



Nouvelles Salésiennes *Salesian News*

Mars 2008 March No.103

Bulletin mensuel électronique
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(Here are two letters received by email from Rome)

Friday, February 29, 2008

TO: Salesians, Sisters, Cooperators, Parish & DBYLC Staff, Family & Friends
FROM: Fr. Richard, Provincial Canada
SUBJECT: Week One: Pilgrimage & Retreat

Greetings to each of you,

I write to you from Rome. I will attempt to do so every Friday as a simple way of sharing with you the highlights of each of the seven weeks. I will do so only in English to make things easier for me. Please feel free to forward this message to others who you think might enjoy it. It will never be more than one page in length. I will also try to attach each week a picture or two.

As you know, I am here with Fr. Michael Pace. He is the new recruit and I am the seasoned veteran! This first week might be summed up in the expression "Pilgrimage and Retreat." After an 8-hour flight from Toronto to Rome, we were treated to an 8-hour bus ride from Rome to Turin. But it was worth it! We were offered the opportunity to make a mini-pilgrimage to "Salesian Holy Land" – the historical places where Don Bosco's dream became reality.

We went to Becchi, where Don Bosco was born and grew up – then to Morialdo, where he first began his studies and where St. Dominic Savio lived – then to St. Francis of Assisi chapel, where he celebrated his first Mass. From there we rediscovered Valdocco, home of the first Oratory, where we prayed in each of the three churches there: the Pinardi chapel, the Church of St. Francis de Sales and finally the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. We then visited the rooms where Don Bosco died and the site of his final resting place at his altar in

the basilica. For me, the most beautiful Eucharist was the one celebrated by the Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez, in the newly renovated basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

The 2nd highlight of the week was the four-day retreat back at the General House. Having been touched by the roots found in our history, we were then invited to reflect upon our own fidelity and journey as followers of Don Bosco.

My message for each of you after Week One is rooted in my own pilgrimage and journey. At the heart of Don Bosco's life was the *primacy of the love of God* and an *acute sense of the eternal value of man*. I believe he says the following to each of us:

"There is nothing difficult in the world which is not overcome, is not won with the fire of love, love of our God and love of our neighbor."

"The Salesian is called to collaborate with the redemptive action of the Divine Savior, so that no one is lost. To save souls, to share God's love with all those we meet, is our only reason to live."

God bless you,
Fr. Richard from Rome!

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Friday March 7, 2008

Greetings to each of you,

Two weeks down; five to go! But seriously, things are going better than I expected! A lot has changed since my last chapter in 1996. The atmosphere of the General House is much more welcoming and international. And the chapter process has been brought into the 20th century! A lot of this has to do with the personality and charism of the 9th Successor of Don Bosco, Fr. Pascual Chavez.

The highlight of the week was certainly the official opening of the chapter on Monday morning. Besides all 233 chapter members, we

were blessed by the presence of three of our cardinals and a whole row of bishops. The two key elements of the opening were the message from the Holy Father and the keynote address by the Rector Major.

In his message Fr. Chavez outlined his *vision for the six coming years*:

- “Give me souls; take away the rest” calls us to have “passion for God and com-passion for humanity.”
- In a world that is becoming de-Christianized, we are called to give the first place to evangelization, especially by speaking about God from a personal point of view, as a convincing testimony.
- Let us make holiness our essential task; it is not so much a matter of taking up new activities, as of living & bearing witness to the Gospel.
- The next 6 years should be a time of grace with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Congregation in 2009 and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Don Bosco in 2015.
- As Salesians, our first mission is to live as brothers. The community is the first object of our mission.
- We must educate the young to “health, wisdom & holiness” and make of them “good Christians & upright citizens.”

This week’s picture (*note: it was attached*) is of Fr. Jim Heuser, provincial from the U.S., and me in front of the Becchi House, where Don Bosco grew up and had his famous dream at nine years of age. Young John Bosco was the son of a poor sharecropper in a time of famine and war. Life was not easy. In Becchi Don Bosco learned to live life inspired by the motto **“Work and Temperance.”** He approached life using all the human resources & strength he had, but with a great trust in God and a courage born of faith. He appreciated the sacrifices Mama Margaret made to keep the family together, and eventually did the same for his “family” of abandoned boys at the Oratory. Have a great week.
Fr. Richard in Rome!

TORONTO. Please pray for Fr. Ivan Dobrsek, who is presently in the hospital. He is waiting to be admitted to a long-term resting home where he can receive 24-hour a day care. Fr. Drago keeps us informed regularly on his condition.

Fr. Mike Pace kept himself busy right up to only a few hours before his departure for GC26 in Rome. From there he has been keeping us up-to-date on all the happenings.

Bro. Steve is continuing his wrist therapy as well as a few theology courses. He is also taking Greek with Fr. Occhio. He will spend the Holy Week Triduum in a Passionist monastery with his uncle, who is a priest.

During this Lenten season we priests have been ministering double-time in our 5 schools and 2 parishes. Next week spring break will permit a bit of relaxation. His Excellency Bishop Boissoneau has graciously accepted to preside at our Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday liturgies in replacement of our pastor Fr. Mike. As usual, Bro. Bernie will be the acting master of ceremony.

The *Young Adults Friday Evening* in the new Monsignor Johnson High School gymnasium has been drawing between 20 and 30 participants. A time of prayer and reflection is animated by one of the young adults at the halfway point of their activity.

February saw some real fancy basketball moves. March will show us their eye-foot control with indoor soccer on the menu.

St. Benedict’s social committee organized a disco nite dance in the church hall on March 1. Close to 150 persons participated. The WYD group sold 50/50 tickets for some neat prizes. Even Fr. George kicked up his heels. Fun and food was had by all.

Fr. Bernie Gilliece spent a week at our DB residence just after presiding at his sister Ruth’s funeral in Montreal. Bro. Jim Zettel likewise stopped by on his way home to visit his family in mid-February. On February 16 our community welcomed two young men who are discerning a call to the religious life. Bro. Steve

pertinence de la strenna. (*Éduquons avec le cœur de Don Bosco*).

Au moyen de l'excellent réseau d'information de *ANS* et la chronique de *AustraLasias* (une plume alerte!), nous suivons quotidiennement les travaux (et les promenades et sorties...) des membres du CG. Et nous prions chaque jour pour leur docilité à l'Esprit.

To all our readers and friends, *Best Wishes for a very Blessed Easter*. Let us not forget that we are an "Alleluia people"!

Que la Semaine Sainte et la fête de Pâques vous apportent l'abondance des grâces et la joie du Christ Ressuscité!

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MONTREAL In mid-January some young adults of our parish, together with some from Toronto, took part in a leadership retreat animated by Fr. Mike Pace, pastor of St. Benedict. After the retreat, he remained another day with us and expressed great satisfaction at the maturity and seriousness with which the young people lived the retreat.

You enjoy statistics? Here is something from our parish for the year 2007: 5,400 registered families, 207 baptisms, 230 First Communions, 274 Confirmations, 50 marriages, 98 funerals.

On the feast of St. Francis de Sales, the Montreal community gathered at the youth centre to finalise its community pastoral plan. Fr. Provincial informed us of the composition of the new pastoral équipe, whose mandate is to animate the youth and vocation ministry. The two Salesians at provincial level responsible for that ministry are Bro. Bernie Dubé and Fr. Mike Pace.

We celebrated the feast of Don Bosco on February 2. A solemn bilingual Eucharist opened the celebrations on Saturday at 5:00 to honour the saint of youth. It was presided over by Fr. Luc and attended by a large assembly, especially of young people. After Mass, many families of our parish community crossed over to the *Colosseo Buffet* for dinner. The presence of many young people and children who had come with their parents created a festive and joyful atmosphere.

For about 2 years now, there is in our parish a very fine group of children & adolescents named after Pope John Paul II, "**the JP II.**" They meet occasionally for a brief formation session. They met during the 1st week of the month. Accompanied by their 3 excellent animators, they spent their evening very profitably with games, Gospel sharing, leaving some time for the making of rosary beads, which they then used to pray the beautiful Marian prayer in the St. Dominic Savio Chapel at the youth centre, finishing off the evening with a time of Eucharistic adoration.

On February 11, this coincided with the 150th anniversary of the Lourdes apparitions, again at the youth centre. DBYLC animators and catechists met on the theme of the Eucharist in view of the Eucharistic International Congress in Quebec City this summer. The evening was animated by Sr. Francine, who, by means of interesting audio-visual aids, rendered the evening enjoyable and profitable.

In mid February, the youth centre marked its 10th anniversary. Theo Vecera, program coordinator, and Fr. Richard, its director, together with their équipe, organised a celebration to which were invited all the collaborators and friends of the YLC. Over 150 young people participated in a climate of joy and songs. (*Why not go take a look at their interesting website? dbylc.com*). During the evening, awards were given to the most deserving collaborators. On those occasions it is always good not to forget the valiant persons who are responsible for the establishment and development of the centre, the most outstanding of whom is evidently, from the moment of its foundation, the pastor of Maria Ausiliatrice, the indefatigable Fr. Romano.

On Feb. 19, the Sherbrooke community joined with us for the monthly day of recollection. Our director, Fr. Dominic Britschu, entertained us on the theme of the *Salesian Galaxy*, illustrating his exposé with very creative posters about the Salesian Family in the world. In spite of the fact that he was packing up for Rome, Fr. Richard spent part of the day with us, probably hoping that he would

gather up some energy for the coming weeks at the GC... Two days later, his departure was celebrated by our community (No! don't take it that way...). He will be in Rome with Fr. Mike, our elected delegate, until mid-April.

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SURREY, B.C. Feb. 3 still saw Fr. Richard with us, and at one of the main Sunday Masses the Knights of Columbus presented a check of \$9,000 to the church. This sum was raised through their dinner dance fund event, where a live band and the 9:30 a.m. choir were the entertainers. The following morning he concelebrated Mass. Fr. Jan prepared his special breakfast before the provincial headed to the airport.

On the evening of the 8th, Bro. Jerry gave a witness talk to about fifteen couples and the godparents of their babies to be baptized, Group discussion followed and a video on this sacrament was shown.

The 6th annual **3-on-3 Basketball Event** in honour of St. John Bosco got underway on February 9. It was sponsored by the Salesian Cooperators with the help of all the various parish organizations. The young adults going to the World Youth Day events in Australia manned the kitchen, helped with the score-board, refereeing, and the younger children's games, face painting and balloon sculpture in OLG School Auditorium. More than 400 boys and girls from the community participated in these fun-filled events. After lunch a parade of clowns and young people presented a rally where everyone calmed down to listen to Fr. Dave's short talk and to participate in the "cheer" that he taught them. Hourly door prizes and a raffle added to the excitement, as did the medals presented to the winners for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-place showing in this basketball tournament. Certainly, a heartfelt and deserving "Thank You" was in order to all the wonderful planners and volunteers who helped make this family event so successful.

Fr. John's ordination anniversary fell on the 11th and was preceded with an announcement at all the weekend Masses. Wouldn't you know it, the parishioners surprised him after the 7:00 p.m. Perpetual Help Devotions and Mass on the

13th with a party in the Mary Help of Christians Hall. Smiles lit the air and enjoyment was held by all with the serenading of a blessing to Fr. John.

On the 15th Fr. Mario flew to Indianapolis for his cousin's funeral. A few days later, the Catholic Educators' Conference was held. The keynote speaker was Monsignor Jim Lisante, from West Hempstead, N.Y., a noted speaker and TV-radio guest. Our teachers were impressed and inspired by Msgr. Lisante's address, as well as by the other "breakout sessions." Fr. Dave Sajdak joined over 600 educators at the conference dinner. A very good spirit of fellowship was felt.

On Feb. 22-23, Fr. Mario Baclig, a Salesian from the Philippines, conducted a parish youth ministry workshop entitled "*Vision-Led Salesian Youth Ministry Management*." Gathered for the event were our youth ministry coordinators and young people from the various youth activities of O.L.G.C. The workshop was packed with information, discussion, and spirit-filled sharing of dreams and hopes for our youth ministry. A vision statement was produced that will serve as a benchmark and goal for our youth ministry program for the next few years.

O.L.G.C. recently hosted the annual *Youth for Christ* Leaders' Assembly. Over 100 youth people, ages 16-25, gathered in our D.B. Youth Center from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. for prayer and worship, instruction and teaching, nourishment and fellowship. We continued to be amazed at the quality of these *Youth for Christ* gatherings.

Monday is always our community day, and on the 25th the Salesians went to St. Andrew Kim Parish for prayer, conference and video given by Fr. Mario Baclig; the sacrament of Reconciliation was available. We enjoyed lunch out and later had our concelebrated Mass together back at the parish. It was a reflective and qualitative day.

Fr. Baclig did a challenging workshop with our catechists. There was brainstorming, group sessions and discussion, broadening the scopes of their perspective and understanding. Father returned to the Philippines a few days later.

Throughout the month there was the regular deanery meeting; helping with confessions here, in other parishes and Holy Cross High School, and all the usual concerns that make O.L.G.C. so active in this Whaley Community of Surrey.

INTERVIEW: Don Enrico Dal Covolo

Interview de Giovanni Peduto avec Don Covolo, professeur à l'Université Pontificale Salésienne à Rome. Il est aussi chargé des causes de sainteté de la Famille salésienne (publié par l'Agence Fides, le 23 fév '08). Trad. R.T.

Qu'est-ce que les salésiens apportent à l'Église aujourd'hui?

Les salésiens s'engagent à donner à l'Église ce que le Cardinal Ratzinger recommandait en décembre 2004 aux provinciaux de l'Europe réunis à la Maison généralice. En cette occasion, le cardinal (il deviendra Benoît XVI quelques mois plus tard) recommandait la «*prophétie de l'éducation*». Qu'est-ce que cela signifie? Il s'agit tout d'abord d'évangéliser dans tous les milieux de l'éducation et ensuite, d'apporter à l'évangélisation la contribution spécifique de l'éducation qui garantit une réception plus intime, personnelle et profonde de l'Évangile. Cela est une *prophétie* parce que ça nous engage à cheminer vers les frontières plus avancées de l'éducation, où les défis sont plus grands...

Quelles sont aujourd'hui les difficultés les plus graves dans la Famille salésienne?

Beaucoup de jeunes aujourd'hui sont fascinés dans chaque partie du monde- par Don Bosco et son charisme. Mais, quand ils se mettent à le suivre de plus près, ils manifestent souvent des motivations fragiles et une faible capacité de persévérance. Cette «fragilité vocationnelle» dans la formation initiale se trouve aussi au niveau de la formation permanente, où le problème demeure toujours celui de la persévérance. Il faut ajouter aussi, surtout dans le contexte européen, que nos œuvres demandent de plus en plus de ressources; elles se développent et se multiplient, alors que les

vocations se font de plus en plus rares. On ne réussit pas toujours à assurer une présence salésienne suffisante, afin d'assurer l'authenticité du charisme.

Le pape a souligné aussi qu'il y a une certaine démission dans le domaine de l'éducation. Aujourd'hui les adultes souvent renoncent à l'éducation. Que proposent les salésiens pour les jeunes?

Les salésiens proposent surtout la passion éducative. Proposer des contenus valables et conserver une conduite exemplaire de vie, ce n'est plus suffisant. On doit avoir cette passion éducative, c'est-à-dire, la capacité de communiquer intensément avec les jeunes et affronter «jusqu'à la témérité» les réponses aux défis du moment présent. Don Bosco disait, s'appuyant sur son expérience personnelle, qu'il ne suffisait pas d'aimer les jeunes, Il faut qu'ils se rendent compte qu'on les aime. Comment? En partageant et en s'intéressant à ce qu'il vivent, toutefois sans les abandonner là où ils sont, mais en les accompagnant dans la recherche des réponses à leur questionnements fondamentaux existentiels. Pour nous, cela signifie aussi les accompagner dans leur rencontre de Jésus Christ, l'unique sauveur des hommes, hier, aujourd'hui et toujours.

Aujourd'hui le monde a besoin d'une nouvelle annonce de l'Évangile. Peut-on parler d'un style salésien?

Encore une fois, c'est celui que nous montre Don Bosco, le système préventif qui s'appuie sur la bonté affectueuse (*amorevolezza*). C'est la marque salésienne, faite de familiarité, de confiance. L'approche personnelle est capitale; c'est sur elle que s'appuient l'ascèse éducative et la charité pastorale. Je dirais que pour nous salésiens, ce concept fécond de charité pastorale, que le Concile a reproposé, se concrétise comme en une médaille à deux faces. D'un côté il y a le fameux «rien, ne mets rien au-dessus de l'amour du Christ», précepte fondamental et irrévocable de la vie consacrée depuis ses origines et particulièrement dans la Règle de saint Benoît, c.-à-d. le choix radical du Christ. Sur l'autre face de la médaille, le *Da*

