



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far





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Nov. 30 - Dec. 8:

*Novena to the Immaculate Conception

Dec. 5: Bl. Philip Rinaldi, SDB

Dec. 9: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Dec. 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe

Dec. 16-24: Christmas Novena

Dec. 15: Deadline to register for the

Salesian Family Spirituality Days in Turin, Italy

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve

Dec. 25: Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
Christmas Day

Dec. 28: Last day to register for
St. John Bosco's Salesian Family History
and Animation Course, Pt. II

Dec. 29: Feast of the Holy Family

Dec. 31: New Year's Eve

**Due to the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception being December 9 this year*



Have an article you'd like featured in *Salesian Family Snippets*? Send it to us!

communications@salesians.org

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Fr. Stefano Martoglio, SDB, with a portrait of Don Bosco behind him
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

A Big Heart like the Shores of the Sea

A new time is given to us: from the Heart of God to the heart of humanity,
mirrored in the great heart of Don Bosco

FR. STEFANO MARTOGLIO, SDB

Dear friends and readers, in this December issue I address you with my best wishes for a new year! We find ourselves in a new time that is given to us to live with intensity and with "newness of life," which I make my own, as a propitious and opportune wish. I am speaking of the gift that the Holy Father has given us in recent days: his encyclical letter *Dilexit Nos* on the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus Christ.

We Salesians are used to singing: "God has given you a heart as big /as the sands of the sea./God has given you His Spirit:/He has set your love free."

Pope Pius XI, who knew him well, said that Don Bosco had a "beautiful peculiarity": he was "a great lover of souls" and saw them "in the thoughts, in the Heart, in the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." Indeed, in the coat-of-arms of our Congregation there is a burning heart.

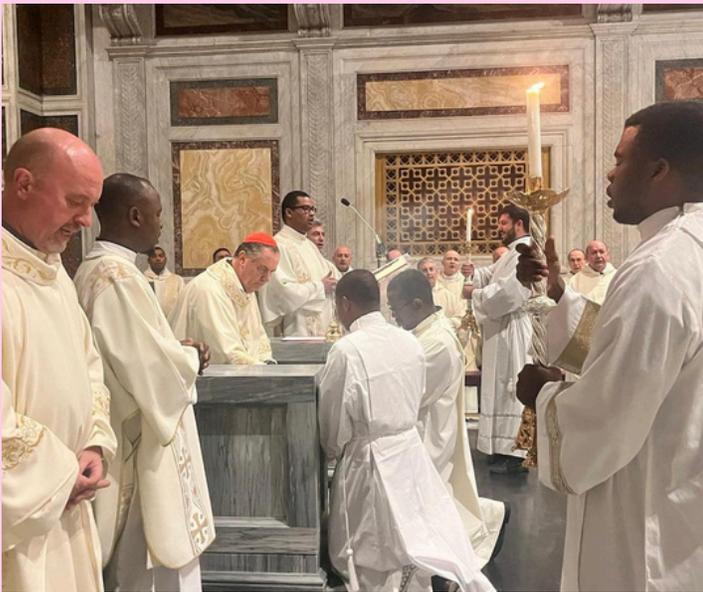
Pope Francis introduces paragraph no. 2 of *Dilexit Nos* in this way: "The symbol of the heart has often been used to express the love of Jesus Christ. Some have questioned whether this symbol is still meaningful today. Yet living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart."

How strong is this teaching of our Pope to show us a new way of living, in a new time that is given to us, the year to come.



In no. twenty-one, Pope Francis writes: "This profound core, present in every man and woman, is not that of the soul, but of the entire person in his or her unique psychosomatic identity. Everything finds its unity in the heart, which can be the dwelling-place of love in all its spiritual, psychic and even physical dimensions. In a word, if love reigns in our heart, we become, in a complete and luminous way, the persons we are meant to be, for every human being is created above all else for love. In the deepest fiber of our being, we were made to love and to be loved." And he adds in number twenty-seven of the same encyclical letter: "Before the heart of Jesus, living and present, our mind, enlightened by the Spirit, grows in the understanding of his words and our will is moved to put them into practice. This could easily remain on the level of a kind of self-reliant moralism. Hearing and tasting the Lord, and paying him due honor, however, is a matter of the heart. Only the heart is capable of setting our other powers and passions, and our entire person, in a stance of reverence and loving obedience before the Lord."

I will not dwell on this any longer, hoping to have piqued your interest to read this splendid encyclical letter which is not only



Fr. Stefano Martoglio, SDB (right), and Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, during the liturgical memorial of Saint Artemides Zatti celebrated in Rome
 Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

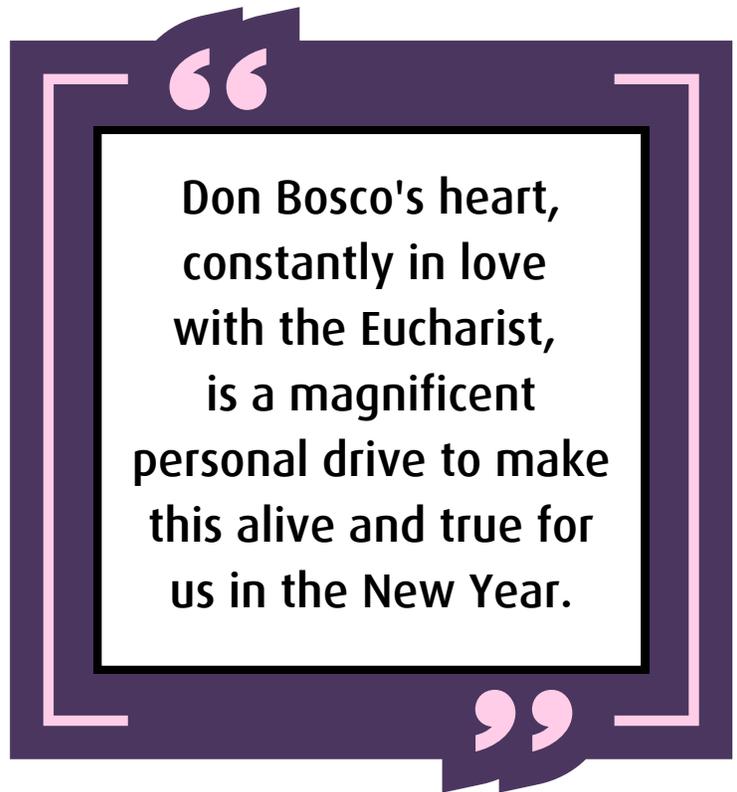
a great gift to live in a new way the time that is given to us, which would already be enough, but it also gives us a profoundly "Salesian" quality: Don Bosco wrote and did much to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the divine Love that accompanies our human reality.

A magnificent incentive

In the *Biographical Memoirs*, volume VIII, 119, we find the following written: "A most ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus animated all his activities and rendered his familiar talks fruitful and his sermons and priestly ministry persuasive. Seemingly, the Sacred Heart helped him also by special charisms as he went about his arduous mission."

The testimony of Don Bosco's devotion to the Sacred Heart is "concretely" identified with the basilica of the same name built by Don Bosco in Rome at the request of the Pope of the time. The material building refers and recalls all of us to Don Bosco's "monumental" devotion to the Sacred Heart. As for our Lady, so also for the Sacred Heart, Don Bosco's devotion is manifested in the churches he built because devotion to the Sacred Heart is ultimately devotion to the Eucharist and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Don Bosco's heart, constantly in love with the Eucharist, is a magnificent personal drive to make this alive and true for us in the New Year. This is a true and deep wish for a happy new year lived to the fullest. As the song continues: "You formed men / with healthy and strong hearts: / you sent them out into the world to proclaim / the Gospel of joy."



I would like to conclude this brief message by wishing everyone a happy new year from the bottom of my heart, with the image that Pope Francis reports in the first pages of the encyclical, referring to the teachings of his grandmother on the meaning of the name of carnival sweets, the "bugie"*[1]... because during cooking the dough swells and remains empty... therefore it has an exteriority to which corresponds an emptiness inside; they seem big from the outside but they are not, they are "bugie."

May the New Year be full and rich in substance for all of us, concretized in welcoming our God who comes among us. May His coming bring peace and truth—that what is seen from the outside corresponds to what is inside!

Best wishes to all of you!
 Fr. Martoglio



[1] "Bugie," also known as cenci di Carnevale, chiacchiere, crostoli, and bugie are Italian fried pastries, often called "elephant ears" in English. The term used in the Vicar's article refers to the Italian "bugie" which is translated as "lies."



*(first photo) The second major conference of the ADMA International Congress held in Fatima | (second photo) Fr. Andrea Bozzolo during his talk
Courtesy of ADMA IX International Congress's Facebook*

A Theological Reading of Don Bosco's Dream at Nine Years Old

BY FR. JOHN PUNTINO, SDB

The second major conference of the ADMA International Congress, held in Fatima from August 29 to September 1, 2024, was given by Rector Magnificus of Salesian Pontifical University in Rome Fr. Andrea Bozzolo. He analyzed Don Bosco's dream when he was nine years old.

The dream has become a most effective symbol and synthesis of the Salesian charism as it constitutes the elements of the Salesian vocation. It was Don Bosco's life-long point of reference. He says it repeated itself in ever clearer terms; on his home visit after ordination he connects the place of the dream with the ways of Divine Providence; in 1887 he sheds tears of consolation at the altar of Mary Help of Christians in Rome, sensing the fulfillment of Mary's words that he would understand the dream in due time.

The Oratorian Mission

Young people are present throughout the dream as the beneficiaries. They are cheerful and playful, disordered and negative. The Divine Man exercises an authority that brings peace and that points Johnny Bosco to gentleness and charity. The central character of the dream that gives meaning to his life is the movement between the young people and our Lord. "The encounter between the vulnerability of young people and the power of the Lord, between their need for salvation and his offer of grace, between their desire for joy and his gift of life, must now become the centre of his thoughts, the space of his identity," Fr. Bozzolo states.

In the dream, Johnny Bosco also experiences this dynamism. He goes from fighting to the one who calls him by name and is sent back to become head of his companions.

The dream illustrates and symbolizes the elements of the Oratorian mission. It takes place in a field, the place where young people live and play, and it was close to home. Johnny's mission is educational and catechetical: "teach them the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue." It calls for conversion, not just self-development.

Christ in the courtyard "summarizes the dynamics of the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Son takes our bodily nature in order to offer us his, and highlights how nothing human needs to be sacrificed to make room for God."

The Call to Do the Impossible

The dream gives Don Bosco his vocation to teach young people that holiness consists in being very happy, but it ends with him confused and in tears. Fr. Bozzolo interprets this as a sign that Don Bosco will suffer demanding spiritual battles so that young people can experience the joy and beauty of grace. He sees this pattern in the life of Mary, perplexed at the words of the Angel (Luke 1:29), the experiences of the Prophets and even in the encounter of St. Paul with our Lord on the road to Damascus.

“While they witness to the attraction of an encounter with God that totally seduces them, biblical men and women, at the moment of their call, seem to hesitate, afraid as they are of something that overwhelms them, rather than throw themselves headlong into the adventure of the mission.”

Given that Johnny Bosco was gifted with leadership qualities and excellent physical and mental abilities, what was impossible goes beyond the natural. It is the humanly impossible, such as the Virgin conception of the Son of God, that God will make possible. The ultimate impossible becoming possible takes place in the overcoming of sin and death in the resurrection of the Son. “It is here that the dignified man of the dream, resplendent with Easter light, asks John to make the impossible possible,” and through obedience, just as the Son was obedient to the Father even to death on the Cross (see Phil. 2:8).

The dream carries throughout the dialectic of possible and impossible, clarity and obscurity. “A divine light shines from the face [of the Man] that paradoxically produces darkness.” The clear explanation of his mission leaves Johnny confused and frightened. He did not know the meaning of the change of wild animals into lambs.

To set out in obedience on a seemingly impossible adventure is the essence of living by faith.

The Mystery of the Name

Three times Johnny Bosco asks the Man about his name. Though the Man tells him to ask his mother, she, in fact, does not mention his name.

Fr. Bozzolo refers to the revelation of God’s name to Moses in the burning bush passage as oriented toward covenant and mission.

God is known through a personal relationship with him and the mission he gives. The fullest revelation of God’s name comes with Jesus, who through obedience to death on the Cross, has received “the name above every other name” (Phil 2:9).

In the Gospels, the disciples come to know Jesus by coming, seeing and abiding with him. “God reveals his truth only when it is sealed with an experience of covenant and mission.” Johnny Bosco will come to know the Divine Man’s name by carrying out the Oratorian mission that the Man gives him, by uniting himself to the Man so much that others would experience the Saviour’s love for children through him.

Maternal Mediation

The Man in the dream mentions both his mother and Johnny’s mother. Mary corresponds to the Man’s light more than any other human person, and she brings that Light into the world through the Incarnation. Mamma Margaret is the one who best understands Johnny’s dream.

“John discovers that at the school of his mother he has already established a bond with the stately Woman who can explain everything to him.... This feminine, Marian and maternal mediation [of bringing Johnny closer to the Man] would accompany John throughout his life and would mature in him as a particular disposition to venerate the Virgin under the title of Help of Christians, and to become her apostle for her children and for the whole Church.”

If Johnny’s mission is to do the impossible in the darkness of faith, Mary his teacher first learned this art. In the finding in the Temple, she and Joseph did not understand Jesus’ reply that he must be in his Father’s house. She heard Jesus say that whoever does the Father’s will is his brother, sister

and mother. At the foot of the Cross, “the ‘Here I am’ that she pronounced at the first moment of her call, took the form of extreme renunciation, namely, the separation from her Son in whose place she was to receive sinful children for whom she was to let a sword pierce her heart.”

Made the mother of every disciple at the foot of the Cross, Mary places her hand on Johnny’s head, and there he will remain throughout his life as she, “the Virgin of Pentecost and the Immaculate Model of the Church,” teaches him. He must become humble in spirit, strong in character and physically energetic, developing the Preventive System.



The Strength of Gentleness

In telling Johnny to use gentleness and love in taking charge of the young persons, the Dignified Man reorients the way he is to lead them. “The heat and passion behind the use of his fists must become the driving force of love, and the disjointed energy of repressive intervention must make room for gentleness.” The educator must first take on the gentleness of the Man and Woman if the young are to become as gentle as lambs around Jesus and Mary.

As Don Bosco carries out his mission, he develops this gentleness and love into a method, the Preventive System. In excluding repression and punishment, he follows St. Paul’s teaching that the law does not save, but faith, not flesh but Spirit. His method rests on the virtue of charity, which is patient and kind, that bears, hopes, endures (see 1 Cor. 13:4.7).

This is the gentleness and love of Jesus and the Kingdom of God, who enters Jerusalem on a donkey, “the Messiah who does not conquer people with arms and armies but through the gentle strength of truth and love alone.” He is the gentle Paschal Lamb.

Denouncing the ugliness of sin and presenting the value of virtue using loving-kindness, that is, gentleness and love, makes Don Bosco’s educational method “a true and proper spirituality.”

In telling the dream it is as if Don Bosco is telling his Salesian family, “It is God himself who has always been our guide, it is he who started the initial movement of what would become the Salesian charism.”



(from left to right) Dr. Pinedo, Ms. Sanchez, Fr. Mairura, Fr. Stawowy, Fr. Conway, Fr. Moral, Bro. Muller, and Fr. Maravilla
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

The Congregation’s Mission Offices at the Service of Don Bosco’s Charism

EDITED BY FR. MIKE MENDL, SDB,
FROM ANS REPORT

(ANS – New Rochelle – November 15, 2024) – Fr. Alfred Maravilla, general councilor for the missions, convened the directors of the four congregation-level mission offices in New Rochelle, November 12-13. Dr. Nelson Pinedo (Don Bosco Mission Bonn); Fr. Luis Manuel Moral Lamela and Paula Alvarez-Naveiro Sanchez (Misiones Salesianas, based in Madrid); Fr. Michael Conway and Fr. Gabriel Stawowy (Salesian Missions, New Rochelle) were present. Bro. Jean Paul Muller, treasurer general, was also present. A representative of Missioni Don Bosco in Turin was unavailable.

This meeting looked at issues addressed at the previous meeting, January 2023 in Turin, focusing on the identity of the four mission offices at the congregational level (R. 24). Fr. Eric Mairura, from the Salesian Missions Department in Rome, moderated the discussion, which focused on the importance of the identity of the mission offices as an expression of the charism of Don Bosco at the service of the charism.

The reflections also stressed that the primary purpose of the mission offices is to be at the service of the Rector Major, organizing initiatives to generate interest in the Church and in society on the missionary commitment of the Salesians of Don Bosco; and then to promote and maintain this commitment, supporting the needs of evangelizing activity and the integral development of the Congregation and new missionary presences.

Each mission office has its own historical development in response to the needs of the missionary activities of the Congregation. “Unfortunately, due to historical circumstances, the mission offices have been seen by many, above all, as an inexhaustible source of funds. This is a distorted and incomplete vision of the mission office,” Fr. Maravilla said. “The mission office is a form of Salesian ministry that makes known the missionary activities of the Congregation and takes a pastoral approach for people who share their resources for the missionary activities of the Congregation regardless of their religious affiliation, so that they can have a spiritual perspective, come closer to God, and be in new spiritual communion with the wider human family,” he added.

Discussion also revolved around how the four mission offices can better coordinate the help provided to the provinces through the Rector Major’s distribution of funds; how to agree on common criteria in responding to direct requests for project funding from the provinces; and how to promote the development of the province mission offices.

The next meeting will be in June 2025 in Rome, where the procurators will also be able to meet the new rector major and the members of the general council, who will be elected in March.



Salesian Family Events



Salesian Family Formation Opportunity

St. John Bosco's Salesian Family History & Animation
A three-part hybrid series 2024-2025

Venue: OLV Orange NJ

8:30am - 4:30pm

Part I: History
FINISHED! RECORDINGS SOON ONLINE!
Oct 26 & 27, 2024

Part II: Animation
Jan. 3 & 4, 2025 *Date Change!*

For details & to register: click here

Next Session: March 2025



Promotional image for the Salesian Family Course
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA

Salesian Family Course

Animation of the Salesian Family

When: January 3-4, 2025

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Place: Orange, NJ, and Online

All from the Salesian Family Groups are welcome to attend.

Note: You did not have to participate in Part One of The History of the Salesian Family to attend Part II in January.

Register here!



Join Us in Praying

the Immaculate Conception Novena

Begin: Saturday, November 30

End: Sunday, December 8

As we enter the Advent season, let's kick it off with the Immaculate Conception Novena starting on Saturday, November 30.

*Explore this entire blog page on Marian devotion,
which comes in multiple languages!*

Note: It starts a day later since this year's Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been moved to Monday, December 9, because December 8, will be the Second Sunday of Advent.



FAMIGLIA SALESIANA

Salesian Family Tree
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

Let's Come Together

for the Salesian Family Spirituality Days 2025

When: January 16-19, 2025

Place: Turin, Italy, and online

The objective of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days (SFSD) 2025 will therefore be to explore the Strenna's message for the new year:

"Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people." The Strenna proposes, that is, to live the pilgrimage to Christ Jesus, the hope that does not disappoint, proposed by Pope Francis for the jubilee Year, and to walk with young people, with the apostolic passion of Don Bosco.

Planning to attend?

Contact Andrea Zimmerman at andreazimm36@gmail.com.

**Register here by
December 15, 2024!**



Italian



English



French



Spanish



Portuguese

Note: Registration is available in any of the above five languages.



Watch Br. Dominic Nguyen's Talk on the Dream of the Two Columns

Date Given: Saturday, November 16

Duration of Talk: 1 hour and 58 minutes

Dive into the talk of the world delegate of the Salesian Cooperators and SDB Past Pupils, Br. Dominic Nguyen, SDB, on Don Bosco's Dream of the Two Columns, given this past Saturday. His talk begins about twenty minutes in.



Tune into the Final Phase of the Synod on Synodality

In October, bishops from around the world met in Rome for the final phase of the Synod on Synodality. In this three-part video series, Dr. DeClue explains the theme of the Synod on Synodality in light of Vatican II and Church Tradition.

Learn how to engage in intelligent conversations about the Synod and how to contribute to the Church's mission.

Watch on Facebook!



Watch here!



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Strenna 2025

"Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people"



Maria Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis!

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more
online!**



Let Us Be Signs of Hope
for young people and their families in Bethlehem

