

INTOUCH

San Francisco Province Newsletter

Building Bridges between Communities

July 27, 2009



Salesians of St. John Bosco

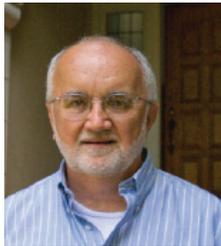
SAN FRANCISCO PROVINCE

Salesians serve youth the world over!

July 26, 2009

Dear Salesians of the West:

How to summarize all our summer ministries in one page! That's a challenge. And I did not even get to see the summer program in Laredo.



Camp St. Francis, Aptos

The only sleepover camp left in Salesian USA and Canada! This is an ideal program for living and learning the preventive system. The first week there were 56 campers and around 20 counselors under the leadership of **Br. Al Vu and Fr. Carmine Vairo**. Most of our candidates and young brothers in initial formation are also there. The programming is kid friendly, deeply Salesian, and a literally round the clock oratory experience of home, school, parish, and playground.

Camp Maria Auxiliadora, Watsonville

Sr. Silvia, FMA, hosts 250 day campers using the premises of St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School. I visited for around 3 hours, half of that time hearing confessions!

San Francisco Salesian Boys & Girls Club

Here there is a dual program: day camp for younger kids (8 weeks!), animated by our **FMA Sisters** from the parish school as well as some SYLC grads, and normal programming for Club members animated by the Club staff.

Contra Costa Salesian Boys & Girls Club

Close to 200 innercity Richmond kids enjoy a safe and Salesian environment animated by the Club staff and helped this summer by **Brs. Chuyen Nguyen and Ricky Ramos**.

East LA Salesian Boys & Girls Club

Working at the two Club sites morning, afternoon and evening, **Fr. Jose Lucero and Br. Gustavo Ramirez** are introducing typical day camp scheduling, moments for prayer and orientation, and good Salesian accompaniment to the dedicated staff there.

Camp Savio, Bellflower

Here we have 95 counselors and around 150 day campers. That's a great ratio! Parish CYM **Juan Carlos Montenegro** provides excellent formation and accompaniment to the young counselors, all teenagers, all volunteers. He is assisted by a senior staff of young adults. In some ways these teens and young adults are the main focus of the camp program. As they provide all kinds of fun for the little ones, they are being formed into Salesians themselves. The campers are having a great time, and you can feel the Salesian spirit everywhere.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Timothy Ploch, SDB
Provincial

Plenary Indulgence

(ANS - Vatican City) – At the request of the Rector Major, **Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva**, the Apostolic Penitentiary has granted a Plenary Indulgence to the Salesians who on December 18 will be renewing their Profession.

The 150th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation will reach its climax on December 18, 2009, the day on which occurs the commemoration of the establishment of the Pious Salesian Society as affirmed by the minutes drawn up by Fr. Alasonatti and counter-signed by Don Bosco.

The Rector Major, in his letter announcing the anniversary, dated June 24, 2008, invited the Salesians throughout the world on that day to renew their Consecration. This act bringing to its conclusion the “year of grace,” as Fr. Chávez describes it, will crown the spiritual journey undertaken this year in which Salesians have been re-examining their Constitutions.

In his request addressed to the Apostolic Penitentiary the IX successor of Don Bosco explained the motive for the request: “so that the confreres of the Salesian Society may be even more open to the Divine generosity and therefore draw more abundant spiritual fruits.”

“Hence the Apostolic Penitentiary, on the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, willingly grants the Plenary Indulgence, which may be gained by the confreres of the Society of Saint Francis de Sales who, truly repentant, having fulfilled the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff), on December 18, 2009 renew the promise to faithfully fulfill the commitments of their vocation, solemnly, or even privately for the members legitimately prevented.”

The Decree issued on June 22 is signed by **Cardinal James Francis Stafford**, Major Penitentiary, and **Mons. Gianfranco Girotti**, O.F.M. Conv., titular bishop Meta, Regent. Some Provinces, involving the various groups of the Salesian Family are organising solemn celebrations for the renewal of their Consecration by the Salesians on December 18.

Chronology of a Century Fr. Mario Mich 1963

March 3: Fr. Bernard Tohill, New Provincial is Welcomed. The Seminarists in Watsonville welcomed the new Provincial, Fr. Bernard Tohill at the closing of their annual retreat preached by **Frs. Frank Rihotta** and **Roger Luna**. Father expressed at the end of a festive dinner his joy in seeing such a good number of aspirants.

March 7th: Death of Fr. Anthony Ragogna at the age of 87. He passed away after a brave brief battle in the Santa Cruz Catholic Hospital. His last two years were a continual up and down of failings and momentary recuperations. This worthy salesian, veteran missionary in Mato Grosso, Brazil, before World War I from the town of Aviano, Friuli (Italy), had come to California to care for the spiritual needs of Portuguese people in Oakland and surrounding areas. After about 40 years of this work and occasional missions preached all over California, he had retired to the house of Richmond at the age of 80. Here he continued to be active as confessor of the aspirants and supplying services in the nearby parishes. He was buried in the Salesian Cemetery in Richmond.

March 13: The new Salesian Provincial, Fr. Bernard Tohill, visited the Salesian School of SS. Peter & Paul. He was introduced to the Salesian Sisters and the pupils, by the outgoing Provincial, Fr. Alfred Cogliandro. A short

program of welcome had been prepared. He was greeted by the students in Italian, Chinese and English and presented a spiritual bouquet from the children. He responded to the assembled students in all three languages. The school and the parish has now in the last decade or so become heavily Chinese.

May 16-17: Visitation of the St. John Bosco High School by the accrediting Commission of the **Western Association of Schools and College**. Room and board was provided to them by the school. The visitors were satisfied with the school and recommended accreditation.

May 24: St. Mark's Parish Teen-Club Varsity Basketball Team. With a hundred and seven wins and four loss record, the St. Mark's Teen-Club varsity had one of the fastest team in the Oakland-Alameda Teen Club 1962-63 Basketball league; it won the Holy Name Championship without a loss and tied for second in the Oakland Diocese League. Team was steered by Captain Richard Rincon and co-captain Dave Melgoza and coached by Bob Garcia.

May 26: During the month of May, especially the 24th, Feast of Mary Help of Christians, special devotions in honor of Mary are held in the Salesian Schools and Parishes. On this day at St. John Bosco High School was held a Mary's Hour at 8:00 pm for students, parents and friends. It turned out a very successful event. There was a procession with recitation of the Rosary, a talk on Mary by a student, polyphonic hymns and a short talk by **Fr. Austin Conterno**, director. There followed the symbolic burning of the letters which students wrote to Our Lady before a prepared shrine in

What's Happening

Fr. Tim's Calendar July 2009

26 *Masses at St. Bridget's, Los Angeles*
27 *Travel Day*
28-8/1 *Office Days*

August 2009

2 *San Francisco Boys & Girls Club Mass*
2-7 *Confreres' Retreat, San Juan Bautista*
7 *Fr. Adriano Bregolin, Vicar of the Rector Major, Arrives in the Province*
8 *Travel Day*
9 *FMA Jubilee Mass, San Antonio, TX*

Prayer Corner for Vocations

Let us pray for the following recently admitted to the Pre-novitiate Program

Jared Anderson
Duoc Le
Patrick Pavelski

Coming Birthdays

August 1 - John Lam
August 3 - Ernie Martnez
August 5 - Paul Tran
August 6 - Joseph Paradayil

Intouch

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1100 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
E-mail: RMurphy224@aol.com
(415) 441-7144 x 12

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

August 2-7 - Salesian Retreat - San Juan Bautista
August 12-13 - Provincial Council Mtg. St. John Bosco, Bellflower
August 13 - Vocation Prayer Vigil 7 pm
August 14 - Religious Professions
August 15 - Feast of the Assumption
August 25 - First Day of Class
SHS Richmond

Salesian Retreat August 2-7, 2009

St. Francis Retreat Center
San Juan Bautista

Reflections on Vietnamese Youth Convention III

(Known as VYC III that took place at the Pyramid at Cal State Long Beach during the Fourth of July weekend)

Fr. Chinh Nguyen, SDB



VYC III was attended by 2000 +/- young people along with the chaperones, like that of any other youth convention. It was a weekend of coming together to listen, to teach and to encourage young people to name, claim and proclaim their faith. I hope that that weekend has encouraged everyone especially our young Catholic Vietnamese to live a vibrant faith. Many of these youth are American born Vietnamese. As **Frs. John Lam** and **Andrew Ng** have noted for the Chinese youth; they are known as ABC: American Born Chinese. These young people are no different to all

young people in the world and, in particular, USA. They do need trusted adult models to encourage them to participate and to share their dreams as believers in Jesus Christ because Jesus is life giving.

I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate Eucharist together on those days @ VYC III. I had many opportunities to hear confessions of so many young people. This is a sure sign of a successful youth convention, in my experience. I reconnected with some familiar faces, mainly college students. These faces will, potentially, be prospects for the priesthood and religious life—Salesian Life. Just like the theme song for VYC III noted: “Be not afraid. Proclaim your faith.” The young people are strengthened and encouraged to proclaim their faith courageously in the world especially where they are living. I am so thankful for the opportunity, given by the province, to be a part of this journey with our young people.



Young people are marvelous! This is true before, now and in the future. However, it is a challenge for each one of us, as adults—models of Salesian holiness. We are challenged to be aware to create a safe place for youth people to be themselves. I was reminded of this truth at the retreat at The Three Rivers by our preacher, Fr. Sweeney and the experience at VYC III. Encouragement is our charism; it is given by

the Holy Spirit to Salesians for the world especially for our young people. Therefore, I am encouraged to learn and give encouragement. That is the message I would like to propose for all of us to reflect.

May we be sincere and proud to proclaim to young people about Don Bosco in the name of Christ and assist them to do likewise. Have a fantastic summer to all,



95 Salesian young people are role models to the children of Bellflower.

No one would ever consider having 95 counselors in a camp of 142 campers. In fact, many thought that we are insane for having it realized. For one reason, the ratio between counselor and camper is 1 to 1.4. Take also into account that these counselors are mostly high school age teenagers. However, our Salesian charism moves us not only to work with the elementary age children, who are our campers, but we also to serve the teen counselors as well. They are not just doing a service to our youth ministry. We, Salesians, accompany these teens as they help in building God's Kingdom on earth to be good Christians and good citizens.

At Camp Savio, out of 142 campers, 15 are at full scholarship and 32 require financial aid. Without this assistance, these children would not be able to be at camp and end up doing other things.

Camp Savio is a Salesian Day Camp at St. Dominic Savio Church in Bellflower. Our mission is to make a difference in the lives of the children in this community and its neighboring towns. We provide children, teenagers and young adults a place where they learn together, pray together, play together and especially be loved as Don Bosco did.

Juan Carlos Montenegro
 CYM of St. Dominic Savio
www.saintdominicsavio.org/youth

Thanks, Fr. Bill

On Saturday, July 18, St. Joseph's Salesian Youth Renewal Center hosted a special Farewell Dinner Party for **Fr. Bill Bolton** in appreciation for his 12 years of pastoral care and leadership in our community. The evening gathered people from all avenues of his ministry: weekend and day retreat clients, Sunday mass participants, SEARCH community and Salesian family - all whose lives he touched in significant ways, as well as Fr. Bill's parents and members of his immediate family. The evening included a happy hour hosted by St. Joseph's Cooperators and a catered Mexican dinner followed by a program of gratitude for Fr. Bill's ministry.

Reflecting the varied ways Fr. Bill accompanied us, many people shared what they had learned from Fr. Bill and how

much they will miss him. Speakers included **Gordon Geeter** from the Lutheran Cursillo Movement who expressed gratitude for all the ways Fr. Bill had been present to their community - often late in the night or in the early hours of the morning, sharing faith or fixing a facility problem. Members of the SEARCH communi-

ty gave Fr. Bill a dedication plaque to mark the newly renovated Don Bosco Hall, a special gift in honor of Fr. Bill's pastoral care and leadership among them. On behalf of the province **Br. Al Vu** reflected on the many ways Fr. Bill lived his Salesian vocation in his ministry here. He also presented a new picture of Don Bosco surrounded by youth, which has been installed in Don Bosco Hall as appreciation for Fr. Bill's varied contributions to the work of the Center.

Fr. Bill took a few moments to address his community, friends and family, imparting both his appreciation for their goodness in his life, as well as offering important reminders of what it means



to continue the good work, which they did together. In conclusion the community prayed together a blessing for Fr. Bill [photo above] to continue in faith, hope and love as a sign and bearer of God's love for youth and all those in need.

by **Judy Wilber Alvarez**

Summer in East Los Angeles

East Los Angeles



1st Reading from Exodus



CHUY OUR CHOIR DIRECTOR



Br. Gustavo, Randy and Michael (dbti Alum) lead singing.

Summer is well underway at the **Salesian Family Youth Center in East Los Angeles**. The 8 week summer program is right smack in the middle and what a wonderful way to celebrate mid season...

- Holy Eucharist with the children- Today's Mass was offered for family and friends of club members. We have over 120 children and over 25 staff along with a seminarian joining us from the Los Angeles diocese, Randy Salinas, Br. Gustavo and myself. Br. Gustavo made his novitiate 2007-08 in Port Chester New York. Gustavo loves music and is a great singer. He will be renewing his vows on August 14th at St. Dominic Savio at 7pm. It is always a joy working with these children. They display such gratitude and are such fun to be around. I hope your summer is going well. Blessings from the SFYC.

Yours in Christ and Don Bosco,
P. Jose Lucero, SDB



Holy Communion



Responsorial Psalm



Fr. Jose with campers.



Araceli - Program Director

Note from Fr. Jose Lucero:

As you may or may not know, Br. Gustavo and I have been here assisting at the family youth center.

Br. Gus is a funny and great guy. It is great working with him again. Please encourage many of those in your communities to come to his renewal of vows on Friday August 14th at 7pm St. Dominic Savio Parish.

Letter from Jeshua White, Salesian Volunteer in TJ

When I was little I always used to say everything happened for a reason.



But I was young and did not fully understand the full extent to which that statement could reach. I feel I am in this place for a reason that God has provided. He has blessed me with life, love, family, friends, everything. Every breath I take is a blessing from Him. I believe He has guided my life in this direction by the choices, people, thoughts, and ideas I have been given to ultimately lead me to decide to become a missionary.

My life has changed so much in so little time, and I believe that God has set a chain of events in my life to accomplish this. In short, this was not an accident. Looking back I feel like I am able to pick parts of my life where God stepped into my life and made an impact.

It is not ironic what I am about to write. I was talking on the porch with a friend named April into the early hours of the morning about God and our personal connection with Him. I loved our talk, and it made me reflect on everything from life to where I stood in life. I realized God's true greatness by

my reflection of my life. I prayed and thanked Him for everything. I told Him I was ready to surrender my life, everything, over to him that morning. It brought me to tears because the happiness that filled me and His presence in my life was never so powerful then it was that morning. I had always been a Christian, but I had never fully dedicated my life to God and His will, to use my hands as His own. Now I am here.

Shortly after this, Talia invited me to go to Tijuana. Everything worked out for me being able to go and I was eager to leave. I loved every second I was there; I loved the people, the other volunteers, the children, and what we did in the short time we were there.

I was finally able to do what I had been talking about for so long and I believe God provided me with the opportunity by letting me see Him in Tijuana. He was there with the people and He was there watching over us. If he can provide me with that, then I am eager to give back.

I have prayed for His will to be in my life because I do not think my life is my own. I share it and I owe everything to Him. When I surrendered my life to God, I was given the opportunity to become a missionary. My dad challenged that and he said I was busting down doors to go have fun in a dangerous place while I should be working and doing nothing. I have prayed for God to soften his heart and now he is excited and happy that I am

going. God is truly amazing, and I believe this has come in my life to only make my connection with my parents that much stronger.

My life course before this was to provide myself with a means to support myself, and I hated that path. I believed there was so much more to life than serving one's self and God has provided me with a window out through the smallest and biggest blessings. I want to help whoever I can, however I can, and do whatever is asked of me while I am here so I can simply be accepted and loved just as I hope to accept and love them. With that connection, comes the ability to see others for who they truly are and talk to them about



whatever, including God. I believe God will provide the opportunity, rather forcing it. Even if I only reach out to one person, that is still one person, and it is because God has provided me with that opportunity. I want to share the love I have been given from him.

We are here for a reason; God has placed things in our lives to achieve where He wants us to be. I will pray he continues His will in our lives and He keeps us safe as we live our lives in His name.

We Remember the Dead

Robert Rossi Wall, M.D.

April 22, 1932 - July 18, 2009

Devoted Doctor and Friend
of Many Salesians.