

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far

► DREAMS THAT KEEP COMING TRUE!

It is very true that Don Bosco's dream is still coming true today, 200 years later.

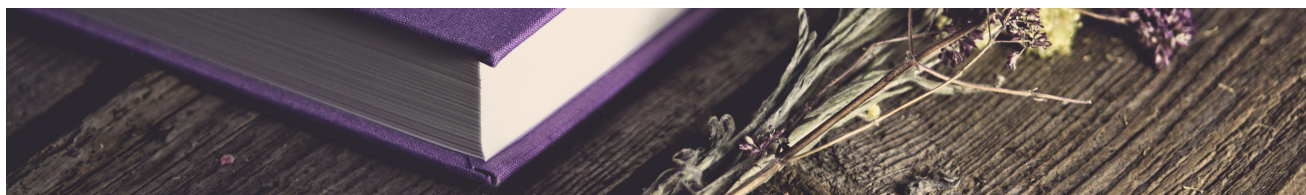
THE NAME IN THE DREAM AT AGE NINE

The understanding of the dream for Don Bosco happened in Rome in Sacred Heart Basilica on May 16, 1887.





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March 19: St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

March 24: Palm Sunday and the Beginning of Holy Week

March 28-30: Sacred Paschal Triduum

March 31: Easter Sunday



Visit <https://salesians.org/> to download and view this current issue and <https://donboscosalesianportal.org/sf-snippets-archives/> to download and view previous ones, including this issue at a later date.

*The cover photo shows Salesian candidates, pre-novices, post-novices, and those in ongoing formation in Orange, NJ, as they continue to pray for the needs of the young in both North American provinces. Cover photo by Br. Reagan Ledet, SDB | Photos featured on the "In This Issue" page courtesy of Canva Pro
End cover photo of Salesian Sisters at last year's Rise Up! Conference courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*



Don Ángel with young people at the youth forum on the environment organized by the "Sustainable Latin America" Regional Project during his visit to the ANT Province.
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

Dreams That Keep Coming True!

When reflecting on all this, I feel I have a little authority to say:
"Dear Don Bosco, your Dream is still VERY ALIVE."

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

Dear readers of the *Salesian Bulletin*,

I am sending you my personal greeting, as I do every month. These come from my heart and my reflections are motivated by what I am experiencing at the moment because I believe that sharing what is good as life happens does us good.

I'm writing to you now from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Prior to this stop, I made a beautiful and very significant visit to Juazeiro do Norte (in the Brazilian northeast of Recife). These last few days have been "Dominican." In just a few hours I will continue the journey—to Vietnam. In the midst of all this 'hustle and bustle'—that can nonetheless be lived with much peace—I have been nourishing my Salesian heart with beautiful experiences.

I'm going to tell you about them because they speak about the Salesian mission, but permit me to begin with an anecdote that a Salesian told me yesterday and that made me laugh, moved me, and spoke to me about "the Salesian heart."

A little "stone-thrower"

A confrere told me that, on one occasion, while traveling along

one of the roads in the interior of this country, he passed by a place where some children had become accustomed to throwing stones at cars to cause some small incident—such as breaking glass—and in the confusion steal from the traveler.

Well, that's what happened to him. He was passing through a certain village and a boy threw a stone to break the glass. He succeeded. The confrere got out of the car, restrained the boy, and made him take him to his parents. The scenario in that family was such that there was no father around—because he had abandoned them—and only a long-suffering mother who had been left with this son and a little daughter.

When the Salesian told the mother that her son had broken the glass (which the boy admitted), that it cost a lot of money, and that the boy had to pay for it, the mother apologized, begging for forgiveness, and made our confrere understand that she had no way to pay him for she was poor. But she would reprimand her son, etc. etc... This is how the dialogue went when the little girl, the little sister of 'this little Magone of Don Bosco', who had her hand

closed, opened it and gave him her only coin, almost worthless. It was her whole treasure. Then she said, “Take it, sir, to help pay for the glass.” This Salesian confrere of mine told me that he was so moved that he could not speak anymore and ended up giving some money to the lady to help her family.

I didn't know how to interpret this story but it has so much of life, pain, need, and humanity in it that I promised myself I would share it with you. A few hours later, very close to the Salesian House where I was staying, they showed me another small Salesian house where we welcome and take in street children, most of whom are Haitian, and who have no one. We are well aware of the tragedy that is taking place in Haiti, where there is no order, government, or law., and only the gangs control everything. To know that these boys, minors, who arrived here—how, we don't know—and with nowhere to go—are welcomed into our house makes my heart overflow. There are a total of twenty living there at the moment. Once they have stabilized, they will then move on to other homes with other educational objectives. We have several such houses where there are always Salesians and lay educators, and another 90 minors right now. My heart swelled as I thought that Valdocco in Turin was born like this, with Don Bosco, and that this is how we Salesians were born—from a small group of those boys from Valdocco, together with Don Bosco, who gave rise de facto to the Salesian Congregation on that December 18th in 1859.

How can we not see “the Hand of God” in all this? How can we fail to perceive that all this work responds to much more than some human strategem? How can we not perceive that here and in thousands of other Salesian places in the world good continues to be done (always with the help of so many generous people and many others who share a passion for education)?

This year, in Madrid, Spain, and in other places (including America Latina), the magnificent short film entitled *Canillitas* was shown. It captures the lives of so many of these boys. I was happy to touch this reality up close with my own eyes and hands. And it is very true, my friends, that Don Bosco's dream is still coming true today, 200 years later.

As though something was still lacking, yesterday I spent the whole day with young people from the Salesian world who call



*Don Ángel with youth during his visit to the ANT Province.
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

themselves and know themselves to be leaders throughout Salesian Latin America. They are part of a movement that tries to get at least the Salesian educational world to take the care of creation, and ecology itself, very seriously, with the sensitivity that the Holy Father Pope Francis displayed in 'Laudato Si'. Young people from their “Sustainable Latin America” movement were present (in person or online) from twelve Latin American nations. I thought it was beautiful for young people to dream and commit to something good for them, for the world, and for all of us.

“

I am saying that the boys at Valdocco knew this same reality because Don Bosco was alive among them. How happy it makes me to know that many of our Houses today have that same “Valdocco flavor”!

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL ÁNGEL
FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

”

When reflecting on all this, I feel I have a little authority to say: “Dear Don Bosco, your Dream is still VERY ALIVE.”

Keep well and be happy.
Don Ángel



Strenna 2024



New artwork of Don Bosco's dream of nine years old.
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

Questions for Reflection, Discussion, and Discernment on Strenna 2024

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB

The Strenna is written for all members of the Salesian Family: SDBs, FMAs, Salesian Cooperators, ADMA, Volunteers of (and with) Don Bosco, Past Pupils, Canção Nova, Catechetical Sisters of Mary Immaculate, Sisters of the Divine Savior, Damas Salesianas, Michaelites, young people, lay colleagues in pastoral service, and parents and families devoted to Don Bosco's charism with the poorest young people.



- “This is your field of work.” Don Bosco's dream at age nine is centered around the mission given to him by the Divine Personage with poor young people who are living destructive lives.

The dream at age nine places Don Bosco with the more troublesome boys, those who can be a danger to themselves and others. This was to be his field of work. Is my apostolic focus with the youngsters most in need?

- The young are the central characters in Don Bosco's dream. ***Is the focus of my ministerial work the young, especially with regard to their situations, their surroundings, their signs of promise and danger? Do I begin each apostolic intervention with a focus on the young and their needs—or on my plan, program, and comfort area?***

- Don Bosco receives from God a call, not a career or a project. It is a way of living in union with God and our Blessed Mother. It is impossible to fulfill that call on Don Bosco's own. His call is to be in union with God and our Blessed Mother.

Do I live the calling as a lifelong service to the young? Or do I move from project to project without much concern for the ongoing evangelization and formation of the young under my care? Am I aware that the ongoing accompaniment I offer the young needs to be in union with God who calls and our Blessed Lady who offers ongoing instruction and inspiration?

- Obedience to God and docility to the Spirit requires discernment of God's will and abandonment to God's plan.

Am I aware of and alert to God's inspiration arising in the midst of my ministry with the young? When our discernment reveals a need to change priorities, strategies, and processes that God and Our Blessed Mother have raised to us, are we able to abandon our own plans in favor of those from God and our Blessed Mother?

- Don Bosco was called to reject any form of repression in his educational style: not by blows or intimidation of

any sort (physical, psychological, emotional-sexual, cyber violence, or social exclusion).

How do I bring the gentle approach of St. Francis de Sales into my everyday interactions with the young so I can educate by the heart rather than through any form of intimidation?

- Our Lady directed Don Bosco to make the young the center of his life and ministry: his attitude when with the young was to be one of attentive reverence: “Look;”
Do I seek to encounter the entirety of a young person’s life situation when looking at him or her? Or do I only focus on the externals and on those characteristics that relate to my more immediate objectives?
- “Learn;”
Do I go into a ministerial situation with the expectation that I will learn valuable lessons for life through each interaction with the young in the educational environment?
- “And be patient.”
Am I willing to wait patiently for God’s grace to take effect in a young person’s life and an apostolic environment? Or do I quickly give up and move on when my preferred timeline has passed?
- Don Bosco was to nurture authentic relationships with his boys: (1) “It is not enough to have structures if authentic relationships are not developed within them. It is actually the quality of those relationships that evangelizes.” (2) I wish that every Salesian Family presence become a space for those respectful relationships which are the origin of our charism.
Do I make sure that I am present with the young during those moments when we are less busy with tasks to be fulfilled? Am I careful to take advantage of those informal/less active moments to foster respectful relationships with the young? Or do I consider less active presence with the young to be a waste of time when I should be doing “real work?”
- Don Bosco’s every choice was in union with God’s plan for him as he experienced it while interacting with his young people. Don Bosco’s life path took shape as it was lived.
- I dream, therefore, that every Salesian, every member of Don Bosco’s family feels, by vocation and choice, that they are uncomfortable and experience first-hand the pain,

weariness, and fatigue of so many families and young people who struggle every day to survive, or to live with a little more dignity. God forbid that we be spectators who are passive or indifferent to the face of the pain and anguish of so many young people.

Am I present to those in my apostolate or general area? who are dealing with difficult and painful struggles in life? Do I limit myself to the formal rituals of support? Or do I go out of my way to accompany them on their journey?

I cannot allow myself to live without hope, for without it, I would not know how to survive because living without Hope would no longer be having “life to the full.”

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL
ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

- Don Bosco’s followers are encouraged to dream as he did. God has a dream for each of us in the Salesian Family, for our young people, a project thought up and designed by God for each of us. The secret of everyone’s much-desired happiness will be precisely to discover the correspondence and the encounter between these two dreams: ours and God’s.
Am I aware of the dream that God has made for me in the Salesian Family for the sake of our young people? What dreams do I bring to the way I am living out God’s call in my life? How has my dream of God’s call to me changed or developed from the time I first recognized and followed God’s call to be a member of Don Bosco’s Family?



Part of DB Sons' album cover that depicts Don Bosco's Dream at the Age of Nine
Courtesy of DB Sons and Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

The Name in the Dream at the Age of Nine

Strenna 2024 Formation

PREPARED BY ADMA AND PRESENTED IN SALESIAN FAMILY SNIPPETS IN TWELVE INSTALLMENTS

Hearing a word that comes from outside. At the beginning of the dream, there is a theophany: a venerable man appears, in virile age, nobly clothed in a white mantle, with a face so luminous that little John could not look at him. The voice that calls Giovannino ("little John/Johnny"—He called me by name) comes from outside and with a command (He ordered me), to **understand life as a dream to be realized.** No one gives himself a name but receives it. I do not call myself. In the name is written the vocation and in it is included the method (not with blows but with meekness and charity), the mission/end (to gain these friends of yours), and the content (instruction on sin and virtue).

Know the identity of those who speak to you. Who are you? The question about the identity of the mysterious character concerns us all. "Who do you say that I am?" Jesus asks His disciples. Mary wonders the intent of such a greeting's meaning. It is impossible to escape such a question in order to give an answer of meaning to one's life.

Don't be in a hurry. It is not uncommon to come across wanting everything right now, to have a desire and see it already fulfilled. Our Lady says to John: "In due time, you will understand everything." The understanding of the dream for Don Bosco happened in Rome in Sacred Heart Basilica on May 16, 1887: That morning, Don Bosco wanted to go down to the church to celebrate at the altar of Mary Help of Christians. No less than fifteen times, during Holy Mass, he stopped, seized

with strong emotion and shedding tears. Our Lady had told him then: "In due time you will understand everything." Sixty-two years of hard work, sacrifices, and struggles had now passed since that day, and a sudden flash of light revealed to him, at the time of the erection of the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, the crowning of the mission that had mysteriously overshadowed him at the beginning of his life.

What John Bosco experienced in his dream and understood at the end of his life and what Jesus revealed through the light of His resurrection show us that **the mystery of the name and meaning of life is understood from the end.** Just as the meaning of a film cannot be deduced from the opening scene, but only from the final one, in the same way from the moment that "we are in time," the dynamics of a life are understood gradually and in a constant process of growth. From an educational point of view, the human virtue most frequently mentioned in the New Testament and consequent to being in time is patience or perseverance (*hupomonè*), particularly suited to living more like sowers than harvesters, more like farmers than shopkeepers. The term (*hupo=under and minus=to stay*) literally indicates Mary's attitude of "**staying under—at the foot of—the cross,**" of being submissive to the Father's will. **Thus, as in the dream, Mary will reveal to us the name of Her Son in the interweaving of her and our history.**



The cancellation stamp in celebration of Don Bosco's Dream of Nine Years Old
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

Vatican and Cancellation Stamps For the Bicentenary of Don Bosco's Dream at Nine Years of Age

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.ANS.ORG, 02/15/24

(ANS – Vatican City) – The Vatican joins the Salesian Family in celebrating the dream that St. John Bosco had at nine years of age, which inspired all his work and his charisma. It does so through a stamp and a special stamp cancellation dedicated to this important anniversary.

The **Vatican stamp** that celebrates the anniversary is a reproduction of a painting on canvas made in 1999 by the painter Mario Bogani (1932-2016) and preserved in the Upper Church of the Don Bosco Basilica at Colle Don Bosco (Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Province of Asti). It has a nominal value of 1.30 euros, and its dimensions are forty by thirty millimeters, printed on 21,200 mini sheets of nine copies each, for a total print run of 190,800 stamps.

The design of the stamp illustrates young John's dream as he himself told it in his *Memoirs*: *"In this dream, I seemed to be near my home... a crowd of children were playing there... and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words I jumped immediately amongst them, and tried to stop them by using my words and fists... At that moment a dignified man appeared... his face shone so that I could not look directly at him. He called me by name, told me to take charge of these children, and added these words—'You will have to win these friends of yours not by blows but by gentleness and love. Start right away to teach them the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue'...I saw a lady of*

stately appearance standing beside him. She was wearing a mantle that sparkled all over... she beckoned me to approach her. She took me kindly by the hand and said, 'Look',...Glancing around, I realized that the youngsters had all apparently run away. A large number of dogs, goats, cats, bears, and other animals had taken their place. 'This is the field of your work. Make yourself humble, strong, and energetic. And what you will see happening to these animals in a moment, is what you must do for my children... in good time you will understand everything.'"

The **cancellation stamp** has a circular shape and a diameter of thirty-eight millimeters. It is an elaborate graphic, freely inspired by the theme of the stamp, which depicts the young John sleeping surrounded by the figures present in his dream: Jesus, the Virgin Mary, wolves, and lambs. The cancellation is completed by the words "the DREAM OF ST JOHN BOSCO," "1824-2024," "POSTE VATICANE," and "DIE EMISSIONIS 19.02.2024."

On Monday, February 19, and Tuesday, February 20, the post office called "Arco delle Campane" (under the bell chamber of the Basilica) used the special cancellation in question. Alternatively, the stamp cancellation, duly stamped by the applicants with the stamps to which the cancellation refers, may be requested from the Cancellation



*The Vatican stamp in celebration of Don Bosco's Dream of Nine Years Old
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

Sector of the Postal and Philatelic Service until Saturday,
March 23.

On Tuesday, February 20, the Italian daily *Avvenire* dedicated a special feature on the history of the stamps dedicated to Don Bosco and the significance of his dreams. "Don Bosco's Dream at Nine Years of Age," reads a note issued by the Governorate of Vatican City, "was the origin of the vocation of the future founder of the Congregation of Salesians and the inspiring source of his educational philosophy permeated by three principles: reason, religion, and loving-kindness. For Don Bosco, it was impossible to educate a young person through reason without someone who loved him, understood his problems, and supported him in solving them."

The significance of this dream and the Salesian charism for the universal Church can be well understood from what Pope Francis wrote nine years ago, in the letter sent to the Rector Major of the Salesians, Ángel Fernández Artime, today Cardinal, on the occasion of another bicentenary, that of the birth of Don Bosco (1815-2015): "Don Bosco teaches us, first of all, not to look, but to take the front line, to offer young people an integral educational experience that, solidly based on the religious dimension, involves the mind, the affections, the whole person, always considered as created and loved by God."



*Promotional image for the Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians
Courtesy of ADMA and Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

An Invitation to Participate in the Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.ANS.ORG,
02/15/24

(ANS – Turin) – From Thursday, August 29, to Sunday, September 1, Fatima will host the Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and aimed at all groups of the Salesian Family. It aims to make known, deepen, and spread the devotion to "Don Bosco's Madonna." The Congress is not just for ADMA members, but for the entire Salesian Family to show its love and devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Indeed, anyone, whether in or outside of the Salesian Family, who loves Our Lady is most welcome.

In view of this significant appointment of the Salesian Family, the organizing team of the congress has promoted a series of nine videos in which different personalities of the Salesian world invite everyone to participate. The first invitation could only be that of Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco and Father and Centre of Unity of the Salesian Family.

In the short video, just over a minute long, the Tenth Successor of Don Bosco reminded the entire Salesian Family of the appointment of the Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians as he spoke in his native language from the Valdocco courtyard. "I still remember how we experienced the Congress of Buenos Aires (the Eighth International Congress, Ed.) with real emotion and deep meaning. Certainly, it is an event of the Salesian Family with a deep Marian heart, to which we can and must respond," the Rector Major expressed in the video. He then concluded: "It is a real pleasure for me to invite you and I know that we will respond to this call with our Salesian and Marian heart that characterizes the Don Bosco Family. Come on, Fatima is waiting for us!"

Just a few hours after the Rector Major's invitation, **the second invitation video** was also shared on the network. It had the Portuguese Salesian Fr. Antonio Marcelino, a member of the Congress's organizing team, remark: "I am sure you have seen that the Pope was in Portugal and Fatima and invited us to be present at 'everything, everything, everything' and 'everyone, everyone, everyone' because the events of the Church are for everyone. I am a simple coordinator, but I would like to invite and challenge everyone to come here to the Congress: an opportunity for us to be together as a Salesian Family, to get to know Portugal and Fatima, which is the altar of the world where Our Lady awaits us all." The theme chosen for the Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, "I will give you a Teacher," recalls Don Bosco's "Dream at Nine Years of Age," which the 200th anniversary of which is being celebrated this year. *To access the video of Mother Chiara Cazzuola, Superior General FMA's invitation to sign-up, please go to page 16.*



This dream marked the starting point of the goal to make Mary increasingly known as a Mother and Teacher who accompanies and guides the entire Salesian Family on the path to Jesus and the neediest young people.

Registration for the **Ninth International Congress of Mary Help of Christians** is already underway. Registration can be made through the form available on the **conference website**, where all the details and costs for participation are also available.



*Image for the webinars made from elements from the flier.
Created by Ms. Julia St. Clair, SUE Communications Director*

"No One is Left Alone" Webinars for Youth Mental Health

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.ANS.ORG,
02/15/24

(ANS - Rome) - The Salesian understanding of evangelization is animated by an active concern for each young person, followed up by an educational concern for the integral growth of the whole person. This anthropological approach leads to a better understanding of how the Salesian educator's spheres of action are marked by an integral humanism and, therefore, by a concern for the health of each young person. Given all this, the Salesian Congregation's youth pastoral sector has scheduled a series of webinars on mental health according to an approach aimed at promoting greater awareness on the subject, preventing mental problems, and knowing how to recognize the premonitory signs of disorders.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." As with physical health, mental health is an indispensable component of a person's well-being. It underpins the



*Bishop Barron speaks on the mental health crisis. Click on the image and [here](#) to watch.
Courtesy of Bishop Robert Barron's YouTube*

human capacity to think, feel, learn, work, form deep relationships, and contribute to the community and the world at large. Therefore, mental health is an integral part of the health of the whole person.

The Covid-19 pandemic has only helped to increase the mental distress of young people. One of the proposals made in the planning of the youth ministry sector is precisely the accompaniment and qualification of Salesians and lay people to accompany young people.

"Embarking on the path of educational-pastoral animation, we are faced with questions that are not easy to answer. The greater the pastoral charity that moves us in this exciting task, the greater the challenge to incarnate the pastoral mission of the Congregation in the concrete, singular reality of that world," General Councillor for Salesian Youth Ministry Fr. Miguel Ángel García Morcuende said.

In the Gospel, we see a mentally ill person "sitting at the feet of Jesus," just like other disciples. Jesus speaks to him, and he listens, understands, and accepts his message. Jesus shows him God's love, and he experiences it. We even see the sick person raise a prayer of praise, "telling others the wonders of God."

"How we long to 'know how to do' and 'help to do' all of this today!" Fr. García Morcuende concluded.

The scheduling of these webinars is, therefore, a concrete response. Thanks to these discussions with specialists in the field, it will be possible to reflect on the needs of the most fragile people and their psychological vulnerability.

Further, these webinars aim to work for the promotion of young people's psychological well-being; to address the issues of stigma and discrimination; learn about the subject in order to intercept discomfort and offer support in educational contexts; recommend targeted interventions for people at risk; and develop and implement measures to reduce preventable causes of mental health problems, comorbidity, and suicide.

The webinars will take place on Tuesday, March 12; Wednesday, March 13; Friday, March 15, Tuesday, March 19; and Thursday, March 21. They will be offered in two different time slots to facilitate participation by all (8:00 a.m. UTC+1 in English; 6:00 p.m. UTC+1, in Italian, English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese).

This initiative is aimed at teachers, educators, animators, and Salesians involved in all sectors (schools and Vocational Training Centres, oratories, youth centers, parishes, social works, universities, etc.) and Salesian-inspired organizations. Animated by qualified specialists from various experts in the field, these webinars will address various topics such as eating disorders, mental health of migrants and refugees, youth depression, bullying, and, finally, self-destructive behavior and suicide.

For further information, click on one of the buttons below.

English

Spanish

French

Italian

Portuguese

Polish



*Fr. Steve Ryan, SDB, congratulates two new Salesian Cooperators, who recently made their Promise in Louisiana.
Photo by Mr. Bernie Pontillo, Salesian Cooperator*

150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Association of Salesian Cooperators **Formation on the Origins**

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB

From his experience at the Convitto Ecclesiastico, Don Bosco was well prepared to respond creatively to his encounter with Bartholomew Garelli on Dec. 8, 1841. With the sharp focus provided by that meeting, Don Bosco gave a robust and collaborative response to the youth crisis highlighted by this Providential encounter with Bartholomew in the sacristy of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Turin.

From his years at the Convitto, Don Bosco was familiar with many Catholic lay men and women who were already in small "Friendship" (Amicizie Cattoliche) groups seeking to renew the Church and society in accordance with the Gospel. His affiliation with (St.) Fr. Joseph Cafasso gave him contact with local priests who were committed to serving the young, especially those in prison and on the streets, and the poor. As chaplain to the Refugio, Don Bosco was part of a more general movement of lay people (animated by the Marchioness Giulia Barolo) dedicated to helping girls who were alone and at risk in the city. Don Bosco welcomed a large number of these Catholics to assist him in caring for the young boys who had come to the city in search of work, housing, good friends, and preparation for life. These colleagues, whom Don Bosco called "cooperators," were from all professions and strata of society. With his charisma and the dedication of so many compassionate men and women, Don Bosco's Oratory grew both in numbers of young people served and in services offered

(catechesis, literacy instruction, job training, sacraments, meals, recreation, and housing). In time, the Valdocco Oratory was augmented by a number of additional oratories as well.

From the very beginning, Don Bosco intended to offer these "cooperators" more than simply a chance to perform pastoral charity on behalf of young people most in need. In line with his formation at the Convitto, Don Bosco intended to found an association or "friendship group" of the laity that would run counter to the secret societies established by the anti-Catholic forces in society.

Giving this association of lay collaborators an identity and structure was not easily accomplished. At its deepest level, Don Bosco had to listen carefully to the Madonna who appeared to him in the dream at age nine. She would guide him through a rather lengthy discernment to discover the form best suited to his mission within the Church.

The first attempt (1850) was to establish a Pious Union of lay people who would carry on good works (moral, material, and instructional) as a way of impeding the advance of secularism and anti-Catholicism. This model of union and the document of its founding was a type of "Catholic masonry" which clearly embodied the Friendship

groups of Frs. Lanteri and Guala. This was a remote preparation for the future Union of Cooperators.

For the next eight years, Don Bosco put aside the idea of a Pious Union of lay people. He did not try to formulate a theological construct of this movement within the Church institution. Instead, he focused on nurturing the foundations of what had already existed at the Oratory for seventeen years (the community of priests, clerics, and lay people who joined together for the purpose of perfecting themselves by imitating, as far as possible, the virtues of our Divine Savior). In 1858, Don Bosco wrote a draft document, Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, in an attempt to give this ministerial community legal standing within the Church structure. This constitution included the categories of all those who contributed to Don Bosco's mission in the Oratory. In its formulation, Don Bosco relied, to some extent, on the constitutions that Fr. Bruno Lanteri had written for the Oblates of the Blessed Virgin Mary and its lay affiliates. It drew up a structure that included both consecrated religious and lay externs. Five articles of the 1864 version of the Constitutions described the membership of the Externs who, as part of the society, lived in their own homes and were not connected to the society by vows.

On December 18, 1859, Don Bosco gathered some of his "boys" in his room for the purpose of "promoting and preserving the spirit of true charity which is necessary for the work of the Oratories for the abandoned at-risk youth." The goal of Don Bosco's invitation was to give permanence and greater structure to the ministerial community that traced its beginnings to the catechism lesson on December 8, 1841 and had carried on Don Bosco's mission for seventeen years in the Oratory. This rather novel structure was not approved when brought to the Vatican in 1864. The Vatican decreed that persons living outside the Religious Communities of the Pious Institute could not be enrolled by affiliation into the Institute. The Consultor suggested that Don Bosco drop the five articles dealing with the Externs. Confronted by this blunt rejection, Don Bosco's first response was to accept the decision and "think laterally." He tried to argue that other religious orders had lay people enrolled in their communities. However, Don Bosco's

"Lay Externs" were far more integrated into the life and mission of the religious community than "tertiaries" in the ancient religious orders. He tried and failed to have the five articles included in an appendix or even attached at the end of the document.

At last, Don Bosco had to resign himself to the reality of the situation. In 1874, he had to suppress the five articles on the Extern Laity from his Constitutions. He worked on ways to include the lay members of his ministerial community without their being "extern members" of the Society of St. Francis de Sales.

Once again, Don Bosco had to rely on the promise of his dream at age nine. Mary, Mother and Help, would show him the way to gather a large number of colleagues who shared his passion for serving the young most in need. This reliance on Mary as the Guide and Teacher proved to be vital. Two years later (1876), Don Bosco founded the Association of the Salesian Cooperators.

It is worth noting that, while Don Bosco's effort to found a religious order that included "Extern laity" was rejected by the Vatican authorities, he did succeed in developing a way of including lay colleagues in his ministerial community. In those later Constitutions, Don Bosco was able to describe the vocation of lay Salesians in a far more developed manner than the five articles of the previous Constitutions would allow. In the new document, Don Bosco spoke of an "association of lay Salesians" in ways that he did not previously.

Fr. Arthur Lenti SDB, "The Convitto Ecclesiastico - "Where One Learnt to be a Priest," Journal of Salesian Studies, March 2, 1992, pp. 1-77.

*Taken from Second Installment: Matching the Vision to a Structure
Second Chapter of A Prophecy's Journey (pp. 21-26)*

and

Tune in next month and read how Mary led Don Bosco to the foundation of the Association of Salesian Cooperators!



In the Salesian Family Know



Salesian Family Opportunities

It Started with a Dream... Remember and Look Back

Learn OUR HISTORY in this first year of preparation for the 150th ANNIVERSARY of the founding of the Association of Salesian Cooperators & the 200th of DON BOSCO'S DREAM AGE 9

A VIRTUAL SERIES 2024

Evangelize and animate! Invite friends and family to learn more about our inspiring history. All are welcome

All Salesian Cooperators and our Delegates are invited and encouraged to take a virtual guided tour through the history of the Salesian Cooperators. You will be led through our history by our Provincial Council Members and participate in discussions with Salesian Cooperators and Delegates from all over our province. Each month we will look at a different chapter in our history.

6:45 pm CST/7:45 pm EST Gather
7:00 pm CST/8:00 p.m. EST Formation and Discussion

March 12th - The Origins
April 9th - An Idea's Journey
May 14th - The Strengthening of the Association through 1888
June 11th - The Salesian Cooperators from 1888-1965
July 9th - Don Bosco's Words
July 20th Vatican II-Today

Register
<https://bit.ly/SCremember>

*Flier for ongoing formation
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

Who Are the Salesian Cooperators? Come Find Out!

All are welcome to participate in the ongoing formation opportunities in preparation for the 150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Association of Salesian Cooperators and the 200th Anniversary of Don Bosco's Dream of Nine Years Old.

Register here!



*Illustration of Our Lady
Courtesy of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMAs)*

Read Articles on the Marian Dimension of Ecology

The FMA Salesian Family Sector has resumed publications on its blog to carry out Marian animation through some articles written by Sr. Linda Pocher, FMA, on the Marian dimension of ecology. The articles are available via the links below in five languages. We pray they will be useful for personal training and Salesian Family group trainings.

The Mother who cared

The Queen of all creation

Look at the world with knowing eyes

Mary sealed source



Salesian Cooperators of Chicago, IL, with Fr. Paul Chu, SDB (third from the right), and Fr. Kris Cepil, SDB (right)
 Photo by Mr. Gerardo Faz, Salesian Cooperator



The Madonna of the Rosary Salesian Cooperator Unit with SUE Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB (third from the left), and Stony Point Director Fr. Dennis Donovan, SDB (center)
 Photo by Ms. Lynn Donovan-Krakaur, Salesian Cooperator

Save the Date for the SC Provincial Electoral Congress

The Salesian Cooperator (SC) Provincial Electoral Congress will take place from Friday, July 19, through Sunday, July 21, at the Sacred Heart Retreat Center, Newton, NJ. All local councilors and delegates are required to attend, *ex officio*.



Salesian Cooperators of New Orleans, LA
 Photo by Mr. Bernie Pontillo, Salesian Cooperator

More information coming soon!

Salesian Family Gatherings Stony Point Cooperators Meet with Fr. Dominic

BY MS. LYNN DONOVAN-KRAKAUR,
 SALESIAN COOPERATOR

This past month, SUE Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, visited the Marian Shrine and met with the Madonna of the Rosary Salesian Cooperator Unit. This was an informal meet and greet where the Salesian Cooperators exchanged ideas with our Salesian Provincial. They also made suggestions on working together for the good of our Salesian Family and youth both locally and worldwide.



Renovated Marian Shrine Chapel
 Courtesy of the Marian Shrine



Performers at the Rising Stars Concert
Photo by Fr. Dennis Donovan, SDB

Celebrations Mark Rededication of Marian Shrine Chapel

BY FR. DENNIS DONOVAN, SDB,
DIRECTOR, STONY POINT, NY

Following a two-year renovation project to beautify the Mary Help of Christians Chapel in Stony Point, a weekend of festivities brought several elements together to celebrate a successful conclusion of the project. “The Make All Things New” capital campaign which began May 20, 2022, successfully raised over \$250,000 for renovations to the sanctuary, altar, and windows.

On Saturday evening, February 3, nearly 400 people filled the chapel for the Rising Stars Concert, which featured musicians and artists, such as Agnus Dei Ministry, Marisel Rodriguez, and Paul Christopher. Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, SDB, concluded the evening with a blessing.

On Sunday, February 4 Cardinal Rodriguez presided at the 11:00 a.m. Mass, which also included the blessing and rededication of the chapel and some altar vessels. The Mass was followed by a Latino celebratory luncheon and karaoke contest in Lee Hall.



Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, SDB
Photo by Fr. Dennis Donovan, SDB

The Marian Shrine has been celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary during the past year. With retreats, pilgrimages, concerts, summer youth programs, and visitors to the gift shop, over 100,000 people visit the shrine annually.

Catch Up on Important Happenings on YouTube

Click on the text and graphics below to watch the Congress of Mary Help of Christians Fatima by Mother Chiara Cazzuola, Superior General FMA, and ANS' video recap on news from January 2024.



Watch Congress of Mary Help of Christians Fatima!



Watch ANS Video for January 2024!



Our Family Album



Requiescant in Pace



*Fr. Joseph Ho, SDB
Courtesy of Mrs. Rosina DiFelice, Salesian Cooperator*

Fr. Joseph Ho, SDB



*Sr. Louise Passero, FMA
Courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*

Sr. Louise Passero, FMA



***Let Us Live the Dream
That Makes Us Dream***



***Maria Auxilium Christianorum,
ora pro nobis!***



**"Gentleness is the favorite
virtue of Jesus Christ."**

- St. John Bosco



Our email address is:

contact@donboscosalesianportal.org



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Rejoice!



salesiansisters



Liked by St.Johnbosco and others



Walk with your feet on earth,
but in your heart, be in heaven. #besaints

