

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far





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IN MEMORIAM

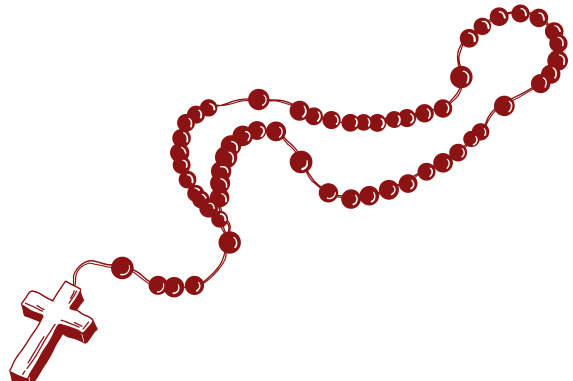
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Have an article you'd like featured in *Salesian Family Snippets*? Send it to us!

communications@salesians.org

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*A missionary recommendation and Vicar Fr. Stefano Martoglio, SDB, at the sending Mass on September 30, 2024.
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

Our Annual Gift

Traditionally as a Salesian Family, we receive the *Strenna* every year—a gift at the beginning of the year. I hold it dear to look inside this gift with these few lines so as to welcome it as it deserves, without losing anything of the freshness of the gift.

FR. STEFANO MARTOGLIO, SDB

A gift

It is a gift because, before all else, *strenna* means: I am giving you a gift[1]! I am giving you something important to help you celebrate a new time, a new year. This is how Don Bosco thought of it and he gave it to all the young people and adults who were with him. I want to give you this gift, this *strenna*, for the start of the new year, of a new time.

This is something beautiful and important: a new year, a new time, a box in which all the other contents will be held. The coming year is not the same as those you have experienced up until now. A new year needs a new vision in order that it may be lived to the full because the new year comes only once! Each moment of time is unique because we are different from the prior year, from how we were the year before. The purpose of the *Strenna* is to help us prepare for this new time, by beginning to look inside this new year, bringing to light some things that will be an important part of it.

The “golden thread”

The gift of time, the gift of life

God’s gift and all other gifts are found within life: people, situations, opportunities, human relationships. Within this providential way of viewing the gifts of time and life, the *Strenna*, a gift that Don Bosco

—and his successors after him have given every year to the whole Salesian Family—calls us to gaze upon the new year, this new time, with new eyes.

The *Strenna* is an aid to help us look at the time to come by putting into focus a golden thread that will guide the new time ahead: the golden thread that the *Strenna* gives us this year is Hope. This is also important! The new year will surely be filled with many things, but don’t get lost amidst them! Start by reflecting on how important it is... Don't scatter; gather!

The *Strenna* that our Cardinal Angel has laid out for us for 2025, like a new outfit, brings to light the events that we will all experience, uniting them with a single golden thread: Hope!

Strenna 2025 highlights both global and Salesian events which involve us all so as to help us live them well:

- **The Ordinary Jubilee of the year 2025:** a Jubilee is an event of the Church in the Catholic tradition that the Holy Father gives us. To live the Jubilee is to live the pilgrimage that the Church offers us so we may put the presence of Christ back at the center of our lives and of the life of the

- world. The Jubilee that Pope Francis has proclaimed has a life-giving theme: *Spes non confundit!* Hope does not disappoint! What a marvelous life-giving theme! If the world is in need of one thing at this difficult time, it is precisely Hope, but not the hope of what we believe we can do all by ourselves, which risks becoming an illusion. Rather, it is the Hope of the re-discovery of the Presence of God. Pope Francis writes: "May Hope fill your heart!" May it not only warm the heart but fill it—fill it to overflowing!
- **Hope makes us pilgrims**; the Jubilee is a pilgrimage! It sets you in motion inside; otherwise it is not "Jubilee." In the midst of this Church event that makes us feel like Church, we, as the Salesian Congregation and as the Salesian Family, will celebrate an important anniversary. In 2025, will be
- **the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition to Argentina.**

From Valdocco, Don Bosco casts his heart beyond all borders: he sends his sons to the other side of the world! He sends them, beyond all human security. He sends them even when he does not have a sufficient number necessary to carry on what he had already begun.

He just sends them and that is it for Hope must be obeyed since Hope guides Faith and sets Charity in motion. He sends them and these first confreres depart and go forth where they do not even know! From there we were all born, from the Hope that sets us on a journey and makes us pilgrims.

This anniversary should be celebrated, as should every anniversary, so as to help us recognize the Gift (it is not your property, it was given to you as a gift), to remember, and to give strength for the future, from the

dynamic power of the Mission. Hope is the foundation of the Mission because Hope is a responsibility that you cannot hide or keep to yourself! Do not hide what is given to you; recognize the Donor and hand over with your life to the next generations what has been given to you! This is the life of the Church, the life of each one of us.

St. Peter, who saw far ahead, wrote in his first Letter: "Always be ready to respond to anyone who asks you to account for the Hope that is in you!" (1 Peter 3:15). We must think that responding does not mean using only words; rather, it is our life that is the response!

With the Hope that is in you, may you live and prepare for this new year to come, making a journey with the young and with our brothers and sisters to renew Don Bosco's Dream and God's Dream.

Our coat of arms

"On my *labarum*[2] shines a star," they once sang. On our coat of arms, in addition to the star, a large anchor and a burning heart stand out.

These are simple images which begin to move our hearts towards the time to come: "Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people." "Anchored" is a very strong term: the anchor is the salvation of the ship in the midst of a storm; it is firm and strong, rooted in Hope!

Within this life-giving theme is found the entirety of our daily life: the people, situations, and decisions... the "micro" of each of us that is welded with the "macro" of what we will all live together... handing over to God the gift of this time that is given to us. This is so because you must do your part for the Strenna that we will all receive; your daily life must be illuminated

by what we have written and you will receive; otherwise, it will not be Hope, it will not be what your life is based on, and does not put you in "motion" by making you a Pilgrim.

We entrust this journey to the Mother of the Lord, Mother of the Church and our Help of Christians, a Pilgrim of Hope traveling with us.

Endnotes

[1]The term "strenna" immediately refers to the element of gift, and in the Italian linguistic tradition from which it came, it is properly associated with Christmas gifts. In the Piedmontese context in which Don Bosco grew up, it was more the case of a tradition of the New Year's gift that the head of the family gave to his children and the proprietor to his employees. January 1st was known precisely as "the day of the strenna". [The complete text](#)

[2]The Labarum (Greek: **λάβραρον** / *lábaron*) was a Christian imperial standard incorporating the sacred "Chi-Rho" Christogram, which was one of the earliest forms of christogram used by Christians, becoming one of the most familiar and widely used emblems in Christian tradition. It was adapted by emperor Saint Constantine the Great after receiving his celestial vision and dream, on the eve of his victory at the Milvian Bridge in 313 AD.

The Labarum of Constantine was a vexillum[[note 1](#)] that displayed the "Chi-Rho" Christogram, formed from the first two Greek letters of the word "Christ" (Greek: **ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ**, or **Χριστός**) — Chi (**χ**) and Rho (**ρ**). Fashioned after legionary standards, it substituted the form of a cross for the old pagan symbols, and was surmounted by a jewelled wreath of gold containing the monogram of Christ, intersecting Chi (**χ**) and Rho (**ρ**); upon this hung a rich purple banner,[[note 2](#)] beset with gold trim and profuse embroidery. The inscription "**Εν Τούτω Νικᾷ**" (In Hoc Signo Vinces) — "In this sign, conquer" was in all probability inscribed upon the actual standard, although Eusebius mentions that royal portraits of Constantine and his children were integrated.[[note 3](#)] St. Ambrose of Milan later wrote that the Labarum was consecrated by the Name of Christ.[[1](#)]

As a new focal point for Roman unity, the monogram appeared on coins, shields, and later public buildings and churches.[[2](#)] From 324 the Labarum with the "Chi-Rho" Christogram was the official standard of the Roman Empire. [More information.](#)



*Haledon Provincial Sr. Colleen Clair, Mother General Chiara Cazzuola, and San Antonio Provincial Sr. Thuy Hong Nguyen, FMAs
Courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*

Visit of Mother Chiara Cazzuola to the United States

BY SR. TERESA GUTIERREZ, FMA

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians have been eagerly anticipating the arrival of Mother Chiara Cazzuola, the tenth successor of their co-foundress, St. Mary Mazzarello. Mother Chiara visited the United States on September 9, 2024, arriving in San Antonio, TX. While some of the sisters had already met her, there was a sense of excitement and joy as they welcomed her to the country. Mother Chiara carries forward the mission of animation, governance, formation, and spiritual guidance in the spirit of St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello, serving in over ninety countries.

From September 10-15, 2024, the seminar “For a Generative Animation” was held at the provincial house of Mary Immaculate Province (SUO) in San Antonio. This seminar was part of the NAC Interprovincial Conference, which included the provinces of West United States (SUO) and East United States and Canada (SEC). Mother Chiara was joined by five members of the General Council—Sr. Nilza Fatíma de Moraes, Sr. Leslie Sándigo, Sr. Maria Ausilia De Siena, Sr. Ena Veralís Bolaños, and Sr. Phyllis Neves—who had recently come from Mexico after attending the CIMAC Seminar.

Sr. Thuy Huong Nguyen, SUO provincial, and Sr. Colleen Clair, provincial of St. Joseph Province (SEC), along with their provincial councils and teams, comprising thirty-six FMAs, were part of this historic event. The seminar focused on synodality, generativity, and the service of authority. Mother Chiara reflected on how St. Mary Mazzarello lived these principles in Mornese and how they can be implemented today within the Salesian charism.

The participants found the seminar to be a profoundly enriching experience, thanks to the simplicity and care shown by Mother Chiara and the General Council members. Their presence was indeed a true blessing for the Interprovincial Conference, adding significant value to the event.

After visiting the Sisters in Texas and California, Mother Chiara, accompanied by Sr. Phyllis, arrived in Newark, NJ. A motorcycle patrol unit escorted them to the provincial house of the SEC province in Haledon, NJ. Over the weekend, members of the Salesian Family, the Provincial Youth Council, and the sisters' families gathered to welcome Mother Chiara in a typical Salesian manner: warmly, with plenty of hugs and big smiles. This warm welcome truly highlighted the sense of community and belonging within the Salesian Family. Mother Chiara took time to inspire, encourage, and engage with each Salesian Family Group's representative(s) and the Provincial Youth Council members representing the province.

There were so many memorable moments that stick out as unique; some were:

- **We prayed together** in Holy Mass and with the choir of students from Mary Help of Christians to Don Bosco Prep. The high school students sang and lifted our hearts and minds to God as one holy family.



*The Sisters treat Mother Chiara to ice cream at Carvel.
Courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*

- **We laughed together** at a story about St. Mary Mazzarella telling her sisters and students to dress their best because a special guest was coming. Then, a cow waltzed in wearing a fancy hat. With her quick wit, Mother Chiara said, "I am the cow." The audience erupted with laughter, and Mother Chiara did, too.
- **We shared stories of our lives and apostolates.**
- **We witnessed a performance** by the Mary Help of Christians students, who sang an Elvis Presley song a cappella: "Wise Men Say," and a dance by three talented students.

Like Maria Mazzarello, Mother Chiara exhibited the same deep affection for the FMAs and all with whom she came in contact, revealing her interconnectedness with her God and others. Her words to the FMAs and guests arise from her deep conviction that God is always present to us, walking with us on life's journey. She echoes, unconsciously perhaps, the words God spoke through the prophet: I will never forget you, my people (Isaiah 49:15).

Mother Chiara personally delivered a special gift to each FMA and the guests attending her welcoming event. The gift was a key chain with an image of a mountain and a mustard seed, symbolizing, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, no mountain is too high!" With faith, nothing is impossible.

Throughout her visit, Mother Chiara demonstrated joy, warmth, and attentiveness, embodying the spirit of Mother Mary Domenica Mazzarello. The sisters expressed deep gratitude for her time with them, cherishing the experience as a special moment in their shared journey.



*Salesian Family with "Don Bosco" and "Mary Help of Christians" in Fatima
Courtesy of ADMA International Congress's Facebook*

The Story and Message of Fatima

Part I

BY FR. JOHN PUNTINO, SDB

Every four years, ADMA holds an international congress that brings together its members as well as many other Salesian family members from around the world. It aims to deepen reflection on the Marian dimension of our Salesian spirituality and mission. The 2024 ADMA International Congress took place in Fatima.

Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Shrine of Fatima and former theology professor, gave the first conference. He connected the events and message of the apparitions of the Angel of Peace and Our Lady to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco with the essentials of our Christian faith.

The Story and Studies

He began his talk making reference to the critical studies of the records concerning the apparitions. There are three cycles. The first is that of the Angel of Peace and of Portugal in 1916 teaching the three young shepherds a prayer, exhorting them to pray and make reparation, and finally bringing them Holy Communion.

The main cycle of apparitions is those from May to October 1917. Mary asks the children to pray the rosary and she tells them that Jesus wants to use them to make her known and to establish devotion to her Immaculate Heart. The apparitions

include the three secrets and the miracle of the sun.

The third cycle of apparitions, called the *Cordimarian* (Immaculate Heart of Mary) cycle, took place when Lucia was in Spain as a Dorothea nun. In 1925 Mary spoke of the first Saturday devotions. In 1929 she asked for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

In 1921, between the second and third cycle and after the death of Jacinta and Francisco, but before leaving for the convent, Lucia received a personal apparition. Mary tells Lucia it is God's will that she leave Fatima.

The message of Fatima includes both the content of the apparitions and the life witness of visionaries.

From the time of the apparitions to the present, Fr. Cabecinhas notes, there is a sequence of phases in the study of Fatima. First, the inquiry into the events and their canonical recognition; second, an apologetic and catechetical reading of the message, lasting until the 1960s. In this phase the message was published and seen to be in line with Catholic doctrine. Then came a more theological and pastoral approach with a critical study of the sources. During this same period the Salesians began a similar more critical study of Don Bosco resulting in a more accurate understanding of his spirituality and mission. The fourth stage reflects similar efforts of the Salesian Historical Institute for Salesian sources, that of producing critical editions of the documentation on Fatima and holding congresses to go deeper into its message.

The fifth and current phase is that of making a critical synthesis of Fatima and its message, moving from a political to other interpretative readings.

Light, beauty and joy radiate from Mary who enjoys the full benefit of life in Christ.

The Message

Earlier in his talk Fr. Cabecinhas remarked, "When we speak of the 'message of Fatima,' we are referring first and foremost to the content of these apparitions, but also to the life witness of the seers, two of whom are canonized."

The heart of the message of Fatima is the "Gospel of the Trinity," contained in the words and gestures of the Angel of Peace and Our Lady. The response to the atheism of the 20th century and to the religious indifference of today is adoration of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To live radically centered on God.

The Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection also shines through the apparitions and message. Light, beauty and joy radiate from Mary who enjoys the full benefit of life in Christ. The Eucharist and meditation on the mysteries of the rosary also give expression to the Paschal character of the message of Fatima.

Fatima also maintains a strong presence of the Holy Spirit forming the Church. Fr. Cabecinhas quotes Pope Benedict XVI who spoke soon after his visit to the Shrine. "It was a renewed Pentecost. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was in our midst. This is the typical experience of the great Marian Shrines: wherever Christians gather in prayer with Mary, the Lord gives his Spirit"

(Regina Caeli message, May 23, 2010).

The vision of the bishop dressed in white, the pilgrim Christians suffering persecution and the request to build a chapel reflect the ecclesial dimension of Fatima. The Church is the living stones of those gathered to celebrate the Presence of Christ.

This leads to Fatima's emphasis on the Eucharist not only as the living presence of Christ but of the mystery of the Holy Trinity bringing us into the mystery of saving communion.

Another emphasis of Fatima is that of conversion expressed most importantly in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The clearest dimension of the message of Fatima is that of Mary as Our Lady of the Rosary and devotion to her Immaculate Heart. This devotion emphasizes Mary as intercessor and exemplar of one who radiates and spreads the light of God. In the Bible, heart means the whole of one's inner life, intelligence, memory, will and love. Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means following her total dedication to God: Your will be done.

Part II will be featured next month.



Salesian Family Events



Promotional image for World Rosary Day
Courtesy of worldrosaryday.com

Calling All Salesian Family Members for World Rosary Day

When: Monday, October 7

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Online

Join Catholics worldwide on October 7, 2024, for World Rosary Day as we pray the Holy Rosary for the success of the Jubilee Year 2025.

Inspired by Pope Francis' call for a global "symphony of prayer," this initiative will see the Rosary recited globally at 7:00 p.m. your local time.

Click here to join!



Vocation Formation Day at the Marian Shrine

When: Friday, October 11

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Place: Lee Hall, Marian Shrine, Stony Point, NY

Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, invites the entire Salesian Family to participate in this Vocation Formation Day.

For those who can only participate virtually,
please email Br. Rafael Vargas, SDB, at brafsdb@gmail.com.

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO
Vocation Formation Day

Friday, October 11, 9:00am-5:30pm
Lee Hall, Marian Shrine, Stony Point, NY
*Day Begins with Mass
Lunch and Dinner Provided*

Main Speaker: Fr. David Ruchinski

Fr. David has experience ministering at the University of Florida Student Center where 50 young people have entered religious life & seminary.

Topic: The Eucharist – Center of Vocation Culture
All members of the Salesian Family are invited.



Scan to register:


Advertisement for Vocation Formation Day
Courtesy of Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB



NAC Catechetical Series Session III

Topic: "The Identity of Catechesis"

Presenter: Sr. Theresa Kelly, FMA

When: Saturday, October 26

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. EST/8:00 to 9:15 a.m. PST

Place: Zoom (*The Zoom link will be sent to participants who register via the registration form*)

Register here!





A boy about to make his First Communion stands in front of a Marian grotto holding a candle.
Courtesy of Iana Pronicheva from Getty Images

Who is the webinar open to?

The webinars are open to FMAs and our lay collaborators who share the catechetical ministry with us: in our schools, faith formation programs, and youth ministry. The Sisters can share this registration form with them and invite them to participate as a means of ongoing formation as catechists. If they need a certificate of participation to verify their attendance, that can be provided after the webinar.

Why are we having this conference?

In September of 2022, Sr. Runita Borga, FMA and her youth pastoral team saw the need to provide for the implementation of one of the topics dealt with at GC 24. "We are convinced that the proclamation of Jesus is the priority mission of the Institute and that, in the Church, we are catechists by vocation." (cf. C 70) (Acts of GC 24, #30). The Acts of GC24 call for: "giving a new impulse to the process of evangelization, the first proclamation of Jesus, and to catechesis."

One of the ways the youth pastoral sector is doing this is by establishing an International Catechetical Commission to foster this new "impulse" throughout the Institute. The commission has planned a number of webinars in the various languages. The first presentation was: "The Catechetical and Evangelizing Identity of the FMA Institute." The second was: "An Overview of the Directory of Catechesis." This is the third presentation.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please contact Sr. Theresa Kelly directly at fmatk13@gmail.com about the webinar or Sr. Brittany Harrison for questions about the registration form.



Promotional image for the training
Courtesy of The Chastity Project



Navigating Gender Dysphoria in Youth

from The Chastity Project

Speaker: Jason Evert

Video duration: 1 hour and 8 minutes

Who Is This Course For?

- **Teachers:** Navigate the complexities of gender identity in the classroom.
- **Youth Ministers:** Communicate the Church's teachings with understanding and compassion.
- **Directors and Coaches:** Address concerns about sports, bathrooms, and more with informed perspectives.
- **Parents:** Learn to support your child or their friends with truth and love.
- **Anyone Working with Youth:** Understand the difference between being transgender and having gender dysphoria, and how to respond with both charity and clarity.
- **Young people:** Play the videos to your students and help them gain valuable insights.

What You'll Learn

- **Health Impacts:** Discover the often-overlooked irreversible health risks of transitioning and explore safer alternatives.
- **Statistical Insights:** Get a clear picture of what studies and statistics reveal about the long-term effects of transitioning
- **Historical Context:** Learn the history of gender dysphoria and transgender identity to understand the current cultural climate better.
- **Practical Scenarios:** How to handle gender in sports, bathrooms, and other sensitive areas.
- **Myths vs. Truths:** Debunk common misconceptions about gender dysphoria with evidence-based information.

Purchase here!



In Memoriam



Salesian Family Formation Opportunity



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

- Venue: MHCA
- 8:30am - 4:30pm
- Part I: History
- Oct. 26 & 27, 2024
- Part II: Animation
- Jan. 2 & 3, 2025

Open to all!

For details & to register: [click here](#)

Part III: TBD - Feb. 2025

*St. John Bosco's Salesian Family History & Animation advertisement
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

Register here!



Photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Fr. Dennis Donovan, SDB



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Strenna 2025

"Anchored in hope, pilgrims with young people"



Maria Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis!