

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far

CHEERFUL AND SERENE EVEN THOUGH LIVING IN A WHEELCHAIR

The Lord is always at our side through
all of it, if we allow Him to be.

SALESIAN FAMILY SNIPPETS FEATURES FOR 2024

We look forward to an exciting and nourishing year as a
Salesian Family who lives “the Dream that Makes Us Dream.”





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Feb. 9: Bl. Eusebia Palomino, FMA

Feb. 14: Ash Wednesday

Feb. 25: Sts. Luigi Versiglia & Callixtus Caravario



Visit

<https://donboscosalesianportal.org/sf-snippets-archives/>
to read and download this issue and previous editions.

The cover photo is of Margarita Lacayo, ADMA and FMA Past Pupil - Miami, as she gazes forth from the window at the Valponasca. Here, she looks where St. Mary Mazzarello observed across the valley to pray to God, who was present in the distant church of St. Sylvester in Mornese. Cover photo courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator | Photos featured on the "In This Issue" page and end cover courtesy of Canva Pro



Don Ángel's hometown of Luanco
 Courtesy of <https://www.vivimosdeviaje.com/luanco-asturias/>

Cheerful and Serene Even Though Living in a Wheelchair

Encounters on Epiphany with amazing people
 who have good hearts and luminous faith

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

Dear friends, readers of the *Salesian Bulletin*,

I greet you cordially and extend my best wishes to you in this new year 2024 that we inaugurated just a short while ago. I wish with all my heart that it will be a year filled with God's presence in our lives and with blessings.

You know that I'm accustomed, whenever possible, to write this greeting to share something that I've experienced and that has had an impact on me for one reason or another.

On the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (January 6), I was in my hometown, Luanco-Asturias, feeling very connected with my roots, with the sea and nature that saw my birth and my growth, as well as with my countrymen. On that day, I went to celebrate Holy Mass. The pastor of my town kindly granted me this privilege while he went to another of the parishes entrusted to him. In this way, we were able to celebrate this solemnity in more Christian communities.

What I want to tell you is that it was a morning in which the Lord had prepared some unexpected encounters for me. As I learned about the situation of some people, the certainty of how

the Lord consoles and comforts us even when pain, sickness, or limitation have settled into some lives was made more real for me.

Before going to celebrate Mass, I began my journey that morning by visiting an elderly person who had been a doctor in my village for many years—a great family doctor, a believer—and, by the way, a Salesian past pupil from Salamanca. For years and years, he was one of the figures I heard my parents talk about when they would sometimes go to the doctor. I made this family visit to him in response to his daughter's invitation and met this man of faith who told me that, as a doctor, he could give only a little of the great amount he had received from God. Now, with a grave illness, he only asked the Good Lord to prepare him for the Encounter with Him. So great was his conviction and his peace that I went to celebrate Mass having already received my dose of "*la parolina all'orecchio*" (a "brief word whispered in the ear"—a phrase Don Bosco used to describe one means of exercising the Preventive System in relationships).

At Mass, I met, as on other occasions, a young man no more than 32 years old who, because of an accident, has been

living in a wheelchair for years. Even being in a wheelchair, he has gone with his mother to India to make contact with the poorest. My young friend impressed me with his serenity, his smile, and the joy that lives in his heart. It is with this same serenity, smile, and joy that he participates in daily Mass and receives the Lord. Certainly, this young friend of mine could have reason to decry his “bad luck.” But, even worse, he could blame God for it because people often do that when something is beyond them. But no, he simply lives without feeling sorry for himself and being thankful for the gift of life, even in a wheelchair. When I’d see him at the end of each Mass, we’d always greet each other. His words were always ones of gratitude; yet it is rather I who should thank him for being a great living witness of faith in the Lord of Life, which he shows to us all.

That’s how beautiful and impressive my Epiphany day had been up until the moment when, at the exit of the church, a middle-aged couple greeted me and gave me their wishes for the new year. They also had joyful faces —the husband with more joy and serenity (who was suffering from cancer) than his beloved wife (who suffered for him). Still, both spoke to me of their certainty that they must live this moment and this illness in trust and abandonment to God.

Finally, among all these greetings, there was still one lacking—that of an elderly mother who recalled to me that a year ago she lost one of her sons. He’d been ill and died, and now she’s suffering from cancer. She asked me only to keep her before the Lord. I asked her how she felt, and she told me that she’s in pain, but very comforted by our Faith. I can assure you that I was speechless owing to the intense emotions that had come and overwhelmed me throughout that morning due to these living witnesses.

I could not but promise my prayers to each one, and I’ve kept that promise while becoming aware, yet again and more strongly, of how the Lord continues to do great things in the humble, in those most affected by life’s situations, and in those who feel that He alone is truly their consolation and help.

I find all this so important that I can’t keep it to myself. Sometimes it seems that we can’t write about these things



*The Rector Major Don Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, SDB
Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator*

nowadays because “it’s not fashionable,” or because we talk about other things. But I rebel against everything that prevents me from sharing and witnessing to what is important, profound, and hopeful in our lives. I don’t know why, but I have the sense that many readers feel in tune with what I’m sharing and that I myself have experienced because what’s being narrated here, what happened on an Epiphany morning in a small village near the sea, doesn’t happen only there. No, this is all a part of our human condition, and the Lord is always at our side through all of it, if we allow Him to be.

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I dream and wish to meet every day, in every Salesian house, Salesians and lay people and members of the Salesian Family who believe in the miracle that Salesian education has the power to perform.

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL ÁNGEL
FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

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I wish you all the best, dear friends. Let us continue to believe that, at all times, even in the most difficult moments, we have reason for hope.



In, With, and For the Church



North American Salesian Family at Becchi, Don Bosco's birthplace
Photo by Fr. Tom Dunne, SDB

Salesian Family Snippets Features for 2024 **Listening to Mary, our Help and Mother**

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB

We in the Salesian Family are blessed in this year 2024 with an opportunity to reflect deeply on Don Bosco's dream at age nine as a way to renew within ourselves the dream that brought us to Don Bosco and sustains our passion and enthusiasm even after so many years. It draws us to listen to the dreams in our own lives and to renew our vocation in following God's call today.

"The Dream that Makes Us Dream"

The formative purpose of the *Salesian Family Snippets* publication will be evident in the approach that we will take, with the following segments making up the pathway of our family journey for 2024:

- First, our readers will notice a steady, month-by-month unfolding of the Strenna's deep and hopeful message to each of us in the Salesian Family.
- Second, each issue of *Salesian Family Snippets* during the coming year will offer formative content drawn from the life of our Salesian Family worldwide.
- Third, with the Salesian Cooperator Association in its first phase of preparation for the 150th celebration of its founding, *Salesian Family Snippets* will focus on exploring the theological underpinnings and dynamic development of the Salesian Cooperator Association under the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit. In this effort, we will draw from *A Prophecy's Journey* (Buccellato, Santoni, and Wirth).

At the Salesian *Family Festival*, two things were evident:

- 1.) Sharing the charism and presence of the many Salesian Family groups in our province has real value for our members.
- 2.) The formation begun at the Festival must continue. Therefore, *Salesian Family Snippets* will invite members of each of our Salesian Family groups to share the story of their charism, their founder, and their mission. with the readers of this publication throughout the year. Hopefully we, as a Salesian Family, will become familiar with each of their groups and their members so that we might be better able to form that synodality that makes us one in spirituality, community, and mission.

We believe that these focal points will offer a solid basis for deepening our understanding of and purifying our motivation for living our calling as disciples of Christ in Don Bosco's spirit in a more unified and proactive manner.

We look forward to an exciting and nourishing year as a Salesian Family who lives "the Dream that Makes Us Dream."



North American Salesian Family members pose with the Rector Major at this year's Salesian Family Spirituality Days.
Photo by Mrs. Julia Dillion, Salesian Cooperator

The Awe-inspiring SF Spirituality Days “The Dream that Makes You Dream”

BY MR. VITO J. DELZOTTO, SALESIAN COOPERATOR - RAMSEY, NJ

Our Salesian Family (SF) from the North American Province in the USA, including Celine Bourassa from Montreal, QC, Canada, were blessed to attend the 2024 Salesian Family Spirituality Days in Turin, Italy where the theme was “The Dream That Makes You Dream, a Heart That Transforms Wolves Into Lambs.” It was an extra special blessing to have the Salesian Rector Major (the tenth successor to Don Bosco) with us throughout the entire event, celebrating Mass with us every day and being warm and approachable at all times.

As Cooperators, the formation of our dream began on the Wednesday before the event began, allowing us an opportunity to visit the grounds of Valdocco that was the place where Don Bosco’s dreams became reality.

Immediately upon our arrival at Valdocco, we were overwhelmed with the beauty and nostalgia springing forth from the entire Oratory. Nothing could have prepared us for the incredible beauty of the great Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice. How generous our Lord is, to give us the fortune of having Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA, and Fr. Tom Dunne, SDB, provide us

with a detailed personal tour of the basilica, including its rich history and explanations of the significance of each of its parts.

Upon the arrival of the remainder of the 350 attendees from all groups of the Salesian Family on Thursday, it didn’t take long for every member of our North American group of Cooperators to marvel at the incredible majesty and splendor of the worldwide mission that was initiated by Don Bosco with the strength of the Holy Spirit and our Mother Mary.

The breadth, scope, and depth of the glory that was to be achieved, was revealed in Don Bosco’s first dream when he was nine-years-old, when he saw in his vivid dream that wolves were turned into lambs. How could the dream of a nine-year-old boy from a poor and humble family in the countryside contain so much fervor, be blessed with such tenacity, and be so richly endowed with grace by God, that he would go on to be the instrument that would launch the formation of our worldwide Salesian Family now

comprising thirty-two groups in locations around the globe? How could the dream of a nine-year-old boy, beginning as the size of a mustard seed, accomplish so much to save the souls of millions by spreading the Gospel and by being a true example of Christian life? A deeply Christian life that lives so fully in the world but not of the world.

Our North America group asked ourselves these questions and pondered what dreams we had that would serve to continue the great legacy left by Don Bosco and his dreams. How fortunate too was our group to have been able to meet and discuss these questions directly with our Rector Major, Don Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, SDB, who urged us to dream like Don Bosco and find new ways to continue all of his dreams.

Meetings began on Friday when the entire congregation of worldwide Salesian Family members heard testimony of how Don Bosco's dream can continue to drive our unique spirituality. All of these talks were expertly translated on a real-time basis into many languages allowing each member of the Salesian Family to remain in tune. The Rector Major urged us not to try to convince anyone to come to our faith, but instead direct our focus and efforts toward being living examples of Christian life to the young (the central parts of Don Bosco's dream). He further emphasized that we should live out the Gospel in the world we live in, not by using blows, but instead by obediently following the guidance of our blessed Mother Mary to leverage the charismatic wealth of the Salesian Family and its



*Salesian Family of the USA with Mother Chiara Cazzuola, FMA.
Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator*

ever-soaring imagination to adopt to current times.

On Saturday morning, the attendees of the Salesian Spirituality Days were divided into groups by common language. Each group was invited to “dream” by hearing through direct testimony how Don Bosco's dreams are currently being transformed into reality. The Cooperators from our North America group heard the testimony of a young man from Cambodia whose life was saved and transformed by a local Salesian mission providing education, technical skills, and job training. In addition, our group heard the testimony of four Oratory youth leaders about how the Salesian charism has educated them, brought them to God, and prepared them for a sometimes hostile secular world.

On Saturday afternoon, we took a bus trip through the beautiful city of Turin to visit the nearby Schools and Oratory of Valsalice where Don Bosco's remains were laid from 1888 to

1929. Similar to our first glance at the Basilica of Maria Ausiliatrice at Valdocco, nothing could have adequately prepared us for the beauty and soaring splendor of the interior chapel that acts as the spiritual home of students and oratorians. Don Pierluigi Cameroni, SDB provided our group with an informative understanding of the Salesians who passed through Valsalice that have become saints and the holy work that continues to research and document the case for future recognition of Salesian sainthood.

Upon returning to Valdocco, we visited the FMA house, where we learned how many additional branches of the Sisters of the Salesian Family were formed and heard from various Sisters who do great works of charity in South America, Asia, and India.

On Saturday evening, the entire Salesian Family joined together to celebrate the tenure of our Rector Major. Many groups prepared dances and sang beautiful songs in tribute to Don Ángel Cardinal Fernández Artime, SDB. Our group of

Thank you, Salesian Family of the USA & Canada!

Because of your great generosity, we were able to present to Don Angel, along with a monetary donation, this spiritual bouquet, mighty in prayer, to sustain him in his mission in the Church.

Holy Masses - 1313*	Mass Intentions - 434
Holy Communion - 907	Don Bosco Novena - 46
Rosaries - 1981**	Sacrifices - 1535
Holy Hours - 260	Good Works - 497
Visits to the Blessed Sacrament - 662	
Personal Prayer Intentions - 1304	
Prayers and Fasting - 582	
Intentions in Lauds and Vespers - 92	
Year of Study of Strenna 2024	

Concert offered in his honor on January 26th
 *One in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians on 8-1-24, the day he begins his service as Cardinal
 **Many more, according to how many join in the SSCC virtual rosaries on every 24th, and on 7/9, 7/31, & 9/30



Spiritual bouquet gathered by the Salesian Family of North America for Don Ángel. Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA

Cooperators from the USA joined other Cooperators in a loving and festive tribute to his Spanish heritage by singing the song “Volaré!”

After Sunday morning Mass at the Basilica, our entire worldwide group of English-speaking Cooperators met to discuss some tangible ways Cooperators can continue to dream. In partnership with Cooperator groups from Croatia, Poland, Switzerland, Lebanon, France, Portugal, and others, we agreed to begin sharing more information about our works and events we sponsor and explore more ways to communicate.

As an extra special treat, our group from the North America Province took an hour drive to Becchi, the birthplace of Don Bosco. There, Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA, toured us through each facet of Don Bosco’s home as well as the magnificent Basilica built by the Salesians of Becchi in honor of Don Bosco.

Our Ramsey, New Jersey Center of Cooperators, together with Jim Desmond (Salesian Cooperator - Tampa), Margarita Lacayo (ADMA and FMA Past Pupil in Miami), and Maria Carmen Castillon (World President of the FMA Past Pupils Association), had a fabulous final dinner together at an authentic restaurant in Turin where we were joined by our beloved Fr. Mike Pace, SDB, who acted as our expert translator and all-around Valdocco liaison.

With the glorious Salesian Family Spirituality Days we spent in Valdocco, the dreams of our group of from the North American

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If a Salesian does not have a deep love for Mary Help of Christians and considers her perhaps only as a personal devotion of Don Bosco, then, I am sorry, he cannot be a true Salesian! It is hard to say, but our Congregation cannot be understood without Our Lady, because, for Don Bosco Mary was everything.
”

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB



North American Salesian Family stand outside of Don Bosco's Oratory in Valsalice. Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator

Province are now re-energized with the Holy Spirit, the guidance of our blessed Mother Mary and the spirituality of Don Bosco!

Read the letter Don Ángel used for his closing of the days.



Explore everything available from the days.





*The Salesian Cooperator's tribute to the Rector Major at this year's Salesian Family Spirituality Days in Valdocco.
Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator*

150th Anniversary of the Founding of the Association of Salesian Cooperators Preparation Program

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB

First Year: Looking Back

The Association of Salesian Cooperators traces its foundation to May 9, 1876 when Pope Pius IX approved its Rule. The Salesian Family looks forward to that date in the year 2026 when the Salesian Cooperator Association will celebrate its 150th Anniversary! As a world-wide association, the Salesian Cooperators have undertaken a three year plan to prepare for their celebration.

The first year is dedicated to **Looking Back** at the beginnings of the Association. The Convitto Ecclesistico was founded by Fr. Bruno Lanteri and a group of Catholic leaders who were committed to responding to the Protestant Revolt with a Catholic Reformation of hearts, minds and souls. Principal among these Roman Catholic leaders were St. Francis De Sales, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and St. Alphonsus. The aim of this movement was to renew what was very best and true about the Catholic faith. As expressed by St. Francis De Sales, they had an optimistic view of human nature, a deeply personal relationship with God and Jesus, a spirituality that held to frequent reception of the Eucharist and the sacrament of

Penance. They were committed to reaching out in loving service to the poor in imitation of Christ. They fostered the active participation of lay men and women in the life of the Church and in the active apostolate for God's Kingdom. They held to the call of all people in all states of life to holiness in virtue of their Baptism.

It was within Church reality and this pastoral movement that Don Bosco discovered his mission within the Church and took up his ministry of outreach with the poorest young people in Turin. Don Bosco began this mission as part of the movement within the Convitto Ecclesiastico to renew the Catholic Church through the theological and pastoral principles of St. Francis De Sales. At one point, he told his boys, "We shall be called "Salesians."

With Fr. Joseph Cafasso as his mentor, Don Bosco began his priesthood with the aim of drawing together all Catholic men and women into an active participation in the Church and a life-centered proclamation of the Gospel. All baptized men and women were called to holiness, mission, and

relationship with others in a spirituality of the heart. His meeting with Bartholomew Garelli, gave Don Bosco the pastoral focus he would need to gather many men and women in service to the gospel and Turin's poorest young people. Together, as members of this movement, many adults and young people would be called to live as Jesus according to the motto, "Give me Souls. Take away the rest" (*"Da mihi animas; caetera tolle"*).

We sometimes mistakenly imagine that Don Bosco's passion for calling so many volunteers to help with the Oratory boys was motivated by his need for helpers. Clearly, he could not adequately serve the hordes of young people who came to him in those early festive oratory afternoons. When he expanded to a number of Oratories, the need for "volunteers" multiplied. In light of the pastoral movement to which he was committed, Don Bosco's reached out for "helpers" so that they could accept God's call to live the gospel, renew the Church, and grow in holiness. Don Bosco did not only need the help of willing hands alone. He was moved to call Catholic men and women, young and old, to contribute their minds, hearts, and souls as well. The motto "Give me souls. Take away the rest" applies to Don Bosco's mission with the adult Catholic community as well as the young.



Likewise, an ahistorical approach to the foundation of the Salesian Cooperator Association might tempt us to impose a passive view of the structure Don Bosco gave to the Association. We may be tempted to view the Salesian Cooperator local center as a club or a social group, or a fraternal lodge. Quite to the contrary, the structure and character Don Bosco gave the Salesian Cooperator Association was based on a rather strong and active model drawn from the Church struggles of his time. Don Bosco took part in the commitment that he found in the Convitto Ecclesiastico to work aggressively for the renewal of the Catholic Church which was under attack from the Protestant Waldensians of his day. Don Bosco sought to strengthen the Church by drawing his followers together in groups that were focused on promoting the mission of the Church, spreading the Catholic faith, strengthening the faithful by binding them together in groups that would in some ways imitate the secret societies such as the Free Masons.

Far from a prayer group, social group, task group, or a common interest group, the Salesian Cooperator Association was imagined and structured as a small Catholic community committed to living, acting, and worshipping as a people living the good news of Jesus in an atmosphere of reason, religion, and kindness. In this, Don Bosco was not adverse to following the example of others. Before he even came to the Convitto, Fr. Lanteri had already had a number of Christian groups of lay men and women living out their Baptismal promises and pursuing holiness through their active participating in the Church and society. Don Bosco borrowed heavily from Fr. Lanteri's work.

*“
May the Don Bosco
Family be recognized
more and more
as the one closest
to the neediest.
”*

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL
ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

In ways that are analogous to other groups with similar foundations, the Salesian Cooperator Association takes on a rather robust process of formation, an energetic commitment to Don Bosco's mission with the poorest young people, and a strong adherence to the spirituality of Don Bosco's "Give me souls. Take away the rest." The promise which Salesian Cooperators recite every day privately and renew together on May 9, clearly states their commitment to renewing the Church and pursuing holiness of life by following the Rule of Life that gives form to their lives as agents of renewal for the Catholic Church and society.



(from left to right) Sr. Shyni and Sr. Jessy seated in the auditorium at this year's Salesian Family Spirituality Days.
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

Get to Know the SMIs of Leechburg “To Love God and Help Others to Love God”

BY SR. VINAYA THOTTATHIL, SMI

Origin

Our Community of the Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians (SMIs), commonly known as the Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMI) was founded on 12 December 1948 in Krishnagar, West Bengal, India by Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow, SDB, a zealous missionary and a renowned catechetical writer born in Weatherford, Texas, U.S.A. He was the bishop of the diocese of Krishnagar, India from 1939 to 1969. Krishnagar is about 60 miles north of Calcutta.

Foundation

Bishop Morrow, whom we fondly call Father Bishop, upon taking charge of his diocese of Krishnagar in 1939, realized the great need of educated women religious to reach out to the families to uplift them and to draw them closer to the true God through evangelization and catechesis. This vision became a reality when he founded our institute.

The purpose of our Community in the words of our father founder: It was so difficult to get sisters to go out into the

villages at all times of the year to instruct and to take care of the women. The Sisters can easily go into their houses and instruct the women, improve their way of living and help them to know the true religion. This is the main work. This is the real work of Jesus and it should be your great inspiration and desire, your greatest privilege. If it were not for this, we would not have the Sisters of Mary Immaculate. We are not going to just wait for the people to come to us, but we shall go to the people, into the villages, towns and into their homes.

We carry out our founder's mandate of reaching out to the people especially the poor and needy, the women and children, the neglected and most vulnerable, primarily through our main apostolate of home visitation and village apostolate.

We go into the villages, stay with them, visit their homes, and meet people in their own life situation. Our continued presence in the villages, interaction with the people's life

experiences, makes us aware of their various needs, concerns, struggles, and helplessness.

We are also engaged in pastoral, medical, educational, cultural, industrial, and other activities proper to our institute. Through all of these, we aim at the holistic development of family, the spiritual, moral, social and material welfare, especially of women, girls and children by making them aware of God's unconditional love and tender care of them. Thus, we live and share our motto, **"To love God and help others to love God."**

Spirit and Mission of our Institute

The spirit and mission of our institute are influenced by the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, and the Preventive System of St. John Bosco as handed down to us by our Father Founder.

Community Expansion and Growth

In 1966, our Community was granted Papal Right. In 1990, we went into provinces. On June 10 1992, we became an official member of the Salesian Family. Over the years, with God's blessings and blessed with a good number of vocations we were able to extend our presence to several dioceses in India and different countries. Today we serve in India, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the USA.

Statistics as of January 2024

- Total number of Sisters: 694
- Novices: 59
- Pre-novitiate: 31



A portion of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days attendees during their visit to the church at Valsalice
Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

- Number of communities: 92
- Number of Provinces: 5 (India: 4; East Africa: 1)
- Delegation: 1 (Communities in Germany, Italy & USA)

Nations represented

- India: 77 communities
- USA: 1 community
- Germany: 2 communities
- Italy: 3 communities
- Tanzania: 7 houses and 1 formation house
- Kenya: 1 community
- Uganda: 1 community

Our Foundation in Leechburg, PA

At the invitation of Bishop William Connare, Bishop of the Diocese of Greensburg, PA, we began our foundation in Leechburg, in May 1981. Per the agreement with the diocese, we began with our main apostolate of Home Visitation.

Today, our five-member community is engaged in catechetical, pastoral, and caring ministries:

Pastoral

- Visiting the homebound in seven parishes (part-time); and
- Eucharistic ministers in the parishes and to the homebound.

Catechetical

- Faith formation; and
- Catechetical Publications of our Father Founder.



Caring ministry

- Small Personal Care Home dedicated to our founder Bishop Morrow; and
- Medical assistance to the retired priests of our diocese of Greensburg, PA.

Support of our missions in India and Africa

- through our Annual Mission Appeal.

Spiritual Assistance

- Pious Associations of Little Flower League and Associates of Mary



All Salesian Family World Consulta members who were present at the Salesian Family Spirituality Days pose in front of Don Bosco's altar with Don Ángel in the Basilica at Valdocco. Courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

2023: A Year of Remarkable Milestones

Platinum Jubilee of the Foundation of our Community

We celebrated the 75 years of our presence in the Mother Church on 11th September 2023 at our Motherhouse and Generalate. We have been greatly blessed during the 75 years of our congregation to reach out to serve the Church in India, Italy, Germany, USA, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. The representation from all of these countries made the celebration a beautiful experience and realization of the vitality, richness and the uniqueness of a joyful happy family.

Our Tenth General Chapter

During October, the days of the celebration of our Tenth General Chapter at our Motherhouse and Generalate, Krishnagar, West Bengal, India, were grace-filled moments in the annals of our Institute. The 54 capitulars from the four continents of Africa, America, Asia and Europe represented the entire SMI family in this significant event in the history of our Institute. The two main purposes of the chapter were study, reflection, and deliberations on the theme of the chapter, **“To be Vibrant Catechist Sisters following Christ the Supreme Catechist as exemplified by our Father Founder”** and the election of superior general and her team for a term of six years.

“
And I truly dream that in faithfulness to Don Bosco we will make our boys, girls and young men fall in love with that Mother without whom all this is not possible.
 ”

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL
 ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB



Auxiliaries with the Catechetical Sisters of Mary Immaculate
 Courtesy of Sr. Vinaya Thottathil, SMI

 **Watch the SMI Sisters' Jubilee!**



Strenna 2024



*A painting of Don Bosco's dream of nine-years-old.
Courtesy of Don Bosco Salesian Portal*

Formation for the Salesian Family on Strenna 2024

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

The Mystery of the Name 1: As you love, you are known

1.) The name in the nine-year-old's dream

If we try to see the theme of the “name” in the dream of the nine-year-old, we notice, first of all, the appearance of the venerable man with the shining face whom little John cannot look at because he is blinded. The man nobly dressed in white puts an end to the violent squabble between the laughing and blaspheming children and little John. The mysterious person peremptorily calls him by name and imposes an order on him. “He called me by name:” this is a fundamental biblical reference, when God calls by name, he always entrusts a mission (Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Mary, Peter, Saul...). It indicates that the initiative is always God's who first pronounces the name and makes it real. "God said: “Let there be light’ and there was light." God calls John Bosco by name and indicates to him the Preventive System "not with blows but with meekness and charity you must win these friends of yours". After pronouncing his name and indicating a mission, at this point, John Bosco feels the need to know the name of the one speaking. Twice he asks: "Who are you who command me what is impossible?But who are you, who speak like this?". It is proper for man to know, to ask himself questions from his reality, to understand... this is also the case for John.

Although he is small, he has a quick and alert intelligence and a desire to understand who the mysterious character is who asks him a seemingly impossible question. The response of the luminous character reflects divine pedagogy: "I am the Son of she whom your mother taught you to greet three times a day." The knowledge of the Divine Name will come about for John Bosco and in Salesian spirituality through the maternal mediation of Mary. Just as it happened for the Incarnation of the Word, where her "here I am" was necessary, thus to know, to enter into relationship, and to experience the power of Jesus, it is necessary to pass through his mother Mary. And again, this knowledge occurs in prayer through the very gentle call of the Angelus prayer three times a day in a peasant society. The mystery of the Name must be asked of the mother, thus concludes the character who disappears from the scene: “Ask my mother for My Name”. In the life of Don Bosco, how true this statement is: the heartfelt prayer before Our Lady of Grace in Chieri to understand his vocation, the indication of the place of the martyrdom of Saints Salutor, Adventor, and Octavius so that the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians would be built there, and the understanding of the dream with tears in his eyes on May 16, 1887, before the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the Basilica of the

Sacred Heart. To understand the Name, to know the mystery behind it, to know Jesus is not a one-time operation that happens once in a lifetime, but rather it is the fruit of an ongoing process that begins, lasts a lifetime, and grows to the full maturity of Christ, until He is formed in you (Gal 4:19).

2.) *The name in the Bible*

In the Bible, the imposition of a name is the characteristic statement of a person (Adam calls his woman *issah* because she is). Throughout the Semitic world, the name is the very reality of a thing, the knowledge of the name implies a kind of power over the being whose essence and energy is known. The famous text in which God reveals his name is contained in chapter 3 of the book of Exodus. God is revealed not with a noun but with a verb (hjh, "to be, to become, to continue to be). Thus, the sacred and unutterable four-letter tetragrammaton for the Hebrews (JHWH) is configured. In reality, the text of Ex. 3:14, rather than a definition and revelation of the Divine Name, contains a denial of revelation. "I am who I am" is perhaps an affirmation of God's unknowable essence rather than a definition of God's eternity ("He who is always") or of his faithfulness ("He who is always faithful") or even of his beingness, as classical Christian philosophy wanted.



However, this appellation "I am" is not empty because it evokes the exact point at which God reveals Himself: the story of the Exodus in which He presents Himself as liberator and Savior. As Martin Buber put it, it could be

translated as "I am present, there where I will be present... I am present always."

What does He listen to? Ex. 3:4-6. The text says: "The Lord saw that he came near to see, and God called him from the bush and said, Moses, Moses. Moses hears his name. Imagine Moses' shock of fear and amazement at the same time, when he hears himself called in the desert, in a place where there is not a soul. Moses realizes that there is someone who knows his name, someone who is interested in him; he believed himself to be an outcast, a failure, an abandoned person: yet someone calls out his name in the middle of the desert. It is a violent experience, one that perhaps we too have had when, finding ourselves in a place where we thought we were completely ignored, we suddenly hear someone calling our name.

Moses now hears himself called by name twice: "Moses, Moses." Moses also feels that a decisive moment has come for his life: it is the moment when he must be truly available, without making the mistakes of the first time; therefore, he is filled with fear: "What is about to happen to me?" And here Moses hears something that he perhaps did not expect. He who had flung himself with such ardor to see the burning bush, would have been pleased to hear: "Thank you that you have come, that you have not let bitterness overcome you;" instead, he hears that voice telling him: "Do not come near, take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is a

holy land." Moses, with all his ardor, was trying to do the same thing: to see, that is, that phenomenon of the burning bush as framed in his view of God, of history and of God's presence in history. And so God says to him: "Moses, this is not the way; take off your sandals, for you do not come to me to encapsulate me in your own ideas; it is not you who must integrate me into your personal synthesis, but it is I who want to integrate you into my project." Moses, therefore, hears: "Do not come near, first take the sandals off your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground." Imagine Moses' shock on hearing these words.

What does this mean? At this point, Moses understands what the divine initiative is: it is not he who seeks God, and therefore must go, in order to find Him, to purified and holy places; it is God who seeks Moses and seeks him where he is. And the place where Moses is, whatever it may be, even if it is a miserable, abandoned, resourceless, cursed place, that is the holy land; there is the presence of God, there the glory of God is manifested. We can contemplate how Moses experienced his own change of horizon, his true conversion, his new way of knowing God. Until now God was for Moses one for whom much had to be done. Now at last, Moses begins to understand; God is different: until now he had known him as one who exploits you for a while and then abandons you, a master more demanding than the others, ...more than Pharaoh; now he begins to understand that He is a God of mercy and love, who takes care of him, the last among the failed and forgotten by his people.



Moses
Courtesy of Canva Pro

“
We are called, like Don Bosco, to offer opportunities to encounter Jesus, the source of life and joy.
”

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL
 ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB

For the concreteness of the path

In the ritual of the Jewish Passover dinner (*Haggadà*), the boys listening to the story of the Passover night behave differently. One of them may be sleepy; but another says: "But what does this Egypt thing matter to me?" Still another asks: "Why are we celebrating this feast and what does this feast mean to us?" This is the attitude of Moses and John Bosco, who ask that fundamental question: "How come?" "What is your name?". A good educator does not only know how to give answers, but first of all knows how to provoke questions. Some educational attitudes help in this arduous task: arousing wonder (*thaumazein* in Greek) and making memory (*zakar* in Hebrew).



In the Salesian Family Know



Salesian Family Opportunities



Image from the First Webinar from the International Catechetical Commission of the FMA.
 Courtesy of www.cgfmanet.org

Second Webinar from the International Catechetical Commission of the FMA

BY SR. THERESA KELLY, FMA

The second webinar from the International Catechetical Commission of the FMA will take place on February 17, 2024. The webinar is an Overview of the Directory for Catechesis. All catechists and those interested are invited to participate.

Read article from the first webinar here



Register for the second webinar here



The presentation will be recorded for those who cannot be present at the time it is given.



Part of the poster for *Cabrini*
Courtesy of www.atomtickets.com

Experience and Preorder Tickets to *Cabrini*

BY SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA

When Italian immigrant Frances Cabrini steps foot in America in 1889, she is greeted by disease, crime, and impoverished children living in New York's slums. Armed with a fearless spirit and a compassionate heart, Cabrini sets off on a daring mission to convince the hostile mayor to secure housing and healthcare for society's most vulnerable. Despite broken English and poor health, Cabrini leverages her entrepreneurial mind to build an empire of hope unlike anything the world had ever seen.

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*Image from the promotional ad for the course.
Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

Course on Our Lady Offered in Spanish

The FMA Family Sector will offer a course on Our Lady in Spanish from March to September online.

Access the ad in Spanish here.

An English course will follow beginning from September 2023 through March 2024.

May every Salesian house be a space for healthy and educative relationships.

THE RECTOR MAJOR CARDINAL
ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, SDB



*North American Salesian Family group at dinner in Turin
Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator*

Mass for the SUE and SEC Salesian Family in Valdocco

The 7:00 a.m. Mass (Italian time) in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Torino-Valdocco, will be said for the SUE and SEC Salesian Family on August 16, 2024.



*Group photo of all of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days 2024 attendees
Courtesy of Mr. Vito J. Delzotto, Salesian Cooperator*

Extraordinary General World Assembly for Past Pupils

The Extraordinary General World Assembly for the Past Pupils of Don Bosco will be convened in Valdocco from October 2-6, 2024 with the theme: "Journeying Together: Change for Continuity."



Read the full announcement here.



Recently elected General Council of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians; they are one of the 32 Official Groups of the Salesian Family and have a house in Hawaii. Courtesy of Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA



Let Us Live the Dream That Makes Us Dream



Maria Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis!



"Walk with your feet on earth, but let your heart be in heaven."

- St. John Bosco



Our email address is:
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“ ——— ”
**OUR YOUNG PEOPLE NEED REAL DREAMS, CHALLENGES,
IDEALS... AND WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE
THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING WHICH BLOCKS
THEIR DAILY LIVING WITH ENTHUSIASM.**
” ——— ”

The Rector Major Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB

