



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far

► **STEPHAN SÁNDOR COMES HOME**

His story is very special, especially to youth.

A RENEWED SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS

The Salesian places are so important to us,
the Salesian Family.

ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

We are called to be good stewards of
our common home.





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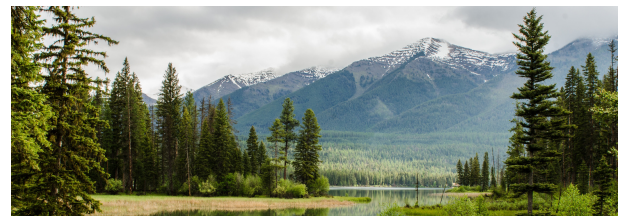
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Sept. 22: Bl. Joseph Calasanz, SDB, and 94 Companions, Martyrs

Oct. 5: Bl. Albert Marvelli, EXA-DB

Oct. 13: Bl. Alexandrina da Costa, Salesian Cooperator

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.

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*Entering from an outside door
Photo by Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

Stephan Sándor Comes Home

A series of miraculous coincidences surrounded and enhanced the solemn celebration for the blessing of the relics of Blessed Stephen Sandor, who had been martyred for "being a Salesian."

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

Cordial greetings, my friends, readers of the *Salesian Bulletin* and friends of Don Bosco's charism. I know that speaking of anything that refers to armed conflicts and totalitarian regimes of one or another ideological ilk is always a delicate matter because it touches people in many different ways. There is "family heritage" in terms of political positions and then there is the cultural environment in which one lives. Although I am aware of this, history cannot be changed. It can be rewritten to fall short of the truth, but that does not change what happened. In the case I wish to relate, it is the history of a young Salesian of Don Bosco, a Brother, Stephan Sándor.

Stephan Sándor is not a young man whom I met on one of my trips but he was a young Salesian martyred in Hungary and now beatified. At the age of thirty-nine, Stephan was sentenced to death and executed during the dark years of communist rule in Hungary. Of what crime was he accused? He would gather boys for sports, youth activities, and to teach them a trade. This was considered high treason to the regime.

Yet Stephan's story is very special: in terms of his conviction, how he saved the lives of six young people who were arrested with him, his execution, his burial in a common and unmarked grave, and how his body was found seventy years later with the help of Martin, a former student along with three professionals who are experts in history and DNA evidence. This discovery made it possible for me to go to Budapest, Hungary, on June 4, 2022, to the Clarisseum to celebrate the Blessed's return home to the same place from which he had been taken to the gallows. Additionally, after seventy years, the land and the house from which they were once expelled and into which they were forbidden to enter ever again has now been returned to the Salesians of Don Bosco.

The Clarisseum reopened

The photograph in which you see us entering from an outside door shows us making a step that no one could have made in the last seventy years, until today. I am telling you

this because I sincerely believe that despite the difficulties that we are seeing, even at this present moment in European and world history, God continues to have the last word, the definitive one, about life and death. So it has been with the young Salesian, Br. Stephan Sándor.

I owe him my life

Stephan prevented six young people from being executed with him. In one of the photographs, you see me with a man sitting in a wheelchair. His wife could not come because she was very ill. He was one of the six young people who, at the age of 22, were arrested along with Stephan for being considered traitors to the regime. After a very harsh interrogation with torture, the young Salesian managed to talk to the six young people at one point and asked them to blame him for whatever they were being accused of by the communists. Although the young people resisted, he told them that because of both the friendship that united them and their faith in Jesus, they had to do so to save their lives. And that is what happened—that is what this former student, a former youth animator at the Clarisseum, told me. Indeed, Stephan was sentenced to death, and the young men were sentenced to eight years in prison. Fortunately, our friend told me, three years later, the communist regime fell in Hungary, and his sentence was repealed.

The DNA from a postage stamp

For seventy years, Br. Stephan's body lay in unknown whereabouts. He had been executed and buried in a common grave



(center) Man who had been saved by Bl. Stephan Sándor
Photo by Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)



Reliquary with the remains of Bl. Stephan Sándor
Photo by Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

with five others, in a forest on the outskirts of Budapest, without any indication or name that could give clues as regards who or what was there. The burial took place at night without leaving any trace—precisely what those who had executed him intended. For seventy years, the conviction was held that it would be impossible to find his remains. Yet the tenacity of a young ex-student coupled with the experience and great knowledge of an expert on the history of those years in Budapest (who went so far as to say where she sensed they might be buried from what was known

of many other burials from that time), caused the mortal remains of six executed men to be found a few months ago. It seemed incredible that they had found just the remains of six people. It remained to be seen if one of them could be Blessed Stephan.

The DNA from a stamp—it was the DNA that was collected from a letter written by Stephan and from another letter with a stamp put on it by his brother (who spent his whole life looking for Stephan without being able to see it realized because he died three years ago) that allowed two great professionals to identify many of Stephan's mortal remains, remains now collected in that delicate reliquary that we see. It was my great joy to meet and greet these experts in DNA recognition techniques.

On account of the above and in many other details, what we have experienced is unique. I can testify to the emotion and even shock of many people at Mass that morning. Sharing in it throughout that day was indescribable. I can testify to the emotion of the now old man who was able to lay his hand on the reliquary of his Salesian-educator, friend, and martyr who saved his and his peers' lives, who sacrificed himself to free them from the same end. I can testify from what I have experienced that this is not a coincidence; it's much more than that. It is the presence of God in the events of history (along with human freedom). That is why I can affirm what I said at the beginning: Blessed Stephan Sándor returns home. And the Salesians today, with the young people who are there and those who will come, also return home, to his house, to the Clarisseum in Budapest, Hungary.



In, With, and For the Church



Bl. Artemides Zatti
Photo courtesy of www.sdb.org

Canonization Date Announced *for Blessed Artemides Zatti*

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.CATHOLICNEWSAGENCY.COM, 08/27/2022

At the consistory on Saturday, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, announced that the pope set Oct. 9 as the date for the canonization of Blessed Artemides Zatti together with Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. Pope Francis previously approved the canonization in a degree promulgated on May 21, 2022.

Artemides Zatti was born in Italy, but emigrated to Argentina with his family in 1897, at the age of 16. The family left their homeland due to extreme poverty. At the age of nine, Zatti was already helping his parents by working as a farmhand. The pope gave his approval on April 9 to a miracle received through Zatti's intercession, paving the way for his canonization as a saint. As a young man, Zatti attended a Catholic parish run by the Salesians of Don Bosco in the Argentine town of Bahía Blanca. At 20 years old, he joined the candidacy to become a Salesian priest. While living in the Salesian community, Zatti contracted tuberculosis after caring for a young priest with the disease. One of the Salesian priests, a medical doctor, suggested that Zatti pray for the intercession

of Mary Help of Christians, making a promise that if he was healed, he would devote his life to helping the sick. Zatti willingly made the promise and was healed of the tuberculosis. He later said about the event: "I believed, I promised, I was healed."

The young Italian immigrant gave up the idea of the priesthood and became a Salesian Coadjutor Brother, a lay role, so that he could devote himself to service in the medical field. In 1915, at the age of 35, Zatti became the director of the Salesian-run hospital in Viedma, a city in central Argentina. Two years later, he also became the manager of the pharmacy and received his license as a professional nurse. Zatti not only worked in the hospital, but also traveled to the peripheries of Viedma and the neighboring city of Carmen de Patagones to treat people in need, and his reputation as a saintly nurse spread throughout that area of Argentina. Zatti always saw Jesus in each of his patients. Some people even recalled seeing him carry the body of a patient who had died during the

night to the mortuary as he recited the *De Profundis*, a prayer for the dead which comes from the text of Psalm 130.

People who knew him said that Zatti carried out his service to the sick with heroic sacrifice and that he radiated the light of God, even bringing some unbelievers to faith.

In 1950, after falling from a ladder, Zatti began to show signs of liver cancer. He continued to work, but on March 15, 1951, at the age of 70, he died from the disease. Artemides Zatti is the first Salesian coadjutor to be declared a saint.



Live Jesus with St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco

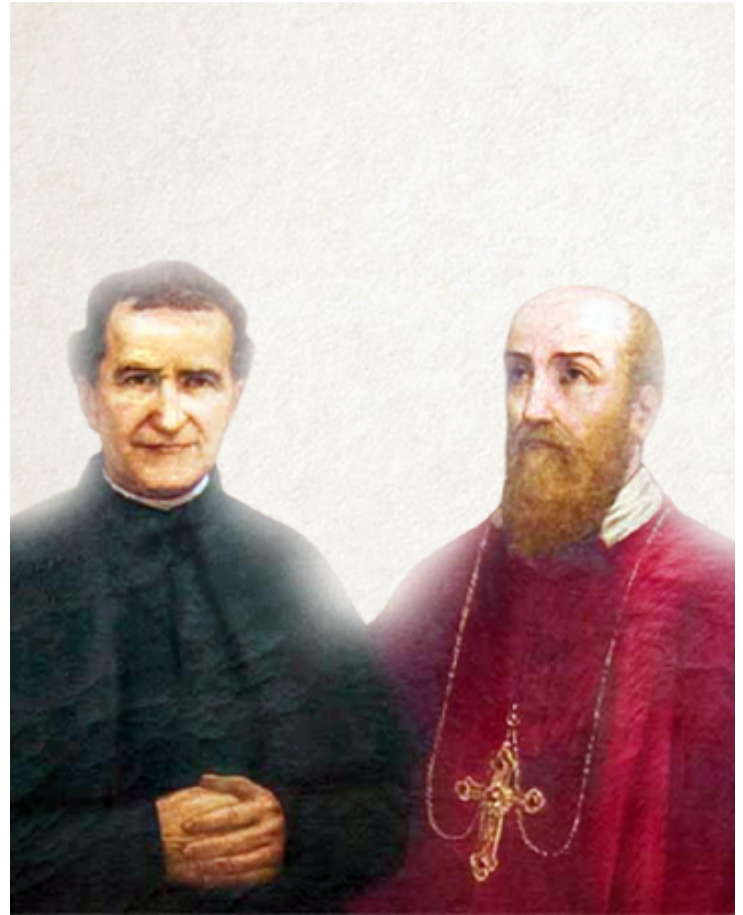
Quoted from pages 52-53

BY FR. EUNAN MCDONNELL, SDB

'The mortifications prized in Salesian thought are not visible and heroic, but ordinary and unobtrusive. Patiently enduring the pains of work rather than long fasts, practicing charity towards an unlikeable neighbor rather than wearing a hair-shirt, curbing the immoderate impulses of one's own heart rather than assaulting one's sensual flesh—these are the preferred methods of Salesian asceticism.'

This Beatitudinal response of gentleness runs contrary to the wisdom of the world which seeks to assert oneself over others, even if it requires violence to do so. It is true that Francis cannot be claimed as a Christian pacifist like the 'Quakers and other peace groups of the radical reformation who bore witness in the person and message of Jesus by which holy war was not holy and just war was not just.' Nevertheless, he did see himself and devout individuals as called to making Jesus live as Peace. Francis' early mission to the Chablais, his youthful plans to retake the city of Geneva by prayer and fasting, his intervention in public embroilments, his own personal struggles to transform his anger into the peace of Christ: all these attest to the rightfulness of his reputation as a peacemaker.'

Gentleness opens our minds and hearts to listen. It is our allegiance to Salesian gentleness that allows us to promote "a



St. John Bosco and St. Francis de Sales

Original forefront photo courtesy of www.sdb.org and redesigned by Julia St. Clair

vision for a nonviolent, Christ-Centered Catholicism," open to dialogue. Accordingly, we give a prophetic witness of a community willing to live the gentleness of Christ with "profound *humility* before God" and "great *gentleness* for others." Herein lies the spiritual affinity between St. Francis de Sales and Don Bosco and reveals the charismatic identity of Salesian spirituality. If prayer understood as *friendship with Christ* distinguishes Carmelites; if *discernment of spirits* distinguishes Jesuits; if *handing on the fruits of contemplation in preaching* characterizes the Dominicans, then the feature which distinguishes the charisma of Salesian spirituality is *living Jesus who is gentle and humble of heart*. It is important to note here that 'Don Bosco was not merely satisfied with practicing gentleness, serenity, and joy himself,' but 'kept promoting them in the very churches he built. It is interesting to note that the "ritual pastors" of these four churches personify love with overtones of gentleness and compassion: Francis de Sales, John the Evangelist, Mary Help of Christians, and the very heart of Christ.'



*Sisters who were in formation and on pilgrimage gaze over at Mornese
Photo courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*

Very First FMAs of Mornese: Sr. Catherine Mazzarello, Pt. 2

COMPILED BY SR. JUDITH SUPRYS, FMA

Sr. Catherine Mazzarello was born in Mornese on May 30, 1834. She died in Alassio on May 14, 1877, after about five-and-a-half years of religion. She was one of the eleven first FMAs to make profession in the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on August 5, 1872.

Sr. Catherine was good-natured, peaceful and very active at work. She took care to keep herself continually in the presence of God; she was very mortified in the use of her eyes and impeccable in the observance of the Constitutions.

Alassio

In 1876, a community of Sisters was established in Alassio, a school of the Salesian priests in the Diocese of Albenga. The Sisters chosen for this House, which Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello had very much at heart, were Sr. Josephine Pacotto, Superior; Sr. Catherine Mazzarello, Vicar; the novices, Sr. Maria Cappelletti, Philomena Bologna and Josephine Brunero; and the postulant, Rosalia Ronchail.

The House was small, unsuitable, without any conveniences. They were even without a dinner table, so that each Sister had to take her plate, and then find where to rest it in order to eat.

Little wonder then that the poor things, despite all their good will, had eyes filled with tears, and hearts at Mornese. The Sisters, however, rose to meet the challenges, and in the Salesian Directors Annual Report, on February 6, 1877 Don Rua commented that at Alassio the Sisters took the thought of the kitchen and of catechism for the girls. He noted having the blessing of the Sisters there, since this was the only school where there were no complaints at all about the food.

The Eternal Reward

Towards the end of February Don Bosco visited the FMA community at Alassio. By this time, Sr. Catherine Mazzarello, together with two other Sisters, was quite ill. The Superior asked him for a blessing for these sick Sisters, especially Sr. Catherine who was the vicar. Sr. Catherine was well on the way to recovery from the streptococcus infection which, all during the month of April, had kept her wavering between life and death. Later, certain that she would soon be well, she had returned to the common dormitory. During the night of May 13-14, she was heard to sigh; then in a sublime whisper: "Oh, Jesus, take me with you." The next morning she could not rise, and was in such

an extremity of weakness, that the Last Sacraments were administered. While she was apparently dozing, a sudden fit of coughing took her away to Jesus.

Don Bosco sent words of sympathy and consolation to the Superior, promising that Mother Mazzarello would come. Accompanied by Fr. Costamagna she went to visit them, for they were still weighed down by the sorrow of Sister Catherine Mazzarello's death. When she arrived, she spoke to each one individually, encouraging them to look after their health, not to yield to discouragement and to do all they could, calmly and without agitation.



Pilgrimage 2022



A Renewed Sense of Connectedness *Reflection of a Pilgrim*

BY SR. MYRIAM MEUS, FMA

We, the pilgrims who made their journey under the guidance of Fr. Thomas Dunne and Sr. Denise Sickinger, had spent a whole year preparing to participate in the World Meeting of Families in Rome. It was a great privilege for me to be part of the group who went to Rome for this occasion. Yet before we arrived in Rome, our journey took us to diverse places in Italy. These places are holy, historical, and important to our Church and our Salesian Family.

Thinking of all the churches, basilicas, houses, and towns that we visited, where different Saints were born or had lived, leaves me with a sense of awe and frankly overwhelms me. This has been a trip that will take a lifetime to unpack. From the moment we entered the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin to the Papal Mass in Rome, we walked the holiest and most historic grounds of our Catholic Church, beginning with our Salesian holy ground in Italy.

Our visit to the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians reminded me of the great vision of Don Bosco. As a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, to be present in the Church that Don Bosco built as a monument of gratitude to Mary urged my heart to sing in praise and thanksgiving to the Most High. It has truly given me the chance to feel the intimate presence of Mary in



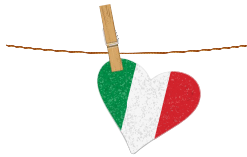
Sr. Myriam Meus, FMA, prays at the tomb of Don Bosco in Valdocco
Photo by Fr. Tom Dunne, SDB

my life. I have reflected on her presence in Don Bosco's life from the very beginning. Mary has always been a pivotal help in all Don Bosco's works. Having toured the Salesian Museum in Valdocco and seen some of Don Bosco's personal belongings gave me a new sense of closeness with our founder. God walks in humble ways with us, human beings; if we persevere and have trust in Him, He will do great things through us.

When we arrived at Nizza Monferrato, the second Mother house of the Salesian Sisters, I imbibed even more of our Salesian world. I entered the room where our foundress, Mother Mazzarello, had lived for two years before she entered eternity. "This was the room where Mother Mazzarello had said her last words before going back to the Father," my heart kept telling me. We had toured Mornese, a little village that had seen the birth of the great foundress of the Salesian Sisters. We marveled at the pure nature of Mornese. We stopped at the Collegio, where the first Salesian Sisters lived, and the chapel where they pronounced their first vows. There, Sr. Denise and I renewed our vows, just as thousands of Sisters have done over the years. We posed at the window at the Valponasca, where Mother Mazzarello used to gaze at the Lord from afar. This experience has helped me to better understand

that we are part of a great legacy, one that began over a hundred years ago.

The Salesian places are so important to us, the Salesian Family. Our having walked these grounds gave us a renewed sense of connectedness. After we left Mornese, we continued our journey in Assisi, Perugia, Orvieto, and finally in Rome.



To be continued



In the Salesian Family Know



He Made Us with a Purpose *Laudato Si' Action Platform, Pt. 1*

BY SR. JANNA SAN JUAN, FMA

"Go outside and find something that catches your eye in nature. When you find it, stay with it for ten minutes and listen to how God is speaking to you through it." These were the instructions from a priest who led a workshop I once attended. While this sounded a little hippie-naturalist, even to my environmentally-inclined ears, I went with it. To my delight, it turned out to be one of my best meditation experiences, and I've never forgotten what God said to me through it.

This was not the only time I heard His voice so clearly through nature. He uses all of His creation to speak to us in some way. One in-your-face example is a beautiful sunset. The dramatic swirls, scattered puffs, and brush strokes against a gradient sky are simply products of temperature and pressure directing the water droplets in the air, yet it captivates our full attention because it speaks deeply of the beauty, richness and creativity of God. "If this is what I can do with water droplets, imagine what I can do with you, a living being made in My image and likeness," I hear Him say. It is a simple, nature-made reminder that He made me and my fellow sisters and brothers with a purpose. These physical realities point to the unseen reality that each person, no matter how afflicted by worldly illness or addiction, is more beautiful and loved than these water droplets. This is one way in which my ecological spirituality



*Sr. Janna and her environmental science students collaborate as they plant cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower at the Academy of Our Lady's school garden
Photo by Sr. Janna San Juan, FMA*

makes God more accessible to me.

As an engineer by trade and a current science teacher, I've often sat in wonder at the pairing of the natural and supernatural—the intimate union between the physical world and God's love and intelligent design manifested through it. This awareness of God's presence is one part of what Pope Francis calls an "ecological conversion," "whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them" (*Laudato Si'*, #217). An ecological conversion, like a conversion of faith, changes the way you see everything to the extent to which you allow God to speak to you. Pope Francis also said that "The Canadian bishops rightly pointed out that no creature is excluded from this manifestation of God: 'From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine'" (*Laudato Si'*, #85). This type of conversion is not just a bonus, nor is it an occasional devotion. Pope Francis goes on to say that "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." Listening to God's voice through his creation is our responsibility. When this sense of wonder and awe changes us in the depths of our being, we can then authentically express this



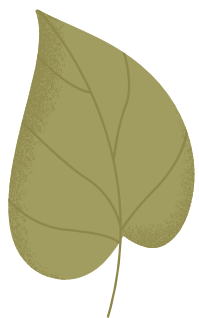
A sunset behind the Salesian Youth Center at St. Rosalie's Church in Harvey, LA, provides inspiration for prayer
Photo by Sr. Janna San Juan, FMA



Amy during a visit to Letchworth State Park in Western NY State
Photo by Amy Stockinger

overflowing praise in external ways, such as in Masses and other liturgies that give thanks for creation.

From the most recent FMA General Chapter, a deliberation brought about the mandatory focus on *Laudato Si'*. Through this, various efforts will be aimed toward incorporating integral ecology into our prayer, community life and mission. Our Province, in particular, made a commitment to having every community registered on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. As a wider Salesian Family, we are called to preserve this earth for our current young people and those that come after them. "The external deserts in the world are growing because the internal deserts have become so vast" (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI). As we know with a conversion of faith, when you take care of the interior life, the exterior changes: our actions and decisions revolve around this newfound love. Like a conversion, you might not change anything about your daily routine, but you will see everything in a different light.



Click on the links below and access
SEC Pastoral Plan resources prepared by our
Salesian Sisters and young people:

- Examination of Conscience: Cry of the Poor*
- Reflection Questions: Cry of the Poor*
- Prayer Service: Cry of the Poor*

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles *Laudato Si' Action Platform, Pt. 2*

BY AMY STOCKINGER, OFFICE SUPPORT
MANAGER, PROVINCIAL OFFICES OF VOCATIONS
AND YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

The Zero Waste Movement is often categorized by the image of a small glass mason jar filled with a few scraps of garbage that serve as the entire waste created by that person in one year. For most of us, this probably seems like an impossible feat. Everything from food to hygienic products to clothing comes with varying levels of packaging and waste (e.g., containers, stickers, tags). Yet, as Salesians and as Catholics, we are called to adopt sustainable lifestyles—to be good stewards of our common home.

We are aware by now that the decisions that countries like the United States and Canada make have impacts on developing countries (particularly on the poorest members of those developing countries). Our choices impact their qualities of life and their ability to see the glory of God through His Creation. The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform lists several different options for adopting sustainable lifestyles. For me, I see a two-fold need for change: personal change and global change.

Here are some steps you can take through personal change:

1. **Trash Can Inventory:** Go through your trash (mentally or physically) and take account of what particular waste you generate.
2. **Google Search:** Do a quick internet search to see if there are "zero waste" alternatives you didn't know about for the items filling your trash.
3. **Pick Your Swaps:** Decide which alternatives you are going to start incorporating into your day-to-day rhythms. Remember, you don't have to do it all and you don't have to start everything at once!

It's also important to note that being more conscious about your waste isn't about spending more money—there are many free sustainable swaps (or swaps that help you save money) like "Buy Nothing Groups" on Facebook and buying secondhand.

By way of global change, here are some ways to ensure that companies are held more accountable for the waste they produce:

1. **Political Support:** Vote for politicians who represent concerns for the poor and the environment. Express support for local, national, and global initiatives that prioritize the poor and the environment by contacting the responsible representatives.
2. **Vote with Your Dollar:** In a capitalist society, it is crucial to show corporations what's important to you by purchasing from companies that are more sustainably minded and by buying package-free options from corporations who may not have any interest in sustainability. This will encourage these companies to keep creating or selling these products.



If all else fails, remember this quote from Anne-Marie Bonneau: *"We don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly."*

So, what is one sustainable step you can incorporate into your life today that will bring about the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls?



*Young people full of hope smile upon a bright day
Photo courtesy of Br. Rafael Vargas, SDB*

May our Dreams Be our Wings! *The Reality of Youth and Their Future*

BY BR. RAFAEL VARGAS, SDB

"My biggest dream is to finish my studies and have a career in systems engineering (...) to be able to improve myself and grow as a person," says Jesús Gerardo, when asked where he sees himself in a few years. He is 15 years old and currently studying at a second-opportunity high school in the *Proyecto Vamos por Ellas y Ellos* (Let's Go for Him and Her Project), initiated by the *Salesianos de Desarrollo Juvenil del Norte AC* (Salesians of Youth Development of the North AC), in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Like him, thousands of adolescents and young people in vulnerable situations in our region seek to achieve their goals despite the adverse conditions they face daily. Is it really possible for them to achieve their dreams in the face of the socioeconomic reality of their contexts?

According to data provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in Latin America and the Caribbean, high levels of violence and social inequality make it difficult for youth to access decent educational and employment opportunities, especially for those who live in rural places and situations of poverty. Only six out of ten students who enter high school finish;

and of those, only one ends up with the minimum skills required to pursue higher education or enter formal employment. In addition, young people between the ages of 15 and 29 are almost half of the victims of homicidal violence, and the adolescent fertility rate is the second highest in the world; each year, about 1.5 million women between the ages of 15 and 19 become mothers.

Between 2020 and 2021, inequality conditions increased as a result of the pandemic: the number of hours that girls between the ages of 15 and 17 dedicated to domestic activities increased, primary school students only learned 27.5 percent of what they would have learned in a normal year and the number of hours that children, adolescents and youth dedicated to study and academic activities was drastically reduced. It is estimated that 3.5 million students have been left out of school.

The unexpected implementation of virtual education increased the levels of inequality, since access to technology, necessary for its development, was limited for those with lesser economic possibilities. This situation highlights the precarious educational condition that "in addition to academic gaps, has generated a negative impact on learning: it slowed the development of motor and cognitive skills, generated setbacks in study habits and, of course, affected the development of socio-emotional skills, which are acquired in the educational environment, in coexistence with others" says Martina Zurita, psychologist of the Ecuador Salesian Project.

In terms of employment, in 2020, young people in the Americas, between the ages of 15 and 24, recorded the highest rate of transition from formal employment to informality. By 2021, the youth unemployment rate in the region reached 24 percent in the first trimester, the highest level on record. Likewise, youth of working age, from 2019 to 2020, presented an increase in inactivity (they neither study nor work) and a decrease in access to a job with a fixed salary, mainly in the three lowest economic strata. Fr. Alex Figueroa, SDB, a reference for Social Works of the Central American province, tells us that "the loss of employment and the difficulties in accessing it still continue in 2022, since many companies closed operations and this has caused growth of informality (...) Crime has grown and drug trafficking, as a way of life and easy access to economic resources, has also increased."

The IDB (2022), in its report: *How to rebuild post-pandemic education?*, mentions that it is necessary for countries to implement immediate, substantial and effective measures in the face of the large number of young people who have been deprived of education and exposed to higher levels of social, health, economic insecurity, domestic violence and abuse. It proposes, among other things, to put in place rapid identification systems for students at risk, supplementary academic support, interventions to prevent school dropout and promote reintegration into education.

Additionally, it highlights the importance of equipping young people with global citizenship skills and the mental well-being they need to excel in school, at work, and in life.

In this sense, the Salesians in America provide comprehensive care for the various needs of children, adolescents and youth, through works and social services; as is the case of Ranneyris, a young Venezuelan migrant who arrived in Bogotá nine months ago and participates in the CAJOV program of the John Bosco the Worker Center, where she receives technical-labor education, food and psychosocial assistance. "I am very grateful because they opened their arms for me, for my sister and for my family, and that is something that I will always have in my heart. Later, if I become a great professional, which with God's favor will be like that, I will not forget the Center or the people who helped me so much," says the young woman, who dreams of being a psychologist or communicator one day.

Sources:

How to rebuild post-pandemic education? Solutions to fulfill the promise of a better future for youth, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 2022.

Social Panorama of Latin America- 2021, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Santiago, 2022.



For additional information on RASS, please contact comunicacion@americasocialsalesiana.org.



*A derivative work of a 3D model of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina
Model completed by Lasha Tskhondia - L.VII.C., CC BY-SA 3.0*

Welcome Home, Lord! *Consecration of the St. Joseph Chapel*

BY SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA

It was about 5:30 pm ET on August 19, 2022, nearing the end of the Dedication Mass of St. Joseph's Chapel at Mary Help of Christians Academy. I knelt in prayer with my gaze fixed on the empty tabernacle with its door open wide and on the shining gold ciborium just in front of it that rested, all by itself, atop the altar that minutes before had been adorned with its gleaming white linen for the first time. While Bishop Sweeney continued to distribute Holy Communion, my mind was transported back to one profound moment of our Salesian Family pilgrimage two months earlier.

It was Wednesday, June 22, at just about that very hour, that we were standing in the middle of the Roman Forum listening to the animated words of our guide, Elizabeth Lev, art history professor at Duquesne University in Rome. She stopped us near the *rostrum*, the platform from which orators, senators, and other statesmen would speak to "friends, Romans, [and] countrymen" trying to persuade them to take up the cause they were advocating. It was precisely the speech that began thus that Liz was referring to at that moment. Marc Antony had just sent for Julius Caesar's will to move the Roman people to his cause: the deification of Caesar, declaring the man a god, thus starting a long chain of such declarations by the Senate and

successive emperors throughout the following centuries.

In fact, an excellent example of this greeted us just after we had entered the Forum from Via della Salara Vecchia. On our left stood the temple dedicated "Divo Antonino et Divae Faustinae"—to the god Antoninus and goddess Faustina—neither of whom was anything more than a mortal human being, even if Antoninus was a fair and just ruler and is acclaimed as one of the five "good emperors." Upon the death of his wife, Faustina, in 140 AD, he had her declared a goddess and this temple dedicated to her. Then, after his own death in 161 AD, Marcus Aurelius, his successor, and the Senate added his name to the frieze adorning the façade, to his glory. Glory, power, wealth, triumph in war, and deification: Liz pointed out that the Romans aimed for all of these.

She also pointed out that the gods the Romans worshipped had the same lusts and vices as they but also the added advantage of wielding their power against the humans. The design of the pagan temple itself illustrates this: it sits high above street level on a *podium*. In order to reach the doors of the temple, one would have had to climb a steep set of

high stairs which led to an open-aired, colonnaded porch. Once there, the only ones allowed to enter through those doors were the priests and attendants—and then only to perform some duty, such as bringing what was left of the offerings to place before the statue of the god who resided behind those locked doors in a completely enclosed, windowless room, the *cella*. All that could be found in that perpetually silent, dark, often smoke-filled and rancid-smelling place was the god or goddess' statue and a place to put the incense and the offerings. The meaning of all this was clear: the god inside, high above you, dwelling in darkness, wants absolutely nothing to do with you, mere mortal. Stay out and stay down where you belong but make sure you leave your offerings on the altar outside the temple and pray I am happy with them lest I harass you, on a good day, or do something that will really mess up your life, on a bad day.

What brought my imagination back to the Roman Forum as I was gazing at the ciborium was what Liz said next: two "nobodies"—a Jewish fisherman and a Jewish Roman citizen from some backwater, god-forsaken place as Palestine—responded to the Romans saying, "No. You have it all backwards—God became Man; not man god. It's not about wealth. It's about Son of God emptying Himself to become Man to save us from sin and eternal death. It's not about being kept at a distance and being controlled by an implacable, cruel god shrouded in darkness. It's about a God who loves us and wants to be with us, one of us in all things but sin, and

who wants to stay with us throughout time, as the Light of the world. It's not about power. It's about getting down on your knees and serving and sharing. It's not about dominating people and nations and rejoicing in triumph at your military victories. It's about rejoicing in triumph at His victory over death in His Resurrection and that because of it, we have been redeemed and forgiven. It's about our being together, in His presence, at Mass with our brothers and sisters, as one, at home, as family."

Despite the persecutions and because of them, for the first three centuries of Christianity, our forebears in faith could not build places of worship so they met in each others' homes—the *domus ecclesiae*, the house church. Here they would gather for Holy Mass, here they would receive instruction in the catechism, here they would be baptized. Here they all felt welcome and loved, all brothers and sisters sharing what they could, and partaking even if they could not share, of the agape meal after Mass. And from here they would go forth to evangelize. They were a family of families and, as Church family, they handed on the Faith from one generation to the next.

Finally, in 313 AD, with the Edict of Milan, Constantine declared that Christianity was not illegal and that persecutions were over. We were now able to build our first public churches. Much thought went into their design so they would express what we believe. They were plain, simple brick

on the outside, much like Christ Himself at the Incarnation in the stable in Bethlehem—God's Glory hidden, robed in Flesh. But on the inside they were luminous and gleaming from the light streaming in from many windows. They were alive with decorations bright with gold and silver—the resplendent God. The doors were opened wide for Christ beckoned all to enter and approach Him without fear. The altar was placed right in the center with everything pointing you in that direction, to the sanctuary to where Christ would become truly present again in Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity at the word of our Priest, around whom all gathered as family. Indeed, many were built right on the spot of those *domus ecclesiae* to honor the Roman owners of the home, oftentimes martyrs themselves for the Faith.

Two thousand years later, our beautiful chapel continues to proclaim these same truths of our Faith both with its structure and in the sacred rites carried out in it. On that day of dedication, it was flooded with bright sunlight, filled with the perfume of the incense that symbolized our prayers rising to our God, and resounded with the majestic instruments and voices of our choir praising our Lord for His Triumph over sin and death. Most important of all, Our Lord became truly present to us again at the word of our Priest. Here among His People He desires to stay.

Holy Communion now over, I watched as that ciborium filled with the remaining consecrated Hosts was placed in the tabernacle just beyond it—the "tent" that had been empty and with its door opened



*Ciborium in the newly completed, consecrated, and reopened St. Joseph Chapel at the Mary Help of Christians Academy in North Haledon, NJ
Photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB*



*Dcn. Branden Gordon, Br. Paul Hotovy, Br. John Castonguay, Fr. Provincial Tim Zak, Br. Francis Nguyen, and Dcn. Joshua Sciuillo
Photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB*

wide during the entire Mass, just waiting to receive its Guest for the first time in His new home. Finally, the Sanctuary Lamp was lit and put into place to declare to the world: "He is here. He is home. Come and rest a while with Him." With deep gratitude and wonder, I prayed in my heart: "Welcome home, Lord!"

SDB Professions

Click on the following links to *read about Salesians of Don Bosco who entered in the novitiate and renewed their profession this past month.*



Salesian Family Gatherings

FMA Professions



*SEC Provincial Sr. Joanne Holloman and Srs. Kathryn Flanagan, April Cabaccang, and April Hoffman
Photo courtesy of Salesian Sisters' Facebook*

Watch the previously recorded live stream and read about the FMA professions in August.



SLMs Commissioned



*Newly commissioned SLMs with their orientation team
Photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB*

Read about the Salesian Lay Missioner (SLM) commissioning and retreat.



Our Family Album

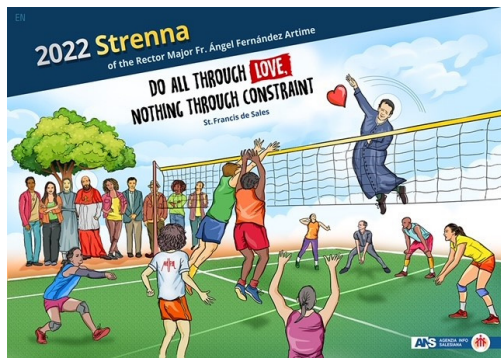


Requiescat in Pace



Maria Kiliveros, Salesian Cooperator

Photo courtesy of Craft Memorial Home



**Let Us Do All Things
Through Love**



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



"Use every opportunity, no matter how small, to be gentle toward everyone."

- St. Francis de Sales



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