

Dear Brother and Sister Salesians:

Our Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez, brought the Interamerica Team Visit to a conclusion last month with four orientations or priorities for our region. He clearly states that rather than multiplying guidelines, these are four action areas, gleaned as priorities from the discussions held by the provincials and councils themselves at the Team Visit in El Salvador. Each province will need to translate them into objectives to be achieved in their own context. They are (1) to return to Don Bosco, evangelizer of the young, (2) to create our own future by renewing the quality of our religious life, reconfiguring our presences and becoming more faithful disciples of Jesus, (3) to give strategic importance to vocational animation and to initial and ongoing formation, and (4) to sensitize ourselves to where God is calling us by the phenomenon of migration in our region.

Today let's concentrate on the first one: to return to Don Bosco, **evangelizer of the young**, at least the first part, **to return to Don Bosco**. We feel this as an urgency, to return to Don Bosco, but what does it mean in practice? It means to respond as he did to the current challenge of the evangelization of youth with his same apostolic passion.

The 150th anniversary of the founding of our Congregation just two years ago, the 100th anniversary of Don Rua's death (whom the Rector Major describes as "the most exemplary Salesian imaginable"), the pilgrimage

of Don Bosco's relics, the three year preparation for Don Bosco's 200th birthday-----all this is surely making us want to grow closer to the person and charisma of Don Bosco. However, enthusiasm is not enough. In our region, the Rector Major says, there is a danger of superficiality in our knowledge of Don Bosco. Could that be true in our province too, despite the fact that our province has sent at least five confreres to Rome for specialization in Salesian studies? Despite the fact that fully one quarter of our confreres have taken the ISS program of Salesian renewal at Berkeley? This is the moment to pass from enthusiasm, or worse, nostalgia, and even worse yet, complacency, to a process of serious reflection and concrete decision.

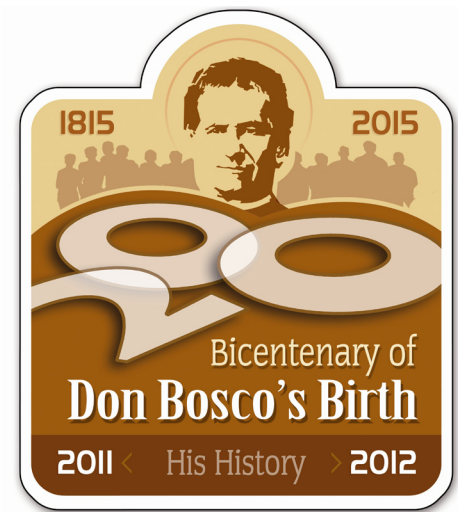
Two practical consequences:

- The first is that the local communities, and not just formation communities, must make available the written works about the history, pedagogy, and spirituality of Don Bosco. For that reason I am making available for each confrere a copy of Don Bosco's *Memoirs of the Oratory*. Dare I ask if each community, without exception, has a set of Arthur Lenti's seven volume work on Don Bosco?
- The second is the need to develop and grow the conviction of the necessity of preparing Salesian experts in spiritual direction and in Salesianity.

So let all of us, together and with intention, move to a greater and more transparent charismatic identification with St. John Bosco. In other words, to know him, to love him, to imitate him, to make him known, to pray to him.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Timothy C. Ploch, SDB
Provincial



Provincial's Calendar

November 2011

- 12-18 Visitation: St. Joseph's Novitiate and Retreat Center, Rosemead
- 19 Office Day
- 20-22 Provincial Council Meeting, Corpus Christi, San Francisco
- 23 Office Day
- 24 Thanksgiving Day Dinner, Salesian High, Richmond
- 25-27 Office Days
- 28-29 CMSM Region 6 Meeting, Encino, CA
- 30 Office Day

Pray for Our Sick

Fr. Paul Caporali, SDB

*colon and bladder cancer
Mission Care Center
Rosemead, CA*

Fr. Austin Conterno, SDB

slow recovery from congestive heart failure

May they Rest in Peace

Marie Nguyen Thi Mui

*November 13, 2011
at age 97 in Vietnam
paternal grandmother of
Deacon Thien Nguyen, SDB*

Visiting Fr. Carmine

By Sheila Kuhn



Our California sun promises to do its job this Saturday morning, bringing its warmth in the midst of the early winter breeze. The smiles of the the Sisters at Nazareth House Assisted Living, Los Angeles, were as welcoming as our weather. Sr. Loretta greeted us warmly as she ushered us to Fr. Carmine Vairo's room on the second floor.

Fr. Carmine began his retirement a week ago at the Nazareth House and, according to him, he is liking it. He fondly remembered his previous visits with his SDB confreres at this retirement home. Now that he starts his retirement, he has nothing but praises about the work of the Sisters. He said he has felt their respect and love here.

Fr. Carmine never loses his sense of humour. He said, "The minute the residents (most elderly women) found out that I was a priest, they hovered over me like their baby brother." Yes, at age 77, he is one of the lively ones around. He jokes around with the residents and even with Sr. Loretta. When asked if he would do some volunteer work, he said, "Money talks!" Our visit was punctuated by fond memories of his years at Bosco Tech, St. Bridget's and the Club. He told us to say hello to everyone. Looking at the calendar of the daily activities, Louis and I are convinced they will keep him very busy.

Medical Mission at St. Luis Rey

By Fr. Michael Gergen, SDB



For the week of November 6 to the 11, the parish of San Luis Rey hosted the Medical Missionaries of the Divine Mercy, a group of 35 doctors, nurses and volunteers from Sugar Land, Texas, near Houston. In their first two days they offer almost 500 people free medical, dental and vision treatment. For many years the focus of their mission was to serve the poor in remote areas of Mexico. This was the third time the medical mission has come to Laredo. It was the first time that we offered them a place to serve the uninsured and the undocumented of our city.

Creating a Missionary Culture in our Province

By Juan Carlos Montenegro

For the last four months a group of over 30 people in our province have been thinking and planning for the Salesian Mission Day 2011, eager for it have an impact on the lives of young people and our province. All this process paid off on November 11-12, 2011 when over 300 people participated



Fr. Maravilla presents the Christian call to be missionaries.

in both events. However, as Fr. Alfred Maravilla from the World Wide Missionary Animation Team said, "It is not about the number of people who participate in such programs, but about the movement and excitement that programs like these create."

On Friday we had two highlights: 1) The presentation of Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB who talked about what it means to be a missionary and how every baptized person is called to become one. He reminded us that we are responsible to evangelize our brothers and sisters who live around us, especially the young and those most at risk. 2) The Salesian Volunteers forum, where we had 9 present and past volunteers who shared their experience of how being with the

• Salesians as volunteers changed their lives. It was impressive to see these 9 young people opening people's minds and hearts to volunteering.

• On Saturday we went to the Salesian Boys and Girls Club in East Los Angeles, where we had many beautiful opportunities to help the community. One group went to clean the backyard of a lady who had always helped St. Mary's Church but can now no longer walk. Gabriela Gordillo, the adult who was assisting the young people said, "She was really happy, and the teens did great job cleaning the back yard. They understood that they were making a difference in the life of this lady." Another project was cleaning the streets of the neighborhood. Grace

Martinez a 16 years old shared, "Young people can really make the difference. We are not only people who are behind the computer. We are people who clean streets too." Rudy Bonilla from St. Mary's Church said, "I always wanted to do clean the

streets like this, but never would do it by myself. Now I have a group."

• At the concluding celebration of Eucharist, Fr. Thomas Prendeville, the main celebrant, and Fr. William Keane commissioned the young people by giving them a "dog tag" embossed with "Salesian Mission Day 2011." While they were receiving this gift, Fr. Tom and Fr. Bill said to the young people, "Go and make the difference," and they responded, "Amen."

• Thanks be to God, Salesian Mission Day 2011 was supported by many organizations from the Salesian Family. In these twenty-four hours



Fr. Tom Prendeville and Fr. Bill Keane commission participants to "go make the difference" in their communities.

• we had the participation of the FMAs, Salesian Cooperators, Past-Pupils, Bosconians and ADMA. It was quite impressive to see all these groups coming together to celebrate and to promote our Salesian Mission Day 2011.

• A BIG thanks to everybody who made all the events possible!

• To See JC's Salesian Mission Day Video Click [HERE](#)



Steve DeMaio, novice, and eight other Volunteers respond to questions about their volunteer experience.

Salesian Volunteers “Missionary Exposition”

By Novice John Langan

On Friday, November 11, the doors were opened at St. Dominic Savio Youth Center to anyone who wanted to learn more about the missionary aspect in the charism of Don Bosco. There were about a dozen missionaries who had been to places from as close as Bellflower to as far away as India. We were given about an hour to start off by visiting the missionaries booths, looking at pictures and cultural items, and talking to them about their own personal experiences spreading the Gospel message.

Next, we sat down for the more formal presentation. I had a chance to look around and noticed that the hall was packed with people all conversing and growing in their understanding of what it meant to be a missionary. Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB, gave an informative Power-Point presentation about the missionary zeal of Don Bosco. Some key elements were recognizing the missionary component in his dream of age nine and then the development of missionary work beginning with the local young boys, and then on to evangelizing more people with the Salesian Bulletin. Finally, sending the first missionaries to Patagonia. The missionary heart of Don Bosco continued to dream and act to save souls.

This was followed by a question and answer session with the missionaries. They were very open



Tijuana Volunteers ready to share their stories

with their own experiences about finding God, fears, joys, and even difficulties returning home. Above all else though their underlying message was summed up well by one missionary who said, “Everyone should be a missionary in whatever way they can, whether it be 30 minutes just outside their house or by giving a few years at an international mission site.”

Finishing off the night Fr. Tom Prendiville gave the good night thanking Juan Carlos, the Cooperators and all involved in planning the evening. Then JC lead everyone in the Salesian tradition of praying three Hail Marys with a particular intention for two men present who were looking into being Salesian Volunteers next year.

This was a great night that highlighted an important part of the Salesian charism and I hope that this is the beginning of an annual event that will continue on for a long time.

To Serve is to Love

By Julieta Contreras

What are you willing to wake up for in the morning? For what are you willing to give up a Saturday? For me it would be so easy to just sleep in, but putting every excuse aside, I made the choice to do something different.

Last Saturday I had the privilege of going to east LA along with several other young adults to serve the community there. When we arrived other groups such as the Salesian cooperators and volunteers met us. After a group prayer we were sent off to different assignments. Four groups were assigned to sweep up the streets and clean up the trash. I was among one of these.

We swept the streets and picked up trash for a few hours, which normally would seem like a drag, but since it was a task done out of love for Christ and neighbor rather than self, it was beautiful.

I learned that in such a community it is good to interact with the people in the neighborhood, that more than how much we get done, it is about being present with the people, so that’s what we did. In a day or two



Lunch revived the energies of all who served.

Mission Animation



Bro Tom offers orientation to the Club for those who will serve.

our group arrived at the Salesian Boys and Girls Club in East Los Angeles, it seemed that the day would comprise of simply volunteer work—cleaning up the streets and moving trash. At first, I was honestly unaware of the complexity of how much this service would mean to the community and to myself.

the leaves will have blown back onto the streets, but the impact that our presence leaves behind will last so much longer on the hearts of the people we served.

So, to answer my own question, “What am I willing to get up in the morning for?” It shouldn’t just be to have a life changing service opportunity. It shouldn’t just be to do something grand. It should be so I can be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and to do all of this with the same love and passion as I have when I get to be a good neighbor! Because I don’t need to go further than my bedroom door to begin to make a difference!

Personal Growth

By Jesus Morales

With every opportunity we have to assist others, there reveals a chance to help ourselves in terms of personal growth. My moment of reflection pertains to the service portion of the Salesian Mission Day 2011, a chance for the youth to serve their community. When

The group I spent my time with definitely turned what I perceived as a chore into an enjoyable experience. We were a collection of old and recently new friends. Everyone talked to each other, like a family; there was never a moment spent without hearing the sound of someone else’s laughter or voice. Surely, we portrayed a group of people that willingly sacrificed their day for others. God was present in each one of us, because we were able to unify in order to serve others, even when they were unaware that we were cleaning the streets in their neighborhood.

The people that noticed us cleaning their sidewalks showed gratefulness for our small work. One woman named Cecilia was so thankful that she recited a prayer to ask God to provide us with guidance through the remainder of

the day. We made the area much more beautiful by just picking up some trash off the nearby streets.

Regardless of the type and proportion of work, we all contributed to serve others, which is what ultimately matters. Overall, the day showed that the youth have a greater purpose than society’s expectations. We surpassed the common misconception about teenagers are mischievous, lazy or irresponsible. In a sense we became an example for other youth who want to partake in service for their community, especially the children at the Salesian Boys and Girls Club. I look forward to other opportunities that God presents me to serve my community.

Points of View Shifted

By Michelle Vergara

On Salesian Mission Day 2011 several youth came together to help out and make a difference, which would not only make an impact in the lives of whom they were helping but in their own. I decided to take part in something of which I did not know what to expect or



Everybody does something to serve.

Mission Animation

what I would do.

As we arrived at the Salesian Boys and Girls Club in Los Angeles, I looked around only to see a neighborhood so different than mine. The youth had split up into different groups to help out in different areas around the neighborhood. The group I was in had to walk around the area and clean up the sidewalks. It was a very tiresome but fun experience.



Chris Carlson, novice, teaches about family spirit.

One of our leaders asked a lady who was sitting outside her house if she wanted us to clean her front yard for her. This moment became my favorite... The look on her face lit up as we helped clean her yard. Even though I couldn't

understand her, by the smile I could tell she was saying how thankful she was and she had even prayed for us. We continued cleaning until it was time for our lunch break and then meditation followed by Mass.

Salesian Mission Day had not only opened my eyes but also the eyes of many other youth that were helping. Many saw that just the little things they did today meant a big deal to someone else. That day I met a little girl and as I continued to talk to her she began to smile more often. She had told me stories of all the fun she had that day and how happy she was that there was someone to play with her.

What happened on that day can not only change the lives of those we are helping but also those who have helped. For those we are helping, they may be inspired to help others in the same way they have been helped. And for those who are helping, their eyes have been opened up to many new experiences that can even change

one's view forever. Many may feel blessed and grateful just as I had that day. And because of these experiences many want to continue helping.

On the bus ride home several youth said they wished to return to help out the following weekend. Many friendships and experiences were gained that day. Many eyes have been opened to a reality that is not their

own and many hearts and minds have been touched by the purpose of what Salesian Mission Day was all about. Whether you are helping out or the one being helped out, a difference in the lives of those people involved are made and some are never forgotten.



Rey Gomez keeps little Andrew pumped up to serve.



Aaron Mendoza, Savio, gives a hoist to Phillip, a young street worker from the Club.

Mission Animation



Small groups reflect on what the day has been for them.

The Young Serving the Young

By Sean Roche

Profound examples of service can be found throughout the world but few events call together such a varied and spiritually charged group of individuals as was the case with the Salesian Mission Day 2011. Children, teens, adults, religious, Lay missionaries, volunteers- all were joined together in love of God to serve His people in any capacity, small or profound. Whether it was pulling weeds, mopping floors, moving furniture, or simply picking up trash in the neighborhood around the Wabash Boys and Girls Club, young people poured forth their hearts in the collective effort to be missionaries to their own people.



Salesian Missionaries gather for a family picture at the end of the day.

To paraphrase Juan Carlos Montenegro, every task the group undertook was to be treated as a personal service to Jesus Christ. Those who tended to the garden at the 4th street Boys and Girls Club were tending God's

garden, those who bagged trash in the local streets were cleaning God's streets and those who played with the club regulars were acting as shepherds to God's children. No task was insignificant and every endeavor was spiritually uplifting.

Following the morning work period, the group gathered to replicate one of Don Bosco's time-honored traditions: the oratory. Volunteers joined the young people in sports, in conversation, and (enthusiastically) in breaking bread. Excited chatter could be heard throughout the playground regarding the day's service while enjoying the generously donated burgers and hot dogs. The great significance of this day could be measured by its spiritual and emotional impact on every one involved.

This group sought to change the hearts of their brothers and sisters but, in doing so, they themselves were changed. When mass was held to conclude the experience, the cohesive love and spirit of the group was apparent. We were one body; one body in Christ.

Salesian Mission Day

By Gaby Gordillo

Young people need to be challenged to live out the Gospel.

Being a missionary, leaving everything behind to bring the word of God to those in need is something foreign to many young people in today's society. However, as our province moves to new frontiers and challenges the young to share their talents, the Salesian mission animation team organized a weekend of mission.

We didn't know what to expect or what it was all this about, but Fr. Alfred Maravilla, SDB, offered an outstanding presentation to start us off. He explained of the missionary spirit of Don Bosco, and how as a visionary he foresaw what he can do for the poor, not just in northern Italy, but around the world.

Proclaiming the word of God and evangelization are at the center of the Salesian mission, and Fr. Alfred invited and challenged the young people that were present to do just that. As a youth minister, it was awesome to hear at the end of the night, that the young people at my parish were so inspired by this presentation that without hesitation they just wanted to go to Africa and do what Don Bosco dreamed of, to save souls.

On Saturday, even though some of the young were ready to pack and leave to the missions, we encouraged them to start with baby steps, doing service in their community. Two of my fellow CYMs and I were assigned ten wonderful young people who worked for three hours non-stop on cleaning the yard of a St. Mary's parishioner who is elderly and can't do the yard work herself. She was very demanding, but the kids never hesitated to accomplish the task at hand. When we were all finished, we looked back and saw that a little bit of effort and team work can really make a difference in someone's life.

There were many assignments during the day, but the goal was only one: to witness the Gospel through action and service. At the end of this new experience, the young people that I serve, realized that the work of Don Bosco didn't end when he died but was just getting started. So they made the commitment to share their talents and help build the kingdom of God in our community and hopefully by the time they turn eighteen, they will be ready to take a bigger step, which is to leave everything behind and follow Jesus wherever this might be.

A Day in the Life of a Salesian Missionary

By Carlos Sousa

I volunteer for the Salesian Boys & Girls Club during the week and seeing a hundred young people there serving in the weekend

was amazing. Watching the teens cleaning the streets of Boyle Heights, fixing up Eva's back yard, or washing the walls of the Salesian Family Youth Center was truly inspiring. The kids that went to Eva's house across the street from St. Mary's said, "I never worked so hard in my life." Eva is the nicest lady that did countless things for the parish in the past. Now she is just too old to even do mundane things around her house. The teens helped Eva out by picking fruit from her trees, picking weeds from her garden, and mowing Eva's lawn. The young people learned a lot about how good service is, no matter how small or mundane the work. We ended with oratory, reflection and the celebration of Eucharist. Mass was exceptional with Father Tom giving the good night. Now we look forward to seeing these same young adults in our communities being "everyday missionaries."

End Quotes

Every task the group undertook was to be treated as a personal service to Jesus Christ. Those who tended to the garden at the 4th street Boys and Girls Club were tending God's garden, those who bagged trash in the local streets were cleaning God's streets and those who played with the club regulars were acting as shepherds to God's children.

- Sean Roche

We surpassed the common misconception about teenagers' as mischievous, lazy, or irresponsible.

In a sense, we became an example for other youth to want to partake in service for their community, especially the children at the Boys and Girls Club.

- Jesus Morales

I would do this again, there's no doubt. Just knowing the fact that I made people's day's is amazing!

- Amy Paredes

"I just want to change someone's life, someone's way of seeing things, for the better, like these volunteers have changed mine."

- Andres Ortiz

One of the girls from that neighborhood voiced that she was so proud to see us clean up and spend time with each other. As tears came down she deeply said, "Thank you."

- Melissa Barron

"This is love through service. This is our future. This is reality. This is changing the world, one small step at a time, one life at a time."

- Taaj Lewis

InTouch Provincial Newsletter

Salesians of St. John Bosco
1100 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Phone: (626) 280-8622 #35
E-mail: intouch@salesiansc.org
Weekly publications will be distributed on Wednesdays. Please submit news for publication by Friday of each week.
Send contributions to:
intouch@salesiansc.org

*Small group reflection prayer during
Saturday mission experience:*



Dear God,

Thanks for this great day. Thank you for all the food. Thank you for the family. Thank you for giving a chance to make a difference and to meet new people. Thank you for allowing us to come together and talk with people we've never met. Thank you for this club, thanks for all the joy. We are truly blessed. Thank you for our homes. Thank you for my school.

Thank you for watching over us and our loved ones. May tomorrow be as good as today.

Amen.

MEDIA MATTERS

Volunteers are signs of God's love, Pope says

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Through volunteer work, Christians become signs of God's love in the world, Pope Benedict XVI said. Especially at a time of serious economic crisis, moral uncertainty and social tension, Christian volunteers show "that goodness exists and that it is growing in our midst," the pope said Nov. 11....

<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1104423.htm>

Spiritual direction from a Salesian perspective

(ANS – Rome) – Between 11 and 13 November at the Generalate in Rome there was the first "Seminar on spiritual direction from a Salesian perspective," organised by the Youth Ministry Department. Over the next two years there will be two more Seminars on other aspects of Youth Ministry....

[Spiritual Direction](#)

National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)

November 17-19, 2011
Indianapolis, Indiana

The National Catholic Youth Conference is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. The schedule includes keynote addresses, concurrent and workshop sessions addressing a wide variety of topics. Some of these events can be viewed online. Check out the schedule:

[NCYC 2011 Called to Glory](#)



The Salesians of St. John Bosco booth at NCYC was completed today by this able group of Salesian family under the direction of Fr. Steve Ryan, SDB, and Sr. Colleen Clair, FMA. Many other members of the Salesian family: priests, brothers, sisters, cooperators, men and women in formation and young adults will help animate the carnival themed booth.



Sr. Colleen Clair and Sr. Ann Cassidy strike a happy pose in front of the Salesian booth now ready to welcome over 22,000 youth and adults leaders who will enjoy more than 16 games in the booth, serving as springboards to discussions on Salesian youth spirituality

SDB Birthdays (Corrected)

November

- 2 **Tom Prendiville**
- 3 **Noel DeBruton**
- 7 **Mel Trinidad**
- 14 **Paul Caporali**
- 14 **Tom Mass**
- 21 **Leo Baysinger**