

# SALESIAN BULLETIN

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U.S.A.



## *Appreciating Two Popes*



# SALESIAN BULLETIN U.S.A.

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## CONTENTS

- 3** Strenna 2014  
Drawing upon Don Bosco's  
Spiritual Experience
- 6** Appreciating Two Popes  
Pope Benedict XVI's Gifts  
to the Church  
The Franciscan Revolution
- 12** Family Life Matters  
Kid Pressure Leaves Little Room  
to Grow
- 14** Youth Culture in the '10s  
Contemporary Youth Culture  
Challenges Parents, Ministers
- 17** Salesian Family News
- 20** Holiness in Don Bosco's Style
- 22** Around the Salesian U.S.A.
- 26** Around the Salesian World
- 31** Recently Deceased Salesians

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*Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and  
Pope Francis exchange Christmas  
greetings with each other  
(L'Osservatore Romano)*

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AVAILABLE IN SPANISH.

# Strenna 2014

## Drawing upon Don Bosco's Spiritual Experience So as to Walk in Holiness

By ANS

Fr. Pascual Chavez's last annual strenna, or theme, for the year is  
"Da mihi animas, cetera tolle."

Let us draw upon the spiritual experience of Don Bosco,  
in order to walk in holiness according to our specific vocation.  
"The glory of God and the salvation of souls."

The word *strenna* in Italian means, literally, "gift." The Salesian tradition of offering a strenna as a spiritual gift for the new year was begun in 1849 by Don Bosco himself, and it has always taken the form of a theme or practice for all the members of his family to try to follow in the year ahead.

For 2014, the third year of preparation for the celebration of the bicentennial of Don Bosco's birth (1815-2015), the Rector Major chose a topic that goes back to the source of the Salesian charism by drawing on Don Bosco's spirituality.

The true "gift," some would say, is not the three- or four-line theme but the commentary on it that Don Bosco's successor publishes on New Year's Eve for the entire Salesian Family.

In this year's commentary on the strenna, Fr. Chavez invites all members of the Salesian Family "to draw from the sources of Don Bosco's spirituality,



Fr. Chavez presenting his commentary on the  
2014 Strenna on New Year's Eve.

meaning from his educational and pastoral charity. Its model is Christ the Good Shepherd; it finds its prayer and plan of life in Don Bosco's motto *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle*. Following this program we discover 'Don Bosco the mystic,' whose spiritual experience is at the basis of our way of experiencing Salesian spirituality today in the diversity of vocations which it inspires; and we too can have a strong experience of Salesian spirituality...."

Fr. Chavez continues: "Behind everything, as the source of Don Bosco's fruitful activity and his rele-



Matthew Pirrall

*Boys at the Salesian work for street children in Hospet, India, lack desks for their school work, but they have an opportunity to go to school.*

point of arrival is holiness for everyone, each according to his or her own state in life.

The second item which the Rector Major calls to our attention is pastoral charity as the center and synthesis of Salesian spirituality. Through his dedication to the young, Don Bosco wanted to commu-

vance to us today, there is something that we often miss, we his sons and daughters: his deep interior life, what we could call his 'familiarity' with God. Who knows, but this may be the best thing of all that we have from him in order to love him, call on him, imitate him, and follow him as we encounter the Lord Jesus and get young people to do likewise."

The point of departure for Don Bosco's spirituality was the glory of God and the salvation of souls; the profound root of his interior life and his apostolic activity was his union with God; the instruments which realize the Salesian religious and apostolic mission are those which translate invisible values into visible works; the

nicate an experience of God to them. Any spirituality aims at instilling charity in a Christian. Charity is the form and substance of all virtues, and what constitutes and builds up the individual. For Salesians, such charity is spelled out as pastoral charity—our contemplation of Jesus the Good Shepherd encourages us to practice "Da mihi animas, cetera tolle."



Patrick Sabol

*More than 50 infants were baptized at Christmas Mass at the Salesian mission in Juba, South Sudan.*



FMA Haledon Province

*Sr. Janet Keller with students at Villa Madonna School, Tampa.*

The third item that Fr. Chavez highlights is how Salesian spirituality—while having things in common which are true for every vocation that draws inspiration from that spirituality—is nevertheless experienced in particular ways according to the specific nature of each Salesian group and each one's state of life: consecrated life, priestly ministry, lay faithful, family, and young people.

Salesian youth spirituality considers daily life as the place where we encounter God and is rooted in the proclamation and experience of the Risen Lord. It is joyful and optimistic. It educates to friendship and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, in ecclesial communion and with Mary's help, and matures as vocational choice and responsible service.

Salesian Family groups involve many lay people in their mission and are called to experience a Salesian lay spirituality.

Aware, then, that there cannot be youth ministry without family ministry, we are now committed to developing a Salesian spirituality for families.

Finally, the Rector Major offers some concrete tasks for the Salesian Family: getting to know Don Bosco's spirituality better; practicing pastoral charity; proposing and communicating Salesian spirituality according to the diversity of our vocations; reading certain texts by Don Bosco that are sources of Salesian spirituality.

Fr. Chavez concludes: "My first letter as Rector Major bore the title 'Salesians, be saints!' It was a letter that I considered to be programmatic for my time as Rector Major. I am happy that my last letter written as successor of Don Bosco is a heartfelt invitation to drink deeply of his spirituality. We find here everything that I would like to live and propose to you, dear members of the Salesian Family and young people."

The complete text of the strenna is available at <http://www.donboscowest.org/resources/letters-rector-major>, and a video commentary is available at [http://www.sdb.org/en/Rector\\_Major/Strenna/Strenna\\_2014](http://www.sdb.org/en/Rector_Major/Strenna/Strenna_2014).

# Appreciating Two Popes

*A year ago the Church underwent a startling papal transition. Pope Francis already seems to be making a profound mark on Catholics around the world, and on non-Catholics as well. Obviously, it is not possible to assess the final impact of his Petrine ministry only one year into it, and thus exactly how profound a transition occurred.*

*A year after the transition, we review some of Francis's steps and consider what impact they may have. A year after the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, we offer a tentative assessment of what his ministry has meant for the Church.*

## Pope Benedict XVI's Gifts to the Church

By Michael Mendl, SDB

One of Benedict's most lasting services in the papal office may well turn out to be how he left it, by voluntary resignation when he found that he no longer had the rigorous physical or mental stamina that the office demands. Talk of papal resignation had surfaced from time to time in the past, e.g., when Pope Pius XII considered what to do if the Nazis were to invade the Vatican and arrest him, and when Pope John Paul II's frailties severely handicapped him in his last years. But, as much as they hated him, the Nazis didn't try to seize Pius, and John Paul insisted that "a father cannot resign his position."

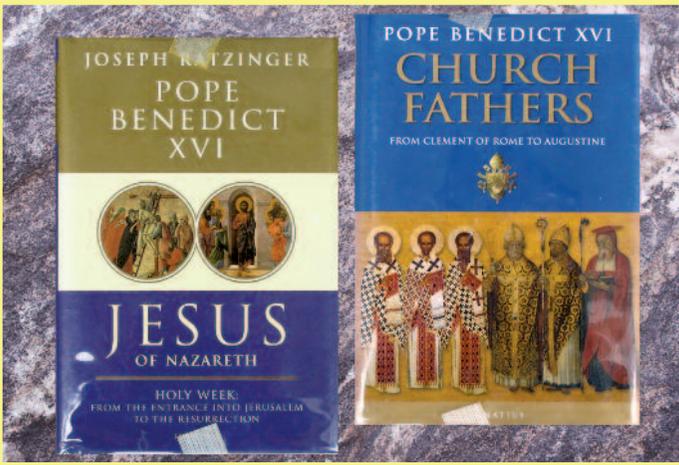
But Benedict did resign, winning universal praise for his humility in leaving behind the power and the authority that he'd never wanted in the first place, for an act of service to the Church that allowed Peter's See to be filled by a man who could govern it capably, and for an act that frees future Pontiffs to take the same step if circumstances warrant it. On the resignation's first anniversary (2/11/14), Catholic News Service's Frank Rocca wrote:



Jeffrey Bruno

"No words or gestures could have demonstrated more powerfully that the pope is not a mere figurehead, but truly the leader of 1.2 billion people around the world, than Pope Benedict's admission that a stronger man was needed to fill the role."

Another aspect of Benedict's service was his teaching. That doesn't surprise us; after all, he was a classroom teacher until Paul VI made him a bishop. From presenting systematic theology in ways accessible to university students, he moved to presenting all forms of theology in ways accessible to many listen-



teaching Popes in the Church's 2,000-year history; Fr. Raymond de Souza says flat-out in the *National Catholic Register* (2/13/14), "Benedict was the greatest papal preacher since the patristic age."

Benedict's third great service was to keep the Church on the

ers and readers: in his weekly audiences, in his encyclicals and other official writings, in his *Jesus of Nazareth* trilogy, etc. Benedict the Teacher tackled the great heresy of our day, that of relativism, which denies that anything is certain and makes a person's own desires the highest good to be sought. He, instead, insisted on Eternal Truth as the standard of right and wrong, as the goal of all human desires. That Truth is personified in Jesus Christ. For Benedict, the Christian faith is not a set of doctrinal or moral propositions but the Person of Jesus. From Jesus and our relationship with him flow the doctrines and the practices of our faith. Benedict constantly showed the reasonableness of Christianity, that faith and reason both seek Truth and can find it. With reference to Benedict's legacy, columnist Ross Douthat wrote in the *New York Times* (3/3/13), "yes, the church believes that its doctrines are compatible with reason, scholarship and science." An editorial in another New York paper noted that "Benedict made his most important mark charting a back-to-basics doctrinal course in an increasingly secular world" (*Daily News*, 3/1/13). Some observers consider Benedict one of the greatest

path marked out by the Second Vatican Council. He was the last of the five Popes who actually participated in the Council, and as a participant like his immediate predecessors he was able to uphold what the Council had said and done, and to distinguish that from what others claimed the Council said or did or what others proposed as the "real spirit" of the Council. Benedict insisted



Pope Benedict greets young people at World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011.

on the continuity between Vatican II and the centuries of Christian tradition before it. This continuity is related to the preceding point, insistence on the truths of the faith, both doctrinal truths and moral truths.

Related to Benedict as teacher is his promotion of the New Evangelization initiated by John Paul II. This is the Church's response to the de-Christianization of Western culture, especially in Europe, brought on by neo-paganism, decades of Communist rule, and the influx of Muslim immigrants. Benedict called for clear presentation of the Faith and for fresh missionary efforts to restore Europe to its Christian heritage—not forgetting other parts of the world. This effort is based on establishing a relationship with Jesus Christ and then, courageously and joyfully, inviting others into that relationship.

A fifth, and underappreciated, service of Benedict XVI was his confronting the sexual abuse scandal. Even before his election as Pope, when he was prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, he had taken such steps as he could to identify and remove abusive priests. As Pope he acted firmly, e.g., removing the notorious Fr. Marcial Maciel from leadership of the Legionaries of Christ, speeding up the laicization process for abusers, and urging national conferences of bishops to face the issue in the manner undertaken by the American bishops.

As Pope, Benedict XVI brought his own distinct persona and style to the papal office. His ministry was less than one-third as long as John Paul II's, but he has undoubtedly left his mark on the Church and on the Papacy, and all Catholics are indebted to him.

## The Franciscan Revolution



Jeffrey Bruno

By Juanita Chavez, FMA

On March 13, 2013, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, archbishop of Buenos Aires, was elected to succeed retired Pope Benedict XVI. The election of a Pope from the New World was unprecedented, as were the election of a member of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) and the new Pontiff's choice of name: Francis. Surprise and joy, curiosity and wonder filled Catholics and non-believers and everyone in between. What would this new Pope bring to the Catholic Church?

Pope Francis's down-to-earth ways, his genuineness, and his concern for persons touched a chord in people



L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis meeting with his council of cardinals. Salesian Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez is third from the left.

throughout the world. He wants to be close to the people, which is why he chooses to live in the Vatican guest house rather than in the isolation of the Apostolic Palace, where Popes have lived since the 14th century. He is a man of dialog, mercy, and joyful witness. Christians and non-Christians alike have responded to his simplicity, humility, and message of God's love and mercy offered to everyone. They love the way he combines a plain and direct style of preaching with gestures that communicate volumes. His simple and austere lifestyle makes a statement to the world that he is in solidarity with all.

The new Pope quickly identified himself as the "bishop of Rome" in the first place, somewhat de-emphasizing "Pope." That is said to have prompted the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople to attend his inauguration—the first time that had happened since the Great Schism of 1054.

It is evident that Pope Francis wants to recover the Church's Christian influence on the world. With the credibility of the Church very much on his mind, he soon established a council of eight cardinals to advise him on restructuring the Roman Curia, and he set up commissions to oversee Vatican finances and the issues surrounding clerical sexual abuse. All of these issues have damaged the Church's moral voice. The commission on clerical abuse is to advise him on how to protect children from pedophile priests and to counsel victims; it was hailed by the bishops of the United States as "a most welcome initiative."

Pope Francis released a document titled *Evangelii Gaudium*, his first apostolic exhortation. It is devoted to the theme of the New Evangelization in the Church and can be summarized as follows: 1) reform of the Church in a missionary key, 2) the temptations of pastoral agents, 3) the Church as evangelizer, 4) the homily and its preparation, 5) the so-

cial inclusion of the poor, 6) peace and social dialog, 7) and the spiritual motivations for missionary action.

The Holy Father himself evangelizes in his homilies, which emphasize the merciful love of God and God's personal interest in each one of us. When people encounter Pope Francis, they sense the presence of Jesus Christ and His joy, and so they share an experience of God's love. Pope Francis explained, "God, the source of all peace and love, has taught us throughout these years to regard one another as members of the same family."

world. They responded with equal emotion. Although he was addressing the young, his words resonated with everyone. All Christians are called to accept the Holy Father's challenges. 1) Be disciples with a mission! 2) The best tool for evangelizing the young is another young person. 3) Use the power of the Gospel to break down evil and violence, selfishness and intolerance, so as to build a new world. 4) "Be revolutionaries.... Rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporal and ultimately thinks you are incapable of responsibility, incapable



*Pope Francis greets an immigrant family during his visit to the Salesian parish of the Sacred Heart in Rome on Jan. 19.*

Pope Francis has shown himself to be friend of the young. In Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day in July 2013, he spoke with emotion and strong conviction to the youths of the

of true love." 5) On vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life: "Do not be afraid of what God asks of you! It is worth saying 'Yes' to God. In him we find joy!"

The Pope's focus is on mercy. The Franciscan revolution isn't one of content but of tone. He believes it's time for the Church to lift up its merciful face to the world, in part because of its own self-inflicted wounds and in part because of the harsh and unforgiving temper of the times. Veteran Vatican correspondent John L. Allen Jr. says that this is a Pope who will look for every chance to express compassion, steering clear of finger-wagging unless it's absolutely necessary.

With the heart of Christ, Pope Francis is sincerely concerned about the difficulties faced by the many Christians who are persecuted for their faith throughout the world. "Wherever a minority is persecuted and marginalized because of their religious beliefs or eth-

nic origins, the good of society as a whole is placed in danger, and we must all consider ourselves affected."

The Holy Father even makes many phone calls personally rather than through secretaries or other officials. He calls not only important persons but even ordinary people who've written to him. This gives evidence of his pastoral attempt to reach out to suffering humanity. He strives to share the experience of God's love. He doesn't seek personal renown and success; he carries out his service for the love of God and the good of all. He has expressed his desire to touch everyone's life, as from his heart he said, "How I would like a Church that is poor and for the poor," challenging us "to have an open heart."

## Bosco Young People in Action

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# FAMILY LIFE MATTERS

## KID PRESSURE LEAVES LITTLE ROOM TO GROW

By Mary DeTurrís Poust

Olivia, 13, came downstairs one morning with a bad headache and a fever over 101. As any parent of a school-aged child knows, a fever means no school, no question. So I phoned her in sick and sent her back to bed.

Then I opened my emails for the day and found a note from the directors of the middle school play saying that any student who missed a rehearsal for any reason could be thrown out of the production. Olivia hadn't missed a single rehearsal up until that point, but I knew I'd better not take any chances. So I sent off an email explaining the situation and waited for what I assumed would be an assurance that a fever is a legitimate reason to miss rehearsal. Wrong.

The message said that while she would not be thrown out of the play entirely, she might very well lose her part if they happened to rehearse that scene while she was out, which sounds suspiciously like being thrown out of the play. If at all possible, they wanted her at practice, sick or not.

On top of that, Olivia happened to have competition dance classes that night. That's her main "sport" and a commitment that leaves almost no wiggle room for conflicts or illness. You are allowed three absences or you are out, no matter the reason, and she was saving up her absences for when she had to perform in the aforementioned play.

So on a day when she was too ill to go to science and math class, she dragged herself to a two-hour play practice followed by a two-hour dance session. Yes, I questioned my own parenting decisions on this, wondering if I should have just said, no, even if it meant she might lose out on everything she'd



Mary DeTurrís Poust

Mary DeTurrís Poust is a columnist for Catholic New York and the author of six books on Catholic spirituality, including *Walking Together: Discovering the Catholic Tradition of Spiritual Friendship*. Visit her blog and website at [www.notstrictlyspiritual.com](http://www.notstrictlyspiritual.com).



ANS

Used with permission of Mary DeTurrís Poust.

worked so hard for. Then I questioned our society's "norms," where teachers and coaches often push children beyond what their growing bodies can handle, even when their growing bodies are sick.

Sadly, there's no easy answer, because if we pull her out of those programs, there are more of the same right behind it, at least if she wants to be involved in anything at an even moderately advanced level. In our local high school, for example, if you want to play in the orchestra, you have to commit to daily orchestra classes in lieu of any other electives—no art or marine biology or business. If you want to try to have it all, you have to skip lunch and book your electives in that slot, meaning no down

time, no food, no socializing. We don't allow that, and when we tell guidance counselors or other parents that Noah—and now Olivia—must have a lunch period, we are often greeted by looks that say without so many words: "slacker."

So Olivia is giving up violin and her chance to be in orchestra rather than give up the opportunity to try her hand at studio art or some other elective that



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might make her a more well-rounded person, that might expose her to the very thing she is meant to do in this life. I'm proud of her for being willing to make that tough call, but it's lousy that she has to make it at all, that at this age there can't be a happy medium. There should be room to explore, room for joy, room for the kind of idleness and quiet that leads to self-discovery and creativity. But our world sees that as unproductive, and, sadly, too many of us buy into it.

And then we wonder why we live in a world where most people are stressed out, unhappy at work and unfulfilled in everyday life. How can we be truly happy if we're never allowed to rest or eat in peace or heal, if we see ourselves only as a human *doing*, not a human being?



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# Youth Culture in the '10s

## Contemporary Youth Culture Challenges Parents, Ministers

By Juanita Chavez, FMA

If we were to take the youths of today and place them as an artistic arrangement on the wall, we would probably be looking at a massive, indescribable tapestry. It might even appear to be the back side of the work of art. There would be noticeable hues and designs woven in blatant and modest inequalities.

Today's youths are fragmented and alienated. They're exposed to many situations and incidents to which past generations had little exposure. There's a visible suffering in regard to their own identity, insecurity, and fear of the unknown future.

Youngsters are uncertain and confused because society's value system has become unstable and fluctuating. The media have contributed to youths' being more alone and insecure with regard to communicating with others. Texting has diminished creativity in language because peer-to-peer text messaging focuses on inflexible verbal limitations with the many symbols it uses instead of words.



bosela - SXC

Adolescents are seeking meaning in their lives while at the same time dealing with the complexities of their own personalities and life experiences. They seek their independence while at the same time often acting in such a way as to hinder the freedom they pursue. We see our youths as persons who are struggling with life between two stages. They're no longer children, and still they're not adults. In a sense they're in a class all their own. They often lack the guidance and strength to overcome living in a world that feeds them illusion; and while caught in the mesh of deceit, they desire to be set free from the slavery of selfishness and individualism. As a result, adults do a poor job in understanding or even reaching out to them.



In their search to find themselves while being a part of a group, they exhibit behavior that speaks of indifference, denial, and disapproval for styles of living that adults are reluctant to accept. They appear to be aloof from God and religious practice; they avoid ordinary participation in their faith; often they're drawn toward bogus religious experiences. Adults need to go beyond the facades that youngsters erect in order to touch their lives significantly.

Young people, in fact, are receptive to the supernatural and what lies beyond this life. They're open to experiences of prayer; they respond to the witnessing of peers and adults who live their faith. They're positively drawn to a life of authenticity and want to live a life of genuineness. They also desire to have a safe space of their own where they can be themselves, where they have some basic structure and activities that they can engage in with their peers.

Our consumer world and its lack of an essential value system leaves them victims of materialism and money. The media expose them to so much advertising that they fall prey to the conviction that pleasure, possessions, and looks are what are important. They retreat into what is passing and superficial and indulge in the craze of the now. These include the cult of the body and the notion that love is just a fleeting experience or mere gratification. At World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro last summer, Pope Francis reminded the youths that "possessions, money, and monetary power can give a momentary thrill, the illusion of being happy, but they end up possessing us and making us always want to have more."

Today's young people are strong and spirited. They're perceptive about human rights, respect for persons, solidarity with the poor, and the

dignity of the person, to name a few important topics. They want to look at life with hope, to seek communication on a deeper level, and to develop genuine relationships. When trusted adults guide them to aspire to a high Christian value system, they're willing to accept a challenge to become the best they can be.

We can take up the challenge of guiding youths, being attentive to their needs, and helping them to strive to live the dream of a future that diminishes evil so that every young person can grow and develop into a strong Christian. We can dare to take the initiative of witnessing to our faith and so educating them with our example. We can encourage them to an active and generous partnership of witnessing among their peers. Educators, parents, and volunteers alike need to embrace the challenge of shaping values and consciences for good, and forming strong healthy characters so as to restore the image of God in young men and women.



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*Pope Francis celebrating Mass at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, July 28, 2013.*

We live in an age that seeks freedom with violence, fostering disorders. We need to set our Christian values in motion and, like the great saints who fostered peace and the spirit of freedom, work to promote a culture of life, of respect, treating everyone with compassion and humble understanding. Youths need to meet “the living Jesus, in his large family that is the Church” (Pope Francis to youth, July 2013).

Especially with our youths who are most in need, as Christians we “must hold the hand of those who have fallen into the darkness and encourage them to rise and stand strong with our help. We need to offer the motivation, encourage them to stand up, and then stretch out our hand to help.” (Pope Francis, at Rio hospital, 2013)

# SALESIAN FAMILY NEWS

## 32nd Annual Salesian Family Spirituality Days

By Denise Sickinger, FMA

Twenty-eight groups of the Salesian Family, including most of their leadership, took part in the 32nd Annual Spirituality Days in Rome, Jan. 16-19. In addition to the usual attention to Salesian spirituality, they came also to thank Fr. Pascual Chavez for his concern and guidance during his 12 years of service as Don Bosco's successor.



The purpose of this year's gathering was to help everyone in the Family know and live Don Bosco's spirituality better as individuals, as individual groups according to each group's specific vocation and apostolate, and as a united Salesian Family. All the talks and discussions centered on the theme of the 2014 Strenna, "Da mihi animas, cetera tolle—the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls."

This is exactly what I take away with me from the SFSD: we belong to a huge, wonderful Family which seeks in so many varied ways to live and work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. All the many presenters shared their thoughts on what it means to belong to Don Bosco's Family as regards our unique spirituality and mission and how to grow in that spirituality.

We heard from young adults who grew up in Salesian homes or environments and who now have committed themselves as Cooperators, members of the Salesian Youth Movement, and/or members of the Past Pupils Association, carrying out a variety of apostolates among the young and the poor. Consecrated religious shared their convictions, reflections, and experiences on deepening our relationship with Christ and then reaching out to others with His pastoral charity. We listened and pondered as they also spoke of the mission entrusted to Don Bosco and how we can incarnate it faithfully in today's world with all its new possibilities and challenges through social media, through outreach to refugees—even within our Western world—and through involvement in the socio-political and economic spheres.

We watched and reflected as the SDB postnovices presented the strenna in the form of a play. We prayed, we ate, we shared, we worked, we celebrated; i.e., we lived life to the full, as Jesus would have us do, while strengthening our commitment to and understanding of this great Family and its common spirituality with an eye to increasing our collaboration for the salvation of souls. Most of all, we were challenged to grow in our union with God—to become saints!—so that the zeal for souls, the pastoral charity, that Don Bosco lived can become our own; become our reason for untiring apostolic work as we encounter God in the young and in communion with each other and the Church Universal. As Fr. Chavez put it in his homily at the closing Mass: “Here is our Salesian mission, dear brothers and sisters: being people who render testimony to Jesus for young people, especially the poorest from a social and economic point of view; also the emotionally needy, at risk because they could lose a sense of life’s meaning, lose hope and their future. We shouldn’t forget that the effort to chase God out of our lives will never convert the earth into paradise. Indeed, it makes our work more difficult, our life more fragile, the lives of young people more difficult, and our entire earth less of a paradise.”

Fr. Chavez’s closing speech highlighted five themes which he stressed during his two terms as Rector Major. He re-proposed them as goals for the whole Salesian Family as part of their commitment to the salvation of young people: life, family, education, evangelization, and vocation.

The Rector Major also made an urgent appeal to all the groups of the Family to work to carry out joint projects in each territory so that each group may feel a sense of belonging, not just to one unit of the Salesian Family, but to a vast movement inspired by Don Bosco’s spirituality.

This, then, is our call: to bring life, joy, optimism, faith, hope, love, and meaning to the lives of the young because we, like Don Bosco, have “our feet firmly planted on the ground while our hearts are fixed in Heaven,” and to share that spirituality with the young!

The Salesian Family of the U.S. was represented at SFSD by Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA, Fr. Thomas Juarez, SDB, and Sr. Suzanne Dauwalter, FMA.



*SFSD participants gave Fr. Pascual Chavez a standing ovation on the last day of their meetings, in appreciation for his 12 years of leadership of the Salesian Family*

ANS



*80 members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) from Miami took part in a retreat directed by Fr. Raul Quesada at Immaculate Conception Church in Hialeah. The retreat emphasized generosity with our Lord in one's daily life. The Miami unit of ADMA is now 15 years old. (Mari Carmen Acosta)*



*In December the Community of the Mission of Don Bosco (CMB) elected a new general council in Bologna, Italy. The CMB is a group of the Salesian Family and is present in Italy, Madagascar, Burundi, Argentina, Chile, Haiti, and Ghana. The new council is made up of Guido Pedroni, guardian general; Marco Golinelli,*

*deputy guardian general; Maurizio Roffi, spiritual guardian general; Maria Maddalena Morritti, treasurer general; and Andrea Bongiovanni, secretary general. They will serve three-year terms. One of their tasks will be preparation for the Second General Assembly of the CMB in 2016. (ANS)*

# HOLINESS IN DON BOSCO'S STYLE

By ANS

## Positio of Servant of God Fr. José Vador Delivered to Vatican

On Jan. 16, Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni, postulator general, handed in to the Congregation for Saints' Causes the positio (basic



Salesians, Cuba

documentation) on the life, virtues, and reputation for holiness of the Servant of God Fr. José Vador, SDB (1909-1979). The positio will be examined by theologians on behalf of the CSS.

Fr. Vador was born in Hungary and came to the Salesians hoping to become a missionary priest. He made his first profession in 1928, was ordained in 1936, and then was sent to Cuba, where doing good and caring for the salvation of souls would be his sole concern for over 40 years. His personality, spirituality, and pastoral creativity made a deep impression in the diocese of Santa Clara, where Fr. Vador arrived in 1954 in order to build a trade school and serve as pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

Fr. Vador has been compared to St. Francis de Sales for his patient docility, prudent dedication, and enlightened wisdom in the spiritual direction of souls, and to St. John Bosco for his apostolic dynamism, love for the poor, spirit of faith, serene joy, and cordial manners.

## Diocesan Inquiry Opened for Fr. Braga's Cause of Beatification

On Jan. 30 the diocesan investigation into the life and virtues of the Servant of God Fr. Charles Braga, SDB (1889-1971), aiming at his beatification and canonization, was opened at Pampanga, Philippines. Fr. Braga was a missionary to China and founder of the Salesian work in the Philippines.

Charles Braga, from Lombardy in northern Italy, professed as a Salesian in 1905, was drafted into the army during World War I, and after the war was sent to China, where he became a collaborator of St. Louis Versiglia, bishop of Shiu Chow. In 1930 he became



*Future bishop and martyr Fr. Louis Versiglia cutting Fr. Braga's hair in 1920.*

provincial and significantly boosted the development of the Salesian work in China. He founded the first Salesian school in Beijing, fulfilling one of Don Bosco's dreams (MB 18:71-75). Salesian expansion was interrupted by the Communist takeover of the country. Fr. Braga was sent to the Philippines, where he started the Salesian presence and in 1958 became the first provincial.

Profound optimism, fatherliness, and happiness were Fr. Braga's salient features. He promoted a wonderful family spirit everywhere he went.

## Diocesan Inquiry Opened for Cause of Nino Baglieri

On March 2, seventh anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Antonio (Nino) Baglieri (1951-2007), Bishop Antonio Staglianò of Noto opened the process of inquiry into his life, virtues, and reputation for holiness in view of his possible beatification. Mr. Baglieri, who was crippled in a work accident in 1968, became a member of the male secular institute Volunteers with Don Bosco. He is described as a man imbued with Don Bosco's charism who offered his sufferings for the life of the Church and the welfare of young people.



*Nino Baglieri (in wheelchair) in 1998 with Archbishop Angelo Comastri.*

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## The Miracle of Caterina Lanfranchi Pilenga

During its winter pilgrimage through Piedmont and Lombardy, the relic of Don Bosco came to Ugnano, near Bergamo. This was no ordinary stop in the relic's itinerary. Ugnano was the home of Caterina Lanfranchi Pilenga, who from 1903 to 1931 suffered a severe form of arthritis and had gone twice to Lourdes to seek healing, unsuccessfully. But she was healed after invoking Don Bosco's intercession—the final miracle needed for his canonization in 1934.

Pope Pius XI's decree of canonization notes: "On May 6, 1931, [Caterina] went to the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. With help ... she got out of the carriage, went into the church, and sat down to pray in front of the body of Blessed John Bosco. A little while later, she knelt for about 20 minutes. She got up, went to the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and knelt down again. Then, as if coming back to herself, she became aware that she was cured. From that moment she was able to walk freely without any assistance, ... get in and out of the carriage, and climb the stairs without difficulty. Her recovery has lasted...."



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# Around the Salesian U.S.A.

## Alumni Return to Bosco Tech for National Engineers Week

By Karen Krynen

Because of the focus on science and engineering at Don Bosco Technical Institute in Rosemead, Calif., National Engineers Week is a major event at the school. On Feb. 12, scientists and engineers who are DBTI alumni returned to the school to talk to current students about the many exciting and diverse professional opportunities that the engineering field offers.

Representing such companies as Northrop Grumman, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and the Fluor Corporation, alumni made presentations on topics like designing the infrastructure for a power station and sending instructions to the Mars Rover.

"It was a really interesting event," said DBTI senior Donovan Gonzales, who plans to major in mechanical engineering this fall at Purdue or Texas A&M. "Getting professional information from DBTI alumni who made careers in the engineering fields helps me to see my reachable goals. They've done it, and they're telling us we can do it, too."

More than 60% of DBTI graduates pursue science, technology, engineering, or math majors in their university studies.



Tom Nolan, an operations engineer at Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Instrument and Science Data Systems, addresses DBTI students on Feb. 12.

DBTI

## Building Collapses at

By Michael Mendl, SDB

Under the weight of heavy snow, one wing of the Don Bosco Youth Center in Haverstraw-Stony Point, N.Y., collapsed on Feb. 14. The building was not in use at the time, and no one was injured.

The wing was a dormitory for youth retreats. The Town of Haverstraw's building inspector ordered the rest of the building complex—



Dennis Donovan, SDB

## A Different Way to Spend Christmas

By Taaj Lewis

This Christmas Eve, the youth ministry program of St. Dominic Savio Parish in Bellflower, Calif., hosted about 15 mothers and their children from His Nesting Place in Long Beach. More than 20 youths participated in games, conversations, dinner, and general Christmas fun with the children and their mothers. The children ranged in age from a few months to 13 years. The service event was organized by Gabriela Escobar, one of Savio's youth leaders.

Kids played in jumpers, and mothers played basketball with Savio youth leaders. Some UCLA alumni volunteers provided a meal. The parish's youth minister, Juan Carlos Montenegro, brought all the mothers, children, and Savio youths together for a touching reflection, followed by responses from some of the mothers, who were almost brought to tears as they shared what a welcoming environment St. Dominic Savio had provided. One six-year-old named Raquel described her feelings in one word, "love."

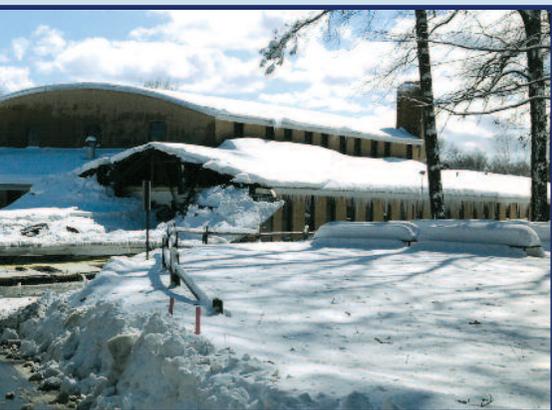
The day ended with all the children opening gifts brought specifically for them. As some kids played with their toys and others cried, overwhelmed with joy, the faces of the Savio youths revealed bliss and thankfulness. They'd sacrificed their Christmas Eve to be with strangers to share the love that little Raquel felt. It was a small share of a much greater love: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).



Amayrani Gonzalez of St. Dominic Savio Church's youth group helps a child with a coloring project.

J.C. Montenegro

## Don Bosco Youth Center



another dorm, a gymnasium, a chapel, and Reconciliation rooms—closed until certain safety upgrades are made in the complex that was built in 1947 to house and educate aspirants to the Salesian priesthood and was converted to summer camp and youth ministry activities after the aspirantate closed.

The New York City metro area has had five major winter storms since Jan. 2.

## Salesian Volunteers Serve the Poor in Tijuana

By J.C. Montenegro

Each year the San Francisco Province sponsors a volunteer service trip to Tijuana during the Christmas holidays. These experiences aim to promote missionary vocations among young Californians and to build relationships with Salesian youth centers in Mexico.

This year's trip brought 18 young men and women from the Salesian parishes of St. Dominic Savio in Bellflower, Corpus Christi in San

Francisco, and St. Luke in Stockton, to two sites in Tijuana, St. Dominic Savio Oratory and La Lupita, from Dec. 26 to Jan. 4. They were accompanied by the San Francisco Province's mission delegate, Juan Carlos Montenegro, and three young Salesians from Ecuador who were taking part in an immersion trip to the U.S. to learn English and the culture.

At a shelter for people recently deported from the U.S., which provides food, clothing, a place to stay, and spiritual support to the deportees, the volunteers helped serve breakfast to more than 1,200 people, prayed with them, and cleaned tables. In the evening they helped bring hot chocolate and coffee to hundreds of homeless people living along the river bed.

Another project was to help set tires at the bottom of a hill as a landslide preventive—important because every time it rains, the flowing water damages the hill, which leads to landslides.

They also spent New Year's Eve at the shelter with the deportees, sharing experiences and praying with them about their hopes and dreams.

When the young people returned to California, they resolved not to forget this experience in which they were able to recognize God in others.

One participant in the ten-day trip, Nhu Nguyen, said of it, "I learned to take the time to smile every day, to hug and kiss warmly, to challenge my endurance, to see Christ in everyone, and most important, to open my arms to everyone in need and to love unconditionally."

Another, Diana Serrano, wrote: "I feel proud to be able to say that I went on this life-changing mission trip to Tijuana. I used to let my insecurities define me, which kept me from doing certain things, but on this trip I stepped out of my comfort zone."

Readers interested in taking part in such a mission trip may contact

[jc@salesianvolunteers.org](mailto:jc@salesianvolunteers.org)



*Helping serve at the tables are Eddie Gutierrez (left) from St. Dominic Savio Church in Bellflower and Alan Zarco from Corpus Christi Church in San Francisco.*

J.C. Montenegro

## Gen. Colin Powell Challenges, Inspires DBCR Students

By Claire Wyrsh

The students of Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park, Md., were privileged to have Gen. Colin Powell visit on Feb. 10. He challenged the students to “be the best you can every day, be your own role model and set your own standards.” He encouraged them to “make a commitment to stay away from things that are wrong.” He also noted that “education changed the history of my family” and would do the same for all students who were prepared to work hard and lead others.

Gen. Powell talked of his early years, growing up in a home with immigrant parents and surrounded by many loving but demanding relatives and neighbors. He stated that a major reason for his success is that his family raised him to be self-disciplined and focused on self-improvement.

Gen. Powell is a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and secretary of State and is the founder of America’s Promise Alliance.



Wolpack Wire



*Peter Higgins, a dedicated volunteer at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park, Md., brings the science of biometrics to the DBCR classroom as he educates the next generation of aspiring CSI agents. Latent fingerprints connect to the chemistry curriculum because they're made*

*of water, amino acids, and other chemicals. Students learn how fingerprints interact with three different types of surfaces—porous, nonporous, or semi-porous surfaces—and the proper method of collecting, storing, and analyzing evidence. (Claire Wyrsh)*

# Around the Salesian World

## Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime Elected Rector Major

By ANS

The SDBs' 27th General Chapter elected Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime as Rector Major, to succeed Fr. Pascual Chavez Villaneuva, who had completed two six-year terms and wasn't eligible for re-election. Fr. Fernandez was elected on March 25 after a month of discernment by the general chapter. Accepting his election, he said, "I abandon myself to the Lord. We ask Don Bosco and Mary Help of Christians to accompany us."

Fr. Fernandez was born Aug. 21, 1960, at Luanco, Spain; he made his first profession in 1978 and was ordained in 1987. He has a doctorate in pastoral theology and a licentiate in philosophy and pedagogy.

Originally from the SDB province of Leon, Spain, he served there as director, youth ministry delegate, provincial councilor, vice provincial, and provincial. Since January 2010 he has been provincial in Southern Argentina, based in Buenos Aires, following a major reorganization of the Argentine provinces.



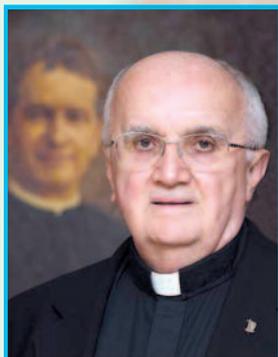
ANS

## Fr. Timothy Ploch Elected to General Council

By ANS

GC27 elected Fr. Timothy Ploch, former provincial of both U.S. provinces, as the new councilor for the Interamerica Region. He succeeded Fr. Esteban Ortiz, who served for 12 years.

Fr. Ploch was born in 1946 in Paterson, N.J., and entered Don Bosco Juniorate in 1960. He made his first profession in 1965 and was ordained in 1976. He has been principal of Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, N.J., director of the Salesian Center in Columbus, director-pastor in Port Chester, and provincial in New Rochelle (1991-1997) and San Francisco (2009-2014). He took part in the 22nd and 24th general chapters and served on the precapitular commission for GC27.



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## Salesians Hold 27th General Chapter

By ANS

The 27th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation was held in Rome, March 3-April 12. According to Salesian Constitutions, "Supreme authority over the whole Congregation belongs to the general chapter." GC27 had 220 official participants from all 90 provinces of the Congregation and from 58 nations. Surprisingly, the most common language at the chapter was English, the first language or the preferred second language for 74 members.

The chapter elected a new Rector Major and general council (see p. 26), tackled several juridical questions including the regional structure in Europe, met with Pope Francis, and studied in depth the chapter's theme, "Living the Gospel in a Radical Manner."

The next issue of the *Salesian Bulletin* will look more closely at GC27's work.

## Salesians Caring for 42,000 Refugees in C.A.R.

By ANS



Since early December, the two SDB campuses in Bangui, Central African Republic, have been crammed with refugees from the Christian-Muslim violence that has terrorized the country. The Don Bosco Center has been hosting 40,000 people, and St. John's Parish has 2,000.

One Salesian said: "We're completely overwhelmed by the crowd of people who occupied every corner of the playground, the classrooms, and the church. We have to deal with security issues, water supply, and sanitation, as well as looking after the injured and removing the dead." Salesian Missions in New Rochelle (<http://www.salesianmissions.org>) and Madrid are doing what they can to help with food and medical supplies.

## Dramatic Situation in South Sudan

By ANS

Amid ongoing tribal violence in South Sudan since mid-December, the SDB mission at Juba has been one site to which thousands of people flee for safety. The SDB superior in South Sudan, Fr. Ferrington, described the situation in January: "We regularly take in [people fleeing] the violence. We're trying, with the protection of the police, to send some out of the



country, while yet others are being accompanied to the UN compounds. We have received more than 100 families, mostly women and children. We're trying to provide a little food, clean water, and basic medical services. Unfortunately, we're not adequately prepared to deal with this crisis."

Working with Catholic Relief Services from the U.S., Salesian Missions in New Rochelle (<http://www.salesianmissions.org>) has been providing food, medicine, and first aid and hygiene supplies for the refugees.

The Salesian community also visits displaced persons at the U.N. camps to encourage them and witness to the Church's closeness to them.

## Holy Shroud to Be Exhibited in 2015

Condensed from Catholic News Service

The Holy Shroud, believed by many Christians to be the linen cloth used to wrap Jesus' body for burial, will be put on rare public display, April 19-June 24, 2015, in conjunction with the bicentennial celebration of St. John Bosco's birth. These 67 days will be the longest period that the Shroud has ever been shown—in part to make it easier for Pope Francis to schedule a visit. (A few days after Francis's election, Fr. Pascual Chavez invited him to Turin for the feast of Mary Help of Christians in 2015, and the Pope said he would like to do so.) The theme for the Shroud's exhibit will be "The greatest love." Abp. Cesare Nosiglia of Turin explained, "The greatest love is God's love for men and women" as revealed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation of all humanity.

## More Than 200 Syrian Families Depend on Salesians

By ANS

Millions of people in Syria need urgent help, the eight SDBs serving in Aleppo, Damascus, and Kafrun report: "Food, water, medicine, and fuel are the things most needed. But it is just as important to give hope and stay close to the people." The people are stressed by three years of civil war, and many teens and children "don't understand why they have to study or make an effort if a bomb is likely to fall on them tomorrow."

The SDBs try to stay close to the civilian population and have witnessed numerous tragedies: deaths, injuries, kidnappings, and homelessness. They're helping over 200 families survive each day. "We offer financial support, or we help them find food. Then there are 60 other people who have taken refuge in our house in Kafrun practically since the beginning of hostilities."

According to the U.N. and other international organizations, the war has created more than two million refugees and left more than 200,000 people in a state of siege, five million children scarred by violence, ten million people in need of emergency aid, and eight million without adequate health care.



## Pope Francis Visits Salesian Parish in Rome

By ANS

Pope Francis visited the SDB parish of the Sacred Heart in Rome on Jan. 19; Sacred Heart, across the street from Rome's main rail station in the city center, was founded by Don Bosco.

The Pope was attracted to this parish by the Salesian community's missionary and apostolic zeal, which today is focused on care for immigrants. The SDBs are assisted by the Missionaries of the Risen Christ, a congregation of sisters. In a very friendly encounter, the Holy Father talked about various pastoral themes, showing great interest in the work at Sacred Heart as a missionary outpost reaching out to people on society's margins, so dear to Pope Francis and the Salesians.

The two religious communities offer young people faith programs that lead them to an encounter with Jesus, and at the same time allow them to grow in love for others through volunteering with homeless people, refugees, and the sick.



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## The Rolls of Marega, a Salesian Treasure

By ANS

In January the Vatican Library and four Japanese historical institutes signed an agreement to translate and catalog the so-called



Wikipedia

“Rolls of Marega,” a collection of about 10,000 documents that describe the presence and the persecution of the Catholic community in Japan from the 1500s to the 1800s. This archaeological treasure came to light thanks to an SDB missionary, Fr. Mario Marega (+1978), facilitated by another SDB missionary, Fr. Vincent Cimatti (+1965), and was rediscovered through Cardinal Raffaele Farina, SDB.

The Rolls of Marega take their name from the Salesian who found them. They originated in the civic archive of Bungo, Japan, in the prefecture of Oita, where Fr. Marega ministered for many years. An astute and passionate collector, he gathered about 10,000 documents written on rice paper. They are of great value—the oldest records the arrival of Christianity in Japan in 1549. Msgr. Cesare Pasini, prefect of the Vatican Library, told Catholic News Service that they “remind us of the Christian martyrs, along with those who could not withstand the trials, and constitute extraordinary documentation for the study of Christianity in Japan. In fact, experts on the subject know of no other collections of this size and breadth.”

The Marega documents were rediscovered during the 2007-2010 renovation of the Vatican Library. “We began studying what kind of documents there were and how many—at first we didn’t realize how much was there,” said Cardinal Farina, Vatican librarian and archivist emeritus, in an interview with CNS.

The documents most likely came from Japan to the Vatican Library through the Venerable Fr. Vincent Cimatti, first SDB superior in Japan (1935-1945) and prefect apostolic of Miyazaki. He seems to have spoken about them with Pope Pius XI. Fr. Cimatti wrote in 1938 to Fr. Marega, “The Holy Father ... sends you a very special blessing and encourages you to work really hard in this field of apostolate too, which indirect though it may be, is no less important and fruitful.”

## Four Years since the Haitian Earthquake

By ANS

Jan. 12, 2014, was the fourth anniversary of the earthquake that devastated Haiti. Since 2010, the Salesians and their partners have developed an intervention program designed to go beyond the emergency phase to the phases of reconstruction and human development.

Major results of Salesian efforts include:

- The Little Schools of Fr. Bohnen are back in operation, offering education and daily nutritious meals to more than 21,000 children.
- The Timkatec 2 school has added a new wing. This year it had a record 71 graduates, and enrollments rose from 430 before the earthquake to more than 600 today.
- Timkatec 3 School for girls was opened. It offers training for 186 students and overnight accommodation for 40.
- The agro-technical school in Cap-Haitien offers classes to 140 students, while the professional training school has trained an additional 200.
- At Fort-Liberté, more than 170 young men and women have received basic technical or professional training, and about 160 young women have attended courses at the School of Nursing.
- New computer labs have been set up in 13 centers for students of the new Salesian University Network.
- At Immaculate Conception Church in Cité Soleil, young people take courses in music and dance that help them overcome their trauma after the earthquake.

As Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez emphasized the need for the Salesians in Haiti to continue the physical and social reconstruction of the country: “Images of the enormous tragedy that struck this country are still alive in our minds and hearts. The reconstruction done so far and what is still to be done will not be complete unless it’s accompanied by the creation of a new culture that helps to ensure that the country will not have to suffer disasters such as these in the future. It’s not enough just to rebuild the walls.”



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# RECENTLY DECEASED SALESIANS

San Francisco Province



## Fr. Girard Bonjean, SDB (1937-2014)

By Thomas Prendiville, SDB

Fr. Girard “Jerry” Bonjean died of cancer on March 10 in Duarte, Calif. He was 77.

Jerry grew up in the Salesians’ Sts. Peter & Paul Parish in San Francisco, which was the center of his family’s life, and from the parish and Salesian Boys Club he received all his early education.

Jerry entered Don Bosco College Seminary in Newton, N.J., in 1955 and

made his first profession of vows there in 1957. He studied theology in Italy and was ordained in 1967. As a priest he served in Salesian schools, parishes, and formation assignments up and down California: Watsonville, Richmond, Rosemead, Bellflower, and San Francisco, including terms as director in several communities. As director of the formation program for candidates and prenovices, Fr. Bonjean was outstanding for his leadership and kindness. The program relocated several times, and he always moved with it.

## Fr. Miguel Gonzalez Garcia, SDB (1927-2014)

By ANS

Fr. Miguel Gonzalez Garcia, SDB, founder of the Damas Salesianas, died in Caracas, Venezuela, on March 14 at age 86. The Damas are one of the member groups of the Salesian Family.

Spanish-born Fr. Gonzalez was ordained in 1954 with the motto “For you, O Lord, the honor and the glory; for me, the work.” Serving in both Cuba (1954-1961) and Venezuela (from 1961), he was a bold visionary, particularly with regard to the inclusion of the laity in social work. Convinced that society’s upper classes have to work for social justice, he organized them to work on behalf of the poor. When he built the National

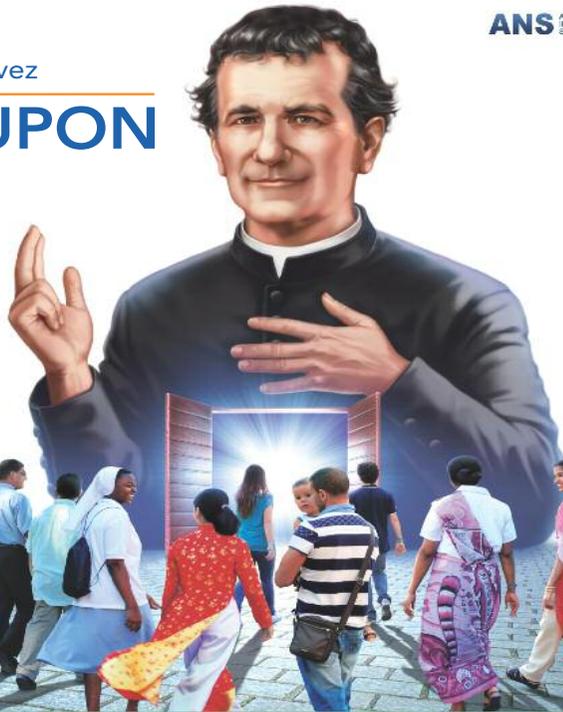
Shrine of St. John Bosco in Altamira, he had the basement set up for social works, and it became the motherhouse of the Damas Salesianas.

On May 13, 1968, the Association of Damas Salesianas was formally established as a private group of lay-women to promote total human development, particularly of women and young people. The Damas received formal ecclesiastical approval in 1988 and were recognized as members of the Salesian Family that same year. Today they have 127 centers in the Americas, from California to Patagonia, as well as in Spain and the Philippines.

**STRENNNA 2014**  
of the Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez

# LET US DRAW UPON DON BOSCO'S SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

so as to walk in  
holiness according  
to our specific  
vocation



**da mihi animas, caetera tolle**  
The glory of God and  
the salvation of souls



## *Salesian Theme (Strenna) for 2014*

Share the blessings of the Lord with His poor. When you give to the Salesians, you help poor youngsters and others in need with a Catholic education, a trade, and social programs, and you support seminarians.

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