

SALESIANS 2014



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DON BOSCO'S PEDAGOGY

» GOSPEL OF JOY

» KINDNESS

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Special thanks to:

Each of the authors of articles, photographers...
ANS, for re-writing some ANS news items as
articles
Artist Fr Sieger Köder
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Printing:

Escolas Profissionais Salesianas, São Paulo, Brazil
Poligrafia Salezjańska, Krakow, Poland
SIGA (Salesian Institute Of Graphic Arts),
Chennai, India
Sociedad Salesiana Editorial Don Bosco, La Paz,
Bolivia
GRAFISUR, S.L., Madrid, Spain

Publisher: Non-commercial edition

Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco,
Via della Pisana 1111, Casella Postale 18333,
00163 Roma-Bravetta, Italy

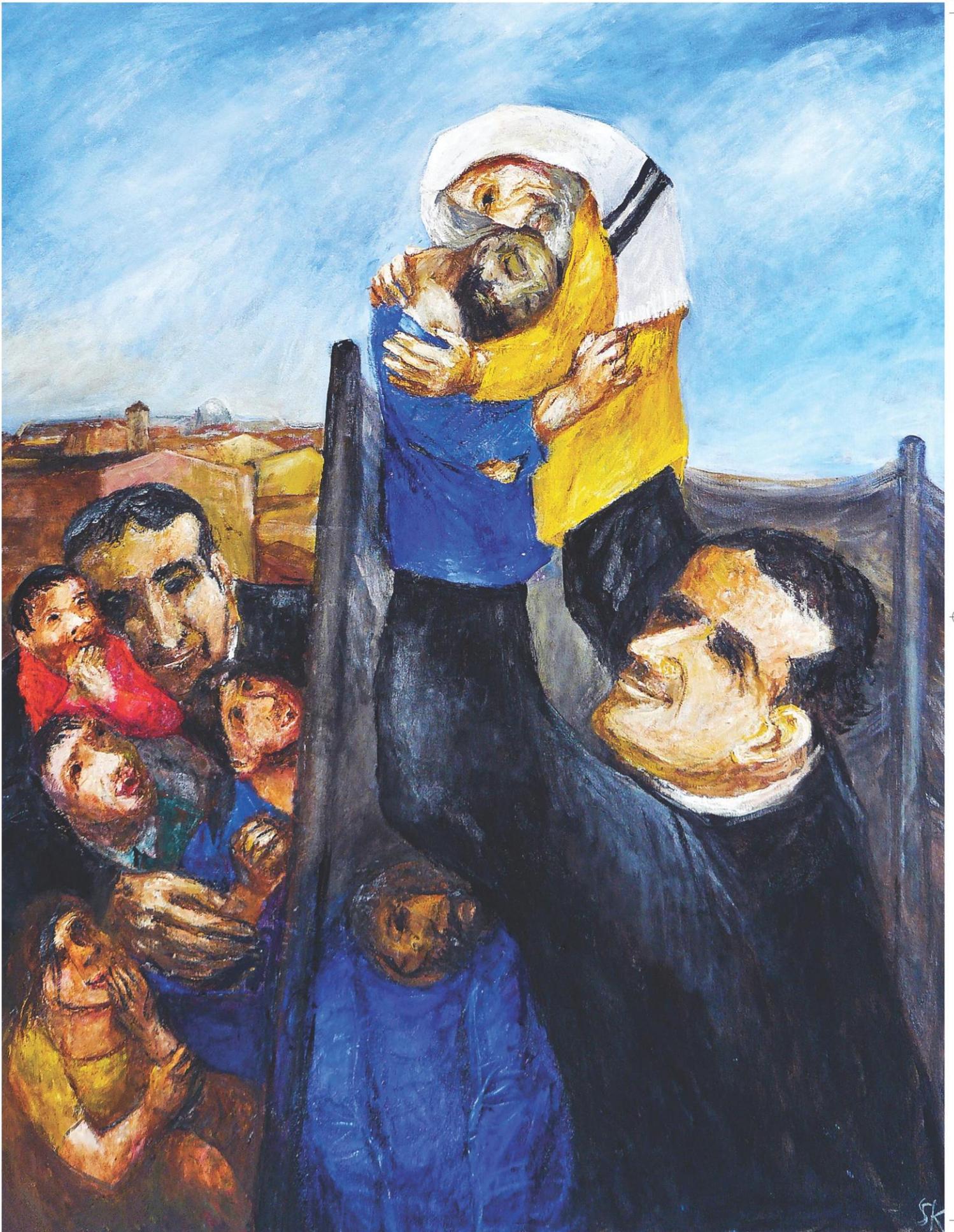
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SALESIANS 2014



Fr. Filliberto González Plasencia, sdb
General Councillor for SC

Dear friends,

The second year of preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth focused on his pedagogy. In the first year we focused attention on his story, seeking to better understand how his life was marked by predilection for the young and the *Salesians 2013 Magazine* looked at him doing this as dreamer, inspirer, promoter, educator, founder, communicator and, of course, saint.

Our aim this year is to focus on one of those items in particular – education: what Don Bosco wanted to offer the young and

the method he used to open the doors of their hearts, in order to win their confidence and so form strong personalities from a human and Christian perspective. In practical terms we want to draw close to Don Bosco the educator and study and update his Preventive System.

Forming “good Christians and upright citizens” is the intention which Don Bosco expressed so often to indicate everything the young need in order to fully experience and live their lives as human beings and as Chris-

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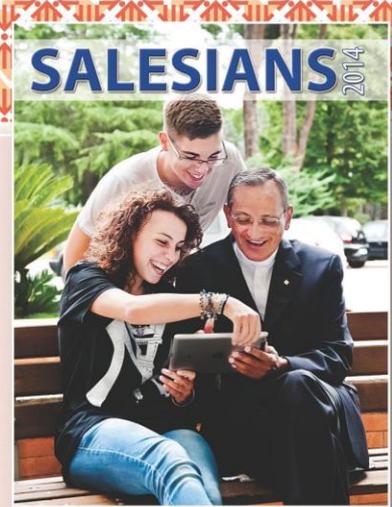
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tians: home, clothes, food, lodging, work, study; free time, joy, friendship; active faith, the grace of God, the way to holiness; participation, dynamism, a place in society and in the Church. His educational experience suggested to him a plan and a particular style of approach which he himself summed up in the Preventive System, which is totally based on reason, religion, and especially loving kindness.

We have divided the magazine into six sections which, in other words present the same ideas that the Rector Major offers us in his article.

Each section offers projects, experiences, structures, events with which the Salesians are carrying out Don Bosco's pedagogy, his Preventive System.

Together with the editorial team and a large group of collaborators we express our gratitude for the acceptance given each year to this *Salesians Magazine*, hoping that after you finish reading it you join us in giving life to the motto that lies behind it: "Like Don Bosco the educator, we offer the young the Gospel of joy through a pedagogy of kindness".

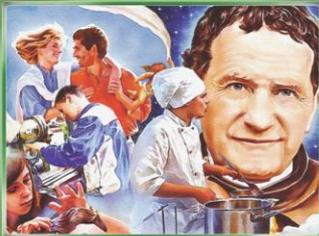


Cover:

"Salesian humanism means giving due weight to all that is positive, accepting genuine values in the world, especially if pleasing to the young".

- Rector Major and two young people from the Auxilium Oratory, Rome (Valeria Sapochetti and Marco Valerio Canto)

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DON BOSCO, THE EDUCATOR

Like Don Bosco the educator,
we offer the young the Gospel of joy
through a pedagogy of kindness



DON BOSCO the educator

Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva, Rector Major

Dear friends,

The second year of preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth is focused on his pedagogy. In the first year we focused attention on his story and sought to better understand how his whole life was marked by predilection for the young. To this end he devoted all his efforts, precisely because he saw that this was the mission God entrusted to him.

Our aim will be to study his approach to education more deeply: what Don Bosco wanted to offer the young and the method he used to open the doors of their hearts, in order to win their confidence and so form strong personalities from a human and Christian perspective. In practical terms we want to draw close to Don Bosco the educator. It is therefore a question of a deeper study and an updating of the Preventive System.

In a world that has changed profoundly with respect to that of the 19th century, it would be a serious social and theological lacuna to exercise charity with narrow, local, pragmatic criteria which overlook the broader dimensions of the common good, not reaching out nationally and globally. Conceiving of charity as mere alms-giving or emergency aid means we risk operating within the ambit of false samaritanism.

We should proceed in the direction of an up-to-date reaffirmation of Don Bosco's social, political and educational options. This does not mean fostering an ideological activism tied to certain party-political choices,

but forming people in social and political sensitivity which leads them to investing their lives in the good of the social body, pledging their life as mission, with constant reference to inalienable human and Christian values. Put another way, reconsidering the social quality of education should motivate us to create explicit experiences of social commitment in the broadest sense.

And we should say similar things when relaunching the 'good Christian'. Don Bosco, on fire with zeal for souls, understood the ambiguity and danger of the situation, tackled its assumptions, found new ways of opposing evil even with the scarce resources (cultural, financial...) that he had. He was attempting to reveal the human vocation, the truth about the human individual, so that it could be lived with awareness. And it is precisely here that believers can offer their most valuable contribution.

It was amongst the young that Don Bosco worked out his style of life, his pastoral and pedagogical legacy, his system, his spirituality. The uniqueness of the Salesian mission for Don Bosco was always very real for him, even when he was not actually in physical contact with young people or his activity was not directly in service of the young, or when he tenaciously defended his charisma as a founder for young people anywhere, in the face of pressure from Churchmen who were not always enlightened. Salesian mission is consecration, predilection for the young, and such predilection in its initial state, we realise, is God's gift, but it is up to our

intelligence and heart to develop and perfect it.

The true Salesian never deserts the youth field. The Salesian is someone who has a lively awareness of youth: his or her heart beats where the young heart beats. The Salesian lives and works for them, and is committed to responding to their needs and problems; they are his *raison d'être* in work, school, affections, leisure time. The Salesian is someone who also has a theoretical and real knowledge of the young, and that means discovering their true needs and creating a youth ministry appropriate to the needs of the times.

Fidelity to our mission then, to have force, must be put in contact with the crux of culture today, with the matrices of today's mentality and behaviour. We are faced with truly huge challenges demanding serious analysis, pertinent critical observation, in-depth cultural comparison, a capacity to partake of the circumstances psychologically and existentially.

In recent decades perhaps the new generations of Salesians feel at a little bit at a loss faced with the older formulations of the Preventive System: is it because they do not know how to apply it today, or because they unconsciously imagine it as a paternalistic rapport with the young? On the contrary, when we look at Don Bosco seen in his lived reality, we discover in him an instinctive and brilliant surmounting of a paternalism in education instilled largely by the pedagogy of the preceding centuries (1500-1700); at the time, pedagogical discourse in

DON BOSCO, THE EDUCATOR



fact reflected European society, which at the political level too was structured in a paternalistic way. Don Bosco's life was woven out of interpersonal relationships with his youngsters and with adults, which was also personally enriching for him.

Beginning from our understanding of Don Bosco's pedagogy, the major points of reference and the tasks of the Strenna are as follows:

1. The 'Gospel of joy'

The 'Gospel of joy' characterised all of Don Bosco's story and was the heart and soul of his manifold works. Don Bosco intercepted the desire for happiness in young people and listed their joy of living in language like cheerfulness, the playground and festivity; but he never ceased to point towards God as the source of real joy. Some of his writings, like *The Companion of Youth*, his life of Dominic Savio, his story of Valentino, show the link he had established between grace and happiness. His insistence on the "reward of heaven" projected earthly joys into the domain of completeness and fulfilment.

2. The pedagogy of kindness

"Don Bosco's loving-kindness is, undoubtedly, a characteristic feature of his pedagogical approach valid for today, whether in a Christian context or one where the young belong to other religions. It

cannot be simply reduced to a pedagogical principle, but needs to be recognised as an essential element of our spirituality.

In fact it is authentic love because it draws from God; it is a love that is manifested through simplicity, warmth and faithfulness; it is a love that generates the desire to respond in kind; it is a love that gives rise to trust, opening the way to confidence and profound communication ("education is a thing of the heart"); it is a love that spreads by creating a family atmosphere where being together is something wonderful and enriching.

3. Education is a thing of the heart

"Don Bosco's pedagogy", Fr Peter Braidò wrote, "can be identified with all his activity; and all of that with his personality; and all of Don Bosco is gathered up, finally, in his heart". Here lies his greatness and the secret of his success as an educator. Don Bosco knew how to combine authority with kindness, love of God with love for the young. Don Bosco's love for these young people was made up of concrete and timely gestures. He was interested in all of their lives, recognising their most urgent needs and intuiting their more hidden ones. To state that his heart was completely given to the young means that his entire personality, intelligence, heart, will, physical strength, his entire being was aimed at their



good, fostering their overall growth, desiring their eternal salvation. Being a man of the heart, for Don Bosco, meant being completely consecrated to the good of his boys and giving everything he had for them, until his last breath!

4. The formation of the upright citizen and good Christian

Forming "good Christians and upright citizens" is the intention which Don Bosco expressed so often to indicate everything the young need in order to fully experience and live their lives as human beings and as Christians: clothes, food, lodging, work, study, free time; joy, friendship; active faith, the grace of God, the way to holiness; participation, dynamism, a place in society and in the Church. His educational experience suggested to him a plan and a particular style of approach which he himself summed up in the Preventive System, which is totally based on reason, religion, and especially loving kindness. Having an educational presence in society includes the following: a sensitivity to educational issues, educational policies, the educational quality of life in society and culture.

5. Salesian humanism

For Don Bosco 'Salesian humanism' meant giving due weight to all that is positive in the life of individuals, in creation, in the events of history. This led him to accept genuine values in the world, especially if pleasing to the young; to place himself in the flow of culture and human development in



his own times, encouraging what was good and refusing to lament what was less so; to wisely seek the cooperation of many people, convinced that each one has gifts that need to be discovered, recognised and put to good use; to believe in the power of education which provides support for a young person's development, encouraging the young person to become an upright citizen and a good Christian; and always and everywhere to entrust himself to the providence of God, perceived and loved as a Father.

6. Preventive System and human rights

The only purpose the Congregation has for its existence is the salvation of youth. Like Don Bosco in his day we cannot be spectators; we have to be protagonists, fully engaged in their salvation. The letter from Rome in 1884 demands that we too in our own day put the youngster at the centre as the focus of what we do and of all the on-going life commitments we make in each of our communities every day. For this reason, for the holistic salvation of the young, the Gospel and our charism require us to pursue the issue of human rights; it is a new way and a new language that we cannot neglect. We must leave no

stone unturned for the salvation of youth. Nowadays we cannot look a child in the eye if we are not also engaged in promoting his or her human rights.

The preventive system and human rights interact, and enrich one another. The preventive system offers human rights a unique and innovative educational approach in regard to the movement for the promotion and the protection of human rights, a feature of which until now has been condemnation 'after the event' - condemnation of violations already committed. The preventive system offers human rights a preventative education, in other words proposals and action to be carried out 'beforehand'.

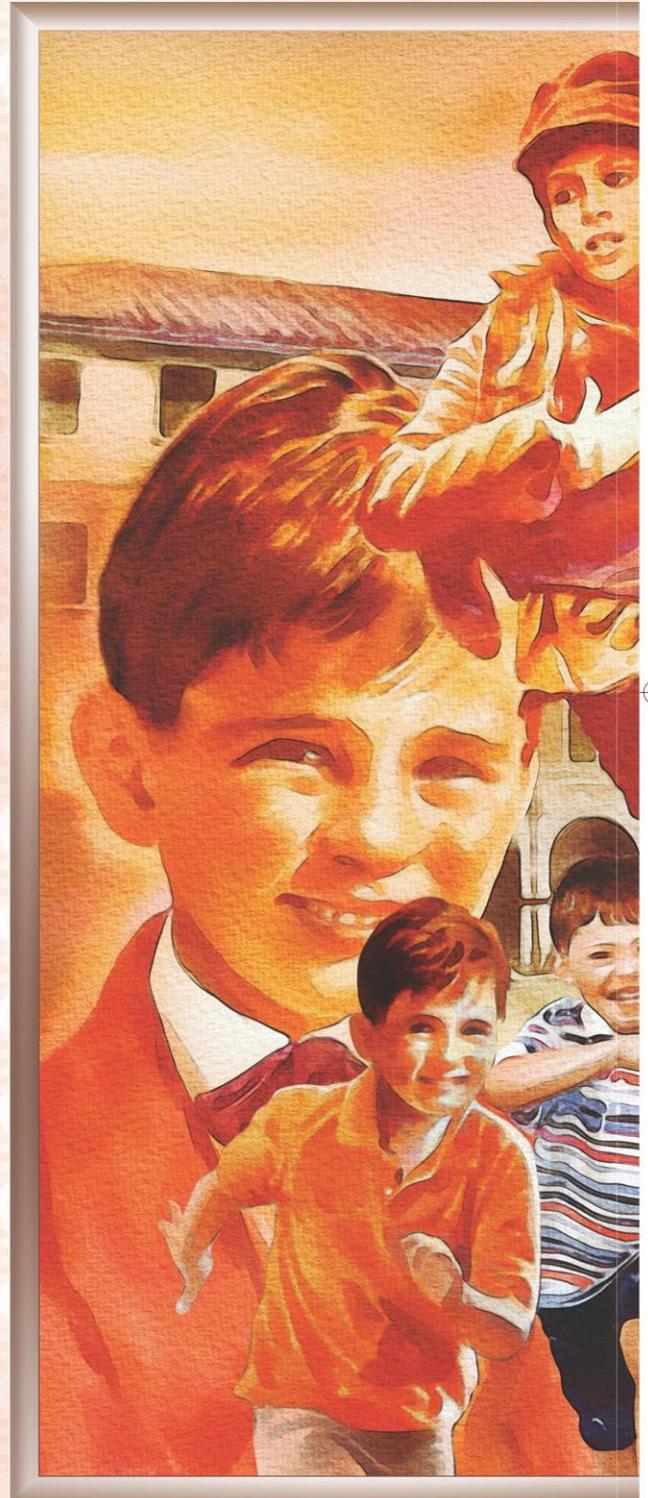
At the same time human rights provide the preventive system with new frontiers and opportunities for dialogue and for collaboration in networking with others in order to identify and to remove the causes of injustice, evil and violence. In addition, human rights offer the preventive system new frontiers and opportunities to have a social and cultural influence as an effective response to the drama of modern humanity, of the separation between education and society, the gap between schooling and citizenship.

GOSPEL OF JOY

GOSPEL OF JOY

The heart and soul of all Salesian work

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GOSPEL OF JOY

The Pope and the Young

by Donato Lacedonio



What did I see in Rio de Janeiro? Before answering that question however, it would be best to present myself. I am Fr Donato Lacedonio, a Salesian priest who had the duty and honour of taking part in the World Youth Day at Rio de Janeiro as a journalist. Yes, not your usual role, but an interesting one because it offered a chance of sharing in the event from quite a different angle. It was not my first WYD! I had been to one as a young person myself, back in 1984 when John Paul II made the first great call and the WYD 'train' left the station for the first time. Later I accompanied groups to Paris, Rome, Cologne and by the time it was Madrid's turn, I was already a journalist and correspondent.

Now let me return to the question! What did I see at Rio de Janeiro?

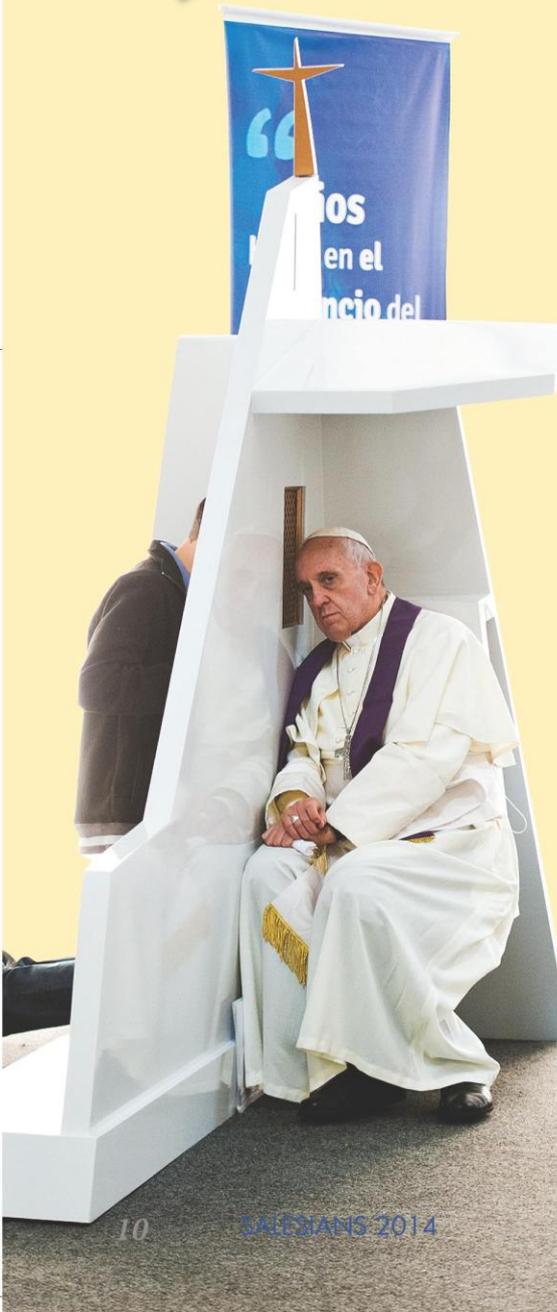
I saw, within the framework of a city of many social hues, two things: the Pope and the young.

I saw a Pope who had sought out contact with the people since his election, and who at Rio de Janeiro had sought out young people.

The countless occasions of him shaking hands, embracing, looking whoever he encountered in the eye, heedless of security details. When he was greeting youthful representatives of various nations – or others who had particular roles in the various encounters – he treated them as if they were the only people there at the time. A smile, a word, an embrace... moments that will remain lifelong memories for those youngsters.

The Pope tried not to preach, but encounter people through simple words and gestures, with an open heart, an authentically human connection.

I saw the Pope use young people's language, body language and gestures – a typical greeting of his was the "everything ok!?" thumbs up sign – images drawn from daily life, little contemporary parables. An example for everyone:





<http://mjs.org.br/>



during the vigil on Saturday 27 July, Pope Francis asked the young to take their own formation seriously, and how did he do it? He used a metaphor from football: "Jesus is asking you to follow him throughout life, asking you to be his disciples, to 'play in his team'. Most of you love sport. And here in Brazil, like in other countries, football is a national passion. Yes or no? Well then, what does a player do when he is asked to be part of the team? He has to train, he has to train a lot! And it's the same in our lives as Jesus' disciples. St Paul described Christians like this: "Everyone who goes into the games competes in strict training; they do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever" (1 Cor 9:25)".

I saw the Pope being close to youthful hearts, asking them warmly to establish a dialogue. Don Bosco's words - "It is not enough to love the young: they need to know they are loved" - seems to fit Pope Francis perfectly and everything that happened at Rio de Janeiro: young people felt loved by Pope Francis and the Church.

The young were invited to be revolutionaries, to "stir things up" (the original

Spanish he used was: *lio*). It is not a very politically correct word, but it is well suited to express what the Pontiff had already asked of Argentinean youth. He asked young people not to give in to a throwaway culture, to a culture of euthanasia. He asked them to be protagonists, to know how to say "yes" to what the Gospel offers, without fear, their heads held high. He got them to understand that being Christ's disciples is not a call to fireside comfort.

At Rio de Janeiro I saw the response from young people.

I can attest to the fact that the rapport Pope Francis sought with them was successful!

If he was smiling, for their part they were too; if he gave them the thumbs up, there were many young people who gave it back to him; if he loved the young... the young loved him and do love him!

Testimonies of affection and devotion at Rio de Janeiro were real. Young people had understood his language!

Especially when he was the first to "go, without fear, and serve"! He walked through the streets and with people in the community (*favela*) at Varginha, went into one family's home, took a *zucchetto* (papal cap) thrown at him by a youngster and replaced his own with it, got the popemobile to stop so he could get off and greet a disabled person, ...

Young people understood what he was asking them because during the more intense moments of prayer – adoration and Eucharistic consecration – they watched in silence the dialogue that Pope Francis was having with Jesus, in all its simplicity, personally, lovingly.

And what have I personally brought back from the WYD in Rio de Janeiro?

The responsibility of a Salesian encouraged by what Pope Francis told priests who were accompanying the groups: "Please, keep on accompanying them generously and joyfully; help them to get actively involved in the Church; let them never feel they are alone!" 



EDUCATION **through sailing**

by Andrzej Król, *yachtmaster*

It's just like with education. You can whinge about how weird kids are, not to say difficult; you can say that it was different back in the old days, that in the past the younger generation had more tact and a romantic spirit; or you can simply, unfazed by all this, start another adventure and try to positively change the kids. This is how it has worked at the Saltrom Yacht Club for almost 20 years now. Thousands of nautical miles, hundreds of voyages, training, events, and an unmatched atmosphere – all this encouraged us – as Maxwell wrote – to hoist the sails and “sail out”. It is the kids that spur us older ones to “get our sailing jacket and sweater” and start another adventure each season, teaching and educating. For surely nobody can doubt that sailing can educate.

Through these years of experience in the Ma-





*The pessimist complains about the wind.
The optimist expects it to change.
The leader adjust the sails.*

Jon. C. Maxwell

surian lakes and at sea I have observed how doing the daily dishes is educational, or washing the deck a few times a day, or preparing the meal, or keeping the ship or even your own bunk tidy and in order.

St John Bosco kept an eye on life in Turin's streets, stayed with young people who weren't necessarily the most ambitious, and tried to influence them. He wrote in his diaries: "I played with them, taught them, played football, and if I got the chance, prayed". He was unconventional, but also and unrelentingly consistent in education. He took great care of everyday details, for these in the long run bear fruit, producing good workers, fathers, mothers

and whole families. Thus sailing, commonly thought of just as a leisure activity meant to fill in free time and bring pleasure, was for us at the Saltrom Yacht Club a place for meeting young people and influencing them in a good way.

The young seek role models and want to look up to them. They can sense perfectly well when someone just assumes this position and when someone has it naturally, regardless of age, physical stature or the number of academic degrees. With squalls, ripped sails and 12 on the Beaufort scale at sea, and above all the awareness of what could have happened – with calm reserve, and of course experience

(though it sounds like over-confidence) we keep on searching for ways to reach yet another young person, like so often today lost in a medley of influences, family situations and social relations. And somewhat uncannily, as if out of the thickness of the fog there emerges an initiative, not just to spend free time, but a lifestyle – one endowed with self-awareness and responsibility. Life can be much like sailing itself – courageously facing new difficulties, trying to read new "life charts" to finally reach safe havens and escape the shoals. Life means "watching the lights" – the good, sure and confirmed guideposts and commands – always with humility, for this is how the sea teaches us to conquer "new lands".



GOSPEL OF JOY

Welcome to the Giovanni Circus!

Circus-like items were part of Don Bosco's educational tactics right from the outset. As a boy he had organised tight-rope acts, sleight of hand and magic tricks with coins to entertain the inhabitants at the Becchi. Then before the final act he would invite the spectators to say the rosary with him, and would repeat the sermon he had heard that morning at church. Later too, when looking after the boys in Turin, learning through games was an essential element of the oratory.

by Hannah-Magdalena Pink



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Abysmal marks in maths, reading difficulties, or problems with mum and dad – in the Circus “Giovanni” at Don Bosco Youth Centre in Bamberg none of these things matter. For the kids here what matters is being able to balance, do sleight of hand and work in a team. The way is then open for a gala performance... With full concentration the youngster comes slithering down the rope at speed. The fourteen-year-old then leaps off in such a way that the rope wraps itself around his leg. “Hey Mrs Jahn, come and have a look, I’ve learnt a new trick!”, he shouts proudly as he calls her over as she crosses the playground at St Josephheim’s in Bamberg. She patiently watches the new artistic trick as he does it again then says “Great!” She praises her pupil with a thumbs up and an acknowledging smile. The lad is doing some of his Circus training practice for the event that is held in the “Gio-

vanni” Big Top twice a week, where everyone works together on the different activities.

The circus at Don Bosco Youth Centre in Bamberg has been around for about 20 years now. Teens and even younger ones who come or live here can try out their skills here and forget their worries. The circus tent was put up permanently in Bamberg so that school groups could come as part of their weekly school assignments. Twice a week in the afternoons, the youngsters are offered an open training programme for the circus, and this is also open to others from Bamberg who come to Don Bosco Youth Centre.

Some of the smallest ones stay there because they have been neglected at home; maybe one or both parents is sick or substance dependant. Other children are hyperactive and





find school problematic and their parents just don't know what to do about their education. "We take in these kids almost exclusively because they have problems. We do our best to see where and what doesn't work" says Volker Traumann, the Circus Giovanni chief coordinator. "Here at Don Bosco we consider them as having a strong need to achieve some success".

The social worker recalls one boy in particular from the day centre, who initially had almost no self-esteem. "It was difficult for me and my colleagues at the Circus to get this boy to interact and get involved in activities", he says. He wouldn't have a go at any of the even ordinary things in circus routines like juggling, acrobatics or clowning. But one thing he was good at

was football, so the circus team thought up a special act for him: the football player who always got it right! The boy always worked with his assistant who would catch every ball he kicked with a butterfly net. It was an amusing circus act even if a little self-deprecating. "We wanted to highlight the boy's strengths", explains Volker Traumann. "Success in physical activities is strictly linked to psychological issues. The children get involved in these activities and it gives them greater self-esteem".

Meanwhile the Clowns are out there doing their practice. One of them comes up and very theatrically collapses on the ground. The Clown emergency rescue team intervenes. Little seven year-old Taoufik pulls a pizza made of

rubber out of his medical kit and sticks it under his nose. Immediately the clown who had 'fainted' jumps to his feet. "I think it's great being able to dress up in disguise at the circus", says Taoufik happily. His eyes are shining. The clown costume is a pair of striped trousers and a shirt, a coloured tie and clown's red nose: the kids have made these things themselves. They were also the ones who thought up the idea of a crazy rescue team.

The young artists from Circus Giovanni have to agree with one another about what role they want to play, and then decide on what to call the act before it goes on. For the regular performances the youngsters also usually decide on the order of the acts and the closing item.

During practice sessions the trainers offer advice here and there but the final performances always run smoothly in front of parents, siblings, grandparents. They always get enthusiastic applause and plenty of attention, and it is not rare that one finds their mothers' eyes brimming with tears.

Volker Traumann and his colleagues observe that the results of this circus training with boys and girls from Don Bosco Centre is just about always a great surprise for their parents. Some of the children who were so often lacking in motivation or found difficulty concentrating, are much more involved and focused as a result. For many of their parents this is a completely new experience.

<http://www.zirkusgiovanni.de/>



Foto: Don Bosco Jugendwerk Bamberg



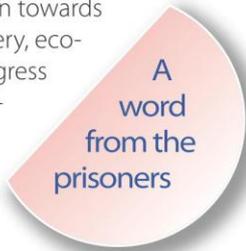


Jeevan Asha: Project for Prisoners' Children Back Home

Jeevan Asha helps children of prisoners. It sees to their education, and physical and mental well being. They overcome shame and the stigmatization, and reshape their lives. Holy Child Home has 125 girls, all children of female prisoners and commercial sex workers. It is a joint venture with Prison Directorate, Government of West Bengal and Sisters of Charity of Sts. B. Capitanio and V. Gerosa.



Don Bosco Prison Ministry works on the side also to serve needy tribal youth and women towards self discovery, economic progress and leadership.



"I am a released prisoner. I spent 7 years in Jail. While I was there I learnt motor driving and engine maintenance from Don Bosco Prison Ministry. After my release, I got a job as a driver. I have now collected enough money to buy a new vehicle with a bank loan. I maintain my family with this income. I will remain ever grateful to Don Bosco Prison Ministry for showing me a better path".
Oudud SK

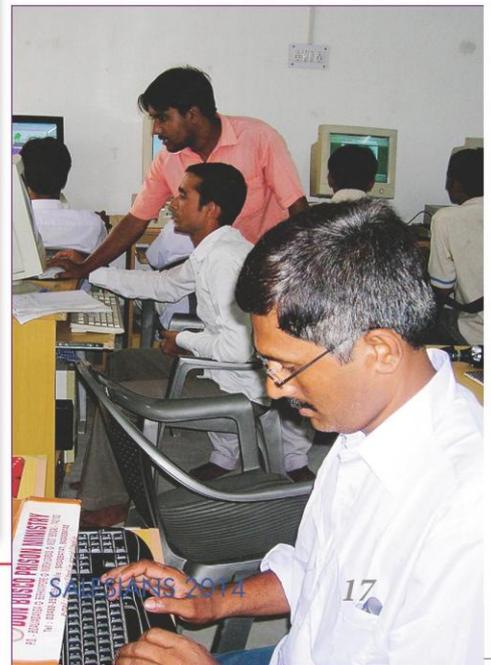


"I am from Malda in West Bengal. I have completed 20 years already at Berhampore Central Prison. I have applied for life parole through the assistance of Don Bosco Prison Ministry. I learnt motor driving, house wiring and motor winding from DBPM. I am also a member of Don Bosco Band in the jail. I was just 18 when I entered here. I had lost all hope for a better future. But life changed as I got in touch with Don Bosco Prison Ministry. Today I am happy. I have a hope for better days. This is the life situation of most prisoners in this jail. Don Bosco Prison Ministry has transformed this jail into a home. This is admitted by not only the prisoners but the authorities as well".

Philip Soren (Life Convict)

"My name is Raju Sharma. I do not know who my father is. My mother, Mira Sharma, is a mental patient. She was not a criminal but was sent to jail in 2000, for what they called "safe custody". I was born in 2001 in jail. I grew up there. I was 4 years old when I pleaded with Fr. N.T. Scaria, Director of Don Bosco Prison Ministry, to take me with him. Through a court order, he released me and my mother from jail. My mother was sent to Mother Teresa Home, Shantidan at Kolkata, for treatment. She is still there. I was admitted to an English Medium school. Now I can speak 4 languages - English, Bengali, Santali and Hindi. When I complete my studies, I will look for a job and I will care for my mother. It is all due to Don Bosco Prison Ministry. Like me several other children are taken out and cared for by Fr. Scaria".

Raju Sharma



GOSPEL OF JOY

SPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

by Chris Ford

Everyone knows that boys love sport. The boys here at Don Bosco Technical Centre are no exception: they love their sport... and that is an understatement!

Until recently, however, sporting opportunities were limited. So we purchased a rugby ball and allowed the boys to play touch rugby on the field. The Sports Committee and the St Vincent de Paul group joined forces to set up two volleyball courts. The Woodwork Department constructed three table tennis tables. Initially, sport was confined to the morning break. It was then extended to Tuesday and Thursday mornings before school (days when there is no assembly). We have now extended morning sport to every morning before school.

The impact of such a simple change in the life of the Centre has been dramatic. The re-introduction of sport has revolutionised the culture of the school overnight. Don Bosco Technical Centre is a much happier place because our boys have ready access to sporting opportunities every day. The impact upon school life has been very obvious:

The number of boys late for school on any particular day has reduced significantly as they want to get here in advance of lessons to play. "Lates" per day have gone from an average of 20–25 per day to 0–5 per day.

Our boys are arriving at school much earlier so they can play their games. Consequently, they are getting

into less trouble at the Market Bus Exchange of a morning because they come to school to play games instead of hanging around the market until the last moment, which also inevitably left them late for school.

The level of violence at school has immediately dropped because the boys have something positive to do. There have been no fights and only



<http://www.donboscosamoa.org/>





Fr Chris Ford SDB, Principal of Don Bosco Technical Centre, Alafua, Samoa, reconnects with and affirms Don Bosco's views on sporting activities in education:

"The teacher who is seen only in the classroom is a teacher and nothing more; but if he joins in the recreation he becomes a brother. If someone preaches he is doing his duty, whereas if he says a good word in recreation it is heard as the word of one who loves. How many conversions have been brought about by a few words in recreation".

(From the Letter from Rome, attributed to Don Bosco)



two small "scraps" for the year to date.

The boys are visibly much happier, and explicitly and openly say so.

The energy levels of the boys have increased significantly.

Those less inclined to want to play sport have a more peaceful and safer environment in which to sit around and talk to their friends.

The teachers are happier because

the boys are happier, better behaved and more willing to reciprocate the good things that have been done for them.

All these things could have been expected. What I didn't expect was the level of gratitude that I have encountered amongst the boys. I have been astounded at the number of boys who have directly approached me to explicitly thank me for the games and sport. I'm not just talking about a few boys. There have been 20 to 25 boys who, in one

way or another have come and approached me saying "thanks for the games".

This set me thinking and it was then that I remembered that in his biography of Michael Magone, Don Bosco says that a spirit of gratitude is one of the signs of God's grace in the life of a boy. While Don Bosco was thinking of Magone himself, I applied this same principle to our boys. If this is extrapolated to the whole school level, then the spirit of gratitude that I have encountered amongst our boys is surely a sign of the presence of God

in our midst.



GOSPEL OF JOY



They are cheerful, and it is a spontaneous, not a stereotypical cheerfulness. They pray, not in tired old formulas but like someone in conversation with God. They sing their hearts out, a single throat, their voices in perfect tune. They greet you with a simple-mindedness that shines on their faces. Just who are they? You will need to keep reading...

by Heriberto Herrera

They work with such vigour that it is difficult to explain where they get so much energy from. They live in community more in fellowship than by hierarchy.

They live like other women of the region, without a habit that would set them apart from their cultural setting. Just a modest crucifix identifies them as consecrated women.

Their field of work covers extensive rural areas. They travel in battered up old buses, in the back of pick-ups, like any other person living in the area. They go long distances on foot to catch up with the people they look after.

And almost magically they gather children, older youth, women, adults. They skilfully run and look after so many little groups as well as big assemblies. Leadership runs in their blood.

They are well accepted in rural communities. They move skilfully from children, to adults to the elderly. It is evident that they demonstrate an inner authority which leads to a natural kind of leadership.

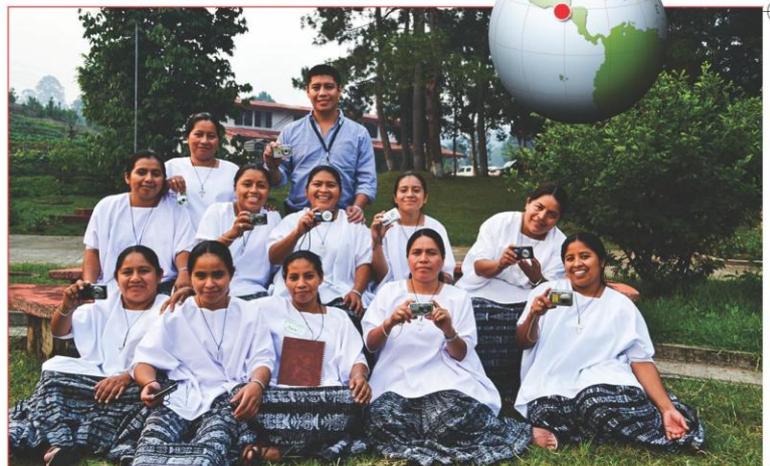
They are very clever at passing on the Gospel message through songs, skits, dances and images. Youths and little children are enchanted by these activities which are at one and the same time prayer, entertainment, art and fellowship.

They are hungry to learn whatever can be useful for their pastoral work. They compose music on a computer, create and broadcast radio programmes, are keep constantly in touch with their closest helpers by mobile phone, and by sending out pamphlets on catechetics.

Recently, and with almost childlike enthusiasm, they launched into the Internet. They already have Gmail and Facebook accounts. They have easily learned how to take photos, send them by email or use them as resources for ministry.

We are speaking of the Sisters of the Resurrection, an indigenous Qeqchí Congregation which came into existence in San Pedro Carchá, in Guatemala's northern region. The original idea was to offer a religious charism to indigenous young women without the western 'packaging'. They wanted to be able to be religious without renouncing who they were as indigenous women.

The experiment is working.



GOSPEL OF JOY

Music and theatre:

dreaming like Don Bosco did

by Marian Serrano

A muse, instruct and form". According to Don Bosco these are the three things that theatre, as employed in educating the young, are meant to achieve. They are also aims that continue to have weight today in Salesian houses where theatre is part of the education that is on offer. It may be an extra-curricular activity or something done in leisure time.

The West Europe Region has many examples of this, some more distinguished than others, or more technically elaborate, but always focused on the education of boys and girls. Several months back the Salesian Provincial in Madrid, Fr Luis Onrubia, had the following to say in an interview given to media in the Spanish capital:

"You have always placed great emphasis in your schools on theatre and music. Do

you believe they are special ways of forming young people"?

"We do it because this is handed down from Don Bosco. He brought youngsters into the oratory, and music and theatre were educational tools. The kids get involved, feel as if they are being active, and are educated in values through it".

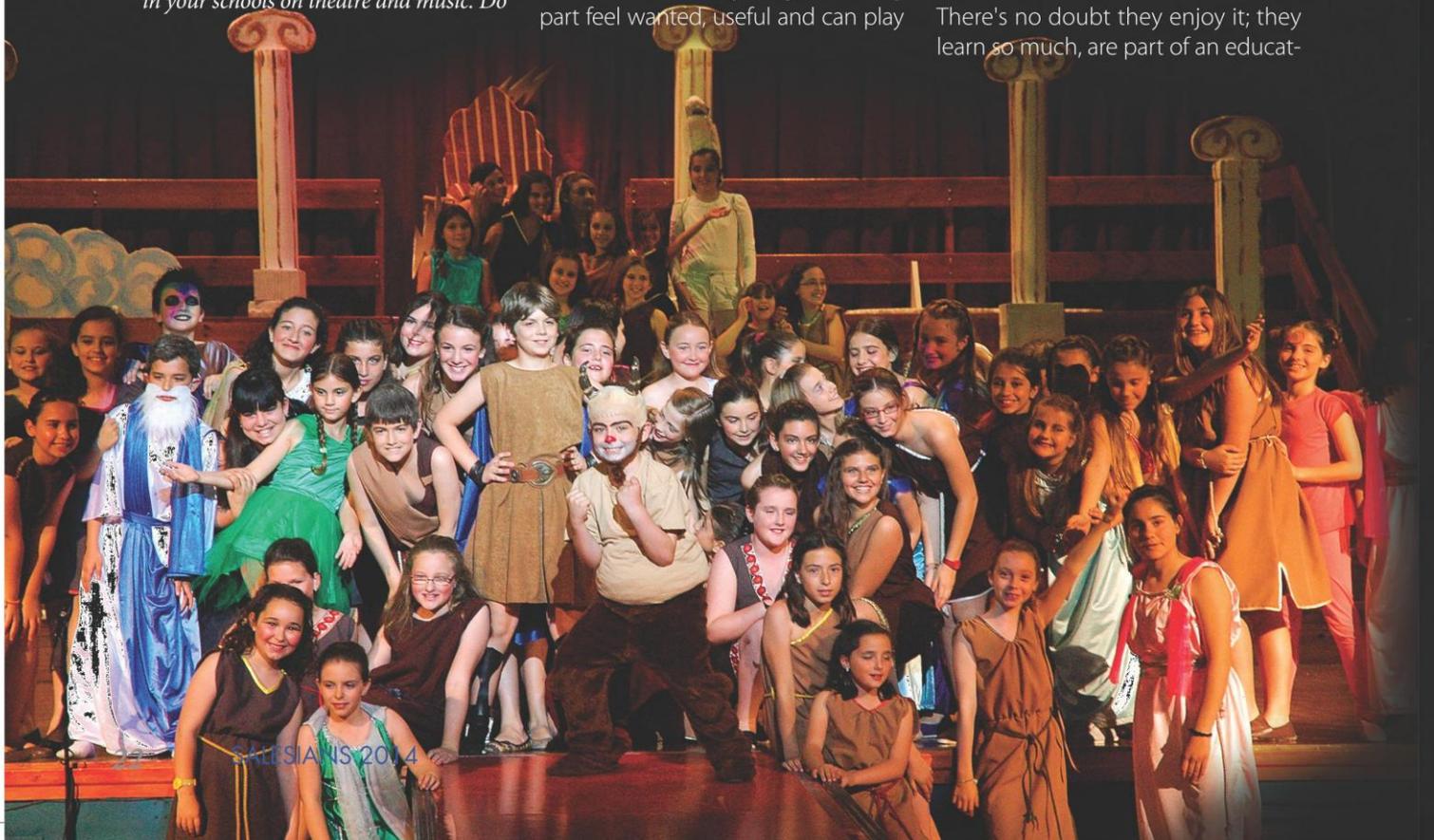
So many experiences

Across the entire region: from France to Portugal, then in the Spanish provinces there are just so many experiences of theatre, many of them (for a number of years here) are musicals where music and its theatrical interpretation go together. There is no joint planning as such, no real need for that, but there is a common focus: using a medium so that the youngsters taking part feel wanted, useful and can play

an active role in their own development.

It is not just something that has been happening recently; it began long ago. In some cases, in the 1980s (around the time of the centenary of Don Bosco's death) the musicals performed were written by Salesians: "Don Bosco, John the dreamer", etc... or some were well-known ones like "Godspell" and "Jesus Christ Superstar"... It is an educational offering that has never been lacking and that, like other areas, has adapted to the times, to youthful culture. Currently, musicals, plays, etc. are multiplying everywhere. They involve many youngsters everywhere, often as part of their leisure time, and it helps them use free time productively and not just consumers of things made by other people.

There's no doubt they enjoy it; they learn so much, are part of an educat-





<http://www.salesianosdeusto.com/>



ing community, and they grow up and mature in this context. A significant number of musicals have been produced this past year, and just to name some: "The Mermaid" by the Amorevo group (Madrid), "Grease, the musical", by the Salesians at Deusto (Bilbao), "On the Tightrope" in France, "Moulin Rouge", Valencia, "Dreaming awake" by the Aleste theatre group (Valladolid), "Wicked" by the Gaztetxo theatre school (Guipuzkoa), etc. . .

If we speak with the organisers and players in the different groups they say one thing in common: "If this is a dream, may it not finish here". There are many musicals premiered each year in which young people demonstrate their interpretative and technical skills, where they grow in friendship and values, where their dreams become re-

ality, dreaming but awake and with feet firmly planted as it was with Don Bosco, and as is the case with the teachers who work with them today.

Ability, professionalism and gratitude

Just a few days ago I read a critique of one of these musicals: "I had not planned to write it up since it was an amateur group, but after the show I thought it deserved at least a review in my blog. The actors played their roles with great skill, both at the level of interpretation and through song and dance. . . The set was surprisingly professional, the deployment of effects, scenery and costumes was all carefully considered and produced amazing results".

Similar critical reviews can be found in

local and regional newspapers regarding performances by Salesian groups. It is not a coincidence; everything is well thought out, each group in their own situation does its utmost to stage things well. They are learning and they are competent, young people and everyone else involved, pursuing the best results.

The collaboration of the entire school or educative community is important within this overall picture. It is a disinterested and freely offered work. Parents, instructors, many others lend professional support as part of the planning, and they are amazed at the level of involvement of the actors; it becomes contagious: putting up scenery, preparing effects, making costumes, whatever else is needed to help, like one big family: each lends his or her talents and we see, feel and experience the results.

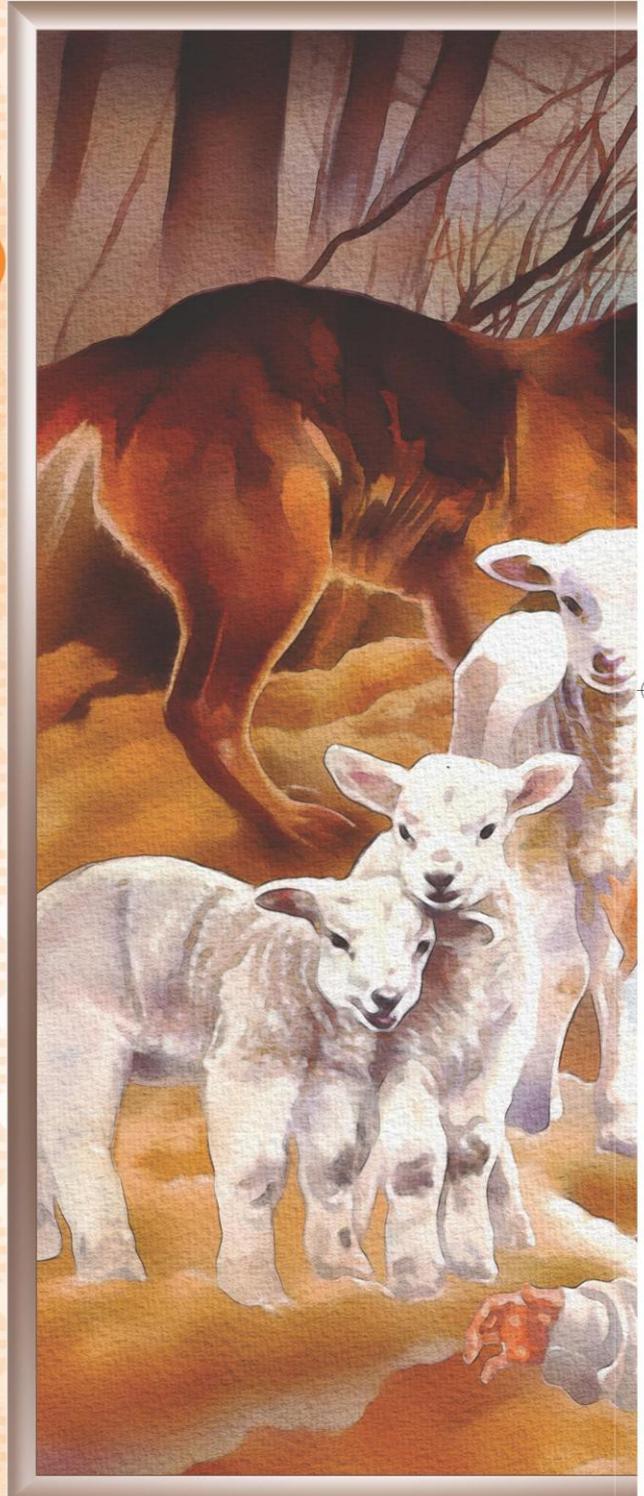


PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

Authentic love that comes from God

- ▶ Don Bosco's Way in other religious traditions (India)
- ▶ Don Bosco Houses (Ireland)
- ▶ A presence with a story (Morocco)
- ▶ Savio House: Salesian windows on the world (UK)
- ▶ From Lenin to Don Bosco (Ukraine)
- ▶ A story of reconciliation (Italy)
- ▶ Heart of Don Bosco, heart of the Americas (Bolivia)





PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

Don Bosco's Way in other religious traditions

a South Asian version of the Salesian Educational Method

DBWAY is Don Bosco's Way of educating for a happy life in a multi-religious context. In view of 2015, the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth, Salesians from the South Asia Region felt the urgency of involving greater collaboration from teachers and youth workers of all Salesian educational and developmental institutions. Since most teachers in South Asia come from different religious traditions, it was necessary to adapt Don Bosco's method in such a way that all could understand and practise it.

A one-day introductory course presents the novelty and importance of using the DBWAY in Salesian educational practice. The course is followed up by a self-study manual which participants are obliged to study within six months of appearing for a test. Each participant who clears the test is awarded a certificate. The one-day introductory course begins with a critical study of the three systems that have dominated the history of education: the systems of repression, prevention and expression. Against this background, participants are introduced to Don Bosco's unique ability to blend prevention and expression through an active presence among the young based on reason, religion and rapport.

by Peter Gonsalves

The DBWAY course has been specially created for the staff of institutions run by the Salesian Family. Participants who have at least three years' experience in working with young people usually benefit more. The course can also be used as an induction programme for new staff members in Salesian educational institutions.

The DBWAY course was put together by a think-tank comprising Salesian personnel and non-Catholic staff at the Don Bosco Centre for Learning, Kurla, Mumbai. Upon completion of the DBWAY course, participants should have a working knowledge of the values, attitudes and skills required for its successful implementation. They will develop greater awareness of the importance of Salesian education for our times.

The first attempt at elaborating a self-study manual on Don Bosco's Way was created in July 2008 in response to a request from the management of Don Bosco Centre for Learning. The first courses were conducted in the province of Mumbai during the visit of Don Bosco's relic in August 2011. From August 2011 to December 2013, courses have been conducted in eight Salesian Provinces of India involving approximately 4000 participants 

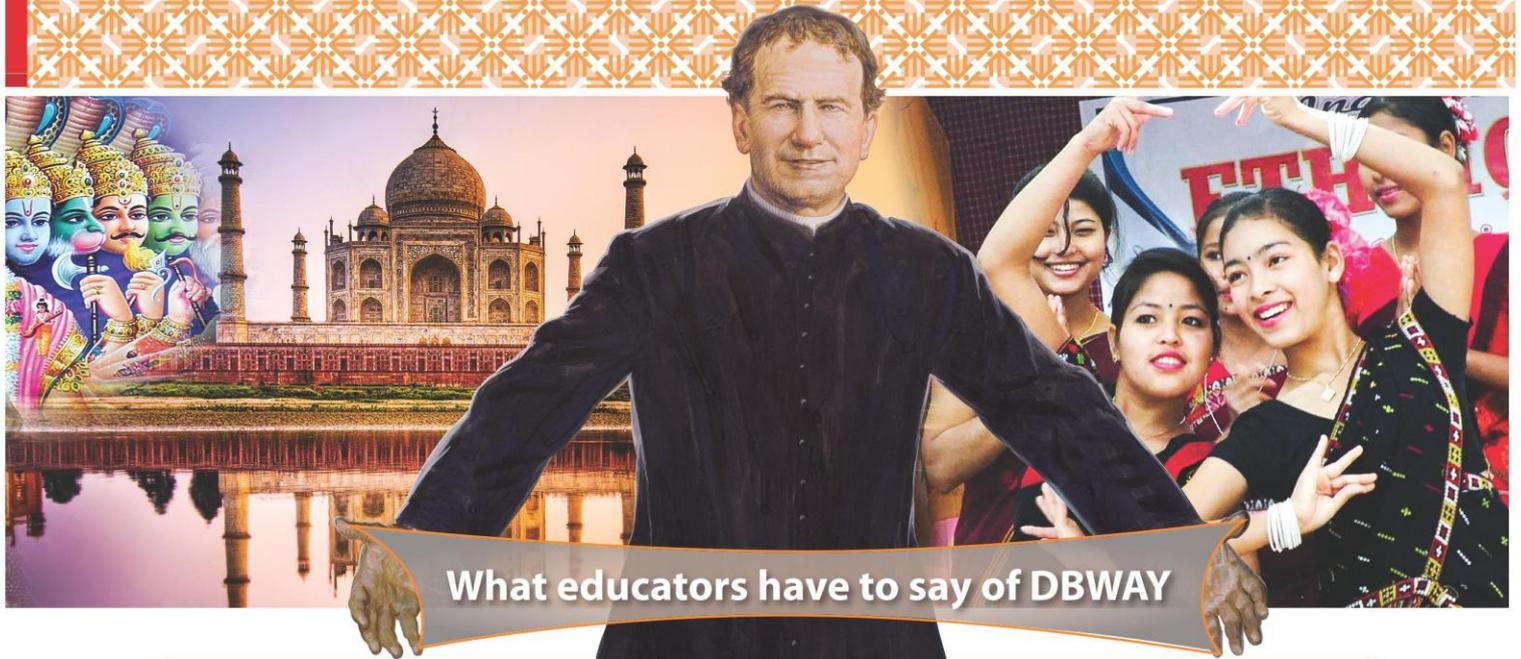


<http://www.dbway.in>



SALESIANS 2014





What educators have to say of DBWAY

"My passion to be with children has been my guiding voice towards becoming an educator ever since I was little. As a calling, teaching to me is an effective and fulfilling way of changing the world. This being said, it has not made my journey as an educator a cake-walk. There have been a zillion hurdles that have made me question my methods, my abilities and my very choice to be an educator. At this time fine-tuning my intellectual, emotional and spiritual receptors periodically into the reasons why I am in this profession helps me. DBWay has been an instrument for the same.

The concrete teacher behavioural pointers based not just on a psychologically sound setting, but a firm spiritual foundation combined with Don Bosco's actual life examples found in the DBWay provided me with the why's and how's of being an effective educator, a world changer. It has helped me understand and appreciate Don Bosco's progressive way and has served as a crucible to harness, focus and accentuate my beliefs, my faith and convictions in being a Salesian educator".

Valerie Mascarenhas
(St Dominic Savio High School, Andheri)

"Education makes a man, or woman as it may be. It is the most precious gift and the most effective tool that can be given to children to enable them to survive and thrive in this ever-changing world.

Don Bosco visualized this long ago. He enjoyed the company of the children and said to them- "In your midst I am always at home". He implemented his belief:

- From "Repression to prevention,
- Not with blows but with Love and Kindness,
- Building a rapport with support,
- With reason to recognition,
- Not by expecting but by accepting.

Don Bosco's preventive system caters to RTE (Right to education) which gives children an opportunity to learn and helps them to meet the challenges to handle the skills of the past by understanding and coordinating with constant change by practising values like the three G's- "Gratitude, Goodness and Generosity" thereby giving young people opportunity for maturing in body, mind and spirit and becoming honest citizens, contributing positively to the betterment of the society".

Soumya Khosla

"Education is not merely the imparting of knowledge or the enhancement of skills to read, write, calculate and memorise. True education aims to improve the quality of life in any given society.

Holistic education were the words that caught my eye and so the DBWay was important in helping me understand the holistic way of education better. It gave me an insight into two systems of education, the Preventive and Expressive, and three essential components of holistic growth: rapport, reason and religion.

I have learned that the first step to being an excellent educator is establishing a good rapport with the students, using reasoning skills while correcting them and helping them have a sincere and a truthful relationship with God so that they can achieve their set goals. I know that my job doesn't end in the classroom teaching i.e. only teaching textual knowledge, but touching the students' lives and helping them gain overall development.

The age-wise application of the DBWay is so applicable that it helps me counsel or understand a child better".

Renilda Fernandes
(St Dominic Savio High School, Andheri)

PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

Don Bosco houses

giving teenagers a chance

by Jennifer May

Fr Val Collier is a man who has spent his life not only looking after the material needs of vulnerable teenage boys, providing them with a home (known simply in Dublin as 'Don Bosco's'), but also giving them the love, encouragement and renewed self-confidence they need to believe that they too can be great.



<http://www.teenagecare.ie>

Successful Irish business man and entrepreneur Mark O'Callaghan cannot speak highly enough about his time in Don Bosco's: "I was living in a hostel and was expelled from school when I moved into Don Bosco's," says Mark. "It was great, like a proper home. Fr Val fought for me to get back into school - he does astonishing work and has for many years. He is an amazing man."

Fr Val puts any praise at the feet of Don Bosco, who founded the Salesians in Italy in 1859. It was the Salesians' dedication, their unique, holistic approach to troubled young people, and their commitment to education that attracted Fr Val; he was ordained in September 1972 after spending six years in Assam, India. "I was very interested in their mission to young people; especially those on the margins who were needy, vulnerable; those who could use help to grow and reach their

potential in life. My belief is that every young person should have a fair chance in life irrespective of background or circumstances of birth."

In 1970, Ireland's Kennedy Report recommended the closure of industrial schools. However the Salesians had recognized the need for an alternative model, and in 1978 set up their first home for teenage boys in Gardiner Street, Dublin. "There were a lot of reports at the time of young people homeless, at risk, on Dublin's streets," says Fr Val. "We were among the first organizations to start a small group home to give more attention to young people who needed support and care."

In those early days, staff numbers were very small - just two Salesians and 3 lay staff, caring for 14 teenagers, but they worked incredibly long hours to ensure that the ethos of Don Bosco



was alive and well from the very beginning. "He was, I believe, a hundred years ahead of his time," says Fr Val. "He didn't believe in corporal punishment but took an approach based on reason, religion and loving kindness; we have carried that ethos right through."

There are now six Don Bosco houses across Dublin two of which cater for boys between the ages of 13 and 18, and the remainder dedicated to transitional after-care – an important step



between leaving a care home and entering independent living, of which Don Bosco Teenage Care is the leading pioneer.

Most of the children for various reasons are unable to live at home. Many are suffering deep hurt and have had their self esteem eroded by years of either emotional or physical abuse. This is where the Don Bosco ethos comes into play. "When a child comes to us, it is important he feels welcomed, accepted, wanted in every possible way and made part of us", explains Fr Val. "Our houses are like small communities, families, and our ethos is about respecting the dignity of a person, building up self-esteem; it doesn't happen overnight."

Life in the homes is certainly like being part of a family. Numbers are kept purposely small (there are currently five boys in the Dromcondra house). Boys

have their own bedrooms, and there is a TV room, games room as well as a pleasant, spacious garden. Children are encouraged to do light chores, keep their room tidy, and days are structured as they would be in any home: breakfast, school or college, lunch, homework, dinner, recreation time; bed at a reasonable hour. Privacy and personal space are sacrosanct and the boys are actively encouraged to bring their friends home, just as if they were living at home.

Continue to give a chance

Government funding has been drastically cut in recent years, so Don Bosco's has been forced to raise its profile to generate much needed funds. "This is a big concern for us," Fr Val admits. "While we can cut back on overheads, we can't cut back on clothes, shoes, food or staffing. It is easier to fund-raise for something like a house, much

harder for day-to-day living expenses."

Today there is even more of a need for services like Don Bosco's and Fr Val admits that this shocks him somewhat. "When we started, I thought our work would be finished in ten years, but it has multiplied", he admits. "Drugs are a big factor in all of this - we have 'drug families' where the parents use and the kids are affected accordingly. I think we have a greater breakdown in family life than we did 30 years ago."

After 28 years as director of Don Bosco's, Fr Val has now handed over the reins to Martin Burke whose twenty years experience with the organization ensures that it runs as smoothly as ever. Fr Val continues in a supporting role, and can look proudly back on the last three decades, knowing that most of the boys flourished under the loving guidance they experienced under his care. Many of them have gone on to great careers, or are also happily married with children of their own; proof positive that the Don Bosco approach works.

They often keep in touch - send Christmas cards, write letters - and let him and the other staff know how they are doing. And remarkably, even the boys who didn't have such fairy-tale endings have only good to say about their experience. "Even those young people who didn't seem to do very well and we were unhappy we didn't succeed more with - you meet them and they might say, 'How are things in Bosco's? That was the best place I was ever in'. Higher praise you could not ask for."

PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

A presence with a story



All the school year and a good many activities have focused on the 75th anniversary. A cultural week in May, a central event for local authorities, parents, past pupils and friends brought together a good number of friends of "Don Bosco".

In Kénitra this name evokes a style, quality, an admirable story. In a completely Muslim setting not everyone knows who Don Bosco is, nor have they much of an idea of what it means to "be Christian", but they do perceive that there is love, dedication, and that we work with youth. Amongst pupils, teachers and past pupils, Don Bosco is known, called upon, admired and frequently quoted.

Often people call in who say they are past pupils from just a few years back – or more than 50 years back. I would like to tell you a story: one gentleman, a past pupil, engineer and businessman in Rabat, came to pay us a visit. He arrived just before recreation at 10 in the morning. He walked around the playground, looking at everything, then asked if he could go and see some classes, the corridors. An hour later, with tears in his eyes, he told me: "Father, this is where I spent the best years of my life, and all the running and jumping I did; We were really very happy. It is true that the Director was a bit strict, but he had a heart of gold..." This was a pupil from the 1970s.

This could be the story for so many past pupils who studied at St John Bosco's since 1937. It was all very small at the beginning, in the basement of

Salesians in Morocco for 75 years

Salesians have been working at Kénitra for 75 years. This is a jubilee they have celebrated with great enthusiasm and "Don Bosco Kénitra" has been on everyone's lips, speaking of how well it has done. The Salesians arrived in 1937, led by Fr Leon Beissiere, a Salesian who had received his religious habit from Don Bosco himself. Kénitra was a smallish town, now with 800,000 inhabitants and about 30 kms north of Rabat.

by José Antonio Vega



<http://www.donbosco-kenitra.org/>



the large church, and much bigger today. Each decade has seen innovation, transformation, new initiatives, all for the youth of Kénitra.

More than 180 foreign teachers (French, at the time of the Protectorate) or Moroccans who taught here with a sense of duty and competence, and some 50 Salesians who have led the various sectors: Parish, School, College, the JUK Association (*Joyeuse Union de Kénitra*; in English "The Kenitra Glee Club!"), and the technical school, JUK-SPEL (Focusing on electricity),

The school has had difficult moments: the Second World War, the country's independence, nationalisation of property, arabization... In each of these situations, "Don Bosco" has proven its worth, impartiality and initiative. Its aim has been to continue its service to youth, without discrimination, in a spirit of openness, meaning the Preventive System of that great educator St John Bosco.

His spiritual sons have passed on these values and now so many teachers in

this country love Don Bosco and have regard for his pedagogy that puts the young person and confidence at the centre. Each child is loved and valued. The school has but one aim: helping each person to grow and be a good believer and a good citizen: this is a value for society.

"Don Bosco", our school, is not just one more school in Kénitra: it is a set of values that we wish to pass on to future generations.

Currently we have 950 pupils in the primary school and college, with 160 in the Vocational section and 40 children who had left school. Also dependent on us is a diocesan kindergarten with 240 children and a girls section with 30.

There is a large number of sub-Saharan students in Moroccan cities, mainly from French, Portuguese or Spanish-speaking countries. Perhaps as many as 25,000. In Kénitra, there are around 1000, and they regard Don Bosco as a centre for their cultural sporting and other celebrations on Saturdays and

Sundays. As for the authorities in Morocco, our work is theirs, and they include Muslims, Catholics, Protestants. They meet at our place, play, commemorate national celebrations or have conferences.

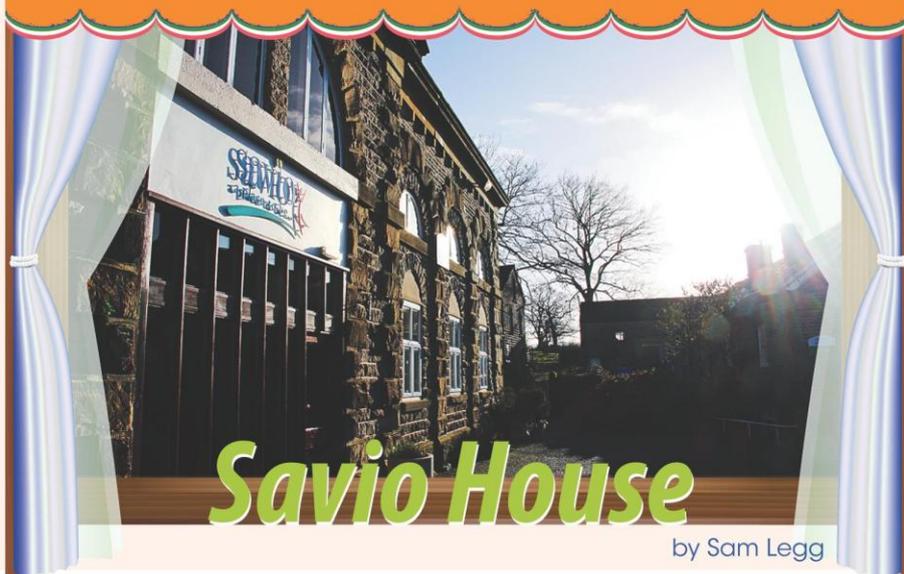
The Salesians were once asked to look after a flourishing parish with a large church. The faithful were thousands of Europeans from the towns and countryside, but for historical reasons they returned to their countries. In 1974 we abandoned the large church for a smaller chapel. Today there are some 120 Catholics, all foreigners, more black than white, younger rather than older, more males than females. It might be a strange thing for other parts of the world but it is a very lively community that witnesses to its faith amidst a believing people of a different culture. It is not easy, but it is an important sign in a Muslim setting.

Our work has an excellent web presence (donbosco-kenitra.org), where you can see the vitality and appreciate what can be done using Don Bosco's approach amongst non-Christians. 



PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

Salesian windows on the world



by Sam Legg

Hidden in the idyllic English countryside village of Bollington, up a long, winding drive with fields of sheep and lambs either side, lies Savio House Retreat Centre. Run by the Salesians for a number of decades, Savio House is one of only two places in the UK Province that sees SDBs and lay volunteers living and working together in the same community.

Savio House is primarily used as a Retreat Centre for Catholic students. Schools come from all over England on retreat – a chance to get away from the city, and an opportunity to get to know their peers, themselves, God, better. Retreats are an embodiment of the Salesian Spirituality focused on the four windows: Church, School, Playground and Home.

Usually centred on a theme such as water, journeys or choices, young people are encouraged to engage not just with the Retreat Team, but with each other on a level that they might not have the opportunity to do so at home. Leading the young people through sessions designed to mimic aforementioned windows, they are taken on a journey from playing games and activities to sharing some of their life experiences in small groups. They spend time preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion, before having a celebration of each other in a session referred to as 'Affirmation', where retreatants are encouraged to write positive letters to each other, outlining the amazing and unique things about each other's personalities... and all of this takes place

in the comfortable, relaxing setting of the English countryside.

The Retreat Team consists of Salesian Priests and Brothers, who live at Savio permanently, as well as lay volunteers, who spend a year living and working as part of the community, often as a 'gap year' in between college and university education. Their work is supported and under-pinned by the conducive spirit of community which defines Savio as a 'place to be'. It is this, their tagline, which epitomises the spirit of the centre: it is a peaceful, docile space for people, for groups, for whomsoever to come, feel at home, and to be... whatever they like! A place to be loud, a place to be silent, a place to be thoughtful, a place to be prayerful, a place to be social; a place to be yourself, a place to be with God.

What makes Savio House even more of an integral part of the GBR Salesian Province is its function as a venue not just for retreats, but also for meetings, talks, seminars and workshops. The centre hosts Salesian Youth Ministry meetings three times a year, which bring together around 30 lay volun-

teers involved in Salesian Youth Ministry projects. One such project is Phoenix Days – which runs week-long holidays in the summer for disadvantaged young people. Having only started a couple of years ago, Phoenix is now rapidly expanding, and becomes fully booked almost immediately each year.

Savio has also hosted a number of Don Bosco Youth-Net activities over the past 10 years, which bring together Salesian volunteers from all over Europe to share their cultures, practices and experiences of working with and for young people. The most recent of which was a seminar held in November 2012 entitled 'Back to the Future', which helped volunteers who had spent an extended period of time abroad to share and reflect on their experiences, as well as encouraging them to consider and plan how to utilise their experiences pro-actively in their own organisations.

The team at Savio are also currently developing new ways of applying the Preventive System in a more environmental setting – taking advantage of the lush countryside surrounding the



site. Focusing on orienteering courses and bush-craft, these new initiatives have already attracted large groups such as the Scouts, and demonstrate the flexibility of Don Bosco's teachings. Speaking of the new developments, Savio's Rector, Fr David O'Malley SDB, said: "Don Bosco's fourfold pattern lends itself beautifully to seeing the environment as a home, a school, a playground and a church. It is a tribute to the wisdom of Don Bosco that his spirituality can open up new ways of meeting God in the sacramental experience of the outdoors".

Savio House is an integral piece in the landscape of the Salesian UK Province. Working with thousands of (predominantly young) people each year, and ensuring the continued involvement of young, Salesian volunteers, it represents the future of our Province and a place to be remembered by many who have passed through its doors.

Savio is a place to be at peace with one's self and with God. Speaking of the Youth Ministry's Young Adults' Retreat, held at Savio in April 2013, a young retreatant attested to its distinctly Salesian atmosphere: "It was extremely heart-warming; it brought out happiness, love, and... everything".

Savio is a place to be 



<http://www.saviohouse.org.uk/>



PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS



From Lenin to Don Bosco

by Giuseppe Casti

Youth organisations belonging to the PCUS, or “Pioneers” movement brought the 10 to 14 year-olds together. At 15 they then joined a group called Komsomol. The movement was founded in 1922, when it was called Spartacus. In 1924 it was then renamed. In inspiration it took the shape and even some of the language of the Scout movement but with a strong Marxist and materialist ideological basis drawn from the Party to which it was affiliated. When the Berlin wall fell the Soviet Union broke up and the Communist education system was in crisis. This likewise happened in the Ukraine in what had been Leopoli, today Lviv.



This was a difficult time for Olég Kúzik. He was born on 25 April 1969 into a working family. His parents were factory workers and even worked night times to earn enough to live on. His mother encouraged him to study. Little Olég sang in the choir when he was 7, had dancing lessons and attended music school. The Communist regime kept an eye on these promising youngsters and obliged them to join the Pioneers and Komsomol. Olég had no choice: anyone who was not a member of them could not get into university. But Oleg's mother followed him up closely during his university studies and did her best to keep the faith alive in her son's heart. To escape the suffocating control of the police they used to go into the countryside where there were no “agents of the system” and where the “vertep” sang their traditional melodies full of spirituality. In 1987 gained his degree and began work. His commitment to study and work, however, had not silenced the questions that





*Lenin had put up a Centre to strip God from the hearts of the young.
But in the same Centre today young people encounter God and his
love. From Lenin to Don Bosco...*

arose ever more insistently in him. The communist system had collapsed. Marxist ideology could no longer respond to the deeper questions: "Who am I? What meaning can I give to life?" This little flame of faith his mother had kept alight began to expand.

In 1990 a casual meeting with a Salesian in the heart of town lit up a light for him. "It doesn't matter", the Salesian told him, "what path you have chosen to reach God. What matters is that you have met him". They were words he never forgot. But who was this strange priest always to be found amidst young people? He was a Salesian of Don Bosco. Fr Stefan Urban's efforts began to bear fruit when he formed the first core group of Salesian Cooperators. Don Bosco's charisma took root and grew. He and Fr Andriy Platosh, tirelessly and passionately spread knowledge of Don Bosco and his Preventive System. This priest's enthusiasm enchanted people and their desire to work with the Salesians at Our Lady's Church at Pokrova in Lviv grew. It became the first Salesian Cooperator's Centre and other young people were preparing to make their Promise. Their commitment was a

valuable contribution to a people who were experiencing rebirth. The persecutions of the Soviet State and almost total destruction of the Greco-Catholic Church had not succeeded in extinguishing the faith in peoples' hearts.

Salesian Cooperator

The faith had also remained alive in Olég's heart. In 2002 he was an outstanding member of the government responsible for culture. He is now the director of the Culture Centre for young people, Galychyna, as it is called: during the Communist regime it was the Pioneer's building. "How sad", Olég says, "it was a centre without a soul!". And in fact it still breathed the system's materialistic spirit and the teachers with the communist way of thinking did not readily accept change. "This is the way we've always done it!", they would say resignedly. Olég saw that he had a great responsibility. He was leader of a centre that was very important for young people, but its educational approach had no soul and no love. What could he do?

The answer soon came. He met Fr Platosh, a Salesian, and things changed

radically. The deep spirituality in his words, his openness to dialogue and especially his immense love for the young opened Olég's eyes and won over his heart: he had finally found a way to continue his work. In 2006 Olég Kúzyk became a Salesian Cooperator. At the "Galychyna" Centre he organised youth meetings for the Eparchy as well as conferences on Christian pedagogy to celebrate the Anniversary of the Slav people's conversion to Christianity.

This collaboration with the Salesians gave rise to Lviv's largest youth centre. Its 2,800 members were breathing new air. The building hadn't changed but it had a soul, a heart, Don Bosco's heart beating in Olég's breast. Now the teachers there know the preventive system and Don Bosco's educational approach. They put it into practice, with love, accompanying young people as they grow to fullness of life. These are miracles of history. Lenin had put up a Centre to strip God from the hearts of the young. But in the same Centre today young people encounter God and his love. From Lenin to Don Bosco... through Olég's heart and the hearts of Salesian Cooperators in Lviv.



PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

A STORY OF RECONCILIATION

by ANS

Two years ago, Michael, a troubled and troublesome youngster from the province of Naples, endangered the life of a companion and risked ruining his own life. He was convicted and sentenced to time in a juvenile prison. Today, thanks to the efforts of many educators and to the care and hard work of the residential community run by the Salesians of Torre Annunziata, his life is changing. The change began with a plea for forgiveness and reconciliation.

The story begins on the night of 3-4 August 2011, shortly after midnight, in Portici, a town not far from Naples. It all started with a mere look, then one compliment too many, and an attempted approach to some girls from another gang. Insults were exchanged and challenges issued, then a few threats and pushes. Michael pulled out a knife and stabbed one of the opposition gang, wounding him seriously.

The row was recorded on television cameras. Michael was identified by three witnesses. His situation got much worse as a result of police en-



<http://www.donboscoalsud.it>

SALESIAN 2014



quiries made at his home, and the fact that some of his family members had previous convictions.

Today, almost two years later, Michael has fulfilled a dream which he has been nurturing slowly over the past few months, by meeting the boy he had injured and almost killed, and asking for forgiveness. The meeting took place on 11 April last, at the Centre for Reconciliation. The plea for forgiveness was the fruit of two years spent in prison and in the residential community, the result of sleepless nights spent reflecting on the wrong he had done, and on what could have

happened that night.

"I never thought" Michael says today, "that the more time passed, the stronger my desire to change would become. I realised the wrong I had done that night, and how many stupid things I used to do with my friends. Believe me, I swear! Today I am a different Michael, a boy who likes to hang around with others, enjoying a game of football, chatting with the staff of the community, becoming mature, going to school with the hope of getting a diploma."

The meeting was an emotional one for

him. "I was very nervous, also because I did not think he would agree to meet me. I told him I had no ill will towards him during these two years of detention, that I knew I had done wrong and had to pay for it. I asked him to forgive me since he agreed to meet me. I knew there was no malice in his heart either. I was sorry for the suffering his family had gone through, especially his mother."

Michael is still resident in a community for young delinquents run by the Salesians, and will have to spend another two years there. But he is now a different young man.

PEDAGOGY OF KINDNESS

HEART of Don Bosco, of the Americas

by Iván Mamami

What the Don Bosco Project (PDB in its Spanish acronym) offers young people at risk in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, is based on the heart of Don Bosco. It is a style of accompaniment, being close to each of these youngsters. And what kind of experiences are we likely to have when we come there to see? The answer is both simple and profound. PDB gives these youngsters the chance to experience the greatest of human yearnings: to love and be loved. Don Bosco's words continue to be of profound inspiration for teachers and educators at PDB: "It is not enough to love, but you need to show them they are loved".

Don Bosco's pedagogy, the pedagogy of love, takes shape in everyone involved in PDB. Each one takes up and enriches through his or her own testimony, the founder's values. And when this happens, Salesian pedagogy really takes place, like a multicoloured rainbow: friendship, closeness, patience, dialogue, familiarity, faith... since each educator, each member of staff offers support to



<http://www.sdb.bo/ProyectoDonBosco>



Who could possibly imagine what we experience here on a daily basis? Every day at the Don Bosco Project in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, dreams of the kind Don Bosco had are realised. It is a place where teachers, volunteers, boys and girls feel "at home", in a place where they can dream.

the pedagogical values at PDB through his or her own abilities and point of view. The young people are influenced by this, since these are the very values they have been lacking, and yet they are such basic values for survival in this world.

As soon as the day begins in each of the homes that belong to the Project, they begin with all the things the children need: rising, the morning shower, coming together for a brief morning prayer, a healthy breakfast, sitting at table with them and sharing the first moments of the day, seeing how they are, chatting, laughing, and noting their faces: some smiling, some cheeky, some still half asleep, while others are distrustful, angry... or just hungry. The Salesians and the staff need to be up early just to enjoy this time with the youngsters. And during the morning they hear out complaints, or problems that arose overnight, maybe a fight... and then maybe one of the staff has not come in, or someone has resigned; you see staff running to get clothes ready for their group, some kids off to school, others off to do woodwork or some other trade, others still helping

with cleaning the house, or off to the orchard. Some of the older ones are going to work. You see smiles everywhere and from all ages, from the little ones to the older ones.

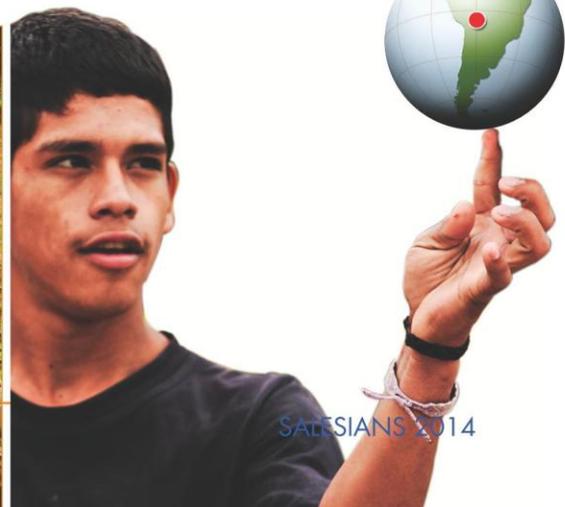
And that's how it goes each day as we care for the needs of these youngsters and we always know there is much to do and much to improve, but what we do achieve at least brings smiles and makes them happy, and the secret? It is not hard to work out that it is all this good treatment...

Every time we meet up with a youngster, or take interest in his problems, when we take someone to the doctor because they are sick, or when we recognise that someone is on drugs, when we share their successes and their failures... certainly all these occasions are precious ones and something that makes a difference in an indifferent, competitive and even aggressive society. For this is how we try to be in harmony with our founder's charisma, with all our being, showing our interest in and love for each child not just with words but also with deeds and through our approach.



At PDB we have discovered that Don Bosco's pedagogy not only covers the basic needs of the children but is also one they can base their future on, something which will go with them and help them develop their rights. What we seek to do is to create a cultural change, strengthen solidarity, sharing, growing up together, so they can appreciate the little they do have, and make it bear fruit.

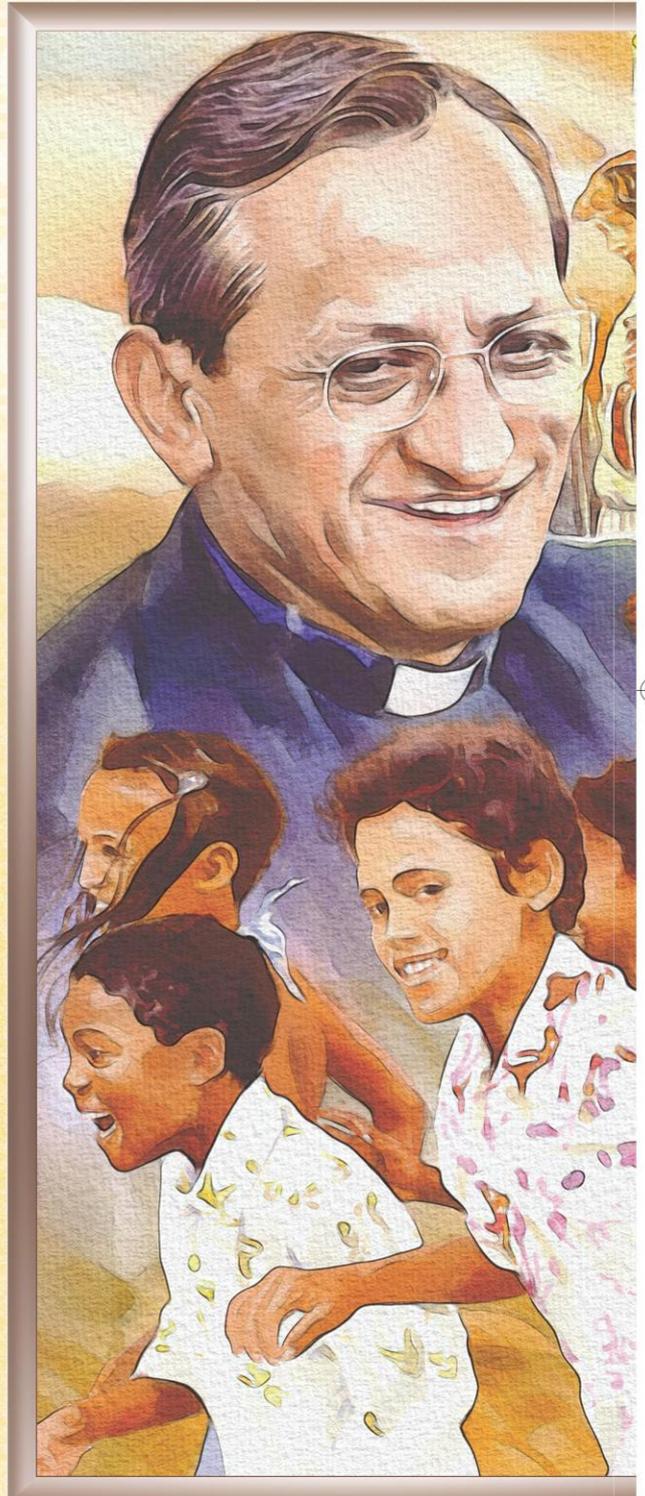
Over the years PDB at Santa Cruz, day by day, is succeeding in making these young people play a key role in this work. Everything here is for them, all the energy of Salesians and lay people is spent for them. Whatever we do is for them, whatever we achieve is for them, and we are happy to see that Don Bosco's plan at the beginning of his oratory is now continuing successfully in Santa Cruz's streets. He was responding to a particular time and place in Italy, but now his sons in Bolivia want to respond with the same courage he had, in a society so much in need of cheerfulness.

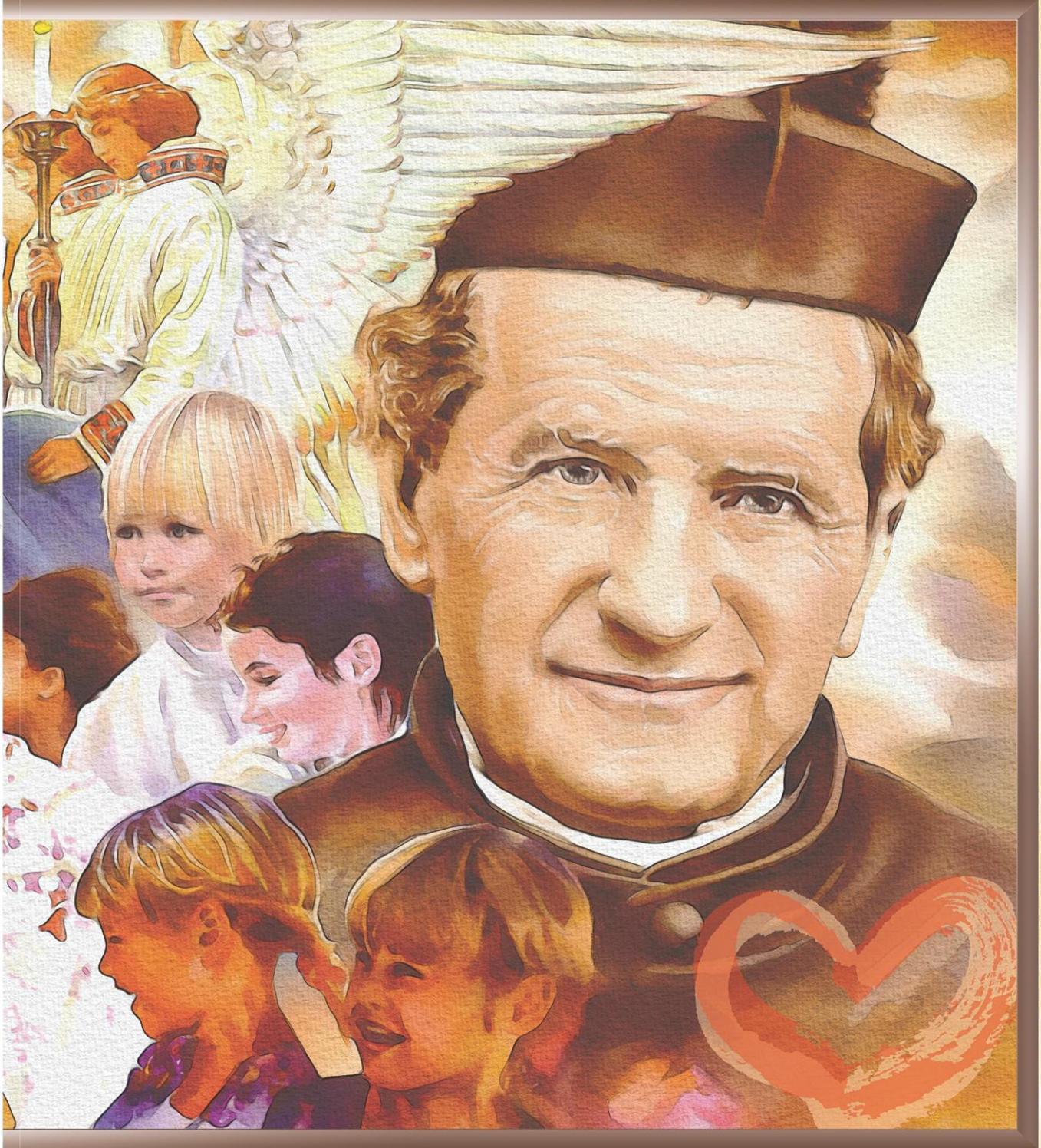


EDUCATION

"Is a thing of the heart" (Don Bosco)

- ▶ For the good of every young person (Australia)
- ▶ Pedagogy helps rebuild a nation (Albania)
- ▶ Comics: pure Salesian pedagogy (Brazil)
- ▶ Learning to read the world (Brazil)
- ▶ UPS, Faculty of Education: a passion for education (Italy)
- ▶ From bits to bytes (Solomon Islands)
- ▶ Education, a thing of the heart (Poland)
- ▶ Holiness is happiness (Italy)
- ▶ New needs, new answers (Department of Youth Ministry)





EDUCATION

For the Good of every Young Person

by Will Matthews

For the good of every young person, Salesians dedicate their lives for the glory of God through education of the young. Whatever the ability and interest of young people, Salesian educators walk along with them to help them reach their potential and make their dreams come true. Young people have different needs, different interests and different learning styles. Some are academic while others are practical. Some prefer to read and write while others experience and act.

Every child is required to be at school until the age of seventeen in Australia. At the end of their Year 10 studies, students choose either academic studies or trade skills to concentrate on in their last two years of secondary education. A greater number of students choose to do the academic section to further pursue their interests at universities. Yet, there are a good number of students who decide to embrace the workforce by learning trade skills in such areas as electrical, plumbing, carpentry, beautician, hospitality, gardening, sports and recreation.

The VCAL

In the state of Victoria in Australia, a program called VCAL, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, is offered to students in the last two years of secondary education. The VCAL offers practical work-related experiences, literacy and numeracy skills, and the opportunity to build personal skills that are important for life and work.

This VCAL is offered in Salesian high schools in Victoria. As in the time of Don Bosco in Valdocco, students do enjoy learning practical trade skills in Salesian high schools to expand their interests and talents.

For instance, in a VCAL program at Salesian College 'Rupertswood', students have decided to refurbish their classroom as part of their school project. This is particularly to repair and paint the classroom wall. They evaluate the situation of the wall and calculate the cost for all expenses involved. Students then organise some fundraising in and around the school to cover their project's expenses.

Students like these are to be congratulated and supported in such projects. They are given something practical to work on and to achieve within their capabilities. They will be proud of what they have done and happy with the opportunity given. Before long, a freshly painted and decorated classroom will be enjoyed by both students and staff.

The Dunlea Centre

There are always a number of students who are asked to leave school temporarily for not being able to participate in a normal classroom environment. Most of these students come from families with certain challenges. In Sydney, in the spirit of St John Bosco, the Dunlea Centre provides a 6 to 12 months intensive residential program for such secondary school students to get back into mainstream education. This program is entirely based on the Preventive System of St John Bosco. It is a program for stu-



<http://www.boystown.net.au>



dents as well as their families in partnership with the staff.

In its concern for the personal well-being, education and safety of children, the Dunlea Centre works with the families with greater risks. Family preservation is a key ministry of the Dunlea Centre as it assists parents and children to get back on track in life.

The Dunlea Centre is built upon eight pillars – presence, preventive, plan, professional, positive, personal, parental involvement and play. It is based on a fundamental belief and hope in the ability of all young people to change.

After all, education is a tri-partnership of parents, students and educators for the future of our society.

The Magone Program

There are many programs being conducted within Salesian schools in Australia and the Pacific to provide extra support to students who are struggling in classes. At Dominic College

in Tasmania, an initiative called the Magone Program is offered in the spirit of St John Bosco to students in need.

The Magone Program is a goal-oriented, individual intervention process designed to re-engage students for mainstream education.

The program has an academic focus with all core subjects covered. Students are continually provided with individual support for their academic program in order to assist them to make dramatic improvements in their learning. Students are provided with rich, practical learning activities in the manual and visual arts areas. Students are also given the opportunity to ex-

plore a weekly recreational activity which is both fun and a positive learning experience.

Salesian education helps young people to develop their skills to live the life of a good Christian and honest citizen. Every young person is different and unique. Every young person has a personal interest and skill to be developed and achieved in order to live a better life. There are many young ones in every corner of the earth waiting to be guided and supported in having their skills developed and interests explored. As Salesian educators in the spirit of St John Bosco, let us help all young people in our care to make their dreams come true.



EDUCATION

Pedagogy helps rebuild a Nation

Bunkers, boat people... and Don Bosco

by John Baptist Tran Tan Huy

"Misery, bitter poverty, barefoot children in rags, dilapidated houses, farms sinking in mud, bleak housing developments for workers, men, women and children working in the fields, everywhere people sad-eyed and bowed by labor--these are the images that stay with anyone travelling through the last bastion of communism in the Balkans and Europe" (from an article in the Los Angeles Times 1990-02-18).

That was 1990.

By 1992 the communists had been defeated in the polls and a democratic leader was elected, the first since 1924. In 1992 Pope John Paul II invited male and female religious congregations to come to the rescue of a bewildered people in this fiercely atheistic State, and the Salesians arrived in Shkodër (Scutari) in 1992, and in 1993 in Tirana, the capital. The Salesian Sisters, who had first come in 1905 but were then forced to leave, also came to Albania. What a story these twenty years offer us – a story of how Don Bosco's pedagogy has contributed to a country's rebirth, by focusing on the young...

A field in Tirana, littered with military bunkers; 20,000 refugees arriving in Puglia, Italy, on a single mercantile ship – the early 1990s, and for that matter the late 1990's, 1997 to be precise, were tough times for Albania and the first Salesians to take up residence there. But look at that field now! From bunkers to impressive education-focused buildings, a combination of grand efforts involving the Salesian-run VIS (International Volunteers for Development), the Albanian Government, the Italian Government, and of course the Salesians themselves.

That military field is now a busy complex with the all-embracing title of Don Bosco Social Centre. The centre comprises an oratory, the very first activity of the Salesians who in 1993 lived in a few poor dwellings erected on the

field, a vocational training centre, a primary and secondary school running the full gamut of classes through to university entrance, a day reception centre which pays particular attention to Roma or gypsy youngsters, a home which looks after differently-abled children, and a thriving parish of some 40,000 faithful.

Don Bosco was always keen to work with the greatest number of people to achieve the greatest possible good for young people, especially those most at disadvantage. But his focus was clearly on education as the solution – not just school, but any avenue which could lift young minds and lives as high as they could reach – to God himself, not forgetting that being a good Christian would also mean being an upright citizen. This stands out in the

brief story of 'Salesian' Albania, and it goes far beyond the cities, beyond the country itself for that matter, as the extended Salesian presence in Kosovo indicates, a presence that might be said to have had its beginnings in Tirana in 1999 when the Salesians opened up their Don Bosco Social Centre in a special way to Kosovar refugees.

Partnerships

Don Bosco works with Vodaphone! Yes, Vodaphone Albania has been supporting a training programme in commercial studies at Don Bosco Centre in Tirana for over a decade now. This training programme offers an opportunity to abandoned or neglected young people, especially from the Roma minority to follow studies that will give them a new chance in life. The





<http://www.donbosco.org/>

programme is run under the auspices of both Vodaphone and UNICEF, but was initiated by the Don Bosco Centre.

Don Bosco works for rural women with recognition from UN Women! The economic activities managed throughout 2012 by Drita, Arjeta, Stela, Zina and Gjystina, women involved in projects supported by the VIS in northern Albania, have won them recognition as "Successful business women in the rural area" from the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture and the UN body for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Regard for remote but incomparable mountain villages, promotion of simple but genuine typical produce and building up latent business sense has been the field of activity for a very large team – part of a three year plan by VIS known

as The rural development project in Kelmend and Shkrel municipalities, in the districts of Malesia and Madhe, northern Albania.

Shkodër

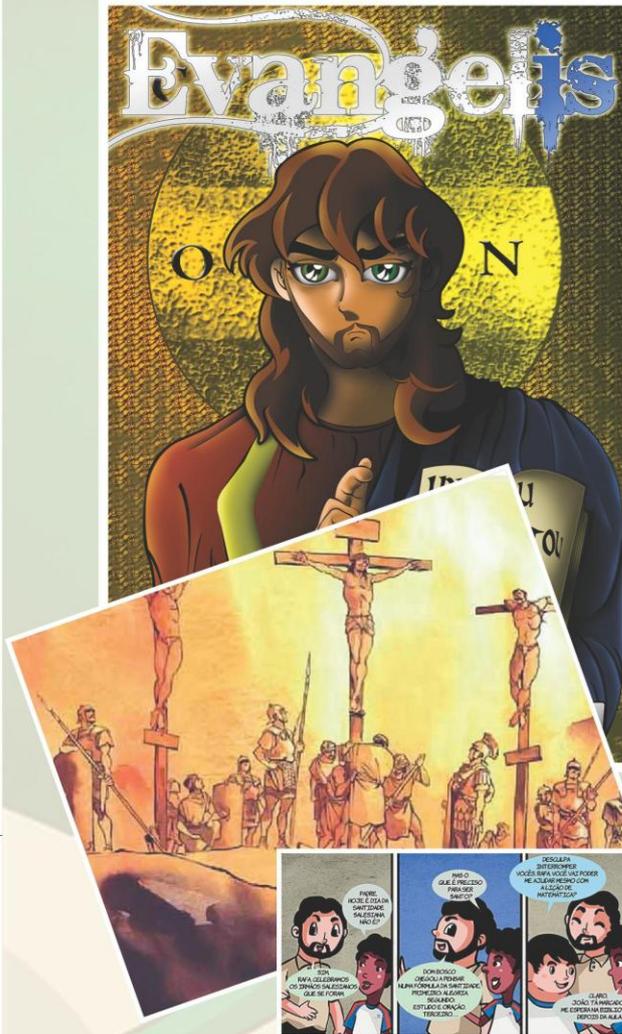
We should not forget the Salesian presence and activity in Shkodër, or Scutari, as some know it by. It was, after all, the first Salesian SDB presence in Albania. The Don Bosco Youth Centre there is now in its 20th Year and the works at the centre are flourishing. The Oratory is open every day with about 600 young people registered, who come on a regular basis. 1,000 young people gathered for this year's Summer Games for three weeks of fun; competitions, games, sports, dancing – the usual Salesian activities. The theme for the games this year was



"Freedom to Rio" based on the cartoon film "RIO", but with obvious hints of World Youth Day too and it seemed... that only the Pope was missing!! The focus was education through games and of course the password was "Rio".

Don Bosco believed that generosity was an important and indelible sign of the success of his educational approach. 20 years after his Salesians came to Albania, there are already 11 Albanian Salesians and more in the pipeline. But perhaps one of the most remarkable signs of generosity is when a 'receiving' nation becomes a 'giving' nation or, in plain Gospel terms, a 'missionary' nation, where its people wish to give freely of what they have received. In 2013 young Salesian Odise Lazri, from Shkodër, followed a missionary vocation to Southern Africa.

EDUCATION



Comics

pure Salesian pedagogy

Education and Evangelization in comic format

by ANS

Could you imagine the story of Jesus in Japanese 'Manga' format? Or could you imagine a 'little priest' comic figure (who looks surprisingly like Cardinal Joseph Zeh Kiun Zen, Bishop emeritus of Hong Kong) offering to guide you through the Gospel of Mark? Or what about just handing over the task, to your nation's best-known comic-strip artist, of presenting Don Bosco's pedagogy in attractive ways. Read on to discover some of these occasions, for after all, it seems that comics are pure Salesian pedagogy!

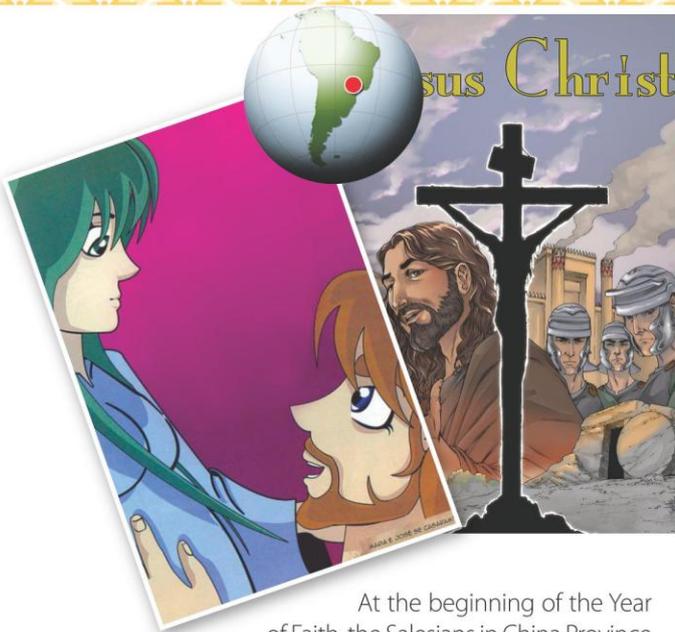
Japan and Brazil have more things in common than meets the eye. A visit to Hammamatsu in Japan would soon make that obvious enough – and especially the Salesian parish there which ministers in a particular way to Brazilian migrant workers, many of them with Japanese names, an interesting form of reverse migration. But look in the other direction too – if you want to imagine the impact of Japanese Manga comic influence, go much further afield than Korea, or even France. Go to Brazil!

Aware of the success of the typical Japanese 'Manga' variety of comics among young Brazilians, Salesian School Education Network across Brazil (known as RSE in that country), the body that oversees about 120 educational institutions belonging to the Salesians and the Salesian Sisters in Brazil, launched "Evangelis" as a major project in 2012, and extended it into 2013. The lively designs and eye-catching text in the book are used to narrate the proclamation and birth

of John the Baptist, the meeting between the Archangel Gabriel and Mary, the search by the Magi, the Birth of Jesus, the wickedness of Herod and the flight into Egypt. The intention of the Evangelis project is to present the richness of the Biblical World in an attractive and appealing way to reach Salesian school students.

The comic book author is Herbert Barbosa, a 'Manga' enthusiast since childhood, who saw the possibility of bringing young people into contact with the Word of God through this project. In 2006, after drawing an icon of Jesus, he got the idea of creating an entire publication which would tell the whole story of Jesus Christ. "I've always liked the 'Manga', like many young people and adults. The 'Manga' is fun, attractive, easy to read and understand. It uses many ways to convey the message in a very fresh and different way", he says.

But back to Asia once more, this time not Japan but China.



At the beginning of the Year of Faith, the Salesians in China Province decided to not only pay their respects to the memory of a great Missionary Salesian, Fr Dennis Martin, who died in 2006, but also to heed the Pope's call to look for new ways to proclaim Christ. Assisted by a group of enthusiastic pupils, Fr Dennis had supervised the production of the new version, which reiterated previously published volumes from Vox Amica Press of Hong Kong, changing the lyrics based on the Gospel of Mark in the New American Bible. And all this in comic-strip fashion but in a new English-language edition.

The two volumes chronicle the life of Jesus with bold graphics and great fidelity to the Gospel account. Flipping through the pages is a special character: "Little Priest", who has the task of guiding the readers on their journey to understanding the Good News. This little character has an uncanny resemblance to another famous real-life character, Cardinal Joseph Zeh Kiun Zen. No surprise, then, that he is a keen admirer of the work and hopes that: "this book might arouse the interest of people to explore the Gospel and the Kingdom of heaven".

And then to another part of the world, the Caribbean and, to be precise, Santa Clara, Cuba. An exhibition by comic-strip artist Alfredo Martirena entitled "We are heirs to his pedagogy" (in preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth in 2015) surprised the parish faithful with the vivid way it depicted some of the salient issues of Don Bosco the educator. The 16 panels were in response to a project coordinated by Fr Guillermo García Montaña SDB, illustrating advice or messages of Don Bosco's which are an expression of Salesian pedagogy. The exhibition then went on to be reproduced via the various information Bulletins around Cuba.

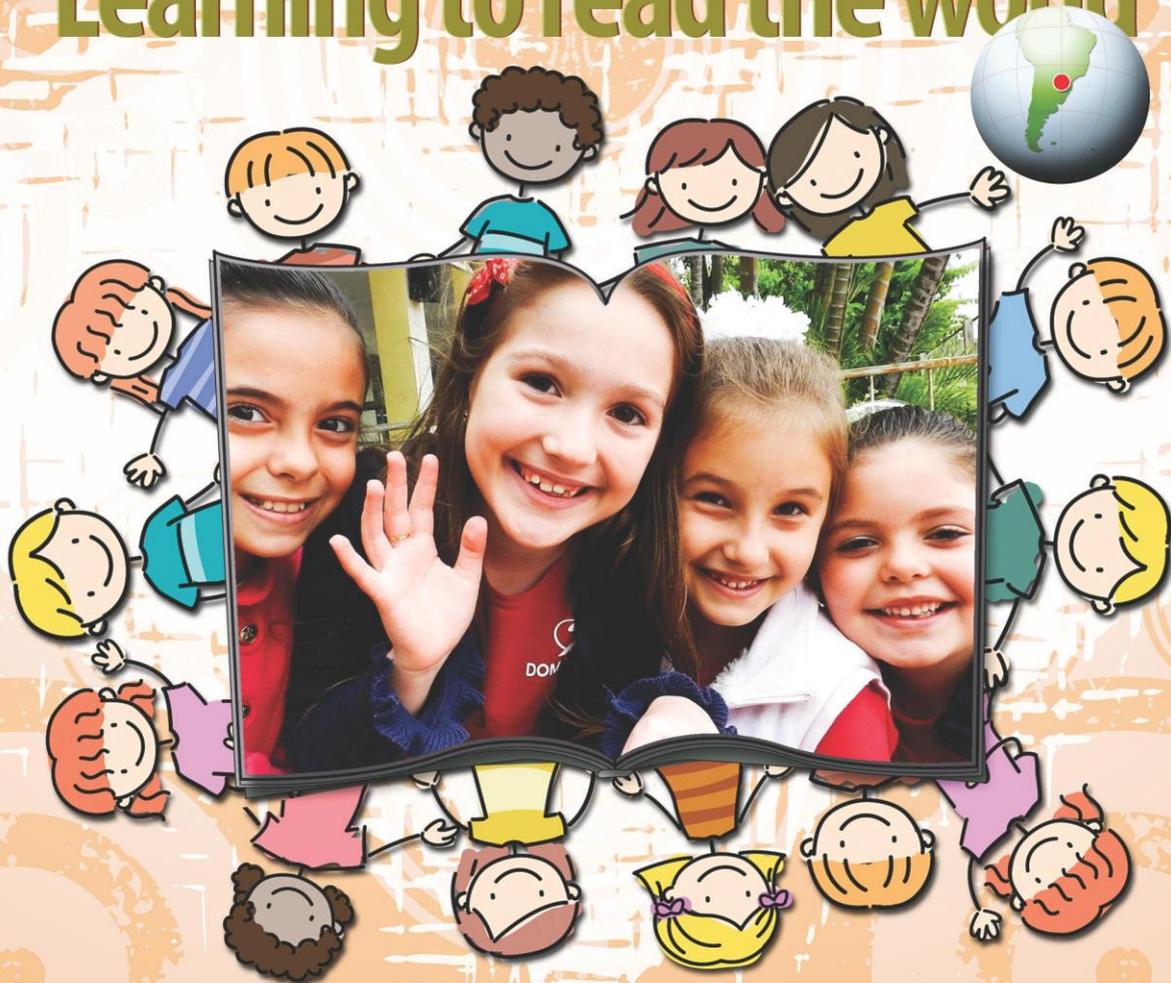


<http://www.rse.org.br>

And finally, back for one last look at Brazil. The same Network of Salesian Schools has earlier mentioned, is now launching a website "Nossa Turma" (our class). This project aims to present everyday life in Salesian schools through the medium of comics. Visitors to the "Our Class" website are able to see various publications, animated cartoons, to get to know the staff and to suggest topics for new stories. The website exists already on the social networks and on the RSE portal. It carries stories of Christian, Catholic and Salesian life in daily strips that introduce 30 people – students, educators, sisters and Salesians. It reinforces the intention of the RSE to form good Christians and honest citizens. In conversation with well known people the project draws attention to RSE and its educational-pastoral aims. There are references to global values of faith and typical situations found in a Christian school. There is little doubt that comics remain an attractive and effective approach to education – and a pure form of Salesian pedagogy.

EDUCATION

Learning to read the world



In Ascurra, SC, Brazil, the Literature Day Project, run by a Salesian College, has mobilised other local schools and motivated children to cultivate the reading habit.



<http://www.salesianosascurra.com.br/>

by Raffaello Furlani Destéfani

The Readers and Storytellers Group at St Paul's College, part of the Salesian Schools Network, is motivating pupils in other schools in the Ascurra locality, SC, Brazil, to cultivate a reading habit through its Literature Day. With the motto "Learning to read and above all learning to read the world and understand its context", the project is a partnership between St Paul's College, the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM), the Readers and Storytellers Group and the local Education Department at Ascurra.

The group launched the project on 29

April in schools in the Ascurra municipality and at its own St Paul's College. The program includes activities of various readings, theatre performances, interactive moments reading from a trunk full of stories, and encouraging the habit of reading to get to know different literary genres. Among the various genres on offer, there is an emphasis on fable, myth and fairy tales.

Partnership

The Literature Day project is coordinated by teacher and SYM coordinator at St Paul's College, Rose Mary do



Nascimento Agostini. She also coordinates the Readers and Storytellers Group, made up of the elementary school students at the College. Both the SYM and the Reader's Group take part in the project, with plenty of support also from the Education Department in Ascurra. They assist with the presentation of work in the municipal publication education network and also help with transport for students.

The activities are carried out in all the municipal public schools in Ascurra, and are aimed at 4 to 6 year-olds. The SYM pupils and the Readers Group meet at St Paul's College, prepare their "fantasies" (some clothing and face-painting) and then put a good number of children's literature items in a large trunk which is then taken to the schools. When they arrive, one student (usually from the SYM) introduces the project then tells a story. Then the pupils in the municipal schools network are invited to choose books whose stories can help them read and interpret the story they have been told.

A trunk full of tales

According to the project team, "when the children get involved with a variety of approaches, the meanings of their stories about their world interact with the various meanings in stories from

a book and they make significant progress through the reading stages, becoming competent readers".

So the idea is that everyone – storytellers and the local school children – can develop as readers and begin to appreciate different literary genres. On May 20, for example, the group carried out the second stage of the Literature Day project reading fables written by Religious. According to teacher Rose Mary, reading fables is always, in the first instance, a work of appreciation. "The suggestion is to read and let the listeners comment, on what they thought, remembered of what was told, freely and in casual conversation", she explains.

Another purpose of using fables with students in the project is for the values and teachings in them, and this fosters discussion on ethical issues. The general expectation of the project regarding fables is that the idea tackled leads to forming children in good citizenship, leading the pupil-reader to adopt an active stance regarding him or herself, with others, and with the environment. This way they do their part in building a better world.

Enthusiasm

Following monthly stages, the Litera-

ture Day project is done in late afternoons, after students at St Paul's College are no longer in their classrooms. All those in the Readers Group and the SYM are volunteers and are keen on the opportunity to take part in this activity along with the local public education department.

"I had a great opportunity this year to learn many new things. As well as improving my own reading, I had new experiences getting to know other literary genres, new people and different places. Everyone should take part because it is very good doing voluntary work", says André Gustavo Dalmolin, a Sixth Grade Elementary School pupil.

For Igor Gustavo da Silva too, 9th Grade student at St Paul's College, the experience of Literature Day goes well beyond just books and telling stories: "The act of taking literature to children in such a dynamic way gives us something which is not easy to describe, knowing that something which tends to get overlooked by people is being remembered and revived amongst us. You see the smile on children's faces and feel happy. This is the spirit of being a volunteer".

The Literature Day project extended throughout the 2013 school year.

EDUCATION

A passion for education

Faculty of Education

by Carlo Nanni

The Faculty's logo says it all: in the outline profile of Don Bosco, there is also one of a young male and a female. By now it is a slogan: The UPS, the Salesian Pontifical University, is "Don Bosco's University for the young". The Education Faculty (FSE in its Italian acronym) is its throbbing heart, and this in numerical terms too. Out of 2,000 students almost half of them attend this Faculty in one or other of its specialisations: pedagogy and communication, school pedagogy, social pedagogy, social and psychological pedagogy (with more than 500 students). The Psychology curriculum extends into the Higher Clinical Psychology School which produces clinical psychologists and psychotherapists. Vocational pedagogy together with the Spirituality Institute which is part of the Theology Faculty coordinate the degree course (a specialist degree equivalent to a Master's in many countries) for lay, consecrated and priest formators. In turn, the Baccalaureate in religious pedagogy leads to the Licentiate (specialised degree similar to Master's) in youth ministry and catechetics, run by a department which sees cooperation between the Education Faculty's Catechetics Institute and the Youth Ministry Institute belonging to the Theology Faculty.

Pope Benedict said: The UPS, "unique amongst the Pontifical Universities, has an Education Faculty and a Youth Ministry and Catechetics Department". But the Rector Major observes a deeper sense to this: "The Faculty of Education provides a fundamental element of the Salesian identity of the UPS. The pedagogical and pastoral fields should be seen not as a sector of a group that goes simply side by side, but as the apex, or an element that runs across everything and gives it cohesion".

In fact, Pope John Paul II had already stated that if "formation of the whole human being is part of the specific mission of the Salesian Pontifical University... then the Education Faculty characterises the entire Athenaeum... it could be defined as an expression of the charisma of Don Bosco's sons and daughters".

The Faculty emerged from what had been the Institute of Pedagogy and Catechetics at the Salesian Athenaeum as it was known when it began in 1940; this institute then became the Higher Institute of Pedagogy (1956) and since





1973 was renamed as the Faculty of Education, expressed in Italian in the plural as *'le scienze di educazione'* because the approach to research and teaching is decidedly interdisciplinary. Research, teaching are carried out in a constant spirit of connection between disciplines, collaborating and interacting in an organised way, producing ways of thinking and acting open to dialogue and cooperation. It is sufficient to read the books and articles by lecturers published by LAS, or in the Faculty's journals.

In fact, since 1954, the FSE has been publishing its journal, *'Orientamenti Pedagogici'* which is still today highly regarded internationally and is amongst the first in Italy for pedagogy and educational research. Someone has said that if the articles on empirical and educational research and on educational linguistics were to be published separately, they could become two specialised journals. For a number of years the Catechetical Institute has also been publishing an

online journal of "Religious Pedagogy".

What everyone agrees on is the 'passion' for an area of knowledge, wisdom, technology and an approach which is "at the service of education" (the title of the most recent conference last March 15. The Acts are about to be published). The ultimate horizon of university learning is the formation of individuals who are free, responsible, competent and active professionals as well as active and involved citizens, convinced Christians committed to the Church and the society to which they belong.

One of our female past students, in an email to the current Rector of the University, Dr Carlo Nanni, her ex-professor, said: "you have inoculated us with a sense of being individuals and human beings". And it is not as if she was the most devout of our students!

Many diocesan or national coordinators of youth ministry or catechetics, in Italy and abroad, have studied at the Education Faculty of the UPS. Without

engaging in any special propaganda - we simply have an annual open day - the number of new entries is always on the increase. Our best mouthpieces are our past students. What kept them going, as many put it, was the fact that they were never just anonymous pawns, never felt they were tossed headlong into a turbulent sea, and were more than just a number for their lecturers. The Salesian family spirit, the search for a high quality educational rapport, the holistic cultural approach, Christian inspired, and a constant connection between knowledge and competence, theory and practice: these are some of the points best appreciated that overcame the inevitable weaker ones (financial problems, lack of teaching and administrative personnel, or need for updating, more intense ongoing education of teaching staff...). The culture of evaluation, in place through a range of activities and instruments every semester, is certainly an interesting way of promoting the quality of our education: but in the end what counts most of all is the effective practice of Don Bosco's preventive system within the university context!



EDUCATION

From bits to bytes

From welding to digital technology

'I am happy with my trade as a carpenter. I now return to Don Bosco to do a course in Welding', said Miki Sada at the interview for participants of the Short Welding Course. Miki a lively student who graduated two years ago, has been interested in his trade and full of fun and life. Being interested in dance and drama, together with his companions, he staged a variety of items at the school and after a wonderful performance in Lawrence Waddy's, 'Prodigal Son' he and his companions were called in by 'Woodford International School', Honiara to help train their International students for a dance performance. He deemed it a privilege, gave his best and was able to bring out the best in the students. "I know that welding will be a great help for me in my trade", said Mike Sada as he registered for the course.

by Ambrose Pereira

The Solomon Islands, with its high youth population has over 59% who are unemployed. 53% can get employment if properly trained. Like Miki, youngsters are eager to learn a trade and get a job. Don Bosco Technical Institute is where our young 'pushouts' turn to.

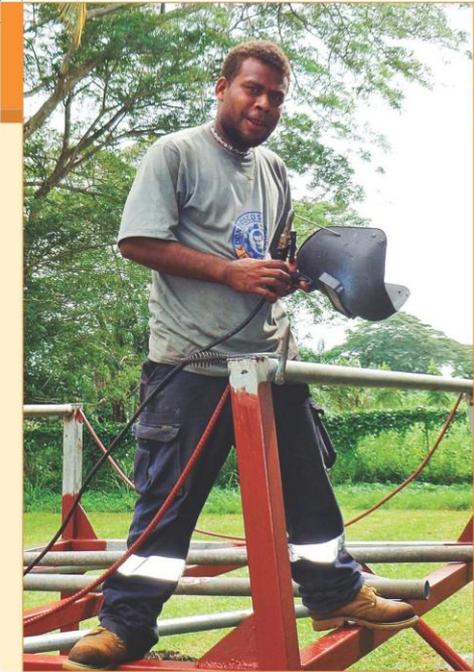
The ten-week welding course was attended by 14 young men. They worked hard every day and learnt much. They did have a chance to learn a bit of English, Values and Mathematics and had the possibility of joining in with the extra curricular activities. The course commenced with welding. It was great to see the participants as they commenced their course - welding bits of metal to-

gether. At the end of the course, each of the students had to their credit a well-fabricated baking oven, using 40 empty two and a half gallon drums. The much sought after baking ovens are then sold to happy customers who use them for baking scones for the large families at home or they earn their living selling what they bake. The next project involved fabricating two-tire beds for the boarding students. The students have now completed their course, are on their on-the-job assignments and look forward to their graduation. Luke Houperere, Welding and Fabricating instructor, a former student himself, reminds the students that hard work, dedication and commitment are the most essential traits of a worker.

Short Courses are much in demand and we have had several Computer Courses for different groups of participants. Recently organised was a two-week Video Short Course. The enthusiastic film makers were a variety that ranged from 16 to 60 years. And they hailed from a variety of backgrounds – teachers and students, public relation officers and lawyers, religious and business owners.

Each day began with a prayer and a group exercise – very much needed as participants strive to stabilize themselves and interact with each other. There was theory, but all of it was useful for the practical exercises. At the start the students were asked to capture examples of a variety of shot types including establishing shots, wide, medium and close ups and the concepts of the "Law of the Thirds". Eventually the students settled down onto the stunning iMacs and began editing the footage taken from the practical exercises. After a concise yet comprehensive overview of the software, the students were straight into it. The next week covered basic approaches to framing and camera movement, an introduction to editing with iMovie as well as shoot planning with storyboards. Then began the final project. They developed their ideas and stories,





<http://www.catholicchurchsolomonislands.com/>

planning their shots with storyboards and scheduled their shoot. There was great teamwork both within and between groups. Some groups had to share equipment, and in some cases the groups had to share their members as actors in other productions! Post-production involved a long day in front of the iMacs in order to craft their footage into a story for the screen. Everybody rose to the challenge. It was a proud group of film students who arrived for the Friday Presentation.

The short film 'Save a Life' put together by Georgianna, Regina and Linda received much applause. The film told a tale of a teacher who wanted to get people to donate blood to save lives. No one signed up until someone

came along and wrote it differently. 'Make a difference, say things differently' was the concluding message at the end of the much-appreciated short film.

"It takes a lot of hard work to get one minute of Vision", said Dorothy Wickham, Director of the only local Television in the Solomon Islands. "Discipline, hard work and commitment give one a fine understanding of the Image and the Power of Film", she said. Networking, collaboration and the venturing into digital possibilities ahead were highlighted by SIBC General Manager, Ashley Wickham.

Speaking on behalf of the participants Regina Lepping and Nathaniel

daWheya thanked the animators who guided the participants. They expressed their need to be trained and share positive stories in the digital medium.

Don Bosco Technical Institute, Henderson has been offering 3-year certificate courses in Automotive, Carpentry, Electricity and Life Skills. Seeing the need to cater to an older age group, we commenced Short Courses – Computers, Welding and Media Courses are a few of them. The courses are well attended and there are always requests for more. Volunteers are most needed. Besides being a teaching experience, it will also be a learning experience of you, not forgetting that it could be the experience of a life-time.



EDUCATION

EDUCATION **a thing of the heart**

Savionalia - Youth festival

by Katarzyna Dumańska

It is early May. Usually, the days are becoming warmer but this year the weather plays tricks on us. I walk along the Vistula River in the Bulwary to Zwierzyniecki bridge. It is still early, the sun struggling to break through the clouds. But at least it is not raining, not like earlier...



The first time the Savionalia Festival was held in Krakow, then in Błonia in 1991 in torrential rain. It all started with a concert in the evening at Dębniaki. The following day, after Mass, a band led all those taking part in the Mass at Dębniaki as far as Błonia. "We woke up that day at 4:00 am, the sky was overcast. And just as the young people got to Błonia it started to rain and the rain did not stop until the evening! Despite it all it was a success. We kept a memento of this and we wanted to do it again the following year, make it even better. And so it went, except that since 1992, the Savionalia Youth Festival has taken place here, at Tyniecka. St." recalls Fr Bartocha, today the Salesian Provincial of Krakow Province.

And yet, Savionalia goes back well before that. Beginning in 1984 in Krakow, then Łosiówka, the choir used meet in early May. In 1990 the Salesians decided to boost this gathering by adding a range of their usual activities to it. A group of seminarians with the Youth Ministry Delegate

began working at it, on the programme, title and a logo. "From the outset we took the decision that Savionalia would be the meeting point for all our youth activities – starting with the 8 year-olds – so that even the little ones who wanted to join the choir could come too; we wanted everyone. So if someone from outside wanted to come they could if the request was good enough" Fr Bartocha went on.

Like every other Salesian activity, a clear idea, maybe even two, went with Savionalia. On the one hand there was everything the young people had done; presenting everything that had been achieved throughout the year. On the other, it was just the fact that young people came together – and that in itself was valuable. This is why the festival programme had a bit of everything: religion, sport and culture, some of it offered by the youngsters and others by the guests. So during Savionalia, someone can attend concerts, or theatre or be part of meetings with those invited.



'Education is a thing of the heart'.

This slogan was chosen for the second year of preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth



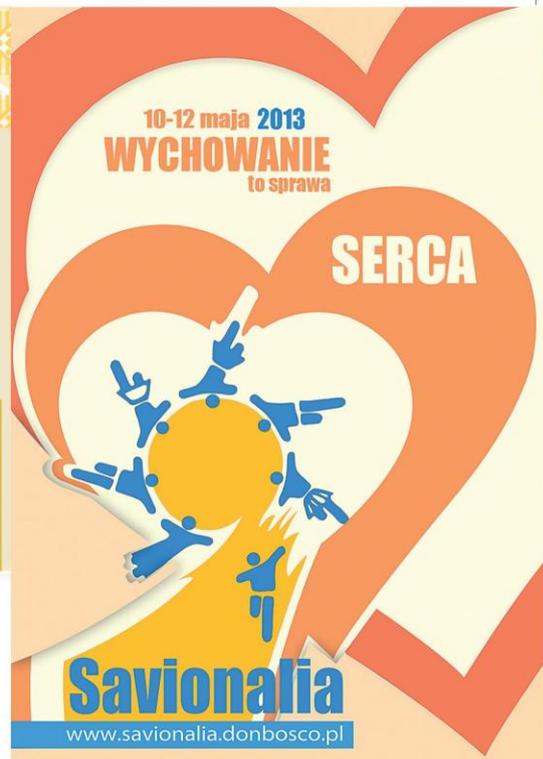
Being together brings joy

The Salesians have always believed very much in the musical aspect of the event. Other than groups from our own centres, there are well-known groups representing Christian music in Poland, like Magda Anioł, New Day, Tomek Kamiński, Maleo Reggae Rockers, Chili My, Saruel, Propaganda Dei, Love Story or New Life Music with Mietek Szcześniak, all of whom have been on stage at Savionalia. There are also special invitations: famous actors, sportsmen and women, including Robert Kubica, the best-known of Poland's rally drivers with his bright blue car. It would be difficult to name everyone who has been on stage at Łosiówka.

Given the long history of this festival, there have been some funny situations that we could not forget, and that the organisers always remember now with a smile. "One year, someone I knew

proposed that the group for the main evening concert be 'The two boys from Milówka, who play the trumpet'. It was January, I believe. He did not recall what they charged; it was possibly reasonable but no small amount. So they were not invited and then just a month before Savionalia, Golec Orkiestra – one of the best-known folk groups in Poland – released its first album. And to think they could have played for us, but have never done so, not even until now. On another occasion the radio got the wrong date and a yellow vehicle from RMF FM came a month early looking for the event." Fr Bartocha tells us.

It would also be very difficult to number the young people who have had such fun at Savionalia, with the Salesians. "Sometimes there were more than 1500 in attendance; I recall just one group from Kielce arriving in five vehicles! And that wasn't a rare thing." Fr Bartocha recalls, smiling.

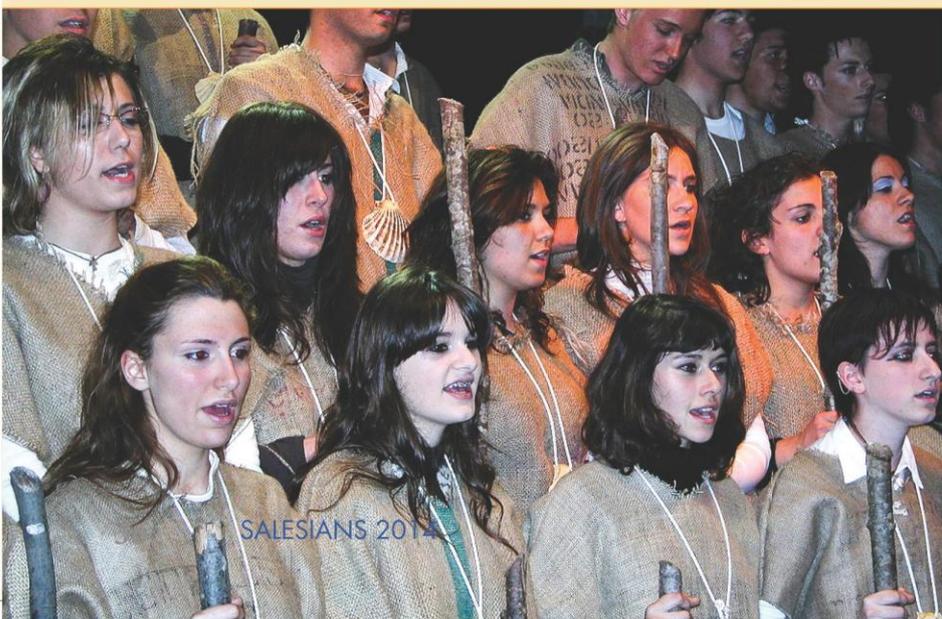


After 20 minutes walking I am at Łosiówka. In front of the entrance I am greeted by the multi-coloured posters. This year the key theme for the gathering is 'Education is a thing of the heart'. This slogan was chosen for the second year of preparation for the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth; he is understood as being a master of education. What is the heart that Don Bosco speaks of? God's heart, or the young person's or the teacher's? Or is it the same heart for all? – the organisers of this year's festival asked themselves and they quickly add that they come together not only to find the answer to such questions but to enjoy just being together looking for it.

This joy, shared by young and old, teachers and pupils, last for years to come, and is peculiar to Savionalia. Whatever the organisation, agreement or sharing of responsibilities, this does not change. So, when I enter Łosiówka and when I see the kids playing football, or hear the laughter coming from the office, and when I see this elderly priest smiling more than usual, this is when I am sure that joy will be the thing that will remain and that this will never change.

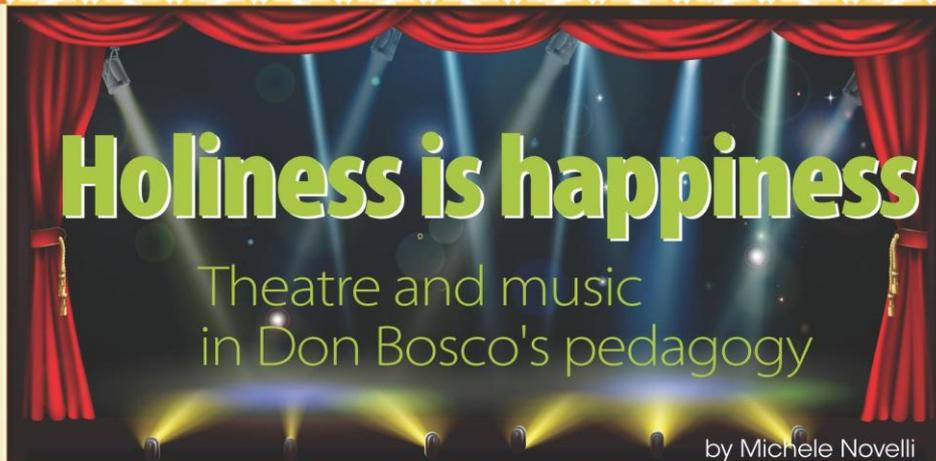


EDUCATION



On Sunday afternoons we would be found milling around the door of a hall which was being used as a theatre, then scrambling for a good seat. While we were waiting for the show to begin, displaying the talents of our friends or even our superiors, our gaze was inevitably drawn to the front of the stage where the words were emblazoned: "Servite Domino in laetitia" (Serve the Lord in gladness). That's how I discovered what Dominic Savio told Gavio Camillo "I'll put it to you in a few words: here we see that holiness consists in being very cheerful..."

Joy was not just an artificial device, but a means of acknowledging what was truly 'serious' about education, and for Don Bosco it was a form of life which came from his instinctive psychological awareness of the young and family spirit. This conviction began with a deep faith experience: the certainty of being brothers of the risen Lord who fills every Christian's life with joy. So cheerfulness is a factor in education and growth as a Christian that cannot be substituted. One of the seven 'secrets' for the smooth running of the Oratory which Don Bosco reminded us of is: Cheerfulness, singing, music and freedom in amusements.



And thus we are introduced to the means which are the biggest contributors to the family spirit resulting in joy: theatre and music. There were no celebrations at Don Bosco's Oratory that were not nurtured by music and "Teatrino" or "little theatre". It was the same for the famous Autumn walks: music and theatre were key elements.

"*Ne impedias musicam*" (let's not hinder music) Don Bosco had written over the door into the choir hall, and even more renowned is his line: "An oratory without music is a body without a soul". It was more than just having a band – music echoed in every corner of the Oratory; look at the first Salesians (Cagliero, Costamagna, De Vecchi, Dogliani...) tackling compositions that left nothing to be envied compared with other contemporary compositions.

And at the Oratory, "Teatrino" carried the same weight. It was fully a part of Don Bosco's educational system, practically and vitally, an integral element in creating the climate of cheerfulness and at the same time with an educative and didactic function. In the early years of the Oratory, Don Bosco followed up every show with close attention, even writing his own scripts, and put out two drafts of a set of regulations for 'Little theatre' that still leaves us amazed today for educational worth that the Saint attributed to this expressive

means: "It is a school of holiness – it enriches intellectual culture – it contributes to mental development – it helps us understand mankind and society – it makes for cheerfulness – it brings young people close to their teachers – it attracts many young people..." (from Fr Barberis's diary).

And the Salesians remained so firmly convinced of this, that over the decades, in a way more or less faithful to Don Bosco's original inspiration, they developed and extended it, becoming champions of an educational kind of theatre for over a century. Our Publishing Houses (SEI, LDC, LAS) were committed to it and were outstanding for the quality of their publications. Journals, beginning with the *Letture Drammatiche* (Dramatic Readings), which Don Bosco himself published, to the *Teatro dei Giovani e delle Giovani* (Theatre for boys and girls), *Espressione Giovani* (Youthful expression), were flagships of Salesian educational theatre and accompanied entire generations of young people.

Today? Let us leave the word to one initiative aiming at recovering and updating this immense legacy.

AREOPAGO TES: a modern vehicle of Salesianity

It is our intention to perpetuate the charismatic gift of Don Bosco's



www.teatrinodebosco.it.

"Teatrino" through a very modern tool, a web site. We call it AREOPAGO TES (*Teatro Educativo Salesiano* or the Areopagus of Salesian Educational Theatre), www.teatrinodebosco.it.

This web site aims to:

- Republish the best that was published and not reprinted, digitalise it and offer it for free to theatre people.
- Draw up a special bibliography of the countless educational and youth theatrical scripts and make them available, pointing out where they can be found.
- To see to the publication in Youth and Educational Theatre Studies the teachings we have received from Don Bosco and other studies that followed.
- Make drama scripts, music scores, handbooks available for the many Youth Theatre Companies. At the same time the site will offer courses, practice sessions, workshops, talks by experts.
- Create a network of the many theatre groups in oratories and schools, Salesian or otherwise, to create a circle of awareness and mutual collaboration. This will set up a creative academy giving room to musical and theatrical productions written and composed for youth educational theatre. Giving young people a voice, helping them to be proactive, was always Don Bosco's dream.

EDUCATION

NEW Needs, Answers

Schools and Professional Formation Centres

by Miguel Angel García Morcuende

An experienced Salesian educator, Francesc Riu, put it this way: "If Don Bosco was there today in each of the Salesian schools around the world and took up responsibility for running it, it would soon be distinguishable from the rest because it would give new answers to the new needs of young people today". Let's take a brief look at Salesian schools and vocational education around the world.

Africa-Madagascar

Formal education, school and trade-oriented education is of major importance in the Africa-Madagascar Region. Despite the differences and difficulties that are a feature of Africa, Salesians have succeeded in offering a flexible approach, educational and pastoral aims and personal attention to young people.

Today the Salesians have around 100 schools in the Region, without counting the huge network of smaller rural schools in traditional mission areas. Our schools are mostly found in the urban centres and in general have a large school population.

In some places the Salesians found a well-established tradition of Catholic schooling (e.g. Senegal); in others, they found considerable restrictions on Church involvement in education (e.g. Angola). In both cases the Salesians are committed to offering the original style of the Preventive System.

Professional or trade-oriented teaching (90 such Centres) plays an important function in Salesian work in Africa. To coordinate and implement these Centres the Africa-Madagascar Provincial Conference has begun setting up a group at the pan-African level to develop and foster education of this kind. There is hope that the future will soon see a "Bosco Tech Africa" (BTA).

Interamerica and America South Cone

Salesian education in Latin America and the Caribbean is diverse and abundant: 21 countries and 24 provinces. Salesian schools in the American continents have developed a major educational and pastoral offering on behalf of an all-round education of the young, an effort to offer them reasons for living and hope for the new generations.

Provinces with Salesian Family presences across Latin America have set in motion a joint process which is in harmony with reflection and guidelines developed by ESA (the Salesian School, America). There are four areas they are working on together: leadership, management and accompaniment; communication, formation and a culture of evaluation.

The socio-political and educational situation in many Latin American countries demands corporate and telling responses by way of an alternative educational offering for the poor, the ordinary people. This is why the ESA process is carried through at continental, regional, national and provincial levels, seeking a quality holistic education which is consistent with Salesian policy. Many provinces have set up organised formation programmes for staff, where religious and lay people work together on their pedagogical preparation with a Salesian spirituality. Some countries have set up a network, to work in a coordinated way with the Salesian Family in response to social, cultural and evangelising challenges. Brazil has the Salesian Schools Network: 120 Salesian SDB, FMA schools and some other non-Salesian schools.



South Asia

India has the Don Bosco Tech network of Salesian institutes involved in technical or trade education. The result of the work and desires of many Salesians, it also includes similar institutes run by other religious orders, dioceses, as well as Government and private ones. It is a national body for the development of professional education, set up in 2006. Developing skills and education is a priority for the Indian Government.

DBTech brings together 123 technical and trade Centres and is the largest such body in the country in this field, especially as applied to poorer youth. There is also considerable Salesian activity going on at national, interprovincial and provincial levels. Today there are technical centres in 24 States. The Salesian network involves 10 provinces, 8 dioceses, 13 religious groups and 6 NGOs involved in the development of technical and trade education.

There is an interesting effort by DBTech in networking and what they have been doing for youth in the past decade. DBTech has developed contacts, planning and development, and has paid particular attention to the lower social strata where the most needy and vulnerable are found.

East Asia-Oceania

East Asia-Oceania has some 90 schools and 46 technical and professional centres across a vast region stretching from Mongolia to Tasmania. In almost every part of this region, Salesians schools and vocational education stand out prominently in the country. With the exception of the relatively recent (20 years) Salesian technical education offered in Mongolia's Ulaanbataar, and the request by the Vietnamese Government for a centre at Phuoc Loc, many of these schools and vocational centres are long-established, as in China province, the Philippines, Japan, East Timor... Oceania too has outstanding schools and vocational training centres: Australia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa.

Europe, Middle East

Catholic schooling is not a uniform situation in Europe: each country has its own specific set up. The educational component is a specific characteristic of the Salesian professional formation centres (CFP) and schools found in 23 countries and 15 provinces. There is similar work being done in the Middle East (Egypt, Israel and Turkey) and elsewhere (Cape Verde, Morocco and Tunisia). Today the educational and pastoral involvement of the Salesians can be found across 412 educational centres in Europe and in the 8 non-European countries (Middle East) hinted at earlier. To be precise, there are 254 schools, 158 CFPs and 7 agricultural schools.

The Youth Ministry Department sees to continuity of processes, responding to new challenges of formal education in Europe, setting up a new form of coordination through the SDB-FMA Salesian Schools Commission Europe. A working group has also been set up aimed at offering leadership in vocational education. A website for Salesians schools and CFPs in Europe has been created: www.salesians-europe.org.

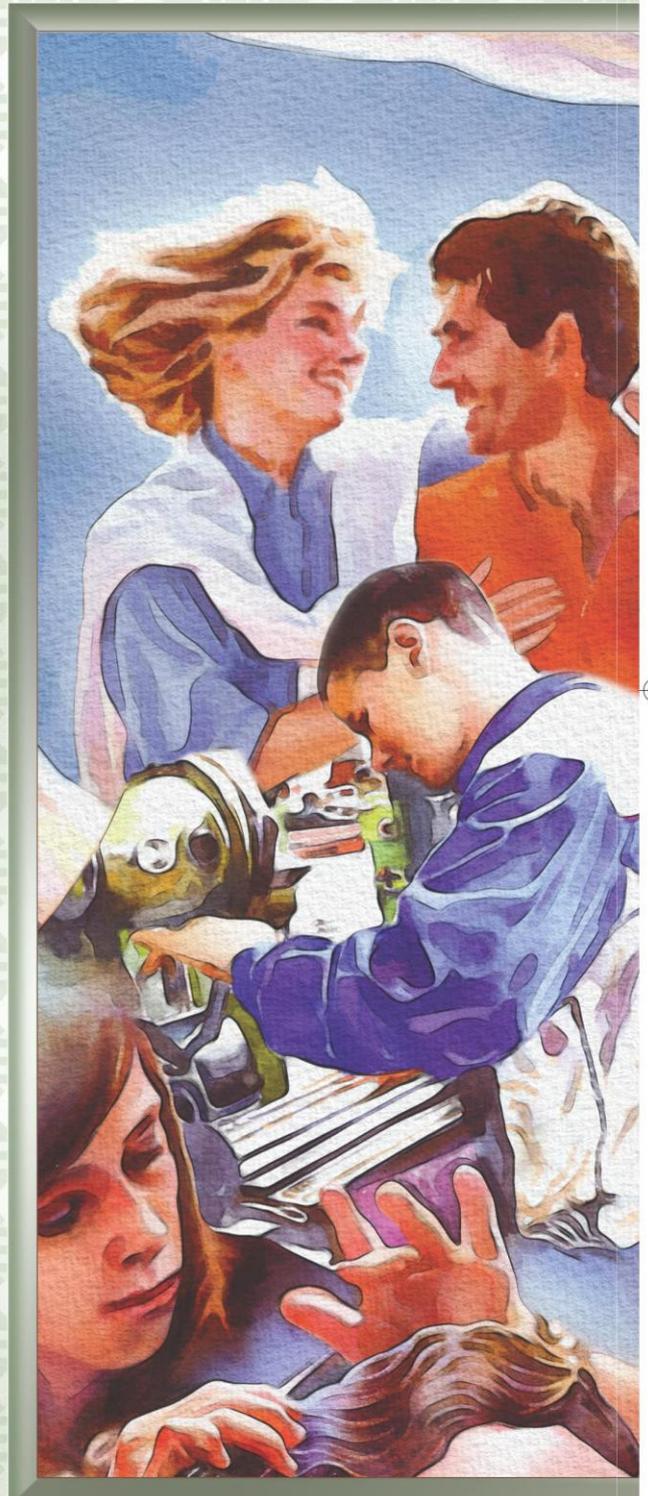
In recent years Salesian education in Europe has been working at and reflecting on one central idea: Salesian schools and CFPs offering their own educational and pastoral style of Christian and human education, which can be distinguished from what others are offering.

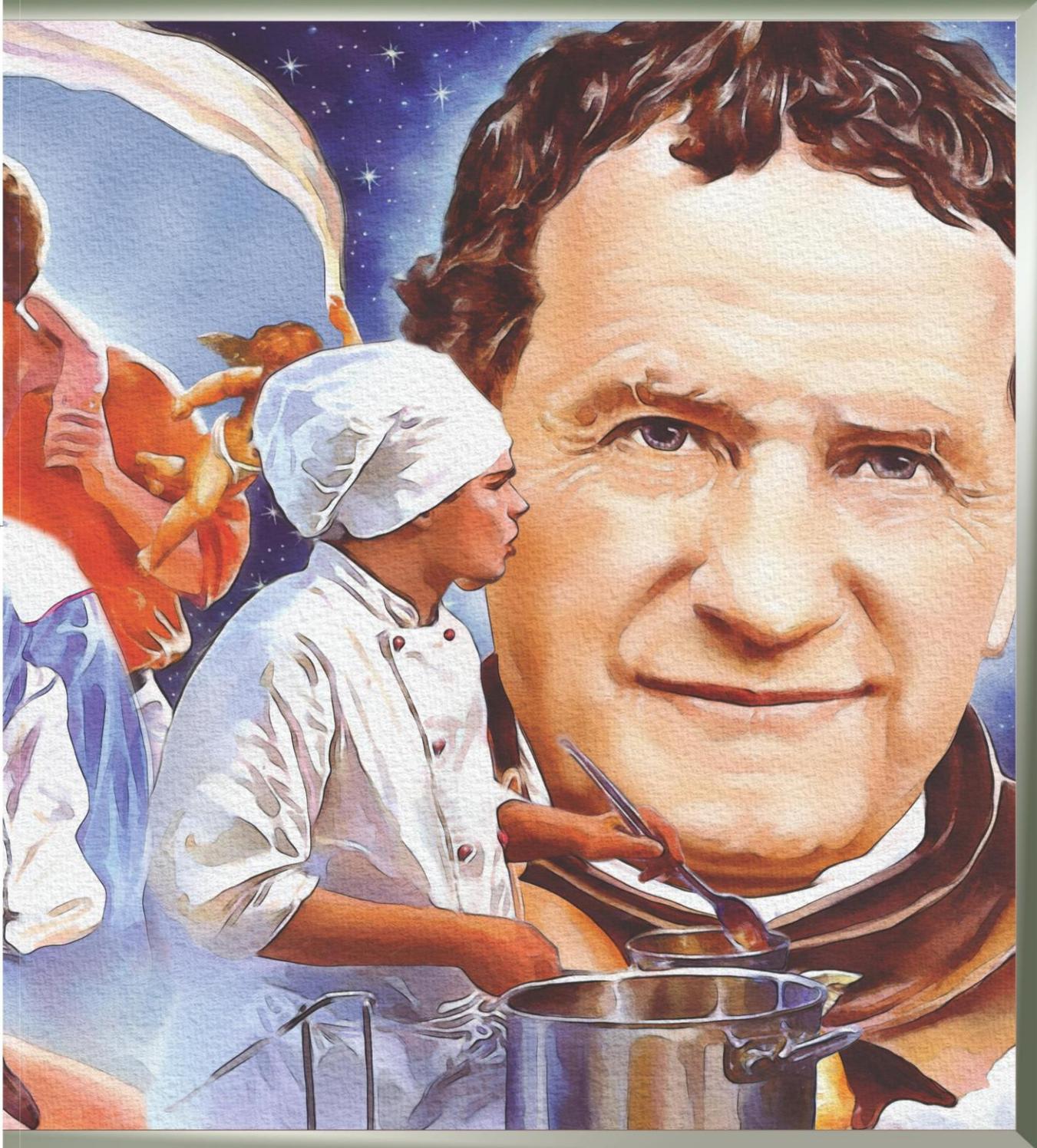
CITIZENS

CITIZENS

"The formation of the upright citizens and good Christians" (Don Bosco)

- ▶ Attilio Giordani: believer and educator to the faith (Italy)
- ▶ Chacas and heaven (Peru)
- ▶ A Family serving the young
- ▶ Jesus at the centre: with some help from Don Bosco (Spain)
- ▶ St Aloysius, Don Bosco's second oratory (Italy)
- ▶ Past Pupils: Don Bosco's consolation
- ▶ Extreme South: the cross at the end of the world (Argentina)
- ▶ A dream being realised (Colombia)
- ▶ We are the others - Focus on the Salesian mission in Europe (Missions Department)



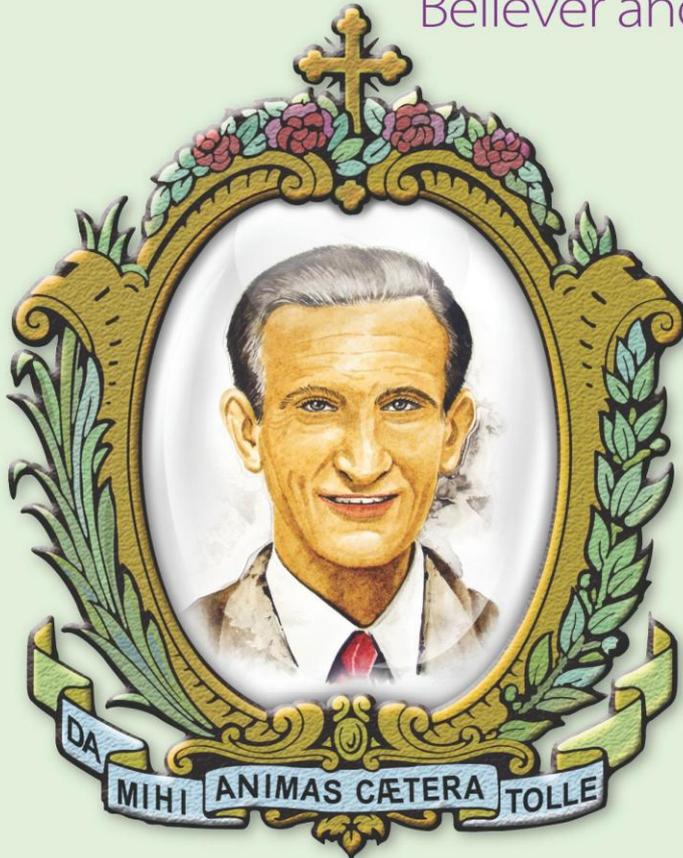


CITIZENS

Attilio Giordani

Believer and educator to the faith

by Pierluigi Cameroni



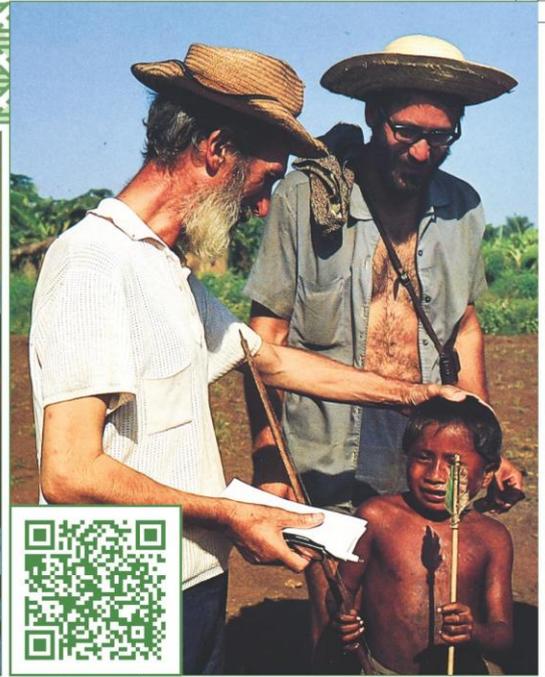
We are celebrating the centenary of the birth of Venerable Attilio Giordani (Milan 1913, he died at Campo Grande in 1972) declared Venerable on 9 October 2013. We recall his testimony as a believer and educator to the faith as a husband, father of a family, catechist and leader at the oratory, and as a Salesian Cooperator.



Attilio Giordani's life as an apostolically committed Catholic took a decisive and very personal direction in which he discovered "the joy of serving Christ", and "not being just lukewarm good", but "going against the flow", by believing that "you need to live the way you want others to live".

He grew into such conviction over various stages in life: as a teenager, as a young military cadet and then a soldier on the front in Greece and Albania, as we see from his "War diary". His choice of a partner, Noemi Davanzo, was a faith-motivated one as he writes in a letter: "The Lord brought you to me, so that I could see your spirit of love and dedication to those whom the Saviour loves most; this was the superior force that urged me to ask you to be my companion".

Attilio's faith was so great that it was truly a "sign" of God's presence: in the family, at the oratory, in the parish and with whomsoever he met. It was a faith that rather than being proclaimed was transparent in his activity and way of being. Witness to it was the calmness and joy with which he carried out everything he was involved with, convinced as he was that he was merely an instrument in God's hands, seeking always to reach out to the youngsters entrusted to him so that the Christian message could be offered to them. This led him to be most demanding where the Faith was concerned. His final words have been preserved: "The



<http://www.sdb.org/>

measure of our belief is shown in the way we live”.

Attilio Giordani had as ultimate purpose and high point of his life as an educator of faith his commitment to his own family in this regard and then to the young people as a catechist, or as a delegate for aspiring members of Catholic Action, which he was also a leader of.

He played a key role in the family in getting his father back to the faith and urging him to adopt a solid spirituality. He did this not only through his testimony and example of his life but also with convincing arguments. When it was a case of defending his faith, he could do this quite firmly. His children Piergiorgio, Maria Grazia and Paola recall their father's constant reference to Christian values and especially his trust in Divine Providence. Night prayer was an important time in the Giordani household; they always said them together, usually with the lights off, but a candle lit before the statue of Our Lady.



As part of his Catholic action he regarded it a privilege and honour to be amongst young people. One of them testifies:

“He used put certain models before us often reminding us of them: Don Bosco, Dominic Savio, Michael Magone, St Tarcisius, St Pancratius, Carlo Mattei, Aldo Marcozzi... He invited us to imitate them in their love for Christ, the Church, their apostolic courage, their virtue. He tried to give everyone something to do. He wanted us all to be busy. Everything depended on his faith and he was always an optimist. Every day he had an appointment with someone at the oratory, which he would come to faithfully and punctually after work, so they could talk about whatever job they had been entrusted with or share a problem. He would invite people to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, for some particular intention and then he would walk home with them. He did not hesitate to demand sacrifice as a way of strengthening one's good will, and would always motivate people and offer good example himself. He would provide opportunities each day for what he called B.A. (*buona azione*, good example), which could be marked up with a knot in a handkerchief and written in the diary we were urged to write up each

day. He did his best to highlight people's talents and found opportunities for these to be used for others; he knew everyone's good side so it could be won over for Christ”.

Another field of apostolate for him was the press. Attilio was always in the front rank in this, even in a bitterly cold winter when it meant standing at the door of the church in the cold and ice. The importance of a Christian-inspired press in those days was perhaps not well explained or supported with statistics and eloquent speeches, but on those freezing Sunday mornings he would offer the youngsters or whoever was around the most convincing arguments. Nor did the cold affect his good humour, indeed, it sharpened it.

Attilio showed his commitment through groups and associations to contributing to the all-round education of young people, helping them to grow up as good Christians and upright citizens in their families, their relationships with their friends, in free time, and at school. He used often say that “there is no need for words, our life, instead, has to be the biggest word we pronounce” and that “we don't recite the Gospel, we live it; life is not just for telling – it is for giving”.

CITIZENS

Chacas and heaven

by Mario Vargas Llosa



Chacas is closer to heaven than any other place on the planet. To get there you have to climb the snow-capped slopes of the Andes mountain chain, cross dizzying chasms, peaks that reach five thousand metres, then descend steep ridges with condors flying overhead, through the Conchucos gap, to Ancash county. There, amongst creeks, streams, lakes, crops, pastures and surroundings of every shade of green, is a town of one thousand five hundred inhabitants, capital of a province that is home to more than twenty thousand. The extraordinary beauty of this place is not just physical but social and spiritual, thanks to Father Ugo de Censi, an Italian priest who came to Chacas as parish priest in 1976.



Tall, eloquent, genial, stocky yet agile despite his nearly ninety years, he possesses a contagious energy and a will that can move mountains. In the 37 years he has been working here he has transformed this region, one of the poorest in Peru, into a world of peace and work, human solidarity and artistic creativity.

Fr Ugo's ideas are quite personal and often need to be put to his Salesian superiors – and to a nervous Church hierarchy; not to mention economists and sociologists. He believes that money and intelligence are the devil, that convoluted discourses and abstract theories of theology and philosophy have little to do with God, indeed keep us away from Him, and that not even reason is of much help for reaching the Supreme Being. For this, instead of trying to explain Him, one has to desire Him, thirst for Him and, if one finds Him, give in to wonder, that exultation of the heart that produces love. He detests greed and profit, the bureaucratic morass, *rentismo* (people seeking to acquire income through the exercise of political or administrative power over existing wealth, thus obtaining advantages, benefits or revenues), the State, insurance, retirement and believes that if there is to be a criticism of the Catholic Church it is that it

has turned away from the poor and marginalised from whence it came into being. He looks upon private property with suspicion. The word that comes to his lips most often, imbued with tenderness and poetic accent, is charity.

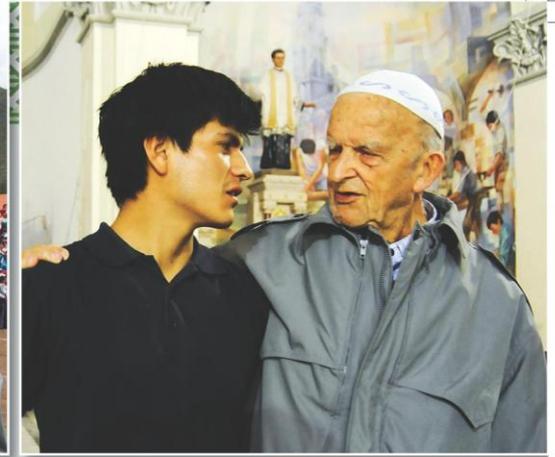
He believes, and he has dedicated his life to proving it, that poverty must be fought from within poverty itself, by identifying oneself with it and experiencing it together with the poor, and that the way to attract young people to religion and to God, which everything in the world tends to pull them away from, is by proposing that they live spirituality as an adventure, giving their time, lending a hand, their knowledge, their life to fighting human suffering and the great injustices which millions of human beings are victim of.

Utopian types and great social dreamers are often vain and self-referential, but Fr Ugo is one of the most sensitive beings in the world and when, with that endless sense of sparkling humour, he says: "I would like to be a child but I believe I am mostly a troublemaker, a *stupido* (a word which needs to be translated not by 'stupid' but by 'foolish idiot!)" who says exactly what he thinks.

The funny thing is that this somewhat anarchistic and idealistic Salesian is at

the same time a man of action, someone who achieves outstanding things and who has set in motion in Chacas and environs a true economic and social revolution by putting his outlandish ideas into practice without asking a cent from the State. He has built two power plants, canals and reservoirs that provide light and water for the people and many districts and neighbourhoods, various colleges, a clinic with 60 beds equipped with the most modern surgical instruments, a nursing school, sculpture, carpentry and furniture design workshops, farms that apply the most up-to-date methods of cultivation while respecting every environmental requirement, a mountain guides school, a school for stonemasons, for restoration of colonial art, a glass factory and workshops for making stained glass, spinning mills, dairy production, mountain refuges, homes for children with disabilities, irrigation channels and this year, in August, he will open a University for adult education in Chacas.

This incomplete and dispassionate list really says very little; one has to see these efforts close up and touch them, as well as others that are on the way to marvel at them and be moved by them. How has all this been possible? It is thanks to the charity that Fr Ugo



speaks of so much and to the fact that for more than nearly four decades he has attracted dozens upon dozens of Italian volunteers to these mountains – doctors, engineers, technicians, teachers, craftsmen and women, workers, artists, students – to work free of charge, living with the poor, working side by side with them to put an end to squalor and roll back poverty, but most of all they have given farmers back the dignity and humanity that exploitation, neglect and iniquitous living conditions had taken away from them. Volunteers and their families pay for their journey, receive food and lodging but no salary, not even medical or retirement benefits, so that being part of this project means surrendering their future and that of their families to greater overall uncertainty.

Yet there they are vaccinating children, working with a pickaxe to dam a river, building houses for the poorest of the poor in San Luis, designing furniture, stained glass, statues and mosaics that will end up in San Diego and Calabria, providing food or offering therapy to terminally ill patients at the Santa Teresa Home in Pomallucay, building a new power plant, cooking the seven hundred meals distributed freely each day, educating technicians, artisans, teachers, farmers, and ensuring a future for the young people of the region. One of these young volunteers was called Giulio Rocca, and he was working in Jangos where he was murdered by a Shining Path militia cell who explained to him, before they killed him, that what he was doing

there was an intolerable obstacle to the Maoist revolution. Years later, another member of the project, Father Daniele Badiali, was also murdered because he refused to provide a ransom demanded by a group of thieves.

With volunteers

Currently there are some fifty volunteers in Chacas and around 350 in the entire region. They live very modestly, singles in community and couples with children in houses, amongst the poor and, I repeat, receiving no salary. The works they build, as soon as they are finished, are given to the State or to those who will immediately benefit from them; according to Fr Ugo's philosophy, the Mato Grosso project does not own its own goods; everything it creates it administers temporarily and for the benefit of those in need, and to whom these things are given as soon as they are ready and working. Other than the export and sale of furniture, financing of the work comes from donations from institutions, businesses or people from many places around the world, but mainly from Italy.

Volunteers come for six months or one, two, three, ten years and many stay on or return and bring their children or they have them here in this ultramodern clinic where inmates pay only what they can or are looked after for free if they cannot. It is amusing to see this crowd of boys and girls with blue eyes and fair hair mixing in on Sundays with boys and girls from the place singing in Quechua, Italian, Spanish and even

Latin. I asked many of these volunteers if they were not concerned, at times, for their future and that of their children, a future for which they had not taken the slightest precaution, nor earned a cent. Only in Chacas are the poor assured of something to eat, a room to sleep in and a doctor to attend to them in case of illness. In the rest of the world, where what Fr Ugo calls diabolical values are more the rule, the poor are starving and people look the other way. But the volunteers just shrug, make jokes, always have a friend somewhere to give them a hand, the Madonna will provide. Confidence and happiness are the pure air breathed in Chacas.

I am convinced that despite the significant moral greatness of Fr Ugo and his disciples and the fantastic work being done in the four countries where they have missions – Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil - this is not the approach by which people can bring an end to poverty in the world. And I do not believe it because my scepticism tells me that there are not enough doses of idealism, selflessness and charity in this vast world to produce transformations like those we see here. But how exhilarating it is to experience, even if only for a few days, the experience of Chacas and discover just the same that in this selfish world there are men and women involved in helping others, doing what we call good, and that in such involvement and sacrifice they find the justification for their existence. Ah, if only there were many other *stupidi* in the world as in Chacas, dear and much admired Fr Ugo!

This article is taken from 'El País'



CITIZENS

A Family

-serving the young

The Salesian Family is a charismatic community and an element of Church spread throughout the world. The Salesian family, led by the Salesians, is made up of thirty groups of religious, consecrated and lay people, and is coordinated at various levels: world, regional, national, provincial and local. Unity and leadership are provided by the Salesian Family Consultative Team which meets annually and offers guidelines for animation. Guaranteeing unity at the centre and following Don Bosco on this, is the Rector Major, his successor. He is the spiritual father of the Salesian Family; his is an animating promotional leadership offering unity and guaranteeing, through a variety of specific vocations, fidelity to the spirit and initiatives proposed through coordination

by José Pastor Ramírez

For Juan E. Vecchi, 8th successor of Don Bosco and the then Salesian Rector Major, paraphrased article 2 of the Salesian constitutions somewhat boldly, saying that the Salesian Family is "a collection of the baptised, who come together in distinct groups bonded by a common response to the Spirit of the Lord, to live in the Church an original spirituality and carry out an apostolic project for the salvation of youth at risk." In Don Bosco's mind and heart, then, the Salesian Family is ONE! The original unity of this family finds its true roots in the common spirit and mission totally at the service of the young and of people.

The "Salesian Family Charter" - a document which contains the identifying features of the groups which take their inspiration from Don Bosco's charisma - in article 44 states that one of the essential criteria for recognising a new group is: "the sharing of the spirit, edu-





educational method and missionary style, that is, the spiritual and pedagogical patrimony of Don Bosco". So the pedagogical aspect is no option, but an obligation for the Salesian Family.

Within the Salesian Family World Consultative Team the groups share their projects and activities and we see how each of them, while carrying out their own particular mission, mirrors the same "spiritual and pedagogical patrimony of Don Bosco".

There are three experiences which involve Salesian Family Groups which are valuable for everyone - one in Africa (Johannesburg) and two in Latin America (Brazil and Venezuela) - in that we can very clearly see the liveliness and dynamism of the Salesian charism in them.

At Ennerdale, Johannesburg on 23 May 2013 the Laura Vicuña technical school was opened, run by a Salesian Family team: Salesians of Don Bosco, Salesian Sisters and Salesian Cooperators. This educational centre was built and will be supported for three years by various European NGOs. The Salesian Cooperators look after the financial administration, while the Salesians and the sisters look to the general running. A Salesian and a Salesian Sister take turns, for a six year

period, as leader of the centre. The school, with many Past Pupils of Don Bosco and the Sisters amongst its staff, has about seven hundred boys and girls and a wide range of specialised subjects: soldering, woodwork, electricity, rug-making, tailoring, cooking, furniture construction, baking, catering.

In Venezuela the Damas Salesianas or 'Salesian Women' look to social formation of young people, general education, health education and women. They have health projects for the very poor. At Altamira they have a very large "Don Bosco Social Complex" with 600 patients and many services: general medicine, cardiology, analysis lab, pharmacy, gastroenterology, neurology, dermatology, and others. The 'Damas', who are an organisation of Catholic laywomen involved in civil society, reach some five hundred thousand people annually through their work.

Canção Nova is a lay movement, born in Brazil. Today it has 1,300 members, including 40 priests, 30 lay, consecrated celibates. Its charism is to foster personal expression in an encounter with Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit; its mission is to "evangelise, communicate Jesus and the new life he has brought us; and its par-

ticular aim is to form new men and women who are able to act to create a new world through evangelisation of contemporary society, following the ideas suggested in *Evangelii nuntiandi*. The *Canção Nova* community has extended throughout South America and into Europe.

Its mission is carried out through Social Communication: radio, television, internet, web TV, Magazines. Its members are active in the social area in clinics, receiving pilgrims, their "New Generation" project for young people at risk. So they can offer proper formation to young people they have set up the *Canção Nova* University and they offer retreats and gatherings for spiritual progress. They have a wide range of programmes: "Families standing up", "Come now", "The Jesus Revolution", "Fight sin" and "YouCat School".

Don Bosco's youth and popular mission is the reason for bringing together, and is the 'raison d'être' of the Salesian Family. The entire Salesian family is responsible for service to the young. This means involving more and more people and groups in a project, working together in the same area and with relative autonomy. Wherever there is a young person at risk, there is room for the Salesian Family.

CITIZENS



Jesus at the centre

with some help from Don Bosco

It is a great responsibility this, explaining to the world how we live out “our being Salesian” as a family, but I believe that many families could tell the same story, and I also believe we should do this more.

A system, without a system

In our case love, reason and faith are part of our every movement although we have never really stopped to study like it is done in school, ... it is a “system without a system” since it was “incorporated” from the moment that Txemari and I were married on 4 July 1998.

We are both Salesian Cooperators, and were before we were married. Jesus is at the centre of our lives and so are the Salesians whom, since we were young, helped us to know of Don Bosco, and

who have accompanied our married lives.

It is all part of the atmosphere at home, our relationships. It is not something we can detach from our life, since it is our way of being.

Three are not many

Our apartment is not very big, and is often only a place we sleep in since our life is lived beyond the four walls of the house. We could not understand life if it were just the three of us.

The Cooperator group is an important point of reference, and is made up of other families like ours, other children who live and feel like Marta does and who grow up and are accompanied together.



We live in one of Spain's smaller cities, Pamplona. There are three of us: Txemari (dad), Marian (mum) and Marta (daughter). Our life is not so different from that of others around us in a western, very secularised society where faith has been largely relegated to the private domain. We do our best to live out our faith and show it through the conviction we have received from our families and from the Salesians.

by Marian Serrano

Our parents have been major players in who we are now, and responsible for our faith because they planted the seed... without which it would not have been possible for us to live as we do. They were the ones who offered Jesus to us. Then later, the Salesians came... and found fertile ground, so they sowed in good soil. But it does not hurt to say it: occasionally things have had to be renewed.

The Salesian community in our city is also important, our brothers, as they have always made us feel they were: brothers.

Then there are other families in other places who live like we do, whom we have known since we were all young and with whom we move ahead together.



And there is much more that life has taught us, and this has helped us to grow, has helped our faith...

We are fortunate; we live in broad circles, with deep relationships that enrich our lives, make them complete, and mean that when we come home to "the four walls" the home is a place of peace, encounter, dialogue, common life, joint plans, a place to pray, offer things...

Since Day One

We have always been convinced that Marta should experience what we think is important in every area of life and of course we cannot leave out our life of faith.

Each culture has its own characteristics, and ours, to be truthful, has certain features of secularised society, very private areas where the children make up their minds on what they want when they are older; for now, they play, enjoy without thinking much... about what they do. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be dragged along, since it is difficult not to... but at other times we show who we are...

Still and all, living with this contradiction, we have always been clear that we want our daughter to live as we live our lives, not so much systematically, as I said earlier but in gestures, actions, friendships... we don't have a set programme like at school, but a spontaneous one, life itself.

How?

By praying every day and several times a day. Especially by giving thanks and asking for what is good for people around us, whatever they need. We pray about our plans... we pray with Mary Help of Christians and with Jesus.

With much tenderness, embrace. Many things we do together. We share our life with everyone.

We teach our daughter how to develop her abilities, give her room to be creative and we show her the importance of things being well done, accepting her responsibilities... always adapted to her age.

And we talk a lot, a lot... offer different points of view, listen to others. We pray and respond. We try not to leave questions without answers, avoiding dead ends. We seek agreement, and give reasons for decisions. We ask forgiveness for mistakes. We teach her to be thankful, ask forgiveness, take on responsibility, think of others, her friends, and we teach her to ask for help and offer it.

Marta is already 12, into her teenage years, and somewhere I have read that this is when we need: "More tenderness, more patience, more reason, more things done well, fewer defects, less nonsense, less just getting by, more example and more truth!". This is what we are doing: our method is Don Bosco's and his mother's, Mama Margaret; our pillar of strength is Jesus, and our embrace is from the Help of Christians.

CITIZENS

St Aloysius

Don Bosco's second oratory

Home for any young person

by Mauro Mergola

On 8 December 1847 Don Bosco began his second activity in an area known then as Porta Nuova (today San Salvario) where he opened a second oratory for young migrant boys coming in from the Piedmontese countryside seeking their future in Turin, the rapidly growing capital of Savoy. This was the only oratory in Don Bosco's time that did not come into existence through a specific invitation by local authorities, civil or religious. It began because the boys who used come to Valdocco from Porta Nuova made their very poor, lonely and precarious circumstances known to him.

St Aloysius has retained its identity since then as a home for the young, especially migrant youth looking for a place of welcome, education and for their future.

There is many a Saint who followed Don Bosco there, such as Blessed Michael Rua, Saint Leonard Murialdo, St Louis Guanella, Blessed Faà di Bruno, Venerable Fr Cimatti, Saint Callistus Caravario, Blessed Philip Rinaldi, Blessed Piergiorgio Frassati. It is curious that for each one of them, going to St Aloysius had the connotation of giving their lives to the Lord and following Him through a deeper dedication to one or other aspect of youthful circumstances.

There have been many waves of migration that followed too, beginning with the region, then the nation, and finally from all over the world, and this is still a feature of the Oratory's life.

Currently the Oratory is developing on three main fronts:

a) Social and educational activity for 6-20 year-olds. They come from 40 different nationalities, a whole variety of religions and confessions (Catholic, Evangelical, Muslim, Hindu, Orthodox), though many of these are by now born in Italy. A good number are from separated or blended families, or single mothers, and they need accompaniment by way of education, social welfare and personalised formation. There is a range of interventions networked with social services, schools and other





The aim is to help them have everything they need to be upright citizens, and to help them develop their conscience and seek what is good, whatever religion they are.

educational agencies. The chief initiatives concern support for schooling, sport, education to Christian living, and parenting services.

b) Another activity is the reception centre for unaccompanied minors. This educational and social service was set up in 2005 in agreement with the Turin City Council. It means that the Oratory takes in 12 youngsters that the City's office for young migrants offers to it. They come from various countries but especially North Africa and for that matter elsewhere in Africa. They have no adult point of reference. These youngsters are entrusted to the Oratory Director and the Oratory becomes home for them until they turn 18. The Director is their "father", the rest of the staff their "brothers and sisters". The aim is to help them have everything they need to be upright citizens, and to help them develop their conscience and seek what is good, whatever religion they are. They are given

skills to prepare for the workforce and to be able to contribute to the demands of Turin society today.

c) A third area is the educational service on the streets. This has been in place since 2007 and began when the Salesians and staff found many young immigrant lads hanging around the Murazzi along the Po and in Valentino Park where they were easy prey for the criminal groups involved in drugs and extortion. Using a campervan, of an evening the staff goes out to find these boys and win over their trust to the point where they can offer them alternative ways of fitting into society. Each day the staff set themselves up at a fixed spot in Valentino Park where they offer an Oratory experience which arises naturally from their rapport, the interest taken in them, and they try to provide the cultural tools which will help them, such as language (Italian). They also offer some early trade skills or help them find work. One result of

this effort is peer education which Don Bosco himself also employed, getting those from the same country or same religion to help one another. But it also involves young people from countries and religions other than their peers, where they can experience the happiness of being able to give to others what they themselves have received at the Oratory.

d) The principles in place at the Oratory in this variegated and complex set of circumstances can be summed up by saying that no youngster is a foreigner; the only real 'foreigner' would be someone who does not share this thinking. Each person is accepted for who he or she is; education is already a kind of evangelisation by offering young people a chance in life; giving meaning to their lives is a way of bringing them closer to Christ; each young person is offered what is good for him or her, accepting the possibility of refusal or that they may go to more competent people when we do not have the skills to help them with; but the Oratory is a unified project as well as offering diverse paths, given the wide range of people and their needs.

The Oratory involves Salesians, 8 full-time staff, various volunteers. And it serves as a 'work experience' also for university students in the education faculty, and so often a chance for someone who is not involved much with Church to get more involved and discover that particular approach we call 'Oratory' 



CITIZENS

Past Pupils

Don Bosco's consolation



Pedagogical involvement of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco in the world

The Past Pupils of Don Bosco Association is one group in the Salesian Family. It has no "official founder". As Fr Ceria once wrote, it came about through "the power of things that find their origins and life in natural and spontaneous causes", and flows out of the family spirit of the preventive system as it was experienced at the Oratory in Valdocco.

by José Pastor Ramírez

Don Bosco's educational approach "makes a friend" of the pupil, adopts the language of the heart, and makes the one being educated a partner not just a target group. It produces profound changes in behaviour and can achieve, as was the case for St Dominic Savio, the heights of holiness and a lifelong communion of ideals and sentiments with educators. The positive climate of shared living, cheerfulness, friendship breathed by young people from very different cultures and social circumstances, has in itself the power of creating between teacher and pupil a kind of spiritual relationship with bonds of mutual appreciation, affection, lifelong ideals.

The past Pupils of Don Bosco based themselves on "the education received" and a commitment to continue its results. They are especially called upon to put into practise the Christian and human values they have received.

The Past Pupils can be found all over the world and in every social setting; they have two clear ideas of Don Bosco's wherever they are: "I am sure you will continue to Don Bosco's consolation" and "act in such a way that people, when they ask you who you are, can hear the amazing answer: he is one of Don Bosco's children".

Past Pupils feel a moral obligation to

give back what they have experienced and received in a Salesian house; that is, they understand that they are called to to make sure the "education received" bears fruit. Throughout the world in fact you can see Past Pupils at work in society, in Salesian houses, in dioceses and in various areas of ministry, youth ministry, ministry to migrants, literacy programs, street kids, working to promote women etc.

If we look just at the pedagogical and health area, Past Pupils around the world have many 'best practices':

Spain: "Salesian Sporting Platform at Malaga" and the "Centre for attention





and social and educational compensation" at Puertollano. The first involves around 180 young people and their families. Sport is the catalyst for attracting young people. They have grown considerably over recent years, also in social recognition for their work. From a sports club it has become a real point of social and sporting reference for youngsters and citizens in Malaga.

The "Centre for attention and social and educational compensation" at Puertollano, in turn, offers good service in forming people for leisure time. Its cultural activities are aimed at integration of youngsters in society. The project, thought up by the Past Pupils has been run for five years in cooperation with the Salesians and involves pre-teens and teenagers between 6 - 12 years of age who have difficulty adapting to formal education.

Guatemala: the "Bartolomé Ambrosio" technical centre which can take up to 500 pupils. These are street children who can attend courses in computer repair, domestic electricity, industrial welding, carpentry, metal grinding and turning. Helping these often disadvan-

tagged youngsters to fit into the working world is a priority for these Past Pupils in Central America and they have set up the "Blessed Alberto Marvelli Foundation" to support this and other activities on behalf of those most in need.

Kolkata, India: Solidarity projects in education and health. At St John Bosco College there are evening classes with more than 250 students. One of the most significant is literacy classes for young women who come to the city to work and have no chance for formal schooling because they work. A clinic has been opened for families in serious financial difficulty. Twice a month, on Saturdays, they offer clinical examinations to diagnose osteoporosis, heart problems, vision problems and then providing glasses for them. Some 2600 people per year benefit from this. This project is run by a group of twenty five teachers and doctors, all Past Pupils, who offer their services free for people who are disadvantaged. This group of professionals is brought together and coordinated by the president and delegate of the local Past Pupils' Union at St John Bosco College in Kolkata.

The Past Pupils are convinced that they can be "Don Bosco's consolation" and "that people will recognise that they are Don Bosco's children" only when projects of this kind for the very needy can multiply around the world. They are convinced that this is how the "education received" in Salesian centres can bear fruit.



CITIZENS

Docu-fiction

Extreme South the Cross at the End of the World



by Francesco Motto

The history of the educational experience of the indigenous peoples, not just the young – in the Salesian 'reducciones' or reservations, on Dawson Island and Candelaria in Tierra del Fuego at the end of the 19th century – could be told many ways: through rigorous historical approaches, careful anthropological research, enlightening geographical documentaries, serious journalism, intriguing adventure novels, and so on... but a modern narrative form is docu-fiction. Let us offer you one, Extreme South, which a team of five (script-writer, director, two actors, an adviser) have put together and made available in a number of languages.

Obviously one needs an occasion to tell a story from the past. This emerged from the need to prevent an extremely significant centenary for the the Church and the Salesians from being entirely forgotten: on 21 December 1913 the Salesians in Punta Arenas (Chile) had erected a huge cross at the southernmost point of the American continent: to be precise on the tip of the promontory known as Cape Froward in the Strait of Magellan, separating two oceans. The cross above and the one below fulfilled a chain of biblical prophecies: "May he rule from sea to sea / and from the River to the ends of the earth". Cape



Froward was the end point of an uninterrupted flow of words like an underground channel coursing through 16 centuries of religious freedom following Constantine's edict (313).

The occasion was there – now it needed a context. And so it was that behind the origins of that cross erected right at the tip of the “holy experiment” that was Dawson Island, one finds Don Bosco and his missionary dreams carried all the way to those lands inhabited by the indigenous peoples isolated there for millennia. The Salesians, who had arrived there while Don Bosco was still alive (1887), gave themselves body and soul to education, which in this case took on the name of “civilisation and evangelisation”.

And of course there was need for a geographical setting, and this was taken up through 20 days of shooting in the desolate Magellan territories and Beagle Channel (not far from Cape Horn), which Don Bosco had dreamed of, and through which Fr Fagnano and the first heroic Salesian missionaries had travelled, but which had also been seen by the famous anthropologist Charles Darwin in his round the world voyage in 1832,

There was need for a more secular socio-historic context too and this was

found in the writings of the father of Evolution, who had found in the indigenous people of those “accursed” lands the missing link in evolution from animal to man, somehow justifying their almost complete eradication by swashbucklers and unscrupulous *estancieros*.

And finally, there was need for an attractive story to tell, and this was built up around two characters: one an adult who, though ill, wanted to see the Cape Froward Cross and thus realise a childhood dream since he had been a boy at Valdocco, and a young actor who, following his father's footsteps “to the ends of the world”, wanted to make a film of where Darwin had been.

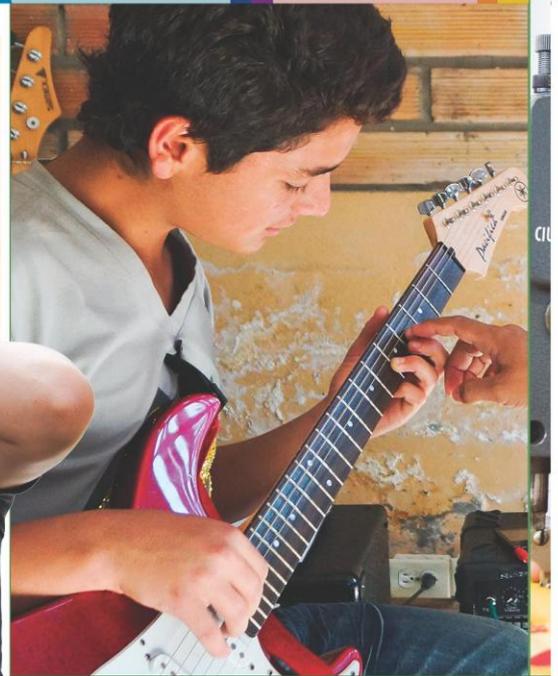
These two characters met almost at the end of their long and lonely journey to Patagonia, where they tell their story and the adult convinces the youth to come with him on the journey to the cross. During the final part, the initial friendship runs into a clash of thinking: between science (the youth) and faith (the adult), between the primacy of an idealistic view of life nurtured by great trust in reason and science which can resolve the world's contradictions and give meaning to human existence, and the primacy of a more realistic and dramatic view of the adult human being who sees that

such a way of reasoning is superficial.

This troubled friendship between the two characters in the film is also fed by mutual confidences they exchange on their journey. Each has a secret to reveal to the other. We will leave this for the film-goers to find out, as also the film's dramatic ending, to be understood not so much in realistic terms, as symbolic ones by virtue of the Cross: a religious symbol for someone with faith, but also a sign of irreplaceable contact between heaven and earth for someone without it.

Historically, the fact remains that the Salesian pioneer experience of the collective education of a people – which this docu-fiction *Extreme South* transforms and develops through images and words of cinema – carries particular weight: if the initial enthusiasm might suggest a comparison with the *reducciones* of the Jesuits in Paraguay, its sad epilogue demonstrates instead how much generous utopia the hearts of those Salesian missionaries had harboured, generous beyond belief, but ignorant of the damage western progress, (theirs), was inflicting inexorably on the indigenous civilisation, leading to their extinction. This is an historical legacy whose material signs are destined to disappear unless something is very quickly done to preserve it.

CITIZENS



"At home where I come from we did not always have the possibility of eating something, or having good clothes, despite help from my dad, but he didn't take much responsibility; I have little respect for him". This is the testimony of Pablo Castañeda, a 12 year-old boy who is currently part of the Niñez y Adolescencia en Situación de Calle (Children, Teens on the Street) program, and then he adds: "I haven't got much to say about myself, but what I do know is that in my heart I have an immense feeling of gratitude for the love of Ciudad Don Bosco (Don Bosco Boys Town) for us, not just for what they do for us every day, but because since I came to Ciudad Don Bosco, I regard it as my father and my home where I am part of a family with a thousand or more members including the Salesians, teachers, my friends, and of course my foster mother, 'my mother' the Virgin Mary".

by San Luis Beltrán Province

It is estimated that Colombia has approximately 11,000 children and teenagers in the ranks of illegal armed groups. Until now some 5,000 have managed to detach themselves one way or another and are looked after by the Government and institutions specialised in protection, with the support of international organisations.

The Salesians, who have been in Medellín, Colombia, since 1915, began their work of protection and education of street children in 1930; since 1970 the Medellín-Colombia Province has been focusing its efforts on the various kinds of poverty which street children experience, as well as on their vulnerable human rights: street life, child labour, neglect, physical, sexual and

psychological abuse, extreme poverty and forced recruitment.

Since 2001 the various Salesians works in the country, backed by more than 50 years of experience in working for street children, began a joint program with the national government for under 18 year-olds who had left armed groups, be they guerrilla units, paramilitaries or criminal gangs. They had either been captured in combat or had voluntarily surrendered.

And just like Pablo's, part of the program for those who have left armed groups, all the other stories are ones of pain and suffering; what they have in common now, however, is the hope, love and education received through Don Bosco's Preventive System.

"I feel very sad that I wasn't able to be with my family, for failing to have a childhood like any other child wants and should have. I am sorry I have lost all this time!" These are the words of Hector Yurumí, a peasant lad who was recruited when he was only 10, threatened that his entire family would be



killed if he did not join the guerrilla group. He stayed with them for 6 years, a time in which he had to kill a number of people, including a child who had been a schoolmate living in the same street where he lived, in the jungle region of Putumayo.

Hector, who always dreamed of returning home to his mother, studying and having a family, was burying his dreams in the jungle since his daily situation there clearly showed that "this dream could never come true", his life was already mapped out and nobody could change it; until the day, that is, that a friend came from another of the battle fronts, spoke of his dreams, which were the same as Hector's, and they decided they had a right to live a normal life with a family. The two of them, and a third friend planned how they would escape from the guerrilla unit. The day came: there was a battle with the national army and as they had planned, in the midst of all the confusion they got away from the unit, hid in the jungle for two days and then sought out the army so they could surrender.

After legal proceedings so they could be recognised as child victims, Hector arrived at the *Centro de Atención Especializada* (CAE or Centre for Specialised Attention) at Ciudad Don Bosco, which looks after teenagers between 14 and 18 years of age who had got away from armed groups. The Centre was educating them to be autonomous and helping them reintegrate with family, and into work and society through Don Bosco's Preventive System. It was preparing them for work and sharing an interdisciplinary role between them and their families. All of this helps to build a better country.

"I trained as a carpenter; then I worked with various companies until last year when I decided to set up my own business called 'Muebles Confort' (Comfort Furniture) and I have never been lacking for work, things have gone very well, thanks be to God. I hope the business grows even more and becomes a large enterprise".

And just like Pablo and Hector, thousands of children, boys, girls, teenagers

like they were, have benefited from the various programs in San Luis Beltrán Province in Medellín-Colombia. The approach has been a holistic one, giving attention to basic needs, helping them with schooling and work preparation, providing ministry, recreational, cultural, educational activities; thanks to specialised accompaniment and attention to health, psychology, social work, pedagogy and nutrition. All this is based on Don Bosco's Preventive System which is more than ever relevant today and allows the Salesians all round the world to say that today, as was the case in Don Bosco's time, it is possible for youngsters to realise their dreams.



CITIZENS

Focus on the Salesian mission in Europe

WE ARE THE OTHERS



My missionary vocation came from the Oratory

I wish to be a Salesian missionary precisely because I am very happy here working with young people in the Oratory; it is the young people who have helped my missionary vocation to grow.

My name is Pedro Mario, a Salesian Brother from Mexico. It is now a year and a half since I became part of the Belgium North-Holland Province. I was sent to the House in Amsterdam. I have needed to spend a good amount of time learning Dutch and getting to know and understand the local culture which is an essential preparation for missionary work. There are some significant challenges in a secular society which tries to exclude God from its life, but I believe it is a good opportunity for the Salesian community to offer the young the Gospel of joy and win over youthful hearts for Christ.

When I spoke about my vocation to the mission "ad-gentes", the first reaction of the confreres in my province was: "Why? Aren't you happy here?", to which

Since 1988 the Salesian Congregation has been offered an annual mission theme. In 2014 the SMD (Salesian Mission Day) attention focuses again on Europe through the theme of Salesian work for migrants in 28 province of Project Europe.

The theme - "We are the others! Focus on the Salesian mission in Europe" tells real stories of seven different works for migrants from Stockholm in Sweden to Leon in Spain. Here are two additional stories of Salesians now working for migrants in Project Europe.

by Pedro Mario and Lukasz Nawrot

I immediately responded: "I wish to be a Salesian missionary precisely because I am very happy here working with young people in the Oratory; it is the young people who have helped my missionary vocation to grow."

My vocation began as a mixture of doubt and curiosity, but grew and matured gradually to become a strong conviction which led me to make a decision: "I am asking to go to the missions so I can share the gift of the Salesian charism with young people from another country, culture and language". And since then the others to whom God was sending me began to be part of my life.

Our consecrated community and a group of young volunteers share the joy of being involved in life in a Salesian style. We share the same vibes and we are all heading in the same direction. This gives me hope and motivates me to give my life to God and young people here.



Young people are like a mirror

I am Lukasz, a newly ordained Polish Salesian priest. My missionary experience began some years ago when I was sent to Ireland to do my Practical Training. From then on I began to think seriously of going to the missions. I officially began my mission in September 2012, when the Rector Major sent me to Ireland as part of Project Europe. This was one of the happiest moments in my life, a true Proclamation of God.

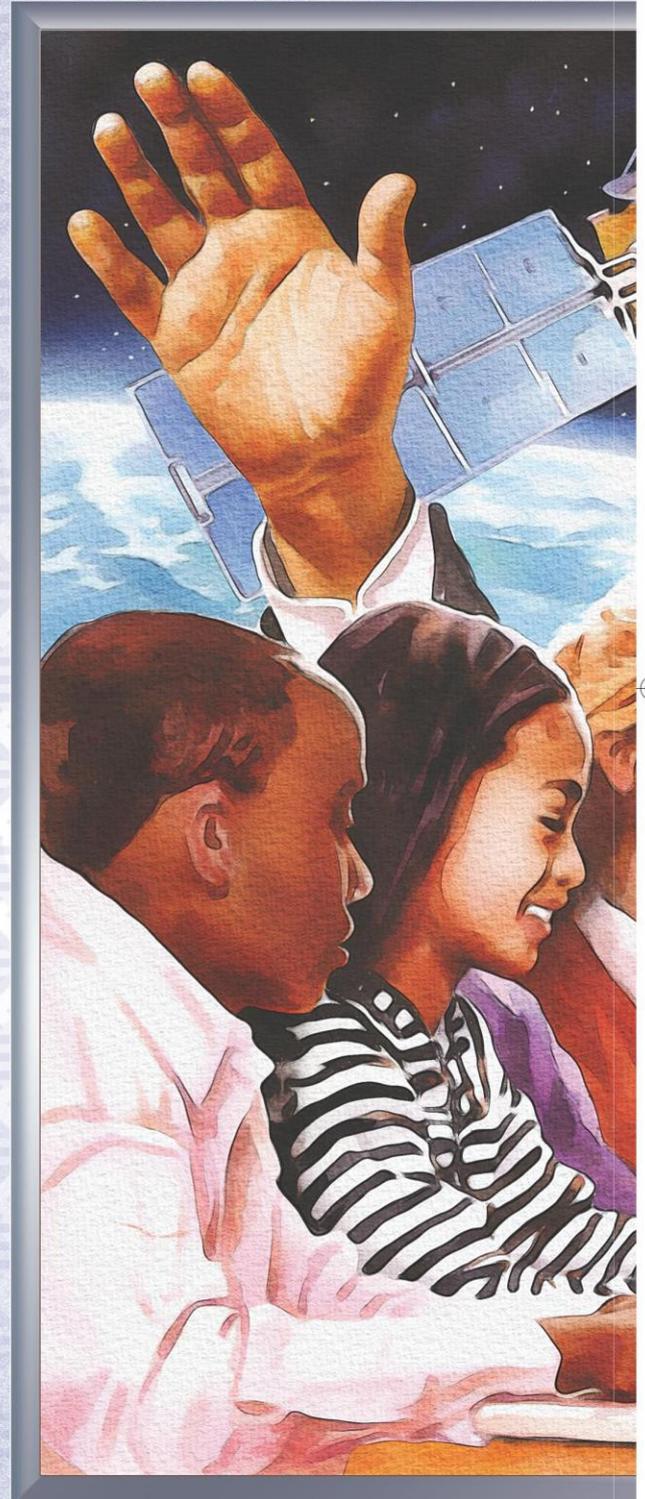
As I look back at my Salesian life, not just now as a missionary, I have to say that one of the most joyful and profound experiences has been community life. I believe that pastoral work for the salvation and benefit of the young starts there. A second belief is that God is to be found in every human being, and as Salesians we believe that our mission is to seek and find God in the young, and that is why I am happy every day to meet them in the corridors at school, in the playground, on the street, on the football field, or wherever I meet them. Our presence amongst them, a simple smile and a nice word, can change the direction of their day, but ours too, because they are like a mirror, I can say, of the fact that we are the others. It is amongst them that I can recharge my batteries.

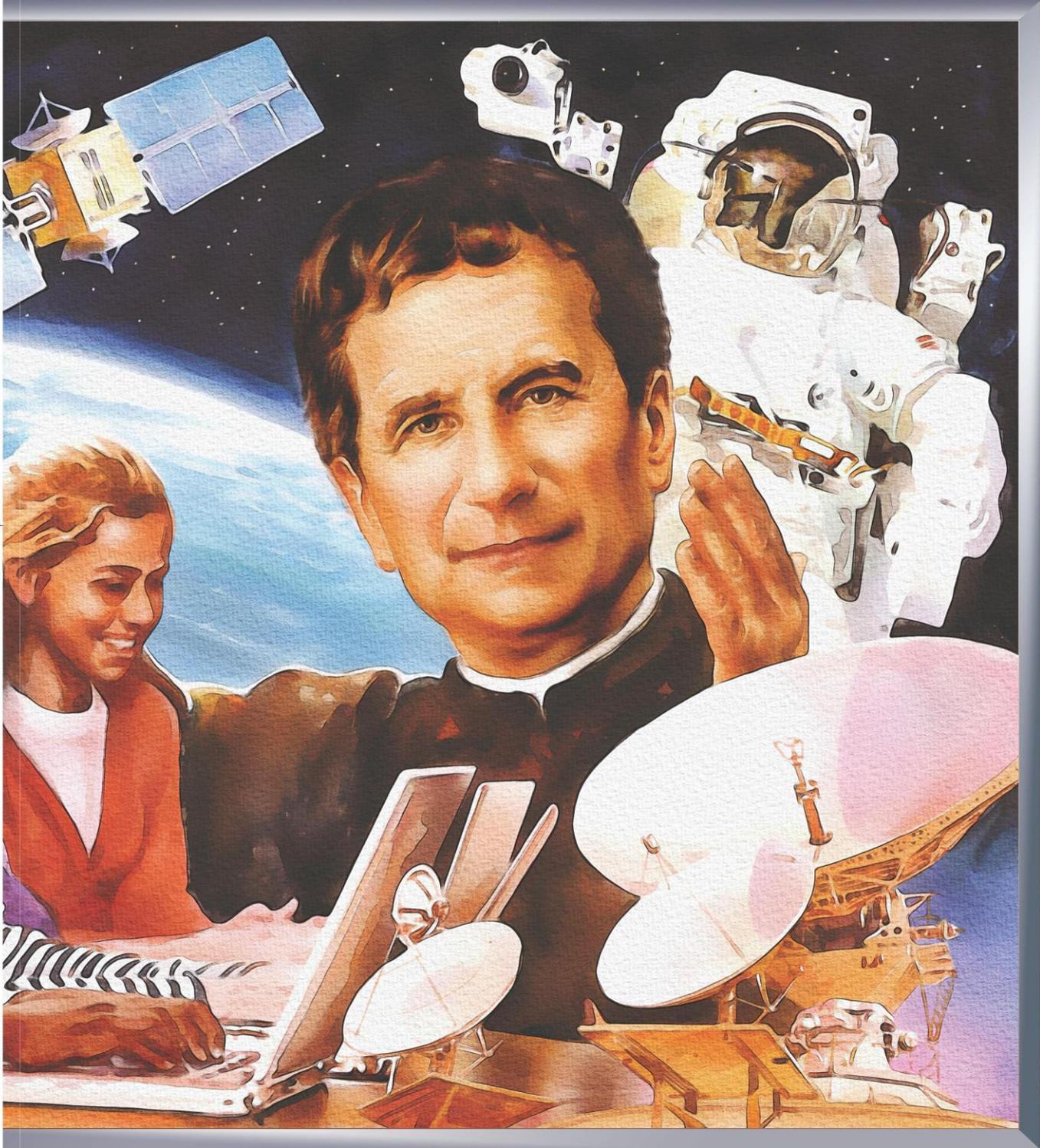
There are three ordinary encounters that make my mission here in the school at Pallaskenry a joyful one: the encounter with the young, with the confreres, and with God. This is how I feel that I am a Salesian missionary who is happy to share my experience of God. I know that every baptised person and every Salesian is a missionary at heart, but I invite you to leave your country and go elsewhere to evangelise. We need more vocations here, so pray along with me: "Da mihi animas, caetera tolle".

SALESIAN HUMANISM

Giving due weight to all that is positive in the life of individuals, in creation, in the events of history

- ▶ Gangnam style turns serious (Korea)
- ▶ Alcohol³, prevention in action (Austria)
- ▶ From street kid to aspiring chef (Philippines)
- ▶ "Being a volunteer is part of me" (India)
- ▶ Where devils become angels (Mexico)
- ▶ Nine days, nine topics, nine verbs: online novena to Don Bosco (Belgium)
- ▶ Borgo, a workshop for providence (Italy)
- ▶ A living source of mission: social communication (Cuba)
- ▶ Don Bosco - Expo 2015 (Italy)





SALESIAN HUMANISM

GANGNAM
STYLEturns serious
Seoul's new style oratory in cooperation with local government

by Hilario Seo

'Gangnam', which actually means 'south of the river' in Korean (the river Han, in this case, which divides the city) is not just a funny dance. It is an icon of the rapid economic development that took place in Seoul and elsewhere in the country in the 1970s and 80s. It is a place where people are wealthy, the girls are pretty and everything is supposed to be cool. But is that true for many young people who live there, and for that matter, anywhere in Seoul? City Hall, Seoul, was not so convinced, and invited the Salesians to bring their style and expertise to bear on the burgeoning 'youth problem' of the secular and consumerist society that Gangnam represents.

"I hope all the young people in this Centre have a feeling of being loved more than they have felt elsewhere and, with this experience, achieve their dreams in life as well as growing up to be upright citizens and good human beings. It is enough that you are young for you to be loved so much". With this greeting from Fr Stephen Nam, Provincial of Korea Province, the opening ceremony for the Seoul Youth Dream Centre began in the presence of 400 people including SDBs, members of the Salesian Family, City Hall officials, youth leaders, youngsters. On 13th June, at 3 pm to be precise, and after a long and challenging preparation process, finally the SYDC was a reality.

The SYDC is located in the most developed zone in Seoul city, Gangnam-gu, a district by now made famous by 'Gangnam style'.

It was February of 2012 that Seoul City Hall decided to entrust to the Salesians the management of the nascent SYDC. But local government had not yet defined its exact purpose nor how it was to be operated as a service to young people. At that point they merely had in mind creating a youth centre that would be somewhat different to the norm. But once the Salesians had taken up management responsibility for the project, they appointed three confreres well-qualified in the

field of youth ministry to take on the roles of Director, Secretary and Program manager. Committing themselves fully to their new responsibilities, they established a vision and mission for the Centre and set up a broader management team with some 20 lay collaborators fully qualified in their field, such as the various youth activities, counselling, group dynamics... From last September, in fact, a number of programs had already been set in motion for young people who had left home for one or other serious reason. The new Centre began offering them somewhere to sleep and eat, as part of the remodelling of the building that had previously been used as a medical





centre. The medical centre and its staff have shifted to a suburb of Seoul.

SYDC, described as a 'comprehensive youth centre', has been designed by the Youth Affairs Department of Seoul City to effectively respond to the diverse demands of today's youth. The new Dream Youth Centre occupies two floors of a seven-storey building, for a total of 6500m² and offers multiple youth activities such as after-school and weekend youth programs, aptitude and career exploration programs, group activities, counselling, educational certificate programs, a shelter, alternative school programs, as well as a sexuality culture program for youth. This range of services is offered as a 'one-stop operating system', or in other words, is conceived as a new type of Valdocco Oratory for the modern city dominated by strong secularism and consumerism.

The Salesians can now bring their 60 years of experience in the field, carrying out a variety of youth ministries in Korea, to city youth who are especially poor and most in need, either because they have been turned out of home or are profoundly in need of solid values.

And that is the view, too, of the city authorities. The First Deputy Mayor, Seoul Metropolitan, Mr Kim Sangbeom, who officially represented the City at the opening ceremony had this to say. "We know very well that for youth work we need people who love young people and know how to engage them. It is not just a question of policy or a good project or even whether the money is available or not. We need leaders who are totally dedicated to young people. So we want to thank the Salesian Society who gladly accepted our request to take on responsibility for this SYDC. They are famous for their ability in the

field, and have shown this in the way they have established and given life to this Centre. I would like to ask you in the name of all the citizens of Seoul to make yourself the friends and teachers of youth in difficult situations so their lives can achieve their dreams and so they may overcome barriers with the strength that comes from your accompaniment".

In reply, Fr Joseph Na Hyengkuy, and now Director of SYDC, said: "We want to express our deep appreciation to everyone present who has given us much courage to share our lives with the young in need. And we assure you all that with our wide experience and our Salesian network, we will work together with you for the dreams of Korea's youth" 



<http://dreamcenter.or.kr/>

SALESIAN HUMANISM

Alcohol³ prevention in action

by Silvia Vrzak

Through their interactive Alcohol³ Display the Salesians at the Don Bosco Youth Point in Siebenhügel, Klagenfurt, Austria, aim to give young people (in the 10-15 year-old age group) an opportunity of tackling the question of alcohol consumption in an interesting and enjoyable way. The idea is to involve them not only at a cognitive level, but also at an emotional one. Personal experiences, alternatives to alcohol and information on the topic should contribute to broadening their approach and point of view.

“Check It”

“Check it” can easily be offered in city centres and during celebrations. This year it was carried out most successfully during ‘Carnevale’ and on report day.

This part of our activity on alcohol prevention won first prize in the “Health Award” in Klagenfurt and is regularly requested.

The basic idea behind the “Check it! Alcohol prevention plan” is not just bringing what happens at night into the light of day, but offering prevention on site.

Young people are offered services for free, right in Klagenfurt city centre or during particular celebrations:

- ▶ Alcohol test
- ▶ A ‘hangover’ kit
- ▶ Alcohol quiz
- ▶ Information materials

The alcohol test allows young people to estimate and then use appropriate tools to check the alcohol level in their blood. The contact with young people here offers opportunity for discussion. At the same time they can test their ability to check on binge-drinking and its associated risks.

“The hangover kit”, contains biscuits, glucose, tea and chewing gum, and gets young people to reflect on the importance of taking care of their bodies even while celebrating. Dis-

tribution of these kits is seen as one further component in encouraging young people to interact with greater awareness and use alcohol in a healthy way.

The quiz is a fun way of testing and expanding the knowledge young people have about alcohol. There are interesting rewards, like a year’s supply of fruit juice, and this motivates them to take part.

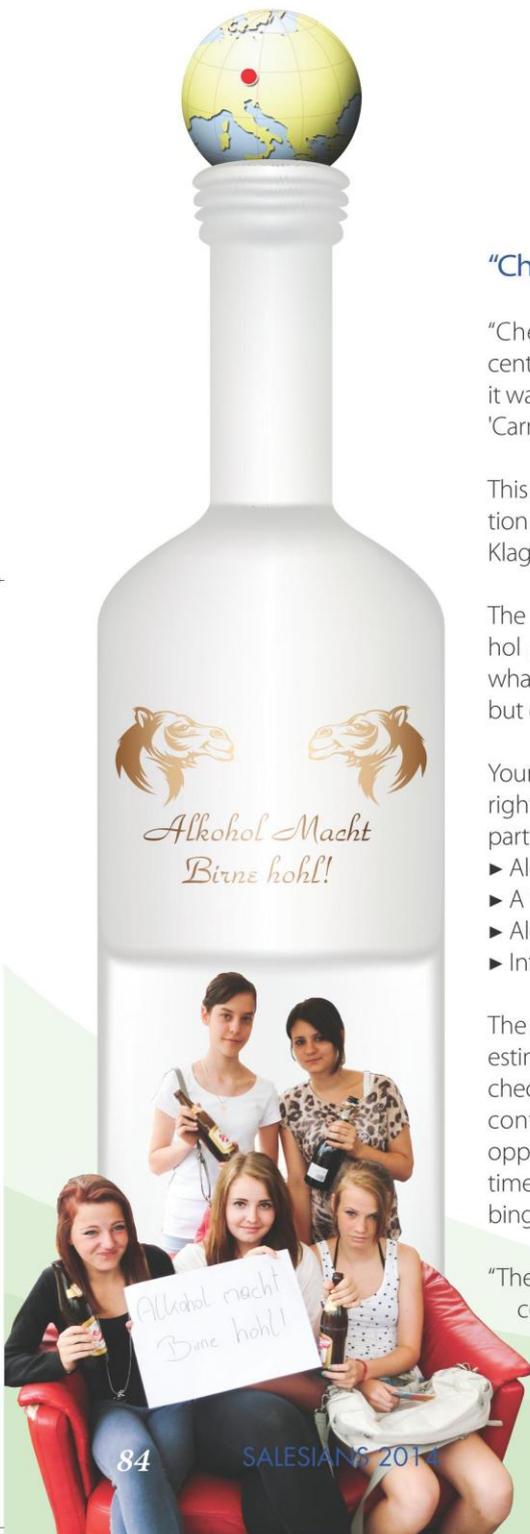
Abstinence, difficult to achieve in a society so bound to alcohol, is not presented as a first option. We insist more on fostering the least risky alcohol consumption possible.

Shooting star

To give publicity to alcohol prevention amongst young people we created “Shooting Stars” which took place during a youth festival at the Klagenfurt City Hall.

Alcoholic beverages receive a lot of very successful publicity. Very often certain beverages are presented not because they quench thirst or bring pleasure, but because of associated feelings: “If you drink alcohol you are cool, sexy, communicative, a fun person, etc..” In short, advertising is manipulative!

We sought to use this argument in reverse, asking young people to advertise against excessive alcohol consumption. To do this we gave them props, costumes, posters for communicating the message. A polaroid



Meeting young people in their own setting and at their level is a speciality of all of these programmes and a basis for sustained dialogue with them.

or instant camera produced immediate results. The youngsters were asked to tackle the issue creatively, including looking at the effects of binge-drinking.

It was all highly amusing. The kids used all their creativity. All their photos were put together at the end in a collage and this was displayed.

Shake it

Alcohol is not essential for a good cocktail. The youngsters can have first hand experience of this. They can have one of the non-alcoholic cocktails or can create their own... there is no limit to the imagination. Naturally the kids can also take their recipes home to try them and offer them to friends at the next party.

A walk with "binge glasses"

Using "binge glasses" we can cleverly simulate the state of confusion caused by excessive alcohol intake (0.8 to 1.5 /mil). The kids' task is to walk a certain distance wearing these "binge glasses". The feeling of insecurity and limited control over the body and its functions can be better understood through this impressive experience. This way they can be clearer about the risks and dangers and have a much more aware use of alcohol.

The Alcohol³ display for schools

The display can be set up in any classroom or open space in a school building. The only requirements are a power point, tables and walls or display boards for posters. The display and items connected with it are presented 'in loco' by specialised staff and can be

voluntarily used by the pupils during breaks. There is also the possibility for a whole class to visit the display and then work on the topic at greater depth in a workshop session.

It includes...

A quiz

An interactive quiz on alcohol invites the youngsters to tackle the issue in a creative and fun way. They can do the quiz at the computer alone or in a group. In answering the questions they get information not only about the risks and collateral effects of alcohol consumption, but they also learn social skills, communication and cooperation.

A survey on student consumption

Through an anonymous questionnaire the pupils are asked to describe their own experiences with alcohol. After

the show the results are evaluated and a model of student consumption produced. This can then be given the school administration, and gives to them further points that can be developed in the school context.

The overall aim of the Display is to foster an awareness regarding alcohol so young people can know the risks consequent to overindulgence, provide clear information about alcohol, promote alternative approaches for parties and youth gatherings, promote social skills for life, reflect on personal patterns of consumption, and expand on individual factors involved in protection against the risks of alcohol.

Meeting young people in their own setting and at their level is a speciality of all of these programmes and a basis for sustained dialogue with them. They also have pedagogical value, not just the individual components, but the conversations they give rise to.



SALESIAN HUMANISM

FROM STREET KID

Twenty youngsters from the Tuloy Foundation work for Street Children recently began a course in Culinary Arts. Run by an authentic chef, and with the help of Fr Marciano "Rocky" Evangelista, founder and director of Tuloy Foundation, the boys will try to acquire the necessary professional skills in order to be independent and build a successful future.



by Rocky Evangelista

Amongst the various technical and professional courses being run by Tuloy Foundation one of the most recent is the Culinary Arts course, which opened at the end of 2010 – following construction of the two storey culinary arts building – and is now in its third year of operation. Jean-Pierre "JP" Migné, well-known chef originally from France but who has been living in the Philippines now for 25 years, is the Master Chef in question, with

Jan Aranillo as his assistant chef.

Normally, pupils come to this course without any prior culinary knowledge. Migné says: "Various kinds of tastes and meals are quite foreign to them, in fact quite irrelevant for them. They eat when there is food (and often only when) and sleep as a way to forget about eating (when there is nothing to eat)". As for tastes, the chef has to start from the basics: sweet, sour, salty...

In the early days of the course, Chef Migné always shows them a few episodes of the famous English reality show "Hell's Kitchen" – where chef Gordon Ramsey runs his kitchen like a sergeant major – as a way of preparing his students for places where the work is more difficult and competitive.

His pupils, however, are willing and happy to learn: "We have been surprised to discover that we should have



<http://www.tuloyfoundation.org/>

been using various kinds of knives and cutting boards, pots and pans for different kinds of plates" one of them comments. And that's to say nothing of the various herbs, spices and other ingredients: "there's just so many and different – and very costly items!" he adds.

The course focuses particularly on Filipino and other Asian cuisines, it also allows them to learn about culinary features of other parts of the world; there are classes in food technology, nutrition, food storage and preservation, hygiene. To offer the broadest possible education, they are also taught other disciplines which go hand in hand with cooking, so the young chefs' employment opportuni-

ties can be broadened, such as working as waiters, bar-tenders...

The boys are also taught that charisma and leadership skills are part of the trade, maths skills for weights and proportions, as well as knowing various food properties; they learn that the real chef focuses on inexpensive food and is not looking for compliments while obviously wanting to avoid criticism; if he makes a mistake he doesn't say "I'm sorry", but corrects it and doesn't make it again; and they learn that in the workplace teamwork and respect for one's colleagues count: "a useful lesson", Mr Migné emphasises "in any area of existence, not just because you are a chef".

While attending the course the boys stay at the Foundation to avoid possible absences and transport costs. When they have finished, thanks to Mr Migné's contacts, they are all sent out for work experience in prestigious restaurants and hotels, where they are usually appreciated for their skills and commitment. All pupils from earlier courses have found work, including some abroad.

Fr Evangelista emphasises that the course, like other of the foundation's initiatives, is supported mainly from donations from benefactors, but Chef Migné likes to explain that it lacks nothing by comparison with similar courses elsewhere that might cost thousands of pesos.

SALESIAN HUMANISM

"Being a volunteer is part of me"

Sarah Wildbichler, originally from Imst in the Tyrol, spent a year as a volunteer (2011-2012) at Visakhapatnam, a city in eastern India, with the Don Bosco partner organisation, "Jugend Eine Welt". This political science student is also considering the possibility for the future of working in the cooperation for development sector. "Her children" have found such a place in her heart that even now she is heading back to India to find them. Here is her story of "Narasimha", followed by her response to a few questions we put to her.

by Sarah Wildbichler

"I know the new Sister, I've seen her. On the beach at Rushikonda. She had the same clothes." "Sister", is what the children call the volunteers, in this case me. The first grade teacher and I look at each other and start laughing. Narasimha, the boy responsible for this laughter, continues with his homework unperturbed. He doesn't take a great deal of notice either now nor before when he was talking to us. Like all the other children he is sitting on the floor with his legs crossed and a page fixed to a small board, pouting a little... Just a few minutes more and our time is up, then the children and I will go home.

A week later, rather than third and fourth grade, they give me first and second Grade - where Narasimha is. Officially we start at 9, but many of the children come late, some even as late as after break, for drawing class. Narashima is already waiting at school at five to 9, for someone to open up. After morning prayer I go into the first and second grade classrooms since the first hour is together. Narasimha gives me his hand and happily tells me about Rushikonda, where he comes from and where his brother goes to school. Amongst other things Narasimha does not have the same clothes as the other children, no, he has a Rushikonda uniform. Besides, he always has an exercise book and

sometimes a pencil too, two aluminium mugs (one for him and one for his older sister in fourth grade) and an aluminium bowl for lunch, which is a bread roll, an egg, a banana and some milk which the school gives them. The first thing we do is clean the room. Narasimha manages to get out of this by excitedly continuing his story until the others have finished their work.

Then there is time to play, learn poems and sing songs. Narasimha is very enthusiastic when there is something new. But he also gets great fun out of things once the lesson starts. "Narasimha, how should you hold your

pencil?" I chide him. When he writes he holds between his index and middle finger! "I'm already finished" he tells me and offers me the page he's just finished. Then he is happy about the next task: "Oh, another one. Good!"

After two hours I let the children out with these words: "Well then, give me your work and now let's have a break". While the children jump up happily and practically pile their work onto me, along with the pencils they borrowed, Narasimha stays seated and asks me with big round eyes: "Can I have another sheet? No, better still, give me two or three!"





What were the main things you had to do as a volunteer?

In the morning I taught bridging classes where kids from the poorest parts of Visakhapatnam who had abandoned school were getting ready to go back into a 'real' school. In the afternoons and on Sundays I organised recreational activities for 16-28 children in the so-called "shelters", the orphanages.

What can you tell us about where you worked?

According to me Navajeevan Bala Bhavan Visakhapatnam is a well-functioning project and plays an important role for the children who receive help there. The project has its problems too but despite that it does well and especially Father Thomas Thottiyil SDB who is an excellent coordinator for the project. The volunteer role is very important for the project since they can bring a female touch as well as their western upbringing. Thanks to this they can get close to the children without fear of losing their authority. If I had to describe my being a volunteer in just five words, they would be... an important part of me.

Being a volunteer must be an important aspect of each one of us – what would you say to that?

I learned a lot and my way of seeing things, my point of view has also altered somewhat. What impressed me was that there is another world out there, and other people who live as we do but in very different ways.



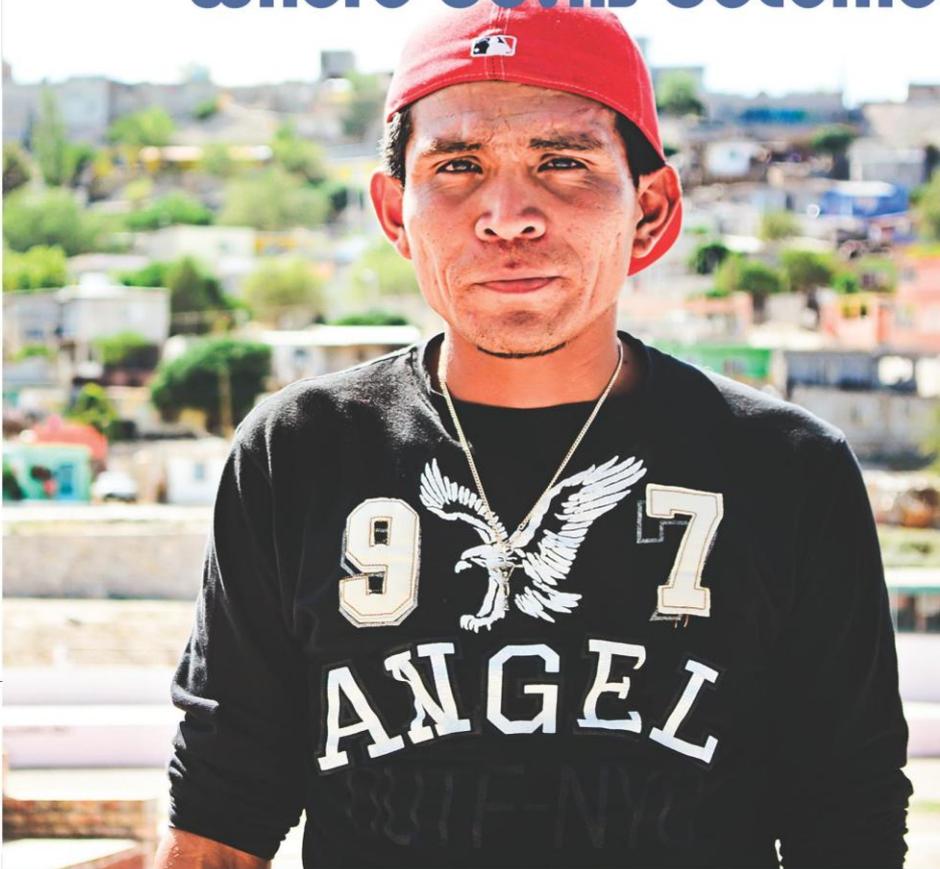
<http://www.jugendinewelt.at/>

SALESIAN HUMANISM

Mexico's frontier experience Where devils become

ANGELS

by Juan Carlos Quirarte Méndez



"The devil" came to the oratory because the oratory came to him in the first instance; young volunteers and Salesians went through the streets advertising, letting people know and inviting them to get to know the experience of the oratory. Ignacio, like the others, was able to have this experience and then discover that it was called the oratory and that those running it were called Salesians and volunteers.

Before each game of football the teams were offered a brief catechesis, and this aroused in interest in Ignacio to get to know the faith better, and then when he began attending an adult faith education group, along with others he had got to know, he was invited to become part of the youth group. He accepted. He went through his catechumenate was baptised and made his first Communion. He is no longer "the devil", but is now cheerful, energetic Ignacio.

Ignacio is a young man who used be nicknamed "the devil", a typical super-active 22 year-old. When he smiles, his face crinkles until his eyes almost seem shut. It is a weather-beaten face, but there are also some scars and a tiny tattoo on one of his temples. They are all things that make him look older than he is but they also reflect the complicated circumstances that have forced him to live alone, in a society where he feels excluded and often guilty. But with all of that, Ignacio is smiling today, and happy.

Like him, thousands of others have turned their lives and their environment around as they have encountered this wonderful experience. For Ignacio sport was what brought him along but he soon grew in so many other ways. There are other attractions, workshops, that in recent years have been adapted to





become employment programmes, by networking with other organisations in civil society and the State, as well as some local businesses who take these young people on at the end of their training.

Many flock to the oratories for the artistic workshops on offer there: visual arts, plastics, music, drama, martial arts... which continue to adapt to the times and youthful tendencies. Some areas have even been set up with ramps for extreme sports on bikes, skateboards, or for parkour. The oratory is constantly taking on new shapes, is equipped and set up for new trends and demands of youth, like is the case for one of the oratories built in an old quarry, and now its rock-faces are being used for climbing and rappelling, which together with a zip-line offer a real opportunity for extreme sports.

Whoever comes to one of our oratories immediately sees its size, all the different areas and educational offerings in the same general area; sports (soccer, basketball, volleyball and American football). They also see the classrooms with all their artistic activities, a mixture of sound, rhythm and general atmosphere becomes a collage of smiling,

concentrated faces. Playgrounds are filled with people practising parkour, cheerleader groups going through their routines, human pyramids, aerobics. Youngsters learning circus routines create street groups as well as groups in the oratory itself, teaching juggling and acrobatics.

Like Ignacio, they will see very different kinds of groups together in the classrooms, children, teenagers, older youth, adults and even the seniors, all with their different dynamics and activities; they will see groups engaged in faith education, others in group dynamics, or just chatting, or some preparing their own food or others getting ready to help people in need.

They might marvel at seeing a priest hearing confession in the oratory corridors, or someone going to the chapel to pray before the Blessed Sacrament or to get ready for Mass. And all these multiple activities are also fed by music broadcast and programmed by a group of young people who run the oratory radio. The radio invites people to visit cultural areas where a cafeteria lies at the heart of so many other services: cinema, digital club, table tennis, conference area, dance, theatre and

murals. And this all happens every day of the week!

What is so powerful about all this is that it all forms part of an educational plan. They are not just isolated activities but are part of a fabric and thread which leads to communication and group experience. You could exchange one activity for another but the preventive action, the mission of forming youth by giving them access and alternatives so they can construct their own personal plan of life and faith: these are the things that don't change. And for this to work, there is need for a large team which believes in its mission; the power of lay people led by the Salesians is fundamental.

A scene like this, situated on the outskirts of the city where the poor and marginalised live, shows how the oratories can actually change their environment and contribute to an atmosphere of peace, harmonious living, hope. This is the case for the oratories: Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana, Mexicali, Nogales, Nuevo Laredo dedicated entirely to the oratory mission and where you will find many "Ignacios" who cease being "devils" to become "angels"

http://redporlainfancia.org/secciones/org_09.php



SALESIAN HUMANISM

Nine days, nine topics, nine verbs

An online novena to Don Bosco
Contemporary images to celebrate Don Bosco

by Gee Van den Berghe



Why go for a virtual novena? One reason is that so many people today are looking for meaning in life, a firm foundation. By contrast with earlier times, this growing interest, this ongoing search for spirituality takes place in a very individual kind of way. Some deplore this development. But we believe it offers us new possibilities and this is precisely what we try to achieve through our virtual novena: exploring the extent to which traditional spirituality can still be of interest to people today.

One of the main tasks of the "Don Bosco Centre for Formation and Leadership" is that of animating and forming lay mission partners (in the Belgium North Province) in Don Bosco's spirit. We are forever on the lookout for ways to reach a greater number of our mission partners. And given that new media occupy an ever greater part of our daily lives, we set up this virtual site. One finds encouragement there to pause a moment and reflect on the motivation and spirituality of the Salesian educator. We want to involve the greatest number of people possible so that, with a simple click of the mouse, they can reflect on Don Bosco's project of education.

The Dutch name for the website is "genegen.be" [= being open to, inclined to, affection] because the title also includes the word "negen" [=nine]: a novena is nine consecutive days. But the word "genegen" [which might also have the sense of 'affectionately'] precisely expresses what we want to achieve: a great feeling of affection and openness to Don Bosco's approach, for him and for his worldwide movement.

Our online offering is also aimed at anyone who has a positive attitude to new media (the so-called "early adopters"). However, we have done what is possible to involve user who might still be somewhat sceptical. We try to do what Don Bosco himself did: present a positive message and reach out to people who might otherwise have been unreachable.

Going against the current

Normally you find a number of different media involved in developing clever interactive applications. We rejected

this approach. Our aim was to develop a project with just a modest budget but by being inventive. We put the website together ourselves. We got many people involved, either offering a symbolic recompense or they worked for free to develop one or other of the items. We did the photography ourselves. There are no 'professional' pretences about the result. We like to row against the current. So with a good dose of enthusiasm it was possible to involve people around us to put the plan together. Many volunteers, teachers in our schools and other educators of young people at risk gave us their inspiration and some wonderful testimony.

Nine consecutive days, nine topics, nine verbs.

We have tried to offer a taste of how Don Bosco today might dream, grow, believe, bring people together, laugh, inspire, encourage, and celebrate. That is what we wanted to do through our website. We have found some very original ways (short films, important sayings, stimulating questions, and for nine days we highlighted a particularly interesting topic. In this original way we have challenged people to reflect on their own role as educators: reflect on how to help young people to realise their own dreams and discover how important it is to believe in the power of education, and understand that to "offer trust" is an effective way of "being trusted".

The novena allows people to understand that Don Bosco can still be a source of inspiration. At the same time we wanted this initiative to be an expression of our immense appreciation for what teachers and other educators do each day for the children and older youth entrusted to them.

SALESIANS 2014



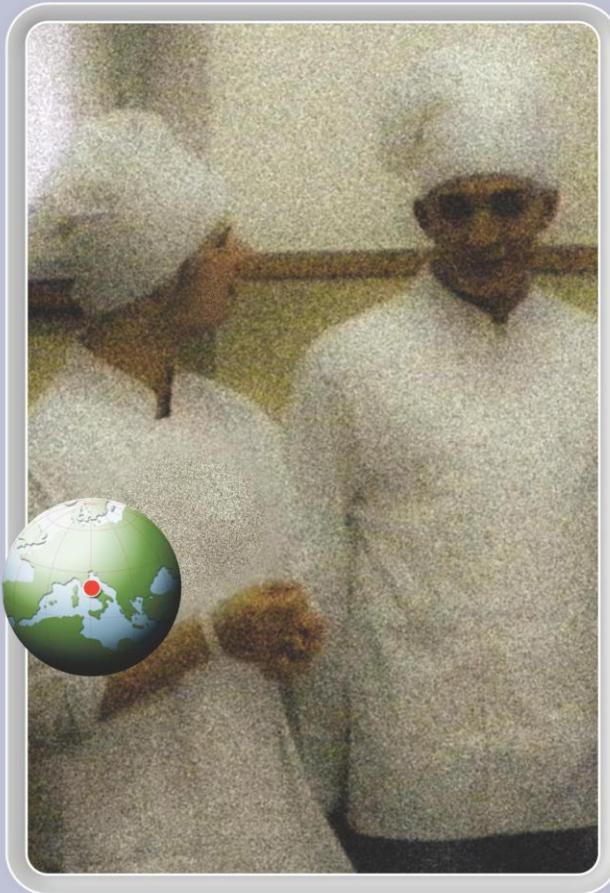
<http://www.genegen.be>

SALESIAN HUMANISM

BORGO

A workshop for providence

by Cecilia Corrias

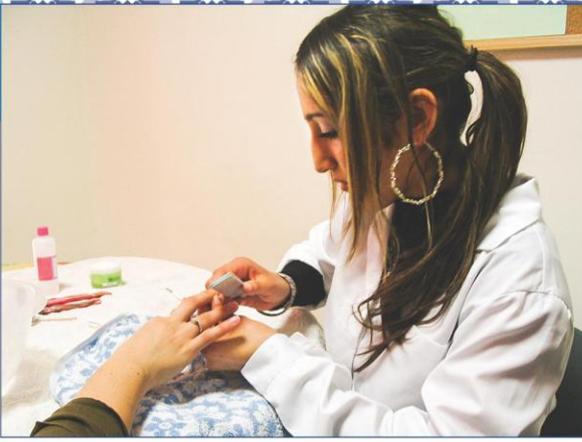


“Hi, my name is Stefania and I attend the reception centre known as Borgo Ragazzi Don Bosco. The course I’m doing is catering; I’d like to be a hotshot bartender and waitress. I like this school a lot. I spend just two hours a day here – it might not sound much, but they teach you so much. Twice a week we have work experience in the cafeteria and also at the bar. I have learned how to make coffee and cappuccinos. Here at the Don Bosco Centre we are like a family, and they are all a great lot. You should come and do a course here, it’s great; there are two catering-type courses, one involving the kitchen, the other the cafeteria. There are other good courses too, like beautician and hairdressing. There are workshops for theatre, photography and others. Lots of things have changed for me in the time I have been here. I’m up early in the morning and off to school, then I rest in the afternoon because I’m tired, and I’m also early to bed in the evening. Before I came here I wasn’t like that. The kids at Don Bosco Centre might look a bit rough, but they are good kids; we all have problems and difficulties, but we help one another, and the people who work with us listen to any problem we have.”



<http://www.borgodonbosco.it/>





There is a place where we catch up with the lives of so many people and hear stories like the one you have just read. It is the Youth Reception Centre which is part of Borgo Ragazzi Don Bosco and also part of an educational programme called 'Refitting the Wings' which deals with families and youngsters in difficulty. Every year dozens of young people come here from all over Rome, especially from the outer eastern suburbs. They are of different cultures, races and colour, and their experiences are different but what they have in common is social disadvantage that translates into premature school-leaving, antisocial behaviour and in some cases straying right off course. They are referred to us by local government services (city councils and ASL, or local health authority), juvenile justice centres, schools, or simply because word gets around amongst the kids themselves. All of them are beyond compulsory school age and they have not been able to complete any regular schooling.

They are accepted by a group of trained workers led by a Salesian in charge, a stable team of professionals: psychologists, educators and social welfare workers, students on work experience from local universities, volunteers doing their civil service, other volunteers and valuable help also from Salesian prenovices and novices who carry out some of their apostolate at the Centre.

Recalling Don Bosco's famous line, "can you whistle?", each youngster is given

an initial two week period where he or she can discover resources, skills, competencies, as well as problems and limitations, and all this so we can build up a meaningful educational relationship and develop a personalised plan for them.

Personalised service

The kids are given a loosely structured curriculum that enables them to achieve their secondary certificate, or learn a trade that will give them easier access to the world of work. Then while they are finding work they are taught how to be autonomous and are followed up by a service we call "the open counter" which mediates between the youngster and work offering training, bursaries and coaching within their chosen workplace. From 2012 the Centre has also undertaken some production of its own which helps with self-financing and preparing the youngsters for work: a cafeteria for workers in the area, a catering service, a confetti-making workshop, small bike shop, hairdressers and nail reconstruction. This way the youngsters can work and learn at the same time.

For each youngster and for its employees, the Centre is a constant point of reference and somewhere they can meet up and feel at home in the name of Don Bosco and his principles. Thanks to opportunities for sharing and overcoming problems, these principles are imprinted on our hearts and in our lives.

Just like in a master craftsman's workshop where all the various materials and the tools applied to them produce something unique, so it is at Borgo Ragazzi Don Bosco. Providence plays with the different materials offered by the youngsters and encourages us to invent made-to-measure courses for them which respect how things need to be done and each one's particular bent. Because it is a work that is always an individual, one-to-one relationship between those who work here and the youngster, it means flexibility is the order of the day.

For a system that has remained unchanged for 150 years and hinges on loving-kindness, reason and religion, the personalities of our "guests" means that each unique being has his or her own very precious story to tell.

As part of the education we offer there is one section we call *Skolè*. *Skolè* is for the youngest ones who might attend regular school but because of various problems (social, family, learning-difficulty) really struggle with study and fitting in. They are helped with their schooling, but especially with fitting in and intercultural sharing. So through study, play, prayer we give them firm ground for putting down roots.

It is interesting when you think that this Salesian house, which came into existence to look after youngsters in difficulty, is dedicated to St Joseph the Worker: what we offer by way of education has the flavour of processes involved in building, and of works of art.

SALESIAN HUMANISM



A living source of Mission

Social communications

“The desire to do good means looking for the best ways to put it into practice. At stake are: the correct interpretation of the needs and of the practical possibilities, spiritual discernment in the light of the Word of God, the courage to take the initiative, creativity in identifying untried solutions, adaptation to changing circumstances, the ability to collaborate, the willingness to evaluate”.

(Art. 35. Charter of Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family)

by Alejandro Satorre Morales

The Salesians came to Cuba in 1917 through the initiative of the central Cuban woman (from Camagüey), Dolores Betancourt; the Cuban Church at that point had a new kind of service of the Gospel, a youthful and popular mission. Faithful to the charisma they had inherited from Saint John Bosco the Dolores Betancourt College in Camagüey (1932), Inclán College in Havana (1945), and Rosa Pérez Velasco College in Santa Clara (1958), amongst others, reflected this predilection for the young and dedication to those most in need. The Salesians came to the Island where they founded the Salesian Province of the Antilles, as missionaries of grand stature like Blessed José de Calazans, the Servant of God José Vador, Juan Ballari, Rafael Giordano, joined then by the early native vocations; they formed communities and, with the help of lay people, qualified teaching staff who were sensitive to the Cuban context.

The prestige of the Society of Saint Francis de Sales grew gradually as the years moved towards 1961, amidst the nationalisation of education that followed the triumphant Cuban Revolution. For many this was the end. Most religious left the country after selling their properties and closing their works. A much reduced group remained, incardinating themselves in the diocese as parish



<http://www.salesianosdecuba.com/>

priests or curates. The years that followed were not very prosperous for a Church that was invisible to society. In these circumstances the Salesians continued on, filling in for the absence of clergy, carrying our religious duties and seeking new forms of apostolate.

There was no gap or rupture in Salesian presence in Cuba and it was precisely during these very years that devotion to St John Bosco took root amongst the people amidst the warmth of the parish communities. Affiliation to this charismatic family increased through the number of committed lay people. Perhaps it was a capacity for initiative and flexibility that were the keys to success. Fr Philip Rinaldi reminded the Salesians: "this flexibility to adapt to all forms of doing good that constantly arise in the bosom of humanity is really the spirit of our Constitutions; and the day we introduce something that runs contrary to this spirit, our Congregation will have run its course".

The apostolic work of the Salesians in Cuba is unique. Education in the country is institutionalised and declares itself to be officially atheist, which limits the Congregation, as it does others with charisms for an all round human education and formation, in carrying out its official role. However,

the parish platform has been, and is, a scene where Salesians have sought to consolidate their ministry and especially continue their option for the young. This has become a workshop for initiatives which, according to Fr Pascual Chávez in article 35 of the Charter of Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family: "is not only a question of strategy, but a spiritual matter, since it implies a constant renewal of themselves and of their actions in obedience to the Spirit and in the light of the signs of the times".

Seeking New Expression

In our time the Salesian Delegation of Cuba overcomes obstacles and with evangelising earnestness is exploring untrodden paths, perhaps encouraged by Don Bosco himself: "in things that concern young people at risk or that serve to win souls for God I go forward to the point of being reckless". And in Social Communication they have discovered a living source of mission. With technical advances and computers and the pervasive 'injection' of values and ideas about life coming from mass media, Salesians have chosen these very tools as effective media for personal, community and ecclesial growth, and as means that can preserve and foster Christian values amongst ordinary people.

The Salesians in Cuba have two recording studios, one in Havana and one in Santa Clara, and a network of communicators amongst the five Works; this expands the possibilities of developing a sustained effort through modest constant work. We can speak of the production of materials in the "Padre José Vandor" studio in Santa Clara that has documentaries, compact disks, multimedia products, web pages (Cf. <http://www.salesianosdecuba.org>) in its catalogue; they also coordinate and advise the national team. The province newsletter, which comes out monthly, is an encouraging voice echoing through Salesian work. A small group of professionals adds other skills and creativity which helps make up for financial constraints and limitations of Internet access and keeping things relevant, prompt and effective through quality productions which stand out for their Gospel values mixed with Cuban cultural heritage.

New Evangelisation encourages us to seek new expressions, new fervour, new involvement, the key to which is a correct reading of the opportunities society offers. This is a purifying, apostolic and missionary endeavour, and is the commitment and goal of Social Communication in the Cuban Salesian Delegation as it discerns the signs of the times.

SALESIAN HUMANISM

Don Bosco



MILANO

by Don Bosco Network

On 8 February 2013 Don Bosco Network, the Salesian Volunteer Movement for International Development (VIS) and the Lombardo Emiliana Province made up the "Don Bosco for Expo 2015" Committee, headed by the Regional councillor of the Salesians of Don Bosco for West Europe. The Committee has the task of coordinating involvement of the Salesian Congregation in the Universal Exhibition to be held in Milan from 1 May until 31 October 2015. Speaking of the Salesian involvement the Vicar of the Rector Major put it this way: "The Universal Expo in Milan in 2015 offers the Salesian Congregation a huge opportunity for raising awareness of education and for involving youth in a key issue 'Feeding the planet; energy for life' a topic extremely relevant and important for every country in the world. In the bicentenary year of Don Bosco's birth, the Salesian Congregation which is in 133 countries of the world will be happy to offer a significant contribution to freedom from hunger and the

right to healthy, secure and sufficient food for everyone, involving young people as individuals and also in social commitment".

On the basis of Art. 1 of the BIE – the Bureau International des Expositions, an intergovernmental organisation set up in Paris in 1928 to supervise international exhibitions also known as World Expos or World Fairs – the aims of Expo 2015 are Education and Entertainment.

By contrast with preceding Universal Exhibitions, Expo Milan 2015 will not be remembered for the architectural legacy it leaves behind, but for its contribution to the theme: it will leave an intangible legacy.

The visitor to this Expo will undergo something experiential, aimed at stimulating interest, learning, knowledge and consciousness-raising.

Above all we can speak of an Expo of



dialogue, encouraging and leading a global dialogue in a multidisciplinary approach and with many stakeholders, on a universal challenge: "Is it possible to guarantee a sufficient quantity of good, healthy and sustainable food for all of humankind? We all know the answer is 'yes', and that the real challenge is 'how'.

In 1884 Don Bosco took part in the general Italian Expo of science and arts held in Turin. In 2015 we celebrate the bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth. Expo Milan 2015 offers opportunities to work together in things like:

– Visibility and communication so the Salesian mission, its vision and its works can be appreciated. 20 million visitors and 1 billion cyber visitors will be a privileged and probably very sensitive target group where the theme is concerned "Feeding the planet. Energy for life". We could carry out a communication campaign involving all Provinces.

– Promoting the Salesian charism through global educational topics such as those already highlighted in the outline of the theme. Food and inequalities in nutrition; abundance and privation:

- the contemporary paradox;

- the future of food;
- science and technology, including vocational education and technical education involving food production to ensure quality and continuity;
- sustainable food = an equitable and jointly responsible world: education to world citizenship, environmental education, education to and for human rights (freedom from hunger, indivisibility and interdependence of fundamental rights);
- promoting changes in attitude and behaviour;
- international volunteer activity;
- children and youth involvement;
- inter-religious dialogue.

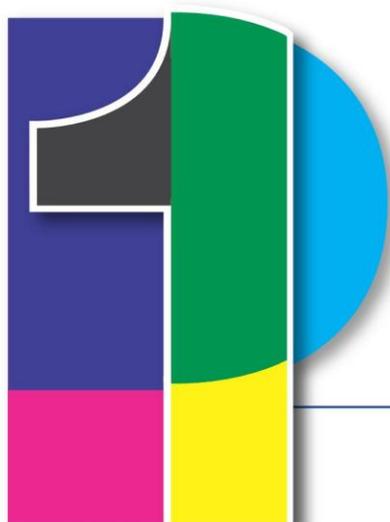
– Networks and collaboration with other bodies working in education and formation where food production and consumption are concerned; global education, development cooperation.

– The possibility of setting up or reinforcing networks and public or private partnerships at least with participating countries (it is hoped that 150 will take part in 2015), International organisations, Civil society, including universities and businesses.

– Advocacy for:

1. An approach based on the human right to a guaranteed food supply; development cooperation;
2. The right to adequate food supply not just as a basic human right in itself, but also as a means of realising other basic rights such as education;
3. Education as a basic strategy for feeding the planet;
4. The central role of the individual, development with a human face, a holistic view of the poor not as passive targets for 'aid' but as people actively involved in human development; the indivisibility and interdependence of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social human rights, as well as the spiritual dimension;
5. Active and significant involvement of children, young people in important international education events like Expo Milan 2015.

With the agreement that DBN signed on 11 October 2012 in Milan, we have committed ourselves to organising a minimum of thirty events based on: "Feeding the planet. Energy for life" during Expo Milan to be held from 1 May to 31 October 2015.

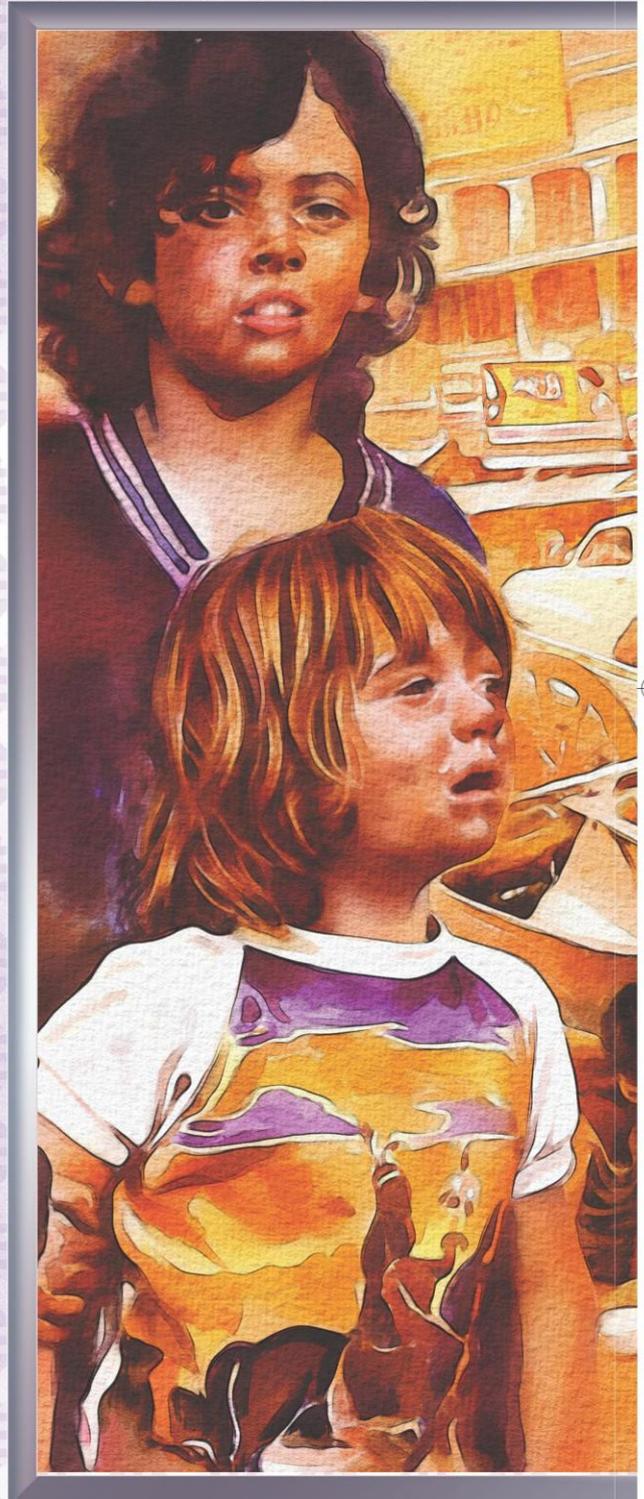


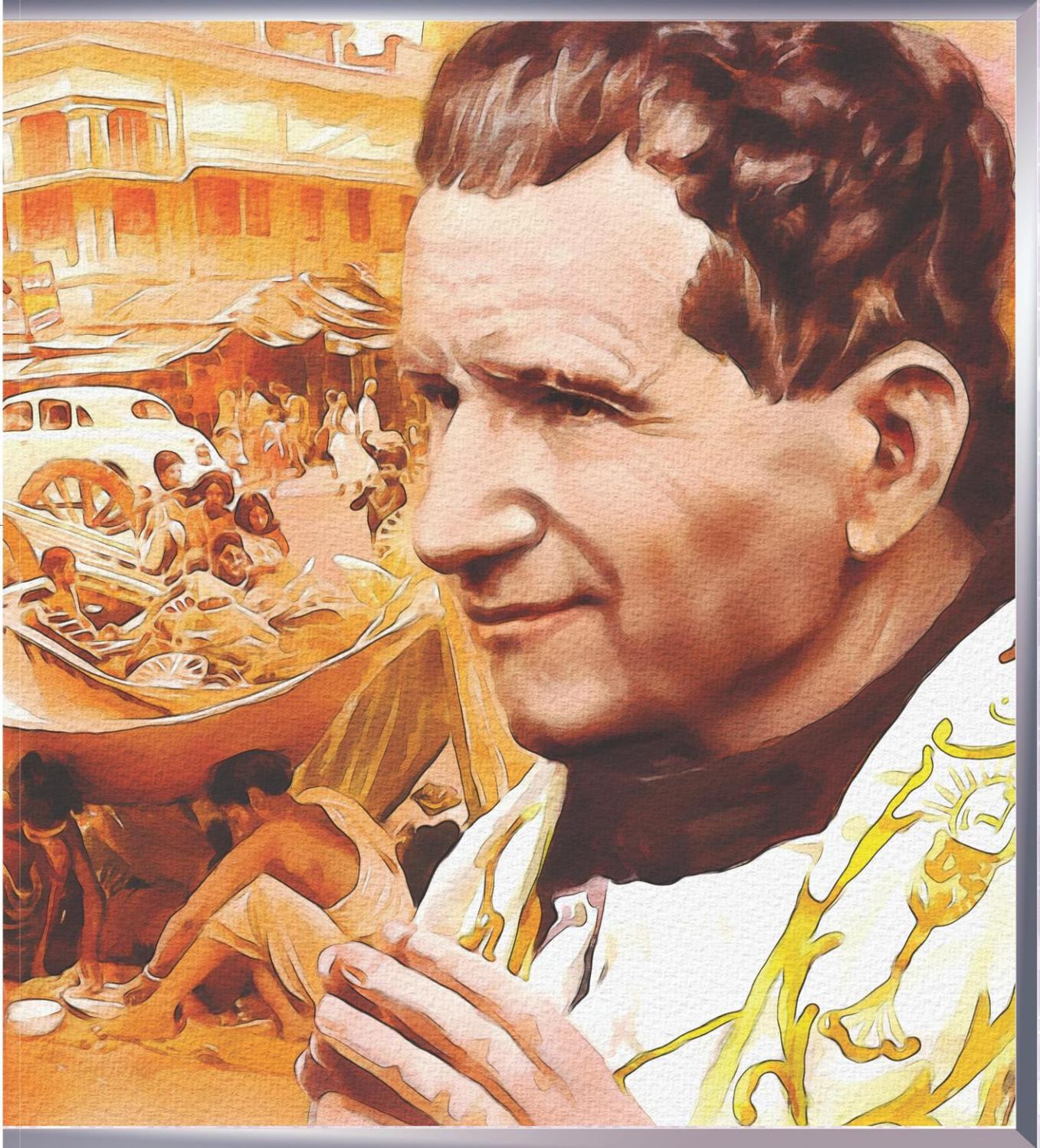
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New way and new language for uplifting youth

- ▶ God bless the water-bearers (Angola)
- ▶ Recycling life: the 'Cartoneros' of Villa Itafí (Argentina)
- ▶ No drugs on Tuesday - or any other day! (Spain)
- ▶ The 'Compleat Educator' (Mexico)
- ▶ Sudan: when emergency strikes... (Sudan)
- ▶ Roshni: lighting up lives (India)
- ▶ Indigenous youth: a dream come true (Brazil)
- ▶ Partnering to build a better world: Salesians, youth, United Nations (USA)





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God bless the water-bearers

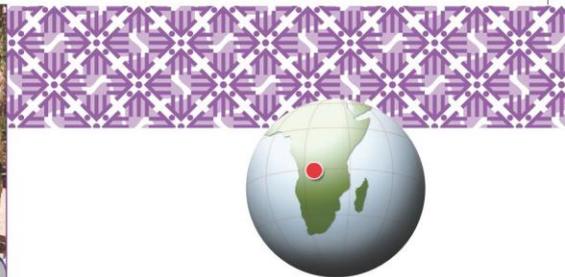
by Christian Carrizo

'WATER' - a word that is just a dream for many people, and this in Angola which has an incredible amount of Africa's water! In the 1990s, at the height of the armed conflict, the Salesians were able to lay pipes 500 metres to the Luena river, close to the city by the same name. This helped Don Bosco school, the Brother Zatti Health centre and our own house, as well as 5 districts where they were able to set up public service pumps. But maintenance difficulties, lack of diesel, and problems with the generator made it impossible to continue. We were forced to have recourse to water trucks with water of very low quality. Then in 1992 our Brother Michelino (a missionary from Argentina) had begun to dig an artesian well by hand, dreaming of finding water. But God took him from us and the work ceased. Then in 2008, with the help of some old 'pat drill' machines left behind by an NGO, we resumed digging and struck water at 86 metres! Then the requests poured in from everywhere: religious institutions, government groups, city suburbs, private individuals. So we set up a new team. Two NGOs in particular contacted us: UNICEF and OXFAM. Contracts were drawn up for excavations in villages and at schools. And so began the 'water and health' program. It was basically a case of identifying villages with the greatest lack of water. Some of them needed to walk from 3 and up to 10 kilometres to find a pail of water. They were far from the many rivers that can be found in Moxico province, Angola. Here is one story amongst many, with a happy ending...



<http://domboscoangola.org/db/blogs/luena>





Lucocua is 112 km from Luena, the capital of Moxico province. It has more than a thousand inhabitants. Mr Augusto, its 'soba' (traditional leader), describes it as "a vibrant place, ready for progress".

"Since the arrival in 2008 of the first well and flow of water everything in this community began to change", the elderly, 75 year old grandfather tells us, smiling broadly. He is not much taller than a bonsai plant! He is so grateful for this well.

A twenty year-old woman with a bucket just filled from the well, and neatly balanced on her head, slides past us rhythmically. "Look, no hands!", I say in surprise to Mr Augusto. She is like a model on a catwalk except that this is a dusty Lucocua street between April and September in the dry season. "The women used have to go up to 2 km to the river to get water to drink, cook and wash clothes. They didn't like it", he explains.

The population of Lucocua has grown exponentially in recent years. Seeing this rapid demographic growth, we decided to dig a well right there in the

community. "With this new well it is not necessary for families who are recent arrivals to settle right away but close to the river", he tells us. "Now the area is developing. Before water was available, our children suffered much illness, and now we are aware that it was because they were drinking untreated water. Now we notice the difference from drinking this water", our grandfather with 14 grandchildren tells us.

Distance is a big factor in these parts. School N° 147, 4th of April - Lucusse and the hospital are 10 km from Lucocua community, right beside the local administrative centre. "We still don't have a school. Our children have to walk many kilometres to go to school at the centre in Lucusse. And their mothers have to go the same distance when they need to take them to hospital", the village leader tells me pointing to the horizon with one hand and waving to some neighbours with the other.

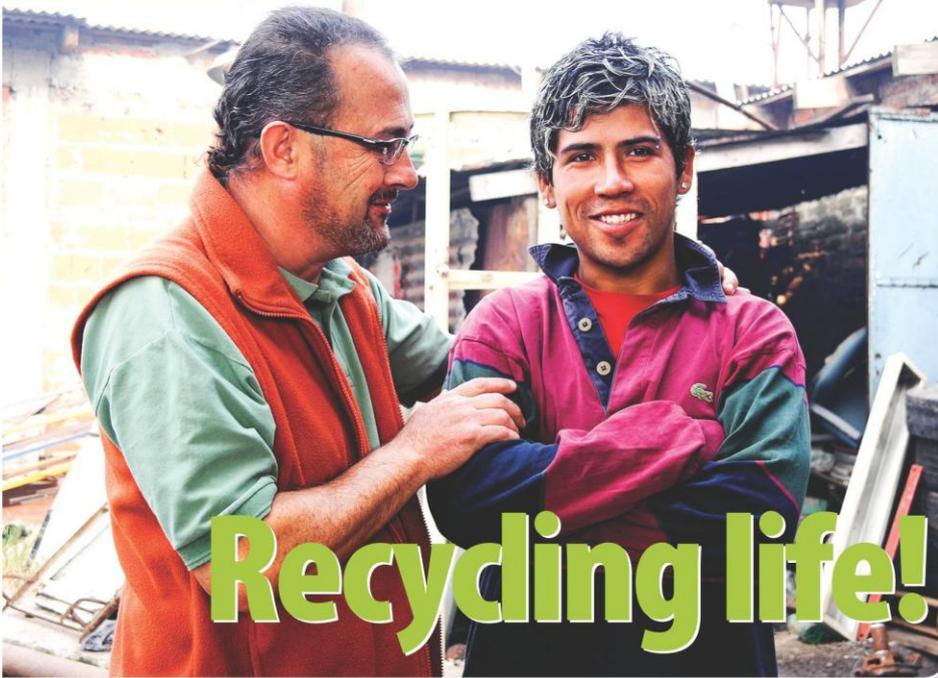
Despite his age, 'plain old' Augusto, as he asks me to call him is active, charismatic and hospitable.

He is ready and willing to give me a tour of the village but it is really a pretext to show off the progress of the community in questions of hygiene and the construction of latrines. "Our two GAS groups (the project group which explains the process and surveys the villages for those most in need of water) are determined to keep raising awareness amongst families. We know there are many latrines still to be built, but we are working at it", the old rogue tells me, as if divining my thoughts. Lucocua has 178 families, and by our calculations there are still 97 latrines left to build "But illness is now on the decrease, as they told us it would", he remarks, referring to one of the consciousness-raising steps of the project.

Between stories and jokes, by the end we are back at the 'ondyango', the community meeting place made of sticks and thatch, that had first received us. Demonstrating his hospitality once more, he invites us into his house to try the 'funji', a concoction made from cassava, made by his third wife. And we are not allowed to say no... 



HUMAN RIGHTS



Recycling life!



The 'cartoneros' of Villa Itatí

by the Salesian Bulletin, Argentina

“Creating spaces for living” based on prevention, stability and work, is the key to what Salesians offer the daily lives of men and women in Villa Itatí, one of Buenos Aires' slums where some fifty thousand poor people, families— many from Argentina's north, and Paraguay – find a place to settle in a hollow left by excavations for the

Southwest Access road. And because it is a basin, flooding and refuse are part of the sad landscape its inhabitants have to put up with every day. Villa is split into “upper” and “lower”. Fourteen metres below the habitable part flows all the water and waste from the population. Close to the settlement is the Salesian community in

Quilmes with three Salesians, including Bro. Daniel “Coco” Romanín, who for the past nine years has been a member of the Cartoneros Association, Villa Itatí, people who earn a living by scavenging garbage for recycled paper. Pausing amidst his daily activities, Bro. Coco responds to questions on his community's work.



What does the Association do?

"Itatí lies within our parish. The Salesians have worked here for 54 years. The association was already in existence when we came. I am just another member and we decide on anything we do as a group. After the 2001 crisis the 'cartoneros' decided to band together and become a cooperative, a community where the management of goods is an example for all Christians.

The first thing we saw they needed was training in administration, because while they had a business, nobody knew how to respond to industry market needs. From the Professional Formation Centre at Avellaneda we organised a course, and since it showed results, we've added new units yearly. The key is that they see what they can do for themselves; we just help. They were able to set up a cooperative and succeeded in raising paper sales from 12 to 28 cents a kg. In fact some of the brokers in the area got angry because this Association is competitive. There is no middleman taking advantage of this work.

The money earned is shared out equally, from the President down to the least of the collectors. There is also a solidarity fund which comes from a contribution from each collector, used to buy medicines, pay for burials, cure a sick horse, build classrooms..."

What other things do you in Villa?

"When we saw that the problems in the lower area were a problem for everyone in Villa we took advantage of other adult education courses at Avellaneda. Other ideas arose, like a course for a community social worker to help with addiction and education prob-

lems amongst the young.

Then we began to teach the 'cartoneros' the preventive system. There are 160 children in school who depend on the 'cartoneros', but about 40% abandon school. We try to get them back to school and learning.

In 2005 we opened evening centres and other children's centres with teachers from the slum itself. They are evening oratories. They eat there, and this way we reduce the harm from drugs, become their friends and start them out 'recycling their lives'..."

How do you deal with prejudice about people who live in Villa?

"There are good and bad people here like anywhere else. I can assure you there are many good, well-intentioned people who do much for others and try to improve their lives.

With money from the solidarity fund we bought a house and turned it into a prevention centre. We subsidise the over 14 year-olds so they can leave work and go back to school. There are also literacy programs for adults. The Cartoneros Association has also given rise to other groups like metal recyclers, gardeners... and now we are setting up a plastics recycling plant".

You were just talking about a group working on addiction. Have you achieved positive results?

"Drugs are definitely the worst problem the youngsters have. The slum has vacant lots where the kids fight and smoke pot; terrible areas. There is a strong smell as soon as you enter, the kids are out of control, "spaced out"... There is no dignity there.

We help those who want to escape

that. We ensure that community workers who help them come from the same area. We offer various educational alternatives during the day... each one can choose what he likes and is capable of. We network with other institutions tackling the issue professionally".

What can you do?

"Some decisions do not depend on us and often we can only do what we do. We report situations to people and institutions, but there is a lack of political decision here. We believe they should be grabbing the sellers not the kids smoking pot. In the end they are just victims of big business.

For our part we stay with them and their families. The kids tell you, 'I want to live', others tell you 'what use is life, why go on if tomorrow they are going to kill me in the street, in a raid...'"

How do you manage to offer a word of faith to people like this?

"We religious are fortunate to have a community; it supports us: Mass, prayer, reflection... and the youngsters are the ones who create hope. The Franciscan Sisters and the Salesians do what we can and support many people. There is a way out. The people believe, and that is why there is a way out".

Can you speak of God?

"Yes, in fact we do: personally, good nights, meetings, assemblies. This way we pass on a spirituality, basic to a renewed way of life. Reducing suffering, doing justice and promoting good identifies us with the "God of life". When they see you are there for them, that you listen to them, work with them, they question themselves, and it brings out the best in them. Here, life is the most profound issue".



HUMAN RIGHTS

No drugs on Tuesday – or any other day!

Story of hope for destitute addicts Valencia's 'Tuesday group'

by Alicia Davalillo



As part of St Joseph's Province, Valencia, there is a small activity called the 'Tuesday Group', involved in recovery of individuals at severe risk of being excluded from work and society. It was founded in 1989 thanks to the work and commitment of Salesian Ángel Tomás and a team of professionals with civic and humanitarian concern. In the 1980s, they decided to tackle a project that is still going years later and now directed and supervised by Vicente Serrano, ex-teacher and clinical psychologist at the Saint Anthony Abbot Salesian College in Valencia. Fr Ángel could see how the emergence of new and very destructive drugs conditioned the day-to-day lives of so many past pupils and others in the area. At the time prevention and information about these was practically non-existent and their consumption led to dramatic consequences.





The problem soon became more apparent when they discovered the terrible addiction these substances brought on, in many cases leading to the consumers abandoning school. Since they were in no way prepared for this and given their growing addiction, many young people were left to wander the streets, without direction or any purpose in life. So much time on the street with little or nothing to do easily led to their becoming young thieves, and it became a source of future delinquents. It is easy to imagine the disquiet of citizens at the time, the suffering in families, the number who ended up in prison, the psychiatric disorders, the results of overdosing, and the infectious diseases that this scourge gave rise to.

It was necessary to find some way to fight against the social stigma that the circumstances were generating;

this group of youngsters needed someone who could help them. The Tuesday Group set up two shelters, the first dealing with treatment and the second to get the kids back to work with eight places, each one of which was connected with the 'Archbishop Miguel Roca Foundation' and his '*Proyecto Hombre*' (Human Plan) project which looked to a therapeutic process. The Tuesday Group reintegration works across all these. These shelters and other places are open 24/7 every day of the year. There is a well-defined process for everyone who comes there: they have to want to leave drugs behind and make a drastic change in their lives. Those of them with fewer resources are identified, or ones without a family, or come from hostels in the city, or those already involved with the law or immediately out of prison. There is always a queue.

broken off by their earlier behaviour resulting from drugs and delinquency.

As part of the Tuesday Group programme, they help concerned families in need of guidance. Every Tuesday – which is where the Group gets its name from – a team of volunteer educators meets to evaluate and discuss the management of the coming week's programmes and then they run a self-help session, open to the general public, where each individual can offer his or her best, with a view to ongoing abstinence and to escape from the marginalised circuit of people and events.

There is a formation programme which varies according to the needs of the moment; it usually deals with health, psychology on topics to do with addictive substances, their effects and consequences.

Put social stigma aside – you can count on us

They have also set up a place at the Valencia prison to try to encourage inmates to get away from drugs. There are twenty in a group, and these become self-help workshops where each one can talk about their own needs and share their problems and good moments. Each situation is analysed and, amongst other things, out of experience and humility come constructive alternatives which are filtered through a team of volunteers. As well as these workshops and specialised courses inmates are eventually taken into shelters where they can undergo therapy useful for helping these young people return to a normal context, or so they can spend at least some time with their families, fulfil their role as parents or re-establish the connections with the families that were

An important part of the programme is the part that deals with employment: when individuals at the shelters reach the stage of looking for work, they can learn how to write a resume, a cover letter, learn the skills for managing a personal interview, learn how to actively seek work, use a computer, email and put their resumes online.

Prevention is not overlooked – this is carried out in youth centres, day centres, and in university institutes and faculties.

Thanks to this initiative, many young people have learned to live peacefully, lead a decent life, create a family and gain employment. In 2006, the Valencia City Council gave an award to the Group's founder for his lifelong commitment, naming one of the streets after him near where his work began more than 40 years ago.



EDUCATION

The 'Compleat Educator'

When Don Bosco left his heart in the heart of Mexico - León

by Javier Prieto



When 120,000 people filed past Don Bosco in León, Mexico, on that single day in 2010 when his Casket visited, many of the older folk no doubt recalled the event, more than 60 years past, when the then Salesian Rector Major, seeing so much devotion to St John Bosco in a place where the Salesians had not yet even arrived, said to his host, Bishop Manuel Martín del Campo: "Don Bosco's body might lie in Turin, but his heart lies in León"! León's Salesian story is typical of how the Salesian

charism of the oratory, of attention to the young, and poor and needy families, took root long before his sons or daughters, the Salesians and the Salesian Sisters, were ever physically in place. It is also typical of how the charism took shape through activity which raised the level of people's well-being and responded to their most crucial needs.

Some 22 years before Salesians arrived in León, save a triumphant visit by Fr Ziggiotti in 1956, a rocky hillside had already become a centre of devotion to St John Bosco. A group of young lay leaders, led by their diocesan priest, had built a small chapel to him on land that lay outside the city boundaries, but before that, in a



Don Bosco's charism is aimed at the complete salvation of the young. Through his Salesian sons and daughters, religious and lay today, he is the 'complete educator'.

nearby courtyard borrowed from a kindly resident, they had also begun an oratory. Both oratory and chapel, from their humble origins, grew prodigiously. Many thousands of people began to flock to the chapel which, thanks to a benefactor, became a shrine, seeking spiritual favours, wanting to thank God for favours received, or just wanting to go to confession. Hundreds of youngsters began to attend the oratory, with its varied programmes, including catechetics, and the Diocese and the Salesian Congregation can now thank these young leaders and their priest for the many vocations that have ensued.

What began with a group of young lay leaders and a local priest, continued by way of close association between the Salesians and lay people, when the Salesians arrived. Taking Salesian presence in León as a whole, we can also see that it has become an holistic educational offering which responds to the needs of an entire population, body and soul, to the extent that at a time when Church-State relations did not formally exist in a tumultuous anti-clerical Mexico, León's local government saw fit to rename the district where the Salesians were working for St John Bosco, dedicate a street to him and a monument at the entrance to the city.

Why all this? Because Don Bosco's charism was responding to real needs. Salesians and lay people, working side by side saw the area transformed in every way, including basic civic services like water, telephone, electricity, paved roads, a park, a marketplace... By the 1960s and 70s, when families

began to leave the countryside and seek work in the city, they were settling in the western suburbs where the Salesians had established themselves. But there were other problems too: a socio-economic study of the area in 1974 revealed four major social issues: alcoholism, especially prominent amongst youth, the social status of women, poor education generally, and a parlous knowledge of the faith.

Salesians swing into action

The power-centre of prayer, the Shrine to Don Bosco, was there, the physical services the people needed were in place. Now the oratories and youth centres began to expand their activities: sports, arts and cultural programmes, especially large festivals than drew in thousands, weekend theatre activities, a mini-olympics, basketball, football and volleyball teams; adult education programmes were introduced for women - secretarial and sewing, cooking skills; a primary and secondary school were opened, and were open to all; catechetics programmes responded to each level; the youth centres became another power-centre for the young as well, a place where they could feel at home and experience their faith together. The Salesian Cooperators now became a familiar and important feature as assistants in the playgrounds.

By the late 20th century, a rapidly expanding León was facing further social problems: street gangs, addiction. This was a youth problem 'made' for Salesian response and they swung into action - Don Bosco House was set up to provide assistance to youngsters

with few financial resources behind them. In strategic alliance with a Foundation, scholarships and bursaries were offered to keep them at school. New programmes and services were added to existing structures: a canteen, assistance for needy families, a clinic, consulting psychologist, dentist, homeopath, nutritionist, legal counsellor, employment agency, a beauty and fashion centre, and a group was set up for senior citizens.

By now the Shrine is a parish in its own right, offering opportunities for basic evangelisation. but also looks to popular devotion, carries out home visits, provides religious education in schools, and runs a special Easter service for young people. As new needs have developed, new responses have too: an 'After Hours' programme to provide for children whose parents are working, the new Mary Help of Christians youth centre, networked activity with civic organisations and the city council in programmes that benefit young people and families. Why, there is even an open-air music bowl built in front of the Don Bosco Shrine, scene of many a cultural, artistic or entertainment programme for the populace.

Yes, Don Bosco might well have left his heart in León, but it now looks as if he is there, body and soul, hands, feet, heart and mind! His charism is aimed at the complete salvation of the young. Through his Salesian sons and daughters, religious and lay today, he is the 'complete educator'.



<http://www.salesianosdonboscoleon.mx.org/>

HUMAN RIGHTS



SUDAN

When emergency strikes...

Don Bosco among
the (so-called) unwanted in the Returnees Camp

Sr Teresa Roszkowska FMA tells us: "Regarding the Camps nothing has changed for the better. People are still waiting. It is a very sad situation and these seem to be unwanted people. There are times I feel like crying aloud in my room when I think about them. Many people are deeply depressed. Fr Ferrington, how unjust this world is! Who will be held responsible for what they are today and tomorrow?"

by Ferrington Rayen

In Mayo we have pasta-making courses for the women in the camps; they make items to sell and survive. Recently a mother with many children just went off her head, talking to herself and the children are now left to themselves just looking at her. How do we help them? Our people do not cry any more, their tears are finished. How long will they have to wait and go through this inhuman exodus? Next week, I plan to do an all day Retreat for the women from the camps.

It is 8.00 am and a warm sunny day. The small ones trickle into our small centre in Azuzab, close to the Railway yard at the periphery of the great city of Khartoum (Sudan). These little ones come from a small camp with houses made of sacks, carton boxes and pieces of plastic sheets. They are all Returnees to the South Sudan waiting to go back to their new home - South Sudan. The waiting has been long and they preferred to pitch their tents near the train wagons hoping to hop into empty ones when they eventually will move to the South – a journey of 20 gruelling days. There are many centres like Azuzab catering to the needs of this population all over the periphery

of Khartoum and its desert surroundings. There is no better way to alleviate their sufferings than to afford them a couple of classrooms for School, Sunday Eucharist and Catechesis in these camps, health and nutrition programs. The government of Sudan (in the North) does not care about this population and so they have no place in the schools there.

Our centres with some volunteer

teachers offer these little ones a flicker of hope by having regular lessons with no precise curriculum. It is an attempt to create an atmosphere of learning and with a hope to help insert themselves in the schools once they return to the South. This is a creative response to this emergency situation. Divine Providence does not fail us in these moments. *Al Hamdu Lillah* ('Thanks be to God' in Arabic). Just recently we have opened two of our schools to ac-



<http://www.donboscosudan.org/>



commodate all these poor children in formal education.

We have over 2,000 families in our parish alone and the numbers soar high as we move around other emergency centres run by the Church. Don Bosco is truly present among this forgotten population.

Don Bosco in Darfur - reconciling image of Christian charity

It is the seventh year running since the youngsters of Darfur have been accustomed to Don Bosco and his Sons. I was in Uganda for a Retreat and seeing my T-Shirt with the logo of Don Bosco a boy approached with a reassuring smile saying: "I was in Don Bosco El Obeid in the Darfur Boys' Project". That took us on a long conversation and updates.

We have about 2,000 youngsters who have passed through this program of rehabilitation and vocational skills learning in our Don Bosco Home, El Obeid. A true and significant way of engaging in inter-religious dialogue (dialogue of life and love with Islam) indeed! Don Bosco's proverbial response to such volatile and inhuman situations has been replicated and re-launched in Sudan.



Integration, insertion and immersion – these are the magic words behind this intervention and Salesian response in El Obeid. Our El Obeid presence has become an icon of Christian charity and offers a new and reconciling image of Christianity and the Church. The Government authority and the civilian population better understand us and I would dare say, this could be a great break-through for a renewed spirit of dialogue with the Church and its mission. These ex-combatants and soldiers find our home and learning environment a perfect oasis to rediscover their serenity, sanity and human dignity. After a year of life spent with the Salesians they are able to reinsert, reintegrate and immerse themselves into their environment and become useful and honest citizens to their society.

Please send Don Bosco to the Nuba Mountains

This initiative has been extended to

the world's most mysterious group of people in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan. Why mysterious? Not much is spoken about or heard of the Nuba, a wonderful people with rich traditions, customs and even biblical origins. Wars, conflicts and ethnic cleansing have been the features of these people's lives for the past two centuries. These misfortunes continue unabated still. The local ordinary has entrusted the project of evangelization of the eastern side of the Nuba mountains to the Salesians Our antiphon has always been, "Sorry Bishop, not now but later; no personnel". But we have already sent some good apostles who have passed through our El Obeid Don Bosco Home. By now, we will have about 300 of them.

The Nubian young people continue to disturb us, "please send Don Bosco to us also". I know that we will arrive there one day and I believe we can take Don Bosco's legendary line of Santiago to Peking and swing it in our direction!



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HUMAN RIGHTS

ROSHNI

Lighting up lives

by Joaquim Fernandes

During the summer vacation, 2004, Don Bosco Makarpura organized a one month long E-Andolan (educational movement) in six slums in the vicinity – a programme which consisted of camps and classes. The classes were conducted in the morning for the children in their own areas. The school drop-outs were identified and motivated to join school. Then a three-day intense camp was held at Don Bosco, which included a variety of activities, such as: awareness programmes, health care sessions, training in creative arts, dramatics, etc. Along with the children even the elders participated enthusiastically in these camps and gained a lot.

Following this summer activity, which re-introduced the Salesians to the slum communities, the Roshni Project was launched. This project aims at making quality education available to the poorest children in the city. While a large number of the slum children do not attend school, even those attending school (mostly public schools) receive a very poor quality of education. Hence, giving these children quality education is a major priority.

In the first year (2004-05), study support classes were started in four different slums of Makarpura—the vicinity of Don Bosco. In these places, children were gathered together for two hours every morning and taught by the play-



This is not just the story of running classes for children in slum areas; it's the story of an institution deciding to reinvent itself! The Salesians of the Mumbai Province began their ministry for the young in the city of Baroda, in the western state of Gujarat, way back in 1974. A parish and a school were set up at Makarpura, to cater to the Christians of the locality, and especially to serve the poor and the marginalized youngsters in the area. Through the years, this school grew into one of the most prestigious schools in the city, much sought after by the wealthy and well placed families. Consequently, the poorer children, especially those from slum communities, either found it difficult to get admission into this school, or simply stayed away from it. Then precisely 10 years back, in 2004, the Salesian community of Don Bosco Makarpura decided that they needed to "return to Don Bosco by returning to the poor youngsters".

way method. The classes in the slums were conducted with the help of the people. Their contribution was to provide the space to have these classes. Some gave their own homes or the temple square or their community centre. Well, not only the children but the adults also enjoyed the play-way method of education. Thanks to these classes, even children who had dropped out of school started going to school once again!

Along with the study support classes in the slums, another aspect of the project was to select children from the slum communities and admit them to the Salesian school. In the first year, 15 students from these four slums were admitted into the kindergarten of Don Bosco School.

The Roshni project has grown progressively through the years. In the second year (2005-06) similar activities were started in six more slums. In the same year another 30 students from the slums were admitted into the kindergarten of Don Bosco School. In the third year (2006-07), this education programme was launched in three more slums, and 15 new students were admitted into the school; thus making a total of 60 students from the slums studying in Don Bosco School.

Over these ten years, the area covered

under the Roshni Project has reached a total of 25 slums. Over a hundred children from the slums now study in Don Bosco Baroda. They are granted huge concessions in their school fees. Hence sponsorship is sought from philanthropic individuals and organizations, in order to ensure the sustainability. Further the Roshni staff has also procured admission into local municipal schools for about 350 slum children who are attending this programme.

In order to ensure community participation and sustainability of the project, Roshni also organizes women's Self-Help Groups (SHG) in all the slums where it works. The SHGs have empowerment of women as the primary focus and income generation by women as the secondary objective. The SHGs provide the women the opportunity to learn and earn some money and help their children and families. Furthermore, the SHGs take up the responsibility of ensuring that the children are regular for the classes and they also monitor the performance of the teachers.

The novelty of the Roshni project is the systematic manner in which the Salesians have moved towards the empowerment of the poor through education, ensuring that the truly poor get the benefits of the education they



have to offer. Even now, surveys are on, to identify new slum settlements in Baroda city, so that this project may expand its reach and take the light of education to as many deprived and disadvantaged children as possible. Another specialty of the project is the systematic involvement of parents (especially mothers) in the education of their children through the Self Help Groups. A third unique aspect of this project is the integration that is forged between the slum children and the well-to-do children by the induction of the former into Don Bosco School. Thus, children of different castes and classes are living to learn together in harmony.

With a decade gone by, Roshni – which means Light – has definitely lived up to its name. The light of education has entered several slum communities in the city of Baroda, lighting up the lives of poor children, ensuring that they will have a bright and happy future.



HUMAN RIGHTS

INDIGENOUS YOUTH

A dream come true

A group of 12 indigenous students from Mato Grosso began higher studies this year at the Universidade Católica Dom Bosco (Don Bosco Catholic University). Herewith the details, challenges and results of this project implemented by the Salesian Mission in Mato Grosso.

by Marcelo Armôa



The first day in the lecture hall for Bergamim Tsipta'awe Tsuwate was one to remember. When, on January 30 this year, he entered the *Universidade Católica Dom Bosco* (UCDB), in Campo Grande, MS, the youth says he took the "most important step of my life". "I was realising a dream", the 23 year-old Xavante young man said, one of twelve indigenous students to have joined a program begun this year by the Salesian Mission in Mato Grosso. In coming years, Nursing, Law, Social Work, Business administration, Pedagogy, Physiotherapy, Nutrition, Animal Science and Agronomy at UCDB will all introduce indigenous student from Mato Grosso into their courses – the institution already has some indigenous students from South Mato Grosso, mainly from Terena.

Of the group to arrive in Campo Grande on 29 January, eight Xavantes and four Bororos – eight are male and four are females, aged between 18 and 29 years of age. In addition to a scholarship from UCDB, the Salesian Mission is also guaranteeing residence (in two houses near the University), employment and monitoring. Food was funded for the first two months of their stay in the South Mato Grosso capital. "Now they begin a new stage, where they provide their own food from the salary they are already receiving", says Antônio Teixeira, provincial economist, who is accompanying the



<http://site.ucdb.br/>



two youths. The provincial of Campo Grande Salesian province, Fr Lauro Takaki Shinohara, is coordinating the venture.

The project came about as a response to difficulties that those living in Xavante and Bororo villages under the care of the Salesians in Mato Grosso, have to face. "There are ever greater problems with alcohol and drugs and we believe that through education, indigenous people, especially the young, will be able to establish themselves as citizens and help their communities", says Teixeira.

Bergamim shares this view. Now studying in his first semester of Social Work, he made this choice because he believes that "we need to know our rights and duties better... If possible I would like to do Civil Engineering, but I guess that what my community really needs is to know its rights and duties. It needs someone to help it. I would like to know about everyone's rights, not just the indigenous people, because I guess that's what would be most useful", the young man adds.

Adapting to a new life

The two Xavante and Bororo young men are being accompanied by the Salesian Mission as they adapt to timetables and routines of city life. When they received the invitation to

study at UCDB, they were all aware they would receive all the support necessary, but that they would need to work so they could gradually guarantee their own sustenance.

"It is a way of getting us to stand on our own two feet", says Bergamim. Because of his wood-working skills, he is working in the carpentry shop at the Province headquarters. The others were hired as general service assistants at St Vincent's. In the first few weeks they worked from Mondays to Saturdays, alternating with their course at UCDB. Then they found they had difficulty completing all their academic work, so they switched to three days of work a week.

Another difficulty is for them to understand Portuguese. According to Bergamim, this is an obstacle for any group coming from Mato Grosso and also for other indigenous students at UCDB. "There are other indigenous students in my course (Tereña ethnic group) who went through and are going through the same difficulties. They help me, support me so I don't get discouraged", he says.

To help in understanding their disciplines and also with text books, help was solicited from the *Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisas das Populações Indígenas* (NEPPI), the Study and Research Centre for Indigenous Peoples at

UCDB. Now, professional help from NEPPI means that regular classes are offered in Portuguese so they can be more proficient, both in understanding their texts and in completing assignments.

There is also the challenge of organising their accommodation. The male and female halls of residence have rotating coordinators who are in that role for a month, giving everyone the chance of taking responsibilities, dealing with expenditures and maintenance and maintaining food relationships.

Overcoming problems

Even with these difficulties, Bergamim says that everyone shares the desire "not to give up". He remembers the day he was invited to come to Campo Grande. "What a wonderful thing. I had had this dream of going to university. I was very happy and I thanked God", the youth says. Besides him the complete group of indigenous students lists the following: Daniela Kietaga, Felizardo Tsité Tserehite, Vera Lina Iwarare Eimejerago, Flaviana Retsiba Tserenhowamre, Carlos Orión Ra Wariro Tsimroparidi, Cleciane Pedata Tserehite, Gonçalo Marques Koetaro, Honorio Tserenhiroto Rewe Tswe, Virgilio Buruwaro Tserehite and Leosmar Tsimi'udo Tseretsu and Milton Bokoderegaru.

HUMAN RIGHTS



Partnering to build a better World

Salesians, Youth, United Nations

by Salesians, UN

Take a look at the UN Chronicle Online some day and just note the main topic 'nouns': water, women, justice, dialogue, climate, human rights, digital dividend, rule of law... It makes an impressive list of what is wrong and what is also right with the world, if we consider that the United Nations Charter aims to right as many of the world's wrongs as it can by endeavouring, in its own words "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character; and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (Art. 3 UN Charter). ECOSOC, The Economic and Social Council of the UN, consults NGOs with an international flavour who have a "special competence in, and are concerned specifically with... fields of activity covered by the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and that are known within the fields for which they have or seek consultative status".

Thumb through the pages of the magazine you are currently reading, and note some of the key title 'nouns': water, boat people, digital resources, addicts, education... and you see the connection immediately, and why the

Salesians of Don Bosco, in January 2007, were granted special consultative status by ECOSOC, under the name of Salesian Missions, Inc., with its office in New York. And why, incidentally, its sister organisation,

VIDES + USA, under the auspices of the Salesian Sisters, is similarly represented and approved.

Visit the attractive Salesians at the UN web site (<http://www.salesians-un.org>),



<http://www.salesians-un.org>

inaugurated in 2010, and consider the range of focus areas and sub-focus areas that are involved. It too is impressive: HIV/AIDS, Poverty eradication, trafficking of persons, social development, migration, climate, human rights, indigenous people. You find stories on all these areas in the *Salesians Magazine*, year by year.

Let's take a sample of this UN activity, under the general heading of 'social inclusion', and in an area that really does show the Salesians and young people partnering to build a better world. The web site tells us: "Healthy societies seek to include rather than exclude individuals and groups. Good citizenship encourages all members of a society to work for the common good and provide opportunities for realising one's full potential. In partnership with the young, Salesians seek to help construct inclusive societies". Now note some of the listed issues; all activities that have been achieved or are currently under way, and a number of them are represented in this edition of *Salesians* or in earlier editions:

- Mumbai Children's Home hosts an Outreach Program for Youths "in conflict with the law"
- Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel Laureate in Literature, praises Fr. Ugo de Censi and his work in Chacas
- Salesian Alumnus helps Palestinian orphans
- Don Bosco Vocational Center, Kep

City, responds to the needs of the marginalized

- Salesians collaborate to rebuild three villages lost to floods
- Social Integration through Sport

Or note the list of 52 nations to the left of that page, from Angola to Vietnam, in every one them, one or more similar stories. There is little doubt that Don Bosco's sons and daughters, consecrated and lay, are playing their part to right the world's wrongs.

On 24th September, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Salesians facilitated a panel discussion titled, "Empowering Youth to be Agents of Change in Eradicating Poverty." Representatives of the Catholic Church, governments, and the Salesians presented their perspectives on the effectiveness and importance of the Salesians' influence on youth to change individuals and societies. The event took place during the High Level Meetings on the Rule of Law and the Opening of the 67th General Assembly. This was made possible by a collaboration between The Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the United Nations.

In his role as president of 'Caritas Internationalis', Salesian Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga (Honduras) cited examples from recent Salesian and

Caritas projects that highlight the generosity of youth who volunteer their time and talent to improve the lives of others. He further noted that the transformation of societies often begins with the zeal, enthusiasm and creativity of young people who often challenge others to see things in new ways and approach life with greater passion and dedication.

Brother Jean Paul Muller, the Economist General of the Salesians, who has vast experience with education and development projects, highlighted examples of effective practices by Salesian programs around the globe that help youth escape the cycle of poverty. He stressed the pedagogy of work, and encouraged assistance in helping youth earn a salary and acquire an education that will help them to spend their financial resources with attention, mindfulness and justice.

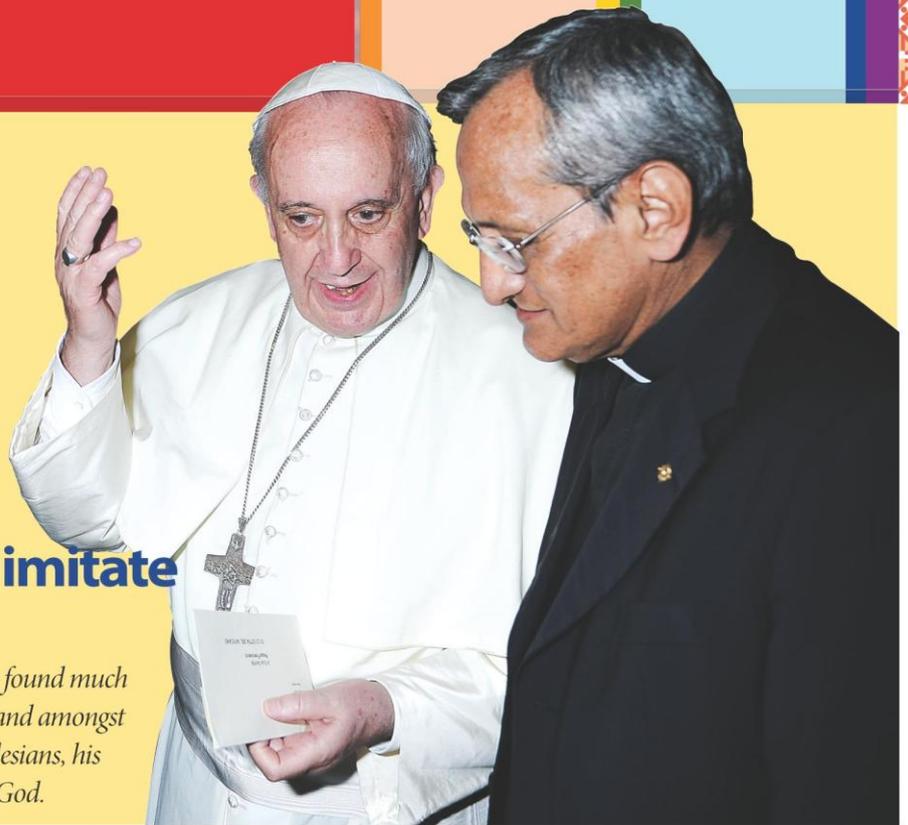
Yes, Don Bosco's sons and daughters are working on many, many fronts around the world, "partnering to build a better world" as the Salesian UN representation describes itself. UN Ambassador Valero from Venezuela noted that UNESCO considers the Salesians "the largest educational agency that exists today". It is education which is the "special competence" that the Salesians "are concerned specifically with" and a field they are known for in 130 or more countries of the world.

POPE INVITES US

Pope Francis

invites us to know, love and imitate Don Bosco

Pope Francis' gestures and personality have found much resonance across countries and continents and amongst believers and non-believers alike. For Salesians, his Petrine ministry is a true gift from God.



by Alejandro León

The Pope's family and personal story is shot through with a strong Salesianity, as described by Fr Cayetano Bruno in two letters received from Córdoba, dated 20 October 1990, on his Salesian experience. In the first, he recalls Fr Enrique Pozzoli, the priest who baptised him and was his confessor as a child and a young man:

"Today it is 29 years since Fr Enrique Pozzoli died (if my memory has not failed me). I have just celebrated Mass for him; he baptised me on 25 December 1936 at San Carlos. When I go to visit Mary Help of Christians I also usually pause at the baptistery to give thanks for the grace of my Baptism. Recalling Fr Pozzoli this morning I felt



the Lord telling me that I had to get to and fulfil a promise, jotting down some of my "Salesian memories", for the archives... Fr Pozzoli was closely linked to the Sívori family, my mother's family, who lived in Quintino Bocayuva 556. He was especially friendly with my mother's brothers, especially the older one, Vincent (also a hobby photographer). My mother's brothers were also active in the Catholic Workers group. Dad arrived from Italy on 25 January 1929. He was Piedmontese (born in Asti) but had lived in Turin for most of the time (in Via Garibaldi and Corso Valdocco). Because he was close to the Salesian church it meant he went there, so when he became a counter there, he was already in the "Salesian family".

Providence, whom Don Bosco taught us to love and invoke, can be seen in the following event, showing how our lives are filled with the signs of God's fatherliness:

They arrived on the Giulio Césare, but earlier had been on the Principessa Mafalda, which sank. You cannot imagine how often I have thanked Divine Providence! My father worked at the Bank of Italy in Turin and Asti. My grandmother, Mrs Rosa Margarita Vasallo de Bergoglio (the woman who

had the greatest influence on my life) worked with Catholic Action which was just beginning; she gave talks everywhere (I had one until recently, published as a pamphlet, one that she gave at S. Severo in Asti on: "St Joseph in the life of the single, widowed and married woman"). It seems that my grandmother said things that were not well received by the politics of the time... Once they closed the hall where she was supposed to speak, so finding herself out on the street, she got up on a table. She knew Blessed Giorgio Frassati, and worked alongside Prof. Prospera Gianasso (who had considerable influence on Italian Catholic action)".

Fr Bergoglio expresses his affection for Salesians in simple terms:

... My family was spiritually nurtured by the Salesians at San Carlos. As a child I used go to the procession for Mary Help of Christians, and also St Anthony's in Calle México. When I was home with my grandmother I used go to the St Francis de Sales Oratory (the one in charge there was Fr Alberto Della Torre, who is currently Airforce chaplain). Of course I am a fan of San Lorenzo and until recently kept a "History of San Lorenzo Club" written by Fr Mazza (I think); I gave it as a gift to Mr Hugo Chantada, a Catholic journalist at La Prensa, a very devoted fan of San Lorenzo's. He still has it. As a child I knew all the famous confessors at San Carlos: Montaldo, Punto, Carlos Scandroglio, Pozzoli. And since I was a child I had Fr Moret's "Religious Instruction" in my possession. We were taught to ask the blessing of Mary help of Christians every time we said goodbye to a Salesian.

Devotion to Mary Help of Christians took root from early childhood and years later played a role in discerning his priestly vocation before the picture of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica at Almagro, Buenos aires. It had been blessed by Don Bosco himself. However his strongest Salesian experience, in his own words, was as a pupil at Don Bosco College in Ramos Mejía, a province of Buenos Aires. It offers us a short and profound summary of Salesian pedagogy:

... my strongest experience with the Salesians was



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in 1949 when I was a border in sixth grade at the Wilfrid Barón de los Santos Ángeles College in Ramos Mejía. Fr Emilio Cantarutti was the Rector; Fr Isidro Fueyo was in charge of studies. Bro. Fernández worked in the office. Amongst the clerics there I recall Bro. (Leonardo or Leandro) Cangiani and Raúl Veiga. Amongst the older priests there were Frs Usher, Lambruschini, Cingolani, etc. I can hardly give a partial account of life at the College, simply because I have often reflected on this year in my life, and this has gradually added to an overall reflection which I would like to offer here. I am aware that it is probably somewhat intellectualised, without the freshness of the simple re-telling, but on the other hand I also know that this idea of things is something I have developed myself, it comes from my experience: so in my view it is objective... College life had "everything". One was immersed in a web of life, organised so that there was not a moment of time wasted. The day went like an arrow and there was no time to get bored. I felt immersed in a world which, while it was put together "artificially" (with all the educational bits and pieces) had nothing artificial about it. It was the most natural thing to attend Mass in the morning, as it was to have breakfast, study, go to class, play at recreation time, listen to the "Good Nights" from the Rector. All the various aspects of life came together as one, and it was creating a conscience in me: not just a moral conscience but a kind of human conscience (social, play, artistic, etc.). I can put it another way: by awakening awareness of the truth of things, the College created a Catholic culture that was not in the least vague or other-worldly. Study, values of living together, reference to the most in need (I recall learning there to give up things so they could be given to people poorer than myself), sport, skills, piety... this was all real and it all formed habits which together shaped a cultural way of being. We were living in a world that was open to transcendence. So it became much easier then in my secondary schooling to "transfer" this (in the educational sense) to other things. This was simply because what we experienced at the College had got us to live well: without distortion, realistically, with a sense of responsibility and transcendence as a horizon. Thus Catholic culture is, in my view, the best

thing I received at Ramos Mejía... There were places for hobbies, crafts... Fr Lambruschini taught us to sing, and with Fr Avilés I learned how to make and use an ice-cream machine; There was a Ukrainian priest (Fr Esteban) and those who wanted to learn to serve Mass in the Ukrainian rite... and there were so many resources (theatre, championships, academic events, taxidermy, etc.) which were channels for our hobbies and curiosity. We were educated in creativity.

In Salesian education the tradition of the Good Nights has been a constant, coming from Don Bosco's own intuition and educational practice, an occasion for passing on values and looking at things from a believer's point of view. Fr Bergoglio again:

Everything was done for a purpose. There was nothing "without meaning" (at least in fundamental terms; sometimes a teacher might have been a bit impatient or there might have been small daily injustices, etc.). I learned there, almost unconsciously, to look for meaning in things. One of the clear occasions of learning to find meaning in things was the "Good Nights" which the Rector usually gave. Sometimes it was the Provincial, when he was visiting the College. I recall one, like it was just yesterday, that Bishop Miguel Raspanti gave; he was provincial at the time. It would have been early October 1949. He had gone to





Córdoba because his mother had died on 29 September. On his return he spoke to us about death. And now, almost 54 years later, I realise this “Good Night” was a point of reference for the rest of my life regarding the problem of death. That night, without being afraid, I felt that one day I would die and it seemed to me to be the most natural thing. When, a year or two later, I found out how Fr Isidoro Holowaty had died, how he had suffered from stomach pain for many days until one Wednesday, when Fr Pozzoli who had gone to hear the confessions of the Salesians there, ordered him to see a doctor, I felt that this seemed a natural thing, that a Salesian had died like that, practising virtue. Another “Good Night” that made an impression was one that Fr Cantarutti gave on the need to ask the Blessed Virgin to help succeed in our vocation. I recall that night I was praying a lot as I went to the dormitory (it must have been noticeable because a couple of days later Fr Avilés made a comment to me about it in passing)... that night I could not sleep; I was praying. It was the psychologically right moment to give meaning to the day, to things.

Without triumphalism and with much that we can examine our consciences about, the Pope's reflections call us to a strong commitment to the pedagogical and pastoral legacy that binds us to our father, Don Bosco.



