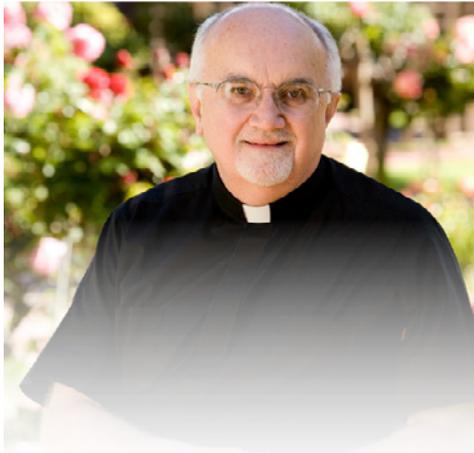




# INTOUCH

June 14  
2012

USA West Province Newsletter • Building Bridges Between Communities



June 14, 2012

Dear Brother and Sister Salesians:

**My Birthday.** The actual day of my birthday last Friday I spent in an early morning car ride from Hergolshausen to Wurzburg (Germany), two train rides from Wurzburg to Frankfurt, two plane flights from Frankfurt to Zurich and Tel Aviv, and one car ride from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. All day on road, rails and air lanes. Arriving in Jerusalem I found all your greetings on that special web page so cleverly designed by Judy Alvarez and *InTouch* staff. Thank you so much. I can only assure you, most gratefully, that I did pray for every one of you here at the holy places, my family and friends, my confreres, and everyone in the Salesian Family of western USA.

**Jerusalem.** My first purpose in coming here was to share in Chuyen's joy as he received the sacrament of holy orders, ordained a deacon by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, in Bethlehem, the place of Jesus' birth. Some of Chuyen's family came over for the occasion, as well as other folk from California. What a delightful surprise to see them here, Anthony Castaneda, Mary Ellen Carlson, Sr. Gloria Mar! Of course after the ordination celebrations

there was some time for visiting the sacred places in the Holy City, in Jericho, in Galilee. Chuyen had arranged a special Mass for our group at Gethsemani on my last day in Israel. It happened to be the memorial of our young Polish martyrs of World War II, Salesian oratory leaders. Offering Mass over the rock of Jesus' agony I prayed for the young "oratory leaders" of our province, especially those gathering for SYLC next week. Be strong in your vocation as joyful disciples, sacrificing everything to help other young people become honest citizens and good Christians.

**Delegate for Social Communications.**

For two years now our province has enjoyed the services of Judy Wilber Alvarez as my delegate for social communications. In 2010, after about twelve years in our youth ministry office, Judy willingly accepted my offer of this change in direction. Since then she has competently led our province to new heights in our awareness of the urgency of social communications as an essential part of and tool for our mission. Within the social communications areas of animation, information and formation, Judy has blazed a path. *InTouch* is the most evident example, but her work on the editorial board of *The Salesian Bulletin* has also been critical for improving the quality of that joint province publication. Courses on social communications are now part of the initial formation curriculum at almost every stage, thanks to Judy's determination and skills as presenter. And there are many other areas in the field of Salesian social communications where Judy's impact on our province's development has been profound. And

it will be missed, because now Judy's life journey has led her to decide to accept a position as Associate Principal for Student Life and International Students at Ramona Convent Secondary School in Alhambra. In the name of the province I thank Judy Wilber Alvarez for all she has been and done among us, both in youth ministry and in social communications. We all wish her every success in her new work. Salesians through and through, she and her husband Mike are bringing the charisma and spirit of St. John Bosco to other communities and families, always making the young their life's mission. Thank you, Judy, and God bless you always!

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Timothy C. Ploch, SDB  
Provincial

## Provincial's Calendar

### June 2012

- 14 Board Meeting, Don Bosco Technical Institute (AM)
- 15-17 Office Days
- 18-22 Salesian Education Seminar (SES), Don Bosco Hall, Berkeley
- 21 Members Meeting, Salesian High School, Richmond
- 22 SES Concluding Mass
- 23 SYLC Concluding Mass
- 24-29 Confreres Retreat, Three Rivers

## Presenting Deacon Chuyen Nguyen, SDB

*On Saturday, June 9, in Bethlehem, Br. Chuyen Nguyen was ordained a deacon. Here are picture highlights of this wonderful celebration sent to us by Fr. Tim Ploch.*



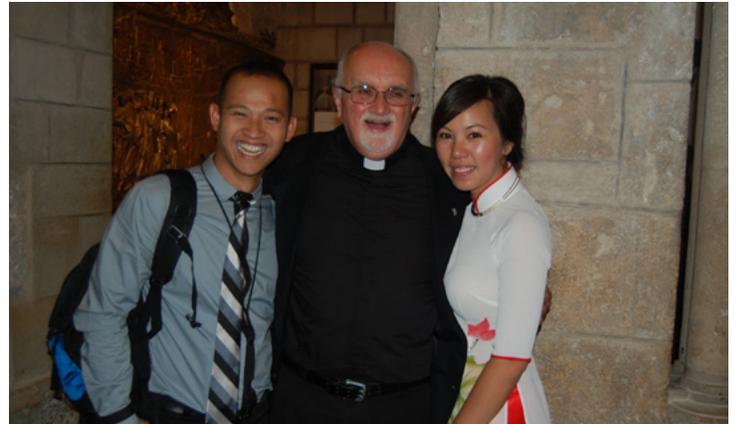
*2012 Deacon Class, Church of St. Catherine, Bethlehem, with Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal.*



*Immediately after ordination Mass*



*Californians in Jerusalem: Deacon Chuyen and Bro. Itchan with Fr. Tim*



*Peter Nguyen, Fr. Tim, Grace Nguyen (Deacon Chuyen's brother and sister-in-law)*



*Ordination dinner, left to right, Peter and Grace Nguyen (Chuyen's brother and sister-in-law), Anthony Castaneda, Mary Ellen Carlson, Fr. Chinh, Fr. Tim, Deacon Chuyen, Huey Nguyen (brother-in-law)*



*USA and Canada delegation after the Ordination dinner: Fr. Tim Ploch, Deacon Jim Zettel (SUE), Deacon Chuyen Nguyen, Fr. Richard Authier (SUE)*

## Don Bosco Technical Institute Graduation

On Friday, June 8, 2012, Don Bosco Technical Institute graduated 124 seniors during the baccalaureate and commencement exercises held on the school campus.

This accomplished group of young men garnered acceptances from universities and colleges across the country. Ninety-seven percent will begin their post-secondary education in the fall; with approximately sixty percent majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) related fields. The class valedictorian, Sina Almasian, will attend Stanford University.

“We’re extremely proud of our senior class,” said Principal Xavier Jimenez. “This group of students consists of technologically competent innovators, communicators and leaders, and we have great confidence in the future achievements of the class of 2012.”

Dr. Ali A. Valenzuela, a 1998 Bosco Tech graduate, offered the keynote address. Dr. Valenzuela is Assistant Professor of Politics at Princeton University where he teaches and conducts research on American politics with a focus on Latino public opinion, immigrant socialization, voter turnout, and racial and ethnic identity in the United States. His research has been published in *Election Law Journal*, the *Quarterly Journal of American Politics*, *American Politics Research* and *Presidential Studies Quarterly*.



*Sina Almasian - 2012 Validictorian*



*Four honored graduates (L to R): Andrew Quintero, Dillon Welch, Elijah Yanet, William Yoshida*



*DBTI graduates with hands on their hearts during the “Star Spangled Banner.”*

## A Fun Filled Fiesta

By Judy Wilber Alvarez

On Sunday, June 10 2012, St. Joseph's Salesian Youth Renewal Center hosted their annual Family Fiesta. People of all ages gathered from groups that find their home at St. Joe's: the Sunday Mass Community, LA/SGV Search, Marian Devotion, Salesian Cooperators, Salesian Novitiate community and staff from the retreat center and province offices.

To kick off the event there was great food for lunch and throughout the day, provided by community groups. Fiesta activities circled the front lawn with children's games, food booths, dunk tank, dining tables and special vendors all around a central stage where the entertainment got everyone involved.

Special performances were offered by Jam Daddies, a rock and roll band where familiar faces from SJBHS regaled the crowd; by Stella Beltran with her Zumba and salsa teachers and by Steve DeMaio, whose rap songs were a fitting end to the energetic Don Bosco skit performed by the retreat center staff and novices.

Music DJ'd by Sean Bryan and Paul Garcia made more spontaneous games happen. There were no age limits for those who played musical chairs and the balloon toss, and the Search community definitely had a leg up on the Macarena and country line dancing.

Prize give-aways kept everyone attentive as pre-sale ticket holders won special gift baskets and the final grand prizes were announced: an 8-day Las Vegas resort vacation; a 3-day Mountain Cabin resort vacation; a new Apple iPad II and a dinner "out on the town" with Fr. Tom Juarez. Whether you won prizes or not, the day proved to be a fun filled gift for everyone!

Lisa Dreyer, Retreat Center Coordinator, expressed many thanks for all the groups who made the day possible, especially the Fiesta Committee chaired by Dave Lerma. For More Pictures of this Fiesta please [click here](#)



*Jam Daddies kick it*



*Lisa Dreyer, Retreat Center Coordinator with Stella Beltran, Cooperator*



*SEARCH Macarena*



*Don Bosco Revival*



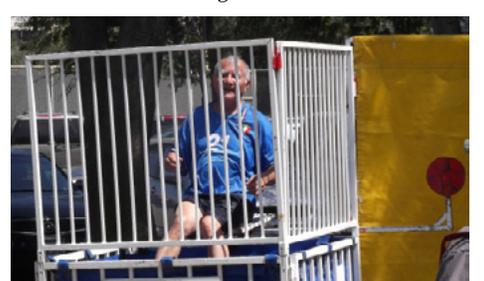
*The "Burger Brothers"*



*Hernandez family crafters*



*They got the beat.*



*Fr. Tom saw more than his fair share of water!*

## 29 Years Ago . . .

On June 11, 1983, the Memorial of St. Barnabas, Apostle, in the City of St. Francis at SS Peter and Paul Church, Italian Cathedral of the West, the young cleric Brother Theodore Montemayor was ordained a Salesian priest. The ordaining prelate was Archbishop Oscar Rodriguez, SDB, Teguciagalpa, Honduras. Today, 29 years later, the SJB Salesians and the FMA community gathered with the parishioners of St. Dominic Savio Church, Bellflower, California to celebrate this special occasion of their pastor's ordination. Congratulations Fr. Ted!!!!



*Fr. Ted, welcoming the parishioners to 8:00 AM Mass, and Fr. Joseph Thinh Nguyen, Director of St. John Bosco High School and Salesian Community.*



*Fr. Ted giving communion to Sister Cesira Pierotti, St. Dominic Savio Convent*

**This October the Salesian Family will gather to celebrate**

**our common heritage**

**Salesian Brothers and Priests,**

**Salesian Sisters**

**Salesian Cooperators**

**Association Devoted to Mary Help**

**Las Damas Salesianas**

**Salesian Alumni of Don Bosco**

**Bosconians**

**Awakening '68**

**Vietnamese Alumni of Don Bosco**

**Exalumnos Sin Fronteras**

**Volunteers of Don Bosco**



## The Work Continues . . .

By Bro. Joseph Lockwood, SDB

On June 7, 2012, I was reading an article in the Sacramento Bee about two Bay Area men being arrested for copper wire theft. Last Tuesday when the contractor arrived and inspected the building, he found that someone had tried to pull out the copper water pipes. He determined that the thieves did not have the tools needed to remove the copper pipes. Then someone tried to cut the (all copper) main electric cable to the construction office. If they had succeeded, the person would have been “fried” because the 220-volt cable is live. At the end of the day, the contractor would board up all of the openings using nails. But since this attempt to steal the copper, the men now use screws.

Last Friday (June 8), Mr. Filiberto Cortez came down from Richmond to attend a graduation ceremony at San Miguel School (Compton) where he had taught. Fr. John Malloy accompanied him and they stayed at SJB. As they approached SJB, Fr. John saw the DeSales Hall and he remarked that the building improvements are very impressive. He said that the exterior of the building looks very good, with the new windows and paint job.

The “Bro. Jack’s old bicycle shop” was finally torn down. (Just a little side bar: This building was also used as a dormitory, housing for workers,

weight lifting room, recreation room, music room and finally a shop). As you can see from the picture, three men tore down the building. Yes, they used sledgehammers to break up the foundation, concrete block wall and the floor. These men worked very hard in the hot sun.

United System Company (fire alarm company) connected all of the window smoke detectors. With the detectors connected, the insulation and dry wall work will begin.

Juno Electric installed the conduits pipes for the electricity, telephone, and fire alarm system, for the elevator mechanical room. The foundations and floor were poured. The contractor is now ready to begin the framing of the mechanical room. The scaffold for the elevator tower has been constructed and the framing will begin.



*Demolishing of “Bro. Jack’s old bicycle shop”*



*Scaffolding around the elevator tower*



*Elevator mechanical room ready for concrete*



*Electrician installing the conduit pipes in the elevator mechanical room foundations*



*Using sledgehammers to break concrete footing*

## My Mission to Haiti

By Claudia Bergantino

*On the recent mission trip to Haiti, Claudia discovered a strong call to return to serve there for a year. In this reflection she tells readers why.*

Why choose Haiti as my one-year mission? It all comes down to one reason: God gave me a vision for it.

Before leaving I attended a YAR retreat. During one of the small-group reflections, I mentioned that I wanted to be a missionary and teach English to the children, but I really didn't know how. I just knew I wanted to serve God in some way.

As I left Montreal on my way to Haiti I knew it was going to be an amazing experience for me to grow more faithful and spiritual. I also began to feel a strong desire to know just what God wanted me to do. Did he want me to come back home or did he want me to focus on Haiti and its children? I didn't think much about it until that moment when it seemed as if I was impressed from the outside, out of nowhere, with this strong desire to know.

I began to pray in deeper ways with God. I asked, "God, show me what it is you want me to do with my life." It was a simple prayer, but it was full of all the faith I could muster. I didn't know how he'd answer it and I wasn't even concerned with what the answer would be.



During this mission I had a great opportunity to speak with Jose, he was an inspiration to most of us on this mission journey but, to me, he was the answer I was waiting for.

We spoke about Haiti's future and how the young want to make a difference. He explained to me that every child has a dream, a dream that someday Haiti will no longer be the country it is today. He told me that Don Bosco had a dream and so do they. As he completed that sentence I thought of Don Bosco's saying:

*Do you want to do a good deed?  
Teach the young!*

*Do you want to perform a holy act? Teach the young!*

*Do you want to do a holy thing?  
Teach the young!*

*Truly, now and for the future,  
among holy things, this is the  
holiest."*

As I was shy to speak to the students, Jose and Stevenson encouraged me and it felt awesome. After that moment I felt great. I felt like all my questions were answered

through my talks with the children at the oratory and with Jose. This feeling of a simple positive response from God as I spoke in front of the English class felt as strong as a vision itself.

While I discern and prepare myself to answer God's call, I have received an encouraging message:

*"You've done a great service to me as a friend and with so much kindness, I found the comfort I needed. It's so important to have someone like you, the Glory of God appears in your face." Jose*

Through my personal and spiritual development and life experiences, I've realized that there's nothing I'd rather do. I loved my trip to Haiti, even as different as it was from anything I've ever experienced. God's given me a vision and placed a passion in my heart and I fully intend to follow through with it, in whatever fashion and for however long He desires. I'm just getting started with it all.

### InTouch Provincial Newsletter

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Send contributions to:  
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## Salesian Family Days An Opportunity for Formation and Fellowship

By Fr. Chris Woerz, SDB

*This October the Salesian Family will gather in regions of our province: Northern California, Southern California and Texas, for a Salesian Formation Day. These reflections are offered here to the members of our Province who belong to the Salesian Family and those who would like to belong. As I go around the Province many ask, "What is the Salesian Family," or "who belongs to the Salesian Family?" Here we begin a series of articles to prepare for the Salesian Family Days. We will look at the origins of the Family and its necessary place in the Salesian world and mission.*

### The Salesian Family - the Genius of Don Bosco The Early Years

John Bosco was a genius, a person who developed a single minded focus of his own self-awareness and his purpose in life. For all of us, self-awareness is a process that allows us, each individual, to mature and develop. Various forces in life and experience help us acquire those tools we need to negotiate the challenges that life presents to us. We develop physical, intellectual, social, and religious strengths and strategies we call upon when faced with challenges, setbacks, and opportunities.

From early childhood John Bosco exhibited a lively imagination and curiosity to learn. His inquisitive mind and natural friendliness combined to make him a leader. His mother Margarita, who was illiterate herself, had memorized the catechism as a child and passed it on to her children: Anthony, Joseph and John. They learned their prayers and daily recited them as a family. Margaret's own childhood was characterized by a firm devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, a healthy fear of sin, and faithfulness to the Church exhibited by regular Church attendance. John, perhaps in imitation of his mother, gathered the children of the neighborhood. He told them stories. He dazzled his peers with magic tricks and acrobatic feats. He learned his crafts while accompanying his mother as she sold and traded produce in the market.

His formal education did not begin until he was nine years of age at the "little school" of Fr. Joseph Lacqua in Capriglio about 3 miles from their home at the *Becchi*. Here he learned the rudiments of reading and writing which began a lifetime of study and publication. From here John followed an irregular path that led him the seminary in Chieri and on to ordination in 1841.<sup>1</sup>

Don Bosco was 26 years of age when ordained a priest. All of these years and experiences, his family's struggle with poverty, the opposition he experienced from all sides, the graciousness of family and friends, especially his mother, the generosity of families who took him in, and the priests he met, all combined to form the great educator and spiritual giant we know as St. John Bosco.

During his studies at the *Convitto Ecclesiastico*<sup>2</sup> Don Bosco came under the mentorship of his professor, Fr. Joseph Cafasso who introduced the young priest to the prisons of Turin. In these horrible institutions adult criminals were mixed with youth and children. It became such a distressing experience that he knew he must do something, something for youth.

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<sup>1</sup> A full study of John Bosco's childhood, adolescence and young adulthood can be found in *Don Bosco: History and Spirit, Vol. 1, Don Bosco's Formative Years in Historical Context*, Arthur J. Lenti (SDB), LAS Rome, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ibid: The "Convitto" was a post-ordination program in moral theology and training established as a lecture series by Fr. Luigi Guala (1775-1848) who was inspired by the teachings and spirituality of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), and St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), St. Alphonsus De' Liguori (1696-1787).