

Canada and Eastern USA



# Salesian Family Snippets



*News of the Salesian Family Near and Far*







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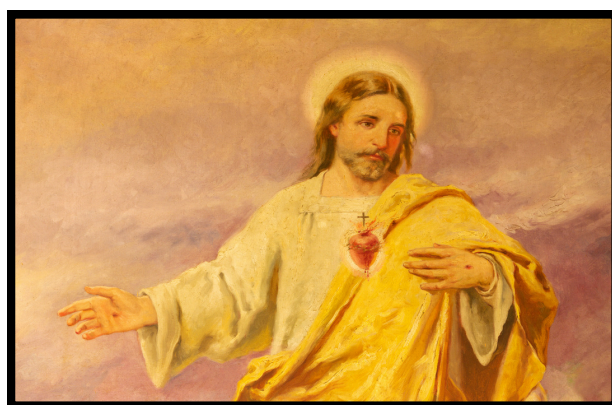
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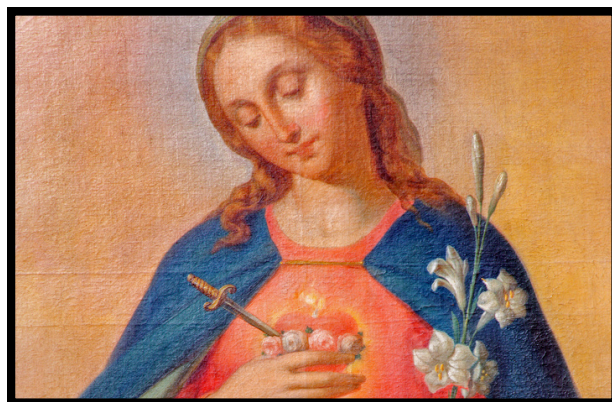
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*The painting of Sacred Heart of Jesus in the church  
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 Courtesy of sedmak from Getty Images*



*Trnava Heart of Virgin Mary  
 Courtesy of Courtesy of sedmak from Getty Images*



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*Don Ángel blesses a woman in Palabek, Uganda.  
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

## **WHEN AN EDUCATOR TOUCHES HIS CHILDREN'S HEART —OR THE ART OF BEING LIKE DON BOSCO**

The art of being like Don Bosco: “Remember that education is a matter of the heart, of which God alone is the master, and that we can achieve nothing unless God teaches us the art and hands us the key”  
(*The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco*, XVI, 376).

THE MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

My dear friends, readers of the *Salesian Bulletin*, and friends of Don Bosco's charism,

I'm writing you this greeting, I'd say, almost as a live stream, before it goes to print. I say this because I experienced the scene I'm going to tell you about only four hours ago.



I recently arrived in Lubumbashi. For ten days prior, I'd already visited very significant Salesian presences such as the displaced and refugee population of PALABEK, Uganda. These people are living in much more humane conditions today than when they first came to us, thank God. From Uganda, I went to the region of Goma in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a place struggling under a difficult situation. There, the Salesian presences are full of life. A number of times, I observed that my heart was “touched”; that is, moved at seeing the good that's being done and that God's presence is so strong there, even in the midst of very great poverty. Still, my heart was touched with pain and sadness when I met some of the 32,000 people (mostly the elderly, women, and children) who have been welcomed and taken in on the grounds of the Salesian presence of Don Bosco-Gangi. I'll speak about this next time because I need to let it rest on my heart for a while.

Right now, I wish to refer only to one beautiful scene I witnessed on the flight that brought us to Lubumbashi. It was a non-commercial flight in a medium-sized plane. I didn't know the flight captain but the local Salesians did. When I greeted him on the plane, he told me that he'd studied vocational training at our school here in Goma. He told me that those were years that changed his life, then added something else, speaking to me and to all of us: “And here's someone who's been a ‘father’ for us.” In African culture, when you say someone is “a father,” you're paying the greatest compliment possible. Not infrequently, though, this father is not the biological father to a son or daughter but the one who has really cared for him, supported him, and accompanied him.

This captain is a man about 45 years old; his son, already a young pilot, was accompanying him on the flight. To whom was he referring? To one of our Salesian coadjutor brothers, that is, not a priest but a consecrated layman, as Don Bosco conceived the Salesians. That Salesian brother, a missionary from Spain, Br. Honorato, has been a missionary in the Goma area for more than forty years. Together with the other Salesians, of course, he did everything possible to make such a vocational training





*Cardinal Ángel with young people in Palabek, Uganda  
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

school—as well as many other things—a reality. He came to know the captain and some of his friends when they were just kids—hundreds and hundreds of boys. In fact, the captain told me that four of his companions, who were practically street kids in those years, were able to study mechanics in Don Bosco’s house and today are engineers in charge of the mechanical and technical maintenance of their company’s small planes.

Well, when I heard the captain, a former Salesian student, say that Br. Honorato had been his father, the father of all of them, I was deeply moved. It made me think of Don Bosco, whom his boys considered their father.



I thought, “How true it is that education is a thing of the heart.” It just confirmed my conviction that our presence among boys, girls, and youths is for us almost a “sacrament” through which we, too, reach God. That’s why I’ve spoken with such passion and conviction in recent years to my Salesian confreres and to the Salesian Family about the **Salesian “sacrament of presence.”**

I know that in the Salesian world, in our Family throughout the world, among our brothers and sisters, there are many fathers and many *mothers* who, with their presence and affection and their ability to educate, reach the hearts of young people, who need so much today. Indeed, I would say more and more that they need these presences that can change a life for the better.

Greetings from Africa—and every blessing of the Lord to you, friends of the Salesian charism.

Blessings,  
Cardinal Ángel

“  
In African culture,  
when you say  
someone is “a  
father,” you’re  
paying the  
greatest  
compliment  
possible.  
”





*Embodying the spirit of Don Bosco, Pre-novice Nicholas Jandernoa juggles with a young person, while the faithful venerate the Blessed Sacrament in the Marian Shrine chapel.  
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

## What a Wonderful World When We Live the Dream

BY SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA

Family and friends, Our Lord, St. Joseph, and Our Lady, our Holy Faith which unites us all, both with and in Him and His Love, a beautiful, crisp, clear, sunny, mild, joy-filled, and peaceful day. What more could one ask for? As I reflect on the words of Sachmo’s song and gaze on the photos from our celebration in honor of Mary Help of Christians on Saturday, May 25, at our Marian Shrine in Stony Point, NY, I cannot but smile. The love, the joy, the happiness, and the friendship all shine forth. I also cannot help but think how blessed we are to belong to this wonderful Family of St. John Bosco, immersed in our Holy Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. Even when I think that there were those among us on that day, faith-filled friends, who were suffering from the loss of a loved one, or the news about a painful diagnosis or struggles of a loved one or that there are so many in our world who do not know Christ, I still know that Louis Armstrong is right! It is a wonderful world!

Thinking back on our time outside the Becchi house, with children playing and laughing, friends meeting and sharing embraces and catching up since the last time they were together, young Salesian families introducing their little ones to the larger Salesian world, and the numerous Salesian Family members all pitching in wherever and however needed, my mind and heart fly immediately to one sacred night. It was somewhere in the winter between 1824-1825 that Heaven and Earth met when a little nine-year-old boy from a very poor farming family, a fourth grader in our world, encountered Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother in a dream—a dream

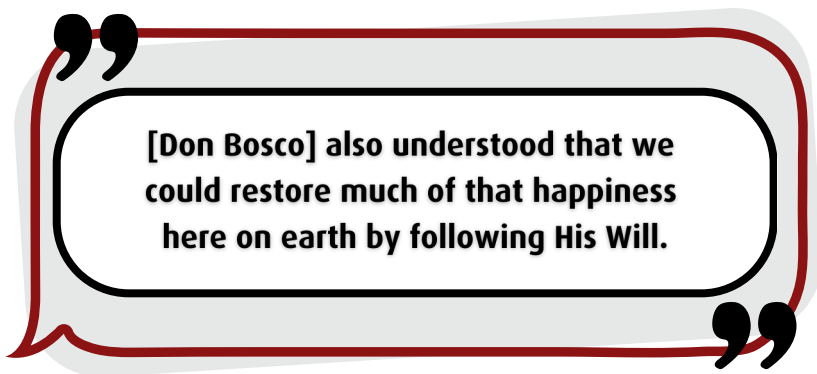
that would set the course of his life, taking him very far from that farming life, and making this day possible.

Little Johnny Bosco could never get that dream out of his head though he says he was of the same opinion as his grandma, not to pay attention to dreams. Still, his heart beat for mission and his mom spoke the inner longing of his heart when he asked what she thought the dream meant: “Who knows? Maybe one day you will be a Priest.” A Priest! Yes! Despite poverty, inability to go to school, the death of his father, and the resistance of his older half-brother Anthony. Yes! Trusting in Our Lord and Our Lady, he felt called to bring our Faith to people right then and there so he set about learning all the magic tricks and acquiring all the acrobatic skills he could by going to fairs to observe the professionals. These forms of entertainment would assure him a crowd of people of all generations who would gather around him for the fun so he could take them from there to the contemplation of the eternal Truths along with teaching them how to pray devoutly and constantly.

This desire, these efforts, his long-suffering all sprang from his understanding that God the Father had a beautiful life planned for us all and that we messed it up. But he also understood that we could restore much of that happiness here on earth by

following His Will. Certainly, little John's wisdom well exceeded his years. This is why Our Lord and His Blessed Mother could choose him to commission him to go forth and to teach his peers and even adults with kindness and gentleness so he could instruct them in the Faith and help them be good. It seems to me that he shared Mr. Armstrong's belief about the world and he would do all he could to help everyone know that, too, and know why it is wonderful. This he would do despite the struggles and resistance with which he met and even despite the resistance from the "wolves" among the very people he was seeking to instruct. His firm beliefs that "there is a point accessible to good" in everyone's heart, that the world is more and more wonderful when we follow God's Commandments and we root out the cause of all the problems from our hearts—sin—kept him going despite all odds.

Even if only in incipient form, the recreation, the instruction, the practices of piety, and the coming together with friends and neighbors, show the teachings of that dream, which we have come to codify as "Oratory," "Preventive System," and "Family Spirit." We can look to Don Bosco and realize that these three hallmarks of his charisma and mission are not merely pedagogical strategies to be employed with students in our classrooms. No, they are our Salesian Spirituality that must characterize our very life and daily living. They are for adults, young adults, parents, families, grandparents, Community members, children, teens, teachers, carpenters, astronauts, and Salesian Family Groups—in a word, everyone—to live personally and with each other. The Oratory is not just a place for kids! When we understand that clearly, we grasp what Don Bosco always wanted us to be and live — Christians fully alive, fully involved in the mission given us at our Baptism, fully in communion with the Trinity, the Angels,



Saints, Souls in Purgatory, and with each other, fully co-responsible and united in one heart and soul with the entire Church and Her Magisterium. Then we will display our Oratorian hearts, living the Preventive System and Salesian Family Spirit at every moment of our lives with everyone.

So it was at our Marian Shrine Feast Day celebrations in honor of Mary Help of Christians, our model and teacher: we lived "church" in all our practices of piety and reception of the Sacraments; we lived "school" when listening to and sharing on the messages given in the witness talks and homily; we lived "playground" when enjoying the magic show, the juggling, the street fair games, and concessions; and we lived "home" when sharing our meal and comforting those suffering among us. In fact, these four are also inseparable. We have delineated them here for the sake of ease in re-telling but one cannot live church without living home, school, and playground contemporaneously and so it goes for the others. How grateful we must be to Don Bosco and Our Lady, the Help of Christians! Undoubtedly, they were gazing down upon us and smiling broadly knowing we brought to life, yet again, the Oratory. Indeed, it was no accident that the street fair, the magic act, the bounce house, the carnival games, the toys—ones that the children of Piedmont would have enjoyed in Don Bosco's day—and the concessions were all placed outside the Becchi House. No, they were all meant to remind us of

the Dream that spurred on little Johnny to attend those county fairs to gain the skills that would make his neighbors want to gather for his shows—and to push on despite all odds—to realize his dream of becoming a Priest to win all souls to God, changing those "wolves" into "lambs."

But the story does not end here! Two hundred years later, this memorial, this anniversary of the Dream at Age Nine is for us a call to renew our own Salesian commitment to live and share this great gift—the Salesian Charism and all its riches—with everyone: young and old, healthy and ill, happy and suffering, believers and non-believers, friends and enemies. Let us continue gathering as Family to form and be formed, animate and be animated, celebrate and be celebrated, educate and be educated, catechize and be catechized together so as to achieve the ultimate goal of living our Salesian Mission together in outreach to the poor, especially poor youth and their families, to bring them to Christ with and through Mary. Come! Let us live the Dream together to create of this wonderful world one huge Oratory—just the way the Father meant it to be from all eternity!

Mary Help of Christians, St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello, and St. Joseph, pray for us!





*A family at this year's Mary Help of Christians Day and the crowning of the statue of Mary at the Marian Shrine in Stony Point, NY.  
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

## Honoring Our Heavenly Mother Mary Help of Christians Day 2024

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB

Anyone familiar with Don Bosco's Salesian Family around the world will know that May is the month of Mary, Our Immaculate Help of Christians. Those who keep up with media posts and social communications are aware of the many of pilgrimages undertaken by Salesian Family groups to give honor to Mary during her month. Don Bosco's followers have gathered as provinces, nations, regions, and local presences to give Mary honor as our Mother and Help.

Large gatherings of Salesian Family members and Church faithful figure highly in these celebrations. When it comes to Mary as our heavenly Mother, it is only fitting that we have a family reunion of all her children! Large numbers of Salesian Family members make it a point to clear their family calendars to be with Mary and her Salesian Family. As with any family reunion, a "welcome home" to all—both old and new—is an important part of being Mary's sons and daughters.

Don Bosco's followers are all aware of the worldwide celebration of Mary Help of Christians in the site of her founding presence in Valdocco and the Basilica which is the center of her devotion for the entire Salesian Family. In the past few weeks, large Salesian Family gatherings have taken place in Mary's famous shrines (Fatima, Knock, Lourdes, Guadalupe, Czestochowa), in far-away places such as Phnom Penh, Lubumbashi, Parañaque City, and Bombay. From all over the world, the Salesian Family could be heard, as one, cheering "Viva Maria" in their own languages!

This worldwide witness is a clear indication that these large public expressions of our filial devotion to Mary Help of Christians is deeply embedded in our Salesian Family DNA. Visioning, planning, coordinating, and taking an active part in these communal celebrations of Mary's Feast as Help of Christians are essential parts of who we are as Don Bosco's followers. These gatherings are also opportunities for us to *spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians* beyond our limited numbers to build toward the "vast movement" of people devoted to Mary Help of Christians who have a passion for helping young people most at risk to grow in holiness and human virtue.

In the Salesian Province of St. Philip, the Apostle/St. Joseph, the Salesian Family gathered in local presences across the length and breadth of our lands. Some local celebrations took a more regional approach (e.g., Tampa and Chicago). On Saturday, May 25, the Salesian Family in the Northeast US celebrated the largest of these gatherings at the Marian Shrine (Stony Point, NY). Approximately 180 of Don Bosco's followers joined in a day of prayer, reflection, sharing, formation, and childlike fun. The Lord blessed our gathering with a beautiful day for all Salesian Family members to honor Mary, the Help of Christians. The theme of the day was that of the Rector Major's Strenna: "The Dream that Makes You Dream." In the spirit of a family

reunion, Salesian Family members (Salesian Cooperators, FMAs, SDBs, past pupils), families connected with Salesian presences in schools, parishes and youth centers, and friends of the Marian Shrine came together to reflect on Don Bosco's dream at age nine. We were pleased to welcome a large number of parishioners from Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Orange, NJ, and some faithful devotees from our former Salesian parish and school on 12th Street in Manhattan. The day was spent celebrating Don Bosco's inaugural dream at age nine when he received the Lord's call to serve the young most in need and to establish a family of men and women who would seek holiness in a life of pastoral charity after the teaching and example of St. Francis de Sales. The Sacrament of Penance was an important part of the day.

After a short time getting to know one another, the assembly reflected on witness talks by Pat Sobel (Salesian Cooperator), Br. Pascal Mukuye, SDB, and Fr. Miguel Suarez, SDB. The pilgrims joined with the Shrine devotees in the Mass of Mary Help of Christians that included the induction of two Salesian Cooperators from Newton, NJ into the Salesian Family. We were pleased to welcome Leonor R. and Eduardo T. Aquino as newly promised Salesian Cooperators!

The afternoon was spent enjoying a "street fair" in front of the Becchi House. In addition to carnival-style treats, family members of all ages took their turn with games that the young Don Bosco would have played at the time of Our Lady's appearance. It was good to see young and older taking up a few of Don Bosco's tricks with his companions to gather them for his catechism lessons on Sunday mornings after Mass. A Don Bosco look-alike, Pre-novice Nicholas Jandernoa, demonstrated juggling dressed in cassock and biretta. Those more adventurous tried



*Collage of pics from this year's Mary Help of Christians Day  
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

out their Don Bosco "high wire" skills with mixed results. We were blessed to see the Becchi House, vacant for so many years, come alive as an Oratory in the same spirit as when Don Bosco had his dream at age nine. Confessions and a period of Eucharistic Adoration started off the afternoon.

The day concluded with a Rosary Procession and the crowning of the Our Lady of the Rosary statue by Br. Pascal Mukuye, SDB, and Novice Sr. Natalie Doummar. After a Good Night by Sr. Colleen Clair, FMA, and the Blessing of Mary Help of Christians by Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, the whole Salesian Family sang the hymn, Immaculate Mary, looking up at the image of Mary, our Help,

crowned as Queen of Heaven. We are grateful to the Marian Day Festival core team for their planning and hard work putting the day together (Andrea Zimmerman, Vito Delzotto, Shannon Whitmore). We are grateful as well to Denise and Rob Dunn, Nick Magrogan, and Salesian Family members from Orange, Newton, and Stony Point. Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA, and Fr. Tom Dunne, SDB, coordinators of the day, are grateful to Fr. Manny Gallo, SDB, Shrine Coordinator and his staff for the welcome and assistance in making this Mary Help of Christians Day an experience of Salesian charism.





*Bl. Carlo Acutis and Giuseppe Allamano  
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

## **Bl. Carlo Acutis and Giuseppe Allamano** to Be Declared Saints

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON [WWW.INFOANS.ORG](http://WWW.INFOANS.ORG), 05/24/2024

**(ANS – Vatican City)** – In the audience granted on Thursday, May 23, to Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, Pope Francis approved the decrees leading to the canonization of Bl. Carlo Acutis, a young lay faithful born May 3, 1991, in London (England) and died on October 12, 2006, in Monza (Italy); and Fr. Giuseppe Allamano, founding priest of the Institute of Missions of the Consolata, born in Castelnuovo Don Bosco (Italy) on January 21, 1851 and died in Turin (Italy) on February 16, 1926.

Perhaps for many it was already the case but now it has arrived “officially” that Carlo Acutis, already predicted by many as the future “patron saint of the Internet”, will become a saint. Dying at just fifteen, he was a believer; not as lukewarm as one might think for a boy his age. He believed in God deeply and sincerely. “The Eucharist is my highway to Heaven” the young man often said, thus giving a profound testimony of his faith. At the age of fifteen, Carlo Acutis has already completed the stages of what it means to have faith, to love the Church and the poor and had expressed his creativity on the web to leave a message—with his exhibition on Eucharistic miracles—that does not fade away by getting lost like many algorithms. The young man, in fact, was struck down by full-blown leukaemia in 2006. In cases like this, discouragement and fear are the feelings that usually prevail in an individual. But not in his case. Because he was a believer until the end, without any hesitation. And not just in words. Because Carlo didn't forget the least. His life was that of a normal teenager but at the same time

he helped the poor and did not forget to go to Mass every day. The young man was particularly devoted to Our Lady and Saint Francis.

Pope Francis beatified him in 2020, in Assisi, where he now lies, a destination for endless pilgrimages. And this is where the extraordinary story of the miracle that will lead to Carlo's canonization began. Among the many pilgrims at the tomb, on July 8, 2022, on a Friday, was a woman, Liliana, from Costa Rica. She knelt there, prayed, and left a letter, words of hope that expressed the worst anguish for a mother. Six days earlier, on July 2, her daughter fell from her bike one night while returning home to Florence, where she had been studying since 2018. The news from Careggi Hospital was crushing. Very severe head trauma, craniotomy surgery, removal of the right occipital bone to decrease pressure, almost no hope of survival. On July 2, Liliana's secretary began to pray to Blessed Carlo Acutis, and on July 8, Liliana herself went to Assisi. That same day the hospital said that Valeria had resumed breathing spontaneously, the next day she began moving and partially speaking. From there on this was one of those cases where medical protocols were set aside. On July 18, the CT scan showed that the hemorrhage had disappeared and on August 11, she was transferred for rehabilitation therapy, but after only a week it was clear that complete recovery was one step away.

On September 2, mother and daughter were again in Assisi at Carlo's tomb to say thank you.

At the same time, the Holy Father also authorised the canonisation of Blessed Giuseppe Allamano: a fellow citizen of Don Bosco, having also been born in Castelnuovo d'Asti (today Castelnuovo Don Bosco), he was also the nephew of Don Bosco's spiritual director, Saint Joseph Cafasso. As a boy, Giuseppe grew up among the Salesians, and at the age of 22, already a priest, he dreamed of going to the missions, but his health forced him to see to something else. At the age of 29 he was sent to direct the largest Marian shrine in Turin, dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation (the Consolata), and he brought it back to the splendours of the past, so much so that the dream of the missions turned into a greater work, the Consolata Missionary Institute, which he founded in 1901, after waiting for years to obtain official approval. Then, at the request of Pope Pius X, he also established a female branch, the Missionary Sisters of the Consolata.



**"The Eucharist is my  
highway to Heaven  
BL. CARLO ACUTIS**

He sent his first missionaries to Kenya, but he felt that it was still not enough, believing that evangelisation should shake up the whole Church. In 1912, together with other heads of missionary institutes, he spoke to Pius X about the ignorance of the faithful regarding the missions, due to the insensitivity widespread in the hierarchy, proposing to establish an annual Missionary Day, "with the obligation of preaching about the duty and ways of propagating the faith". It would take place from 1927. Live he was reproached for caring more about the teaching of trades than the triumphal statistics of baptisms. But for him, the Gospel and human promotion had to be pursued together, with passion and ability.

The acknowledged miracle that will lead to his canonization occurred precisely in mission territory, in a situation also not unfamiliar to the Salesians: it concerns a local who inexplicably survived a jaguar attack. St. Pope John Paul II beatified him in 1990. When he is canonized, he will become the third saint from Castelnuovo.



*Sr. Alphonsine Roy, FMA; a diocesan priest; Salesian Cooperators Ms. Araceli Delgado Gamez and Ms. Gabriela Vilchis Reyes; and Fr. Richard Authier, SDB  
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

## **Welcoming Two New Cooperators** on the Feast of Mary Help of Christians

BY SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON [WWW.INFOANS.ORG](http://WWW.INFOANS.ORG),  
05/27/20024

On Friday, May 24, the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, the Association of Salesian Cooperators (ASC) in Canada rejoiced at the promise of two new Salesian Cooperators, Araceli Delgado Gamez and Gabriela Vilchis Reyes, who belong to the Centre at Sainte-Claire.

# Congratulations!

The ceremony took place in the Italian community church of St. Dominic Savio in Montréal, QC. Secretary of the ASC Canadian Province Rosa Romani D'Addario received the promises in the presence of Sr. Alphonsine Roy, FMA, and Pierre Larocque, ASC, responsible for initial formation.

The Eucharist was presided over by Fr Richard Authier, SDB, and concelebrated by two diocesan priests.





International Salesian Commission  
for Artificial Intelligence

*Logo for the International Salesian Commission for Artificial Intelligence  
Courtesy of Fr. Maciej Makula, SDB*

## **SDBs Gear Up for the Artificial Intelligence Age** New Commission Launched

BY FR. MACIEJ MAKULA, SDB, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON [WWW.INFOANS.ORG](http://WWW.INFOANS.ORG), 05/08/2024

**(ANS – Rome)** – In order to answer to the mandate of the GC28 to respond creatively, courageously and educatively to the digital culture and the recent call of Pope Francis regarding the importance of artificial intelligence for the Church, the Sector of Salesian Social Communication has created an International Salesian Commission for Artificial Intelligence (ISCAI).

ISCAI has been set up in an effort to stay relevant to the signs of the times, to reap the benefits of the fast evolving AI technology and also to empower the Salesian family and its beneficiaries with knowledge of the tools and its ethical and moral implications.

The inaugural online meeting of ISCAI took place on May 7, 2024. General Councillor for Social Communication and the Chairperson of ISCAI Fr. Gildasio Mendes, SDB, said “the primary purpose of this commission is to reflect on Artificial Intelligence from an interdisciplinary perspective and provide guidelines for the Salesians and Educators working closely with the young” in his keynote. He also went on to say that “the commission members were carefully chosen keeping in mind the larger vision of this body. There is at least one member representing each of the seven regions of the Salesian world. The initial team is a vibrant mix of Salesians and lay associates from both genders from different parts of the globe who are specialists in various aspects connected with the AI domain. There are professors, researchers, philosophers, creative professionals, computer experts and resource persons”. Fr. Mendes

in his keynote address also highlighted the essential elements from the message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 57th World Day of Peace titled “Artificial Intelligence and Peace”.

After the welcome and the keynote address the commission members briefly introduced themselves and presented about their areas of expertise and their creative pursuits in this field. Boldly embracing and putting to good use this evolving AI technology was the common theme that connected everyone's thought pattern.

The commission is set to explore:

- The potential of AI to enhance communication and education efforts;
- The ethical implications of AI development and use; and
- The use of AI to promote social justice and care for the marginalized.

The Commission Members:

- Fr. Gildasio Mendes, SDB, General Councillor for Social Communication
- Fr. Ricardo Campoli, SDB, Member of Social Communication Sector
- Fr. Ernest Rosario SDB, Coordinator of ISCAI
- Hemerson Pistori (Brazil)

- Charo Fernandez (Madrid)
- Cristina del Aquila (Barcelona)
- Brendan Chua (USA)
- Esteban Inga Ortega (Ecuador)
- Fr. Paul Dungca, SDB (Philippines)
- Fr. Arockia Selvakumar, SDB (India)
- Fr. Felix Olamide, SDB (Nigeria)
- Fr. John Paul Swaminathan, SDB (France)

One of the core questions that will steer this team toward research, innovation, discussions, deliberations, case studies, and policy drafting is “How can we interpret AI from a Salesian perspective?”

In the context of the rapid acceleration of AI integration into every field, some writers argue for new ethics tailored to artificial intelligence. They also discuss how humans, nature, and technology interact on a global scale. This shows that digital issues are closely linked to human progress and environmental concerns.

Therefore, rather than just embracing a new era where technology solves all problems, the focus should be on humanizing the relationship between people and technology. This means caring for the environment, respecting human dignity and rights, revitalizing economy and politics, promoting global cooperation, and integrating technology responsibly, as advocated by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and the Global Education Pact.

**Read Pope Francis' message for the 58th World Day of Social Communications**



**Read Pope Francis' message for the 57th World Day of Peace**



Fr. Mendes said the next two meetings will be held on September 5, and December 4, 2024, respectively. The meeting came to a close with a call to be creative ambassadors promoting the positive use of evolving technologies such as AI for the betterment of all humankind and planet earth, our home.



*The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Courtesy of NancyAyumi from Getty Images*

## **Devotion to the Sacred Heart** So Dear to Don Bosco

GLEANED FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES, INCLUDING ANS AND A WORK BY FR. GIRAUDO, SDB

*Don Bosco had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart and he recommended it to his boys. He printed the booklets *The Nine Offices and the Guard of Honor and commissioned Fr. Bonetti to write A Month in Honor of the Sacred Heart. Observing the First Friday of the Month in honor of the Sacred Heart was prescribed in the "Regulations of the Oratory". The Chaplet to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was another practice which was found in the Companion of Youth (see below). However, Don Bosco wanted to express the concrete and effective part of this devotion in his work for at-risk youth through the good work of leading a companion away from sin and directing him to what is good.**

"Here one acquires true warmth," he said, "I mean the Love of God, and not only for oneself, but to take it elsewhere and make souls participate in it." This devotion is expressed in his insistence on frequent Confession and Communion and on participation in daily Mass, pillars that must support the educational edifice and animate the practice of the Preventive System.



## The Companion of Youth

The first edition of *Il giovane provveduto* (in English *The Companion of Youth*) appeared in 1847 and was Don Bosco's greatest publishing success. The year he died, it had reached its 119th edition. It was reprinted with minor adaptations until 1961. It is also the book which Don Bosco most liked and constantly recommended. It represents a point of arrival for his pastoral experiences amongst boys at the early Oratory and is the basis for developments in his plans for youthful holiness. We find in it the content and model of Christian living which he offered the boys, his unmistakable "horizons of youth spirituality." This was the author's intention, declared right from the preface, where he says he wants to teach "a method of Christian living which is cheerful and pleased at the same time," "brief and easy, but sufficient" so young people can become "the consolation of their parents, an honor to their town, good citizens on earth to then be the fortunate inhabitants of heaven." The importance of the Companion of Youth emerges especially when read in the light of all of Don Bosco's teaching and "his entire system and lifestyle" in which he immerses young people at the Oratory in daily life. The reader can see this by comparing with other texts, especially the lives of Dominic Savio, Mickey Magone, and Francis Besucco.

### From *The Companion of Youth*: "Chaplet of the Sacred Heart of Jesus"

Say this chaplet to the Divine Heart of Jesus to make up for the outrages He receives in the Holy Eucharist from heretics, unfaithful people and unworthy Christians either alone or with others and, if you can, before an image of the Sacred Heart or before the Blessed Sacrament.

V/ *Deus, in adiutorium meum intende.*

(*God, come to my assistance.*)

R/ *Domine, ad adiuvandum me festina.*

*Gloria Patri etc. (O Lord, make haste to*

*help me. Glory Be ... three times)*

1.) "O most amiable heart of My Jesus, I humbly adore You in the Blessed Sacrament where You show such wondrous mercy and sweetness to all poor sinners. I grieve to see You so ungratefully requited and I will endeavor to console You for the many insults You receive in the most Holy Eucharist from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.*

2.) "O most humble Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I adore Your profound humility in this Blessed Sacrament, hiding Your Divinity for us under the species of bread and wine. Grant I beseech You, My Jesus, that such a beautiful virtue be in my heart, too; meanwhile, I will try to make up for all the offences You receive in the most Holy Eucharist from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.*

3. "O Heart of My Jesus who has suffered so much, I adore You in Your Passion so ardently embraced for Love of us and in the Blessed Sacrament where You receive, as You foresaw, so many injuries in return for Your Love. My Jesus, I resolve to make reparation with my own life; I would like to prevent those offences that unfortunately You receive in the Eucharist from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.*

4.) "O most patient Heart of My Jesus, I humbly venerate Your invincible patience in bearing for Love of me such great pain on the Cross and so many insults in the Eucharist. O My dear Jesus! Since I am not able to wash with my blood those places where You were so cruelly treated in both of these Divine Mysteries, I promise You, good and kind Jesus, to use every means in my power to make up for the many outrages Your Divine Heart has received,

Eucharist. O My dear Jesus! Since I am not able to wash with my blood those places where You were so cruelly treated in both of these Divine Mysteries, I promise You, good and kind Jesus, to use every means in my power to make up for the many outrages Your Divine Heart has received, and that You receive in the Eucharist from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.*

5.) "O Heart of My Jesus, who so lovingly condescended to institute the most Holy Mass, I adore you and thank you for the immense Love You bore us by giving us Your Divine Body and Blood as food. Our hearts should be consumed at the thought of such immense charity. O My dear Jesus fill my heart with sorrow and compassion and grant that I may console You for the offences You receive in the Blessed Sacrament from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.*

6.) "O Heart of Jesus thirsting for our salvation, I humbly venerate the Love which has prompted You to sacrifice Yourself so completely for us on the Cross, renewed every day on the altars in Holy Mass. Why are not our hearts burning with gratitude at the sight of so much Love? Unfortunately not, my God; I promise to do all in my power to make up for so many outrages You have received in this Mystery of Love from heretics, unfaithful people, and unworthy Christians." *Our Father, etc.* (This exercise can serve as a novena for the Feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ).

### Prayer to the most Sacred Heart of Mary

"August Queen of Peace, Mother of God,



A statue of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  
 Courtesy of KatieDobies from Getty Images Signature



A statue of Mother Mary by leaves and a stone wall  
 Courtesy of PaoloGaetano from Getty Images

by the Sacred Heart of Your Son, Jesus, Prince of Peace, grant that His anger may soften and He may reign over us in peace. Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me." *(Pius IX grants an indulgence of 300 days every time you devoutly say this prayer)*

“

**Don Bosco wanted to express the concrete and effective part of this devotion in his work for at-risk youth through the good work of leading a companion away from sin and directing him to what is good.**

”

“Sweet and good Jesus, I do not wish to offend You again.”  
 “Sacred Heart of Mary, grant that I may save my soul.”  
 “Sacred Heart of Jesus, grant that I may Love You more and more.”  
***Sacred Heart of Jesus, send us good and worthy Salesian vocations!***

## Mary, Teacher of Ecological Conversion Part I

BY SR. LINDA POCHER, FMA

Talking about Mary and ecological conversion might seem 'out of place' to some: what does Mary have to do with ecology? Indeed, in her time, the problems we face today due to pollution and climate crisis did not exist!

On the contrary, someone else might think it's normal, in a way, to talk about Mary and ecology because for us Catholics (and Salesians!), Mary is always involved in everything... We are used to turning to her for everything, so why not also ask for help in implementing that arduous change of mentality and habits that the Pope calls 'ecological conversion'?



I believe that, between these two extremes, there is a middle way, and today I would like to try to walk it together with you, trying to understand, first of all, what the connection between Mary and ecology is, and then looking in Scripture for those attitudes and insights of Mary that can truly make her a Teacher of ecological conversion!



I would like to invite you to a moment of personal reflection. Try to answer briefly these two questions:

- 1.) What does ecological conversion mean to you?
- 2.) From your point of view, what connection do you see between the person of Mary and Francis' teaching on integral ecology?

The Pope dedicates an entire paragraph of *Laudato Si'* to Mary:

241. Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. Completely transfigured, she now lives with Jesus, and all creatures sing of her fairness. She is the Woman, 'clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars' (Rev. 12:1). Carried up into heaven, she is the Mother and Queen of all creation. In her glorified body, together with the Risen Christ, part of creation reaches its fullness. She treasures the entire life of Jesus in her heart (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51), and now understands the meaning of all things. Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom.

I would like to draw your attention to three elements of this text, which can help us understand how and why Mary can be a Teacher of integral ecology for us.

First, the word "care," which is repeated three times in the Italian version of the text: at the beginning of the text, it is said that Mary cared for Jesus in his historical experience, and now, in her glorious existence, she takes care of this wounded world. At the end of the text, it speaks again

of the care with which Mary cherished the life of Jesus in her heart (in English it's said that she treasures it). Now that she is in the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the same affectionate attention to reality allows her to understand everything. Therefore, the attitude of care is the thread that runs through Mary's experience and her way of relating to others. Learning to care, in Pope Francis's language, means living ecological conversion in a simple and everyday way.

(ADMA, September 23) In the message given at the Angelus on the first day of the year 2023, Pope Francis offered an extraordinary commentary on this succinct expression, recalling all Christians around the world to the importance of caring: "If we really want the New Year to be good, if we want to rebuild hope, we need to abandon languages, gestures, and choices spurred on by selfishness and learn the language of love, which is caring. Caring is a new language, which goes against the languages of selfishness."

The Pope also indicates what the concrete steps of care are:

- 1.) **Taking care of our life** - each of us must take care of our own life - taking care of our time, of our soul;
- 2.) **Taking care of creation and the environment in which we live;** and
- 3.) **Taking care of our neighbor, those whom the Lord has placed beside us, as well as our brothers and sisters who are in need and call for our attention and compassion.**

The order in which we are invited to take care of ourselves; of the environment in which we live, and of our neighbour is not random: the first two directions of care, in fact, are the basis of the third, which is indeed the most important but which

cannot sustain itself without the other two. The "ecological conversion" so much desired by Pope Francis, therefore, cannot take place without each of the children coming into the world learning to think, speak, and act according to the new language of care. And in this journey of continuous renewal of our minds, hearts, and hands, Mary's presence and help are fundamental!

It is important to remember, however, Mary was not alone in caring for Jesus. Joseph's presence, beside Mary, is to be equally esteemed. The Pope, in *Laudato Si'*, describes him as follows:

242. Alongside her, in the holy family of Nazareth, stands the figure of St. Joseph. He cared for and defended Mary and Jesus with his work and generous presence, and he freed them from the violence of the unjust by taking them to Egypt. In the Gospel, he appears as a righteous man, a worker, strong. But from his figure also emerges great tenderness, which is not typical of the weak but of those who are truly strong, attentive to reality in order to love and humbly serve. For this reason, he has been declared the guardian of the universal Church. He too can teach us to care, motivating us to work with generosity and tenderness to protect this world entrusted to us by God.

Learning to care, therefore, as well as ecological conversion, is truly possible only if we recognize ourselves as part of a network of relationships, which, starting from the closest and reaching out to the farthest, connects each of us to the whole of creation. We need each other. To grow in this awareness, it is important to recognize our fragility and

our partiality. The more we allow those close to us to take care of us, the more we become capable of taking care of others! Even Jesus had this experience: receiving the affectionate care of his parents, he learned to care for others. Even during his adult life, he knew not only to give but also to receive gestures of affection and care, especially from women.

Let's try to ask ourselves: what are the acts of care that we give and receive in our daily lives? Are we capable of educating to give and receive care? Do we take care of the network of relationships in which we live, in the educative community and in the territory to which we belong?

The second element of the paragraph in *Laudato Si'* dedicated to Mary that I would like to draw your attention to is the statement that thanks to Mary's assumption into Heaven, in her glorified body a part of creation has already reached the fullness of its beauty. At first glance, these words might seem to concern only Mary. To be resurrected with her body, just like her son Christ, is certainly a privilege of Mary. However, the gifts that God gives to his church are always for the benefit of all! What advantage do we also have from Mary's glorification? The advantage for us is that, by looking at Mary in glory, we see our destiny and we are strengthened in faith, hope, and charity. God has promised to redeem all creation from the threat of destruction and death. The glorification of Mary is only the beginning of the glorification of the entire creation. We are destined to share in the glory of Mary and Jesus, together with all creation. Everything that God has created, God guards and will redeem because everything he has created is precious in his eyes and worthy of esteem. Now, however, creation is entrusted by God into our hands: what are we doing with it? How do we take care of so much beauty? Don Bosco said that in difficult moments, "a piece of Paradise fixes everything": the glorious presence of Mary in our lives and in the Church can be this piece of Paradise, this reminder of God's faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. I ask you: what inspires your daily actions? What sustains and encourages you in times of hardship?

Let us ask Mary to help us, sustain us, and share with us her ability to care, so that through us God can renew the face of the earth.



Stay tuned for Part II in next month's issue!



Still from *The Chosen*  
Courtesy of *Word on Fire*

## The Keys to the Kingdom

A Gentle But Firm Correction to *The Chosen*

BY DR. RICHARD DECLUE, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED  
BY **WORD ON FIRE**, 03/06/2024

*The Chosen* has become a hit series. It "is the first multi-season television series about the life of Christ" and "the largest crowdfunded TV series of all time."<sup>(1)</sup> Produced by Angel Studios (together with Loaves & Fishes Productions and Out of Order Studios), it has released episodes and a Christmas special in theaters and not just online.

*The Chosen* has received a great deal of praise from noteworthy Catholics. Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem, who belongs to a solidly orthodox religious community, **has written** about how the positive reactions of his fellow Norbertine priests led him to watch the series, which he has enthusiastically supported (at least at the time of publication of his article in May, 2021). <sup>(2)</sup> The faithful Catholic organization The Augustine Institute even acquired rights to broadcast the first season, and they have developed a series on the Formed app called "Catholic Commentary on The Chosen." Word on Fire itself has published **multiple positive articles** about The Chosen, and Bishop Barron himself has **interviewed Jonathan Roumie**, a fellow Catholic, who plays the role of Jesus in the series.



Other Catholics have been more critical. Some writers have noted certain points of conflict between the series and Catholic theology. For instance, Fr. Brian Graebe, who wrote his doctoral dissertation about Jesus' birth, **has challenged the series'** portrayal of Mary experiencing labor pains, which is not unique to *The Chosen* in bible-based dramas. (3) Others are skeptical and opposed to the show because the show's creator, Dallas Jenkins, is a Protestant. Their fear is that Catholics watching the series may unwittingly imbibe Protestant notions that are incompatible with the Catholic faith. ***One can be a fan without thinking every decision is impeccable.***

I do not wish to dismiss all such concerns outright, since I have no doubt that they come from a place of genuine concern. Furthermore, the series is still in development, so we do not yet have a full picture of its overall portrayal of the Gospel. As a Catholic theologian who has watched every episode released thus far, there are certain aspects that I could nitpick about here and there. It is a dramatic presentation, after all, and it takes artistic license that I do not always agree with.

Nevertheless, I have a generally positive view of the series. I think it does more good than harm. Of course, one needs to recognize it for what it is: a drama series and not a doctrinal exposition of the Gospels. One ought not to look to *The Chosen* for intricate theology or sufficient catechesis. I have, though, found certain scenes to be conducive to meditative prayer.

I felt the need to preface the main thrust of this article with the above caveats. I do not want people to get the false impression that I am absolutely against *The Chosen*. Quite the contrary, I have thoroughly enjoyed the series, and I look forward to future seasons.

I am not among the naysayers who think it is absolutely spiritually dangerous for every individual to watch. In fact, I think for many people, it could be helpful, the way that *The Passion of the Christ* (which also took artistic licenses) has helped some people pray the Rosary better, because they have a better image of the brutality that our dear Lord suffered. Certainly, among the vast array of options for movies and shows on offer, *The Chosen* is one of the best choices one could make for wholesome viewing.

Yet I think it is still fair to offer pushback when the series gets things wrong. One can be a fan without thinking every decision is impeccable. In fact, it is largely because I am a fan of the series that I lament when certain aspects of the show misrepresent the Gospel, which leads me—finally—to the main point of this article: *The Chosen's* portrayal of Matthew 16:19.

After accurately portraying Jesus giving Simon a new name, Peter (Rock), the rest of the scene gives a false impression. The false impression is made possible by the ambiguity of the English word "you," which is the same in its singular and plural forms. After bestowing the name "Peter," in *The Chosen's* rendition, Jesus then turns to the whole crowd of disciples (and not even just to the Apostles) and, while moving his eyes around to address them all, he proclaims: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (4) This naturally leads the audience to assume that Jesus is using "you" in the plural. This assumption is supported in a subsequent scene in which the character of Matthew (whose Gospel contains the passage we are discussing) is speaking alone with Jesus around a fire. Matthew makes a comment about Jesus having given the keys to the community. (I cannot give a verbatim quote, because I saw the episode in the theater and do not

have access to the script.) This presentation of Matthew 16:19 is erroneous. The Gospel according to St. Matthew was written in Greek. Unlike English, the singular and plural forms of the second person dative case ("to/for you" and "to/for you [all]") are different. The singular "you" is transliterated as "soi," while the plural "you [all]" is transliterated as "humin." They are very clearly differentiated in the original language. Matthew 16:19 uses the singular "you," indicating that Jesus is giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven **to Peter**, not to everyone present. The same is true in the following two clauses of the same verse: "and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." The verb tenses for bind and loose are in the second person singular form. He is saying that whatever **Peter** binds on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever **Peter** looses on earth will be loosed in heaven. Jesus is not speaking to the whole crowd of disciples in this pericope.

Undoubtedly, there are some Catholics who will argue that a single instance like this is enough to condemn the show wholesale. What could be worse than misrepresenting the Gospel? I concur that this is a very disappointing choice for the show's creators to make. It is problematic, and I lament their decision. I therefore think it is completely justifiable to offer this pointed criticism and to encourage the show's producers to be more careful, especially when the Gospel itself is quite clear.

I will still watch the show. I still think there is value in it. But this instance



Shahar Isaac as Simon Peter  
Courtesy of The Chosen Wiki



Fr. Steve DeMaio, SDB, and SLM Program Director Mr. Adam Rudin  
Courtesy of Salesian Youth Ministry and Mr. Adam Rudin

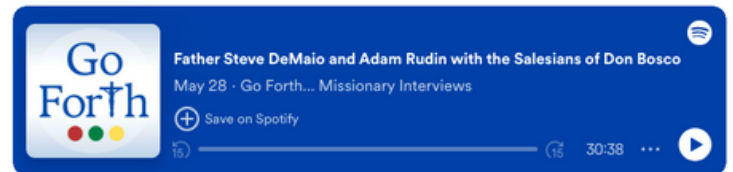
does lend credence to the need for caution. One needs to be informed about the Gospel to avoid coming to erroneous conclusions based on a dramatized representation. Individuals—especially parents—will ultimately need to decide whether they or their children will watch. There are various factors to consider, and I do not presume to be able to give a blanket recommendation that covers every particular circumstance. I merely wish to help viewers become informed about this specific matter. Perhaps it can be a starting point for discussion with one’s family and friends as well as for the purpose of evangelization. The fact that Jesus gave Simon the new name “Peter” and gave him the keys to the kingdom is an important part of Catholic theology, and it deserves defending against misrepresentations.

- 1.) Jodi Stauffer and the St. Leo E-Team, “A Catholic Reflection Guide for The Chosen,” CatholicLink, <https://catholic-link.org/the-chosen-catholic-study-guide/>.
- 2.) Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem., “A Catholic priest Reviews The Chosen,” Catholic Answers (May 14, 2021).
- 3.) Fr. Brian Graebe, “Does ‘The Chosen’ Get It Right About Our Lady,” National Catholic Register (March 25, 2022). He points out that Jesus of Nazareth (1977) and The Nativity Story (2006) likewise portray Mary as suffering labor pains.
- 4.) I am quoting from the NRSV as found in The Word on Fire Bible, not from the show itself, which may or may not contain the exact same phrasing.

## Salesian Family Featured in *Go Forth...* Podcast

BY MS. JULIA ST. CLAIR,  
SUE PROVINCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

**(New Rochelle, NY)** – The United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) has featured Fr. Steve DeMaio, SDB, and Salesian Lay Missioners’ (SLM) Program Director Mr. Adam Rudin on their latest episode of its *Go Forth...* podcast. The episode was released on Tuesday, May 28.





Click [here](#) or on the image above and hear Fr. Steve and Adam share how they entered the mission field!

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**“What A Wonderful World”**


*by Louis Armstrong*


 I see trees of green, red roses too;  
 I see them bloom for me and you  
 And I think to myself what a wonderful world!  
 I see skies of blue and clouds of white,  
 The bright, blessed day, the dark sacred night.  
 And I think to myself what a wonderful world!  
 The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky  
 Are also on the faces of people going by.  
 I see friends shaking hands saying, “How do you do?”  
 They're really saying, “I love you.”  
 I hear babies crying, I watch them grow.  
 They'll learn much more than I'll never know  
 And I think to myself what a wonderful world!  
 Yes, I think to myself what a wonderful world!



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