

GRATITUDE





Australian

Salesian Bulletin



IN THIS WINTER ISSUE



ON THE COVER

Rector-Major Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime is aided by young people of the St Mary's (NSW) community in cutting the celebratory cake!

Photo by Michael Gartland



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2 Australian Salesian Bulletin

FRONTLINE

■ ■ You Salesians are lucky because your founder, Don Bosco, was not a saint with the face of "Good Friday", sad, long-faced, morose ... but rather from "Easter Sunday".

He was always joyful, welcoming, despite the thousand labours and difficulties that besieged him every day. As they write in the Biographical Memoirs, "his radiant face of joy manifested, as always, his own happiness in finding himself among his children".

It is no coincidence that for him holiness consisted in being "very happy, joyful".

-Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* con Don Bosco

Features

- 3 Editorial - As Time Goes By
- 7 "He Will Take Care of You"
- 24 Lives lived well: Vale Fr Giulio Cavarzan
- 26 Lives lived well: Vale Sr Josephine Bargigli

Reflections

- 4 In Dreams Lie Happiness
- 5 We are Christ's Hands, Feet and Heart
- 22 Heart of Bosco in Brunswick

News

- 6 Tour of the Relic of Don Bosco
- 8 The Tour Down Under!
- 18 Building A Sustainable Community
- 20 Education Immersion in Samoa
- 23 Ministry of Acolyte on Mary's Feast
- 23 Feast of Mazzarello in SPR
- 23 A Life Labor of Love
- 23 The Children of Mary
- 28 Regional News
- 30 World News

AS TIME GOES BY

We are creatures of time, and since the ticking clock governs our daily round, we are fascinated with it. How often in literature the passage of time is likened to a flowing river. "In rivers, the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes; so with present time." (Leonardo da Vinci)

The day-to-day business of making a living, and the fulfilment of our duties, make great demands on our energies. Immersed in a busy round of responsibilities, people and situations challenge us continually. Yet, if this becomes an unvarying routine, we could be missing out on some of the best things in life and one of those is the celebrations of anniversaries and meaningful, commemorative events.

*"Time has a three-fold present:
the present as we experience it,
the past as a present memory and
the future as a present expectation."
(St. Augustine)*

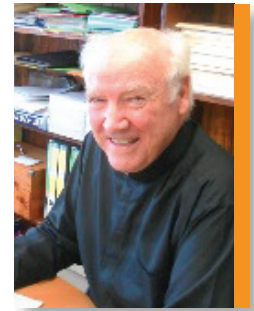
Treasuring and remembering our past can provide the solution. History is to a nation what memory is to the individual. Remembering leads to appreciation and appreciation leads to the deepening relationships, allowing us to build on and to adapt our past to our future.

The year 2023 will offer the Salesian Family an opportunity for such an enriching experience for, in this year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Presence in in 1923. That year saw the coming of the Congregation of St Francis of Sales to the 'Great South Land' of Australia. On 30 March 1923, the first group of Salesian confreres, led by Bishop Ernesto Coppo SDB, reached Fremantle in Western Australia.

The years, that have flowed since then and the ticking clock have seen a rapid growth in apostolic works throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Indeed, the seeds sown in hardships and frustrations in the distant Kimberley, have grown into plants despite moments of difficulties, failures and loss of social appreciation.

It is indeed the time to remember. The year 2023 calls us to live it as a year of grace, "remembering where we come from, who we are, and where we are heading." During this year we will be borne along on a veritable stream of memories and celebrations of the great events of the past 100 years. So let it be.

Remembrance is a gift which, while preserving the past, refreshes the present and stores up lasting enrichment for the future.



Frank Freeman

Fr Frank Freeman is the long-term editor of the Australian Salesian Bulletin and a longstanding figure of the Australasian Catholic Press Association

BRAVE PIONEERS OF THE AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC PROVINCE



Br Emmanuel Gomez
(Spain)



Bishop Ernest Coppo
(Italy & USA)



Br Celestine Acerni
(Italy)



Fr John Siara
(Poland)



Fr Erminio Rosetti
(Italy)



Fr Filemon Lopez
(Spain)



Fr John Setaro
(USA)



Br Caesar Asseli
(Palestine)





IN DREAMS LIE HAPPINESS



Ángel Fernández Artime

At the Youth Forum for Young Salesian Leaders at Salesian College Chadstone, the Rector Major was asked why he so frequently mentions dreams. This was his answer, translated into English by Fr Frank Moloney.

I talk about dreams because all of our lives have been touched by dreams. When I think about my own life, I can't help but be convinced that it's been directed by events and things that were quite unexpected. Today, I'm the Rector Major but when I look back on my past and history, it's just impossible that in those early days I could have ever dreamt that I would be in a situation like this.

I was born into a family of fishermen in the north of Spain and with no knowledge of Don Bosco or the Salesians at all. So for six years I went on the sea with my father working as a fisherman when I was your age. It's clear to me that God did things that I would have never thought of. When I was about 12, a tourist met my father as we were preparing the boat and some nets to go fishing. Gradually they became close friends and the lady of the tourist family asked my father, "What do you think your son will do and be?"

He said, "He'll be a fisherman like me." And I thought, yes, I want to be a fisherman like my father. And I did it very well. The lady said, "I know a group of people who educate young men and I think it would be a good thing if we got an education for your son."

My mother, who is still alive, said: "Son, what do you think?" And I gave her a very eloquent response. This is what I said: *At this point, the Rector Major simply shrugged*.

A year later, I began studying in a Salesian school. I enrolled to go to university to study medicine because I was interested in it, and I still am to this day. So, when I was all set to go to university, I had this deeply felt experience in my heart that something was missing. And that was to be among young people.

I have no idea why I had that feeling; that's the mystery of my life.

So, I asked my parents' permission to have a Salesian experience just to see how it went. And in this case, again, I can't help but see the hand of God in the way my parents responded.

My father could have said "No, I need your help to continue the fishing business. By all means, go and study medicine but in all the holidays and breaks you've got to come and help me with fishing." He could have said that straight away and I would have followed through on what my father would have said.

My parents, who are uneducated people with no training, could have said anything, but they said to me "It is you that has to make this decision. Whatever you feel is best for you, do it, and you have our support." I was delighted to have had that response from my parents. I was happy right from the start and I'm still happy. So why do I always think of dreams? Because in your dreams, happiness is in play.

In my years as a teacher, I've known many people who have been studying things in their lives that they never really loved, and they generally finish up unhappy. Eventually, they leave the profession altogether because that profession didn't touch their hearts. On the other hand, I've met many young people who follow their dreams, and even if that's been very difficult at times, they turn out to be happy people.

I'll say it to you in another way; your future does not depend upon a mathematical equation. It depends upon the most authentic sentiment that you carry in your hearts. You must follow what's in your heart and follow it with courage, otherwise you will never really live a happy life. I'm convinced about this because over the years I've met thousands of young people in these various conditions.

That's why I keep insisting on these dreams. I use the word dreams because that is where your happiness in your future career lies.

WE ARE CHRIST'S HANDS, FEET AND HEART.

We know that Don Bosco dedicated most of his life to the education of the children and young people. However, on some occasions he also spent his time visiting the sick and those at the end of life.

Working in the Mission "ad gentes," I spent years surrounded by poor children and youth in the Cambodian mission. Nowadays, I try to be sign of God's love for those who are sick, elderly, and lonely here in Australia.

Once a week as a Spiritual Care Volunteer at Monash Health Dandenong Hospital I visit Catholic patients. I started at first as a Ward Ambassador, welcoming the patients at the hospital entrance and helping them to find their way around the numerous corridors on different floors of the building. I also went around the ward and talked to people who wanted some company.

I was then introduced to my new mission as a Spiritual Care volunteer: with a particular role to visit the Catholic patients and try to provide for some of their spiritual needs. Every time I enter a new room, I enter with a kind of reverence, knowing that I need to "take off my shoes" as I am entering "holy ground". The first thing I usually tell people in the wards is that the Church is praying for them and that they are not forgotten.

This simple sentence moves them often to tears. People in hospital go through tough times of pain, fear, loneliness, and uncertainty. A friendly word of greeting and a nice smile bring healing and strength too. If the patient feels like talking, I'm there to listen, like a simple clay jar which serves for holding and protecting.

I feel very blessed hearing so many different life stories that people share with me. Their stories stay in my heart and help me to pray for them.

When I can, I try to find something nice to tell the person sitting up in bed, often in their over-sized hospital pyjamas. I enjoy telling those who have their bed next to the windows from which they can see people entering the hospital, "Do you know that you can actually say that you are the first person who sees these patients in hospital?" This remark puts a smile on their faces and maybe for the first time helps them think of it as a precious mission that they can do right there from their beds - "to bless that person and to pray for them".

Not all healing comes from medication and surgery! God is the most powerful healer of all. At appropriate times I present to the Catholic patients the possibility to receive the sacrament of Anointing of the sick, which is a sacrament for the living, not for the dead!

Once I explain to the patients that the Anointing will bring them peace, healing of the heart and maybe even healing of the body, and most of all the forgiveness of sins, many of them express the desire of the priest's visit, which is then arranged by the hospital staff member who is responsible for the spiritual care of all the patients in the hospital.

I love my Tuesday mornings at the Hospital. They enrich me deeply and make my days more meaningful.

Some months ago, I also started a new mission, the so called JudeCare, among the people of St Jude parish in Scoresby. We have a group of committed parishioners who volunteer to bring Communion to the sick, to take someone to their doctor's appointment, or to drive them to Sunday Mass or shopping or to help in any other way, especially for the elderly and those in need.

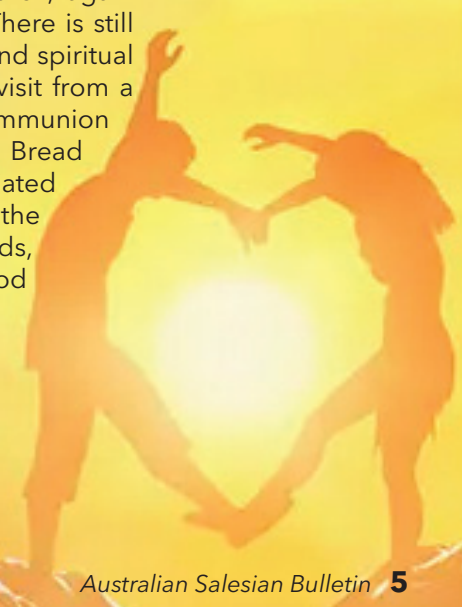
With all the Government and Diocesan regulations, we make sure that all the volunteers have the necessary documentation and training. Gradually the parishioners are becoming more aware of JudeCare and are willing to help. You never know who gets more joy: the one helping or the one getting help.

Through regular visits of the volunteers to some of our parishioners, new friendships are developed and some people, who after Covid felt "far and forgotten" by the Church, again feel part of the wider community. There is still a lot to do, mostly in the personal and spiritual formation of the volunteers. But a visit from a fellow parishioner or receiving Communion and being strengthened by the Bread of Life is always much appreciated especially by the house bound. As the saying goes: We are the Lord's hands, we are his feet, so let us do some good while we can and wherever we can.



**Ljudmila
Anzic**

Sr Ljudmila Anzic was originally a Slovenian missionary to Cambodia who joined the SPR province in 2018 with her assignment to Samoa. A passionate gardener, she finds great joy in colourful, beautiful environments!



TOUR OF THE RELIC OF DON BOSCO

The relic statue of St John Bosco will be touring Australia from July-September as celebrations of the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians on Australian soil continue throughout 2023.

The wax replica of the Saint contained in a glass casket comes from the Province of Hong Kong, made by Gianpiero Zoncu at the time of Don Bosco's beatification in 1929. A small bone from the right arm of the Saint was removed and placed in this wax replica before being securely concealed in the large glass casket.

For Catholicism, a relic is of immense reverence, and helps to remind individuals of the holiness of a saint, and the fulfillment of God's work through the saint. A relic can consist of anything from the bones of a saint to an object that the saint came in contact with during his or her lifetime.

The 410 kg glass casket containing the wax replica of St John Bosco will be received by the Salesian Province Centre in Ascot Vale, Victoria, by the end of June. It will be on tour and displayed for prayers and homage at various Salesian works in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart and Perth from July to September 2023.

The relic will stay at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne during the Salesian Biannual Educational Conference in August. It will also journey with the Salesians and many lay members at the Centenary Retreat in the last week of September at the foothills in Mooroolbark.

The relic statue of St John Bosco will be farewelled from Australia during the concluding Mass of the Centenary led by Archbishop Peter Comensoli on Saturday 30 September at St Margaret Mary's parish in North Brunswick at 11:00 am.



The tour dates for the Relic are as follows:

| July | August | September |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 3-7 Ascot Vale, VIC | 3-8 Sunbury, VIC | 1-5 Gawler, SA |
| 8-11 Clifton Hill, VIC | 10-13 APSPA Conference | 7-11 Glenorchy, TAS |
| 12-14 Chadstone, VIC | 16-22 Engadine, NSW | 16-20 Perth, WA |
| 15-19 Lysterfield, VIC | 23-28 St Marys, NSW | 25-30 Centenary Retreat, VIC |
| 20-21 St Joseph's College, VIC | 29-31 St Mark's, SA | 30 Centenary Conclusion Eucharist, St Margaret Mary's, VIC |
| 27-31 Brunswick, VIC | | |



"HE WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU"

Your first Rector is dead. But there will be another elected, who will take care of you and of your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him, as you have done for me.

Don Bosco wrote these words in his last Will and Testament directed to the Salesians. Since the death of Don Bosco in 1888, there have been ten Rectors Major who have taken his place as his Successors.

All have had to face major challenges - due to rapid growth, or steady decline, trying to maintain the Salesian identity across many different cultures. They had to deal with situations of war and political turmoil followed by expulsion or suppression of religious congregations and in recent years, the growth of the Salesian presence in Asia and Arica has been close to phenomenal.

The first four Rectors Major after Don Bosco's death knew Don Bosco personally and were formed in the Salesian way by the Founder himself. They guided the Salesian Family through a period of rapid growth, up to the early '60s. Then with the Second Vatican Council, religious life went through a major process of evaluation under the call of "returning to the Founders and to the sources". It was a process that generated radical changes and shook the old style of religious life to the core. Not only was there a decline in numbers, but greater responsibility and freedom were placed on the members that remained. This resulted in a mixture of success and failure.

Superiors General and their Councils were entrusted with the major undertaking of re-shaping the presence and the mission of religious congregations, especially those who were engaged in the active apostolate of school education, health care, youth work and social welfare. At the same time, the leadership of religious congregations was no longer a "European" prerogative, but tended to be more universal, looking at well-prepared leaders from "mission" countries.

This was certainly the direction taken by the last four Successors of Don Bosco, who came from South America, Mexico and Spain. These leaders were men of God, imbued with the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco; they lived the fatherliness of Don Bosco, while personally visiting the Salesians who are at the coalface of the mission. Their presence and their ability to connect with the young - regardless of the language they use - creates an atmosphere that Don Bosco himself used to generate in his visits to the fledgling Salesian works in France and in Spain.

The visit of the Rector Major is always planned in advance, with the expectation that would be given to a visit of Don Bosco himself. It is never just a photo-opportunity, or an occasion for some publicity. It is always a visit with a message, a challenge, with direction for the future, and the joy and satisfaction of knowing that Don Bosco himself appreciates and supports the work of his sons and daughters in the world.

And when the visit of the Successor of Don Bosco takes place on some extraordinary and unique occasion, as it happened with the recent visit of Fr Angel F. Artime for the centenary of the Salesians in Australia, then the expectation is even greater. And those who were part of this experience - including many young people - enjoyed the presence, the rapport, and the message of Fr Angel.

The Australian-Pacific section of the Salesian mission has welcomed three of the last Rectors Major (Frs Vigano, Chavez and Artime). Their presence and personal engagement have given new impetus to the work of the Salesian family in this part of the world. And when they departed, they left behind the feeling of a father leaving the family for a period of time but looking forward to his return!



Frank Bertagnolli

Fr Frank Bertagnolli is caretaker of Salesian lore in the Australia-Pacific province, earned through a life-time dedication to Don Bosco's mission.

THE TOUR DOWN UNDER TOUCH DOWN!

After a marathon 31-hour transit, the Rector Major Don Ángel Fernández Artime touched down to find a sunny morning at Sydney airport, Australia, greeted by Provincial Fr Will Matthews, Regional Councillor Fr Joseph Nguyen Thinh Phuoc and rector of the Engadine host community, Fr Frank Bertagnolli.



After a short rest, the Engadine community came together to celebrate the Eucharist. Thanks to the generosity of one of the parishioners, the Mass was celebrated with a brand-new chalice and paten that had been commissioned to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the Salesians in Australia.



Lunch came next and afterwards a visit to Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral, where Don Ángel met with Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umbers sharing a lively discussion and tour throughout the Cathedral.



The next stop on the itinerary was Mary MacKillop place, an oasis of peace hidden amongst the hustle and bustle of the modern metropolis. A home of spirituality, education and hospitality, at its centre is the sacred resting place of St Mary MacKillop, a contemporary of Don Bosco. Here, Don Ángel paid his respects to her and learnt about the many parallels between her story and Don Bosco's.



Of course, no trip to downtown Sydney is complete without a visit to two of Australia's most internationally recognized icons: the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House!



THE TOUR DOWN UNDER 70 YEARS OF ENGADINE!



The second day of the Rector Major's visit saw him tour some of the highlights of the Engadine community - the Don Bosco Shrine, the Dunlea Centre and the John Paul retirement village.

The atmosphere was lively and full of friendly chatter as lay collaborators from across the Engadine ministries came together with the Salesians and FMAs for a Meze-style banquet, with Don Ángel as the guest of honour, giving thanks for 70 years of Salesian presence in Engadine.



After a few quick speeches of acknowledgement and thanks, it was time to cut the celebratory cake and Don Ángel was called upon to do the honours. However, refusing to take such an important duty alone, he requested aid from the table at the back, calling up the young leaders from Youth Matters to share the responsibility!



Once everyone was well-fed, Don Ángel then took it upon himself to entertain the crowd, calling for a guitar. He performed two songs to great enthusiasm from the crowd who was as impressed with his talents as he was with its joining in on the Spanish language singing!



A few hours break followed, returning to St John Bosco Church for evening Mass with the parish. Concelebrating with Don Ángel was Regional Councillor Fr Joseph Nguyen Think Phuoc, provincial Fr Will Matthews and the members of the Engadine Salesian community.

During his homily, Don Ángel thanked the parishioners for their great support and presence within the life and mission of the Church and, specifically, their Salesian way of doing things. In the light of the Emmaus story, he spoke about the importance of walking together on a faith journey, filling the shoes of that unnamed disciple.



His friendly back-and-forth with his newly minted 'personal translator' Fr Frank Bertagnolli helped bring to light the Emmaus story as the Rector Major's wonderful, playful sense of humour came to the fore; more than once did the congregation erupt in laughter!

THE TOUR DOWN UNDER ST MARY'S FESTIVITIES

Don Ángel began the day with the celebration of morning Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary, St Mary's. Concelebrating with him was Fr Joseph Nguyen Think Phuoc, Fr Will Matthews, Fr Frank Bertagnolli, Fr Brendan Murphy (Rector & PP) and newly ordained Salesians Fr Jeff Miller and Fr Joseph Huang.



Following the theme of journey in the light of the Emmaus story, Don Ángel spoke of his own personal journey, visiting Salesians all around the globe. He explained the significance of the evangelist Luke leaving one of the two disciples unnamed so that all believers may slip into the shoes of that disciple, walking alongside Jesus throughout their life's journey.



After Mass, the congregation moved across the road to the Don Bosco Youth Centre to celebrate 30 years presence in the suburb of St Mary's with parish members and regular patrons of the Youth Centre community, featuring a great banquet enjoyed by several hundred people. All throughout, the lively sounds of young people rung out as squeals of joy and laughter filled the air, mingled with the sounds of ball sports and trampolines.



After a few quick speeches, entertainment began with a song led by the local youth group choir, to the applause of many. Fr Jeff then explained that breakdancing was being introduced into the next Olympics and the team that Australia would be sending performed, to the great delight of the gathered crowds, wowed by their feats of physical strength and agility.



Ever the musician, Fr Ángel soon found a guitar in hand and, calling up the young people for a dance, led them over the course of a couple of songs, bringing smiles to the faces of everyone present. It was then time to cut the cake and, of course, this responsibility was given to the guests of honour – the Rector Major and a contingent of young people!



After a few more musical acts, the festivities ended, and the crowds began to disperse. The Rector Major then gathered with the SDB and FMA members in the residence for some afternoon tea and some time of shared presence.



THE TOUR DOWN UNDER THE FUTURE IN GOOD HANDS

By Afi'a Enosa



The Rector Major's visit brought great joy and enthusiasm to Brunswick as he was welcomed by a great cross-section of the community: Fr Phillip Gleeson (Rector), the Salesian community, volunteers, parents, children from the Youth Centre, Hostel residents, parish representatives, Don Bosco Foundation members and other lay partners who are helping in many Salesian endeavours.



In a very fatherly manner, the Rector Major met the confreres and guests who came to welcome him, especially the young people, expressing his joy at seeing the Salesians in Brunswick serving a very diverse group of people in the Youth Centre, Hostel and Parish. "It brings me a lot of joy and satisfaction seeing this great work of our Salesian family. The future of the province is burning so brightly".



Many families posed with the Rector Major and took photos with him, excited by their chance to meet such a charismatic person for the first time. He was in turn delighted with the multicultural gathering, which included Australians, Lebanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indians, Egyptians, Argentinians and Italians. Later in the afternoon, many invited guests from the various different mission in Brunswick joined with the Rector Major for afternoon tea before he departed for his visit to Clifton Hill.



Fr Ángel thanked all the members of the Brunswick community for their great efforts in taking forward the Salesian mission, for their work that helps provide a future for the Congregation and especially for nurturing the young people who are under our special care.



"I want to express my sincere gratitude for the hard work you have been doing and continue to do for all deserving people. Thank you for keeping the charism and the dream of Don Bosco alive. Many of us won't be around for the bicentenary, but the young people who are here today will; some will become benefactors or volunteers for this place, and I am confident the future of this community and Province is in good hands."

THE TOUR DOWN UNDER CENTENARY GALA

Arriving at Salesian College Chadstone the day began with a morning tea and meet and greet with the staff of the college. They were most impressed with the Rector Major's journey, who in turn thanked them for all the hard work they do in maintaining the spirit of Don Bosco. At the full-school assembly to welcome the Rector Major, young leaders from Salesian works around Australia were also present, creating a wonderful gathering of Salesianity. By now, the Rector Major had become something of an expert on the Australian sense of humour, and impressed the audience with his easy-going, affable speech and charming musicianship.



At 5:30 pm, around 200 people from all aspects of the Salesian family in Australia gathered in the school chapel to celebrate the centenary Mass together. Fr Ángel thanked all those gathered for what they have given to bring the Salesian Charism come to life over the course of their lives and stressed how momentous this occasion was: "In another 50 years" he stated, "some of the young people gathered here tonight will be grandfathers and they will be able to proudly tell their grandchildren: 'I was there when we celebrated 100 years of Salesianity!'"



The festivities then rolled over into the College hall, for a gala dinner. There was entertainment throughout the night, including traditional dances from Myanmar, Vietnam and Samoa, young musicians playing guitar, violin and singing and even an impromptu performance from the professed Salesians and FMAs brave enough to go up on stage! The Rector Major was very impressed, although he had one piece of tongue-in-cheek feedback "My confreres... I think we need more rehearsals".



Dinner was provided by Roll'd, an extremely popular chain of Vietnamese restaurants that has seen rapid growth in Australia. There is a very personal connection between the company and the Salesians - the owner, Bao Hoang is an ex-student of Salesian College Chadstone and the nephew of Fr Peter Hoang! As the night was drawing to a close it was announced that he had very generously donated the entire cost of the gala dinner meal to the ongoing works of the Salesians in the Pacific, to the rapturous applause of the Gala dinner attendees and a true sign that the centenary was only the beginning of the Salesian story in the Australia-Pacific province!





THE TOUR DOWN UNDER YOUTH FORUM REFLECTIONS

On Wednesday 26th of April, young Salesian leaders from across Australia gathered at Salesian College Chadstone in Victoria for a youth gathering celebrating 100 years since the arrival of the first Salesians in Australia. The event also featured the prominent attendance of the Rector Major Fr Ángel Fernández Artime.

The Salesian school captains and other young leaders encountered the core values of St John Bosco, sharing in the Salesian pillars of a home that welcomes, a parish that evangelises, a school that prepares for life and a playground where friends meet and enjoy themselves. We engaged in the importance of community in strengthening our qualities as leaders, as well as broadening our sense of Catholic faith to reflect the image of St John Bosco. We were captivated by the wise teachings of the Rector Major, as he taught us on how we can be not only better Salesians in our school community but also better people.

We were given the opportunity to ask valuable questions and discuss what it really means to be a leader and how we can address issues that may arise within our school community. A Salesian leader is approachable, understanding and determined to build relationships through communicating with all people, in all walks of life. We are very grateful to be given this opportunity to travel to Victoria and work alongside such great Salesian leaders from around Australia.

-Tayla Campbell and Liam Blair (Captains, St John Bosco College Engadine NSW)



I was delighted when the Rector Major approached me at the entrance hall recognizing me as he announced "FMA!". I welcomed him warmly with a hug and he said "let's take a photo to send to Mother Chiara, as she celebrates her International feast of Gratitude in Colombia; she would like that very much".

I was really impressed with his warmth and his memory, as the last time we met was during his visit to Sunbury nine years ago. Each time we met at different places it was such a pleasure, like meeting Don Bosco himself - caring, kind, interested in one's welfare, very enthusiastic, cheerful and very entertaining.

It was a most enjoyable day overall; all activities were well organized, the venue was excellent, the atmosphere electric and so Salesian and family oriented. The same can be said about the Eucharistic celebration and dinner. Thanks everyone for their preparation and involvement. God bless.

-Sr. Delma Lamb, FMA



My encounter with the Rector Major here in Melbourne was close and intimate, in the manner of Don Bosco encountering former pupils after their life at the oratory in Turin. I have had a total of five encounters with him in Turin, Krakow and Manila but they were short; this was the most meaningful encounter - it was an intimate conversation. We spoke in Italian, a language I am learning and discussed our shared experiences in learning a foreign language.

He remembered and asked about the condition of my dad (paralyzed) whom he met when he visited the Philippines. So I video-called my dad on the spot to say hello to the Rector Major. He was delighted! I was astonished at his bravery during the youth forum as he gave profound advise on contemporary issues that affect young people.

I was quite sad when bidding him farewell since I had a gut feeling that this might be my last encounter with Don Angel as Rector Major, but I became happy when he gave me a tight hug and assured me that he will always remember me in his prayer. What a blessing! I am so grateful that he is Don Bosco during my time!

-Rod Romero, 3rd year student at Melbourne Uni and Past Pupil from Don Bosco School Tarlac, Philippines



Recently my school, Salesian College Chadstone, had the privilege to host the Rector Major for the celebration of the Salesians' 100th birthday in Australia. My peers and I approached the day with a nervous optimism - we knew he was an important man, but not what he would be like personally! Nevertheless, our bout of trepidation was unnecessary; Father Ángel was a beautiful blend of charisma and teachings. He had the ability to counsel and guide us, whilst simultaneously joking with the crowd. We didn't feel inadequate in his presence - unlike too many adults, he has a genuine faith in young people.



Primarily, the Rector Major reiterated the importance of providing a welcoming environment to all, reminding us to accept one another despite our differences. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that this innate welcoming feeling I've experienced at my Salesian school was not a coincidence, but a permeation of the Salesian teachings. The day concluded with Mass and dinner and was attended by members from across the Australasian Salesian family. I was struck with how tight knit the Salesian community was; entire families have dedicated their lives to the Salesians!



Overall, I am humbled and grateful to have been in attendance on the day. It is an experience I will never forget.

- Pete Holland, Salesian College Student

THE TOUR DOWN UNDER OVER ROLLING HILLS

The penultimate day of Don Ángel's tour down under saw him begin the day at St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully, which has recently undergone stunning renovations. His first task was the blessing of the new water-fountain established in the newly minted 'Bosco Piazza', with the allusions to Don Bosco's methodology of meeting young people clear.



The small crowd of guests, student leaders and teachers were treated to a composition of a song that had been specifically written for the event by music teacher Ms Bronwyn Dean. Sung by the school choir, it was a poignant moment befitting of such a special time. A quick tour of the new Year 7 buildings commenced, dropping in on an ongoing mathematics class. Grasping one of the textbooks, the Rector Major mentioned to a few nearby students how impressed he was at the thickness of the book and all they are learning, eliciting laughs from the young people!



Afterwards, the Year 12 student leaders joined the gathered guests and teachers in the staff room for morning tea. Here, the Rector Major thanked everyone gathered for all the hard work they do offering congratulations for reaching 100 years with an important proviso - this was to be only the beginning with many more years to come!



Moving on to the Don Bosco Retreat Centre in Lysterfield, Fr Frank Bertagnolli began the retreat day with a reflection on the history of the Salesians in Australia; some light entertainment in the form of Fr Mick Court's magical act followed. Those gathered were then invited to share some of their most precious memories as Salesian; most seemed to gravitate towards talking about the Salesians that had most impressed them when they were young.



The Rector Major spoke with the gathered confreres on the state of the congregation and his vision for the future. His last visit to Australia was nine years ago, and he stressed how good it was to see progress in the province from that time, and the dissipation of anxieties that had lingered in the air during his last visit.



He spoke of a conscious hope; that there was surely plenty more to come in the Salesian story in Australia; the congregation just needed to march towards that with a deliberate plan for spreading Don Bosco's charism to the young who are in need of it most. The floor was then opened for a few questions and then adjourned to ensure that everyone was given some time for rest before evening Mass, which was then followed by a communal dinner put on by the retreat centre staff.



THE TOUR DOWN UNDER FAREWELL ON DERBY DAY

The final leg of the Rector Major's tour brought him to the motherhouse - Salesian College Sunbury. Proceedings began with full school assembly, welcoming the Rector Major to the college grounds. In his speech to the students, he stressed the importance of dreams to young people, and passionately encouraged them to always follow their dreams, as this is the path to happiness.

For one last time in Australia, the Rector Major reached out to the young people through song, playing a couple of tunes in his native Spanish. Before playing the second song, Don Ángel commented that if he played this song in Spain, young people would be up and dancing for sure; he wondered out loud if anyone would be brave enough to dance in front of their peers. To his pleasant surprise, many members of the audience jumped up to dance along!

To commemorate the Rector Major's visit and the centenary of Salesianity in Australia, the Rector-Major planted a tree by the cemetery gates (the final resting place for many Salesians who have dedicated their lives to the Australia-Pacific province), and buried an accompanying time capsule to be opened at the next centenary.

In the background of the Rector Major's visit, Salesian College Sunbury were participating in their "Don Bosco Derby", a day full of friendly competitions between the schoolhouses through a wide range of activities and games. This meant that there were plenty of students about the grounds, to the great joy of the touring party. Many were eager to have their photo taken with the Rector Major, taken as they were by his speech and song earlier in the day. Indeed, some students even asked for the name of one of the songs that he played, so that they could add it to their Spotify playlist and maybe even change the school bell to the tune!

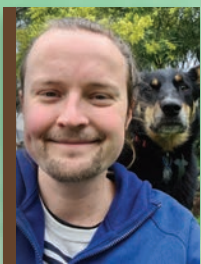
One final stop at the Salesian Residence was in order to visit the community and bless the benefactor's monument that had been freshly minted only a couple of months. It is dedicated to all those who have supported the works of the Salesians in the Australia-Pacific province since its inception in 1923.

With that complete, it was now time to leave for the airport for the return flight to Madrid. Both Sydney and Melbourne had been blessed with fantastic, sunny weather for the Rector Major's visit, and even so, no sooner than his departure plane did the Melbourne sky's turn grey and the rain fell, marking the end of an extraordinary visit that has nourished the Salesians in Australia during their 100 year celebrations!





BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY



Michael Gartland

Michael is a journalist for the Salesian Bulletin but can usually be found exploring one of Melbourne's many beautiful parks and waterways with his best friend!

The 140 first year students (aged 12-13) from Melbourne's Salesian College Chadstone spent three days building community amongst themselves and improving the lands around them. Hosted by the Don Bosco Camp & Centre Safety Beach, Victoria, Australia, the program had a two-pronged focus: for the students to get to know one another and to learn what "sustainable living" entails.

As the students are still finding their feet after the big transition to high school, the program led with what the Don Bosco Camp does best - is bringing people together into a warm, welcoming environment through the power of fun and games!

A key part of forming any community is to learn more about the people you are sharing a space with; so, the program kicked off with a series of games aimed at building bonds amongst young people. "As the Yeast in Today's Human Family" is the Strenna theme for 2023, and a glint of determination could be seen in the eyes of the young people as it was explained to them how important their role as protagonists for a better world is.

With this small community established, the focus then turned to the wider area. The Don Bosco Camp is situated on the traditional lands of the Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation, blessed with an abundance of sparkling beach waters and sweeping plains. To live a little closer to the Earth the students forsook the cabins and instead learnt how to pitch a tent and enjoyed a few nights amongst the elements.

In recent years, the suburb of Safety Beach and its surrounds have seen a large amount of urban development, as more people seek to immerse themselves in this natural beauty. The students learnt about the vitality of Australian native indigenous plant life and the massive flow on booms they bring to all forms of life in their presence. To put this lesson into action, they then planted 150 Australian native indigenous grasses and trees around the campsite, picking up new skills while helping the campsite achieve its ecological goals.

The students also learnt about the antithesis to sustainable living: throwaway culture and the large-scale impact it has on the environment through waste that is not disposed of correctly. While a discarded bottle on the side of the road might not elicit more than a second look from



most people, they all end up somewhere - and the beach-side campsite knows this all too well. To help marine life and beautify the area for the public, the students and their teachers teamed up to collect garbage around the beach environment.

Camp Manager Mr Paul Poutney extended his heartfelt thanks to Salesian College Chadstone for making such a special contribution to the camp environment and doing it in a manner that the Camp prides itself on - taking on everything on offer with great joy.

He added that "It's quite remarkable to think of how far we'll go with our young people as the yeast in our world today; everyone at Don Bosco Camp is looking forward to incorporating more of these Green Alliance activities on our camps in the future." For their part, Salesian College passed on their sincere thanks to the camp leaders and staff for delivering such a memorable experience to the students.

As is often the case for Don Bosco Camps, the time spent together came to a close too soon; yet the students left with so much more than they came with; closer bonds to one another and a greater appreciation for the lands of their common home.



Photos: Lia Poutney

EDUCATION IMMERSION



Lauren Hichaaba

Lauren is the delegate for Mission Animation in the province and the director of the Cagliero Project. She has developed close ties with the Pacific nations, after many years of tight friendship!

During the month of May, a group of teachers and educators from Salesian schools around Australia travelled to Samoa for a Salesian Education Immersion. The main goal of the immersion was to give Australian teachers an experience of Samoa, particularly the education system. A long-term goal was to cultivate and deepen relationships between our Australian and Samoan schools.

This was the first time a program like this took place and those from Australia and Samoa enjoyed it immensely.

A key component of the program was for the Australian teachers to stay with Samoan teachers in their homes. This was a beautiful experience where they could really get to know each other. There were two homestay experiences during the immersion. The first was with teachers from Don Bosco Technical Centre (DBTC), Alafua, for three nights and the second with Don Bosco High School (DBHS), Salelologa, teachers for two nights. Although homestay can be a challenging part of the journey, all members were grateful for the experience. There was a deep sense of gratitude for being able to really engage with our Samoan teachers in their real lives. Bonds and friendships were formed that will last for a very long time.

The Australian group prepared and delivered a professional development program for Samoan teachers at both schools. The major facets of the program consisted of a communication wheel/speed dating and a rotation of workshops from schools who had staff present. The communication wheel/speed dating was effective at giving everybody the opportunity to talk and engaging in challenging content. It was wonderful to have time to share our experiences in education and to learn from each other. We also had the opportunity to visit Don Bosco Kindergarten in Sinamoga and the FMA (Salesian Sisters) run St Josephs Primary School in Leauva'a - both of which were beautiful encounters, especially with the young people.

The group of participants was truly wonderful - so open and enthusiastic. There were representatives from St John Bosco, Perth, St John Bosco, Engadine, Dunlea Centre, Engadine, St Josephs, Ferntree Gully, Salesian College, Chadstone, and Salesian College, Sunbury. The Principals and schools put their full support behind the program and we are grateful. All participants were very open and receptive to the whole experience. There were definitely difficult moments on the immersion and the group really persevered both together as a group and individually. There was a lot of resilience in the group.



There were so many highlights of this immersion experience. Firstly, the opportunity to connect with Salesian Teachers from around Australia and Samoa was enriching and rewarding. These connections are invaluable and are the ones that I will cherish forever. We are definitely keeping the salesian spirit alive!

I loved the whole experience. It is really difficult to narrow it down to one best part.

The immersion experience itself, to fully immerse oneself into another culture, was challenging but also rewarding at the same time. I was blown away by the Samoan culture and the genuine love and beauty displayed by the Samoan people. They truly are the most generous, selfless and happy people. They definitely remind us of what is important in life and put things into perspective.

I'd perhaps lean towards the amazing interactions I had with my Samoan Host families, the teachers and students from the schools and getting to know our incredible Aussie teachers along the way".

*Kalinda Knight,
St. John Bosco College, Perth*

*Peter Harris,
St. John Bosco College, Engadine*

IN SAMOA

The 2023 Samoa Education Immersion was overwhelmingly a positive experience. The homestay experiences were wonderful and are a highlight of the program. I knew that this experience would have a significant impact on the lives of the participants, but during a final debrief session they all spoke of the fact it had been "life-changing" for them and had fundamentally altered the way they look at the world. This impact has exceeded expectations of what we were hoping it would achieve.

Upon returning home the group have reflected what a positive impact this has had on their lives and what they hope to do with this experience in the future. Many of them have demonstrated an interest in continuing to support and engage with our schools in Samoa. Most participants have been given the opportunity to speak with their home staff and students about the experience.

An important idea that arose both during the design of this program and during the implementation was a reciprocal immersion for Samoan staff. We will start to look at and plan for opportunities for our Samoan teachers to visit us here in Australia. We look forward to many more education immersions to come and we sincerely thank our colleagues and Salesians in Samoa for such a warm welcome.



My experience was spiritual, positive, enlightening. It was better than I ever expected. Staff in future should know it's not a holiday, this immersion is not for everyone. I am blessed I had this opportunity.

*Simone Babic,
St. John Bosco College, Engadine*

This was a once in a lifetime experience, and I am so very grateful to have been part of it. Thank you! Thank you!! Thank you!!!

*Montana Nicoloutsopoulos,
Salesian College, Chadstone*

SPONSOR A TEACHER EDUCATE A NATION!

We want to ensure that we can continue the holistic education that is offered by both of our schools in Samoa.

We are running our "Sponsor a Teacher, Educate a Nation" campaign to collect funds to ensure we can support the teachers with the necessary supplies and resources that are required within their classrooms and within the schools at large.

Please help us to support the incredible Salesian schools as they continue to educate and form the wonderful young people of Samoa.

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HEART OF BOSCO IN BRUNSWICK



Afi'a Enosa

Br Afi'a is a Salesian brother who recently moved to the community in Brunswick. He has a keen interest in photography and a passion for working with and for young people.

Young people and parents living in Brunswick and surrounding suburbs find Don Bosco Youth Centre a welcoming place, a home away from home, an environment where they feel comfortable, safe and loved.

The Youth Centre offers a variety of services and activities to youth groups and family groups, creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere that encourages young people to attain their full potential; promotes positive self-esteem and encourages them to help others. We have seen multicultural friendship blossom between young people, and parents, as well as lay people and volunteers, and we have witnessed this for many years. It is great to see this bond growing stronger between young people.

Father Jan Walenciej is the new Director of Don Bosco Youth Centre. He took over from the previous Director, Father Peter Kerin, who provided many years of service to the youth of the local community. Father Jan was the Director of Don Bosco Youth Centre in St Marys, Sydney, for eleven years, including six years as Rector before he moved to Brunswick in 2023. He has been presenting fresh perspectives and initiatives for the ongoing mission of the Youth Centre and planning new activities for the young people. Brother Afi'a Enosa, who is a practical trainee, arrived from Fiji, where he spent five years in formation, and he is now assisting Father Jan in the Youth Centre.

Don Bosco Brunswick is an extremely multicultural community. Young people come for recreation after school on weekdays and for weekend sessions in the mornings and afternoons. The Centre provides pool tables, air-hockey tables, soccer tables, trampolines, gymnastic springboards and an outdoor multipurpose sports court. Many parents who accompany their sons and daughters to the Youth Centre share stories and great memories of the Centre when they used to come with their own parents. Now, they are bringing their

children back to the place that gave them a sense of belonging and safety.

We have been blessed with the presence of many local volunteers who are keen to offer their time and energy to support the Youth Centre. They are offered in turn to supervise and to ensure the safety of young people during sessions. With the support of Father Phillip Gleeson (Rector) and the regular presence of the members of our Salesian community, the spirit in the Centre is greatly enhanced as they mingle with the youngsters or meet their parents or some of the past pupils of the Youth Centre and entertain them in lively conversations.

During the Easter celebrations, the hymn "Sing Alleluia, the Lord is Risen..." was chanted with enthusiasm and fervour by many faithful parishioners of St Margaret Mary parish as they came together to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, a celebration of joy and renewal. The church was packed with local parishioners, relatives and family members.

In the preceding week, Fr Phillip Gleeson (Rector), Fr Jan Walenciej, Fr Anthony Nguyen and Fr John Kick took it in turn to lead the parish community to the celebrations of the powerful liturgy of Holy Week. Recalling the Holy Thursday celebration, one parishioner, who was deeply impressed by the ceremony of the washing of the feet, commented: "It is a symbolic gesture by Jesus that will never get old, and reminds us of the need of being always humble and to be of service to others".

The Vietnamese group, made up of adults and children, presented the Stations of the Cross in a very reflective and solemn way, enabling the wider community to enter into the spirit of Holy Week more deeply. All the liturgical celebrations were enlivened by the two parish choirs - the Vietnamese and the English choirs - and numerous parishioners were actively engaged in the liturgical readings and other responsible services.

MINISTRY OF ACOLYTE ON MARY'S FEAST

St John Bosco parish, Suva, Fiji, came alive on 24 May 2023, as the community gathered to celebrate the feast day of Mary Help of Christians. This great Salesian feast was also marked by the installation of Brother Peter Anh Vu Nguyen to the ministry of Acolyte.

The day began with Morning Prayer, setting the tone of heartfelt devotion and gratitude to our Blessed Mother. The highlight of the feast day was the celebration of the Eucharist, at which Fr Taisali Leuluai (Parish Priest) presided and concelebrated by Fr Peter Minh Duc Nguyen and Fr James Kyaw Hoe (Rector). The simple yet elegant decoration of the Youth Centre in which the Eucharist was celebrated, and the enthusiastic singing at the Eucharist showed the great love of the people for our beloved Mother, the Help of Christians.

Br Peter Anh Vu was installed to the ministry of Acolyte by Fr Jim Kyaw. Most noticeable was the young people's attention to the brief and deeply meaningful ceremony of Br Peter dedicating his life to deepening his love for the Word of God, the Eucharist and for our blessed Mother.

The traditional kava ceremony (sevusevu) took place after the Eucharistic Celebration. The feast day cake, refreshments and ice cream were all part of our expression of joy and thanks for the gift of a wonderful Mother to all God's people.



Br Peter is very happy with his new role!



Falefa Elia

Falefa is a Seminarian at the Pacific Regional Seminary in Fiji

FEAST OF MAZZARELLO IN SPR



The feast of our founder St Maria Domenica Mazzarello was celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy at the Mazzarello Development Centre, Henderson (Solomon Islands). After the Eucharistic celebration, the children, youth and the sisters had a roaring time and enjoyed the entertainment and the expressions of gratitude for this great woman.

All the fun and festivities concluded with a cold treat which is always welcomed and appreciated. May Maria Mazzarello protect and guide the youth and FMA of the Solomon Islands.

A LIFE LABOUR OF LOVE

The Sisters of the South-Pacific Province celebrated with joy as dear Sr Patricia McCusker was formally acknowledged by Tony Farley, the Catholic Education Director. She was sent an award of appreciation for her many years of service at St John Bosco Primary School, Engadine.

In summing up Sr Patricia's love for all things Salesian, Mr Farley said "Sr Patricia will be most remembered for sharing her love of Don Bosco with our community. She truly lived his vision that not only should every child be loved but know that they are loved. Sr Patricia worked tirelessly right up and past her 83rd birthday ... she was truly remarkable".



LIVES LIVED WELL:

Don Giulio Cavarzan passed away in the evening on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at the Salesian Retirement Home, Mons. Cognata, Castello di Godego (Treviso) in Italy.

He was born on 4 May 1932 in Maser, Italy, to Luigi and Albina Comazetto, one of 12 children in a faith filled family.

Giulio entered the Salesian pre-novitiate in Verona at 18 years of age, made his first profession as a Salesian in 1952, and came to Australia in 1956, as a young missionary. He made his perpetual profession as a Salesian into the hands of Fr B M Fedrigotti in Sunbury on 31 January 1958. He spent two years in Engadine and one year in Brooklyn Park as a practical trainee before returning to Italy for theological studies in 1959 at the Salesian International Seminary at Castellammare di Stabia, Naples.

Giulio was ordained a priest in Rome by Bishop Arduino, Salesian, on 6 April 1963. The following year he returned to Australia to become a member of the Salesian Community at Salesian College Chadstone, and remained there for 52 years, universally known as "Father Julian". During his early years, he was first a teacher at the College and became well known for his enthusiastic participation in the students' recreation activities: the life of the courtyard.

Most of his priestly life was taken up with the care of the Italian communities of Oakleigh and Clayton as their chaplain until 2016. His apostolic zeal was focused on the care of their souls and extended out to the provision of social clubs for the community. Together with a group of helpers, Fr Julian raised funds to build the Dominic Savio Early Learning Centre in Clayton in 1977, including the convent for the Salesian Sisters who were invited to take charge of the Centre.

Giulio's Mother and Father visit Australia in 1973



Giulio joining in with students in a game of volleyball at Chadstone



VALE FR GIULIO CAVARZAN

In 2016, after long years of dedication to the work as Chaplain of the Italian community in South-East Melbourne his health began to fail and as such, Fr Julian decided to retire back in his motherland.

Don Giulio was 91 years of age, 70 years as a professed Salesian and 60 years as a priest. He certainly was a much-loved figure, not only in Chadstone and in our province, but also among the Italian communities in Melbourne, particularly in Clayton.

Eternal rest grant unto Don Giulio, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace.



Giulio says mass for the Associazione Trevisani nel Mondo



The leadership team at the St Dominic Savio Early Learning Centre



LIVES LIVED WELL:

Sister Josephine Bargigli was born in Turin on 9 November 1928, the only daughter of Carlo and Livia Bargigli. Along with her three brothers Ugo, Carlo and Renato she grew up in a hardworking Christian family with strong parish connections to the Salesian spirit and works where she developed a deep appreciation for value of hard work as she helped her parents during the difficulties and hardships of wartime.

Sr Josephine became a postulant with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Turin on 31 January 1948. After her profession Sr Josephine spent a year in Casa Madre Mazzarello, Turin, where she trained as a Kindergarten teacher. In 1952 Sr Josephine with three other sisters left Turin for the United States to study English in preparation for the opening of the first Salesian Sisters' foundation in Australia.

On 30 September 1954 Sr Josephine (with Sr Cecilia Lanzo, Sr Elisa Vavassori and Sr Lina Chiandotto) set sail from the port of New York for a 49 day trip to Australia. The ship they sailed on was named the 'Pioneer Reef' which they jokingly nicknamed the Pioneer Grief as it was a cargo ship; travel prices were less expensive than a passenger ship.

They travelled via the Panama Canal and had a day in Panama City with the FMA community. The sisters arrived in Brisbane, Australia, and after two more flights they reached their new mission in Brooklyn Park, Adelaide, on 19 November 1954. The following February the sisters took over St John Bosco parish primary school, which soon became known for the quality of its educational curriculum due to Sr Josephine's great skill as an early childhood educator.

Sr Josephine continued to teach at St John Bosco primary school Brooklyn Park until 1965, when she relocated to the St John Bosco primary school in Engadine. Once

Josephine (far left) upon arrival in Adelaide in 1954



Josephine (centre) as community leader of the Le'auva'a in 1987



VALE SR JOSEPHINE BARGIGLI

again, her talents shone through, as she endeared herself to students and parents alike for her innovative methods and teaching skills. Ever the obedient servant of the mission, Sr Josephine returned to Brooklyn Park in 1975, picking up where she had left off.

In 1985 Sr Josephine moved to the recently founded mission in Samoa, teaching catechists and their wives at Moamoa Theological College. In just one short year the community became aware of her great spirit, and she was then assigned to the principalship of St Joseph primary school in the village of Leauva'a where she remained until 1990. Sr Josephine began a pre-school for the children of the trainee catechists, using her many skills, creativity and natural affinity with young people.

During this time, Sr Josephine was also the community bursar and assistant to the boarders. In 2010 Sr Josephine moved to Pago Pago, American Samoa, where she helped students in numeracy and literacy in the primary school. Three years later Sr Josephine moved to the

newly opened community of Malololelei to assist with the life of the Divine Mercy primary school, remaining in this mission until 2016 when her gradually failing health forced her to return to Engadine, Australia.

After a short time in the community, she was hospitalized due to a fall. However, she was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour and needed specialised care which she received in John Paul Village Nursing Home. She was regularly visited by her community members, who were ever grateful for her joyful Salesian presence, humour and gift of storytelling that gave a pioneering light and life to the FMA mission in the South Pacific Region.

Sr Josephine was a faith-filled woman who lived her FMA life in fidelity to her commitment. She was a wonderful pioneering missionary who gave her all in the educational mission, living the charism of Don Bosco and Maria Mazzarello until 22 May, when the Lord finally called her home to her eternal rest.

Josephine was a natural and finding smiles on the faces of young people!



Josephine was a talented artist who adorned her walls with her work



Josephine and preschool teacher Sesilia Taofinu'u at Moamoa Theological College





PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Approximately 7.5 million people call Papua New Guinea (PNG) home; 40% of them live below the poverty line, due to international exploitation of what is a resource-rich country with high oil, gas and gold reserves as well as fertile land capable of producing high crop yields.

The Salesians first came to PNG in 1980 and have focused on providing education and support to the young most in need.



JAPAN

The Salesians first made their way to Japan in 1926, responding to Don Bosco's 1885 Missionary Dream about Oceania, in which he saw a high mountain facing a wide sea.

The mission has grown to over 80 confreres across 14 houses, in a country where only 0.34% of the population identify as Catholic.



THAILAND

The Salesians first came to Thailand in 1927, when 18 missionaries arrived by boat.

This has blossomed to over 97 confreres across 18 houses, where the focus on providing vocational education and meeting the basic needs of people has gone a long way to sharply reducing the poverty rate in the country over the past 20 years.



LAUDATO SI CAMP

The Laudato Si' Youth Camp was held from 21 to 22 April at the gymnasium of Don Bosco Technological Institute, Boroko campus. 184 participants from different institutions and parishes in Port Moresby focused on the theme "Be the Salt and Light to CARE for our Mother Earth", with a focus on interconnected ecology.

Leila Baoroba, one of the participants, reported "As we are interconnected, the treatment we give to these creatures will affect us as well.

For example, if we cut down trees without planting new ones, we will have shortage of oxygen in the future. Likewise, if we mistreat or abuse animals we'll likely mistreat or abuse fellow human beings in the future.

Therefore, it is important to respect and take good care of these creatures as well as our homes."

After Mass, the campers put into action all the things that they had learned through an immersion experience at the nearby Bavaroko Primary School.

They worked on various tasks: collecting and sorting rubbish, weeding and planting flora around the school.

A representative from the school commented that the actions of the campers made them feel as if "someone really cared for them and the school, and, indeed, it was nice to see young people caring for the environment."

CAMP HELPING YOUNG JAPANESE LIVE 'SHALOM'

March 28-30 saw the return of the cherished Youth Catholic Camp (YCC), put on hold for three years due to ongoing pandemic restrictions.

The program began with the participants breaking into small groups and playing ice-breaker games, before then sharing a dinner meal together, marking a period of great learning, fun and festivity!

The next morning, Bishop Shinzo Sulpice Moriyama, gave a talk highlighting the biblical and connotational meaning of "Shalom", establishing the idea that 'peace' is a state of restoring 'wholeness'.

It is in the light of this concept that the participants engaged themselves in assessing their own already-conceived ideas of peace through group discussions.

The rest of the day involved fun and activities around the beachside, enjoying the breathtaking scenery.

The last day of YCC began with morning prayer and meditation based on the resolutions each one had made the previous night. Breakfast was served after the prayer session.

The participants were then asked to collect their belongings and do some chores around the camp.

Before finally parting ways, Holy Mass was celebrated as a culminating event with the hope that everyone would commit oneself to help establish true peace on earth.

MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, HELP OF THAILAND

On 24 May 2023, on the occasion of the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, Salesian communities and institutions came together to celebrate the feast of Mary Help of Christians, alongside with the students, teaching staff and the faithful.

The Church of Mary Help of Christians, Bangkok, which is the centre for the propagation of the devotion to the Blessed Mother, organized the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Silvio Siripong Charatsri, the ordinary of Chantaburi Diocese.

Salesian confreres, members of the Salesian Family and the faithful, numbering about 350 people, joined in the celebration.

During the liturgical service, the Bishop administered the sacrament of Confirmation to six young people.

Included in this number were five children of Filipino couples, and one of Thai descent.

At the end of the Eucharistic service, the faithful joined the procession of the statue of the Blessed Mother around the church area.

The atmosphere was filled with devotion. At the end of the service, a variety of food, which came from the faithful themselves, was shared among the participants in a family-like atmosphere.



ITALY

The 24th of May is the Feast day of Mary, Help of Christians, patroness of Australia and, of course, the most cherished guiding light for all Don Bosco did.

In 1862 Don Bosco addressed the first group of Salesians with the words "Our Lady wants us to honour Her under the title of Mary Help of Christians", emphasizing the infinite trust in her intercession on behalf of his life's work and ministry.



PARAGUAY

Salesian missionaries have been working in Paraguay since 1896, where they established a church and educational programs focusing on the arts and trades to help advance the skills and knowledge of the indigenous people.

Today, there are 66 confreres spread out over 11 houses, living and working in one of the poorest nations in South America.



SYRIA

The Salesians have been living and working in Syria since 1948 and it is hard to imagine any presence that has endured as a tumultuous period as recent history in Syria.

In 2011 civil war broke out, made exponentially worse by the impact of the terrorist organization ISIS and most recently, the devastating earthquake of February 2023 that killed over 6,000 people, destroyed 100,000 buildings and left 1.5 million people without a place to go.



MARY IS THE MOTHER OF EACH OF YOU

The celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, was a grand expression of all that is cherished about Salesianity. The entire day swelled with an atmosphere of visible fervour: groups of pilgrims, religious, devotees of all nationalities, ages, and ethnicities crowded the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, as well as the various courtyards and environments of Valdocco, to take part in the many planned celebrations and activities.

The Rector Major, Father Ángel Fernández Artime, quoted Don Bosco during his homily, saying that the celebration of the Eucharist was taking place in the house that Our Lady herself built. "This is the impressive and beautiful reality that one has when God is behind the heart of a man and when then Our Lady continues to inspire him," commented the Rector Major.

He also highlighted how Don Bosco's devotion to Mary Help of Christians was interwoven with his desire that each young person in the oratory could experience the embrace and warmth of a mother. At the end of the Mass, despite the rain, a multitude of the faithful took part in a procession to accompany the statue of Our Lady through the streets of the city. Parading along with Her were the countless banners of student groups, youth movements, associations, alumni and unions.

Archbishop of Turin, Msgr. Roberto Repole, added "It is very beautiful, this feast ... because it says something about who we are: people who need care, always, at all times... It would be nice to return to our homes this evening and see more, in a more intense, authentic, true and profound way, the need for care of those close to us."

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS RECEIVE HOUSING

Salesian students, living in the Apostolic Vicariate of El Chaco, have new housing thanks to donor funding and support from Salesian Missions.

The 2022 project provided a new apartment building for disadvantaged Indigenous college students who are studying in the capital city Asunción.

Funding provided for the installation of a transformer, air conditioners, water heaters and a sidewalk outside of the building, as well as a bar metal fence and gates on the front of the building.

It also provided for the completion of the exhibition hall on the ground floor, interior painting and the electrical installation for the building.

Conditions of poverty drive youth into early labour and a lack of literacy. Those in poverty face overcrowding, low quality housing and a lack of access to basic household services.

Paraguayans who only graduate from primary school are twice as likely to live in poverty as those who have access to and complete secondary school.

OVERCOMING TRAUMA WITH SUMMER CAMPS

Every year, the Salesians summer camp takes place to help nearly 2,000 children aged between 8 and 18 to overcome the trauma experienced in their daily lives.

A study by psychologist Mariam Ghosn, who works with the Salesians in Aleppo, showed that 85% of children need psychological support and that the participation in group activities and therapy can begin the healing process.

"Bosco Space" is the guiding theme for the summer program for six weeks. Through the stories of six children who are sent to six planets across the "Don Bosco Universe," participants learn six different virtues that will be useful to them "when they return to Earth."

Traveling by imagination, the 2000 campers discovered the planet of:

- Good Deeds, (learning to share and communicate);
- Dreams (learning to pay attention to God's signs in life);
- Life (learning how to take responsibility);
- Fateful Decisions, (learning to trust and not give up);
- Principles (learning to be ethical and distinguish right from wrong)
- Fulfilled Dreams (learning to observe the beauty around us).