



## TUGBOATS

*...an additional help to steer a willing heart and mind into the harbour of life or out into the sea of living, as did Don Bosco, with and for the thousands of young people of his times.*



# SALESIANS 2115



## SALESIANS IN 2115

“Any great civilization is not conquered from without until it is destroyed from within.” This statement is the opening credits of Mel Gibson's movie, *Apocalypto*. Today, we hear much hue and cry over the degradation of values and degeneration of the modern world. Along with these, we priests and religious, are alarmed about low mass attendance, rising indifference towards religion, dwindling number in vocations, Christian genocide (as we witness in Iraq and Syria now) ... Though it is true that these affect the Church, they do not weaken the Church. History has shown that the church was weakened and bruised more whenever there was decay within. The sex scandals, the extravagant clerical lifestyle of the middle ages and the arrogance of the ecclesiastical authorities have done more harm to the Church than the persecutions of Nero.

It is the same thought that comes to my mind when I think of the Salesian congregation in 2115. We can speak of a decline in vocations, merging of regions and provinces, financial crises, government hostility and other factors that raise our concern regarding the future of our congregation. But what actually would determine the quality and the quantity of the congregation in 2115 would be the internal tranquillity of each confrere and within the congregation. It is this internal strength that led the congregation thus far and is leading us now.

The chronicles of the congregation date December 9, 1859, as the foundation day of the congregation and state thus: “All present were united in one and the same spirit with a sole purpose.... of true charity.... providing members with mutual help for their own sanctification.” It is undoubtedly this internal tranquillity that led to the phenomenal growth of the congregation even after the death of Don Bosco. Don Bosco had no fear of external factors denting the future of the congregation, but he did not hesitate to state that when laziness and an over concern for comfort and food would prevail, the congregation would have run its course.

On September 2, 1880, while delivering the keynote address for the second General Chapter,

*What actually would determine the quality and the quantity of the congregation in 2115 would be the internal tranquillity of each confrere and within the congregation.*

Don Bosco spoke of how even the anti-clericals appreciated and wanted the presence of Salesians. “Yes! Don Bosco and the Salesians, they work. They are well-deserving of society; they do a lot of good. Priests of this kind may be with us forever for the good of the people.” A selfless fidelity to the young, which is an offshoot of our internal solidarity, is a guarantee for a bright future of the congregation. It is by equipping ourselves with the weapons of constant adherence to the spirit of Don Bosco and an internal coordination and joy that our congregation can sail towards the new age that awaits us in 2115.

**Cl. Jerin Palatty sdb (INK)**





## SALESIANS IN 2115

The name 'Don Bosco' will become a brand by itself. The Salesian emblem will become a sign of originality and genuineness, and it cannot be duplicated. Salesian presence around the globe will be more tangible, even if professed Salesians are not present on location. Past pupils, volunteers, benefactors, cooperators and the lay faithful who have imbibed the spirit of Don Bosco, will carry his torch far and wide. The Salesian Preventive System of education will be the one which will be acclaimed and practised as the best educational model.

**The Salesians will dazzle the world with their brilliance and they will have no other wealth but abundant charity.**

The numerical strength of the congregation is bound to reduce but not the qualitative presence or effect. Not by our swanky institutions or complex structures but for selfless and joyful charity will Salesians be renowned. The list of those acknowledged – and more especially, of those not acknowledged – by the Church as saints, will be longer. The 'Indian face of the congregation' will be at its zenith. India will have a crucial role to play, by way of animation and leadership, at the centre. 'Salesians' in 2115 will not only mean SDBs or FMAs or only the professed members but every individual whose heart has been set on fire by the *da mihi animas* of Don Bosco and seeks to build the Kingdom of God.

**Fr Therampil Jose sdb (INH)**

"I am certain that your Congregation has been raised up by Divine Providence to show forth the power of God. I am certain that God had willed to keep hidden an important secret till our times, a secret unknown to so many centuries and so many other Congregations of the past. Your Congregation is new in the Church; it has a new nature; it has arisen in these times and is both religious and secular; it has the vow of poverty and allows ownership; it belongs to the cloister and also to the world; its members are both religious and secular, cloistered and free citizens. It was instituted to show how religious can render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's".

**Pope Pius IX**

### KNOW DON BOSCO

1. How many boys attended the first catechism class organized by Don Bosco?
2. Who were the companions of Fr Thomatis?
3. Who designated Rua to be the first successor of Don Bosco?
4. Name the 10 diamonds present in the Dream of Don Bosco?
5. Who was the first Salesian Co-operator?

*(Name of those who send in the right answers will be published in the next issue.)*





## A RADICAL OPTION AWAITS US

In his book *Jesus' Plan for a New World: The Sermon on the Mount*, Richard Rohr offers a new reading of Mathew 9:17 (the new wine in old wineskins...):

*A so-called new attitude inside an old world order that we accept uncritically will finally dilute and even destroy the very attitude. It's not enough to talk about some kind of new inebriating wine, some new wisdom, without new wineskins, new structures, a new world order. Both container and the contents must be renewed – or they will both be lost (p. 42).*

The commemoration of the 150th year of founding the Congregation, the General Chapter, a year of history, another of pedagogy and then spirituality, and even the bicentenary celebrations themselves are at the most, distilleries that make possible new wine. The wineskin, the person living inside the 'sdb', is a different reality altogether. Changing the wine does not guarantee a change in the container that holds the wine. But time will come when only new wineskins and new wine will make a difference.

By the year 2115, the world will witness Salesians – and most religious – make a radical choice (and not merely have a Chapter on 'radicality') to live a life of



the Gospels. There will be more communities but less institutions; greater challenges with hardly any 'programme projects'; greater networking and communion and less 'Salesian domineering', more talk about humanity and little of 'salesianity' or religiosity, more living witnesses than inspirational documents, and we will be more Christ-like than merely Church-like.

And those who do not make that radical choice, will certainly still carry the label 'sdb' but would mean nothing to anyone – least of all, to oneself.

**Br Vincent Castilino sdb (INH)**

### Congregation in 1888

No. of Countries	7
No. of Provinces	6
No. of Houses	57
No. of Salesians	768

### Congregation in 1910

No. of Countries	33
No. of Provinces	34
No. of Houses	345
No. of Salesians	4000

### Congregation in 2014

No. of Countries	132
No. of Provinces	90
No. of Houses	1816
No. of Salesians	15373





## DON BOSCO: THE SAINT FOR ALL TIMES



On many occasions especially between 1859 and 1860, Don Bosco used to get hundreds of boys to form a long line in the middle of the playground. Then he would place himself at the head of the line saying: "Follow me."

He would then clap his hands in time to their steps and all those behind him imitated what he was doing, as he would sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, or move in a straight or a curve. As he did so the line formed acute angles and right angles and circles. Suddenly he could cry out, "Halt!" All the boys who had executed these odd manoeuvres behind him would come to rest, forming strange patterns that meant nothing to those who were watching. But some of the boys, who had guessed what Don Bosco was doing, would run up to the balcony of the house and could see that each group formed the shape of a letter. Together they spelt out the words: 'Long live, Pius IX'. During those years when the Papacy was constantly threatened and attacked, it was not wise to be heard shouting these words, so Don Bosco used his boys to 'write' them in the playground (BM VI, 343).

Today the desire to identify oneself with the surroundings can be a cause of disturbance to some and find an appropriate response, eluding. The above mentioned episode in the life of Don Bosco shows that Don Bosco was a traditionalist in his ideologies but a pragmatist in his approach. The spirituality based on attitudes built on convictions like 'learn to make yourself loved' and 'For you I study...' is not outdated but is a permanent value in the life of every Salesian.

'Don Bosco combined ideological conservatism with modern pragmatism.'

In a reflection given by M. Guasco, he says, "The modernity of Don Bosco did not depend on abstract analysis or ideological preferences." Stefano Pivato, reflecting on the theme of Don Bosco and the popular theatre, offers us the following insight: 'Don Bosco combined ideological conservatism with modern pragmatism'. Don Bosco's modernity consisted in making use of the contemporary and available means of communication to offer young people an age-old truth: Each one is called to be Holy.

Summing up, we remind ourselves the words of St John Paul II: Once we follow this, Don Bosco becomes not just a hero to be worshipped but we feel his presence in our today and in our tomorrow.

**Fr Thonikuzhiyil Joyce sdb (INK)**







## VISION - SALESIANS 2115!

To envision Salesians in 2115 is quite an endeavour. Besides, at 72, I am getting shortsighted. However, I venture to 'prophecy' that within the next century, the Salesian mission will certainly grow in many aspects. A greater presence of the Laity, especially young people of the nexgen, is something we can look forward to. From this perspective, the SDBs – or FMAs – would have only a minor but more important role of genuine guides as 'spiritual animators'. Furthermore, the congregation will particularly be challenged to shift from direct involvement in various fields of Salesian activity, to a more important role of empowering the various apostolic activity groups.

It could sound more like an 'illusion' than a 'vision'! But then, 200 hundred years ago, Don Bosco's vision was seen by not a few even in the ecclesial circles, more as an illusion of a dreamer.

But, if this 'prophecy' is plausible, it would imply firstly, that the carefully selected lay members of the Salesian Family be suitably trained, qualified and well-formed in Salesian Spirituality and Principles of education. Secondly, that these lay members be entrusted with increasing responsibility in the various levels of administration and management of all Salesian activities, be they educational, socio-cultural or spiritual. As for us SDBs, the challenge is to be men in 'union with God' more than merely doing the plethora of activities we are engaged in. This entails a definite need for a paradigm shift in the living out of our SDB identity in the Salesian Family and in the Salesian mission itself.

**Fr Tony D'Souza sdb (INB)**

## THE DREAM OF TEN DIAMONDS: A VISION TO THE FUTURE

Don Rinaldi calls the august personage in the dream of Don Bosco on 10 September 1881 at San Benigno Canavese as "the Model of the True Salesian". The dream which is popularly known as the dream of ten diamonds can easily be understood in three parts.



In **Scene I** the august personage portrays the ideal Salesian. The front of his mantle is adorned with five diamonds, three on the breast representing Faith, Hope and Charity, and two at shoulder level for Work and Temperance. On the back of the garment are another five diamonds: they stand for Obedience, Poverty, Reward, Chastity and Fasting.

In **Scene II** the august personage depicts the model completely debased. The mantle "is faded, moth-eaten and torn. Where the diamonds, had been, the cloth was in tatters and eaten away by grubs". This depressing scene portrays "the ruin, the antithesis of the true Salesian".

In **Scene III** there is a handsome young man of imposing and charming mien, dressed in white garments delicately worked in gold and silver thread. His message to the Salesians is to "listen, take heed and be strong and courageous; to bear witness in their words and lives, to be prudent in accepting and training the new generation, and to see to the healthy growth of the Congregation."

(Source: <http://sdl.sdb.org/cgi-bi/library>)





## IN 2115, WHERE WILL WE BE...?

Love keeps no score of wrong, and does not gloat over any sort of unpleasant happenings. Just like the love of Mamma Margaret and Don Bosco during the wandering oratory days, despite the problems caused by the boys. Perhaps this bicentenary celebration of the birth of Don Bosco is a gentle reminder for me and for all of us to introspect not into 'what we are' but 'where we are'? Don Bosco was a saint who read very well the signs of the times. Therefore, if our SPCSA invites him to grace the occasion of our unique celebrations in 2115 what would he tell his sons?

Don Bosco would surely invite each one of us to leave the security and comfort of our institutions and launch into the civilized streets and new generation youth who frequent the palatial shopping malls, social networks, theatres, games clubs and music/dance rooms to join the circle of friends and love them as they are without any pre-conditions... at the same time challenge them to be catalysts for something better. Thus in 2115 Don Bosco invites us all to become catalysts while being the signposts of humanity first and then spirituality. Thus we as his sons would be a grace rather than a threat to young people, our beneficiaries. I am sure Don Bosco will be happy with us if we are able to make this difference in 2115 with our charism and work.

**Cl. Neelam Naresh sdb (INH)**

# WE LOVE DON BOSCO



**Patience smoothes away lots of difficulties.**

**BM Vol. 3.p.100**

Once Signor Carlo Buzzetti, an architect and musician by profession, visited the oratory of Don Bosco. He was amazed to see poor boys playing music. He opened his valet and offered some money to Don Bosco. Don Bosco smiled and said, "Signor Buzzetti, what I really need right now are few men like you, I could use them more than their money."

### Don Bosco in India

- (INC) St John Bosco (Kolkata) – 28<sup>th</sup> May 1926
- (INM) St Thomas, the Apostle (Chennai) – 24<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1934
- (ING) Mary Help of Christians (Guwahati) – 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 1959
- (INB) St Francis Xavier (Mumbai) – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1972
- (INK) Sacred Heart of Jesus (Bangalore) – 19<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1979
- (IND) St Francis de Sales (Dimapur)- 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1981
- (INH) St Joseph (Hyderabad) – 24<sup>th</sup> April 1992
- (INN) Jesus the Good Shepherd (New Delhi) – 24<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1997
- (INT) Our Lady of Health (Tiruchy) – 25<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1999
- (INP) Bl. Joseph Vaz (Panjim) – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2007
- (INS) Bl. John Paul II (Silchar) – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012





## Questions to Ponder

\* The radical lifestyle and clear conviction of men and women who saw beyond their own petty personal concerns attracted followers in the past. Who then would be responsible for our future if not ourselves?

\* To how many young people have I offered the invitation to follow Christ, as a close collaborator of Don Bosco? What prevents me or why do I hesitate to invite young people to live the way of life I have chosen, professed and live?

\* Most of those who joined Don Bosco as his sons, in the initial years, were those boys who were with Don Bosco at the oratory. Do young people of our own institutions join us? Or is the vocation promoter 'hunting' for young people all over the state/country, while none of those with us are keen to join?

\* What should outlive us: Our institutions or the dream and charism of Don Bosco? If so, are our plans, policies, initiatives and endeavours in line with that?

## Answers for August 2014 Issue

1. Who was the first member after the Society started?

Ans. *Joseph Rossi*

2. Who was the first cardinal protector of the Salesian society?

Ans. *Cardinal Nina*

3. Of the five oratory boys chosen by Don Bosco, how many became Salesians?

Ans. *Two*

3. Who was the Superior of the Oratory?

Ans. *The Bishop*

5. Under whose suggestion did Don Bosco change the title 'Congregation' to 'Society'?

Ans. *Pope Pius IX*

## Witty Answers

1. Can you have a Society with just one member?

3. Did Don Bosco only choose 5 boys and neglect all the others?

4. Don Bosco, of course.

Fr Lens John sdb (INH)

## DOUBTFULLY CERTAIN!

As to what will happen after 100 years is too much to imagine, and too wild to predict. However, it is worthy a task to write about the future of the Salesian congregation to which I have dedicated my life.

One part of me spells doom! The fascination for the secular, the over-emphasis on individuality, the growing desire for comfort and ease, and the subtle elitism creeping into the Salesian lifestyle make our future bleak. In such a postmodern context, the continued existence of our congregation for another 100 years seems rather uncertain.

However, certain other facts do offer assurance. The first article of our Constitution affirms that the congregation came about as an initiative of God, through Don Bosco. And therefore, as long as there are Salesians searching for this God and seeking His will through prayer, the congregation will continue to thrive. Furthermore as long as real joy, the joy derived from being united with Christ, at the service of the young and not merely from doing things or holding portfolios, is a fact, the wellspring of our vocation is intact. Finally, so long as we treasure the poor as our real wealth, as instructed by Don Bosco himself, the congregation is not at any risk.

Therefore rather than be preoccupied with the survival of the congregation, we ought to invest our energies on being relevant signs of the times. The rest, as they say, will always be history!

Cl. Mallavarapu Anil sdb (INH)





## “YOUR FRANK OPINION . . .”

Thanks, for the forward and the good work you are all doing for the bicentenary. I believe writing affects the writer and readers more than talking affects the speaker as well as the listeners! Good to see the ‘TUGBOATS’ coming out of Karunapuram! Wish you all THE BEST! – **Fr TD John sdb**

The "Tugboats", a very attractive and impressive title, filled with inspiration and enriching captions, enlightening and thought-provoking phrases and deep thinking questions. It is a creative and novel publication. I liked it so much. It is a good initiative. Don Bosco will be happy with you and bless you from above. - **Mini Leon**

Thanks for sending in the issue of Tugboats. It is a good resource for the bicentenary, and I am circulating it to our animators. Congratulations on this initiative. And blessings on this venture. - **Fr Ajoy Fernandes sdb**

The 'Tugboats' is really good! Congratulations to you and the editorial team. It is very informative and gives food for reflection. Hope it will improve with each issue. Do congratulate all those who collaborate with the publishing. - **Fr Antony Vailatt sdb**

Congrats for the great initiative of Tugboats ...an initiative to make the bicentenary more meaningful. I read every bit of the first issue. Looking forward to the next ones. Wish you and the team all the best. Appreciate such meaningful initiatives. - **Fr George Maliekal sdb**

Excellent, I was looking for something like this to be posted on the national website for all provinces to use and benefit from. - **Fr Gilbert sdb**

Congrats for "Tugboats". I read through the entire newsletter. It gives certain insights that would lead to fruit-bearing actions. – **Fr Shibu Davis sdb**

Thank you very much for forwarding the Tugboats issue. It looks very colourful and resourceful. A wonderful initiative! May it continue and have the desired effects. Congrats for organizing this venture! **Fr Francis Vattukulam sdb**

Thanks for sending me Tugboats. Congrats to you for your initiative during the bicentenary year. I am looking forward to the forthcoming issues. Keep up your good work. - **Fr Joy Kaipan sdb**

Thanks and congratulations for your reflections: The Saint of the Young turns 200. One remark: “Why Bicentenary?” by Manu Michel, is as good as illegible: white letters on a light-grey background. For the rest: Splendid! - **Fr John Lens sdb**

Congratulations on Vol. 1 # 1 of your fine bicentennial publication! I like very much the bicentennial logo on top of pages 2, 3, and 4. Thanks in advance for your time and attention. - **Fr Mark Hyde sdb**

It is a good initiative. There are several initiatives, small or big, from different confreres all over the world. It will definitely do some good. In envisioning the monthly, it is good to see in front of us the target group. - **Fr KO Thomas sdb**

I had a look at the Tugboat. Looks good. Congrats on the venture and I am sure it will prove very beneficial during this bicentenary Year. - **Fr Thomas Anchukandam sdb**

Layout: Liju Joseph

“ . . . OUR SINCERE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT”

Topic for the Next Issue:  
Formation, Leading to Transformation: Reality or Hypothesis?

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