# SVCF

Salesian Volunteers Crossing Frontiers



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# TELLING THE STORY OF JESUS IN NORTH AMERICA

Every year the Salesian Congregation presents a theme that explores the missionary dimension of our charism. This missionary dimension was clearly present when St. John Bosco first sent his missionaries to Argentina in 1875. This same dimension calls us to share the good news of God's love with the young people in our province.

This year's theme is "Telling the Story of Jesus" to the young, with a particular focus on the continent of Asia. While the congregation wants us to know more about the mission animation of Asia, this magazine takes up the theme in order to motivate our young people to keep telling the story of Jesus among their peers. With this intention in mind, the magazine presents different ways in which our young people are telling the story of Jesus in North America. It also includes two elements of the spiritual and pastoral program that our Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez, shared in his introductory letter for this year's Salesian Mission Day:

- 1) To evangelize the hearts of young people
  - 2) To return to Don Bosco, a communicator of God's experience.

I hope you enjoy this magazine. Please use it to promote the missionary culture in our province. It is a resource that can be used in classrooms, youth groups and for any spiritual retreat.

In Don Bosco,

Juan Carlos Montenegro
Province Delegate for Mission Animation

#### My Life...

## ...WITH Y-LIFE

By Brian Alvarez

7hen Jesus first started teaching, most people did not embrace him with open arms. They ridiculed him and convinced themselves that he was the problem that needed to be removed. Yet even in the end, Jesus asked God to forgive them for they did not know what they were doing.

From an outside perspective, it is difficult to understand the Y-Life retreat, if you are only able



to read about it. In reality, the true Y-Life experience comes from within. If you come into the retreat with an open mind, you will be able to see the story of Jesus, but that is only pos-

> sible if you allow for it by helping yourself first. "First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matt. 7:5)



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During the Y-Life retreat, youth are no longer told what they should be doing, but are shown how the person and teachings of Jesus are always present

lives. It is there

that



individual is able to take the "log out of their own eye," and able to not only witness God's love in the present, but also continue what Jesus intended us to do.

The Y-Life retreat causes no transformation; rather, it is an awakening to Jesus who helps people to see. Jesus did not come to change people's minds, but to show us the Way, which he did by living out what he preached. In the Y-Life retreat, everybody participates in the experience and are challenged by the same challenge Jesus gave to

accept the challenge by making a difference in the world

us: take what you have learned

Through the Y-Life experience,

show how it can be

and continue to live by it.

we share the story of Jesus,



#### THE ROAD I TOOK..

By Caterina Florio missionary from Canada

Gospel Roads
has encouraged me to whole-heartedly accept
what God wishes
for me to achieve
in life and has
taught me to evangelize! My two
missionary experiences in Tijuana,
Mexico, have also
helped me to discover the meaning

of community and the love that Salesians have for their brothers and sisters.

On the first day of 2012, I had the privilege of being in Tijuana in an orphanage filled with 250 children. We had been visiting these children regularly throughout the week and this was the last time we would see the children during our Gospel Roads journey. I became very good friends with a 16 year old



orphan named Sara. Saying goodbye was the hardest part. She cried as I hugged her, thanking me for all I did but asking me not to leave. I told her about Don Bosco and how he was the friend of the young and the poor. I told her that if she would continue praying to the Lord and asking Mother Mary to be her Mother and guide, she would always be protected. I assured her that I would always pray for her and everything would work out. As we said our final good-



byes, Sara said to me, "Canada is crazy, but I love you Cat!"

I still share this story with people who ask me about my Gospel Roads experience and there is one reason I am sharing it with you. Our faith is important, not only believing in it, but also sharing it with others can make a very big difference.

We might not see
it, but the tiny little
footprints God gave
us were made to mark
the hearts of every
brother and sister we
meet. Gospel Roads
helped me understand
that every person on
this planet is a child
of God. Whether
we are rich or poor,

born in Canada or Mexico, we all have one sole purpose. That purpose is to find Jesus in others and most importantly to BE JESUS for others.

As Jobin Sam said: "I want my life to bear witness to the beauty of the

broken."Jesus shows us that the broken are really beautiful.





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#### ~GOSPEL ROADS~

#### TELLING THE STORY OF JESUS

By Claudia Bergantino

Any of us ask ourselves who Jesus may be, where he is and if he really guides every step we take? My Gospel Roads mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico, allowed me to see Jesus in many different ways. I was able to see him through prayer, work and most of all through people in the community. Gospel Roads also helped me to evangelize through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and allowed me to accept the Lord's calling.

I had the privilege to encounter two Wise and Knowledgeable



men named Lazerus and Ricardo at the Domingo Savio Oratory. They carried on as true examples of Jesus. with their experienced leadership, good judgment towards others and patience and compassion towards all. Even when language may have been a barrier in understanding what needed to be done, Ricardo and Lazerus had patience just like Don Bosco to guide and help the youth and the needy. They carried the gift of Counsel, speaking the truth and allowing us youth to respond in a loving way while carefully explaining, demonstrating and allowing us to gain experience of living in a community and serving the young and poor.

Domingo Savio Oratory was filled with children, life and joy. At this Oratory I had the chance to meet a young boy named Javier. He was a free spirited boy, who wanted to learn and be taught. He carried the gift of Courage and lived without fear. He was always happy to help us with our tasks of the day. He was a gift of Jesus. At my lowest point

of strength, I asked for a sign of *why I was here...* and this little boy, Javier, came and we began to play and work together. While shovelling the dirt and the rocks, we would pile them onto one another and share a little laughter. His smile said it all - bright vision of Don Bosco. Gospel Roads helped me <u>Understand</u> the true meaning of living in community and the difference between wanting and the necessity for survival. This led to new insights:

Be brave and try to detach your heart from worldly things. Do your utmost to banish darkness from your mind and come to understand what true, selfless piety is. Through confession, endeavor to purify your heart of anything which may still taint it. Enliven your faith, which is essential to understand and achieve piety.

-Don Bosco

Finally, Gospel Roads taught me to <u>Fear the Lord</u>, by letting my light shine (Matt. 5:16). As Jesus shined upon us all and gave us all a mission, let us evangelize and answer his call.

# IIVING...TO SERVE

By Eddie Gutierrez

Service day was a great experience for me in my spiritual life. It felt great to go out and serve the community where people are less fortunate than me. This good feeling grew when one man came out of his house to talk to us, specifically me. This man asked me where our group came from and why we were serving. I said "From Bellflower and just to help clean up the streets." The next thing he said is something I took to heart: "It's great to know there are organizations out there that care about the community; especially organizations that involve the youth. Thank you for cleaning the streets and God bless." After he said this, I felt really good about what I was doing, helping others that didn't ask for help.

I feel now like I'm living a life that God would want me to have. This includes doing confirmation classes, doing youth ministry, going to Mass every Sunday and especially praying every day. When I do activities such as retreats and stuff like cleaning up the streets, I feel like I am actually accomplishing something, not just like scoring a winning point in basketball or beating a level in my favorite video game. Thanks to Service Day, I will now always remember to help the less fortunate and my parents whenever they need help, because I want to live a more meaningful life with God.



# Teaching and Learning About Jesus



Hello! My name is Melissa Camarena and I teach First Communion classes at Saint Dominic Savio parish. This is my first year teaching, but I have been helping for about six years. I use to come when my mother was a teacher. I would help her out and listen to her lessons about the miracles of Jesus, the Ten Commandments, the seven Sacraments, how the world was created and such. I started to realize I really enjoyed going. Not only did I start to grow in my faith in God but I also started to connect with the kids. Each week I went. I would talk to the kids more and more and they would ask me questions about God and Christ, things like, "How do I know God is really there?" or "How could Mary trust that everything would be ok?" I really like to stress "faith" and how important it is. I tell them they are never going to directly see Jesus stand in front of them with a sign that reads, "I am Jesus, here to serve and be with you as your



best friend." You have to believe and focus on the small things that we have and take advantage of realities as simple as the Mom and Dad who love you and the food you have on the table to eat. That is Jesus being with you.

My class this year is the oldest group of kids with whom I have worked. They are six graders.

I've learn that it is more of a challenge to teach our beliefs as Catholics to older children. Plus most of them are only there because their parents force them to be there. The best way I

have experienced to get the kids to learn is to make lessons into a game or an activity that really makes them think about their faith and our beliefs. Although this is the toughest year I have worked, I am really enjoying it. The kids are

full of life and I see Christ in them, because they give me the opportunity to teach. I'm sure a lot of them would rather be home playing video games or sleeping in, but they are still open and absorb the lessons of each week. Each year every batch of kids is different, but they are all beautiful and, without fail, I see God in each one of their unique personalities.



## WALKING THE GOSPEL ROAD, THE SALESIAN WAY

By Tricia Lothschutz



For the last three years, on December 26<sup>th</sup>, in the afterglow of the Christmas celebration, I have traveled down to New Orleans, joining fellow young adults in walking the Gospel Road and doing service in the Spirit of Don Bosco.

Why do we give a week of our holiday, of our vacation time, to painting, scraping, cleaning, and praying? Because it is so much more than simply those actions. It is a week of encountering Christ in

ourselves, each other, and those we serve; it is a chance to be God's Love; it is experiencing what it truly means to be a part of the Salesian family!

This year was no different. December 26<sup>th</sup>-Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>, twenty-seven young adults gathered for Gospel Roads New Orleans to

continue Hurricane Katrina rebuilding efforts, help the local Salesian community, and to grow in faith and friendship. We grew together, served together, and loved together, the Salesian Way...



#### 1. I will be cheerful

We were quite the cheerful bunch! The week was filled with much laughter, dancing, and many spontaneous sing-a-longs. We worked with cheerful hearts too—never a complaint was heard, always spreading cheer to those we worked with and those we served. There were lots of smiles shared throughout New Orleans!

### 2. I will do my duties well

We did everything from scraping and painting porch railings and classrooms, painting lines on a parking lot, and demolishing a swimming pool, to sorting and folding baby clothes





a pregnancy center, and working in a cemetery. No task was too big or too small. We were hardworking, determined,

passionate people of ser-

vice!

## 3. I will stay close to Jesus in the Eucharist

Daily Mass throughout the week and a time of Eucharistic Adoration to bring in the New Year helped us to keep our focus on Christ and helped us to see Him in those we served.

## 4. I will honor and love Mary as my Mother and Helper

We began every day and ended every day honoring our Mother, Mary, asking for her intercession. One



evening we prayed the Rosary by candle-light. It was a beautiful reflection of the important role Mary plays in our lives: helping us to keep our lives pointed toward Christ and keeping Christ's Light alive in our hearts.

#### 5. I choose to be kind

Kindness is a quality this group definitely possessed. Every night during reflection we gave each other "push-ups."



These are compliments and praise for outstanding acts or even little acts of kindness we witnessed throughout the day: a helping hand, a listening ear, a smile, a teaching moment, a task well-done, a fear overcome, a hug given. These "push-ups" could've gone on for hours because of all the kindness shown during this week to each other and to all others we encountered.

#### 6. I want to serve rather than be served.

After humbly washing the disciples' feet, Jesus says to them: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have



set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (Jn. 13:14). Jesus also advises us that "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,

and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:43). This was our goal going down to New Orleans - to serve; to follow in the footsteps of Christ by humbly giving ourselves for others.

Don Bosco found great joy in living his life for others, especially the young and the poor. He found great strength in his relationship with the Blessed Mother and in the Eucharist. His loving-kindness transformed lives. May we follow his example and continue to walk the Gospel Road, the Salesian way!



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Salesian Volunteers is a program that provides an opportunity to any young adult who would like to volunteer and experience what it is like to work with young people, while living and being part of a religious community.

The Salesian Volunteer Program belongs to the Salesians of Don Bosco who are present in over 130 countries, working for young people, especially the poor and those at risk

If you are interested in becoming a Salesian Volunteer please contact:

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Sponsored by Salesian Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (SUE)

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Gospel Roads II is open to all Catholic young adults interested in a hard-morting. faith-filled experience walking the Gospel roads. For more information or to apply visit our white www.Googloods.org or and info@googloods.org



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