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In the August 2007 census done by the National Statistics Office (NSO), Philippine population was at 88.57 million. Of this population figure, 36.854 million are under 18 years old or 41.61% of the total population are under 18 years old.

This figure presents us with a reality that our society is young, dynamic, rapidly changing. Furthermore, a young society also presents us with challenges dealing with the specific concerns of adolescent behaviour, education, employment and transition towards adulthood.

We Salesian priests and brothers, members of the Salesian family, youth ministers, animators and leaders are challenged by the young because of our ministry which is primarily directed to them, to guide and form them to be servant leaders in society and the Church.

The first challenge the young presents to us is to understand them. To understand where they are coming from – the rapid growth and development they are undergoing. We can only understand them if we spend time with them learning their language, symbols and images. Oh, the young are more than willing to teach us!

The second challenge the young presents to us is to develop programs that are responsive to their specific needs and concerns at this stage. Responsive means that it is starting from where they are and journeying with them to where they would like to be. It is a program of accompaniment. We cannot be at the end of the journey just encouraging the young to go forward. No, we have to back track and start from where they are – one step at a time. It's like retracing our youthfulness as we accompany the young.



That makes us positive and realistic models – models that can be imitated rather than admired. And it makes the journey more manageable for the young to undergo. Isn't that fun and exciting?!

The third challenge the young presents to us is to do it quickly because they are

rapidly growing and changing and they have a lot of catching up to do. Are we up to the challenge?! I can say we are because of three things: We have a wealth of experience received from Don Bosco and the countless who have gone ahead of us. We can learn from



"We can put our acts together to be able to reach out to more young people in need."

them.

Second, we have many priests, brothers, members of the Salesian family, lay mission partners, youth animators and leaders who believe in this cause. In our society where the majority of the population are young, they are also the majority who are poor. Hence, we are ministering also to the poor by

EDITORIAL

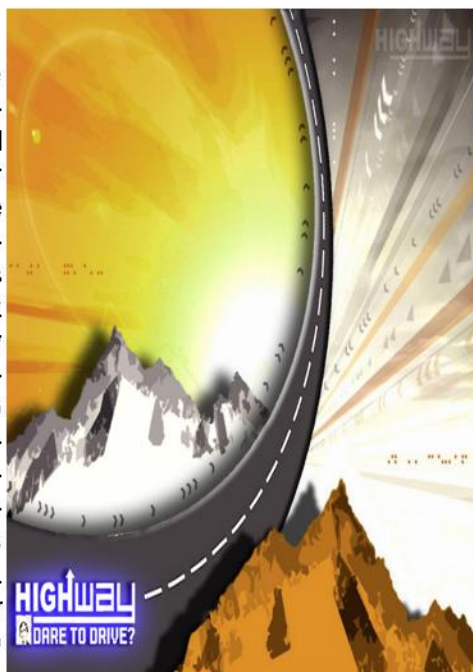
What happened to the Highway publication after missing in action for about one and a half year? Yes, it has been a year since the Highway publication had gone, missing its responsibility to circulate quarterly. Maybe some of you are curious about it, but many are not concerned with it, that line of thinking made us out of circulation for the entire year, because we were considering the reformatting of our publication or rather reconstructing Highway.

"Holiness is the highway... the dare is to drive!"

The old Highway publication we've printed several years ago since its first launching on 50th canonical anniversary of St. Dominic Savio in 2004, aims to give you intense youth ministry updates and thematic reflections focusing on our Salesian Youth Animators Leaders Assembly's (SYALA) yearly major topics namely: Vocation, Volunteerism, and Rector's major Strenna. Our attempt of bringing you fresh news, information and intense reflections regarding youth ministry issues were the things that we

found necessary in educating the young... that is what Salesian Commission on Youth Ministry is all about. However, we also found our publication with its failure to be unique from other Salesian publications, as their formats and contents are almost the same. Boring has it seen on black and white photocopy print quality, but still we've managed not to suffer its appeal by reassigning the layout designs and creatively arranging its images. Years of circulation, successful or not, do not give us an option, not to continue the publication. But rather, these years of experience gave us ideas on how to improve and reinvent the publication.

The Plan is plain and simple, to transform rather than to change. We simply put our trust in the new Salesian Commission on Youth Ministry head, Bro. Raymond Callo, SDB, as he reaches his first year of service in this office. He challenges the new staffers to dare and move for the total transformation of our publication by seeking the aid of our Salesian youth to reconstruct



our very own Highway. By daring to transform, we also take the risk of being ignored but our faith that our simple publication will reach its purpose is still tough, like the well-built highways. We want our readers (youth and youth ministers) to have this Highway as their own for them to be constantly reminded of their call to holiness. The battle cry still remains loudly resounding from our youthful hearts, **"Holiness is the highway... the dare is to drive!"**

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ministering to the young. We can put our acts together to be able to reach out to more young people in need.

Third, we have many young people who are willing not only to be recipients of our accompaniment but who are also willing to teach us, to partner with us in journeying with their fellow youth, and to push and pull us to respond quickly and in the right direction.

The Salesian Commission on Youth Ministry is taking the challenges of the young. Are you up to the challenge? If you are, send us your letter of intent and tell us how you are you are taking up the challenges of the youth of today.

Email us at sycamore_fin@yahoo.com



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Basic Course on Youth Ministry

Jaypee M. Lopez

Youth representatives from San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac were sent to attend the Basic Course on Youth Ministry; a two-day seminar which facilitates better understanding about the many aspects of youth ministry present in different sectors such as schools, parishes, and communities. I was fortunate to be chosen as one of



We listened and participated starting from the animations, instructions and game activities up to the speakers' inputs and reflections. The BCYM seminar broadened our view of the issues and questions arising from the activities to clarify things about youth ministry. This serves as a good point for the facilitators' effort to make the activities lively and responsive.

them.

At first, we expected that this seminar will be another typical seminar like those which we have previously attended. I describe a typical seminar as being bombarded with ideas by listening to the talks. Yet in the end, we participants found ourselves out of focus, not accomplishing our objectives, and finding it hard to fish out ideas and lessons from the seminar, which we think are necessary to our community. First impressions don't last. As the program went on running, my companions and I found ourselves regretting our previous expectation about this seminar, especially when we discovered ourselves appreciating, participating and enjoying every activity.



"You are a special treasure of the Church!"

We will not forget the Basic Course in Youth Ministry as we have found its importance to us youth ministers. This seminar affirmed the role of the youth, that in due time they will no longer become recipients and spectators of change in this generation, but they will also become agents of social transformation, The call of the great Father of the World Youth Day, Pope John Paul II lives to this very day to affirm and encourage the young: **"You are a special treasure of the Church!"**



THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE SUMMER!

Marijoyce Patricia Serrano

I was one of the lucky participants who were picked to join the Hope Illustwriters Youth Aspirants (Hi-Ya) Summer Camp at Bansud, Oriental Mindoro. I was very excited. In this camp, I met new friends, learned new things, and discovered something amazing. I never thought I could change in a week. I must say last April 24 to 29, 2009 were the best days of my summer.

I got the hype built up the night before we left for Mindoro. I couldn't sleep. Once we were on the bus, the RORO, and on the

We had an immersion. Each group has an assigned family to visit. I was moved by the story of Nanay Helen and her family. They have a simple lifestyle but as far as what I have seen

As the hours passed, we finally came to the fun part of the day . . . Swimming! Everyone felt refreshed, dipping down the cool waters of Mindoro.



HIYA Camp Participants with the Bansud community

On the fourth day, we did more sharing and finally started constructing our stories for the book. It was hard to make stories and illustrations right away, especially when time is your enemy. The mentors didn't like what we have in mind about our stories, so we kept on changing our concepts. The night, we had a healing mass, we felt the presence of the Holy Spirit coming to us and that made us a lot better. All we needed was Divine inspiration.

they are happy. I wish I could have that life – a simple yet contented life.

The first two days were handled by the SCYM staff. So at the third night, we put on a little presentation for them. This is our small way of saying our thanks to Kuya Sandy, Kuya Donnie, Kuya Jeff, Ate Janette, Ate Dinwah, and Bro. Raymond, for sharing great lessons and wonderful words to inspire us to continue working on our book and in living our lives.

The next days were handled by Fr. Richie, where we had beautiful sessions and masses with him. On the dawn of the third day, we were all assigned into different groups. It's hard to walk through the dark with our eyes blindfolded. Some of us grew afraid because they didn't know what to expect. But I did not feel scared, for I know something good will happen. They made us sit on the sand and asked us to take off our blindfolds. What a relief! We waited for the beautiful sun to rise. Before our mass on the beach, some of us had confession. It was the most beautiful mass we ever had, with scenery like that, it will be unforgettable.

The next hours were spent sharing.



The muddy crawling challenge

road again anticipation increased. At the first day when we arrived at St. John Bosco Camp, we were given a challenge right away. All of us were surprised. But it's a good move that the so called "Amazing Race" really made us closer to each other. Especially when I had an injury, all of my teammates worried about my condition. How-



"This is the best summer of my life!"

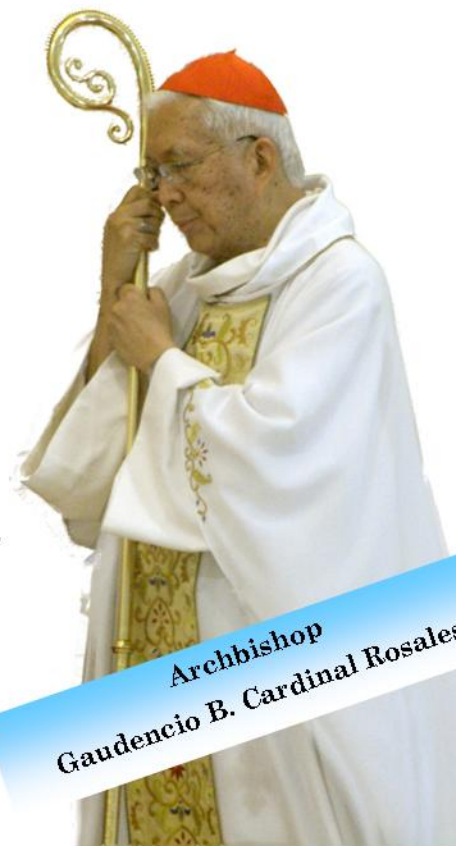
ever, we still managed to finish the whole race.

The sessions we had were very intense. The lessons that they taught struck me. It touched my heart and my soul with every activity we had.



HIGH 5!
Donnie Bernardino

It was the feast day of St. Dominic Savio, May 6, 2009, in Don Bosco Technical Institute Makati when the 5th John Paul II Catechesis-Youth Ministry Conference started its first day with a bang which was held at Don Bosco Institute Makati. This three day festive congress of formations was attended by Catechists and Youth Ministers from different parishes, communities and congregations all over the Philippines. The main theme of the event highlights the focus of our liturgical year, St. Paul. The conference was thus entitled, "Catechesis and Youth



Archbishop Gaudencio B. Cardinal Rosales



Sr. Bernardita Dianzon, FSP

day was enlightened with the theme: "Like Paul, Catechists and Youth Ministers Make the Word of God Their Own." This was given by Sr. Bernardita Dianzon, FSP, a professor on Pauline letters at the Loyola



Rev. Fr. Renato De Guzman, SDB

Ministry: Nourished by Biblical and Pauline Spirituality."

It was Fr. Renato De Guzman, SDB and the Salesian Commission on Youth Ministry, who spearheaded the conference.

Aside from the exciting workshops in the afternoons, the main highlights of the event were the plenary sessions piloted by the invited guest



Rev. Fr. Stephen Placente, SDB

speakers for the day.

The first day conference speaker was Rev Fr. Stephen Placente, SDB, Professor on Sacred Scriptures at Don Bosco Center of Studies. He tackled issues on the topic: "Catechists' & Youth Ministers' Spirituality: Grounded on the Word of God". The second



Most Rev. Broderick Pabillo, DD

School of Theology. The 3rd day of the conference was culminated with the theme: "Leading the Youth to Love and Share the Word of God and to live in the Spirit" expounded by Most Rev. Broderick Pabillo, DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, and well known Professor on Sacred Scriptures.

This conference is a wonderful contribution of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco to the mission of evangelization.

Let's Get UpD8!

Dinvah Lei Rasonabe

Last May 20, 2009, the Salesian Commission on Youth Ministry conducted a whole day activity for the D8 Tau Lidars. It was held at St. John Bosco Hall, Don Bosco Technical Institute, Makati City. This was a follow-up activity which aimed to help build the capacity of the "D8 tau lidars" participants to continue to share their best leadership practices. San Antonio National High School, Makati Science High School and the SCYM Staff participated in the activity. Some members of YUPPEACE facilitated the team-building activities.

Mr. Gary Engico was the main speaker in the afternoon. He talked about the importance of being a servant-leader that epitomizes the four *Ps* which are *panalangin (Prayer)*, *pagpapakumbaba (Humility)*, *pagkilos*



SCYM staff participating in the team building activity

(Action), and *pakikilakbay (Co-journeyer)*.

Many were invited especially the participants of the D8 Tau Lidars but only two schools replied to the call. Most of the students were not participants of the D8 Tau. They were all newly elected-officers. But, it did not stop them to show what we got. The students actively participated in all the activities. They had shared their ideas, insights, and realizations to each one.

The day ended with smiles on everyone's face because they knew that they had been *upd&d* as a leader. They had something to share to their member when they will go back to their schools and offices.. The challenge begins when school is back.



"Upd8 tau lidars" participants discussing their school's project plan



BABBAd, Immersing in Life's Fullness

Jeudiel S. Maunahan

For many outdoor enthusiasts, summer is a season for beach bathing, out of town trips, hiking and meeting different people. But for me, all of these activities could be summarized in the

context of an immersion camp. And that is Salesian Lay Volunteer Philippines's (SLVP) bABBAd '09. The SLVP, headed by Fr. Ramon Borja S.D.B. and Ms. Reggie Medalla as the Executive Officer, together with other volunteers, decided that bABBAd '09 would be held at Brgy. Mabato, Calamba City Laguna, one of the upland communities that belong to the Parish of Mary Help of Christians, Mayapa. Brgy. Mabato is known for its coffee beans and breathe taking scenery.

May 16, 2009, at around 5:00 pm, right after our overnight pre-camp at Don Bosco Canlubang, we traveled for an hour and a half to reach our immersion site. It was already getting dark and our foster parents were still not in the Baranggay Chapel. So, the 2 S.K. kagawads decided to take us to our foster homes. The way to our foster homes already became a challenge for us. The rough and steep road, slowly enveloped by darkness, made it difficult for us to

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see our footholds. It took us about 30 minutes walk from the Baranggay Chapel to our foster home. Half-way through our strides, I, together with my buddy Gabby, a graduate of Don Bosco Sta. Cruz, met our foster mother, Mrs. Tonet Laurel and her only child, Emmanuel. She approached us with a smile and led us to their home. While she was leading us to their home, she immediately introduced herself and her son, and we started getting acquainted with each other.

At last, we reached our foster home! The Barking of their dogs echoed and Nanay Tonet rushed forward for us to safely enter their home. As I sat down on their sofa, I realized how tiring that 30minutes was. Tired and hungry, Nanay Tonet prepared a squash soup with galunggong for our first dinner together. The squash soup tasted fresher compared to the squash soup from the city. One can savor the flavor very well in their cuisine, even if Nanay didn't use MSG. After eating dinner, my partner and I decided to wash the dishes. But we have to conserve the water very well because they have no faucet. Their primary water source is the rain, while, they have to go down a steep hill to for drinking water. My foster father came late at night because he got stuck a bit in a Bingo game. He shared a number of funny stories that

night; making us feel very welcome in their home.

After our light talk, it is time to sleep. They provided a mosquito net, a blanket and a covered pillow for each of us. Both beddings smell newly bought. That night, I felt not just the Filipino hospitality, but the warm welcome of having acknowledged us as one, or two, of their family members.

The next morning I woke up to the cock's crow, with the cool breeze still rushing through my veins, giving me Goosebumps. This was my very first time to see my surroundings, since we arrived dark the other day. I lived in a 2 storey, cement founded house with a window made of "capiz" in the front and right sides. It was then that I realized that it was only our foster home that stood within the area. That morning, I tasted their home made brewed coffee, with beans fresh from their backyard that serves as their small coffee plantation.

In the following days, I was able to get used to their way of living such as long distance walks, somehow I was able to chop wood, the tiring up and down hill walks just to take a bath and fetch drinking water. All these and many simple things made me be one of with the community, and a brother and friend to my fellow ka-bABBAd's. We became one with the community because every time we passed by somebody, they would not hesitate to give us a smile, a smile which signifies that we are very much welcome in their place; a place not just for an immersion, but a place where you can return to every time you want to... a HOME.

It was definitely sad that the 5 days of being with them has gone through very quickly. But it the time has come for us to process ourselves as to what learning we have acquired during the 5 days of stay with the community of Brgy. Mabato. The processing took place at Bulabod, Puerto Galera, in a private beach resort with a mesmerizing view of the sea and sky, a perfect way for us to recollect our experiences of Baranggay Mabato.

To sum it up, bABBAd '09 made me realize how generous and hospitable Filipinos are. We share with the ones we acknowledge as friends and family, and sacrifice for the ones we love. For 5 days we were able to become part of the community who have shared and sacrificed much for us. That sacrificial love, expressed in the daily lives of the people of Baranggay Mabato has captured my heart, not as an immersionist, but as a fellow Christian, whose goal in immersing with a community is to be in deeper communion with Abba, our Father and Creator.



A place where you can return to every time you want to... a HOME.



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Journeying with the young towards servant leadership

Upcoming Activities

SYALA 1 (July 11)

Parishes Leaders' formation (July 24-25)

SYM Formation: Lay Animator and Club moderator (July 25)

Korean Volunteer Service (July 25- Aug 8)

SYM Fin Provincial Council Meeting (Aug 8)

Student Leaders Assembly (Aug 15)

DBAA -Don Bosco Athletic association Sports summit (Aug 21-22)

Juventus Provincial Day (Aug. 22)

SYM Formation (Aug. 22)

Auxilium Leadership Training (Aug. 22-23)

SYM Children's Festival (Aug 29)

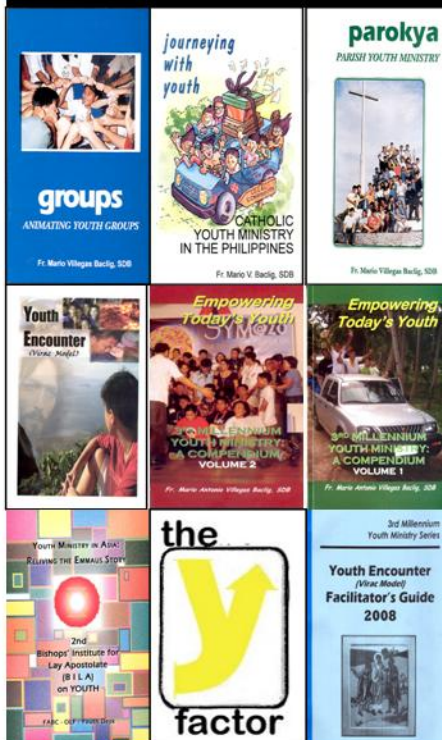
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- Spiritual Direction
- Vocation Camp
- and More