

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far





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Some of the representatives for the U.S. and Canada pose with Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime.
Courtesy of Mrs. Amy Stockinger, Program Coordinator, SUE Province Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry



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

communications@salesians.org

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Vicar Fr. Stefano Martoglio, SDB
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

On Wings of Hope

While continuing my service as Vicar in the coming months, quietly, very simply, and completely in continuity, I'll replace the Rector Major in leading the Congregation to the General Chapter, the 29th, in February 2025.

FR. STEFANO MARTOGLIO, SDB

Dear readers of the *Salesian Bulletin*,

I'm about to write these lines with trepidation because, having been a reader of the *Salesian Bulletin* since I was a child in my family, I now find myself on a different page, having to write its first article, the one reserved for the Rector Major. I do so willingly because this honor allows me to give thanks to God for our Don Angel, now a cardinal of Holy Roman Church, who has just finished ten years of valuable service to the Congregation and the Salesian Family, following his election at General Chapter XXVII in 2014.

Ten years later, he's now completely at the service of the Holy Father, to do whatever Pope Francis will entrust to him. We continue to carry him in our hearts and accompany him with grateful prayer for the good he's done for us because time doesn't diminish but, rather, strengthens gratitude. His personal story is a historic event not only for him but also for all of us. Although he leaves us, in the canonical sense, for an even greater service to the Church, he remains always with us and within us.

In complete continuity

Now, as a Congregation, and by extension as a Salesian Family, how do we move forward? Quietly, very simply, and completely in continuity. According to the Salesian Constitutions, the Vicar of the Rector Major also has the task of filling in for or replacing the Rector

Major in case of need. This will be the situation until the next general chapter. The Salesian Constitutions say this in a more organic and articulated way, but this is the fundamental concept. Remaining in my service as Vicar in the coming months, I will replace the Rector Major in leading the Congregation to the General Chapter, the 29th, in February 2025. This is indeed a demanding task and one for which I ask you immediately to pray and invoke the Holy Spirit for fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ, with the heart of Don Bosco.

My name is Stefano

Before moving on to the important things, a few words to introduce myself. My name is Stefano, and I was born in Turin to a typical Italian family. My father, a Salesian past pupil, wanted to send me to the same school that he had attended in his time; my mother, also a past pupil of a Catholic school, was a teacher. From them I received life, and a simple, concrete faith life. This is how my sister and I grew up; there are only the two of us.

My parents are already in Heaven, in God's hands, and they'll break into huge smiles seeing what's happening to their son. They'll surely comment: *dun Bosch tenje nà man sla testa!** ("Don Bosco, keep your hand on his head!")

As a Salesian, I always belonged to the Province of Piedmont-Valle d'Aosta, until GC27, when I was asked to coordinate the Mediterranean Region (all the Salesian realities around the Mediterranean Sea, on the three continents that overlook it, but also including Portugal and some areas of Eastern Europe). This beautiful Salesian experience transformed me, making me international in the way I see and feel things. GC28 took a further step, asking me to become Vicar of the Rector Major, and here we are! I've spent the past ten years alongside Don Ángel, learning in those years to feel the heart of the world, in a Congregation that's truly spread over the entire earth.

The near future

The service I'll give in these coming months, until February 2025, is to accompany the Congregation to the next General Chapter, which will be celebrated in Valdocco (Turin), starting on February 16, 2025.

Dear friends, a general chapter is the highest and most important moment in the life of the Congregation. Representatives from all the provinces of the Congregation gather together (we're talking about more than 250 confreres) to do three things, essentially: to get to know each other, to pray and reflect in order to "think about the present and the future of the Congregation," and to elect the next Rector Major and his entire council. This is the very important moment about which Don Ángel spoke in his reflection on its theme: "Passionate about Jesus Christ and Dedicated to the Young."

This theme that the Rector Major chose for our Congregation will be articulated in three different and complementary aspects: the centrality of Christ in our personal lives and Religious consecration; the dimension of our community vocation, in fraternity and in co-responsibility with the laity to whom the

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 ”



Cardinal Ángel and Fr. Stefano
 Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

mission is entrusted; and the institutional aspects of our Congregation: an evaluation of the animation and governance by our congregational leadership. These are three aspects of a single, life-giving theme. Our Congregation needs this general chapter experience very much after so many events that have touched us all. Imagine—our last General Chapter began very close to the beginning of the pandemic, and it was precisely because of Covid that it had to end early.

Building Hope

To celebrate a general chapter is to celebrate hope, to build hope through institutional and personal decisions that allow us to continue Don Bosco's "dream," to give it a present and a future. Each of us is called to be a dream, the dream in God's

heart, and a dream come true.

In our Salesian tradition, there's a beautiful phrase that Don Bosco spoke to Don Rua when he recalled him to Valdocco from Mirabello—really to take Don Bosco's own place: "You were Don Bosco in Mirabello. Now you'll be that here at the Oratory." This is what really matters: "to be Don Bosco today"—this is the greatest gift we can give the world.



**Spoken in the Piedmontese dialect, the one Don Bosco and Mamma Margaret spoke! (translator's note).*



*Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Photo by Styves Exantus from Pexels*

Mary, Teacher of Ecological Conversion Part III

BY SR. LINDA POCHER FMA

Need a refresher? Re-read parts I and II in the June and July issues of Salesian Family Snippets!

If the infancy Gospel of Luke particularly emphasizes the attitude of discernment as a typical characteristic of the personality of the young Mary, the Gospel of John presents Mary in the time of her maturity as a woman of discernment in the episode of the wedding at Cana, where the first sign performed by Jesus in his public ministry is recounted. Discerning, in a sense, means recognizing in the present moment the seeds of the future. Translated into Salesian language, discerning means identifying that point accessible to good from which it becomes possible to collaborate with God so that the people entrusted to us and the reality in which we live can flourish and bear fruit.

"Discernment" is a key word in Pope Francis's teaching. First of all, because the Pope is a Jesuit, and to the Jesuits is entrusted, by charism, the practice and teaching of discernment. Discernment as such, however, is not something that belongs only to the Ignatian charism! Discernment, in fact, is a gift of the Spirit that every believer receives along with baptism. To be put into practice, however, it requires an apprenticeship, a continuous exercise of the freedom and will of the believer. Secondly, because, in an era of uncertainty and great changes like ours, discernment is the safest way, even if not without risks. The opposite of discernment, in fact, is the pedantic application of rules and models, it is the

Church/museum where there is much order but little life. The Church that discerns, however, is the Church/garden, where it is not possible to avoid a bit of chaos, some weeds, some slightly crooked trunk beforehand, and yet there is life and there are the fruits of life: joy, peace, benevolence, self-control, love, magnanimity, fidelity to the action of the Spirit in hearts and in history (Gal 5:22). The Church that discerns, finally, is aware that to proclaim the Gospel in the contemporary world it is not so much a matter of occupying spaces, but of activating processes.



For this reason, the ability to discern is fundamental to walk together towards the realization of what Francis calls ecological conversion. Integral ecology, in fact, is not a magic formula, but rather a process that begins with the conversion of perspective. What is required first of all is to learn to contemplate the beauty of Creation and the dignity of all creatures, each of which bears within itself the imprint of God's creative action. Everything that is created, in its beauty, comes from God, but it is entrusted to our hands to guard and foster its development on behalf of the Creator. From this awareness arises the need for discernment: what to do to promote life, in the small great choices of everyday life?

Moreover, the contemplation of reality in its concreteness allows us to recognize the limit of what is created. Nothing, in fact, remains forever: every form of life undergoes a cycle that goes from birth to death. The human being, as extraordinarily similar to the Creator thanks to his intelligence, his capacity for relationship, speech, and creativity, can remain on earth forever only to the extent that he is able to transmit what he is and what he has to future generations. Discernment, therefore, also means learning to move from the criterion of maximum profit to that of sustainability, in the interest not only of ourselves but also of those who will come after us.

At the wedding in Cana, Mary is a woman of discernment because she is concerned about the future of the newlyweds and wonders what can promote or hinder the full development of their life together. The sign of the wine, in fact, goes far beyond the need to quench the thirst of the moment. Wine represents the passion for life, the ability to celebrate its goodness and beauty, the typically human need for joy and festivity. Mary also sees in the Son what is still hidden from the eyes of all: the Savior of the world, the One who can give life in abundance. Mary, finally, acts in such a way as to activate the resources of all the guests. She weaves a network, among the guests at the feast, which makes everyone participate in the miracle: the servants; the master of the feast; the newly married; the Son; and the disciples.

At Cana, Mary does not take a place of prominence, she does not behave as a protagonist in the scene, even though she is the one who sets in motion the process that will begin the disciples' adventure of faith. Mary activates the process of faith by favoring the encounter and communication among the people present at the feast. In

[Mary] weaves a network, among the guests at the feast, which makes everyone participate in the miracle: the servants; the master of the feast; the newly married; the Son; and the disciples.

our daily lives, we can activate the process of ecological conversion starting from small possible choices, carried out consciously. Among the possible small actions there is also the courage to speak, to share with family members, friends, neighbors, our concern for the Common Home. Instead of multiplying initiatives, it is a sign of ecological conversion also the ability to converge in common initiatives together with other associations and institutions present in the territory, even when what unites us is not faith, but attention to nature and to others.

Caring for relationships, engaging in networking, belong fully to integral ecology. Of course, it is always a matter of acting with respect for the other, for his positions and convictions, and even in this Mary is a teacher, as she never imposes herself. Faced with Jesus' response, which at first seems contrary to her request for intervention, Mary shows neither haste nor disappointment. On the one hand, she draws the attention of the servants to Jesus preparing them to listen to the Son; on the other hand, she leaves to the Son the necessary space to elaborate his response, without insisting or trying to impose herself. And Jesus recognizes the goodness of her intention and inspiration. At this point, Mary steps aside and leaves the scene to Jesus, the servants, the master of the feast, and the newly married, offering

to our eyes a model of action and service aimed at the essential, not seeking recognition or applause, but attentive to the concrete fabric of daily life with its relationships.



In Cana, wine was lacking and this lack threatened the failure of the feast. In the neighborhood where you live, in the parish, in the school you attend, what is lacking or is coming to be lacking, concretely threatening the existential failure of the brothers and sisters who share this space with you? What can you do to promote a network of relationships capable of taking charge of this need in front of the competent authorities? Listening to the cry of the poor and of the earth, it is important to remember, is one with the announcement of the resurrection of the Lord! In the name of his victory over death and in the power of his Spirit that we received in baptism, we are called to do our best for the good of all, to become Samaritans of our brothers and sisters, just as Jesus is the Samaritan of each of us. Let us ask Mary to help us, to share with us her ability to discern, so that through us God can renew the face of the earth. THE END



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Maria "Lupe" Sanchez, Salesian Cooperator



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Maria Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis!

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