11 years in China and five years in St Anthony's parish, Hong Kong.

A regular writer for Salesian publications, much-beloved by his readers, Fr Francis was throughout his life a zealous transmitter of Jesus' Gospel, putting to good use the most updated means of social communication. In his last and long sickness he was to us all a model of joyful acceptance of God's providential care. May his life-long witness continue to bear fruit in the lives of all who were blessed with making his acquaintance. Thank you, dear Fr Francis! May you rest in peace!

The Vigil Requiem Mass for Fr Francis Wong Kin Kwok was held in St Anthony's Church, Hong Kong, on Tuesday, 2 May. The Funeral Mass was celebrated in the same church in the afternoon of Wednesday 3 May and was presided over by Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze Kiun SDB, and was immediately followed by interment in the Happy Valley St Michael's Catholic cemetery.

Kidnapped Indian priest pleads for help in new video



Kidnapped Salesian priest Fr Tom Uzhunnalil has appeared in another video

by Hannah Brockhaus

Fourteen months after his kidnapping in March 2016, Salesian priest Fr Tom Uzhunnalil has appeared in another video asking for help in obtaining his release, criticizing the response of a local bishop and the Indian government.

Opening with a word of thanks, Fr Tom apparently references either a message he's received, or the general concern surrounding his case.

"I received the message of concern that you sent to me, my dear family people. I'm thankful to you. Thank you very much," he said in the video published on YouTube, 8 May.

The video, which has not yet been authenticated, shows a cardboard sign with the date 15 April 2017, sitting on the lap of a thin-looking Fr Tom who appears with overgrown hair and a beard.

Speaking slowly in English, Fr Tom said the Indian government has been contacted several times concerning his release. The bishop of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates has also been contacted, he said, claiming that he's seen their responses, and they were "very, very poor."

The priest indicated that he is in poor health, saying: "My health condition is deteriorating quickly, and I require hospitalization as early as possible," he said.

He then made an appeal for his release, asking "My little family people, help me be released. Please, please, do what you can to help me be released. May God bless you for that."

Fr Tom was kidnapped in Yemen in March of last year during an attack on a Missionaries of Charity house that left 4 sisters dead. He garnered international attention last spring when rumors spread that he was to be crucified on Good Friday. Those rumors were later discredited.

A video was posted to YouTube on 26 December 2016, showing Fr Tom personally appealing to Pope Francis and bishops all over the world for help.

"Dear Pope Francis ... as a father, please, take care of my life," Fr Tom said. The five-minute video was the first communication from Fr Tom since his abduction. The priest had overgrown hair and spoke slowly from a prepared script.

Pope Francis did appeal for the priest's release on 10 April 2016, after his Sunday Regina Coeli address in St Peter's Square.

"I renew my appeal for the freeing of all kidnapped persons in armed conflict zones," the Pope said. "In particular, I wish to remember Salesian priest Tom Uzhunnalil who was abducted in Aden, Yemen, last 4 March."

Since his kidnapping, Salesians in the Bangalore province of India have made continued efforts for his safety and release, including holding a prayer vigil on 4 January and a worldwide novena on 15-23 January.

No one has claimed responsibility for the priest's kidnapping, making it difficult for the Indian government to broker the priest's release. In addition, the situation has been exacerbated by the political instability in Yemen.

Yemen has been embroiled in civil war since March 2015, when Shia rebels attempted to oust Yemen's Sunni-led government. Saudi Arabia has led a pro-government coalition. Both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State have set up strongholds in the country amid the power vacuum. More than 6,000 people have been killed in the conflict, according to the United Nations.



Mozambique – Salesians faithful to the charisma of Don Bosco

The evangelizing option of the Salesians in Mozambique, faithful to the charisma of Don Bosco, has focused on vocational training, to the point that they have become points of reference for professional reform in the country. A young missionary, Fr Francisco Pescador, recounts his experience through amazing stories of hope and love.

Fr Pescador is a cheerful, simple, optimistic, hardworking Salesian. He arrived in Mozambique in December 2003 and recognizes that his initial dream was put to the test, and that many things have changed in his life.

"Mozambique continues to be one of the countries with the lowest rate of human development, and life expectancy is short. People are hungry and have no access to basic services. This is true of more than half the population," he says.

The Salesians are working with children and youth in education, demonstrating that the preventive system continues to bring hope among the most vulnerable. (ANS)

South Sudan – Salesian missionaries operate Leprosy Program in Tonj hospital

Salesian missionaries have been working in Tonj, a town in the northwest region of South Sudan, for several years. Their focus has been on providing education and social development services for poor youth through the operation of primary and secondary schools and youth centres. In addition, the missionaries operate several medical clinics, including a leprosy clinic, as well as a hospital.

The leprosy program was started by Father John Lee who arrived at the Salesian mission in Tonj in 2001. He remained until 2008 when he went away on a trip to South Korea. It was there that doctors discovered Fr Lee had cancer, and he passed away 14 months later. During his time in South Sudan, Fr Lee constructed an outpatient clinic and made repairs to the primary school building. He also brought band instruments from South Korea and trained more than 70 young boys and girls. The youth band is well-known in South Sudan and even travelled to South Korea in 2012 to perform. (ANS)



South Sudan - The Salesian mission at Gumbo takes care of hundreds of malnourished minors

Conflict and famine in South Sudan are severely affecting minors. "In two days we weighed more than 300 children and we found that more than 200, between 3 and 6 years of age, are malnourished and of these, 170 are in a situation of a severe malnutrition", as reported by the Salesian mission at Gumbo, near the Capital of the country, Giuba. "It was like a bad dream, we did not expect that the situation could be so serious", they add.

The reality is that in the village more than one million children are malnourished, more than two million have left their homes and it is estimated that about 16,000 have been enlisted. These are data coming from international agencies.

The Salesians of the Salesian Mission of Gumbo have begun to give milk to children with malnutrition problems. The minors, being in a state of increased severity, in addition to the food, are also given some vitamin supplements. The lack of nutrition for thousands of children, involves a deficit growth and little attention to studies, among the various things. "We want to monitor them for two weeks, in order to see how they develop"- explain the Salesians-. But all this proves the very serious situation that people live in Gumbo, as they do not have the means to access the food, not even for the younger ones".

The Salesians on site and the various Salesian Mission Offices, including the "Misiones Salesianas", the Madrid Mission Office, are involved in supporting the South Sudan and in particular in order that "the international community will stop one of the today's greatest tragedies". "Lootings and killings continue to be in the village. At Gumbo the situation is quieter and we continue to carry out our activities: classes with children, activities with women, an agricultural project ... But in other places like at Wau and Tonj there were disorders and deaths in the past few days". Finally, the Salesians conclude: "however the most curious thing is that, despite the situation, mothers and children ... are eager to learn and play ... they have so much life. Perhaps the world leaders will realize it and change their hearts" (ANS)



Kenya – Food and water to despairing people

As a catastrophic drought continues to worsen and spread in Kenya, the Nairobi government has declared a national disaster. Don Bosco Korr is situated in the northern county of Marsabit where it has not rained for more than a year. “The poorest of the poor are suffering the most,” he says. “They have no food and very little water.”

Undeterred by these challenges, Fr Luke, Fr Giovanni Rolandi (Salesian Provincial in Korr) and Fr Eric Mairura (Provincial Economist) have developed a plan to improve the nutritional intake of Korr’s most vulnerable – the children, and bring clean water to the entire community. They propose to do this by drilling a new borehole equipped with a solar-powered pump in a central location, and installing four new water tanks to hold the water. They also plan to install water tanks and water harvesting systems at four community schools. They will distribute fortified meals to 500 severely malnourished children daily through the Salesian-run dispensary, and will provide an additional 2,815 girls and boys attending eight Salesian primary schools with lunch every day.

Their budget is not small; the priests estimate the total costs at nearly \$125,000. Yet they have faith – in God, in the international community, and in our loyal and generous donors – that they will succeed in raising the funds they need to alleviate the suffering of their beloved community. Can you help them feed the hungry? (ANS)

Sierra Leone – Orphans, abused minors, street children, detainees, sex-slaves... The work of the Salesians for them

Three years ago Sierra Leone was mentioned in the media all over the world as the country where people died of Ebola. “The truth – the Spanish daily ‘El Mundo’ wrote – is that Sierra Leone is sinking into oblivion and only a smaller number of NGOs remain in the zone”. While media and international organizations seem to have forgotten, Salesians did not leave any room to oblivion, abandonment and despair. The Salesian Mission Procure of Madrid and the Sons of Don Bosco continue to help and work to secure a future to children and young people.

The members of the Salesian Mission Procure of Madrid returned to Sierra Leone, two years after the end of the Ebola epidemic that killed thousands of people and left many orphans. Now the objective is to prove that today more than ever an aid is important and necessary and that the work of the Salesians is more intense just because of the halt the country is suffering from. What was said is true: Sierra Leone lives on!

This is a country where those who reach 50 years of age are considered survivors, elderly, with a low life expectancy. It is a country where a cruel civil war left its mark on several generations. It is a country where 75% of the population is below 25 years of age.

However, Salesians have not lost faith, nor hope, nor even less love for their neighbour: poor and vulnerable young people.

With the sole aim of providing visibility to the missionary commitment and the frontier work among vulnerable young people, a documentary film is being prepared on the work the Salesians do for vulnerable children and young girls, for those who are detained in jails for grown-ups in Pademba Road with no one objecting for this nor doing anything for them, and for minors who are victims of prostitution in the streets.

The Salesians accompany all these boys and girls, providing them sanitary assistance and the possibility of studying, guaranteeing all their rights and to help them regain their freedom.

“Africa grabs you, and we want to try and narrate whatever to the superficial eyes of the developed world is considered poverty and misery, but which encloses great lessons of resilience, hope and humanity, even though in many cases these are truly difficult situations”. (ANS)



Democratic Republic of Congo – Building a future for young people away from the streets

Poverty and family breakdown are the main reasons for the large number of children and young people who crowd the streets of Lubumbashi, the third largest city of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Often their only shelter is the market stalls, cardboard boxes and an improvised fire.

The Salesians want to help them escape from hunger, violence and fear. The first approach to street children happens by night. The doors of Bakanja Ville, the reception centre, are always open. There they can wash, sleep, eat, wash their clothes and engage in some small activities. A personal file is opened for each young person. Then the search is begun for the family, to see if reintegration is possible with the help of social workers.

The Salesian structures hosting young people are numerous and represent different paths available to them. Cité des Jeunes is a vocational school that offers courses in carpentry, auto mechanics, construction, welding, mechanics and agriculture, with a hostel for 60 young people.

Then there is Bakanja Magone, a vocational school which offers craft courses with a hostel for 41 young people. Even those who have already been reintegrated in the family can attend courses in carpentry, mechanics, welding, shoemaking, construction, ceramics, or driving.

Finally, there is the Jacaranda Centre, with a hostel attached, for 35 young people. It offers a training course lasting 3 to 4 years in mathematics, French, agriculture and farming techniques.

Democratic Republic of Congo – First of all, the "worst boys"

A Salesian school should target primarily poor and vulnerable children. For that reason, last September the Salesians organized an "entrance test" which is the exact opposite of those that take place in the more prestigious educational centres: the boys with the worst results were immediately offered a place in the literacy classes, while the better ones who did not need literacy classes were told to wait and then go directly to the professional courses if there were places available.

Altogether about 150 young people have enrolled free of charge, including four girls aged 16-17. All of them were living on the streets. For many of them it is difficult to sit still for hours and listen to even the minimum theory required. In addition to working in coordination with teachers, families and social workers, the Salesians are trying to create opportunities for singing, sports and other recreational activities, and they offer all the students a daily meal.

From this year they have signed an agreement with the Provincial Department of Justice, which will allow the Salesians access to the juvenile section of Bukavu prison for the moral and spiritual education of the young people, and to offer training at the centre for 30 young people who are in conflict with the law. (ANS)



Argentina

The first Salesian missionaries in Tierra del Fuego



Bahia San Sebastian, Argentina, 1893.

The Bay of San Sebastian is located in the north of the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, on the coast of the Argentine Sea in the Atlantic Ocean. The first photograph of the first Salesians in Tierra del Fuego in the midst of people, living in temporary tents for the pastoral visits.