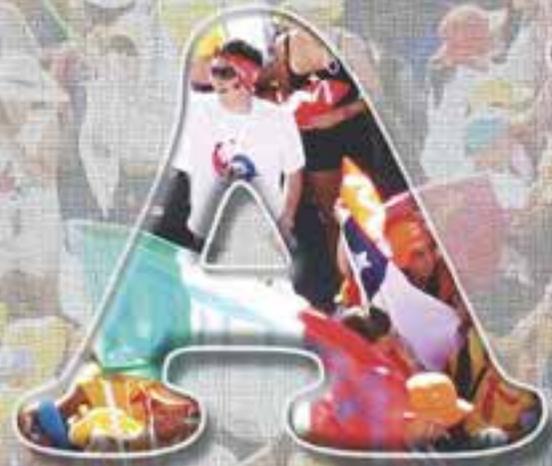


SALESIANS 2012







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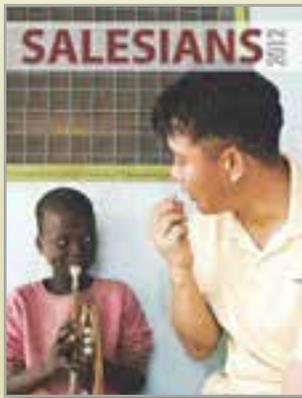
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Cover:
Don Bosco of Tonj
 † Fr John Lee Taeseok
 (1962 - 2010)

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Fr Filiberto González Plasencia, sdb
General Councillor for SC

Dear friends,

"Nobody trod yesterday, nor treads today, nor will tread tomorrow the same path that I am treading now. God ensures that a new ray of sunshine and a virgin path lies ahead for each of us" (León Felipe).

We each have our story to tell if we wish to: the story of our life, our particular calling, a story of the lights we have received and the road we have taken.

Our story is our own unique one because it is a response to a personal call. Contrary to the pragmatic view of things, it is not woven of simple facts, free or paid for. It is woven of: important silences where we listened in all humility; our openness to dialogue and understanding; the risky decisions we have taken in order to move on. These are what set us on the road and measure the extent of our sharing. We will usually understand only at the end what our calling and response was, what the road and its point of arrival really are - and not always everything even then. Such was the case for Don Bosco when at the end of his life, old and ill, he said: "Now I understand; it is She who has achieved everything".

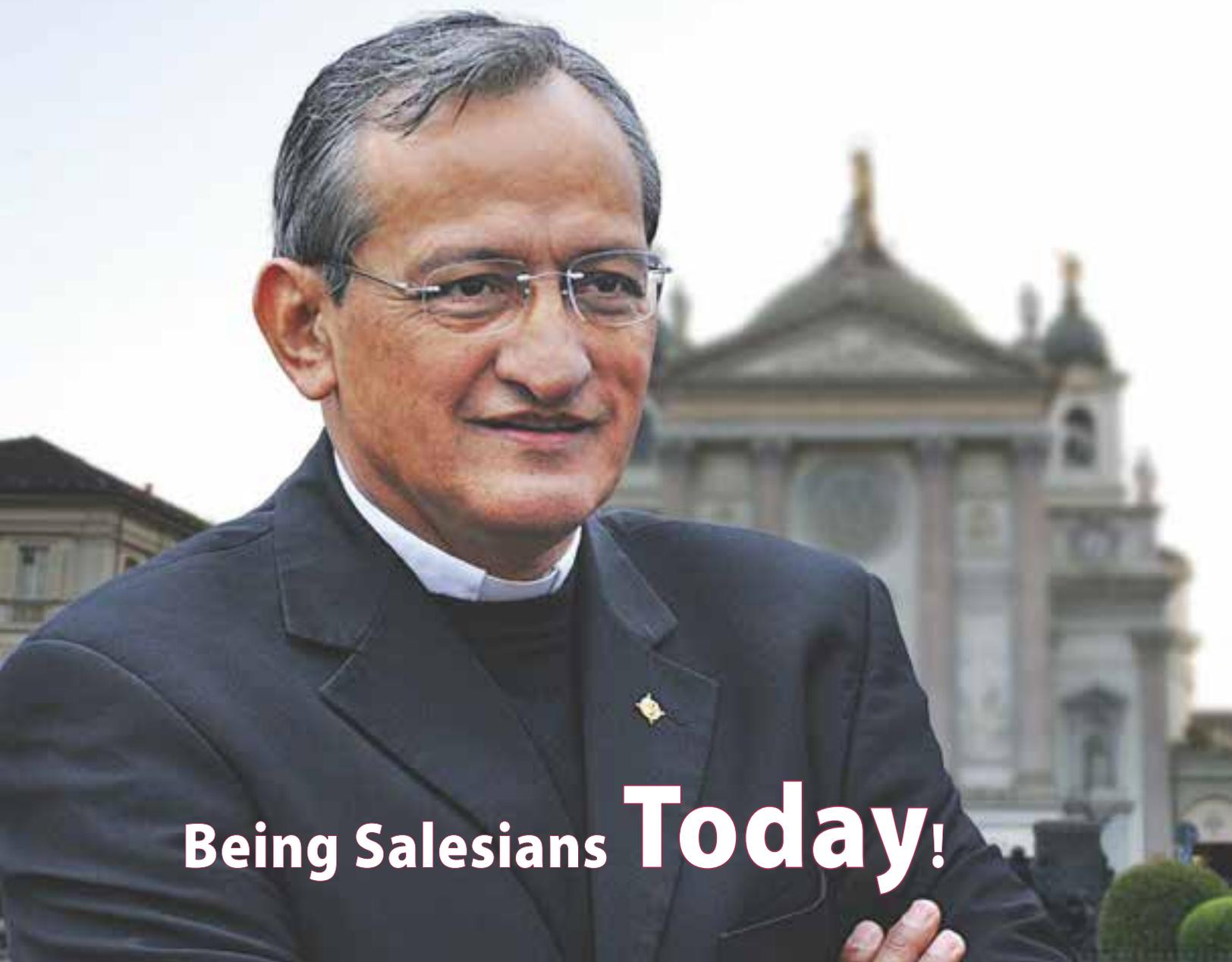
The theme running through the Magazine this year is life as a vocation. It is a pleasure to be able to present you with these testimonies of religious, priests, and lay people. They are simple testimonies of people who may be on in years, or may yet be young, men and women, responding to the call they have received in one or other part of the world where they were sought out.

The common factor in them all is a generous and unconditional commitment, cheerfulness, a desire to share their passion for God and for the very poor. God and the poor have become their call, their response and the meaning of their lives. You will also discover the testimony of those who give their life fully to the end: until their health is spent and the seed buried in the ground. They are alive in those who receive them and they live on beyond those who immediately know them.

All these people know that they are not alone and cannot remain alone. They are joined by people who love Don Bosco and his plans for the young, people who in various ways and means respond to their own calling to help poor young people.

We are offering you the Magazine this year not just with the intention of showing you ways to contribute or respond but also as a way of saying thank you for the vocation that you have so generously joined with ours.

December 8, 2011



Being Salesians **Today!**

Being
Salesians
Today!

Fr Pascual Chávez V., sdb
Rector Major

My dear friends, I greet you with the sentiments of Don Bosco himself; may the New Year be filled with all the good things you expect from life.

It gives me pleasure to offer you, once again, this overview of the Salesian Congregation by way of our 'Salesians 2012' magazine. This year it is particularly focused on the idea of vocation. This is one way of responding to the appeal which the Lord continually makes to every young person

in the world: "Come and See".

But what does it mean to be a Salesian today?

Let me answer this by telling you something of the story of my own vocation and of my personal experience of inviting others to follow Jesus.

I belong to a large family of 12 children: 6 boys and 6 girls. I am the eighth. I have to confess that even though my

Having a vocation means that life has meaning, and this means it has direction, goals to achieve and enormous energy, the result of motivation.

family is a very Catholic family, and the bishop, priests, sisters visited home, it never occurred to me that I might be a priest. And in fact, other than myself, no-one else in the family became a priest or sister.

So what happened for me to make this decision?

Something very simple! When I was just eleven, a pupil at the Salesian school in Saltillo in the north of Mexico, my mum suddenly fell ill and died two weeks later. Three days before she died, however, I was able to talk with her. I wanted some money to buy a pair of runners. I loved playing games, especially basketball. She said to me: "But do you know how I've always asked God if one of my sons could be a priest? I have had six boys and not one has gone to the seminary". And just wanting my runners, I said: "And I'm the one!" She smiled and gave me the money for the shoes. As I have said, she died three days later. The most interesting thing about this is that I asked for a pair of runners and I got a vocation!

In fact a few days later I went to talk to my teacher and told him simply that I wanted to be a Salesian priest. I certainly did not mention the talk with my mum. I did this only 14 years later, the day of my ordination. That is when I told my father, brothers and sisters: "Maybe you want to know how I ended up a priest". And I told them.

Now I can see how God has guided me through life! He really has been wonderful with me! I am not referring to the fact that I happen to be Rector Major of the Salesians. I am speaking of the gift of a vocation, because it is the most wonderful gift the Lord gave me other than the gift of life and faith.

Having a vocation means that life has mean-

ing, and this means it has direction, goals to achieve and enormous energy, the result of motivation. This is because we have a reason for being who we are and doing what we do happily, optimistically, convinced that we are useful.

I really think the general problem for young people is not brought about by seeking drugs, or the result of alcohol, or confusion about their sexuality, but rather the lack of meaning and motivation in life. This is why they fall for the temptation to exploit the present, experiment with strong emotions, or just live indifferently.

By becoming a Salesian I wanted to give my whole life to God on behalf of the young, like Don Bosco.

Once I had completed my formation in Guadalajara, and immediately after ordination, I was sent to do my Licenciante in Sacred Scripture in Rome, at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, then Jerusalem at the Hebrew University. I became a Professor in Biblical Studies and Rector of the Theologate in Tlaquepaque-Mexico for nine years, then Provincial of





Guadalajara for another six years. Once I had completed this service I finished my Doctorate in Biblical Theology at the Pontifical University of Salamanca. Just at that point I was elected as a member of the General Council, as Regional for Interamerica which takes in a good 18 countries from Canada to Bolivia. Then in the General Chapter (2002) I was elected Rector Major. However, my mission has always been the young. They are my vocation, my *raison d'être*.

I am so happy with and proud of my Salesian vocation that not only am I not ashamed to be a Salesian, but I want to invite young people whom I consider suitable for this vocation to become Salesians, because I want the best for them, and I want them to be as happy as I am.

I can tell you that amongst my students and the boys at the oratory where I worked, and amongst the volunteers who were helping us, there are a number to whom I made the proposal and who responded positively.

And do you know where this decision came from? From personal experience. Amongst the boys in the basketball team at school where I was teaching during my time as a Practical Trainee was one who went to the De La Salle Brothers school, and while I was doing my theological studies he wrote to tell me he was joining them; I asked myself at that point why I had not invited him to be a Salesian! I said to myself: "From now on I am going to be clear and make the offer". It was a lesson I learned well and it had good results.

Someone might ask: "how difficult was it for you to suggest a vocation to religious life in today's context? How do you invite young people to follow Jesus if this also means going against the dominant culture. Are there places in the Salesian world where this kind of vocation promotion actually works?"

In the West, especially in affluent countries, there are a number of factors which work against consecrated life: fewer people demographically speaking (fewer children for society means the same for the Church); secularism which makes it more difficult for religious proposal and response; affluence that makes life easier; so it is counter-cultural to organise your life around sacrifice and renunciation, or definitive commitment, as well as the fact that the State is now self-sufficient and can carry out all the kinds of work that seemed to be for religious to do (schools, hospitals...).

Elsewhere in the world, though, there are things that run in favour of consecrated life: the youth ratio is higher, the cultural background has remained religious fundamentally, there is poverty of a kind that makes us think about how to help people, especially the really poor and needy, and the State does not have the resources to do it.

For example at the moment most Salesian vocations are coming from India, Vietnam, East Timor, and some countries in Latin America. In Poland too and in the Ukraine there are vocations.

One case worth noting is Vietnam, the

I am so happy with and proud of my Salesian vocation that not only am I not ashamed to be a Salesian, but I want to invite young people whom I consider suitable for this vocation to become Salesians, because I want the best for them, and I want them to be as happy as I am.

province growing faster than any other in relative terms. A communist country, then, a totalitarian regime, also predominantly Buddhist, and we have 400 aspirants to Salesian life, all of them university students, showing a high level of perseverance.

So it seems that consecrated life is much more likely in poor countries, but this does not mean to say that the Salesian vocation has no place in affluent, developed nations; you find Salesians in just about every such country. It means that consecrated life has another function there, to be a visible, credible, legible sign of God in a godless society where people live

as if God did not exist. It can be a sign to the extent that it is truly countercultural, with a gospel-based identity strongly focused on God, witness to communion and total dedication to the other.

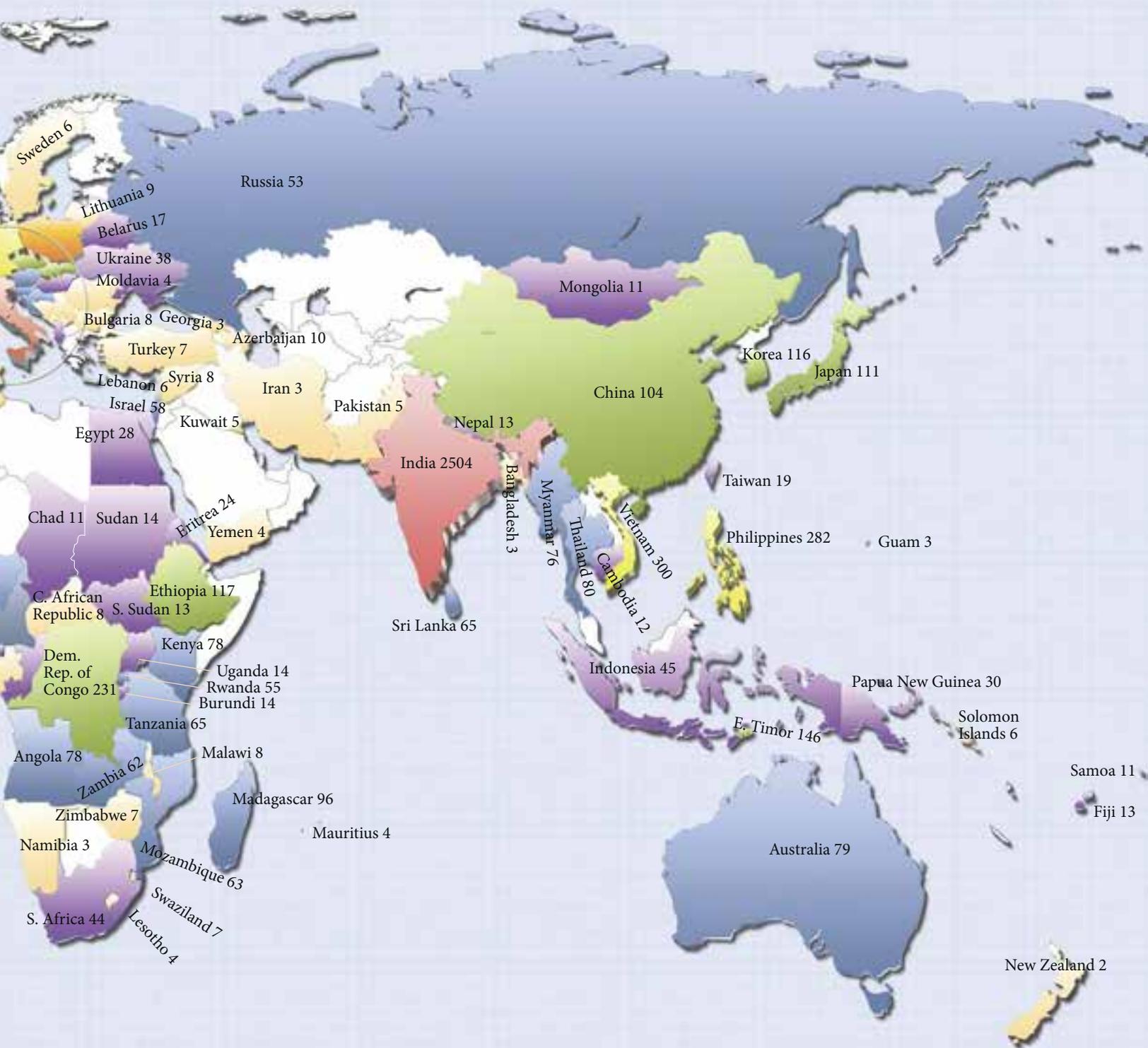
In our case, it is enough for there to be young people for there to be a reason for us to be there and to continue offering young people the possibility of being a Salesian, as I am doing right now, with you.

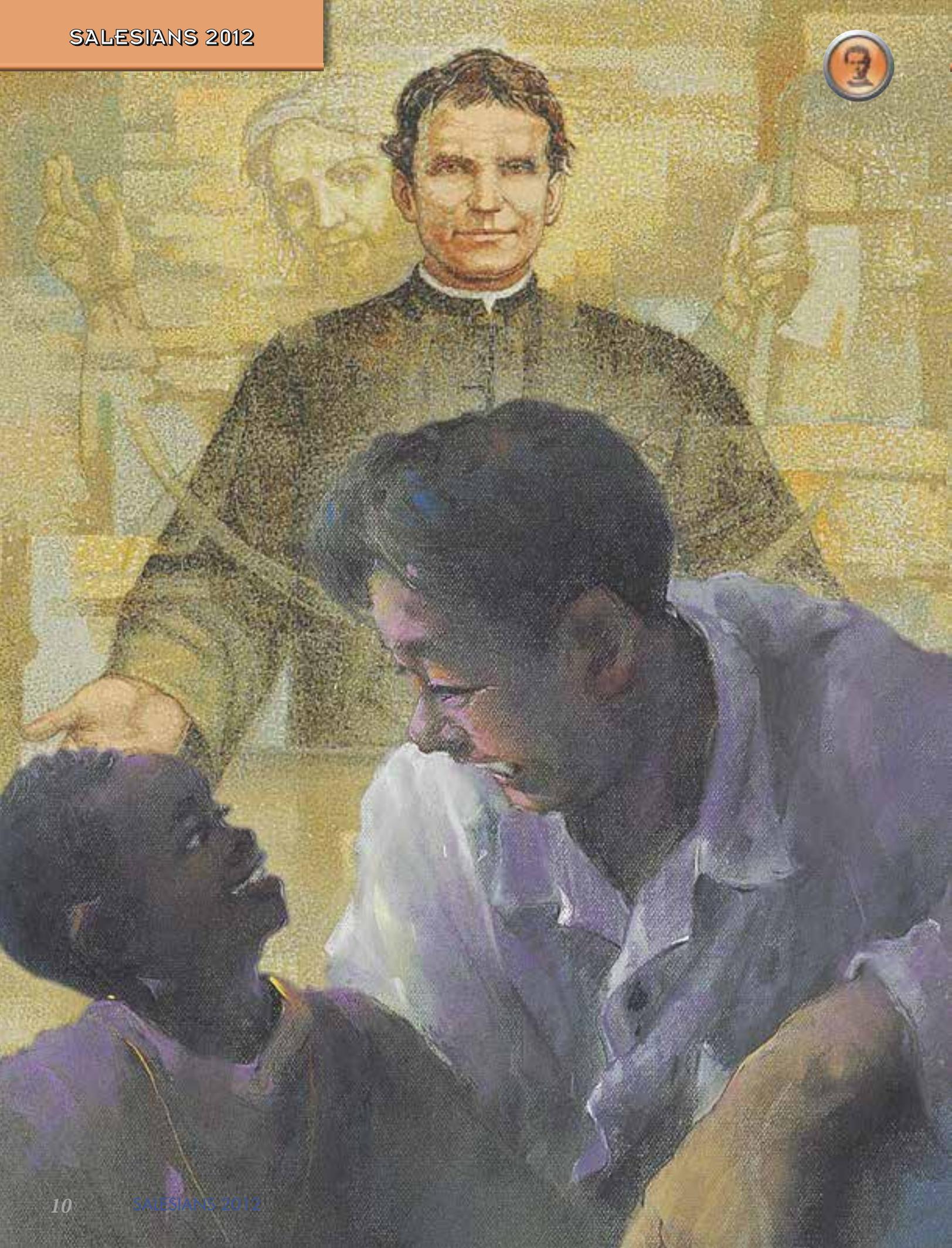
Do something wonderful with your life! Courage! Give God a chance and you will see that he will not disappoint you.

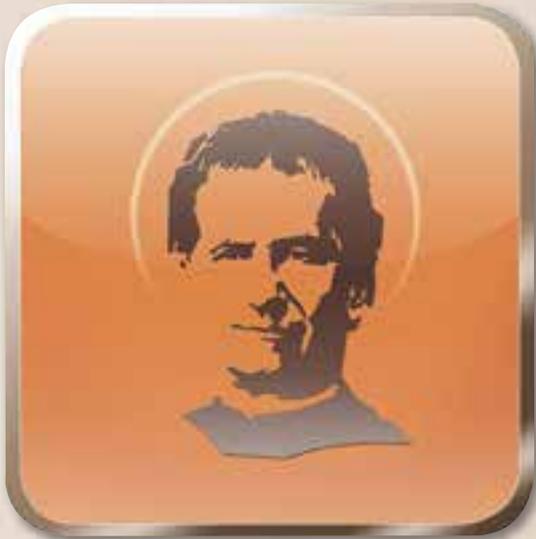
Being
Salesians
Today!



SALESIANS IN THE WORLD BY NATION







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SDB

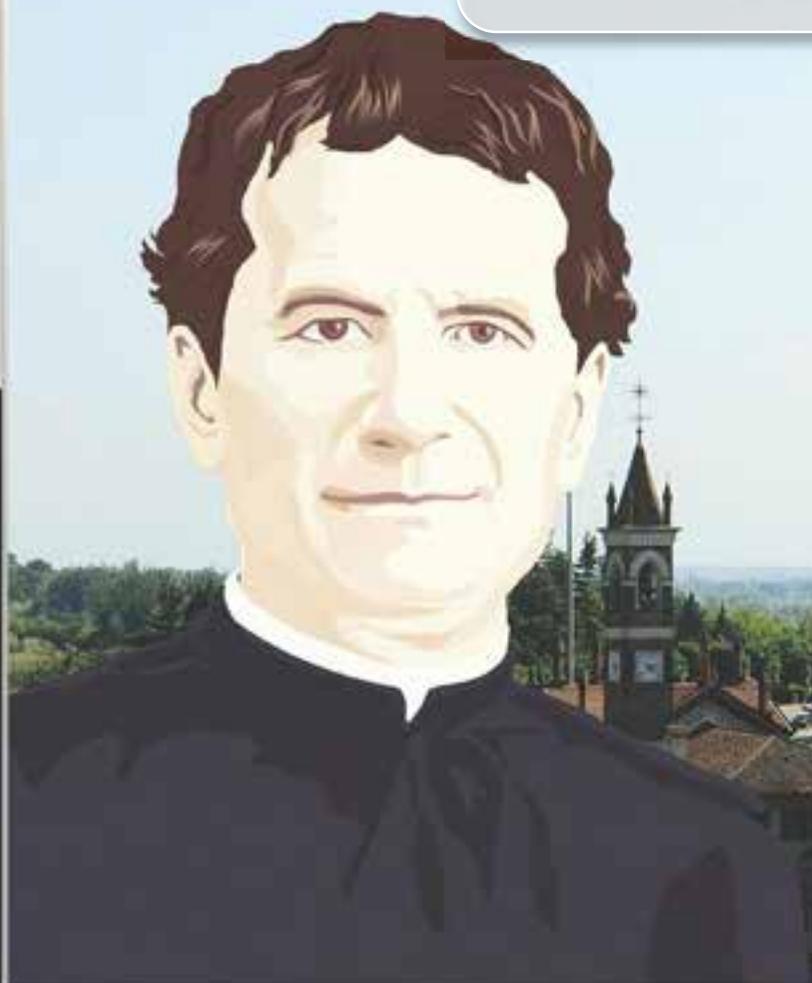
2011 - 2015: Preparations for the Bicentenary of Don Bosco's Birth



1. Don Bosco's story

16 August 2011 - 15 August 2012:

“A systematic plan for the study and assimilation of Don Bosco... The study of Don Bosco is an essential condition in order to be able to communicate his charisma and propose his current relevance”.





2. Don Bosco's Pedagogy

16 August 2012 - 15 August 2013:

“Nowadays a deeper understanding is needed of Salesian pedagogy. In other words we need to study and apply that updated preventive system desired by Fr Egidio Viganò... developing its great implicit principles, modernising concepts, guidelines and interpretations so as to express the basic ideas in a modern manner”.



3. Don Bosco's Spirituality

16 August 2013 - 15 August 2014:

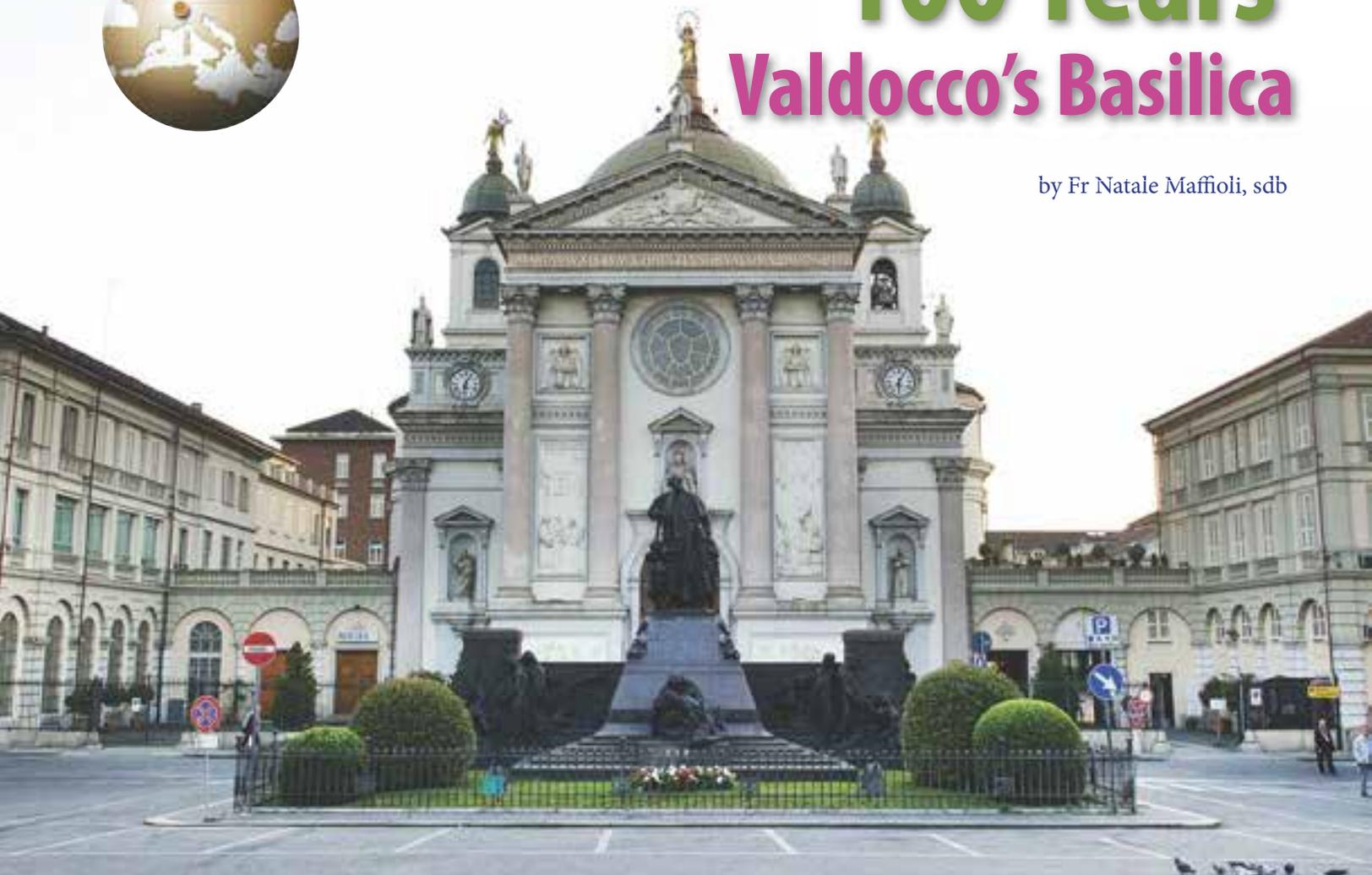
“Perhaps this is an aspect of our founder that has not been studied at sufficient depth. He was a man totally intent on work. We have no descriptions of his interior development, nor has he left us any explicit reflections on his spiritual life”.





100 Years Valdocco's Basilica

by Fr Natale Maffioli, sdb



One hundred years ago, July 13, 1911, the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco received the title *Basilica*. It finds a place in the heart of every Salesian around the world.

One summer's day, an elderly grocer trundling along in his cart saw the massive scaffolding rising in the midst of the Valdocco fields and became curious.

"What's going on?" he asked one of the stone masons.

"We are building a large church for Our Lady!"

"And who's finding the money?"

"Don Bosco. But he is scraping together donations from everywhere".

The man was silent a moment, then called the su-

pervisor and gave him all the fruit in his cart so he could share it amongst the builders and then, wanting to give a hand himself, with the help of some others he heaved a large stone onto his shoulders and started climbing the scaffolding. The poor old guy was trembling all over under his heavy load, but sweaty and breathless he got to the top. He lowered the stone in place and said cheerfully: "Now I can die happy because I hope that now I can somehow be part of all the good this church will achieve".

Don Bosco never said: "I'll do this or that..." He always said: "Mary Help of Christians will do this and that..."

Together, Mary and Don Bosco built a beautiful church!



Neither land nor money

Since the early 1860s, Don Bosco had dreamt of building a church of considerable size; the reason he gave initially was that the church of St Francis of Sales, built between 1851 and 1852, was too small. This what he told Fr Paul Albera one evening in December 1862: "I've been thinking, our church is too small, and may not hold all the youngsters, or they'll be too packed in. So we'll build another one, a bigger, more beautiful one. We will call it Mary Help of Christians".

On February 1, 1863, Don Bosco resolutely began planning the new church, although the land he was dreaming of building it on was not his and he lacked a plan, but he sent out a large number of circulars to ask benefactors to help.

The excavations were partly begun in autumn; winter passed then work was taken up again in March 1864.

Towards the end of April, at the invitation of the foreman, accompanied by his priests and many of his boys, Don Bosco went down the excavations to place the foundation stone. After this was done, to show how pleased he was he turned to Buzzetti the foreman and said: "I want to immediately offer you a deposit for this wonderful effort". So saying, he pulled out his wallet, opened it and poured into Buzzetti's hands everything it contained, all of 40 cents. "Don't

worry" said Don Bosco, "Our Lady will take care of providing the money we need for her church". "And Mary", Don Bosco wrote later, "wanted to give a hand herself and make it known that since it was in her honour, she wanted to build it herself: *aedificavit sibi domum Maria*. Oh, how many have had recourse to Mary Help of Christians, making the Novena and promising a donation if they obtained the grace they were asking for!"

Devotion pictured

Don Bosco was no connoisseur of art, but had a strong sense of the potential of a religious building for strengthening memory, and of sacred art for conveying a message. He entrusted the task to architect Antonio Spezia, who had been a long-time friend of his.

For the Church of Mary Help of Christians, Spezia drew inspiration from the facade of the Basilica of St George the Great in Venice, by Venetian architect Andrea Palladio. In five years, the church was complete and was consecrated on June 9, 1868.

After the consecration of the church the time for thinking about some inner adornments began. Don Bosco certainly had a precise iconographic plan in mind: he wanted, through the paintings over the altars and various devotions, to communicate a message, offer the faithful more than just saints to address their prayers to, but examples to follow.

In June 1868, at the time of the consecration, the large painting by Thomas Lorenzone was already in place, picturing Mary Help of Christians with the baby Jesus in her arms, surrounded by the Apostles and Evangelists; over the altar dedicated to St. Joseph, in the left transept, he placed a canvas featuring St. Joseph and the Family of Nazareth, also by Lorenzone. Then, proceeding towards the back, where we find the altar dedicated to St. Anne, he placed a painting by Giovanni Battista Fino which had the education of the Virgin as its subject.

The final work, completed after Don Bosco's death, was the decoration around the dome, the Help of Christians in her glory. This project, designed by artist Giuseppe Rollini, goes back, however, to Don Bosco himself.

Between the 1920s and 1930s the Salesian superiors wanted to enlarge and re-design the basilica for the beatification and canonisation of Don Bosco.

The blessing of the enlargement, and of the monumental altar to St. John Bosco and the marble additions to the sanctuary took place June 9, 1938, recalling the the fiftieth anniversary of Don Bosco's death. With the start of World War II work slowed down, creating all kinds of difficulties, especially financial ones, but on December 19, 1942 the chief foreman, Carlo Cussetti, declared the work completed with final touches to the main altar.





Don Bosco's University

by Fr Renato Butera, sdb

There is one place in the Salesian Congregation with a very special meaning, characterised by its international nature and what has always been called 'family spirit' in the Salesian tradition. Those who live and study there know this. They do not need to belong to the Salesian Family. The students, as they themselves tell us, experience and share it with others who have made the same choice, a choice which means being formed as individuals and as professionals for the future in one of six faculties at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS), Rome: (Theology, Educational pedagogy and psychology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Christian and Classical Literature, Communication Studies, to which we can add the Youth Ministry and Catechetics Schools). The UPS was founded as an institute in 1940. On May 24, 1973,

Pope Paul VI elevated it to the status of University with his *Motu Proprio*, 'Vitae Magisterium'.

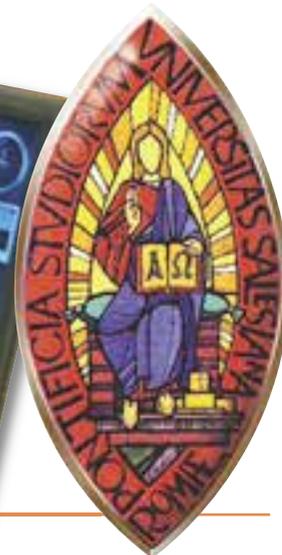
Now over these 70 or so years of its existence, the UPS has delivered to society, the Church, the Congregation, the Salesian Family, not only well-developed human beings, but also a host of pastors and leaders, professionals and experts, in short, the 'good Christians and upright citizens' whom Don Bosco dreamt of, who contribute to building up a 'civilization of love' (Paul VI). The popes, Benedict XVI in particular, have highlighted the mission and the specific role that the UPS plays in the Church and society: the special attention given to the study and resolution of issues concerning educational and pastoral activity, especially among the young and ordinary people, according

to the spirit of Don Bosco.

Many vocations, priestly, religious and lay, have been formed in it. They come from all corners of the earth and from every continent. Students at the UPS come from at least 90 different countries: a range of cultural expressions united by a single creed which makes the educational mission of the University even more universal in nature. This feature makes it special when it is compared with many like institutions.

The UPS is therefore Don Bosco's University in the fullest sense, not only because it deals with approximately 2000 students each year (not counting the thousands enrolled in the 28 centres connected with it), but because it forms teachers, youth leaders, experts who in turn devote the wisdom and competence they have gained to the service of the multitudes of young people they discover when they return to the place from which they came and for which they have now been prepared.

Academic life at the UPS applies Article





40 of the Salesian Constitutions as its basic criterion: "a home that welcomes, parish that evangelises, school that prepares for life, and a playground where friends can meet and enjoy themselves".

The UPS is a **'home that welcomes'**, where people study in a spirit of friendship and solidarity, and are certain to find someone they can count on. The University has a Pastoral Team, a volunteer group which is especially helpful for students with difficulties typical for someone arriving in a country for the first time, barely knowing the language or finding themselves in an academic structure with quite different requirements from high school. This kind of welcome is experienced, for example, on the day that graduating students wel-

come the 'newbies' and show them around the university.

The UPS is also a **'parish'** which evangelises through its care and development of personal spirituality and offers communal services such as daily Mass, confessions, monthly retreats, opportunities for deepening faith or accepting a lay calling such as that of the Salesian Cooperator. Then there are particular experiences such as the traditional Lenten Wednesday services.

The UPS is also a **'playground'** for cultivating friendship in a happy spirit through moments of celebration like the 'Meeting of Peoples', or fellowship festivities for the feasts of Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians, or Christmas preparation, or hiking trips

in and around Rome, curriculum days.

And above all, the UPS is a **'school that prepares them for life'**, its specific function. It does this through the variety and seriousness of its formation, its attention to scientific and cultural progress and instances which give life meaning. It is inspired by an all-round humanism which fosters eagerness in students and puts them at the heart of its intellectual and research efforts.

So the UPS aims clearly at being, and is, Don Bosco's University not only for youth, but is youthful in its approach, where the human being comes first and above everything else. This is no mere slogan, but an intent, a willingness and – we believe – also a reality that supports and becomes the atmosphere of its university education.





Totus Tuus: Salesian Family a Marian Family

6th International Mary Help of Christians Congress
Czestochowa, Poland



There is a lively devotion to Mary Help of Christians in the Salesian Family because of Don Bosco's wish that it be so.

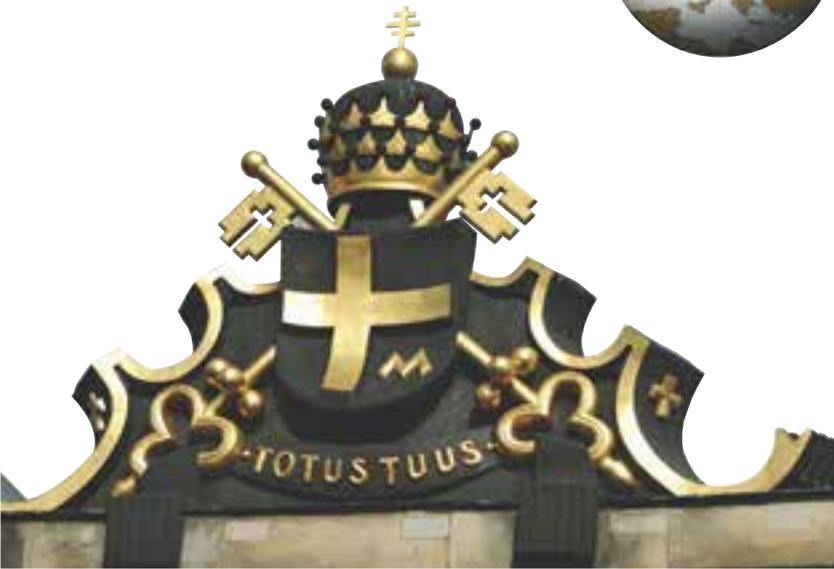


The 6th International Mary Help of Christians Congress, a Salesian Family event promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), took place from 3-6 August 2011 at the Shrine of the Black Madonna, Czestochowa. The Salesian Family regards devotion to Mary under the title of Help of Christians, as one of the charismatic characteristics of its common spirit.

The Congress motto, *'Totus tuus'*, while reflecting the holiness and Marian devotion of Blessed John Paul II, also expresses our childlike trust in Mary Help of Christians as we walk the way of faith with Her, defending the important values of life, family, education. This way we renew our commitment to being authentic disciples and passionate apostles who bring the Gospel to the young.

There is a lively devotion to Mary Help of Christians in the Salesian Family because of Don Bosco's wish that it be so. He built the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, encouraged prayer, founded Congregations and groups dedicated to Her in the awareness that Mary has been the inspiration and support of Salesian work.

Since 1988 five International MHC Congresses have



been held: Valdocco in 1988, on the occasion of the Centenary of Don Bosco's death; Cochabamba (Bolivia) in 1995; Seville (Spain) in 1999; Valdocco again in 2003 for the centenary of the coronation of the statue of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica; Mexico City in 2007.

The Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), founded by St John Bosco in 1869, offers a way to holiness and apostolate through the Salesian charism. In the Salesian Family the Association emphasises and spreads Eucharistic worship and Marian devotion for the evangelisation and advancement of ordinary people and youth most in need.





ADMA

ASSOCIAZIONE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE

Mary Help of Christians Association



A born organiser, Don Bosco did not leave devotion to Mary Help of Christians simply to something spontaneous. He gave it stability with an Association which took her name. First-hand witnesses saw in this institution one of the initiatives most dear to Don Bosco and the one with the widest impact after that of the two religious Congregations and the Cooperators Association.

When presenting important documents, Don Bosco attributed the Association's origins to "repeated requests", coming "from all parts and from people of all ages and every circumstance" during and after the construction and consecration of the Church (now Basilica) of Mary Help of Christians. He referred to the associates as "people united in the same spirit of prayer and piety paying homage to the great Mother of the Saviour invoked under the beautiful title of the Help of Christians".

The following were proposed as the aims of the Association:

- » zeal for an increase in piety, spirituality, worship: "to promote the glories of the divine Mother of the Saviour" (art. 1);
- » "spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin and veneration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament" (art. 2);
- » make use of "words, advice, good works and influence to promote dignity and devotion in the novenas, feasts and solemnities that occur during the year in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Most Holy Sacrament" (art. 3);
- » encourage "the spreading of good books, pictures, medals and leaflets, by taking part in processions in honour of Mary most holy and the Blessed Sacrament and by encouraging others to do likewise; frequent





Communion and attendance at Holy Mass; bring *Viaticum* to the dying" (art. 4);

- » make great efforts "never to blaspheme or engage in talk contrary to religion, and do their utmost to prevent those under their charge from doing likewise; they will also do all they can to remove obstacles in the way of the sanctification of Sundays and Feast days" (art. 5).

The means were basically an intense life of personal piety: "Sacraments of Confession and Communion once a fortnight or once a month, and assist at daily Mass if one's duties permit" (art. 6); for the ordinary faithful, suitable brief prayers were suggested in the morning and evening, and for priests, the intention of praying at mass for all the members of the pious Association: "These prayers", he pointed out, "will serve as a bond to unite all the members so that they form a single mind and soul and give due honour to Jesus hidden in the Eucharist and his august Mother, and participate in all the good works done by each member" (art. 7). Eight articles under the heading 'Spiritual Advan-

"Those united in the same spirit of prayer and piety paying homage to the great Mother of the Saviour invoked under the beautiful title of the Help of Christians".

tages' dealt at length with the spiritual growth of the members.

To increase the expansion of the Association Don Bosco managed to have it erected as an Archconfraternity, with the faculty of aggregating to it similar associations already in existence or later to be erected. This was granted by Pius IX with the brief *Sodalitia Fidelium* of 5 April 1870, which, however, limited the aggregation to the archdiocese of Turin. With a subsequent brief *Expositum Nobis* of 2 March 1877 the faculty was extended to all the dioceses of Piedmont. After the death of Don Bosco, Leo XIII, first with the brief *Admotae Nobis preces* of 25 June 1889, granted the faculty of aggregation to all the similar associations "erected or to be erected in any church or public

oratory belonging to the Salesian Society wherever they may be"; then with the brief *Cum multa* of 19 January 1894 he conferred *in perpetuo* on the Rector Major of the Salesians and his successors the faculty of being able "to validly and lawfully erect other associations of the same name, and institute them in any place where houses and churches of the Congregation existed and aggregate the associations erected to the above mentioned Archconfraternity"; two years afterwards with the brief *Sodalitas* of 25 February 1896 he granted the Rector Major and his successors the faculty of "aggregating to the same Archconfraternity", established in the church of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, other associations with the same aims and of the same kind canonically erected in any church or diocese.

Finally, the Sacred Congregation for Religious with a rescript of 31 July 1913 granted the privilege that the Rector Major might canonically erect the Mary Help of Christians Association also in the houses of the Institute of the FMA and aggregate them to the Primary Centre in Turin.



Salesian Bulletin at the Service of Life



by Fr Nivaldo Luiz Pessinatti, sdb

A conscious choice

If great challenges or catastrophes lead to unusual solutions, life's daily routine does not always offer provocation for changes that often are just as necessary. The press, which comes from the same monotonous daily routine, seems to be included in this list. But the multiplier effect of the press might be considered as one of the major transforming events of mankind.

Don Bosco understood this and quickly put in place the use of this innovative communications solution. He also gave it a life and shape which was completely Christian.

The Salesian Bulletin, now appearing in many languages and hues, confirms the soundness and appropriateness of this innovative Christian solution.

In February 1902, the Portuguese lan-

guage Bulletin informed Brazilians, the Portuguese and their colonies of the vitality and strength of a work which had and would continue to have a long story to tell.

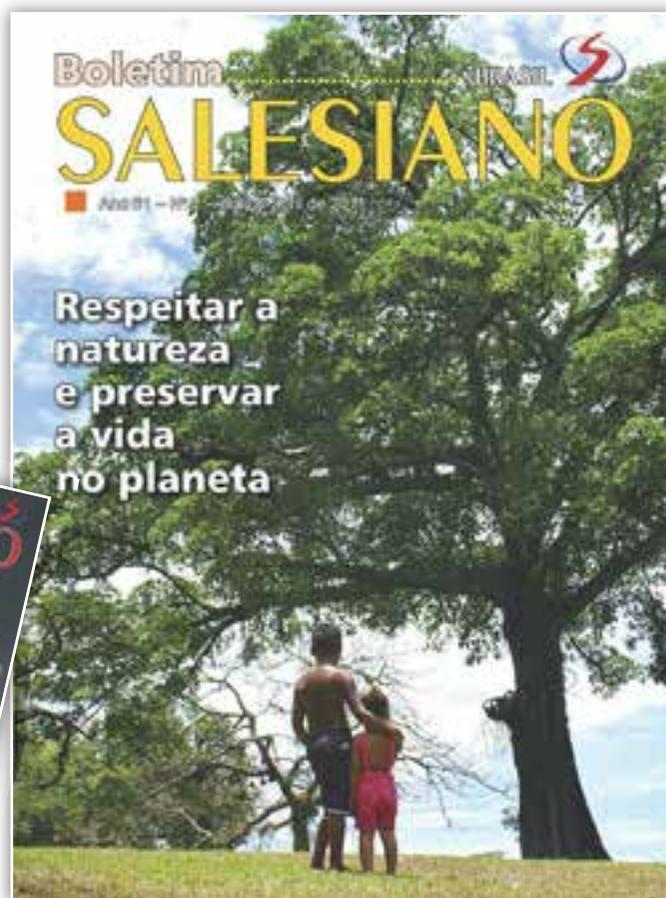
The first Portuguese edition spoke eloquently and accurately of all the ingredients and the wonderful treasury of Salesian initiatives in Europe and the Americas: texts full of detail, of life, and high definition photos are some of the indicators of this quality communication. Leafing through the first edition (Year 1, no. 1 February 1902) and comparing it with those that followed, we find ourselves faced with an account of involvement in real life: news, testimonies of missionary dedication, articles by teachers, young people, lay and religious.

More than being a simple depository of 'exotic' cultural curiosities, this vehicle of communication became a true harbinger revealing projects dedi-

cated to the good of ones neighbour and the defence of the lives of so many people: one only needs to think of how the 'missions' were presented.

During the difficult period of the First World War, publication of the Salesian Bulletin was interrupted. Just the same, little by little, it returned to being a regular bimonthly of improved graphic quality. The interruption to publication during and after the Second World War was longer: almost ten years! From this unfavourable set of circumstances however, opportunity arose, and was immediately taken advantage of, to diversify and decentralise the Salesian Bulletin's publication.

In 1950 Salesian Brazil began publishing the Brazilian Salesian Bulletin: Year 1, Number 1, drawn up, laid out and printed in Sao Paulo, under the direction of the Provincial, Fr John Resende, allowed it to be translated into Brazilian Portuguese and style, while still



maintaining its strict links with the Salesian charism.

2012 sees an uninterrupted series of 62 years of publication.

From 1957 to 1972 the magazine ran under the name of 'Salesian Magazine'. The change was intended to overcome the reductive sense of 'bulletin' in Brazilian Portuguese. But for the first number in 1972, the original title came back: *Salesian Bulletin*, and it remains thus until today.

Successes and challenges

Development, dissemination and use of the Salesian Bulletin were and are still the constant concerns of its editors.

Over a long period the Brazilian edition was sustained by the efforts and good will of a single editor. Now the editorial team is made up of SDB and FMA and a Salesian Cooperator. The desire for

greater professionalism has been constant: journalists, graphic designers, printing, distribution.

For a good number of years the Salesian Bulletin print run was some 20,000 copies. In the last five years it has reached 100,000 copies. Also, in collaboration with the RSE (Salesian Schools Network), it has produced a collection of comics on the lives of Saints, Salesian and other.

So there has been significant increase; nevertheless the challenge of dissemination remains along with its use by Salesian communities, meaning that the Salesian Bulletin be seen as an instrument of Salesian formation and information for broad use in Salesian educational and pastoral settings.

Various initiatives and strategies have been suggested to parishes, schools and social works, so the Salesian Bulletin may be used as a tool of Salesian

communication. Provincials are involved in offering various kinds of support: motivating their communities, expanding circulation etc.

An online Salesian Bulletin has been seen as an important goal. But the regular, flexible nature of such a tool requires new planning, a new platform and new professional types for it to become a true portal of reference for Salesian communication in Brazil: it is already under construction.

We have an important indicator of its significance: some Masters candidates at Brazilian Universities have chosen the Brazilian Salesian Bulletin as their topic for academic research either in the communication or the social welfare field.

In the meantime the Brazilian Salesian Bulletin, through its bimonthly appearance, is committed to being a tool focused on the service of life.



Called to Holiness

In the light of the Strenna for 2011 we are reminded that our basic call is to holiness. The Postulator General's Office is grateful for some of the stages reached by various Causes and invites people to get to know and to pray to these witnesses who have taken up the Gospel appeal. "Come and See".

by Fr Pierluigi Cameroni, sdb

24 September 2010: Andrej Majcen

Ljubljana Rakovnik (Slovenia) - opening of the Diocesan Inquiry into the Beatification of Servant of God Andrej Majcen SDB (1904–1999), priest and missionary, 'Salesian patriarch' in Vietnam.

27 April 2011: Stephen Sándor

On 27 April 2011, the *Positio* regarding Stephen Sándor SDB (1914-1953) was delivered. He was a Salesian Brother, a martyr. His constant concern was to be faithful to his Salesian vocation as a Brother. Instead of fleeing abroad, he remained in his country to save Hungarian young people.

29 October 2010: Augustus Arribat

On 29 October 2010, the *Positio* concerning Augustus Arribat SDB (1879-1946) was delivered. With his smiling, open demeanour, this son of Don Bosco never alienated anybody. His slight frame and ascetic looks might remind one of the Curé d'Ars, but his smile and kindness were truly Salesian.

24 May 2011: Jan Swierc

Conclusion of the Diocesan Inquiry into the martyrdom of Servants of God Jan Swierc SDB and his 7 companions, from the Krakow Province, martyred at Auschwitz, and Franciszek Mińska SDB, from Piła Province, martyred at Dachau. They were witnesses to Christ in one of the darkest hours of human history.

18 February 2011: Constantine Vendrame

Shillong (India) – the Diocesan Inquiry concerning Servant of God Constantine Vendrame SDB (1893-1957) came to a close. He was a missionary who worked solidly at forming lay catechists to evangelise their communities. As a good Salesian he set in motion and followed up weekend Oratories, and educated hundreds of children. He exercised his Catholic Faith amongst Hindus, Muslims and Methodists alike.



23 October 2011: Louis Guanella

Canonisation of Blessed Louis Guanella (1842-1915). He was won over by Don Bosco and his charisma and founded Congregations dedicated to the education of the young, helping the mentally ill, supporting the elderly especially when they had nobody else.

7 June 2011: Anna Maria Lozana Díaz

Agua de Dios (Colombia), the opening of the Diocesan Inquiry into Servant of God Anna Maria Lozano Díaz (1883-1982), co-foundress of the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Drawn to the charisma of Blessed Louis Variara, she became his disciple and faithful follower.

27 June 2011: Laura Meozzi

Laura Meozzi FMA (1873-1951) was declared Venerable. She was the pioneer of the FMA presence in Poland, and though experiencing extreme poverty she opened houses for all kinds of needs: orphaned or neglected children, young girls, postulants and novices, Sisters; also for refugees, the persecuted, sick...





CREATING A CULTURE OF VOCATION

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Words and Ways

by Fr Frank B. Freeman, sdb

A visiting speaker, a revolutionary if not by reputation certainly by name, was addressing a class of senior students on the need for drastic social reform and the need for fire-eating leaders to foment it. "Tell me," he said, "Is there any one of today's leaders you would die for?" To his disappointment silence reigned in the classroom. Until one student spoke up, "No, but I am looking for someone to live for". A lively discussion broke out among the students, oblivious now to the visiting speaker, as to how to discover such a person to live for. Names of recent revolutionary leaders, who had strutted the world stage, were thrown up for discussion but so many of them, after enjoying popular support, proved to have feet of clay. On obtaining power, how quickly they adopted rich and opulent life styles. Their self-aggrandising ways belied their fine words to the masses: certainly not the type worth living for, let alone dying for.

The visiting speaker felt he had been sidelined. In order to regain their attention he put the question, "and how do you propose to discover this real person you want to live for?" "Easy," said the same student, "Let's see how he really lives behind the façade of his revolutionary talk. Let's see if his ways match his words".

History is full of such leaders not worth dying for and also leaders well worth living for: the New Testament shows us two such leaders.

John the Baptist, that fiery revolutionary, whose mettle was tempered in the hardness of the desert environment over long years, was no dissembler. His revolutionary call to repentance matched his lifestyle. Naturally enthusiastic young men were attracted to him as the fulfilment of their ideals for a better society, a man they could live for.

But one day their leader did an uncharacteristic thing for one gathering disciples for a mission. He pointed out one greater than himself who was worth living for. "Behold the Lamb of God... One greater than I. I am not worthy to undo his shoe straps". Now some of his disciples, attracted by the idea





*At all times his words matched his ways.
He invited them to come and be with him;
they “came and saw where he was staying
and many remained with him”.*

of following a greater personage, followed him from a distance. Then Jesus, aware that they were following him, directly questions them: “What are you looking for?” Eager to know more about him they ask him: “Rabbi, where do you live?” Jesus then gives them an invitation, “Come and see”. They “came and saw where he was staying and they remained with him”.

A hundred and fifty years ago, some young men, living in the industrialised city of Turin in Northern Italy, were attracted to a young priest who was making great efforts to help young people to survive amid all the injustices and exploitation of employers anxious to make great profits. He, Don Bosco,

had arrived in the city having been moulded by a lifetime of the rural poverty and hardships of the times. Living with them, he shared with them not only his few worldly possessions but the love of his own mother. He taught them basic skills to better their chances of employment and to become good Christians and better citizens. At all times his words matched his ways. He invited them to come and be with him; they “came and saw where he was staying and many remained with him”. They saw in him, and in his mission, a person well worth living for.

We, today’s Salesians of Don Bosco, are their successors. We have learnt,

through our family history, how he lived. We have heard his invitation “Come and see”. With our idealism, we “came and saw where he was staying and remained with him”.

In our schools, our youth centres, our missions and parishes, we are Don Bosco’s revolutionaries, working for youth who are at the mercy of exploitation by a materialistic society whose godless gospel is a great hoax: namely, that power, possessions and pleasure give happiness.

So, to today’s youth, we issue the same invitation of Jesus and Don Bosco: “Come and see”, for here are leaders well worth living for.





COME AND SEE!

by Fr João de Brito Carvalho, sdb

The Rector Major's Strenna was disseminated, in its essentials, in July of the previous year, and became the point of departure for planning at province and local level. This allowed us to see that the provincial and local communities, pastoral and educative communities and Salesian Family Groups could take up the Rector Major's Strenna as a reference point for the school year and other pastoral activities throughout the year.

'Come and See' culture in Portugal

In early January 2011 we published 1,500 pamphlets containing the Rector Major's commentary on the Strenna. This pamphlet aimed at ensuring that a copy was in the hands of every participant when the Strenna was pre-

sented. On 15 January more than 600 people came together at Fatima (SDB, FMA, other member groups of the Salesian Family, and other lay people who share responsibility with us) in order to get to know its key idea: "Come and See". The commentary on the Strenna was presented in summary form by the two provincials (SDB and FMA) then further illustrated by a DVD which the Congregation produced and sent around the world. The meeting was coordinated by the national delegate for the Salesian Family.

As part of the plan to encourage a "culture of vocation" in each local community, the Provincial, during his canonical visitation to the communities, presented the Strenna and commentary to the SDBs, lay partners, SF Groups, Salesian Youth Movement, Parish

groups and so forth. Vocation teams in each community were particularly involved in this work. The DVD was especially useful, in its entirety or part thereof.

In order to broaden the reach of the Rector Major's reflections, a copy of the Strenna commentary was sent to key civil authorities in the country, to diocesan bishops and to other provincials of male and female religious communities.

At the Youth Ministry level

At national level, the province vocation team supported local communities in letting the Strenna be known, and in accompaniment of youngsters showing seeds of a calling to consecrated or priestly life.

The main activities undertaken by the Youth Ministry Team were as follows:

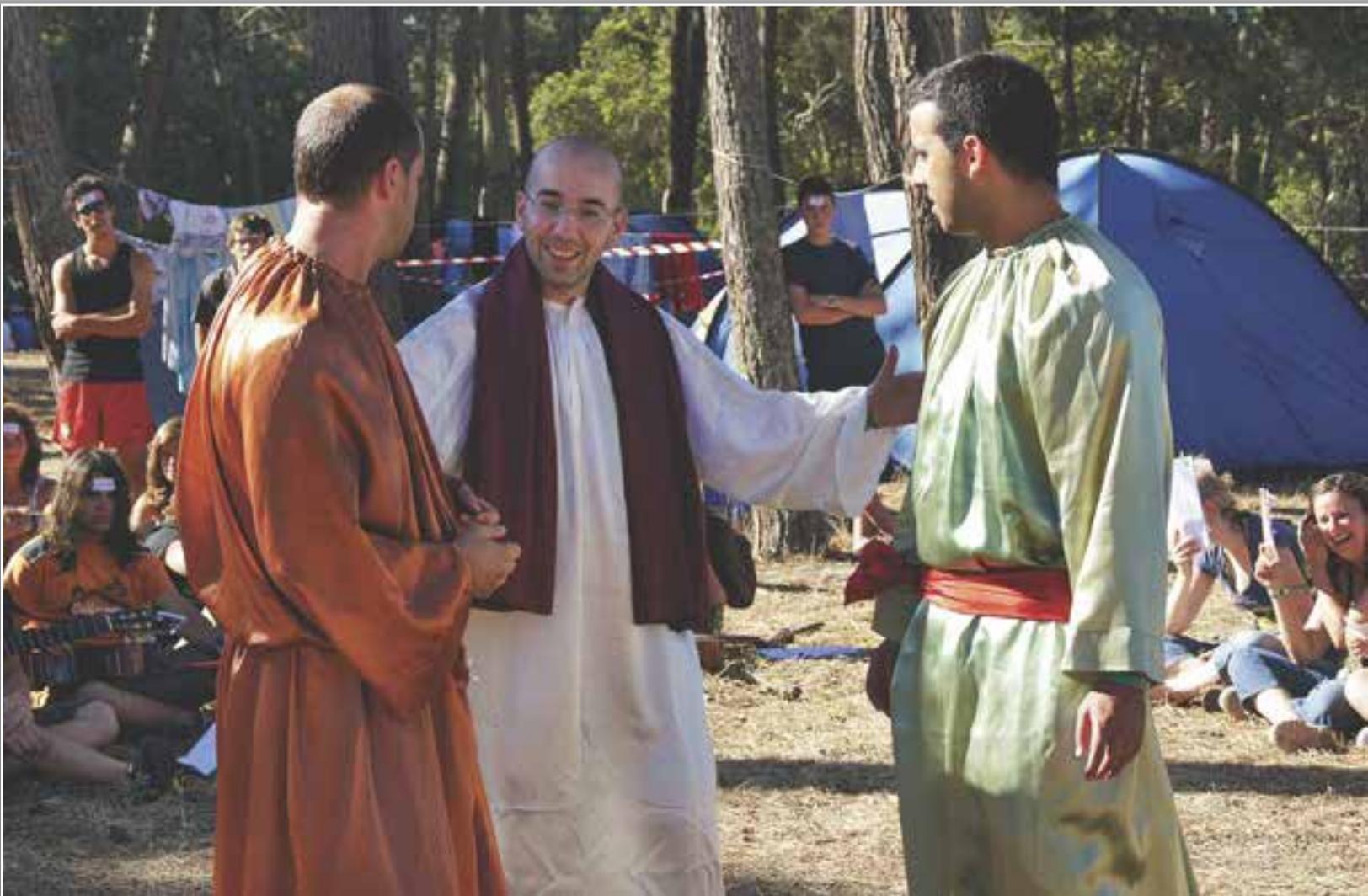
- » **Don Bosco Meetings:** an initiative which took place this year in various communities to present the Salesian vocation to young people through regular meetings;
- » 24 October 2010: a **National youth gathering** in Mogofores as part of the national Salesian Family Pilgrimage to the National Shrine to Mary Help of Christians;
- » 22-23 January: **FlashBosco** (for teenagers) North and South;
- » 5 February: **Pre-teens Meeting**, North and South;
- » 9-10 April: Easter for Youth – a youth retreat at Fatima;
- » 14-15 May: **National SYM Day** which coincided with the 59th **Salesian**

Family Pilgrimage to Fatima – including a **youth forum** on the Strenna;

- » 10 June: **Province Day** where young people involved in the vocations discernment process were also invited;
- » 18-22 July: **National SYM Camp** for pre-teens and teenagers, with vocation culture as its main theme.

Salesian Family Groups

Under the guidance of the National Salesian Family Council, which meets three times a year, the idea of a culture of vocation was taken up. This became part of formation occasions and Salesian Family retreats and was the central theme for the two national pilgrimages to the Mary Help of Christians Shrine at Mogofores and the international Shrine at Fatima.





Following in his footsteps

by Fr Dominic Savio Amnuai, sdb

“Come and See” is the Salesian 2011 Strenna. It is the appeal from our Rector Major to work for vocations in the Salesian world. It is the Call for all of us to return to St John Bosco, our founder, and to go back to Jesus our teacher of Love, in order to know what Don Bosco thought, what he said and what he did, and follow his steps in our Salesian daily life.

Nowadays the Salesian Congregation in Thailand has four centres of vocational guidance to form our youth to become Salesians and to continue our Salesian works in the future:

St Theresa of the Infant Jesus Centre (Hua Hin) founded in 1947 (1947-1970) and closed for around ten years (1971-1980). Then it opened again in 1981 and continues as an aspirantate for youth from all over Thailand, except Chiang Mai Diocese. Our aspirants here study at Hua Hin Vitthayalai School.



St John Bosco Centre (Doi Saked Chiang Mai) founded in 2009 is also an aspirantate for youth from Chiang Mai Diocese. They study at Sarasat-Chiang Mai School.





Holy Family Centre (Nazareth Banpong) founded in 1990, is an aspirantate for older young people completing their secondary studies. They study at Sarasit School Banpong.



St Peter's Postnovitiate (Sampran) founded in 1977, is the house for Postulants, Novices and Post-Novices. They study philosophy at Saengtham College.



From these four centres for young people who wish to follow in Jesus' footsteps, our youth have the chance to form themselves in the Spirit of Don Bosco. Everyday, they have time to study, learn the Salesian Spirit, practise it in various fields and find their real vocation as Salesians. We say that "these centres are the heart of our Salesian Congregation".



Volunteer

Vocation and Missionary Movement

by Fr Juan Cárdenas, sdb

Rafael Correa, the current President of the Republic, is one of the more than 2000 young people who in their earlier years left home for a year for experience as a Salesian volunteer in the mountainous Cordillera de los Andes region at Zumbahua, an indigenous community and mission station 3,500 metres up.

Gabriela Jiménez, after a formation process was sent to the Ecuadorian jungle to share the Salesian spirit with the indigenous Achuar at the Wasakentsa mission.

The Salesian volunteer movement in Ecuador, involving a full year of service, began in 1971. Four decades later it has

undergone a process of evolution and consolidation as an opportunity for social commitment for young people. Since 1980 FMA communities have opened their doors to take in young female volunteers and now take part in a joint effort with their Salesian confreres. Somewhat later, in the 1990s, the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary came in on the scheme and set up a formation process known in Spanish as JUVOMI - *Juvenil* (Youthful), *Vocacional* (Vocational), *Misionero* (Missionary). The volunteer movement envisages three stages, a 'before' (pre-volunteer), a 'during' (the actual time as a volunteer) and an 'afterwards' ("volunteers forever" or VPS in its Spanish acronym). Most of the young volun-

teers come from Salesian communities and their works.

The volunteer movement now has a strong social, church and vocational component.

- » volunteer activity is presented as an opportunity for citizen involvement with a view to strengthening the social fabric, solidarity and democracy.
- » young volunteers are sent to 40 Salesian communities and 8 female religious communities which are not Salesian but are in the local church. Here they work in close collaboration and develop a true sense of Church.





The volunteer movement plays a major role in allowing young people to have an experience of life helping those who are very poor.

In the past twenty years the volunteer movement has been a unique source of vocations for the Province. Fr Marcelo Farfán, the Provincial, indicates that as part of the Province Vocation Plan the volunteer movement plays a major role in allowing young people to have an experience of life helping those who are very poor; they “come and see” and while some then choose to be Salesians, everyone has a very real experience of Don Bosco in their life.

What started out as a personal initiative then became a province and even an inter-province choice. We currently have a single Salesian Family-wide volunteer project, one that works towards teamwork in all respects: leadership,

coordination, communion and resources, in order to strengthen the mission volunteer movement in Ecuador.

Both male and female volunteers are in roughly equal numbers, and twice yearly we send out some 80 to a 100 young volunteers. Similarly, the Province also welcomes international volunteers from Austria, Germany, Italy, the United States. We see to it that young people are part of the life and activity of the communities, and in an appropriate setting for an apostolic experience and a life of faith. We also do our best to see that they are personally accompanied. It is a challenge to accompany young people as they conclude their experience as



volunteers, to see that they become active citizens who maintain a Christian viewpoint on life.





Annual Altar Server's Pilgrimage

by Bro. Robert Gajewski, sdb

The annual Altar Servers Pilgrimage (Known as PIM in Polish) is an extensive gathering of Altar Servers from the Salesian Province of St. John Bosco in Wrocław, Poland.

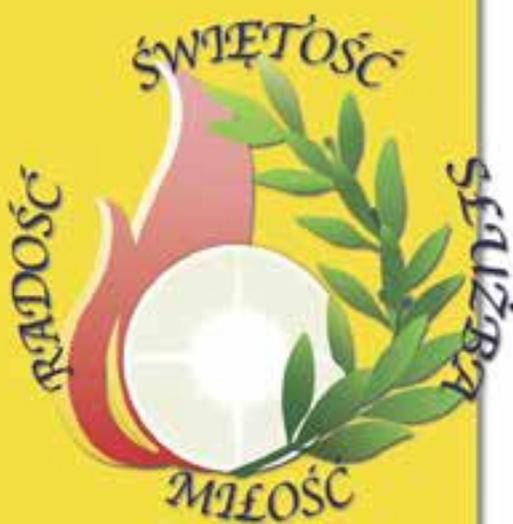
For the past 30 years, in the first days of May, the youngsters have been coming to spend a few days at the Sanctuary of Our Lady Help of Christians in Twardogóra to celebrate what it means to be an Altar Server and to compete in all kinds of games.

Over this period we estimate that some 20,000 young altar servers have taken part in an event that normally sees around 700 coming together annually.

The gathering is an enormous logistic enterprise. The 100 or so organising staff and referees are young Salesians who effectively run the entire event. The altar servers are accommodated in different locations in Twardogóra: schools, kindergartens and dormitories.

The games take place in the town at different sport facilities and in the oratory at the church.

The participants are recruited mostly from our Salesian centres but also include representatives





The participants are recruited mostly from our Salesian centres but also includes representatives from non-Salesian parishes.

from non-Salesian parishes. They have a wide choice of 30 different games, both individual and group, in 4 age categories as well as all kinds of other activities, sports, liturgy, quizzes on the lives of the Saints. Every day the altar servers attend Mass. Evenings are dedicated to so-called 'cultural recreation' (music, fun games, acting) as well as spiritual formation (evening prayers, church services, 'goodnight talks').

The annual PIM Pilgrimage in May is the crowning effort for these altar servers. In the course of the year, in different places of our Province, mini-gatherings of the kind take place where the youngsters take part in different sports: football, volleyball, basketball, swimming. There is also place for spiritual and liturgical formation. The points which the different teams collect at these mini-events are then added to the main event in May so we could say that the idea of the festival is kept alive throughout the whole year rather than just for a few days in May.

People from the local community and the city council as well as our benefactors and volunteers are involved in the organisation of the event.

The Pilgrimage has its own anthem, logo and its own internet website: www.pim.salezjanie.pl 





The Proof is in the Pudding

by Fr Paul Formosa, sdb

Run by an experienced team of lay youth leaders under the direction of Fr Paul Formosa SDB, the Salesian Pastoral Youth Services (SPYS) seeks to develop and implement a programme of holistic formation for young people; this is achieved through a number of seminars and other activities aimed at gathering young people from all walks of life.

For a number of years now, one of the main activities undertaken by SPYS has given Maltese young people the opportunity to go on voluntary work experiences abroad with other Salesian communities, focussing on communities in developing countries. In fact, SPYS has, over the years, forged a very strong relationship with a number of Salesian communities in India and Ghana, although it has also sent volunteers to other member organisations of Don Bosco Youth-Net ivzw, which encompasses Salesian organisations from 13 EU countries.

The journey does not however start and end with the experience away from Maltese shores. Rather, at SPYS we consider the experience to be a journey that commences well in advance of the visit to the overseas community. A meeting is in fact held at the beginning of the year to inform prospective volunteers about the types of experience that SPYS can offer, and in which interested youths get the chance to listen to first-hand experiences and start to get a better appreciation for voluntary work and for the Salesian spirit.

This is then followed by a series of activity-filled sessions, during which the prospective volunteers are given the opportunity to learn about Don Bosco and the preventive system, and discover and reflect on a number of situations and experiences that they may encounter along the journey, for example being in a different culture, or being in a community which lacks a number of luxuries that are taken for granted in the volunteers' day to day lives. They are also given the opportunity, through sessions aimed at identi-





...fying their inner skills, to discover themselves (and their creative selves!) in new ways they hadn't previously explored.

The truth, however, is that no amount of preparation sessions can come close to matching the experience itself. While each experience is like no other, all former volunteers share many things in common: they all thoroughly enjoy the experience with the children, be it telling jokes, making children smile, playing games, giving educational talks, painting faces, helping the children with some homework, making arts and crafts, or teaching!

Truth be told, however, it is generally the case that the real students turn out to be the volunteers themselves, because for every little bit of English, or mathematics that they teach the children, the same volunteers learn a lot more in respect of appreciation of the many things they have got but often, however, take for granted. They may say that the proof is in the pudding, but we like to think of the proof as being volunteers returning to Malta humbled by the experience, and keen to return again on another future voluntary work experience!





Never Forget to Play!

by Thea Ricchiuto

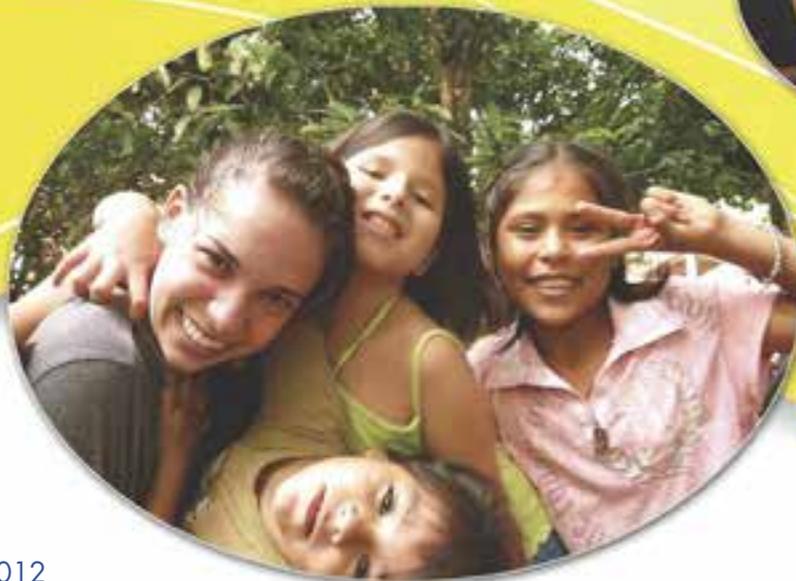
I made the mistake a few times, and I will never make it again. I forgot to play. When I became frustrated with the girls during *estudios*, my first thought was get to my computer and it will all be better. My computer is my link back to my life in California, but that currently isn't my home. My home is in Bolivia, and I can't run away from it by turning on a computer.

Estudios ends at 5:00pm and *Rosario* begins around 6:30 pm. This leaves the girls an hour and a half to gather their clothes from the line, eat a snack (*merienda*), and most importantly play. This is the best time to play because the girls are just released from sitting, and they are ready!

Once they have all had their snacks, the numbers start to gather and the screams are heard across town. The girls have a few different games they love to play, but

most importantly they just love to scream. I now remember why I love working with my all boys camp... no screaming. The big girls are very athletic so I stay out of all the games they play, to avoid a ball being pelted at my head. It's a special version of dodge ball that scares me!

I stick to the little ones during this time because they have an energy level that is astonishing. A few days ago I was lucky enough to enjoy the company of 5 little ones and a soccer ball. It began with us kicking the ball in a circle, which turned into 'monkey-in-the-middle', with all the girls trying to get the ball away from Becca (volunteer from WA) and me. In the end I was dribbling around and through the girls, as if they were cones that were trying to trip me. I was holding my own until the swarm around my feet grew so large that I could barely move without stepping on





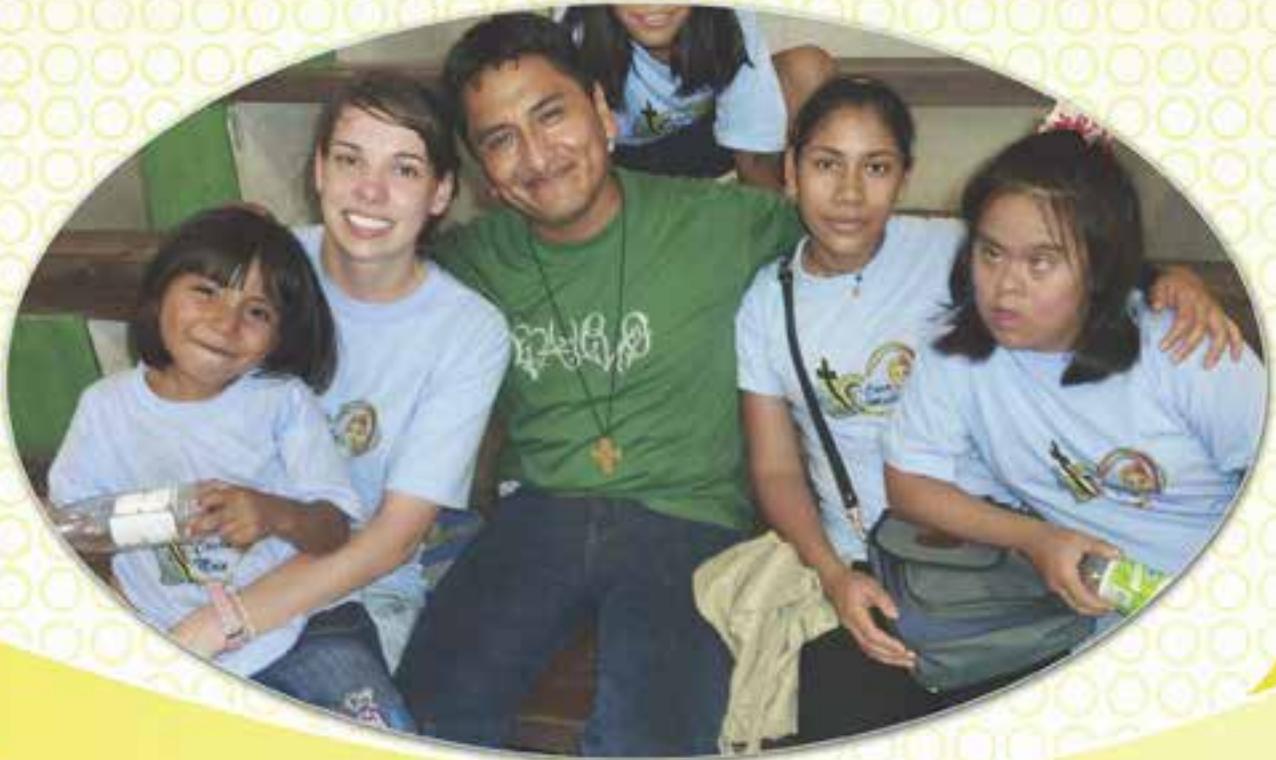
them. The best part of it all was their incredible laughs!

Estudios is the hardest part of my day, but if I remind myself that I get to play, it somehow makes it all better. I no longer retreat to my computer for comfort. I play! It is easy to run away to my room and only come out when needed, but that isn't why I am here. I am here to love and show these youth what love is. I realize more than ever that my six months here are very short. I complain about missing people, but it's only for six months that I will be missing my family, my fiancé and my friends. I will miss these kids for the rest of my life.

I am learning many lessons that I wouldn't learn anywhere else in the world. I was placed in Hogar Casa Main in Santa Cruz, Bolivia for a reason. I will never

know the exact reason, but I know that I am doing what the Lord has asked of me. The Lord works in very mysterious ways, and I am watching his blessings in front of me every day. Every time I have a problem with a girl I remind myself that she was placed here for a specific purpose, and it might be for me to help her or her to help me. Every laugh and giggle brings me that much closer to God. After being here at the Hogar, I will never again forget to play!

After a month long formation with VIDES, Thea Ricchiuto was sent as Salesian Lay Missioner to Bolivia in mid-January 2011.





World Youth Day, a Celebration of Faith



World Youth Day was described by Benedict XVI as 'a celebration of faith'. The reason is clear: these events breed an atmosphere of joy, sharing and enthusiasm that offers both a wealth of opportunity to reflect and, above all, encounter Jesus through the sacraments and prayer.

The Madrid World Youth Days were no exception. Young people from all over the world gathered to listen to the Successor of Peter and receive guidance from him on how to be a Catholic in the modern world. And while young people readied themselves for the occasion – through catechesis, confession, Masses, Stations of the Cross and much more – they gave colour to the city, welcomed strangers, made new friends, sang and danced in the streets and subways, . . . expressed, that is, the joy of living that is characteristic of young people when they have dreams and believe in something (or better yet, Someone) to hope for.





WYD MADRID 2011

The Salesian Youth Movement at the feast of faith

by Gian Francesco Romano



The WYD kind of scene is just made for a situation like the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM), a movement which grew out of Don Bosco's educational style and has always integrated enthusiasm and devotion, festivity and prayer, the pro-activity of youth and confidence in their pastors and teachers. The SYM found Madrid to be a natural habitat, and in the encounters with the national delegations, seeing the circumstances of other young people and movements, listening to key figures of the Movement such as Fr Pascual Chávez and Mother Yvonne Reungoat, and of the Church in the Pope and the bishops, the SYM found new stimulus and strength for the challenges ahead.



There were some very special moments for the Salesian Youth Movement at this year's World Youth Day. The 'Steadfast in Faith' Vigil and Festival was certainly one of them. Salesian Youth Ministry in Spain, which includes the Salesian Sisters, started working on it two years in advance: two years of work for an event which lasted, all up, for about 8 hours. That might seem a huge investment of resources – human, time and of course money – but it was aiming for incalculable results. And it left the 7,000 young people who thronged the huge courtyard at Atocha with a heartfelt conviction, a sense of family and unity, and something to remember forever: that it is wonderful to be involved as young Catholics working for the salvation of other young people, and that the journey, if you are in the company of a group of friends as vast as the world is vast, is both joyful and exciting.

The goal was achieved. During the afternoon Festival the youth witnessed the beauty of



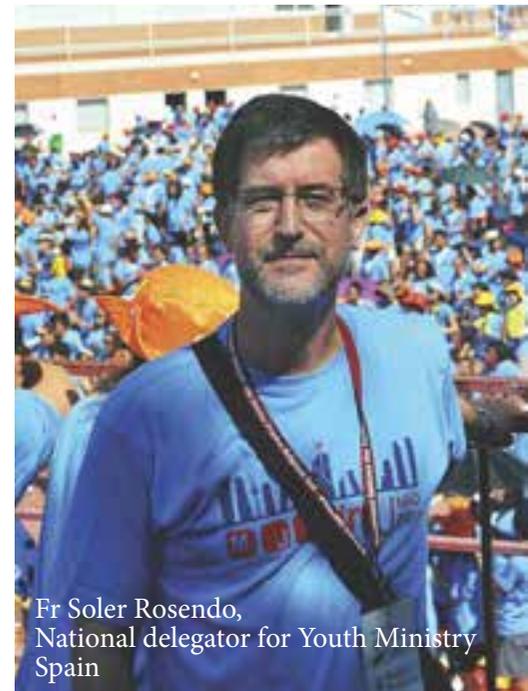
the variety of people and traditions, songs and dances, stories and art, and in the evening program – centred on the Gospel passage of the house built on rock – and in the words of Fr Chávez and Mother Yvonne – they acknowledged their concerns and responses to them; in Eucharistic adoration and prayer they found the true reason for their pilgrimage.

Something similar happened on Saturday 20 August, before and during the prayer vigil held at Cuatro Vientos. In the morning the SYM youth from all around the world gathered at the College at Carabanchel to make the pilgrimage together to the former Madrid airport. It was an opportunity to have fun again with organised dances, but mostly it was time for thinking about commitment, pledges made by the young people before returning to their countries: to go out and meet other young people, support them in their difficulties and walk with them on their journey of faith, foster opportunities for volunteer activity, create strong bonds and a sense of belonging, give witness, evangelise and show what it means to be happy as a young Catholic.

Later in the day the 'steadfastness in faith' of all young people – not just the SYM, but all those present at Cuatro Vientos – emerged in pure form, in its entirety and for the world to see on television. Without faith, in fact, one could not explain what happened. What could urge half a million or more young people to remain several hours under the scorching sun to



listen to an 84 year old man, except for the firm faith and conviction that this man would lead them to Jesus? And what else could provide the strength to sing for the Pope and pray through a raging storm, kneeling in the mud that ruined their sleeping bags and clothes? Only the enthusiasm and the joy of being so many and so different, yet united by the same faith. And how does one understand why hundreds of thousands of young people, almost as one, suddenly knelt for Eucharistic adoration, forgetting all the context and practical difficulties around them, unless one imputes a firm faith? There is no doubt that World Youth Day in Madrid was a true celebration of faith.



Fr Soler Rosendo,
National delegator for Youth Ministry
Spain





“You are God’s hope and ours too”

Rector Major’s visit to Chile Salesian Province

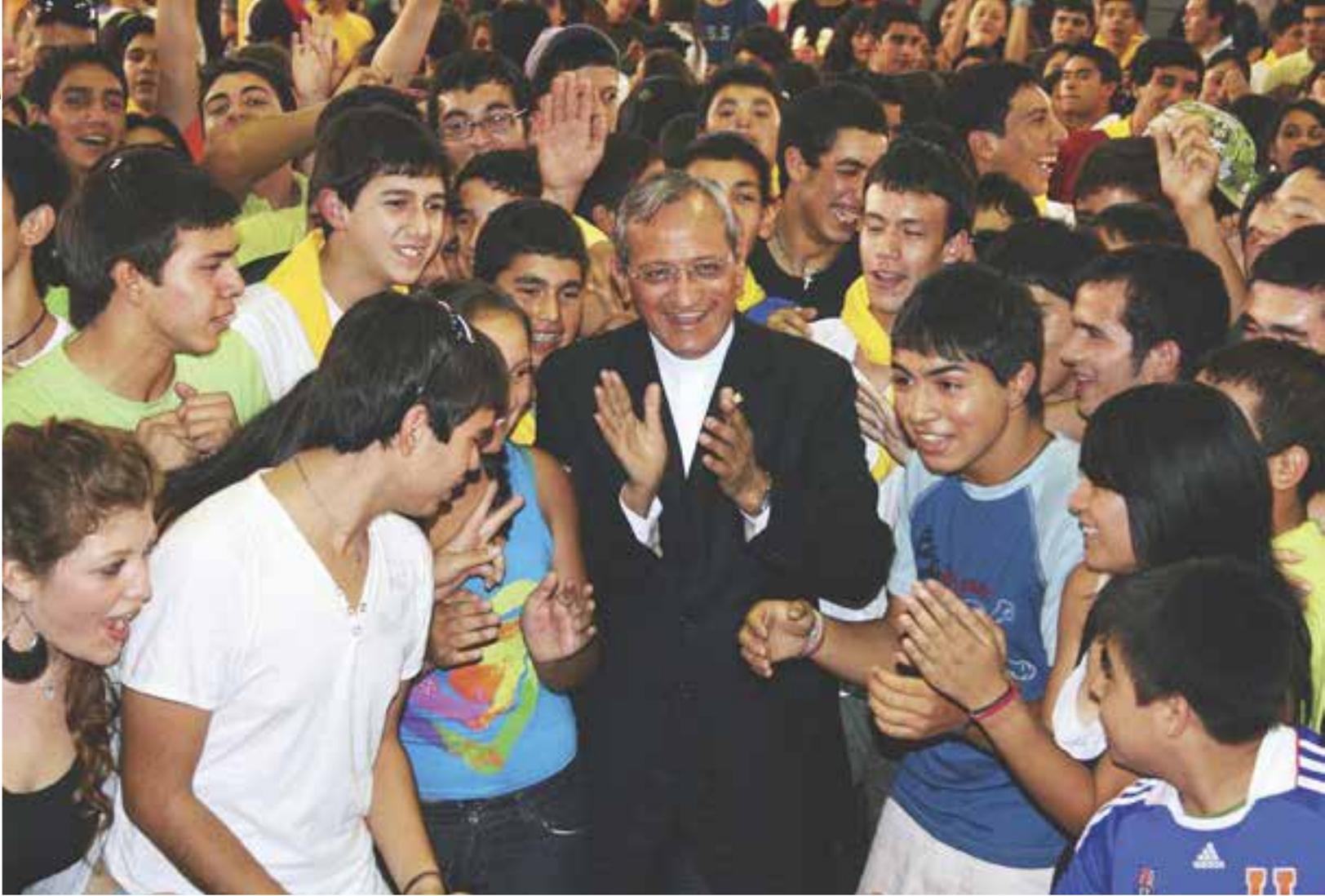
by Fr Juan Bustamante, sdb



“Young people from the Salesian Youth Movement, come and see!”, the Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez, shouted, and a thousand young people immediately got on their feet, came down from the stands and gathered around Don Bosco’s successor. Without a doubt, this was the moment that best described the Rector Major’s encounter with the members of the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) on Saturday 26 March in the context of his visit to Chile. From there on it was a joyful, festive, encounter involving Don Bosco’s representative today and today’s youth.

One by one the Rector Major answered the questions from the youngsters, talking to them in their midst, just as if he were meeting up with good friends who had not met for some time. “I really am very happy spending this time with you, because you are the *raison d’être* of my existence; you are God’s hope and ours too, and that’s why I love you all so much” said Fr Pascual.

One of the questions was about continuity – how they could carry their SYM spirituality forward into adulthood. Fr Pascual answered by saying that the SYM was just one stage in a boy’s or a girl’s life, where they experience fascination for Don Bosco and his spirituality, and where they form a group to ensure they are not alone. “If you only knew how many youngsters today live alone, and then you look around to see how



many have come together here to share love and life, faith and everything that Don Bosco means for us... however, it is one more step, since we are not going to stay young forever. The most important thing is that the SYM helps you to make courageous and decisive life choices, as did Laura Vicuña, Dominic Savio, and Ceferino Namuncurá”.

The Rector Major also told them that life could be lived in two ways: perfunctorily, or creatively. “Living it perfunctorily”, he said “is like just going to the office where what you do may have little bearing on how you really live. Jesus tells us ‘My Father is always at work and so am I’, meaning that if we are creative we are always generating something new, our own life, our envi-

ronment, whatever surrounds us. I would like to finish my life having been fruitful, having really created something, not simply by passing through life without leaving a footprint, and it all depends on how we experience what we do”.

He finished by recalling that Don Bosco did things in such a way that his youngsters became apostles of other youngsters, young people for the young: “Today, like yesterday”, he added, “the only alternatives are welcoming ones: family, an intense spiritual atmosphere which is able to generate ideas for being committed, generous”. He called on young people to be giants, with everything depending on our ability to offer them high goals for them to achieve.

“The most important thing is that the SYM helps you to make courageous and decisive life choices, as did Laura Vicuña, Dominic Savio, and Ceferino Namuncurá”.





Voluntary Service brings Hope Again

by Fr Daniel Masaharu Torigoe, sdb

The strong earthquake and subsequent tsunami which struck the Japanese archipelago on 11 March were the most devastating events to have hit the country since the end of the Second World War.

In the difficult situation after the tsunami there is a glimmer of light and hope in the solidarity and readiness of young people to help. "In this tragedy, one of the most moving things has been the generous response of the young Japanese" Fr Yasutaka Muramatsu, Provincial Secretary and Delegate for Salesian Voluntary Service told the Fides Agency at the time.

"Young people, Christians and non-Christians, are getting together and they want to go to the stricken areas at once to offer their services, their energy and their enthusiasm to help the victims, giving some hope through their smiles. It is very moving to see how much love they have for their neighbours. It is a lesson for all of us educators".

Some young students from Salesio-

Gakuin High School in Yokohama have undertaken to help as far as they possibly can in the rebuilding of the areas hit by the earthquake and the tsunami back in March 2011. This is something which gives fresh hope to the local people and makes the young people involved reflect and grow in maturity.

Fr Daniel Masaharu Torigoe is the Principal of the school in Yokohama. Like all the members of the Japanese Salesian community not directly affected by the disaster, right from the beginning he tried to make himself useful in helping and comforting people from the most northerly regions hit hardest by the earthquake, the tsunami, and then the nuclear danger.

"However, in the early months the consequences of the devastation and the fear of radioactive contamination prevented us from taking young people to the area. We had no real idea of what sort of help we could give. On my own I visited the area in May to find out what could be done, but the whole city was destroyed, nothing remained, everything had been swept away.

There was no place for the students or young people who were not professionally qualified", the Salesian said.

As the months passed, the situation improved and the Salesians found a safe place where they could work with the students. In fact in Shiogama city, in the diocese of Sendai, a diocesan Voluntary Service Centre was set up supported by Japan Caritas which was being coordinated by a Salesian, Brother Francesco Fukagawa.

In June Fr Torigoe suggested to the young people that they should become personally involved in the reconstruction of their country and provide moral support for the victims. "Surprisingly", he says, "more students than I expected wanted to take part and I divided them into four groups, with five students and a teacher in each".

On 12 July the first group left for Shiogama City; the second were there between 19 and 21 July, the



“I received a lot from people here, I was encouraged by their smiles, their positive ways of looking at the reality, their living together, helping each other”.



third between 25 and 27; the final group went from 18 to 20 August.

Under the supervision of Brother Fukagawa and other leaders, the young people spent two whole days cleaning up the houses, the streets, the beaches, clearing the grass, collecting bags of sand, clearing mud from the drains and visiting old people left alone.

The experience made a great impression on the youngsters: “I noticed what they lost is not merely their property, but their memories, their own lives. I felt bad about me having my home and living a comfortable

life” one of the young volunteers said. “First of all, I thought I was going to do a lot of work for people. But there were so many things to do. And I couldn’t do much. On the contrary, I received a lot from people here, I was encouraged by their smiles, their positive ways of looking at the reality, their living together, helping each other”, another says.

“What we did seems to be insignificant”, said a third, “nonetheless, what we did does not mean nothing at all. We can hand good will over to the ones who come next. And then it will turn out to be significant!”





YOUTH FORUM: COME AND SEE

One way to listen to God's call through the disciples
and find a way to respond.

by Fr Jean-Paul Ruriho, sdb



The Youth Forum in Africa Great Lakes Province is a wonderful opportunity for reflecting on the Rector Major's Strenna with young people.

This particular forum, held towards the end of December 2010 at the Salesian Parish in Bombo, Uganda, was the second such forum organised by the Province.

The young people came from three countries in the Province: Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. All told there were 300 youngsters, and they came together for three days to reflect on the Strenna for 2011 and especially to see how they could respond to it in their own lives.

After listening to what was presented to them, they had time to share their experiences with the Salesians in their various countries.



Our encounter with God:

An encounter with the Salesian charism, the appeal to become involved with the Church



In a family atmosphere, the young people were reminded several times of Biblical examples speaking of the encounter between God and man, amongst others the case of Samuel, and the Virgin Mary when she was asked to become the Mother of God. For ourselves it is anchored in the fact that we seek the meaning of who we are and we look for meaning in our lives. The first part of the Rector Major's Letter speaks of "Come", an invitation to come to the Lord who calls us daily. But, as was the case for the people in the Bible, we need someone to help us listen more attentively. Coming from Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda, each one had made a long journey in order to listen more attentively to the Lord.

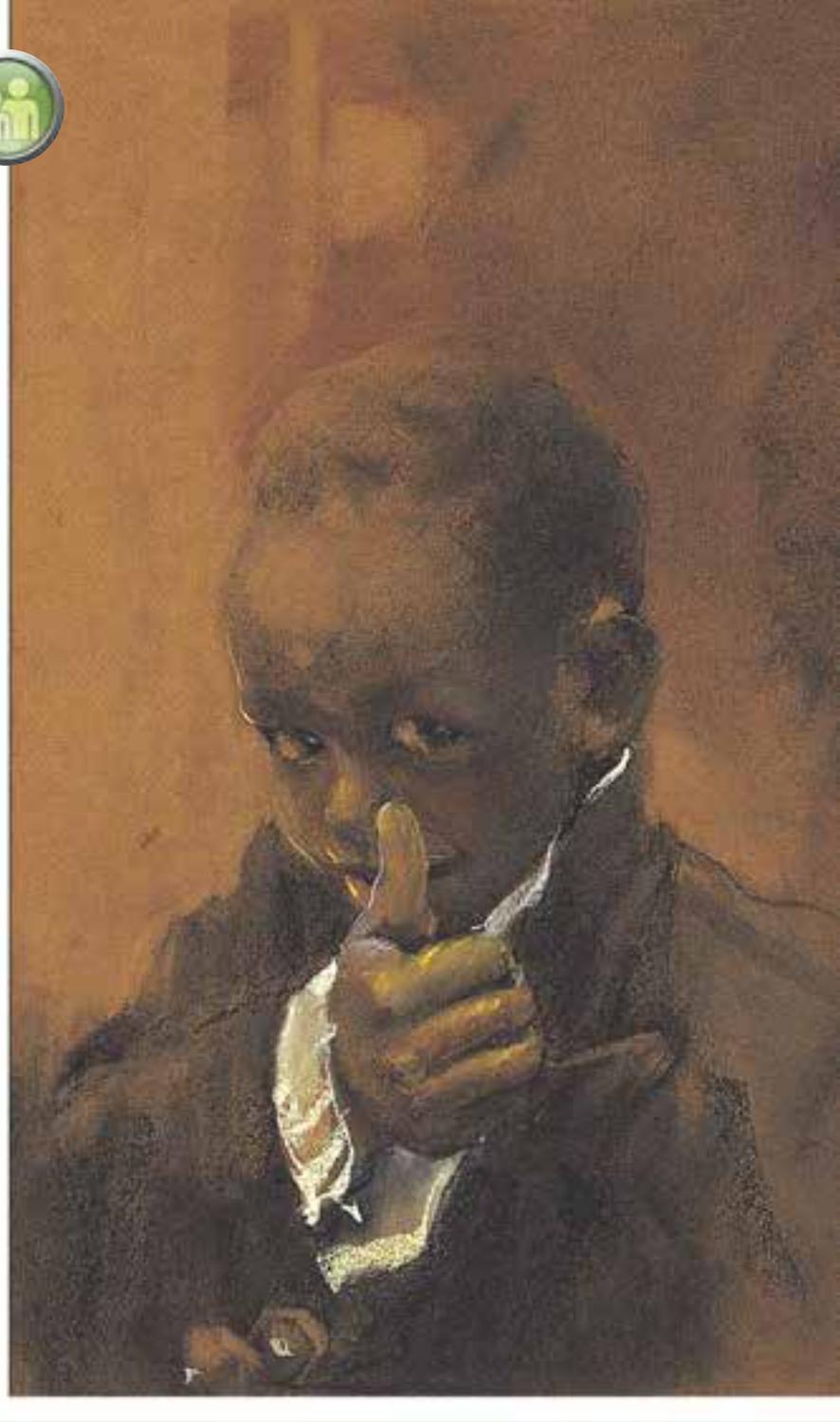
One could see that the Forum was a unique occasion for the young people to make new connections, share the same charism, even though they were coming from different countries.

The youngsters were reminded that their encounter with God has to be realised through their daily life. Each person need only open his or her eyes to see the ways God manifests himself.

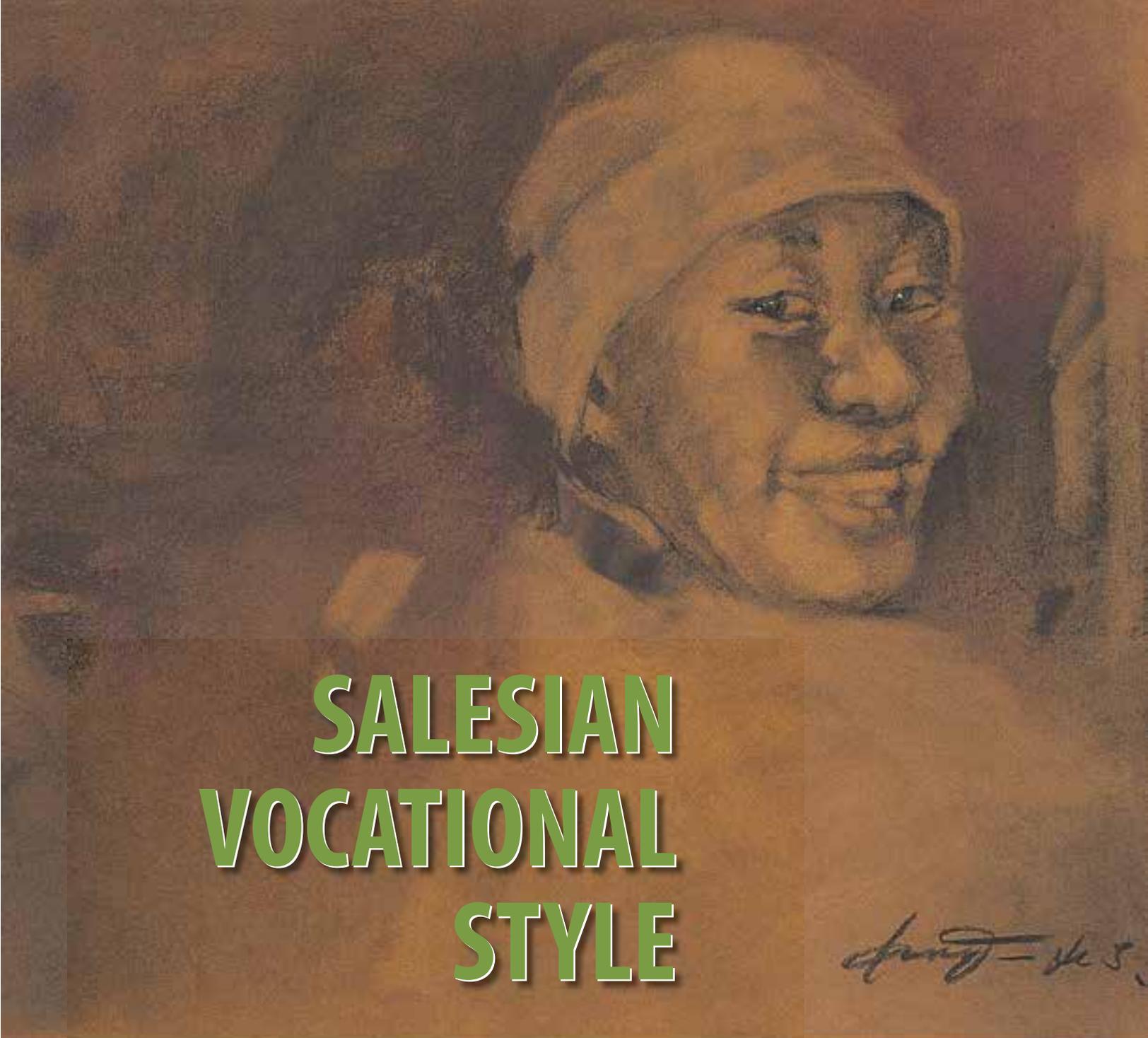
"Dear young people, the Salesians who are with you in the classroom, on the sports field, in the playground, are real invitations to you to come", the Rector Major indicates through the Strenna.

"You too can stay with the Salesians after meeting them. Staying with the Salesians today means responding to the appeal that the Lord makes to you every day: you can stay by becoming a Salesian of Don Bosco, Priest or Brother, Salesian Sister, Salesian Cooperator or by taking an active part in associations animated by the Salesian spirit, or simply by different life choices in which you can radiate the Salesian spirit received during the time spent with the Salesians"





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I WILL BE WITH YOU

I Will Be With You

by Ms Sophie Wöginger

Pupils at the Dominican school in Vienna attend presentation of the Bible published by Don Bosco Press for children and had a chance to meet the author, the Bishop, and a Salesian who sang with them.

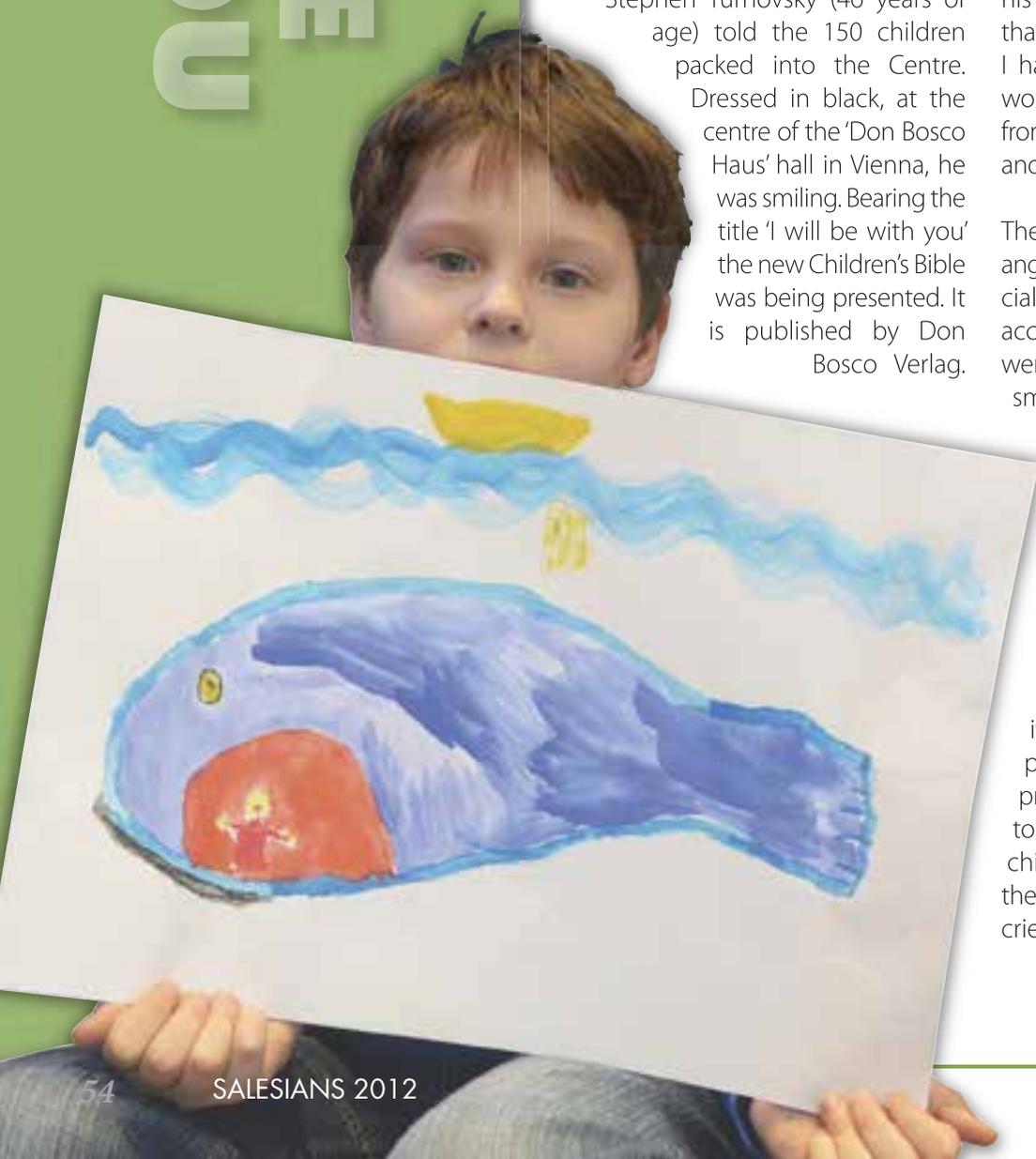
“Every story in the Bible has a happy ending. God always has the last word”, the auxiliary bishop of Vienna, Stephen Turnovsky (46 years of age) told the 150 children packed into the Centre. Dressed in black, at the centre of the ‘Don Bosco Haus’ hall in Vienna, he was smiling. Bearing the title ‘I will be with you’ the new Children’s Bible was being presented. It is published by Don Bosco Verlag.

Bishop Turnovsky, for his part, is the bishop responsible for Youth Ministry in the Diocese.

Initially the bishop was sitting along with the pupils. Fr Alfons Friedrich (52 years of age), the Director of Don Bosco Verlag, Munich, was conducting the morning’s events. When invited to come forward, the bishop expressed his gratitude for the event. He said that he loved the bible very much. “If I had to choose a book to keep, I would choose the Bible. I have read it from beginning to end. It is a moving and wonderful book”.

The other guest was Fr Rudolf Osanger (60 years of age) Salesian Provincial, Austria, who was very happy to accept the invitation. The children were immediately taken by his happy smile. They were not yet aware that

Fr Rudi was the composer of many of the hymns they knew. Some of these were sung during the Mass they had just attended. Fr Osanger knows all about how to address youngsters: “I have brought something for you to sing today and I have discovered that you already know it pretty well. Your teacher whispered this to me”. And smiling, the provincial took his guitar and began to sing *Freude kann Kreise ziehen*. The children began to dance and clap their hands. “All together”, Fr Osanger cried in a loud voice and everyone



*"If I had to choose a book to keep, I would choose the Bible.
I have read it from beginning to end.
It is a moving and wonderful book".*



sang one more verse at the top of their voice.

The presentation went on. Lene Mayer-Skumanz is a children's author and very well known in Austria. Fr Friedrich, as the Director of Don Bosco Verlag has already been involved in publishing some of her works, including a life of Don Bosco. Both were very happy with this new Bible. Lene Mayer-Skumanz, assisted by an actor, recited a number of passages from it. Later she signed and wrote notes in the new books.

Little Paul, speaking for all the children,

handed over a gift copy, though a little nervously, to the bishop. Fr Friedrich spoke to the bishop at the conclusion: "May I ask you to give a blessing" and Bishop Turnovsky turned to the children: "I invite you to focus and think for a moment, prepare for the blessing". He bowed his head briefly and raised his hand for the blessing making the Sign of the Cross: "May Almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen".

The children were given a Holy Picture with a prayer. This was to put in their new Bible. It would remind them of the day the bishop was with them.





A School with a Mission Vocation

by Juan José Chiappetti

Victoria is a city located in the western zone of La Pampa province, and is the main habitation in steppe lands that look more like desert than green prairies for grazing cattle or for cultivation.

The Salesians arrived in 1896 and little by little began a missionary effort that covered an area of some 400 square kilometres. From there they extended their efforts to a further seven localities. "This is a Christian community that has given much help to the work of the missionaries, and many have gone out from here to evangelise Santa Isabel and the Salado coast", says Fr Jorge

Ledesma, the Rector of this Salesian community.

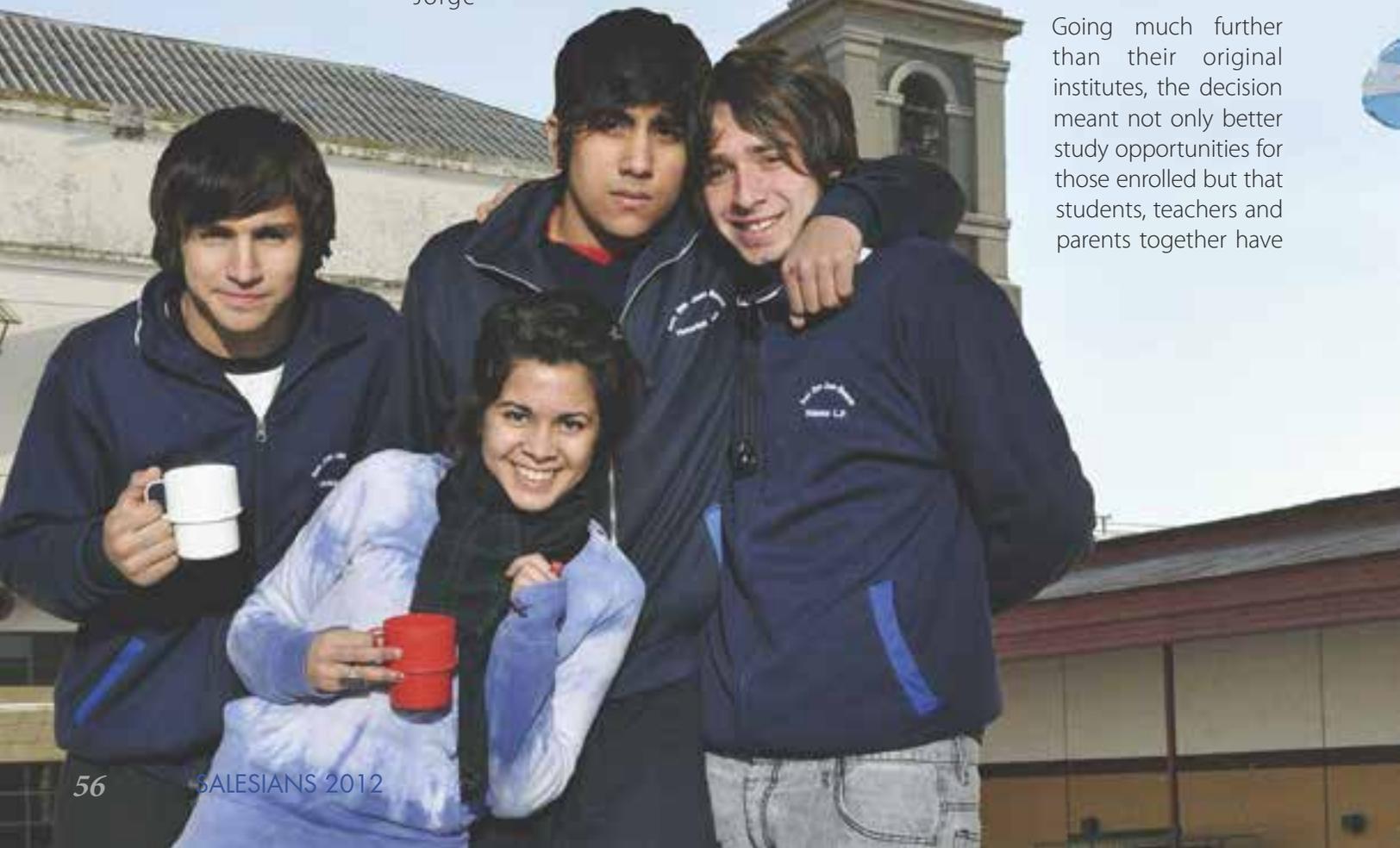
The Salesian Family here lives in a state of ongoing mission at work especially through the parish and school with youth groups and projects. But the highpoint of this mission effort has been achieved by setting up a mission school with few similar precedents around the world.

A new kind of school

In 2008, taking advantage of charismatic common effort and the fact that they

were close by one another, Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians Colleges set up a school bringing together both these branches (SDB and FMA) of the Salesian Family. One school holds the secondary while the other has the primary classes and together they make up more than 650 students, boys and girls, most of them from struggling families. The Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and the Salesian Sisters (FMA) have come together in this endeavour after a time of discernment that began years back, resulting in a new work which is much more than the simple sum of its parts.

Going much further than their original institutes, the decision meant not only better study opportunities for those enrolled but that students, teachers and parents together have



Don Bosco's presence in these parts has a special character because the Salesians and Sisters are working side by side with youngsters and adults, helping to build a more just and inclusive society



an educational and institutional setting that is much stronger than it was before.

Regarding primary education in particular, the experience has been most significant since it has combined the two primary sectors to achieve a much more complete result. As the principal, Amalia Martínez, and vice principal, Patricia Manso put it: "Coming together was much easier than we had imagined it would be. Working together this way was and still is a unique experience, since it was the first time this had been achieved, but more importantly because of the way it strengthened our sense of community and taught us how we must help each other increasingly each day".

For her part, Silvia Torres, staff representative and member of the secondary pastoral team comments that "many

here are lower middle class or poor, so fees are accessible for them – no more than 40 pesos. We keep them low so that school fees are no barrier to anyone wanting to come to the school". But in all this however "in the idea that we put to students and their families", the missionary nature of the school holds particular relevance: "in mission territory, formal education cannot avoid this side of things".

Don Bosco's presence in these parts

has a special character because the Salesians and Sisters are working side by side with youngsters and adults, helping to build a more just and inclusive society. "The dream is that, as a community made of of Salesians, Sisters and lay people we can continue to work together in ministry. We provide communion and involvement so that we are all building Church together, and we grow together", says Sister Susana Sotelo, Superior of the FMA community.





A week in the Salesian Mission



by Fr Jean-Noël Charmoille, sdb

For the past eight years, each year one Salesian school benefits from a week of 'mission': a team of 15 to 20 Salesians (SDB and FMA) who come from the various places where they work and provide leadership, time for reflection and celebration involving young people and adults. The idea is to change their daily lives and provide some impetus for a pastoral approach.

A mission was once seen as a week of preaching, confessions and celebrations in a parish led by a Religious, often maybe a Capuchin or a Franciscan. In our Province, not all schools have the benefit of a religious community. The catechist has usually been replaced by a school pastoral leader, a lay person formed for the task, but often formed for a completely different role.

The adult teams running the schools are the ones who have to look to the spirit, the school climate, often without much remuneration, and they are taken up largely by matters of daily management. So to provide support, give ideas, give a boost to the adults and give the students a sense of meaning at the heart of their scholastic endeavours, the idea came about to set up 'Salesian missions'. The idea took on: many schools have sought to benefit from this much appreciated pastoral push.

A courageous kind of leadership which has borne fruit

When a school is chosen, we start by preparing the teachers and school managers. We explain what will happen: they need to accept our timetable for the week, since the school routine is going to be completely upset. We take a 'play' approach for the students: the 'missionaries' move through the classrooms or they catch up with everyone in the playground or in the gym. A main topic is





chosen, then developed according to its different aspects: personal or human point of view, point of view of meaning or values, religious point of view. There are varied approaches: activities and small groups, sharing ideas around a story, wide games, vigil, celebration...

Everyday in the courtyard or during lunch time the Salesians and Sisters mingle as part of the life of the school: they are closer to the young people, share their games, their questions, their problems. Many question the meaning of their lives but without knowing who to talk to about it. It becomes an incredible opportunity for dialogue. The God question is never far away, and the 'missionaries' are not slow to raise it. What place does the 'Other' have in my life? Why do we have talents if we don't share them? How do we find signs of God in our lives? If they are not yet ready for a Eucharistic celebration, celebration can take other strong symbolic forms: sharing, forgiveness, solidarity...

Life, faith, every topic is tackled

The leaders try to loosen the tongues of the young people, and adults as well. During the exchanges, once confidence has been established, the question of vocation comes up, and often enough a youngster will pose a personal question: "What does one have to do to become a religious?" Then there are informal moments, personal projects to be expressed: "Well, I'd like to be a specialist teacher for the handicapped, like my mum". And then there are comments about the Religious who run the event: "They were great! We thought they'd all be oldies like in the parish!"

One Principal told us: "As Principal, I appreciate this formidable work by the Salesians, and thank them very much. I was able to see our students differently: some who were timid shone out, others who seemed more

normally boisterous showed wisdom... to put it bluntly, I was surprised. The adults too were great, taking part in the games and working in with the mission, each in his or her own way, either by helping the students in their activities, or helping out with the logistics. Finally, speaking personally, I was able to talk very freely about God and the youngsters' faith with the Salesians: it has been personally enriching".

In many schools, the 'mission' has given a boost to the pastoral plan, adults have got going again, relationships between them and the kids has improved, the climate has changed. Each one comes to understand better what Salesian pastoral leadership is all about, the reference to Don Bosco is clearer, and is owned once again.

We are now preparing for the eighth year of this mission. It will be in Alsace, at a technical school.





Journey to the Soul's Centre



"It was the best experience I have had in my young life" remarked one youthful participant in a leadership-cum-retreat at Don Bosco Youth Educational Services (DBYES). In our busy, modern world, it can be difficult to find space and time to stop, reflect and be still. This is precisely what DBYES offers. Its serene and peaceful surroundings welcome anyone who wants to stop and take stock of life. Here one finds true pilgrims to the soul's centre, or people who seek a way to their future.

DBYES offers variety: residential conferences, retreats, various seminars, all aimed at helping anyone, especially young people. Whether in the chapel, or out in the garden, these beautiful

by Fr Sebastian Koladiyil, sdb

surroundings far from the hustle and bustle of life could be just the ticket to help one get in touch with oneself and nature, and renew one's strength for returning to the demands of everyday life.

DBYES was established in 2000 when the Salesian Theologate at nearby Utume was moved to a newly built location. DBYES is a youth-friendly centre focused on empowering, accompanying and animating young people, youth ministers, catechists, teachers,



DBYES can also be considered a religious theme park with its specialised reflection walks for youth and adults where one can take an inward journey, physically, through the prayer garden.

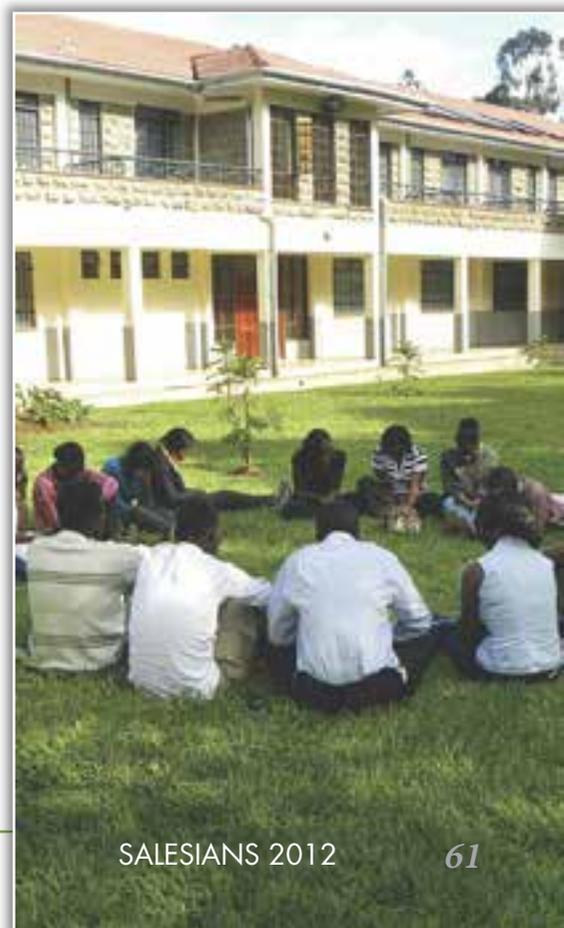
parents and other leaders by training them in life-skills: self awareness, self assertiveness, self esteem, care for the body, interpersonal skills, communication, stress management, problem solving, goal setting, planning, decision making, caring for the spiritual self, capacity building, leadership training, value education, time management, study methods, handling emotions, career guidance, relationship and friendship skills, peace building, interpersonal skills, media education, knowing ones sexuality and living with

differences so as to transform the society. All these are offered at the one-day morning-to-evening, or residential facilities.

Campus Ministry, School Chaplaincy, Youth counselling and School Retreats are offered on a regular basis and on special request. Each year DBYES reaches out to thousands of college and school students, parish youth, teachers and youth ministers.

Some 20 kilometres from Nairobi's cen-

tral business district, in the tranquil and picturesque outskirts at Karen, DBYES can also be considered a religious theme park with its specialised reflection walks for youth and adults where one can take an inward journey, physically, through the prayer garden dedicated to the memory of Fr Philip Valayam, murdered as he was returning to DBYES after midnight Mass in 2005, or through multimedia offerings. There is a journey of self-discovery, 'River Mee', the journey into ones origins; 'Nazarene Lane', the journey of life; the 'Road to Youth, Teen Commitment', and a beautiful chapel filled with rich African art. The prayer garden at DBYES is truly a place where "Come and See" becomes a lived reality.





Catechists in Mission

by Fr Heriberto Herrera, sdb



Catechists, men and women, are the Church's real treasure in the Salesian mission in Carchá and Raxruhá, Guatemala.

The word "catechist" may mislead us unless we know something of the truth of this in the Salesian mission. The native catechist is someone who has a vocation as a religious leader, who takes on the task of encouraging the community in an ongoing way.

There are catechists with already dozens of years of service behind them. They receive no financial remuneration for their work. They work as a team. They enjoy prestige in their community.

The catechist team coordinates and

encourages Sunday religious services. Ordinarily, they preside at the service because of a shortage of priests. When visiting the communities, catechists offer invaluable support.

Catechists specialise in particular kinds of catechesis: there are catechists for the younger children, older youth, baptisms or marriages, the sick, the elderly, and musicians. Catechists also catechise other catechists as trainers. To this we can add their role as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist: The most faithful and those with the most prestige in the community accept this role.

How many catechists are there in our Salesian mission? Not even the missionaries themselves know exactly how many there are. A rough estimate





shows that the number is at least four thousand. It seems an exaggerated figure but that's the promising reality of it. In fact, the preference now is to talk about ministers instead of catechists.

To look more closely at the phenomenon, we can picture this scenario. The priest comes to a community one Sunday (called a centre, because it brings together several nearby villages).

The baptism catechist speaks to the parents and godparents who have been preparing for the sacrament. The paperwork is done by the catechist.

The marriage catechist does similarly for couples preparing for their wedding.

Another catechist presents a sheet with a carefully prepared list of the Mass servers.

The music catechist has written down all the hymns to be used at Mass.

The children's catechist already has them organised in the pews, singing or acting out biblical scenes.

The ushers have prepared the decoration of the church, and along with their wives they have already prepared the lunch for the whole assembly.

After Mass, several catechists (adult or youth) go to the microphone to inform the community about upcoming meetings or activities.

It is clear that the future of missionary vitality lies in this legion of generous catechists. The challenge is to provide a solid formation, so they can successfully express the essential content of Christian faith in their own culture.

There have been various efforts in this regard. Young catechists in December prepare the courses to teach the following year. Along with the priest they identify the most important issues. They then develop the content as a team, develop training materials and schedule the group meetings. It is admirable the way they show their ability to give life to the faith. There is nothing of the tedious, classic boredom that the word 'catechetics' sometimes evokes.





Helping us Pray Today

Working in a Salesian School – Working from the Heart

by Fr Anthony Bailey, sdb

Forty years ago, our schools in Great Britain were well-staffed with Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB). As the number of vocations fell and Salesians began to retire from teaching, we began to consider what to do with our schools. We even raised the question, how many SDBs do we need to teach in a Salesian school to keep a school 'Salesian'? It was felt, at the time, that the answer to this question would determine which schools we would have to close.

In the

event, we did not close any of our secondary schools. Today we have more students in our schools than ever before. Most of our schools have lay leadership and staff and they are very much Salesian schools. We now know that we were asking ourselves the wrong question. We should have asked the question, How do we support our Salesian schools to ensure that they remain Salesian?

A Salesian province has a duty to support its schools. Staff have a right to know what is expected of them when they are appointed to work in a Salesian school. Every province will have devised various support systems for its schools. One small part of that support is in the work of publications. For the last ten years the staff of Don Bosco Publications.





Clapping

We have programmed to see problems in their minds. We have programmed to see them. We have minds that can focus too much on mistakes. It is best to recognise the good that is always here and thank God for it. Invite the group to respond to the litany by a short round of clapping as an active prayer of gratitude.



Lord

We thank you by clapping, for a new day to experience, good friends to share the day with, many different gifts in this group, hidden acts of kindness in our group, hidden acts we are sorry, the fun that happens by accident, (add your own as leader) Lord thank you for the ability to see what's positive in each other and enjoy the gift of life you give us every day.



cations have sought to provide some of this support by encouraging Salesians to collaborate in the creation of publications which staff will welcome, since these publications will help them in the education of the young people entrusted to them. Some publications have been written specifically for the staff in our Salesian schools, for example the booklet *Working in a Salesian School – Working from the Heart*. This short booklet, which sum-

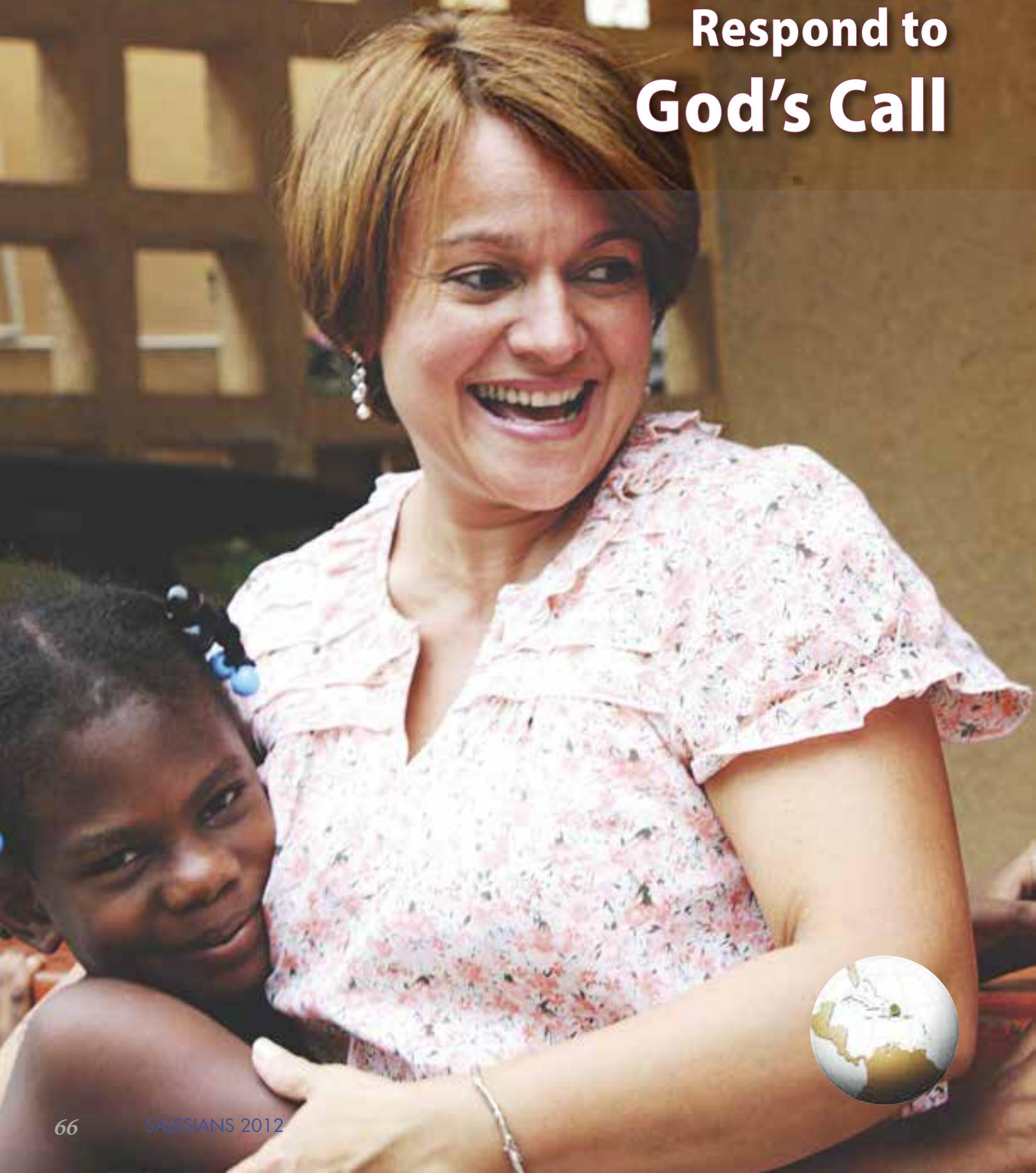
marises the essentials of our Salesian Preventive System, is given to everyone who works in our Salesian Schools. However, when we display our books at teacher conferences we make this booklet available for anyone to take, free of charge. Participants at conferences always appreciate a gift.

While being aware of the needs of the staff and young people in our own Salesian schools, most of our publications have a wider remit; they are designed for all Christian schools. For example the book entitled *The Christian Teacher: Shepherd of Loving Kindness* by David O'Malley SDB, while being firmly based on Salesian principles, is widely appreciated in Christian circles and is used in teacher-training courses.

A recent interesting development has been the introduction of *Swatch & Pray*, a 60 page card-resource of prayers, actions and reflections for use with young people. It brings together the Church traditions of praying with the body and with the heart. These prayers are designed to be used in large groups, small groups or individually. The swatch can be given to an individual to choose a prayer or the leader may select an appropriate prayer for that day. The activities and reflections lead from life experience into prayer. We have had a very positive response to *Swatch & Pray* from many Catholic schools and orders from Anglican schools. All enjoy praying in this Salesian way.



Parish Missionaries Respond to God's Call



The main objective of the group is holiness through the practice of virtue, and salvation of one's neighbour through a life of intense apostolate in a parish setting.

by Fr Pablo Abreu, sdb

The Caribbean nation of Santo Domingo has been blessed by the presence of great missionaries who planted the seeds of the Gospel, as did St John Bosco, in such a fruitful way that it produced a hundredfold. Such is the case of Fr Andrés Németh Herczeg, a Hungarian missionary with typical Salesian ingenuity who worked tirelessly for the salvation of souls and, as one of his most precious legacies, left a group of women who consecrated themselves to God in and from the world, cooperating in the building of God's kingdom: they called themselves Parish Missionaries of Mary Help of Christians.

On 8 December 1961 as part of the celebrations for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, St John Bosco Parish in Santo Domingo was the setting for the first group of young women to pronounce vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and thus consecrate themselves to the

Lord to serve him as Parish Missionaries of Mary Help of Christians. Thus a Secular Institute dedicated to parish work came into being.

The main objective of the group is holiness through the practice of virtue, and salvation of one's neighbour through a life of intense apostolate in a parish setting. They work for the poorest of the poor, especially young people of all ages, and in the spirit of Don Bosco's charism.

The apostolic zeal which they have embraced has enabled them to immediately spread the kingdom through their work in the parish, a work of teaching catechetics in forgotten slum areas and in public schools, as a faithful response to God's call. They believe He has invited them to become holy by giving their lives to develop a future for people who were born without true knowledge of Him. They are currently working in

Holy Family, Doña Chucha parishes, Altagracia Boys Town and St Dominic's School, all in the Dominican Republic's Capital.

They are at the service of the Church, taking in orphan children, the extremely poor or at risk. They offer them a place to live, food, education, health, recreation, and a well-rounded human and religious formation, both personal and social, but they especially offer them the love that has been denied these children.

As Luke's Gospel puts it, these women accompany and await the Lord (cf. Lk 8: 1-3): they have experienced a personal encounter with Jesus through their efforts to turn sorrow into smiles. From this encounter they gain the strength, reinforced by charity, which turns them into authentic proponents of the Gospel, which says: "Look, there is the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:36)





Salesian Youth Movement

Come and See the SYM

by Fr Michael Pace, sdb



The tension between a 'maintenance' and a 'mission' Church is written into our Salesian DNA. Don Bosco's pedagogy built on sacramental pillars, our devotion to the Pope, and our trust in Mary Help of Christians make us 'at home' in a maintenance church, while our youth-centred 'da mihi animas' urges us to be cutting-edge in facilitating the encounter between youth and Christ.



This tension finds healthy resolution in the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM). More than any one 'work' ever could, the SYM reflects a church that is harmoniously 'maintenance and mission'. This is the kind of church the young need to experience when they come and see the Salesians.

In Toronto, for example, we have only one Salesian work: St. Benedict Parish. It is a fine work, but a *come and see* limited to it would be incomplete because it cannot adequately express the scope of the Salesian mission carried out in Toronto. The Salesian mission passes through the work, but is not limited to it. On the other hand, when we invite the young to come and see expressions of the SYM, they experience a vast network of evangelization efforts



that, while based at St. Benedict, reaches far beyond the parish's boundaries, possibilities and personnel.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. The Salesian Leadership Retreat (SLR) is a three-day 'baptism' in Salesian youth spirituality. Annually, it reaches 120 Toronto high school students. Originally animated by the SDBs, it has been kept alive over the past ten years by dedicated lay teachers from 8 non-Salesian schools, none of which have a Salesian on staff, and all but one of which lie outside our parish boundaries.

Summerdaze Day Camp is a six-week summer 'Oratory' experience that has

become a school of formation in Salesian youth ministry. Campers and counselors 'graduate' from it imbued with the Preventive System, and go on to become protagonists who develop other youth ministries both in the parish and beyond.

Noteworthy also are the 'salesianized' ecclesial movements that enrich the Toronto SYM. The Don Bosco Council of the Knights of Columbus has a strong Salesian identity, while the youth branch of the Knights draws its inspiration from the saint whose name it bears: Dominic Savio Squires Circle. Our pan-Canadian World Youth Day (WYD) group coordinates young people from three Salesian works in Surrey (British Columbia), Toronto (Ontario) and Montreal (Quebec). This

Canadian group joined other national SYM groups in Spain in August 2011 to experience the SYM at the international level.

Finally, the SYM introduces Toronto youth to fruitful SDB-FMA collaboration. VIDES opens the doors to the foreign missions, while *Duc in Altum* has forged SDB-FMA links in the service of spiritual accompaniment and vocational discernment.

Clearly, the SYM opens a broader window onto the Salesian mission than any one work ever could. Imagine what kind of fruit a come and see might bear if every confrere asked himself: What can I do to develop the SYM? What will I do to develop the SYM?



Rock Out Youth Poverty

by Delano Perera

On a wet Sunday, January 30, 2011 many teens gathered together at Saint Joseph's Salesian Youth Renewal Center to take a stand against world poverty. The day was filled with talks, music, food, exhibits, and Mass to finish the day.

I was born in Sri Lanka, where I have seen many poor people on the streets. This event reminded me how lucky I am to have a roof over my head and food on my plate. When I first heard about the recession, I wondered if I would end up on the street, just like

the people I had seen back in Sri Lanka. Sometimes it is so easy to forget the poor on the street.

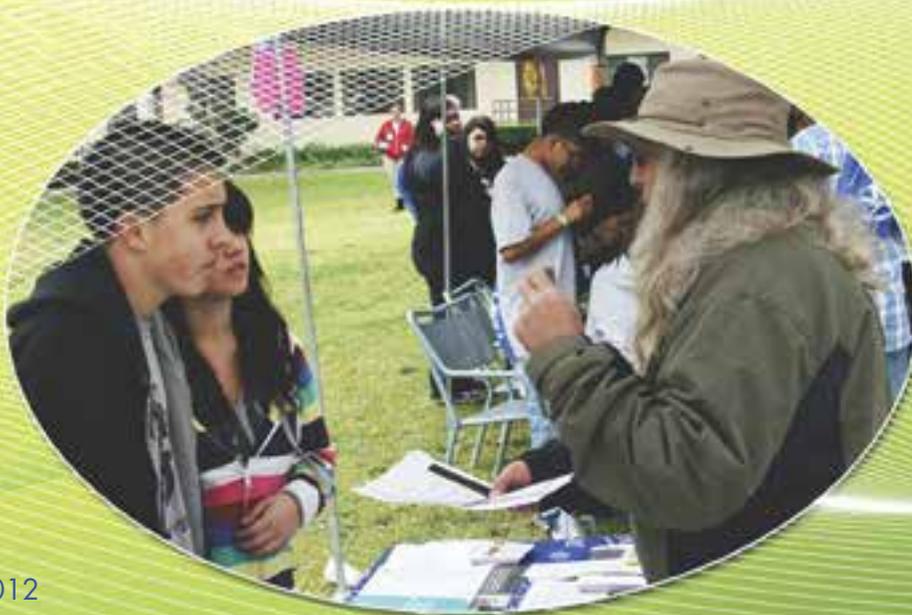
The food served that day was not anything fancy. It was food that a poor person would eat in a regular day: peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, plain bread, beans and tortillas, rice with yams, fruits, and boiled potatoes. Not the most pleasing food, but it was truly a reminder of how blessed we are.

Both of the guest speakers spoke to us about how poverty and disease take millions of lives each year. What really touched me was when I heard that 93 percent of the world's population makes less than 50 dollars a day.

celebrating mass and the feast of Saint John Bosco, who lived in the 1800s and brought the poor boys off the streets and gave them a home. Even though Saint John Bosco has passed away, his spirit will always be in those who serve the poor. He is truly a perfect model for us. It is sometimes easy to forget about the poor and abandoned. This event woke me up and energized me to work for the poor and follow Don Bosco. We have to "See Don Bosco and Be Don Bosco". Let's try to end world poverty by 2015.

We ended the day by

Delano Perera is a third year student at St. John Bosco High School, Bellflower, CA.







RSE Salesian Network Keeps Schools Closely Linked

Rede Salesiana de Escolas



Nearing ten years of existence, the Salesian Schools Network strengthens links between the educational institutions which make it up, inspiring action focused on educational management and investment in the ongoing formation of teachers.

by Fr Nivaldo Luiz Pessinatti, sdb and Ms Ana Cosenza

Almost a decade has passed since the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Salesian Sisters took on the task of building up an educational network bringing together their schools throughout Brazil in a proposal based on the pedagogical principles left them by Sts John Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. It has been a long slow road involving more than 100 schools belonging to the RSE encouraging them to adopt the proposal, and in turn contribute their experience to building up the Network.

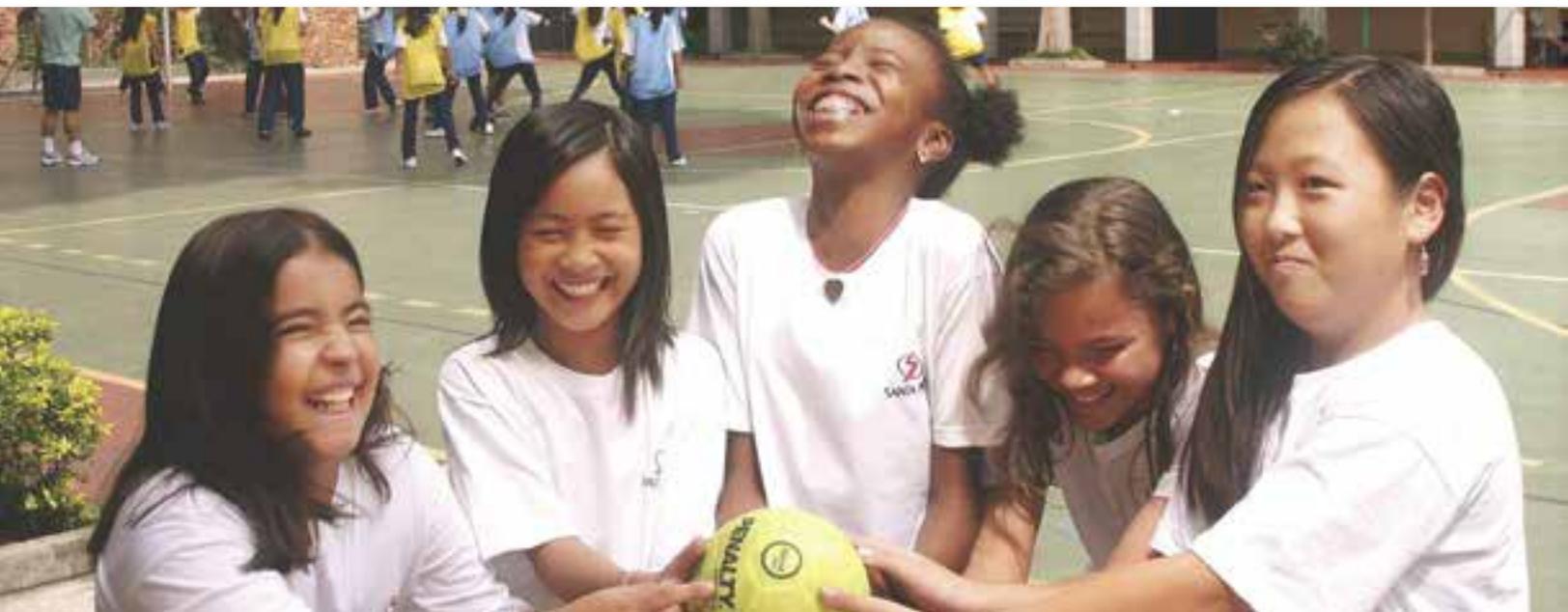
By now well consolidated, the Network provides continuity for the consistent work carried out by its governing board (currently made up of Fr Nivaldo Luiz Pessinatti, SDB, and Sister Ivanette Duncan, FMA) and has entered a new phase. "It is time to complete this project, to help schools on a day to day basis, showing that networking also uses the same teaching material", says the super-

intendent of the Network, Professor Dilnei Lorenzi.

The new challenges for the RSE include greater focus on educational management, strengthening links between schools and investing in ongoing formation of staff.

Educate by evangelising and evangelise by educating

"Today the discussion is not about whether or not we should network, since this is already a reality. It is a case of how to do things better, with greater awareness for quality schooling", says educational leader, Kátia Stocco Smole. This is why the challenge in the educational field is, amongst others, the constant updating of teachers. In 2011 it has involved both national and local levels, serving approximately 5,100 teachers.





“Educate by evangelising and evangelise by educating”.
“The Network aims to give this motto greater consistency, by showing how it needs to be part of the school routine”.



If excellence is a teaching goal, the major difference of RSE comes from the fact that quality teaching is achieved when it brings with it the Salesian charism. So says Pastoral Care Coordinator, Antonio Boeing. For him the main challenge is to make the whole school understand what it means to “educate by evangelising and evangelise by educating”. “The Network aims to give this motto greater consistency, by showing how it needs to be part of the school routine. It does not matter whether one is a teacher or a coordinator, teaches Religion or Physics: no-one can ignore the principles of Salesian education”.

Network management

The project of integrated administration began to be implemented in RSE in 2010. Its aim was to promote best practice in management and extend the network concept to administration. The first step therefore was a diagnostic one for educational institutions. This phase has already begun, with survey data on the school, city and region where the school is, the competition it faces etc.

The reports produced will be the basis for the other phases of the project: implementation of management software, definition of a centralised model of operations and deployment model of management control.

The other challenge for the RSE is to consolidate the brand of Brazil’s major Catholic school Network, highlighting the differences in its pedagogical and pastoral approach both for its own and its external public: the eighty five thousand students in the Network today. The 2011 communication campaign took the line that the young people, from the many regions of Brazil, are key players, by highlighting issues such as ethics, awareness, solidarity, innovation and entrepreneurship. “We have demonstrated the role of the RSE in guiding and preparing a new generation of citizens for Brazil’s future”, concluded the Communications and Marketing head, Célio Ballona Júnior.

Preparing teaching materials in today’s digital language is the new task for all network professionals and ‘enthusiasm for life’ remains the slogan and horizon for this educational effort being built up collectively.





Children Looking for God

by Bro. Jacques Nagalo, sdb



Burkina Faso

On 3 April 2011, more than 330 children gathered in Saint John's Church, Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), a small mission station belonging to St Dominic Savio Parish, for the 2011 'March for God' organised by the children's coordination team. Accompanied by their leaders and group leaders, the children came from the oratory, as well as catechetics and youth groups, and were organised into seven groups identified by different-coloured badges. They headed out for Koffin, a small village at the northern exit of Bobo. after deacon Paul-Frédéric, from the diocese, gave them blessing to send them on their way. Bubbling with excitement, the pilgrims headed out in search of God. Hymns and prayers marked their progress as they covered the kilometres. The children sang happily and with their normal enthusiasm.

Along the way there were seven pauses for prayer. Once they had arrived at Koffin, after some welcomes, they carefully followed the presentation by Brother Christopher sdb, a practical trainee. He based it on the message by Pope



Benedict XVI for the World Vocations Day. Tactfully, and despite his lack of practice, the speaker won the attention of the youngsters and helped them understand the essentials of the Pope's message. It was an opportunity for them to better understand some matters concerning vocation.

Everyone then went into their groups to answer some questions on the topic that had been presented. Mid-morning, Fr Paul sdb, the local Youth Ministry Coordinator, presided at the Mass. The liturgy was led by the young people themselves. Following the Mass a cut lunch as well as food offered by the Youth Team was shared between friends and with the leaders. Various games, songs and some time to relax filled the remainder of the day. In mid-afternoon 30 of the youngsters set off on the return journey, happy to have spent a pilgrimage together for a day seeking God. Did they find him? The million dollar question! The future, and each one's vocational story will tell!



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Don Bosco Žepče

by Fr Tihomir Šutalo, sdb

The Salesians arrived in Bosnia at the invitation of the Archbishop of Sarajevo and the local Croatian Government. They wanted to offer signs of hope to a suffering population, to people uncertain as to what the future held in store. In 1997 construction of the new Centre was begun and the Salesians began their pastoral work by taking up their activity in a school – it was a State school.

Political, financial and social uncertainty were in abundance, but with the help of Providence, the work began to grow. Many people and organisations from the international community have become part of the project, and we can truly say that we have been touched by the hand of Providence in such

a way that by 1999 a Technical Institute opened with the first 72 pupils, and the following year a Secondary school.

School Centre

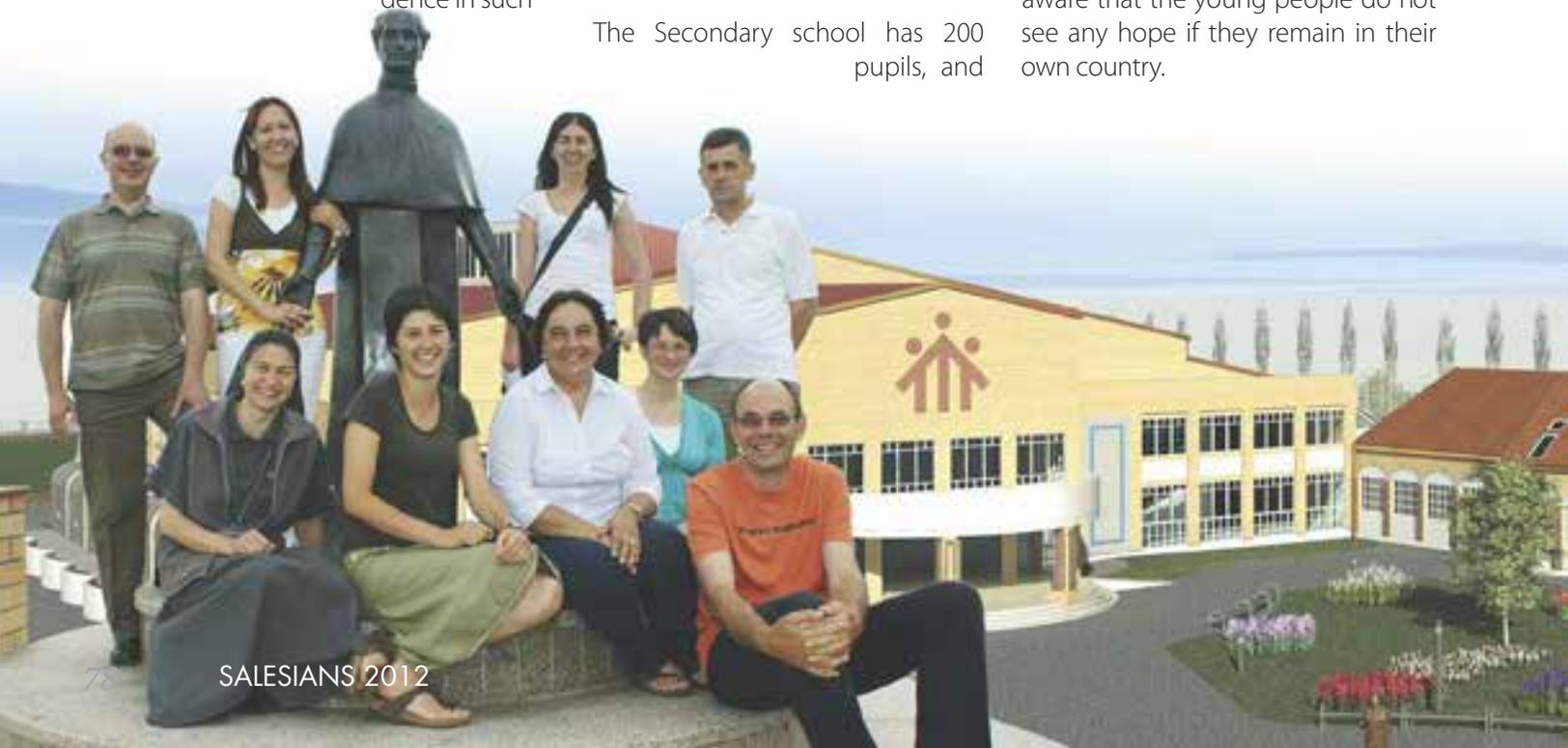
Today, 16 years after the first Salesians came, and after 11 years of KŠC Don Bosco activity amidst young people in Žepče, we can proudly show how much has been built up for so many and what we are continuing to achieve in the Institute. The school is by now nearly 80% complete in construction terms. It is well equipped and certainly much better equipped than the state schools in the same area. The School has 60 staff, most of them with the appropriate degrees and training for their various subject fields.

The Secondary school has 200 pupils, and

the Technical school 350 pupils, distributed as follows:

- » 4 classes of economics (4 year)
- » 4 classes of mechanics (4 year)
- » 3 classes involving hydraulics welding and turning – 3 year)
- » 3 classes of electronics (– installation and autoelectronics – 3 year)

We are unable to respond to everyone who seeks a place, since so many families seek a better future for their children through our schools. The chief difficulty is that 80% of our pupils who complete their secondary and university preparation, or work preparation, leave the country (for Croatia, Italy, Germany) and often they do not return. This is a problem for us because we are aware that the young people do not see any hope if they remain in their own country.





Oratory – Youth Centre

Thanks to a project sponsored by VIS and financed by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and after we built an area where young people could come for activities, we have begun an oratory with youngsters from the local area, and we try to bring in as many as possible from the urban area. This characteristic Salesian oratory work in Bosnia and Herzegovina was unknown in the area before the Salesians came, so we are pioneering activity of this kind. At the moment our main concern is to open our doors to everyone who wishes to come and be part of a welcoming, calm place where everyone can find something that responds to their tastes. Our weekend oratory attracts some 250 youngsters with a team of leaders to look after them. The second characteristic activity is forming

leaders and educators in general so that in the future we will have a team to whom we can entrust the future work for young people. At the core of our weekend oratory work is the Sunday Mass which is a time for meeting up and sharing in the community around the Lord.

Our challenges

The small religious community is made up of three priests and a brother in practical training, who do their best to be Don Bosco for today's youngsters through their witness and tireless effort. But there are still difficulties in the nation, many uncertainties, many things lacking which affect the nation's youth, many of whom do not believe that they can hope to achieve much more than simple survival if they remain there. Of the 30,000 inhabitants 5,500

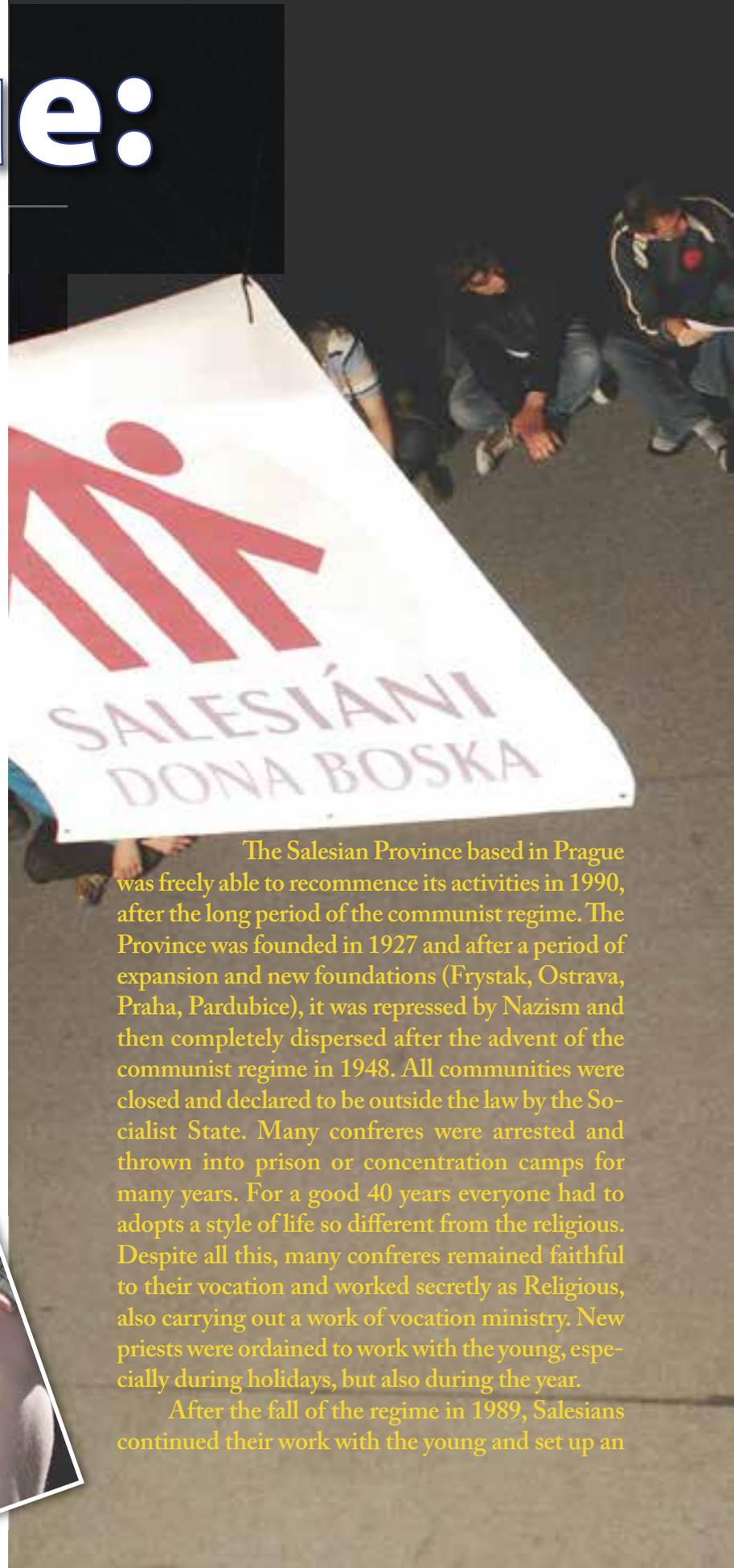
are of school age – primary, secondary. This indicates that the youth population is about a third of the total. But what awaits them afterwards? What are the education models in place? What will society give them? What kind of adult models do they have? Unfortunately the answers are somewhat limited and not acceptable for us as Salesians. We would like to offer them alternative models and life choices, help them see and believe that the future is especially in their hands. The Lord never tires of His people, and will continue to be the Lord of history despite human sinfulness. Don Bosco Žepče is just one of the drops of Divine Mercy that has fallen in this beautiful place, a paradise that human wickedness has turned into a vale of tears. Such is the story of civilisation, but one redeemed by the Lord, where through and at times despite us, He is still present.





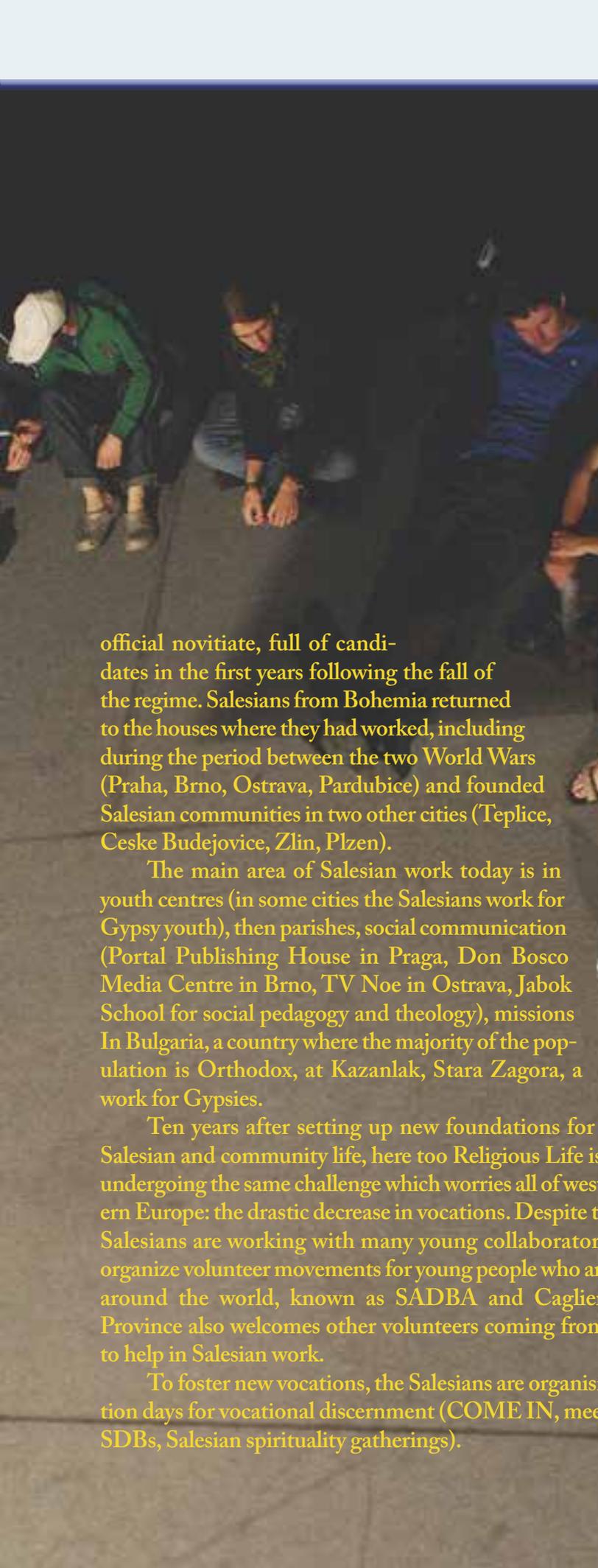
Prague:

Encountering Today's Youth



The Salesian Province based in Prague was freely able to recommence its activities in 1990, after the long period of the communist regime. The Province was founded in 1927 and after a period of expansion and new foundations (Frystak, Ostrava, Praha, Pardubice), it was repressed by Nazism and then completely dispersed after the advent of the communist regime in 1948. All communities were closed and declared to be outside the law by the Socialist State. Many confreres were arrested and thrown into prison or concentration camps for many years. For a good 40 years everyone had to adopt a style of life so different from the religious. Despite all this, many confreres remained faithful to their vocation and worked secretly as Religious, also carrying out a work of vocation ministry. New priests were ordained to work with the young, especially during holidays, but also during the year.

After the fall of the regime in 1989, Salesians continued their work with the young and set up an



official novitiate, full of candidates in the first years following the fall of the regime. Salesians from Bohemia returned to the houses where they had worked, including during the period between the two World Wars (Praha, Brno, Ostrava, Pardubice) and founded Salesian communities in two other cities (Teplice, Ceske Budejovice, Zlin, Plzen).

The main area of Salesian work today is in youth centres (in some cities the Salesians work for Gypsy youth), then parishes, social communication (Portal Publishing House in Praga, Don Bosco Media Centre in Brno, TV Noe in Ostrava, Jabok School for social pedagogy and theology), missions In Bulgaria, a country where the majority of the population is Orthodox, at Kazanlak, Stara Zagora, a work for Gypsies.

Ten years after setting up new foundations for Salesian and community life, here too Religious Life is undergoing the same challenge which worries all of western Europe: the drastic decrease in vocations. Despite this Salesians are working with many young collaborators, to organize volunteer movements for young people who are sent around the world, known as SADBA and Cagliari. The Province also welcomes other volunteers coming from abroad to help in Salesian work.

To foster new vocations, the Salesians are organising reflection days for vocational discernment (COME IN, meetings with SDBs, Salesian spirituality gatherings).



Connecting the World:

by Fr Albeiro Rodas, sdb

In November 2010, Laura Villadiego, a reporter from EFE (Spanish language News Agency, equivalent to Reuters, or API in English), visited the Social Communication and Journalism Section of Don Bosco Technical School in Si-hanoukville. The resulting article, *Periodismo joven en el corazón de Camboya* (Youthful journalism in the heart of Cambodia) was reproduced by newspapers such as *El Mundo* and *El Tiempo* in Spain, and Latin America. The Spanish media were amazed at how Don Bosco Tech had managed to open a school of journalism and communication in a country with not a few difficulties in freedom of expression and at how young people from vulnerable communities were able to access technologies and information.

The attention of the press attracted the attention of the radio and I received some calls from Colombian radio stations wanting to know about the project. Before returning on holidays to Medellín (a journey that took some 50 hours from Phnom Penh, through Bangkok, Frankfurt and Bogotá), I was contacted by Medellín City Mayor. "Could you offer some workshops in communication to our *Fuerza Joven* programme?" My answer, as a Salesian, was of course "yes".

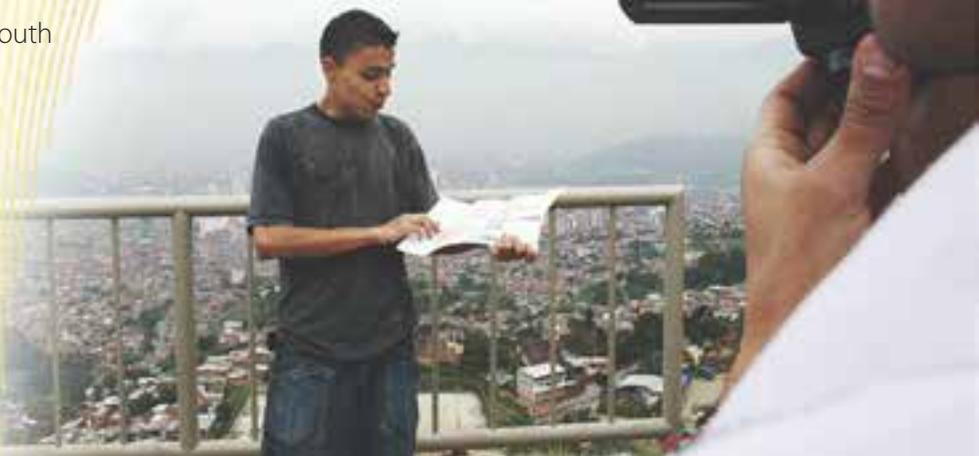
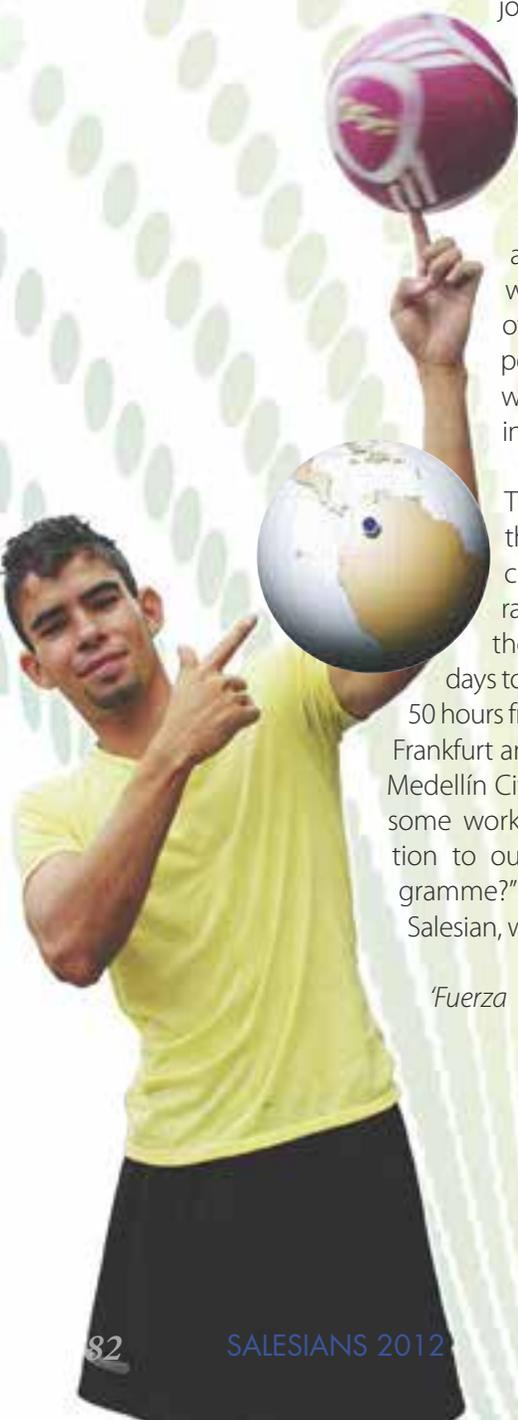
'Fuerza Joven' (Youth

Force) is a program set up by Medellín's Mayor for young people from the poorest quarters of the city, victims of urban violence or vulnerable youth who might otherwise end up in gangs.

Don Bosco Parce

I called my experience with *Fuerza Joven*, *Don Bosco Parce*. 'Parce' is Colombian Spanish slang for 'friend' in Medellín. Every morning a car from the municipality with some program leaders picked me up from the family home in Barrio Castilla and brought me to another barrio in the city to meet a group of youths involved in a re-socialisation program. I asked however that the groups be small, between 15 and 20 each, so the youngsters could better profit from the experience.

I began with a cultural exposition about Cambodia and our communication training program for young people like them. These Medellín youth from the poorest barrios - portrayed very often by the media as violent and the inspiration of several movies on urban violence - were obviously quite curious about this 'newcomer'. Then there were the stories of young people like



Medellin to Sihanoukville

them, living precisely on the other side of the planet (Cambodia is 12 hours time difference from Colombia), to gradually draw their attention. Many of them had more than one tattoo on their bodies and now they wanted their names in Khmer!

After the cultural section on Cambodia and many questions from my 'parces', we came to the communication workshop. I explained to them that we cannot not communicate. Everything in our society means communication and every community develops its own codes of information.

Then I explained what I managed in Cambodia in our social communication and journalism section.

What must we, as young people, communicate?

There are four elements we, as young people,

must communicate in order to improve our standard of life, make peace and exchange our gangs for video cameras, the Internet and the like.

1. Hope: We should communicate hope for our society with our values and talents. As young citizens, we should show our cities to the world.

2. Development: We talked about improving our standard of life as everybody's right.

3. Tenderness: Tenderness means beauty and aesthetics. The transformation of Medellín is a good example over the last two decades. We have built great parks, libraries and tourist compounds in poor and marginal places that made the city more attractive and international.

4. Tolerance: We should communicate tolerance. It is respect for the other as he or she is. We give importance to humanity.

We love everybody because every person is a son or daughter of God, so everybody is my brother and my sister.

To end the workshop, we created a video. The Parceros of Medellín sent messages and questions to their Cambodian peers in Sihanoukville. They talked about their city and their own traditions. In April, once I crossed three continents once more, back to Cambodia, I filmed the Cambodian youth answering and sharing with their Medellín friends.

We hope that these experiences of communication with young people will bring good results to our societies. I offered the municipality of Medellín the possibility of a youth program like this with something else in mind. The social communication and journalism section's aim is to create leaders in communication to multiply the experience. It would be a dream to create a Don Bosco Parce social communication section in Medellín if we get the required support. Don Bosco dreams all the time... all the time... 





Priests' Films, Promote Human Rights and Evangelization

by Fr C.M. Paul, sdb

Two Catholic priests dabbling in mainstream cinema for almost a decade claim their two feature films help indigenous people gain dignity and assert human rights. The two Salesian filmmakers have been working for over two decades among the Kokborok people of Tripura in northeast India bordering Bangladesh. Their first film, the 132 minute 'Mathia' (2002), creates awareness of the social evil of witch-hunts, while the second 95 minute film 'Yarwng' (2008) highlights the plight of people sacrificed on the altar of development. They are Guwahati Salesians, Joseph Kizhakechennadu (producer) and Joseph Pulinthanath (director).

Fr Pulinthanath has teamed up with a third award-winning Salesian filmmaker, Fr Jiji Kalavanal, of DB IMAGE Kochi for a docufilm entitled 'The HAND of Don Bosco'. The shoot covering seven states of Northeast India (Assam, Arunachal, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura) is a homage to Salesian pioneers, on the eve of the first-ever Don Bosco Relics Pilgrimage to Northeast India which began on 1st May 2011.

When 'Mathia' (Bangle) won first prize at the Niepokalanow (Warsaw) festival 2004, Tripura State's first international film award, the Kokborok Sahitya Academy (Literary Society) organized a public event in the state capital Agartala to congratulate the crew.

The Minister for Tripura State Tribal Welfare, Mr. Aghore Debbarma, granted INR 200,000 (4,000



“Our effort has not been to make a film that people will necessarily like but to make a film that will hopefully excite”.

Euro) as a lifeline to salvage the priests’ sinking motion picture company “Sampari Pictures”, riddled with huge debts.

Six years on, the priests’ second film ‘Yarwng’ (Roots) received Tripura’s first national film award from the President of India, Mrs. Pratibha Patil, 19 March 2010, in Delhi.

Evangelization through culture promotion

“See, cinema is a lot about images and no image is neutral. The very process of engaging oneself dynamically against these images can be enriching individually and collectively. They challenge, criticize, uplift. Our effort has not been to make a film that people will necessarily like but to make a film that will hopefully excite,” clarifies Pulinthanath.

Besides, these two films have helped to remove much of the mistaken notion that the State’s 2 percent of Christians are not rooted in the local culture.

The numerous works of evangelization, development and social service that the Church in Tripura and the whole of North East India carry out, at times to heroic degrees, will be most effectively enhanced by the present project as it focuses on culture and its crisis in a changing society.

When it comes to the oft-heard accusation that the Church is destroying the culture and language of peoples in Northeast India, Tripura Church

spokesman Pulinthanath casts aside his usual reticence and finds eloquence.

Stoutly refuting the accusation he says, “It is not true! People who say this presume that the Church sees no merit in local cultures. Perhaps they are basing themselves on some archaic, outdated perceptions of isolated instances. Over the last 50 years (since Vatican II) the Church has been the outspoken champion of the promotion of indigenous culture...”

If one seriously investigates, one would find that church has contributed to culture through mother tongue education, script evolution, local festivals, cultural and linguistic research centres, art academies and anthropological museums: the list is only indicative, not exhaustive.





60 Sixty Years Sowing Life



by Fr Rogelio Arenal, sdb



Servant of life

The Salesians attempt to offer an all-round development of poor youngsters and ordinary people in the various political and social circumstances to be found in the young nation of Mozambique.

Many, already at work and responsible for a family, are sincerely grateful for the human and professional education they received and which gave them a chance to make progress in life.

Over these years of growth we try to offer different responses in the four provinces of Mozambique and by means of the eight Salesian communities:

- » The school at Moatize together with some small rural schools.
- » The St Joseph's Home and boarding

establishments at Moamba and Inharrime for poor youth or those from rural areas.

- » Technical education: Moamba, Tete, Inharrime, Lhanguene and Matola. Given the appeal from the Government and society for qualified workers in technical areas, the Salesians have created educational setups that have already shown results. There is networking through the Technical Secretariat for Professional Schools.

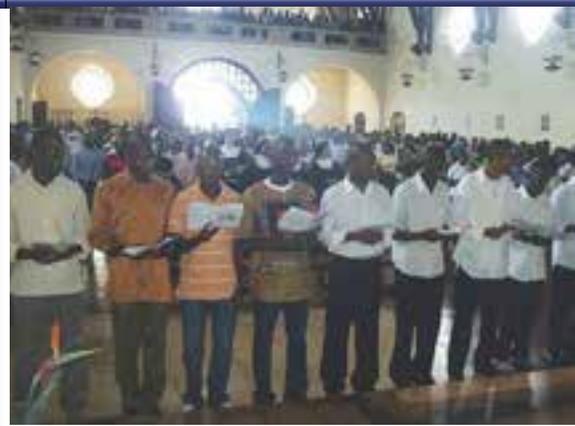
The request for technical education was met by setting up the Don Bosco Higher Institute for Pedagogy and Technical Teacher Training.

One interesting work is the care given by rural communities in the Moatize Mission through the agricultural development project for teaching poorer populations how to benefit from their own agricultural resources.

Announcers of Christ

In all the works where the majority of the young people are not Christian, there is a first proclamation of Jesus. These educational centres are also a source of evangelisation.

The Moatize and Moamba missions in the rural area, with many Christian communities spread through the interior, and the city parishes in Lhanguene and Jardim, are important direct evangelisation centres for thousands of young people, as well as for



accompanying Christian families.

A new work for the Vice Province is the setting up of the 'Emmaus' Spirituality centre in Matola, as a place for meetings and retreats for various groups of young people.

Seeing life as a vocation

The Salesian Youth Movement brings the different groups together and strengthens the vocation of the young people as 'leaders.' Every year, various

formation gatherings, prayer opportunities, live-in occasions at different stages of growth give the SYM some substance.

The Salesian Family is growing through Salesian Cooperator groups, ADMA and the Past Pupils, which offer the possibility of experiencing the lay vocation in the Salesian spirit.

The best and most important result is vocations to consecrated Salesian life. In 2011 the local Mozambican Salesians already made up 50% of the

Vice Province. Don Bosco's charism is being enriched. To form these Salesian vocations the Vice Province has an Aspirantate at Matola and a Prenovitiate at Moamba. The novitiate, which includes novices from Angola, is at Namacha.

Despite our relatively small numbers (57 confreres) and lack of resources, we continue to sow the beauty of life in the hearts of young Mozambicans, an experience of encounter with Jesus through service of their brothers and sisters.



Leading to the Future

Lithuania and the Salesians

by Fr Alessandro Barelli, sdb

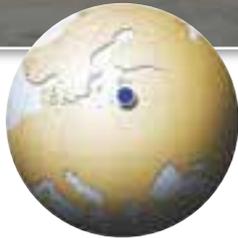


Don Bosco was already known in Lithuania in the late nineteenth century, then in 1909 a young Lithuanian, Antanas Skeltys, decided to become a Salesian. Arriving in Turin illegally without papers, he asked to be accepted among the sons of Don Bosco. After a few decades, by now a Salesian priest, he began an extensive information campaign on Don Bosco and Salesian life in his homeland. Every summer he returned from Turin and inspired many young people through his presentation of the Salesian charism and Don Bosco in diocesan parishes. Within ten years, hundreds of young Lithuanians studied in Italy and of these, more than 60 of them left for the Salesian Missions. The first Salesian community in Lithuania was only opened in 1934, a school and

aspirantate which nurtured many vocations. Unfortunately, the Second World War froze the shoots of this Salesian spring. Many Lithuanian Salesians fled to the West where they devoted their energies to the extensive Lithuanian diaspora. Those who remained at home were dispersed and forced to live as diocesan priests, in times of persecution.

After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990 Lithuanian Salesians around the world and the remaining survivors in Lithuania decided to come together and begin the typical pastoral activities of Don Bosco. Unfortunately with the passing of the years, despite great enthusiasm, the forces available were limited. To help them, the Congregation sent young priests





from Poland and Italy, many of whom are still working alongside local confreres in the cities of Vilnius and Kaunas.

The social and religious circumstances were strongly influenced by the years of Soviet occupation, and particularly among young people there is a strong tendency to relativism, materialism and religious indifference. And this is precisely the setting for Salesian pastoral activities.

Vilnius

The capital of Lithuania has a population of 600,000, divided between ethnic Lithuanians (60%), Poles (30%) and Russians (10%), often at loggerheads with one another. The Salesians are in the working-class suburb of Lazdynai, where they have the St John Bosco parish with 45,000 inhabitants. The parish ministry is bilingual, Lithuanian and Polish, and in addition to the typical work of catechetics for young people, and charitable support, service to parishioners, the parish has become known over the years for its youth focus through the weekend oratory, after-school care for children in need, the summer camps and day activities, youth centre, youth and pastoral ministry groups, and religious education in

state schools. Another activity regarded as important and much appreciated throughout Lithuania is the Salesian Bulletin, published in Lithuanian since 1927 and distributed free to all readers. The Salesians also provide spiritual assistance for the Lithuanian Don Bosco Volunteers group.

Kaunas

The Salesian community at Kaunas is situated in the poor suburb of Palemonas, once famous for its industrial setting which has now fallen into disuse. Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, with 10,000 inhabitants, does its best to meet the religious, social and financial needs of the people. Besides the normal activities of the parish, catechetics, and Caritas, we could highlight the other more typical Salesian daily oratory and recreational summer camps held both in the parish and in the countryside. A great treasure is the common effort between the Salesian community and the Salesian Sisters, who run an after-school program each day for children in need and manage the teaching of the Catholic religion in the two local primary schools. Linked to the Salesian community there is also a small group of Salesian Cooperators and another group, ADMA.

Prospects for the Future

The various youth activities result in the Salesian charism being increasingly more appreciated and better known. Young people have shown much interest and not a few want to help as leaders. Also thanks to the Salesian Bulletin making us more widely known nationally, we have taken in several young people who want to learn more about Salesian life, though for the moment there are no new vocations. We are confident for the future, provided we can strengthen our works and our visibility. Given the amount of work facing us, the physical forces of the Salesians operating in Lithuania are meagre. A major difficulty in strengthening the Salesian presence in Lithuania is that the language is not easy and it requires several years for someone to be able to work independently. Moreover, the shortage of personnel is being felt everywhere and sending people abroad is not so straightforward a solution. The Lithuanian people, who have undergone various occupations, have always had to defend their identity tenaciously and this also affects full acceptance of outsiders, especially if they are far from the local mentality... it is a challenge for the Salesian future in this country: being able to fit in in a visible way, while respecting local traditions and values.



Alborada, a Lively Place!

by Fr Waldo Gómez Pacheco, sdb

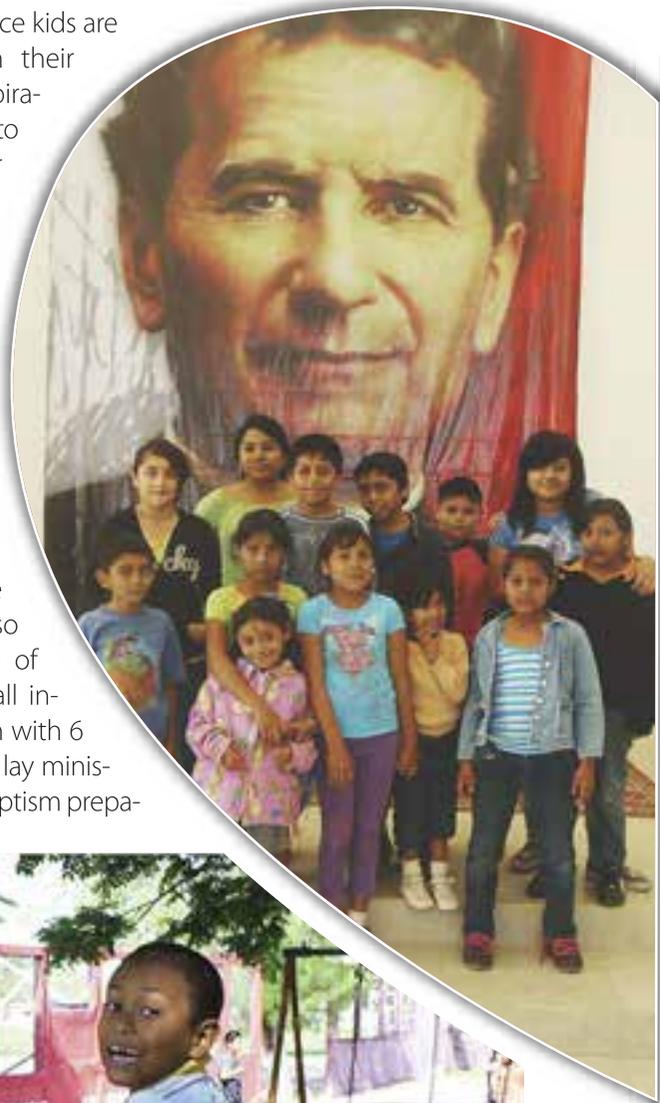
I came to Mérida Yucatán just eight months ago, where I found Alborada Oratories 1, 2 and soon to be 3 (the future Xotlán College). It was all so different to what I had imagined, like another country, another people, other customs, a different climate, different ways of speaking. There is always something to learn; to be truthful, I have little time to spend lying around doing nothing!

Alborada is so varied in its activities: there's indoor and outdoor soccer for boys, girls, old and young; there are workshops, fashion and design and culture activities, air-conditioning and refrigeration repair, pastry-making, electrical trades, adult education courses, English, computers, a symphony orchestra, guitar groups, improvement courses. In Alborada 2 there are fewer courses at present but this is growing. Alborada 3, the school, will start with its first primary classes in 2012.

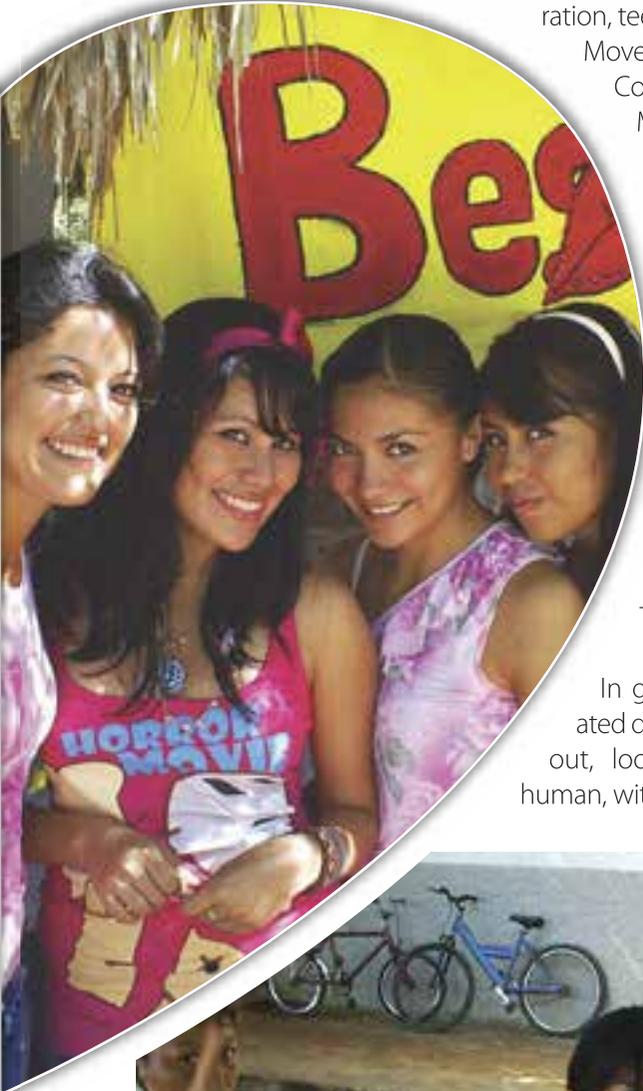
Like everywhere else the Salesian mission

here is full of challenges, since kids are the same anywhere with their dreams, challenges and aspirations. The teenage girls tend to let their hair down at their mothers' bidding, as a sign of growing up as they enter secondary school, and the boys are, well, as rowdy as any kids are in 2011!

Our work consists of giving Good Morning or Good Night talks in the workshops and another of 10 or 15 minutes before games. Alborada is also known as the Mary Help of Christians Chaplaincy, for all intents and purposes a parish with 6 chapels, groups of all kinds: lay ministers, liturgy, marriage and baptism prepa-



Each Salesian generation has the noble and responsible task of handing on the witness to faith and being God's instrument through Don Bosco's exciting charism.



ration, teenager groups, Christian Family Movement, pastoral centres, Salesian Cooperators, care for the sick, Marian groups (Guadalupanos and ADMA), catechism, and even aerobics! We also look after the spiritual needs of our lay partners.

We are given moral and financial support by our patrons and by people who like what we do, and to whom I say thank you in the name of the entire Salesian Work. We send them the Salesian Bulletin each month: Thank you!

In general we are much appreciated despite our faults. People seek us out, looking for Salesians who are human, with feelings, but maybe with the

same faults and failings as themselves but who love God as they do.

The really rough kids are fewer now but they haven't quite disappeared; I have been able to mix with a number of them and we play together almost every day. I call them the ADR, *los amigos del resistol* or 'Friends of Resistol', the substance they regularly sniff. They are Don Bosco's kids today, difficult to love as always: just when we think they are on the improve, they surprise us by failing yet again, as if to say: why bother wearing yourself out for the likes of us? There's no point... that's when the only solution is to love them – and love them a lot.

Each Salesian generation has the noble and responsible task of handing on the witness to faith and being God's instrument through Don Bosco's exciting charism.





Proclaiming the Word in Kiriwina

by Fr John A. Cabrido, sdb



I arrived in Kiriwina two years late! Fr Sonny Fajardo, our Salesian parish priest for the Trobriand Islands, popularly called the 'Isles of Love' by the Polish self-styled anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, first invited me to give a Bible seminar for his parish leaders in early 2009. Unfortunately, heavy rains during that time had caused a shortage of yam crops and the parish initiative had to be scrapped. So when Fr Sonny renewed the invitation late last year, I speedily accepted it not only for a chance

to explore Kiriwina's coral paradise but also to help out a confrere.

My luggage was definitely overweight. I had to bring all my teaching equipment including handouts, a laptop and even a projector! More than that, Fr Timothy Choi took the occasion to beef up Fr Sonny's pantry with canned goods and other food stuffs. To top it off, Fr Albert Swer also sent an air pump for the parish bicycle!



After an unusually pleasant (and punctual!) flight with Airlines PNG, I landed in Losuia to an unforgettable sight. The airport was a tiny structure whose perimeter fence was packed with people. It seemed that half the island's population of 40,000 was there to ogle the new arrivals or await the latest mail. Mercifully, Fr Sonny was already around to help retrieve my luggage once these were flung with

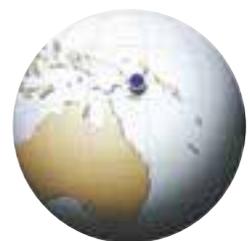
total disregard on the grassy ground.

The Bible seminar began the next day, 09 May (Monday) and was attended by some 120 parish leaders. These came from the island's six Catholic communities. Mixed with the predominantly elderly crowd were some 15 'youths'. Apparently, in Kiriwina, to be called 'youth' meant that the young person was an 'out-of-school' drop out. When I inquired why there were not that many young people (since the villages we passed by all seemed like 'children-factories'), the parish elders gently explained to me that now was their time, and that the 'time' of the youth would have to wait for the future.

For the next five days I gave three lectures and/or conducted workshops daily, two in the morning and one in the afternoon until 4:30 PM. The 15 talks spanned the entire Bible and included bible sharing sessions, dances, drama and art. In 2002 I had given a similar seminar to the village folk of Kelologeia and Kurada in Normanby Island. What struck me with this latest venture was the eagerness and consistent number of participants. Never in the next five days did we go below 100 attendees. Believers belonging to the United Church and a local 'Rema' faith community (including their pastor!) were also there. Participants who belonged to the 'nearby' villages walked to and fro daily, i.e. anywhere from an hour to an hour-and-a-half journey on foot. Others were accommodated in the parish and school compound. In the evenings, for relaxation, we showed some movies which were eagerly

awaited and attended by all the village children. To commemorate the beatification of our dearly beloved John Paul II, we viewed a two-part Italian produced film on his life (in English, of course). But the highlight of the nocturnal movie-viewing was a Jackie Chan film which had the village people roaring with laughter. During my stay, the community of sisters, Daughters of Mary Immaculate (PIME Sisters), generously cooked our meals. That was a welcome respite, since in the parish house there was no electricity and barely any running water. Benignly, at least the parish house was well-screened so the ever ubiquitous mosquitoes were left outside (!) even if the invasion of millipedes was not kept at bay.

I flew out of Kiriwina the next Sunday, 15 May, deeply impressed by the warmth of the people and the paucity of opportunity and the dearth of hope for the island's youth. The valiant efforts of missionaries past (MSC and PIME) and those present (Reparation Sisters in Gusaweta; PIME Sisters in Wapiipi; and Fr Sonny) are truly inspiring. I deeply pray that our 'sharing of the Word' may sustain the people of Kiriwina in their trials and nurture their faith.





In the third district of Budapest, the door of the building number 79 in Kiscelli street stands wide open early in the morning – Gábor Vitális, a Salesian priest since November 2009, waits for pupils every school day, with breakfast for youngsters who would otherwise be left hungry until lunch.

Good Morning Tale with a Twist

by Erzsébet Lengyel

The work begins at 6 in the morning each day: Fr Gábor and his helpers – adults and younger ones alike, set the tables in the cellar of the oratory building, prepare tea and lunch packs. The children come from 6.45 and can stay until 7.45, so there is also time for personal conversations and for a short morning prayer.

“When I heard that many pupils go to school on an empty stomach, I was literally shocked. I knew that I have to give breakfast to these kids, but I also knew that there isn’t a penny to spare. The provincial encouraged me: Don Bosco had no money either, still he did much for the youth... We haven’t organised any



large-scale call for donations, we have only advertised in the church; I preached about it, and a dear benefactor wrote about our cause in the local newspaper. Right the day after, a pensioner came and gave 1000 forints (about € 4) for the children's breakfast – this was the first, then others followed... and the "Breakfast program" began. When we ran out of money, I prayed: if it's God's will for us to go on, he will also give us the opportunity – and in a wonderful way, there was always an unforeseen donation from which we could feed the kids the next day. A little wonder..."

There are three elementary schools in the vicinity of the Salesian community. Father Gábor asked the management of the schools to inform the pupils in need that there is this breakfast opportunity.

"On the first occasion there were fourteen children who came", he recalls. "We didn't know who they were and what their circumstances were. Then, the rumour slowly began to spread and from the initial 15-20, there soon grew a merry group of fifty. Thanks to our kind benefactors, we could serve tea or chocolate milk with cookies,

bagels and little packs, which the children could take with them to school". Father Gábor and his helpers have distributed 10,000 packs over one and a half years.

About seven o'clock, Father prepares Morning Prayer for the children.

"We have thought much about how we could include the prayer", says Father Gábor "for most of the children are not religious; they are not even baptised. First, we just displayed the words of the prayer on a board, which the children slowly managed to learn. With time, some of them also started learning some religion; but with a tricky little idea, we began to bring a little piece of religion to everyone".

"The nearby Don Bosco confectionery stood by us from the beginning; they send a little dessert now and then", the young Salesian tells us. "Those who take breakfast await the small cakes, and in addition, for a little ice-cream, they can bring back the empty bags of cake, which are stamped with the Salesian logo. Our idea was to include a little quiz in these bags, which they have to fill in to deserve their dessert. These questions are very simple of

course, but thanks to them, we can smuggle a 'mini religion lesson' into every week for our pupils.

We know that most of these children are at a disadvantage; they are in need and they live in difficult circumstances, although they are not required to show any proof of this. The children can tell us their daily worries; they can share their pain or fear. They write their homework, if they still have to, memorise poems, and celebrate birthdays, Christmas and Santa Claus together... In the last week of June we even organised a summer camp for the children, and thanks to that, the bond between them hasn't weakened, but has become even stronger. It was wonderful to perceive the change going on in these children! These little 'everyday holidays' forged this occasional breakfasting group into a real community.

But this requires a huge financial and human sacrifice. Many give and have given money, food and help for this programme, which is so permeated with the love of Don Bosco. This little early morning help really has become an example of Christian love and sacrifice 'in use' "



Evangelisation by Example in ZMB

The Salesian mission in ZMB carries out for the most part a pastoral and educational work for young workers from the four countries which make up the Province (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malawi). Although certainly the Salesian presence in ZMB began mainly with mission parishes, over the past ten years these parishes have set up small job training centres for youth and adults. It is a work which helps a population with poor resources to direct its development opportuni-

ties towards a much more competitive level and helps people face up to the challenge of an emerging industrial society. The youth and adults who frequent these centres also form part of the catechetics program for out technical schools, and through the education offered them, they also gain all the benefits of education to the faith; in this way faith and culture become part of the work of education and evangelisation offered by the Salesian mission.

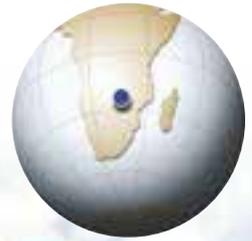


Zambia

by Fr Javier Antonio Barrientos, sdb

The influence of this educational and pastoral thrust in technical schools and parishes is helping to evangelise young people who would otherwise not be so much faith involved. Many of the young people in our centres gradually become missionaries of other young people, inviting them to share their life and faith in extracurricular programs which the Salesians offer.

A number of young people from other faith communities including those from traditional African religions have been introduced to a process of faith and conversion which has happily culminated in a decision to be baptised and become part of the Catholic Church which continues its evangelising mission by example. 





Project Life, a Home for Young Refugees

Text by Katharina Hennecke / Christina Tangerding / Claudia Klinger
Photo by Wolfgang Maria Weber

A certificate in Persian script with a picture of his father is all that remains from Mohamed Asif Dorani's former life in his native country of Afghanistan. He does not have any further documents, a passport or other pictures. Due to his spiritual and physical development German authorities have estimated his age at 16. June 1 was set as his date of birth.

Asif Dorani fled from Afghanistan in November 2008. His younger brother Abdul Samad (18) was kidnapped from their home town by the Taliban about five months ago. The parents worried about the safety of their second son and therefore sent him to far-off Germany with the help of smugglers. The journey was adventurous and sometimes life-threatening. But Asif somehow survived. Now he lives in a home for young people in Munich called 'Salesianum', where the Salesians of Don Bosco have initiated 'Project Life'. It is an aid project for unaccompanied under-age refugees.

Asif lives on the third floor of the Sale-

sianum with ten other boys who all had to flee from their native countries because of different emergency situations. They have three single rooms, four double rooms, two kitchens, a common room, a bathroom and a shared lavatory. Social workers and educators look after the group of boys round the clock. They support them in everyday affairs like cooking, washing and cleaning. They accompany the young refugees in administrative procedures and help them complete the required forms and write letters. They keep in touch with any other contact points and the school. Primarily the educators help the young and largely traumatized refugees work through their experiences and open up a future in Germany, step by step.

Every time Asif talks about his life, bad memories return: the war in his homeland, the kidnapping of his brother, the farewell to his parents and the almost two-month odyssey from Afghanistan to Germany. He does not know exactly how long this wandering took, but he remembers that they changed cars frequently.

Project Life

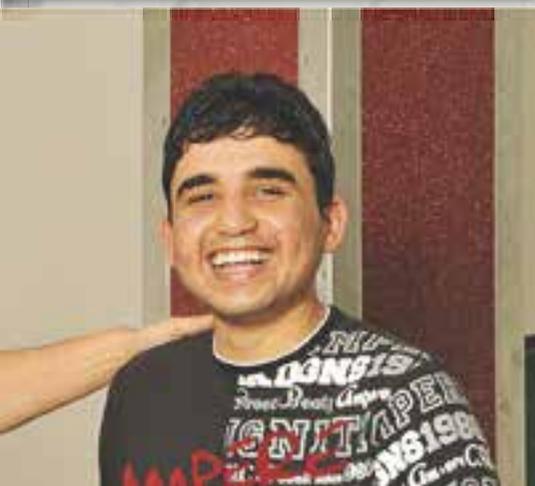
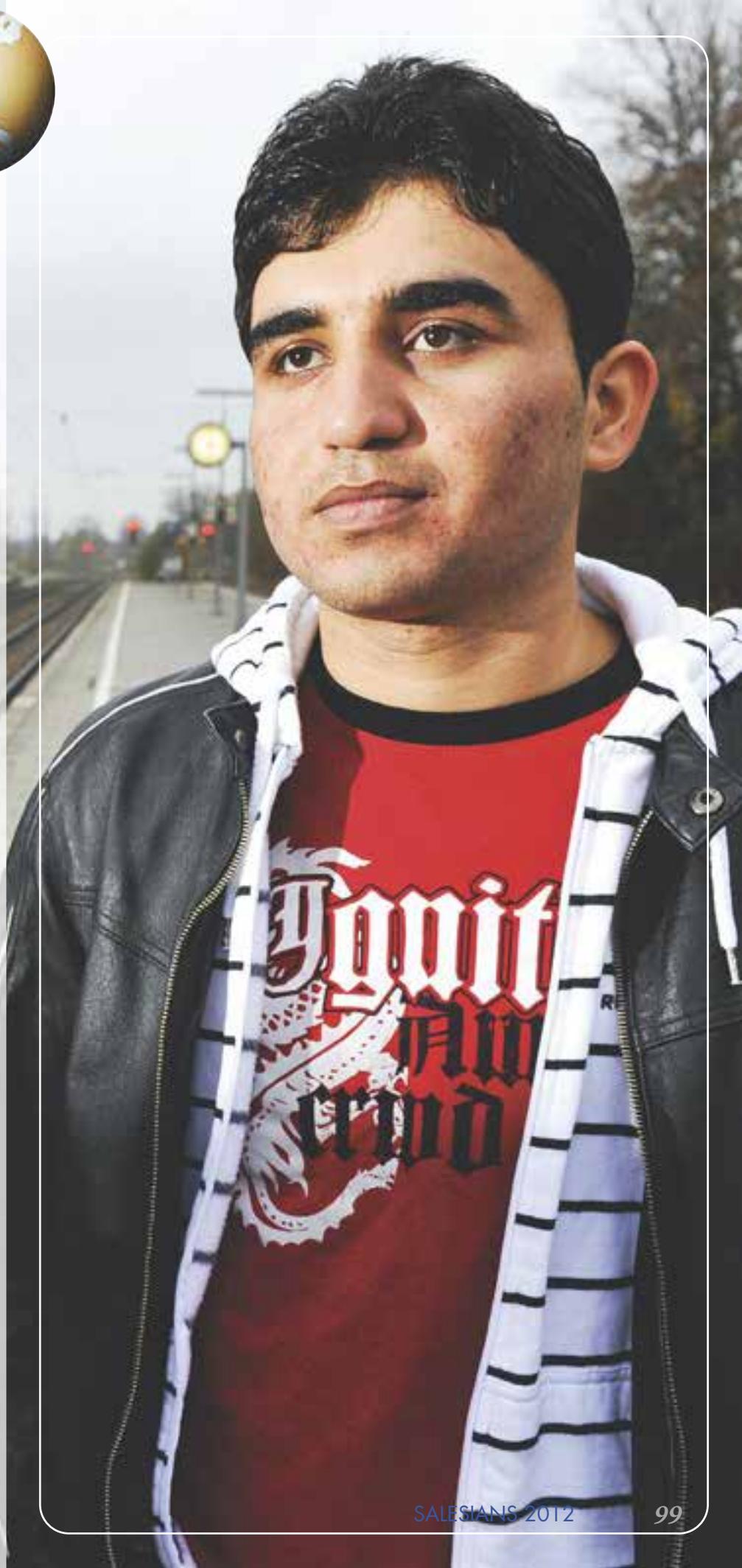
Every year hundreds of under-age refugees arrive in Germany without parents. They flee usually under life-threatening conditions from war, dictatorship, pursuit, expulsion, hunger and disasters. They are in a foreign country without their home, families and friends. For that reason the Salesians of Don Bosco in Germany have started 'Project Life'. Since August 2009 eleven unaccompanied under-age refugees live in youth center Salesianum in Munich. Here they find a home and get help in everyday life. Besides they get a pedagogical and pastoral accompaniment to work through their traumatic experiences. The goal of the project is to guide young people in their life, to prepare them for the future and to strengthen them in managing life.





They were locked up in twos or in a threesome in a stuffy, dark car trunk or in boxes on a load floor of a transporter. They feared for their lives. When Asif finally reached German soil, everything happened very quickly: A push in the back woke the boy up from sleep. Somewhere in a dark area the smuggler shooed the refugees from the load floor of the transporter. They found a railway platform, took the train and asked their way to Munich.

In the meantime Asif has gained a foothold in Germany and he has dreams for the future: he wants to be a car mechanic, to live without fear and to have enough money for food. He can also imagine having a wife and children, but in Germany, not in Afghanistan, says Asif. Does he believe that he will see his brother once again? He shakes his head. "Dead", he says. "I think, he is dead". And hastily he wipes tears from the corner of his eyes.





INSPIRING TESTIMONIES

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“If your leg doesn’t heal, no Profession!”



Bro. James Marcus, sdb

James Marcus was born 25th June 1971, made his first profession on 24th May 1994 and perpetual profession in 2000.

Presently he is the principal of the Technical Institute at Don Bosco Fatorda while being director of the oratory and person in charge of the youth there.

James Marcus comes from a large family, being the 5th child in a family with nine children. His parents had moved to Sulcorna along with the Salesians who pioneered there. Coming from a small hamlet near Sagayatotam in Tamil Nadu, the family struggled to bring up the children in a new place with no support from their immediate families. To add to this, there were financial problems. James admits, “We came up the hard way. It was a hand-to-mouth existence for us for several years”. Till the age of 6, little James did not see the walls of a classroom since there was no school in the locality. But he has fond memories of his childhood which was filled with a lot of



adventure – fishing, hunting and trekking; catching reptiles and having close encounters with bison, wild cats and other wild animals in the forests of Sulcorna.

As James goes down the memory lane, he recounts his first experience of the Salesians – Fr Moja, the man with the long beard, and Bro. Ludvick, the great farmer. But his interest and admiration for Salesian life was inspired by Fr Daniel Venia who was known among the workers as ‘Chicken Father’. James spent many years of his childhood in the company of this great man who showed special affection for this lively child. Fr Venia lived a life of simplicity, always trusting in the providence of God which he expressed through his constant refrain, “No problem!”

James grew up in the Salesian boarding at Sulcorna even when his family moved out of the place for a short while. Initially, James had a great interest in being a CID inspector. Though he was good in sports and studies, he confesses that he lacked self-confidence. He distinctly remembers how

on one sports day he had made up his mind to settle down for the 2nd place on seeing some African sprinters on the track. To his surprise he bagged the gold medal and was also declared the sportsman. It was during the same year, some Salesians came to give a vocation talk. But James was not among the 12 boys who responded. Fr Michael Mascarenhas, the Rector of Sulcorna, who was transferred to Fatorda invited James along with a few other boys to do their technical studies.

After 2 years of technical studies, Fr Michael encouraged James to go to Lonavla. Without considering much, he agreed. The superiors found him good and he was sent to the novitiate. It was here that James came to understand his Salesian vocation. For eight months he suffered with a thorn in his leg in spite of all medical care. At this time he was told “If your leg has not healed, you will not be able to make your profession”. However, from March 19th (the day the applications are submitted) to 24th May (day of 1st profession) the leg gave no trouble. James made his profession but the leg

would continue to trouble him for another 8 months until one day while playing basketball a piece of the thorn came out by itself never to trouble him again.

After the magisterio course in Kalyani, Calcutta Province, Bro. James completed his practical training in Matunga and Pinguli while also completing his CTI (Central Training Institute) during those years. Having completed his diploma in polytechnic, he is presently pursuing his engineering studies while being fully involved in the Salesian apostolate at Don Bosco Fatorda.

James accepts that though he may not have consciously made a decision to be a Salesian brother he is most happy to be one. He finds it easy to be with the young, sharing their lives, listening to their stories, helping them to unburden themselves, guiding them in their life decisions, and encouraging them to go on. He says, “As a priest, I wouldn’t have had all this time for the young”. He feels totally at home with the poor, especially youngsters coming from deprived situations.



Youth Leader Becomes a Salesian

‘My vocation’: Arnaud tells his story

by Fr Jean Baptiste Beraud, sdb

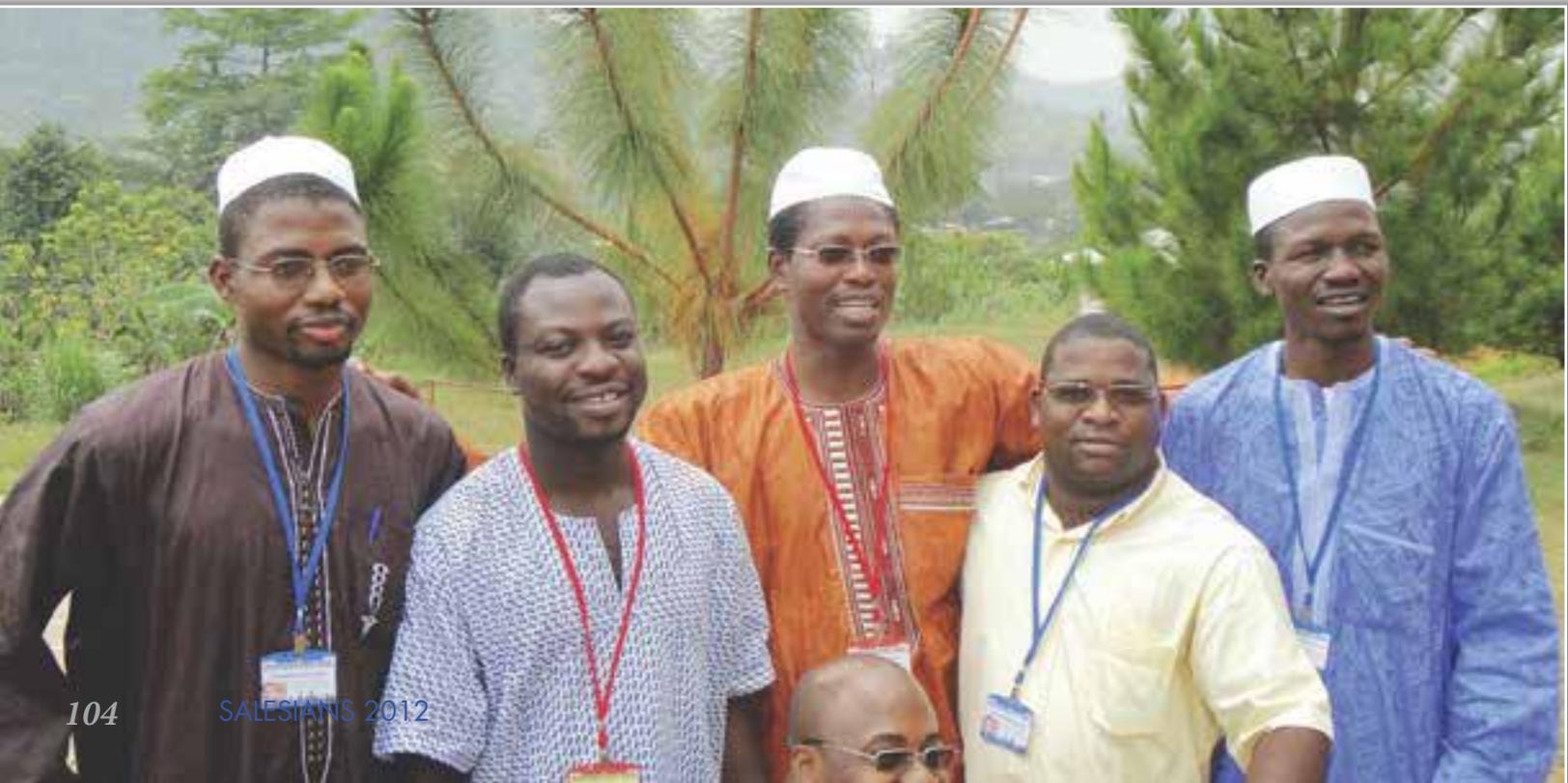


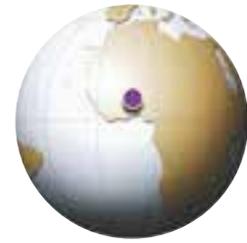
Arnaud is a Salesian student of theology at Yaoundé. He tells the story of how his activity with ‘six boys and four girls’ helping their classmates at college set him on the path to Don Bosco.

“I was born on Saturday 2 February 1980 in Benin. My family was a good Catholic family, a monogamous family – not all are! I am the third of three children. I learned to pray when I was three years of age thanks to fact that our family prayed of an evening before bedtime... already by the time I was seven, while I was in the pre-catechetics class, I wanted to be a priest because I was attracted by the nice vestments the priest wore when he said the Sunday Mass!”

Arnaud became an altar server, then joined a vocations group. He goes on to tell us:

“Fr Fermin Nuevo, then parish priest and also chaplain to the vocations group, gave me a book





by Teresio Bosco on Don Bosco's life. Thanks this I opted for Salesian life, because I saw that I could be a priest while continuing to work actively in education and for the betterment of the young.

In Year Five I was deeply moved by the harm that I saw happening when some of my classmates were sent away from school. They were often sent away for failing to pay their school fees. After looking at the situation, I realised that at least 90% of these students who had been sent away ended up paying their school fees by the end of the year, but in the meantime a good number of them had missed many of their classes, and so they failed.

Faced with this situation I decided to take action, and I loaned some of my classmates some of the money they needed so they could continue to follow their course. I had about six thousand francs with me as

pocket money which I had never touched. But I soon saw that I could not really do great things with so little. So along with some other friends, we set up an association called the *'Association des Jeunes pour la Construction de notre Avenir (AJECA)'* or, Youth Together for Building our Future. There were ten of us (six boys and four girls), all in Year Four. We organised all sorts of activities to help our classmates financially. During the longer holidays we held lots of football, basketball competitions. . . , offered holiday courses, and also sold school materials. After some five years we were well known to all the young people in the area and in surrounding areas. We had become leaders.

Thanks to these competitions I discovered the Salesian work at Cotonou for the first time, but it was not until 1999 that I really found out about this educational mission on behalf of the young and especially for the poorest of them”





“I will give you shepherds after your own heart” (Jer. 3:15)

by Fr Sergio Oter Díaz, sdb

On 30 April 2011, in the Salesian community at Paseo de Extremadura (Madrid), three young Salesians were ordained. Carmelo Donoso was ordained Deacon, while Guzmán Pérez and I, Sergio Oter, were ordained priests.

“I will give you shepherds after your own heart” was the motto chosen for the diaconate and priestly ordinations. It was not chosen in order to remain just on the invitation to the ordination, or just as a reminder of that very special day. It is a slogan that I would want to be the fundamental basis of my life as a Salesian priest, a verse from the Book of Jeremiah which I would like as a summary and synthesis of what it means for me to be consecrated to the Lord.

And it is the Lord who has chosen me, not me who chose Him, who presented himself before me for me to carry out His mission. The priesthood has been, is and will be a true gift, a true gift from God. He has truly led me down this path that really leads to true happiness, true love. It is God who has come to me and called me. It is God who has sought me out, and who, again and again, has been there along my way to make a real gift to me.

The Lord has chosen me to serve his people, the great people of God. He has chosen me to give my life, without any reserve. He has chosen me to cooperate in building his kingdom, here

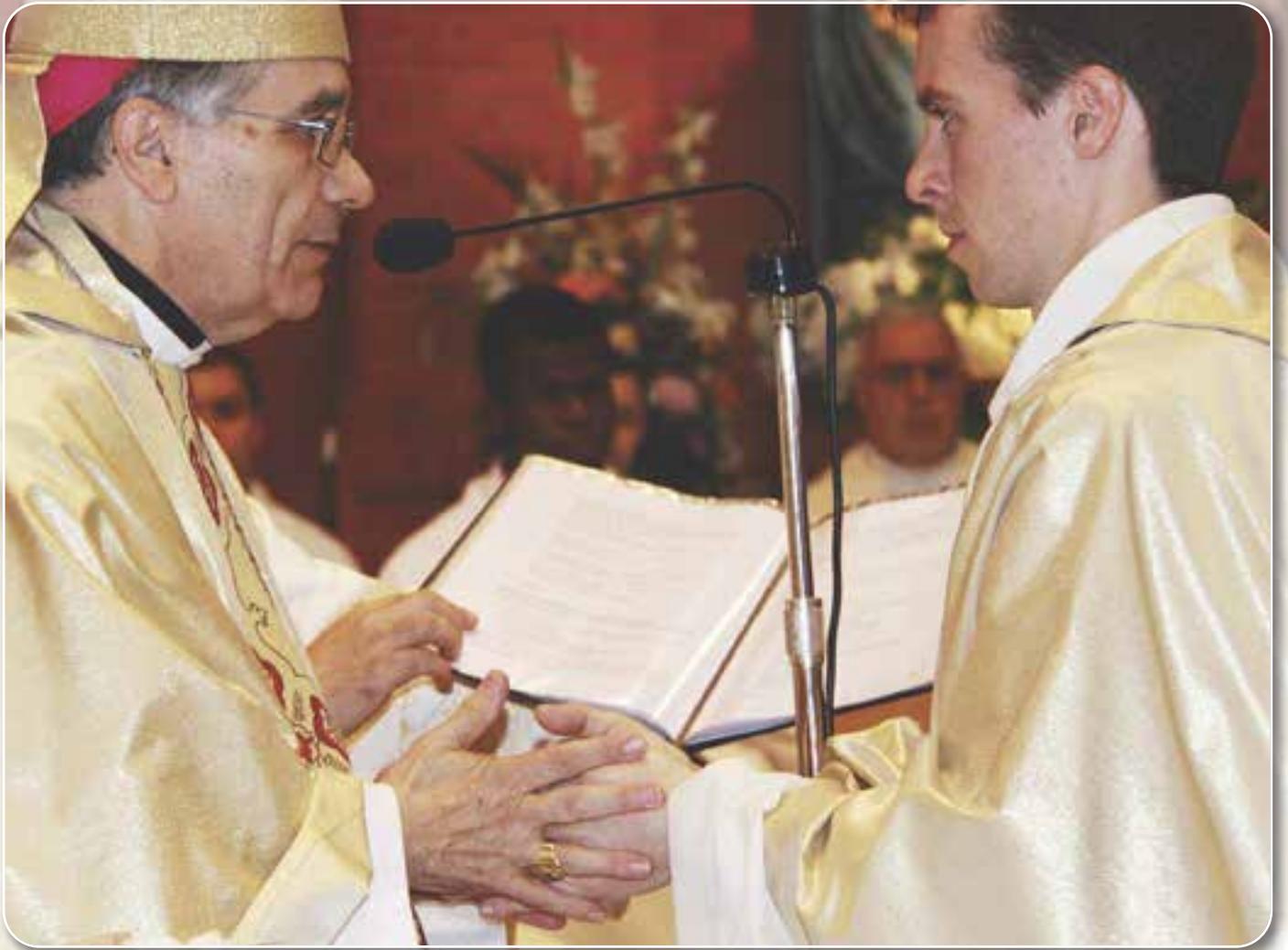
and now. He has chosen me to pass on to young people, through my own life, a message of hope that comes from the Lord's Pasch. And finally, he has chosen me to serve his people in the image of Christ, the Good Shepherd.

“I will give you shepherds after my own heart” says the Prophet Jeremiah, which means my heart must be shaped after the Heart of Jesus, the heart of the one who has called me to follow him along this way that leads to complete happiness, a happiness that fills and floods everything. A heart filled with God, the heart of an authentic shepherd, a generous heart, a heart dedicated solely and exclusively to others, a humble heart, a heart committed to the very end.

Doubtless that the daily celebration of the Eucharist is a true impulse for me to help me in this beautiful, relevant task of making Jesus' command real: “Do this in memory of me”: to be a witness of God's love for the young, especially the poorest of them, a person of communion and a zealous pastor of the flock whom God entrusts to me in the equally wonderful task of bringing young people to Jesus.

These are the key to my living as a Salesian priest. “I will give you shepherds after my own heart” marks out who I am and what I do, my life and action. God wants me to deal with young people after his own heart, the heart of the Good Shepherd.







“What God has planned for you no one can take away”



It was on 21st March 1970 that God sowed the seed in the beautiful garden of Victor and Shakuntala Mota. Little Anisio was born in Mozambique (East Africa). This second child among three boys of the Mota family was always looked up to as the most loving and caring child. “Living in Africa was fun and challenging” is what he expressed to us. The locals with their own customs, cults and religion did not make the practice of Christianity so easy, but that was no obstacle for Anisio to prepare himself to become a disciple of Jesus. At the age of 5 he would return from the Church and begin to preach to his siblings behind closed doors, and would almost be close to the sermon he had heard during the Sunday mass.

When he was 11, he returned with his family to Goa. Having the handicap of

language, as Portuguese was the only language he could speak, Anisio really struggled but wasted no time in learning English and Konkani. In school, at Loyola’s Margao, Anisio was not only learning Languages but began to play and participate in almost all the games in the school. After his VII, he expressed his desire to become a priest. He first spoke to Fr Francisco Ataide, then Assistant Priest Holy Spirit, Margao, to which Anisio belonged. Fr Ataide wasted no time in sending him to the Diocesan Seminary at Saligao. Under the spiritual guidance of Fr Ataide, Anisio grew and bloomed well in the Seminary till his XII standard.

Then came the time of making a firm decision about his calling. During the summer holidays while helping out in the parish with the summer activities for children, he met a young enthusi-



Fr Anisio Mota, sdb

Made his first profession in 1993 and was ordained a priest in 2003. Presently he is working in Don Bosco Ganv, Quepem – Goa as the Vice-principal of the School and Junior College. He was the vocation promoter of the Konkan Province for several years. He is much sought after as a resource person for youth animation.

astic Salesian priest who left a lasting impression on him. Through the encouragement of Fr Dominic Savio, Anisio accepted the invitation to Follow Christ in the Don Bosco style. Recalling that experience Anisio narrates, "I did not know who Don Bosco was, but this young man made me feel that Don Bosco was just waiting for me... I liked Don Bosco's personality, his love for youngsters and the many works he carried out; nothing could stop me from following Don Bosco".

"Yes, my parents did not want me to join Don Bosco as I had to go to Lonavla and other places in Maharashtra for my formation," recounts Anisio and then adds, "But remember What God has planned for you no one can take away. I fought my way with my parents and got Fr Dominic Savio to convince them. Yes, I won that battle, the battle I'd fought for Jesus". Finally, Anisio was

ordained a priest on 27th December 2003. The day is significant – it was the birthday of his first vocation promoter, Rev. Fr Francisco Ataide. "My ordination was like a birthday gift to him," says Anisio.

As a Salesian Priest, Fr Anisio is deeply involved in youth work. He loves to be with the young and the young feel very much at home with him. They know he is always there for them – to counsel and to guide. His heartwarming sermons are always inspiring. Many of these youngsters want him to bless their marriage or seek his blessings before leaving for foreign shores.

He went through a brief period of sickness, having a near-death experience. He begged God for life; God gave it to him and now he has promised to live it for God's glory. After his miraculous recovery, he continues his work with

the young. While in Benaullim, as the Director of the Youth Center and Vocation Promoter for the Province, Fr Anisio gave his heart and soul in all that he did – animating youth groups, visiting schools for vocation promotion, organizing summer clubs and holiday camps, animating retreats and youth paschs. He says with great joy that the most rewarding moment of his life was when six young promising boys came forward to join the Salesian congregation, being impressed with the Salesian way of life.

When asked whether he had any difficulties in responding to God's call, he says, "I have gone through hard times, people have misunderstood me, but God knows the truth, hence nothing deters me. I became a Salesian Priest to serve the youth and to be a brother to them. I will not do anything that takes me away from the young"





Volunteer Forever





by Bro. Peter Rinderer, sdb

In July 2006 I left for Mexico. I was 19 and had just finished high school. My destination was the "Proyecto Salesiano Tijuana" for a year of volunteer work with the Salesians. This experience of service to children and their families has never come to an end, but instead has lengthened into a new form: Today I am a Salesian!

I used to play games every evening with the youngsters who came to the Mary Help of Christians Oratory in Tijuana. I did this along with some young leaders and a few adults from the neighbourhood involved in leadership.

I also taught English and computers and helped in parish ministry. On one occasion a twelve year old asked me:

"Why have you come here?"

"Giving makes me happy! I want to use my strength to help others", was my answer.

It wasn't that I was able to achieve great things during my time as a volunteer. I think the most important thing was to be close to the youngsters in the oratory. During this year I read a fairly extensive life of Don Bosco.

I was fascinated by his life from the very first moment and thought: For me, Don Bosco is a way of life. He was convinced that God wants to use our hands to do good and he spent all his energies on behalf of poor children.

Today we need a lot of people like Don Bosco, in Mexico and even in Austria! This thought remained in my heart and after much prayer and lengthy discernment I decided: I want to be a Salesian in the service of youth! Five years later I found myself in Vienna.

After the aspirantate, the novitiate, then I did my philosophy and education studies and began my practical training at 'Don Bosco Flüchtlingswerk'. I am working in a Home with 16 young refugees who arrived in Austria without a family and need so much help. Often overwhelmed by experiences of war, they are now in a totally different situation and are starting out on a new life. "Here in the Don Bosco House they look after us well", said a young Afghan.

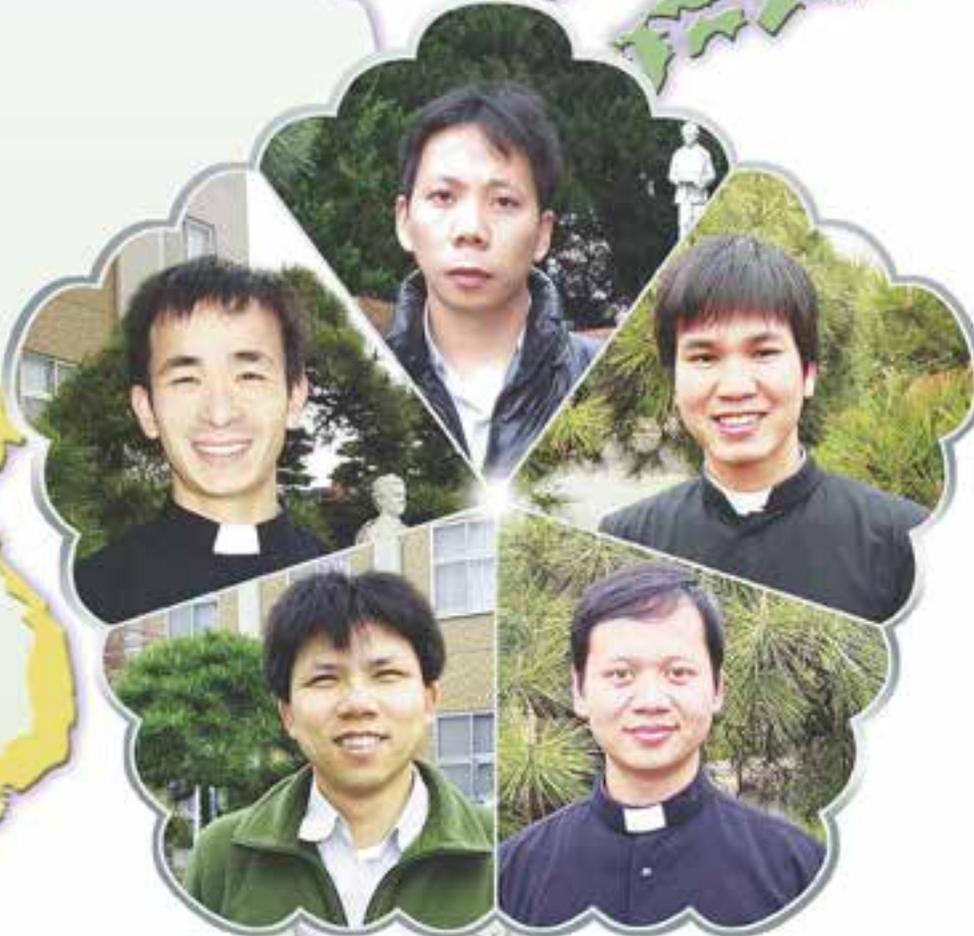
I help them with study and have fun in their free time playing volleyball or football. We give these lads new hopes of building a better future!

Volunteering was the beginning of an adventure, a vocation that God placed in my heart. That year of service in Mexico led me to give direction to my life: Where is my place? What do I want to be? I found my answers during my year as a volunteer and said: "I want to be a volunteer forever in the style of Don Bosco!"





From Vietnam to Japan with Love



John
Le Pham
Nghia Phu

These five young Vietnamese missionaries have brought a breath of fresh air to the formation community at Chofu. They have not yet received their mission cross from Turin, but they are carrying a not always easy cross in a country not so easily permeable to the Gospel.



Joseph Nguyen Giao Hoa

Before coming to Japan five years ago I studied some Japanese, thinking to become a Salesian priest in my newly adopted country. It was during my experience working with young people at the oratory that I discovered my vocation to be a missionary. The example of my Japanese confreres has helped me a lot and in a particular way the missionaries. A serious difficulty I feel is that Christianity does not attract the Japanese.

I was a Salesian aspirant in Vietnam and my four years with the Salesians and especially the contact with the ethnic minorities in K'long in Vietnam lie behind my missionary vocation. Being with the young and speaking of God's love to them helps me be a better person. The Japanese language is difficult. I am doing my best to get to know Japanese society and culture.

Joseph Nguyen Khac Diep

I am a post-novice studying philosophy. Before coming to Japan as an aspirant to Salesian life perhaps it was more the spirit of adventure than the missionary vocation that attracted me. During the prenovitiate I found myself in crisis but then came to understand more clearly that being in this country means being a missionary with the task of spreading the Gospel of Jesus. However for now I am but a missionary in formation.

Andrew Tran Minh Hai

I must be honest and say that when I came to Japan as a Salesian aspirant my missionary vocation, if indeed it existed, was weak and insecure. It was towards the end of the novitiate that I felt myself called to share with others the graces received and the spirit of the Gospel, and I owe this to the exemplary lives of the missionaries I have met. Living in Japan and assimilating the culture is not easy. St Paul's words here are a help to me: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me".

Joseph Nguyen Duy Hun

I arrived in Japan four years ago as an aspirant after two years of preparation in my native land, Vietnam. I have to admit that my vocation to be a missionary began here. It was a discovery more than something which came about naturally. In fact, working with youngsters at the oratory, almost none of whom were Christians, I discovered that I was being called to be a missionary for their sake. My fellow Vietnamese have been an important source of support for me and of course the help of Mary our Mother. Japan is very much a developed nation and it is difficult to spread the Gospel.



Peace is Possible

When Church Takes the Lead

Archbishop Menampampil
22 Oct. 1936, Born in Kelara India
24 May 1955, First Profession
02 May 1965, Ordained Priest
24 nov. 1981, Ordained Bishop
10 July 1995, Archbishop Of
Guwahati

by Fr C. M. Paul, sdb

Church people negotiating peace in a conflict situation may not be considered a 'politically correct act', especially when a Catholic archbishop takes the initiative. But when the Church leaders and eminent citizens from the warring factions join him in the conflict resolution process "it is making the Word of God come alive in the lives of people," says Salesian Archbishop Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati.

Over the last 15 years, the archbishop has successfully led seven major peace initiatives. The Joint Peace Team (JPT) of Northeast India under his leadership intervened in the following conflicts: Bodo-Adivasi (1996), Kuki-Paite (1998), Dimasa-Hmar (2003) and Karbi-Kuki (2003), Dimasa-Karbi (2004), Bodo-Muslim at Udalguri (2010) and Rabha-Garo (2011).

It all started with a missionary Sister visiting relief camps where over 250,000 took shelter following conflict between Bodos and Adivasis-Santals in 1996.



“Most of the children are sick and all of them will die,” she reported.

“These words hit me hard and roused me from my sense of helplessness before a massive problem,” the soft spoken archbishop recalls.

Over 500 people died, hundreds of houses were torched, and people rotted in 42 camps.

“I began by bringing into the field persons with little competence for offering relief, but a lot of good will: seminarians, candidates, novices. I kept informing the public what we were trying to do. Learning of our work, people came: nurses, doctors, university students and volunteers from all over India. We joined hands with the other Churches and sought help from non-governmental agencies”.

Over 400 volunteers worked in turn for half a year bringing relief to people in the camps.

Even the Chief Minister of Assam visited the camps and praised the work. That is how JPT came into existence bringing together sober, moderate, far-sighted local people. When they make an appeal for peace, everyone listens.

The 75 year old archbishop is not discouraged by heartbreaking moments in peace-making despite much fatigue and enormous effort, sometimes ending in total failure.

He recalls a flicker of hope when a Muslim group said, “we came only because Archbishop Thomas invited us to this peace meeting,” or when some Presbyterian or Baptist friends quote his writings on peace saying, “as ‘our’ Archbishop suggests”.

In recent years, JPT ventured beyond peace initiatives making a drive for a ‘corruption-free society’. Archbishop Menamparampil’s 78-page booklet entitled *Probity in Public Life* was used as a reference when ecumenical Church leaders in Mizoram passed norms for

a corruption-free election recently.

The dramatic change of guard in that northeastern state owes much to this call for probity in public life. The archbishop adds, “youth groups like the Bodo Students’ Union ask me to give talks on peace and ‘Ethical Awakening’. They read my articles and booklets. Possibly the Assam Students’ Union will be next”.

Besides being a special invitee to the Synod of Bishops for Asia and on the Word of God, archbishop Menamparampil is currently president of the Northeast India Bishops’ Conference; National Chairman of the Bishops Commission for Education & Culture; and Chairman of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference Commission for Evangelization.

A member of several Vatican Commissions, archbishop Menamparampil is a recipient of the prestigious Mumbai based Maschio Humanitarian Award 1998.



China - Mongolia

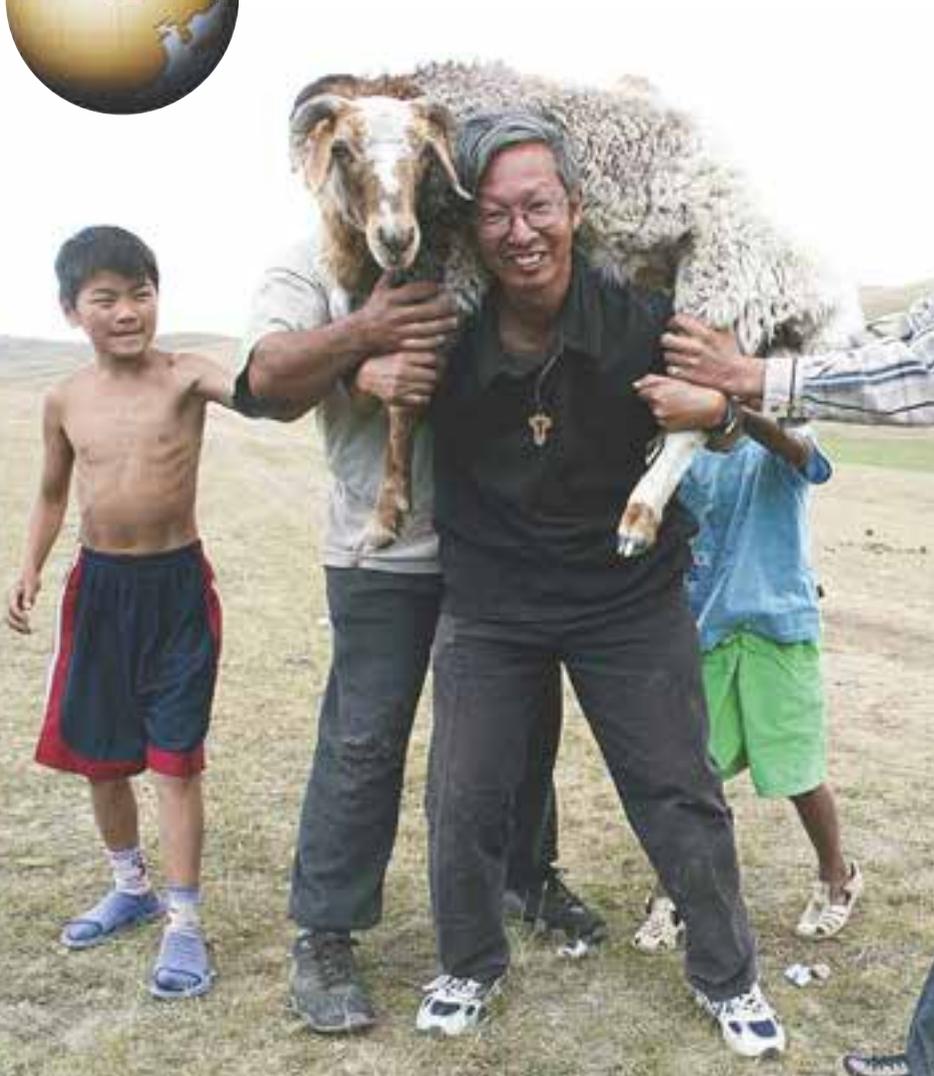
Don Bosco had a missionary dream in Barcelona during the nights between 8 and 10 April 1886, which included the future of the Salesian work in China. It is a dream which is being realized over different stages of history.

In 1906 Fr Louis Versiglia, together with five other missionaries, was sent to Macau by Don Rua. From there the Salesians then set up in Hong Kong and other cities in China. In 1946, Fr Mario Acquistapace arrived in Beijing, believing that it was the city that Don Bosco had seen in his dream. There he founded a House for orphans and poor youngsters and rapidly spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians among the faithful. After only a few years, the Salesian work was also developing rapidly and vocations were flourishing.

Suddenly, in 1949 the communist occupation of China dispersed the dream and Salesians were expelled from Mainland China; the work was reduced and entrusted to Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The number of Salesians dropped to the present one hundred and ten with the majority being now quite advanced in age.



Don Bosco's Dream in a Chinese Woman's Son



by Fr Pedro Leong, sdb

In 2006, despite a shortage of personnel, Father Paul Leong, a young priest holding several important posts in the province, obtained permission from the Rector Major to be a missionary to Mongolia where he began work for poor boys in Darkhan. When he was asked why he had insisted so much on going to the missions, leaving behind many important tasks in Hong Kong, he replied simply: "If I was baptized and came to know God, it was because there were good missionaries around. Now here in Hong Kong many of my fellow citizens have plenty of opportunity to hear the Good News, enjoy the rich fruits of evangelisation. How can I be so selfish as not to share what I have received with so many others who have no chance of hearing anything about God, and have nothing at all?"

In fact, when the first group of Salesians



arrived in Darkhan in 2005, there was not even one Catholic in the city. No one knew who Jesus Christ was. Now, when Fr Paul was recently appointed to be the first parish priest of Mary Help of Christians Parish in Selenge Aimag, a vast province which includes Darkhan, 22 times larger than Hong Kong, he found out there were already around 150 Catholics because of the hard work of the missionaries. Some of them are now preparing themselves to be catechists or Salesian Cooperators. And he is now preparing to build a shrine dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians.

Fr Paul recently came back to be beside his dying mother. We learned that this mother of our first missionary was a very wonderful woman, mother of five children. She was not a Catholic but always remained an honest non-Christian woman.

As Fr Paul himself told us, when he was still a young college student after he graduated from a Salesian school in Hong Kong, one day he asked for his mother's permission to be baptized and his mother answered, "No problem" but then added, "You should never be a missionary". After about a year, he told her that a certain priest had telephoned him, and instinctively she asked, "Priest? Do you also want to

be a priest one day?" "Yes", Paul answered. She didn't say a word but closed herself in her room for three days weeping, carrying all the pain of her son's mysterious plan in her heart. Then she generously gave her consent: "Take good care of yourself then... if one day you cannot stand the hardship, you are always welcome back home".

Years later Fr Paul had been sent to Rome to study. One day he gave her a call indicating that he was going to spend a long summer holiday visiting another country. She immediately twigged that he might be heading for some dangerous place and advised her son: "Please, be careful if you are going to countries in trouble". In fact Fr Paul went to Albania to serve those under persecution.

Then, again after some years, Fr Paul told her that he would like to be a missionary to Mongolia to spread the Good News and probably would be away from her for a long time. She again remained a generous, always available mother, saying, "Son, I know you are always restless, but you must know that it is very cold there, so put on more clothes, eat more and whenever you are free, come back to see me".

From then on she took great care of

him and gave full support for all that her son was doing in the missions. She was always proud of him.

Don Bosco's dream for Salesian work in China and Fr Paul Leung's calling as a missionary are hard to fathom for many of us. The explanation can only be that God has a marvellous plan for the future of our Province and we are to cooperate with him to make it happen.

On 25 March, the China Province welcomed the solemn arrival of Don Bosco's Casket in Hong Kong. In the welcoming ceremony at Tang King Po School, organised by the Youth Ministry Office, to our great surprise Fr Paul appeared among us with six Mongolian young people and one Salesian cleric. They danced and sang before the Relic. The following day, during the public veneration of the relic, some priests and sisters, and some young men and women from the south and north of China came to see Don Bosco. They had learned of the event through the press or Internet.

Do we have reason to say that this may be a sign that now is the time for Don Bosco's dream to be fulfilled? Are we ready and well prepared for that possibility? The question remains.



“The vocation of every Salesian is tied to Mary Help of Christians”

by † Fr John Lee Taeseok, sdb †

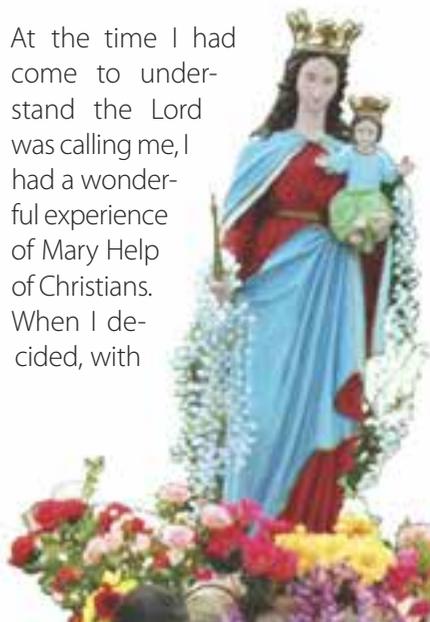
In Korea devotion to Mary Help of Christians is not as strong as devotion to her under other titles: Mary Queen of Peace, or Our Lady of Mercies. This is why, before I became a Salesian, I had neither heard of nor ever said the invocation: “Mary Help of Christians pray for us” that we Salesians would say at least three times a day.

I would like to recall a brief story of my own vocation.

At the time I had come to understand the Lord was calling me, I had a wonderful experience of Mary Help of Christians. When I decided, with

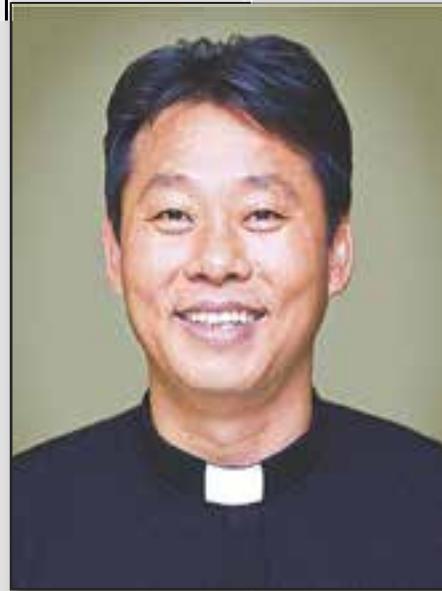
much joy, to set out on the path to becoming a Salesian, I suffered some anxiety about the fact that I needed to tell my mother about it! Since my father had died when I was 10, my mother had to struggle a lot so I could go and study medicine. Thanks to her many sacrifices, I was able to become a doctor. It was at that point that I could begin to help my mother and pay her back for the many sacrifices she had made without asking anything of me in return. This made it very difficult for me to tell her about my decision. In fact it was almost impossible for me to do so. I made many attempts but never succeeded because every time I looked at her, I lost courage. I also tried to tell one of my sisters to whom I was very close and could talk about many things with ease. But I couldn't even tell her! Three months went by without me saying anything.

One wonderful day, when I went to see my sister, I stood there astounded, mouth open. My sister had already found out about my decision through a dream she had had the previous





Don Bosco of Tonj! Fr John Lee Taeseok



evening. However, my sister then told my mother about my decision by telling her of the dream. All my problems were resolved at that moment.

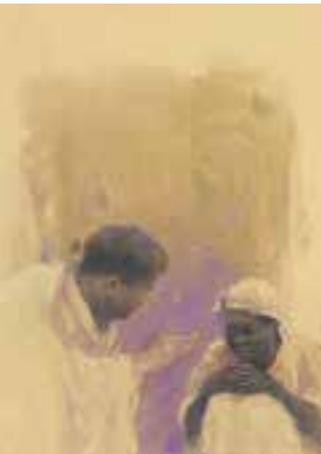
However I had not worked out at that time that this was Mary Help of Christians at work until I heard, for the first time from my novice director, that the vocation of every Salesian is tied to Mary Help of Christians.

I had not asked Mary for her help. But Mary was aware of my problem and quietly helped me. This was the first experience I had had of Mary's help. It was such an important experience for me because through it I gained such a real image of Mary as the Lady who loved me very much. This enabled me to understand Mary as 'Help of Christians' and I learned to adopt the attitude we must have when we help others: be attentive to their needs and ready to give them all necessary help. From then on I was able to speak with certainty to young people about the presence of Mary Help of Christians...

Mary is not a special privilege just for Salesians. She is the Help of all Christians. But we Salesians are very grateful and sensitive to Mary as Helper. With this sensitivity Don Bosco chose Mary Most Holy as his inspiration, Mother and Teacher of his Congregation...

Born: 19 Sep. 1962 (Pusan, Korea)
Graduated in medicine, Inje University: 1987 (Pusan)
First profession as a Salesian: 30 Jan 1994 (Daejeon)
Final profession as a Salesian: 27 Apr 2000 (Rome)
Ordained priest: 24 Jun 2001 (Seoul)
Joined Sudan mission: 1 Nov 2001
Diagnosed with cancer: Nov 2008
Died: 14 Jan 2010 (Seoul)





While I was reflecting on the life of a great priest, Fr John Lee Taeseok, I wanted to tell his story and share his valuable, beautiful life as well as repay a deep inner debt. I decided to hold an exhibition in memory of his life.

As Fr John Lee put it in his words, love itself, the virus of love will overcome time and space.

I wish deeply for this virus to spread endlessly to all whom we meet in God's great plan.

I pray sincerely that all the seeds Fr John Lee has planted bear great fruit and bring peace to this land.



Artist, Michaela Kang Hyunjoo

A handwritten signature in brown ink, which appears to be 'Michaela Kang Hyunjoo'.

Thanks to

Editorial team:

- ◆ Fr Filiberto González Plasencia,
Councillor for Social Communications
- ◆ Members of the SC Department
and Bro. Hilario Seo, from Korea Province

Translators:

- ◆ Too many to single out individually, but sincere thanks to translators from Africa (French); Central and South America (Spanish and Portuguese) and both Salesian and lay; Europe (for the remaining languages, including: English, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Polish)

Special thanks to:

- ◆ Salesian Bulletin editors from around the Salesian world and their Provinces, who provided the bulk of the articles, with support from the Regional Councillors
- ◆ Salesian Mission and Development Offices
- ◆ Artist Michaela Kang Hyunjoo

Printing:

- ◆ Publishing House Don Bosco
Bratislava, Slovakia

Publisher:

- ◆ Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco,
Via della Pisana 1111, Casella Postale 18333,
00163 Roma-Bravetta, Italy

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Salesians of Don Bosco



SALESIANS 2012

