

Dear Brothers!

I hope the pastoral year is off to a good start/continuation throughout the Province. Prayers for all of you, your collaborators, the young people and all those you will encounter this year.

Here are a few words/plans for this year regarding Vocation Animation:

Local/Regional Vocation Contacts: We will continue to communicate with the local vocation contacts in order to create a real culture of discernment in all our works. However, this year we will also begin a team approach and animate our Province in a more regional way. It will take some time to initiate and to find the most practical and efficient method. Fr. Dominic will share more about this at a later date.

Involvement with local Dioceses/Local Gatherings: There were a lot of good things that happened last year in the various communities. We really encourage everyone to continue the many initiatives that were started and to find ways to be involved in local events in the Dioceses or different Universities. Without neglecting our high school students, we need a real focus on young adults. We are hoping that all the communities can also host **four young adult gatherings** this year. My suggestion would be to try and organize it when students return from school (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Summer).

Discernment through Mission Experiences: One of the major goals of the Vocation Office this year will be to help organize and animate a missionary option for our province. Working with Vicky Weekley, Adam Rudin and Fr. Sean McEwen we will try to promote and encourage the local works to send young people to different communities within our province to serve alongside the Salesians and lay collaborators. For example, last year we had at least two students from Don Bosco Prep who went to Tampa to help with the summer camp and others attended the Gospel Roads in New Orleans. A group of students from Tampa Cristo Rey also went to New Orleans. There is a lot of great work going on throughout our Province, and this “exchange” of Salesian young people will give them an opportunity to discern Salesian life within the US and Canada, by serving at Gospel Roads, summer camps, community centers and other apostolic activities.

Major Events from the Vocation Office this year:

Discernment Weekend: October 20 – 22 (ORANGE, NJ)

Discernment Weekend: November 17 – 19 (CHICAGO, IL)

Discernment Weekend: February 23 -25 (TAMPA, FL)

Salesian Men’s Retreat: May 16 – 19 (TAMPA, FL)

Possible International Gospel Roads: Aug 1 – Aug 12 (ECUADOR)

I would like to say a special thanks to Fr. Franco, Fr. Eddie and the Tampa community. They have done an excellent job of opening up the Salesian house in order to allow young people to live, experience and discern within a community setting. They have invested a lot of time and money to help young people feel encouraged to think about Salesian life but also to participate in the various events throughout our province. This effort is bearing fruit and I really encourage other communities to think about how they can open up spaces for young people to live, pray and work alongside us in the mission.

THANKS to all of you for the hard work and dedication to the mission of Don Bosco!

Any questions/comments/suggestions please let me know. -Steve DeMaio