

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far

▶ **THE MEMORY OF THE FUTURE**

Don Bosco's dream came back again and again—with enthralling energy.

SHARING THE PREVENTIVE SYSTEM

Read a firsthand account of the Salesian *Family Festival*.





In This Issue



LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

The Memory of the Future 03



IN, WITH, AND FOR THE CHURCH

Sharing the Preventive System 05
The Salesian Family Festival and Convocation

Like a Family Reunion 09
Interamerica Salesian Family Provincial Delegate Encounter

Strengthen the Body of Christ 10
10th National Eucharistic Congress

In Awe of What God Can Do 11
Vicky Weekley's Appointment as Province Delegate of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (PDYYM)

Salesian Pioneers of North America 13
Abp. Richard Pittini, SDB

IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY KNOW

Faith and Fellowship 15
Midwestern Cooperator Formation Day

OUR FAMILY ALBUM

Requiescat in Pace 16



IMPORTANT DATES

Nov. 5: *Mass for Deceased Members of the Salesian Family and Benefactors*

Nov. 5-11: *National Vocation Awareness Week*

Nov. 13: *St. Artemides Zatti, SDB (Worldwide)*

Nov. 14: *St. Artemides Zatti, SDB (Canada and U.S.)*

Nov. 15: *Bl. Madeleine Morano, FMA*

Nov. 23: *Thanksgiving Day, USA*

Nov. 25: *Anniversary of Death, Mamma Margaret*

Nov. 26: *First Sunday of Advent*

Nov. 29: *Novena to the Immaculate Conception begins*



Visit

<https://donboscosalesianportal.org/sf-snippets-archives/>

to read and download this issue and previous editions.

Cover photo courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS) | Photos featured on the "In This Issue" page and end cover courtesy of Canva Pro



*The Rector Major Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, speaking while performing his first Mass as cardinal.
Photo courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)*

The Memory of the Future

We have a dream that is our greatest wealth.

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

Two hundred years ago, a little nine-year-old boy, poor and with no future but to be a farmer, had a dream. He recounted it to his mother, grandmother, and brothers in the morning, who found it funny. Grandma concluded, “Pay no attention to dreams.” Many years later, that boy, John Bosco, wrote: “I agreed with my grandmother. However, I was unable to cast that dream out of my mind.” Because it wasn’t a dream like so many others and it didn’t die with the dawn. The dream came back again and again—with enthralling energy. It was a source of joyful security and inexhaustible strength for John Bosco—the source of his life.

At the diocesan inquiry into Don Bosco’s cause for beatification, Fr. Rua, his first successor, testified: “Lucy Turco, a member of a family where Don Bosco often went to visit her brothers, told me that one morning she saw him arrive more jubilant than usual. Asked what the cause was, he replied that during the night he had had a dream that thoroughly cheered him up. Asked to recount it, he explained that he had seen a Lady coming toward him, who had a very large flock behind her, and who approached him, called him by name and said to him: ‘Behold, John: I entrust all this flock to your care.’ He asked: ‘How would I be able to care for so many sheep? And so

many lambs? Where will I find pastures to feed them?’ The Lady replied: ‘Don’t be afraid. I’ll assist you,’ and then she disappeared.”

From that moment on, his wish to study in order to become a priest became more ardent; but serious difficulties stood in his way: the financial straits of his family and the opposition of his half-brother Anthony, who wanted him to work in the fields like him. Indeed, it all seemed impossible, but Jesus’ command had been “imperious” and our Lady’s assistance a sweet certainty.

Fr. Lemoyne, Don Bosco’s first historian, summed up the dream as follows: “It seemed to him that he saw the Divine Savior dressed in white, radiant with the most splendid light, in the act of leading an innumerable crowd of young men. Turning to John, he said to him, “Come here, and put yourself at the head of these children, and lead them yourself.” “But I can’t,” replied John. The Divine Savior insisted imperiously until John placed himself at the head of that multitude of boys and began to guide them just as he had been commanded.” In the seminary, Don Bosco wrote a page of admirable humility about the motivation for his

vocation: “Morialdo’s dream always left an impression on me; it was renewed on other occasions in a much clearer way, so that if I wished to believe in it, I had to choose the priesthood, to which I was greatly inclined. But I didn’t want to believe in dreams, and my manner of life, and the absolute lack of the virtues necessary for this state of life, rendered that decision doubtful and very difficult.”

We can be certain that he had recognized the Lord and his Mother. Despite his modesty, he had no doubt at all that he had been visited by Heaven. Nor did he doubt that these visits were intended to reveal to him his own future and that of his work. He himself said: “The Salesian Congregation didn’t take any step unless a supernatural fact advised it. It hasn’t developed as it has without a special order from the Lord. We could have written all our past history in advance in its most humble details.”

For this reason, the Salesian Constitutions begin with an “act of faith”: “With a feeling of humble gratitude we believe that the Society of St. Francis de Sales came into being not only as a merely human venture but by the initiative of God.”

Don Bosco’s testament

The Pope himself ordered Don Bosco to write down the dream for his sons. He began: “Now, what purpose can this chronicle serve? It will be a record to help people overcome problems that may come in the future by learning from the past. It will serve to make known

how God himself has always been our guide. It will give my sons some entertainment to be able to read about their father’s adventures. Doubtless they will read much more avidly when I have been called by God to render my account, when I am no longer among them.”

Don Bosco clearly reveals his intention to involve the reader in the adventure narrated, to the point of making the reader participate in it as a story that concerns him and that he, having been dragged into the story, is called to continue. The narration of the dream clearly becomes Don Bosco’s “testament.”

Here is the mission: the transformation of the world beginning from the least, the youngest, and the most abandoned. Here is the method: goodness, respect, patience. There is the security of the strong protection of the Holy Trinity and the tender and maternal protection of Mary.

In the *Memoirs of the Oratory*, Don Bosco recounts that many years after that first dream in 1824, there was “another dream, which seems to be an appendix to the one I had at Becchi when I was nine years old. . . . I dreamt that I was standing in the middle of a multitude of wolves, goats and kids, lambs, ewes, rams, dogs, even birds. All together they made a din, a racket, or better, a bedlam to frighten the stoutest heart. I wanted to run away, when a lady dressed as a shepherdess signaled me to follow her and accompany that strange flock while

she went ahead. After we had walked a long way, I found myself in a field where all the animals grazed and gambled together and none made attacks on the others.

“Worn out, I wanted to sit down beside a nearby road, but the shepherdess invited me to continue the trip. After another short journey, I found myself in a large courtyard with porticoes all round. At one end was a church. I then saw that four-fifths of the animals had been changed into lambs and their number greatly increased. Just then, several shepherds came along to take care of the flock; but they stayed only a very short time and promptly went away.

“Then something wonderful happened. Many of the lambs were transformed into shepherds, who as they grew took care of the others. . . .

“I wanted to be off . . .; but the shepherdess invited me to look to the south. I looked and saw a field sown with maize, potatoes, cabbages, beetroot, lettuce, and many other vegetables.

“ ‘Look again,’ she said to me.

“I looked again and saw a wondrously big church. . . . Inside the church hung a white banner on which was written in huge letters, *Hic domus mea, inde gloria mea*. [This is my house; thence goes forth my glory].”

For this reason, when we enter the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, we enter Don Bosco’s dream... which begs to become “our” dream.

In, With, and For the Church



*Auditorium shot during the Salesian Family Festival.
Photo by Mr. Joe Gigli, The Beacon, Diocese of Paterson*

Sharing the Preventive System The Salesian *Family* Festival and Convocation

BY MRS. PHYLLIS M. HAKEEM, SALESIAN COOPERATOR

The Salesian *Family* Festival, “Out of Darkness and into His Marvelous Light: The Joy of Love,” was a celebration of diversity in the unity of the members of the Salesian Family. Participants of all ages and ministries arrived at the campus of Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, NJ, on Friday evening for registration. Fr. John Puntino, SDB, led the procession with the Blessed Sacrament around the quad and the life-size statue of Mary Help of Christians. Attendees were officially welcomed to the Festival by Fr. Thomas A. Dunne, SDB, and then joined together in sacred Adoration, with guided meditation and music provided by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. The evening closed with Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, Reposition, and a Salesian Goodnight.

Saturday festivities opened with breakfast and fellowship. The day was filled with numerous opportunities for spiritual renewal and animation through the Holy Spirit. Participants were afforded time for workshops and to visit vendors. The keynote speakers inspired attendees through their witness and presentations to embrace forgiveness, to observe in fullness each of our sacramental vocations, to revel in

perseverance through faith, hope, and love, and to pray with gratitude for God’s mercy. Bishop Kevin J. Sweeney, Bishop of Paterson, NJ, presided at Holy Mass in the afternoon where he called upon all the faithful and Salesians to be fully present while using our diverse gifts and talents to further God’s kingdom and in meeting the needs of those in our charge and those we serve. The evening Oktoberfest meal and dessert trays were a delight to the palate as the Salesian Family cherished this time to reconnect, reminisce, make new acquaintances, and happily share our journeys as Salesians. Following the recitation of the Holy Spouses Rosary, Dr. Peter Howard, world-renowned expert on the message and person of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen exhorted us all to hear his message afresh and work to reinstate his beatification.

Sunday began with the celebration of Mass presided by Bishop John Bonnici, Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of NY, and former Director of the Archdiocese’s Family Life/Respect Life Office. Following this, all shared in a magnificent brunch graciously donated in its entirety by

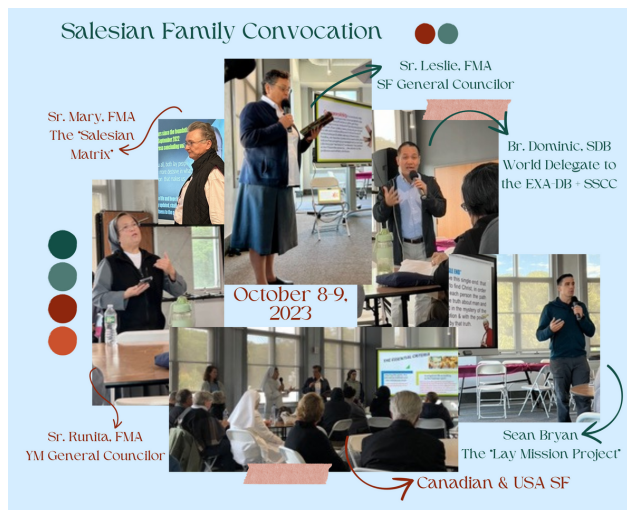
The Brownstone, of Paterson, NJ.

Workshop and vendor options for the day focused on the blessing of joy amidst trials and tribulations and ministries of restoration and healing. In addition, attendees were encouraged to prize their baptismal identity, revive their devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and were invited to consider the work being done on the *Salesian Matrix*. The inspiring keynote address of Immaculée Ilibagiza was followed by her book signing.

Participants were once again called to Adoration, Benediction, Reposition, and the commission to go in peace to love and serve in the preventive spirit of Don Bosco. The Salesian Family members continued their time together after supper with the Salesian Family Convocation activities.

Fr. Thomas A. Dunne, SDB, welcomed and invited everyone to reflect on our experiences in listening to our encounter of family. He expressed the Rector Major's call to unity as diverse communities. He led us in an opening prayer on Spirit and Wisdom. He expressed that the purpose of this evening together is to build the foundation for the work to be done on Monday. He continued by celebrating the gathered groups. He asked everyone to discuss "What did we take away from our time together at the Salesian Family Festival?" We engaged in pairs to reflect on the questions as follows:

- How is your family a blessing for you?
- How is your family a challenge for you?
- What did you learn during the festival?



Convocation collage

Photos by Mrs. Jill Conroy and Mrs. Julia Tafoya, Salesian Cooperators

- What did you learn about yourself?
- Where is God in your family life?
- What does this mean to you as a follower of Don Bosco?

He expressed that these will be questions that we may return to as we continue to process after we depart. Father challenged us to see what elements invigorated us and he named, "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, witness, and reflection." He continued by emphasizing that, "all are welcome" and he celebrated this opportunity for "...so many diverse persons to come together as a Salesian Family", He reflected that, "... It looked like a family reunion". Father reminded us to pray for those who fell ill or those who were unable to attend but played a significant role in the planning. He turned the evening over to Sr. Mary Greenan, FMA.

Sister enjoined all of us to meditate on light. Sister asked the question, "What lights do we need to place on the light stand?" Sister played some Celtic

music. She invited people to take the light (candle), enter into a personal reflective moment, and pass it on. She challenged us to be the light of Christ, especially to young people. We were assigned some group work at our tables. She asked, "How do we live the Preventive Spirit as light?" Guided inquiry and sharing followed. A non-exhaustive list of notable themes emerged including, invitation, bearing witness, modeling through living the spirit of the preventive system, and formative transformation. We prayed the prayer of the Salesian Matrix in assigned paragraphs in two groups ending the prayer by saying the last paragraph together. Last, participants shared a word or phrase from the prayer they found to resonate in their hearts. We ended the evening with a "Good Night" by Father John Puntino.

On Monday, October 9, Fr. Dunne welcomed everyone back to the "upper room." He provided a brief overview of the reflection work done on Sunday evening. He called us to continue to be a light amidst the backdrop of the many forms of current darkness. Our World



Festival collage

Photos by Mr. Joe Gigli, *The Beacon*, Diocese of Paterson; and Mrs. Julia Tafoya and Mrs. Andrea Zimmerman, Salesian Cooperators

Delegates were introduced, and they highlighted themes of vocation, solidarity, ministry, social justice, respectful dialogue, co-responsibility, and “preventive” education. Father Dunne then introduced the first to speak: Sister Runita Borja, FMA, General Councilor for Youth Ministry. Her presentation was a weft and weave of story and practice. She emphasized the dispositions, postures, and strategies that are grounded in the preventive spirit (i.e., reason, religion, and loving-kindness) with a focus on presence and rapport. She established for us the context in which we are called to work in youth ministry and underscored that the needs of our youth and the families we serve are many.

Next, we enjoyed the presentation of Br. Dominic Nguyen, SDB, World Delegate for the Salesian Cooperators and SDB Past Pupils. He was followed by Sr. Leslie Sándigo, FMA, General Councilor for the Salesian Family. Br. Dominic provided a slide deck that moved us through the tenets of the Preventive System so that we could consolidate our understanding

of the dynamics of the preventive spirit. All of our encounters are formed in faith, hope, and love, animated though sacramental life modeled, and perpetuated in the call to build rapport though a “heart” to heart” encounter that transforms in holiness. We considered the World Perspective of the work with youth and families.

Sister Leslie presented these dynamics as a movement from information to formation to transformation. We viewed the video on the Salesian Discipleship and Apostolic Family. Highlights included the naming of the consecrated and the groups of the active fraternity of the entire family. The metaphor of an ever-growing forest was used to express the unity among diversity of this vast family. She maintained that, individually and collectively, we beat with one heart in this evangelical life, when we embrace the charism that we term, Salesian.

She expressed that the objective is to reach holiness and be responsible partners in mission and in social

living. The fundamental elements are the importance of the Holy Mass, the sacramental life, Mother Mary, and sanctity. There is a call to go deeper and embrace the Gospel, the “Good News,” as the goal of our mission that starts in harmony within the Salesian Family (i.e., the 32 Official Groups), where unity and the plurality of expression (*Charismatic Charter*, no. 3) is manifest.

Future directions include common study and projects and to learn to think together born from respectful dialogue that affirms all perspectives. There was an urgent call to give voice in dialogue that will be brought to the membership on the Provincial Councils in order to have a greater impact in our Province and world. Being one in prayer and spirit is a longing of the heart of all Salesians and we will be fruitful in the common mission of forming good Christians and upright citizens beyond measure, if we are one, in truth and in deed.

We viewed the video, *Alike*, and Sister Leslie concluded with our need for co-responsibility and collaboration. The question for continued contemplation was, “What can we do to live, deepen, and offer the Preventive System to families in the Church and the world?”

In addition, we were asked to reflect on the following:

- As good Christians and honest citizens, how are we present with young people and their families?
- What family needs do we encounter?

Fr. Dunne introduced Sean Bryan (aka, the “Papal Ninja”), creator of the “Lay

Mission Project” initiative, who presented on collaboration and co-responsibility of the laity in the mission of the Church. He began by explaining the common mission established in the Church and he reiterated the identify we have in Baptism. He expressed that co-responsibility includes four aspects as follows:

- Equal responsibility for the end results
- Tasks having equal dignity
- Equal voice in discerning the means to the end – dialogue
- Accountability to one another

He called us to ensure that the imagination is in sync with the tradition of the Church and that requires formation and accountability. He discussed the Church’s teaching on the lay vocation (*Lumen Gentium*, 31). Sean established that this lay existence is like a “web of existence”. He continued by stating that, “The laity in their lived experience in the world through faith, hope and charity, are “leaven—yeast”. He maintained that “The commission is by the Lord, in furthering the Kingdom in environments only accessible by the laity”. He continued by presenting the criteria for formation:

1. **Spiritual** – Holiness
2. **Mission Focused** – Orientation is outward
3. **Communal**
4. **Systematic**

Sean suggested that the work has to bring all of us to dialogue as to best practices in formation. He mentioned the challenge of time, relational pastoral guidance, and dedicated commitment.



Bishop Sweeney (center) greets our Past Pupil from St. Anthony’s, Beech Street, Paterson, Seminarian Alfredo Tuesta.
Photo by Mr. Joe Gigli, The Beacon, Diocese of Paterson

He posed the question to ponder, “What are ways we can show that they are loved so that they know that they are loved”? Sean also suggested that we deeply consider the manner of relating in an institution and to maintain the original mission informed by the Holy Spirit. Sean concluded by an invitation to develop spiritual acts of contemplation in our on-going formation.

We were then called to reflect on a meaningful experience of co-responsibility and why it was successful.

Father Tom called us to continue to be a light amidst the backdrop of the many forms of current darkness. We then transitioned to the chapel for our final Mass of the Festival where Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, Provincial, celebrated the Votive Mass of the Holy Family. Father Tom Dunne, SDB and Sister Denise Sickinger, FMA were honored for their hard work both in preparation and during the event. Gratitude for the volunteers, especially the Salesian Cooperators

from DBP and Tampa, and a Salesian Past Pupil from MHCA, who worked tirelessly, was expressed. This was a fitting and empowering end to a weekend which can best be described as a taste of the Banquet promised.

The Festival is over but the work has just begun!



Festival attendees stand before Our Lady in the courtyard during the Procession with the Blessed Sacrament.
Photo by Mrs. Julia Tafoya, Salesian Cooperator



Members of the Salesian Family Encuentro.
Photo courtesy of Boletín Salesiano en Centroamérica's Flickr

Like a Family Reunion

Interamerica Salesian Family Provincial Delegate Encounter

BY FR. TOM DUNNE, SDB, AND SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA

The initial communications on the 2023 Encounter of the Interamerica Salesian Family Delegates (Oct. 23-26), promised a rather novel approach. Unlike previous get-togethers that featured only SDB and the exceptional lay presence, this encounter was called to include the leaders and representatives for all Salesian Family Groups in the Interamerica Region. What had been, in the past, a rather staid gathering of up to 14 SDBs and one or two lay delegates, became a lively and widely diverse assembly of 42 participants representing 10 Salesian Family groups and one provisional group. From the first gathering to the last, this Encuentro was going to be new, creative, and inspiring.

Fr. Joan Lluís Playà, SDB, the Rector Major's World Delegate to the Salesian Family, led the encounter with a team that included other world delegates in the Salesian Family, e.g., Sr. Leslie Sandigo, FMA, General Councilor for the Salesian Family. It was refreshing to meet other Salesian Family members who had previously only been read about in the *Salesian Family of Don Bosco* book published a few years ago. It was also refreshing and encouraging to know that, from the outset, we all share the same charism, mission to poor young

people and families, a connection with Don Bosco, and a devotion to Mary, Help of Christians. Like the recent Salesian *Family* Festival in our own province, this gathering seemed like a family reunion.

The timing of this Encuentro was **a very important aspect** of our gathering. We were meeting during the last phases of the Bishops' Synod on Synodality. The leaders of our Encuentro made sure that we kept that juxtaposition before our minds and hearts. With so many Salesian Family Groups present, it would have been rather easy to fragment around our own priorities and plans. It would have been understandable if one Group would predominate and control the discernment and planning. To the contrary, this Encuentro began with our common call as followers of Christ in the spirit of Don Bosco. We focused on our identity as a **charismatic Family**, loyal to our commonly held traditions, cherishing our special charisms, and discerning, as one, the way our call is moving us forward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the accompaniment of our Mother, the Help of Christians. We all reflected deeply on our charismatic communion in Don



(from left to right) Maria Carmen Castillon, president of the Worldwide FMA Past Pupils, Sr. Denise, and Fr. Tom presenting the Salesian Family Festival as a "best practice."

Photo courtesy of Fr. Tom Dunne, SDB

Bosco's Family. We took strength from the "best practices" many of our groups have initiated in bringing Don Bosco's charism to life in the modern age. (Sr. Denise and I were asked to share our province experience with the Salesian Family Festival in creating a synodality for the sake of action among all the Salesian Family groups in our province.)

Overall, I am happy to report that there was a significant difference when comparing this Encuentro and those that went before. In this encounter, there was a greater sense of ownership for Don Bosco's charism among the many groups present. It was good to see PowerPoint documents and program manuals eagerly shared with other provinces and groups. The outcome of this meeting of Charismatic communion was a greater sense of oneness, along with an excitement of sharing the gifts and work of so many of our brothers and sisters in Don Bosco's family.

We can look forward to witnessing the same charismatic development take place when the Salesian Family meets once again for Salesian Family Spirituality Days in January. Together we will look to Our Lady Help of Christians for her inspiration in discerning and following the apostolic impetus of Don Bosco's Dream at age 9 in the 21st century. Within a Synodal Church, our Salesian Family is a charismatic communion, praying, listening, sharing, planning, and sharing life together.

Please click [here](#) to read some of the reports and sharings of our world and province leaders, as well as view some of the power points, turned into videos. [View photos](#) on Flickr, too!



Blessed Sacrament housed inside a beautiful monstrance.

Photo by David Eucaristia from Pexels

Strengthen the Body of Christ 10th National Eucharistic Congress

GATHERED BY SR. DENISE SICKINGER, FMA,
AND MISS JULIA ST. CLAIR,
SUE PROVINCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The 10th National Eucharistic Congress in the U.S. will take place on July 17–21, 2024, in Indianapolis, IN. As the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 Years, this upcoming event will serve as a profound historical and spiritual moment for the good of us and our Church.

Now is the time for us to unite with one another as we share in the encounter of Jesus Christ. Visit the links available via the buttons below to register a group, access resources, and learn more about the upcoming revival!

[Explore the website](#)

[Register your group](#)

[View and share resources](#)



*Vicky Weekley plays guitar during the October SLR.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Youth Ministry*

In Awe of What God Can Do **Vicky Weekley's Appointment as** **Province Delegate of Youth and Young Adult Ministry (PDYYM)**

BY MS. JULIA ST. CLAIR, SUE PROVINCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Ten years ago, Ms. Victoria "Vicky" Weekley, then an Immaculata-La Salle High School (ILS) student in Miami, FL, attended her first Salesian Leadership Retreat (SLR). Her time at ILS and on the SLR marked the beginning of her faith journey working with the Salesian Family. She would later serve on the young team, volunteer with the office of youth ministry (OYM), and participate in different mission opportunities before joining the province office of youth and young adult ministry in 2018 as a program coordinator.

Last year, she was promoted to associate director of the office of youth and young adult ministry. This year, in late August, she received another incredible opportunity—being named the interim province delegate of youth and young adult ministry.

Vicky is both the first woman and lay delegate of youth and young adult ministry in the history of the SUE Province. Although she did not expect to be asked to fill this role, Vicky feels an immense amount of gratitude to be entrusted with this role in the mission.

"I'm really amazed and thankful for the support of the [Salesian] Family," she beamed.

Since the pandemic, Vicky has taken on the role of retreat director of the Salesian Leadership Retreat. Although her job title has changed, her connection with the young remains the same.

"The beautiful thing about young people is they don't care about things like titles," Vicky shared. "They care about how you present yourself and treat them, which takes the pressure off. You can be yourself."

This encouragement to be oneself also extends to all retreat leaders, especially members of the team.

"Something we stress among the young team and core team is the importance of being themselves in order for the team to work well," Vicky explained. "The young team is so important. We spend months leading up to the retreat walking with and getting to know them since they are the ones leading us forward."

Vicky's time as interim delegate is very special because it can continue to be "a year of dreaming."



Vicky (left) and Sr. Guerline Joseph, FMA, take a selfie with Grigio.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Youth Ministry

“You hear the needs of a lot of different people while working in ministry,” Vicky detailed. “We hear all different ideas and dreams. What’s beautiful about working in this office is we get to listen to both people’s realities and the perspectives they offer, take more things to prayer, and then move.”

This affords her and the office the ability to continue to be innovative.

“My hope is that we can involve those who work with young people and accomplish some of these dreams,” Vicky remarked.

During her time as interim province delegate of youth and young adult ministry, Vicky would love to continue building relationships. She envisions providing opportunities that build a good foundation for the future of the Congregation, especially with the core team.

“We have a great group of core team who are growing in friendship. They’re not just a team who are working together once a year. We have something special. Because there is a real concern for the other and for the mission, they are better able to serve. They know us and we know them, and because of that we are able to look at them as a foundational core team who are able to bring other young adults in to be core team,” Vicky exclaimed.

“We’ve been so fortunate to have these foundational core team members who are so generous with their time. It can be hard to find young people who can take off work and school. All these years later, I’m still amazed that those who can are willing to



Vicky (second from right, back row) and the young team at the October 2023 SLR.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Youth Ministry

take off from work and miss school to serve,” she continued. “It’s so amazing to see the love people have for the mission and how much of themselves they are willing to give. I hope the dedication of these young adults inspires the young people they are serving to do the same.”

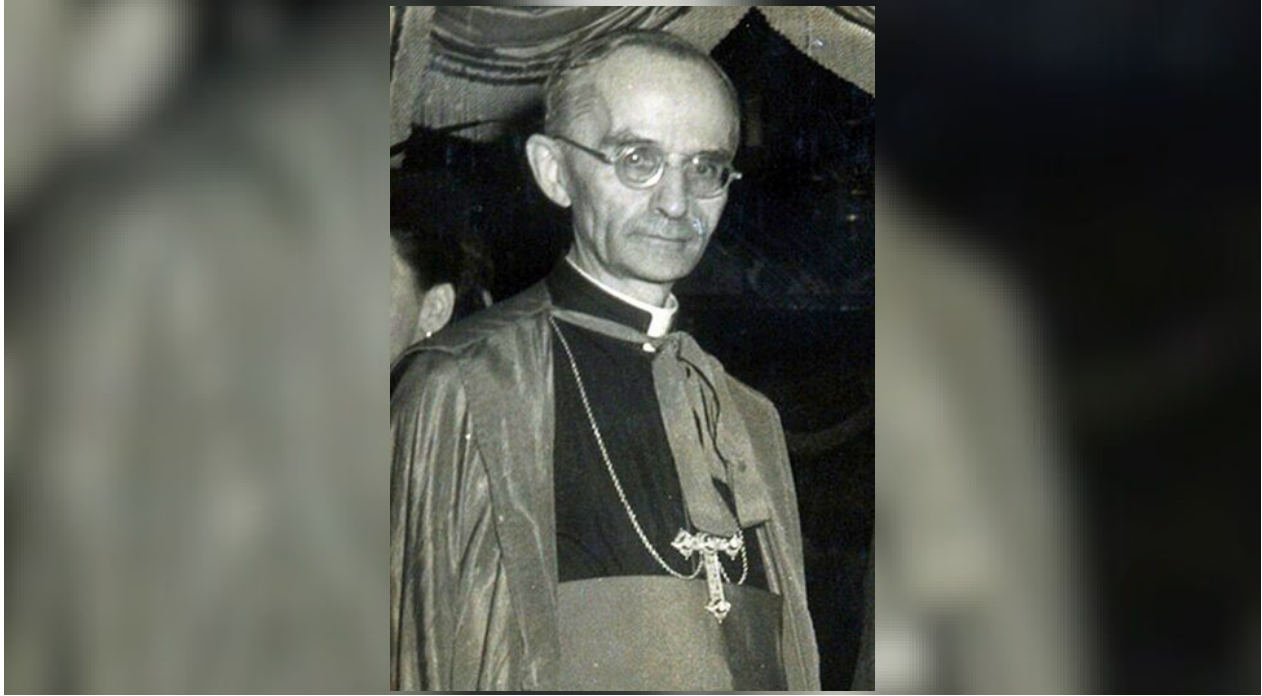
“I know that what I have in front of me is a treasure, a little glimpse of heaven,” she declared. “I’m just thankful I’ve been trusted enough to do it. We’ll see what God has in store.”



She also shared her faith journey throughout the past decade.

“October marked ten years since my own Salesian Leadership Retreat,” Vicky reflected. “I never would’ve dreamed of being here today ten years ago. It just happened beautifully, step-by-step, trusting and seeing what’s possible when you say Yes!”

“The faith life can be an adventure,” she added. “It’s not boring—it’s meeting people, seeing the world. If you’re open, it changes your whole life. I’m just in awe of what God can do.”



Abp. Richard Pittini, SDB
Photo courtesy of Salesian Provincial Archives

Salesian Pioneers of North America Abp. Richard Pittini, SDB

BY FR. MIKE MENDEL, SDB

Fr. Richard Pittini, SDB, like many of the early Salesians who came to the U.S., arrived here after having been a missionary in South America. Fr. Rinaldi sent him in 1927 to succeed Fr. Manassero (*Snippets, June 2023*) His six years in the Eastern Province were very significant: for making Don Bosco more widely known, attracting vocations, and establishing a permanent house of formation.

Richard Pittini was born in Tricesimo (Udine province), Italy, on April 30, 1876, learned about the Salesians through the *Salesian Bulletin*, and sought admission in 1892 in spite of opposition from his father and his bishop. Even without the usual testimonials, Fr. Julius Barberis admitted him, and he professed in 1894. After listening to tales of the missions from Bp. Louis Lasagna, Bro. Pittini volunteered to go to South America with him. He arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, and was ordained there on January 22, 1899. He served as director in two of the major houses and as master of novices until in 1923 he was made provincial of the Uruguay-Paraguay Province. He didn't complete that term before he was appointed to New Rochelle.

The author of *Service for the Young* speculates that the appointment was because the superiors had “searched the globe and found no one who surpassed him in courage and fidelity to Don Bosco.” His appointment together with Fr. Binelli's as master of novices in 1921 (*Snippets, July 2023*) “constituted the greatest sign of Father Philip Rinaldi's special solicitude for the Salesians of America.”

The same author writes that Fr. Pittini “brought to the United States the conviction that there is in our apostolate such a spirit of geniality and such a popular appeal, such an adaptability to the changing times, that it is bound to find favor.”

He took a crash course in English and insisted that his confreres use it; thus they would help their parishioners and students enculturate as “upright citizens” of the U.S. He traveled to seminaries all over the Northeast as well as in Toronto and the Midwest, making Don Bosco and his sons known. His narratives held seminarians spellbound. Even if those future priests didn't decide to become Salesians, their

influence would be felt in their future parishes. As Don Bosco's fame spread, requests for Salesians came from many dioceses. In view of Don Bosco's beatification, Fr. Pittini commissioned his first American biography, *The Blessed Friend of Youth*, written by Fr. Neil Boyton, SJ, with a foreword by the former governor of New York and presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith (Macmillan, 1929); it's still in print. With Cardinal Hayes he organized a splendid celebration of the beatification in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Even more important was the purchase in 1928 of a 183-acre farm in Newton, N.J., where aspirants, novices, and students of philosophy could be trained. They had outgrown the confines of New Rochelle, Goshen, and Ramsey. The old granite farmhouse was renovated, and in the fall the new community assembled with Fr. Pittini himself as director and a staff of seven other Salesians, two students of philosophy, and 23 novices. The next summer plans were laid for a large new building, and in spite of the Great Depression (which began in October 1929), construction began in 1930. Contractors and seminarians all pitched in to complete the building. That work, as well as improving the grounds, constituted the seminarians' recreation for several years. When Fr. Pittini's term ended in 1933, the staff of Don Bosco College numbered six Salesians; there were 21 professed clerical students and four coadjutors, 14 novices, and a healthy number of aspirants.

Meanwhile, Fr. Pittini approved the suggestion to start a summer camp on

the property in 1930, and he handed over direction of Don Bosco Seminary to Fr. Joseph Costanzo (*Snippets, August 2023*). The other schools of the province also began summer camps before long. The provincial approved an expansion of the school at Goshen, including a new building with chapel, classrooms, and dormitories. The existing work in Tampa (a parish in Ybor City) expanded to include an orphanage named for the Salesians' patroness, Mary Help of Christians, built from scratch on the city's outskirts.

En route to Italy for the general chapter in 1932, Fr. Pittini met Msgr. Peter Wynhoven, director of Catholic Charities in New Orleans. The monsignor was eager to have the Salesians take over Hope Haven, an orphanage he had started in Marrero that was proving difficult to manage. Fr. Pittini recruited coadjutor brothers from Italy to teach printing, bookbinding, woodworking, and agriculture to the boys; they included Bros. Julius Bollati, Joseph Botto, and James Rolando. In the summer of 1933, he sent Fr. Celestine Moskal as director. The school curriculum was rounded out with academics, music, and sports. The boys and benefactors were won over.

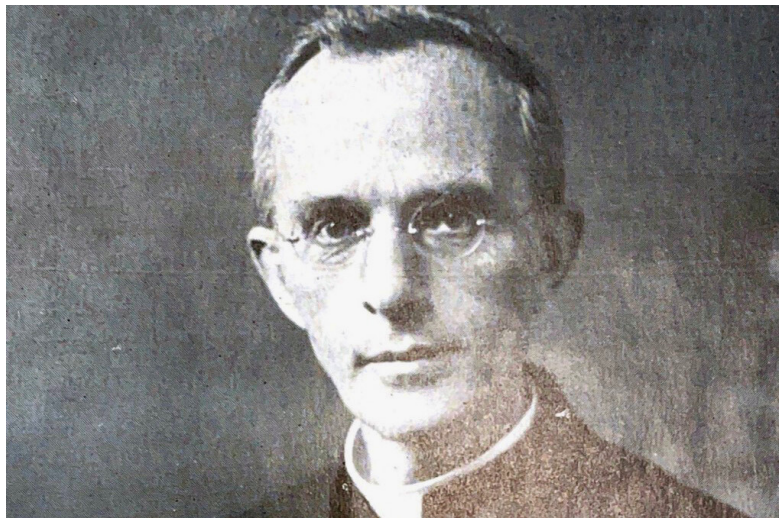
In August 1933, the new Rector Major, Fr. Peter Ricaldone, sent Fr. Pittini to Santo Domingo to investigate the possibility of opening a trades and agricultural school there. His report satisfied the superiors, and they put the project into Fr. Pittini's hands. He

definitively left New York on February 1, 1934.

Initiating the Salesian work in the Dominican Republic, he so won over the local clergy and the government that in October 1935 he was chosen archbishop of Santo Domingo. Humbly, he remarked, "Once, to serve His designs, God even chose Balaam's ass." He was ordained bishop on December 8. His episcopal program was the formation of the clergy, promotion of the sacraments, the social apostolate, and Catholic schools. He arranged for the Salesian Sisters to come.

The Church grew tremendously during Abp. Pittini's episcopate, increasing the number of dioceses, parishes, priests, schools, medical facilities, and religious houses. In 1938 he assisted the papal nuncio in mediating an armed conflict between his adopted country and Haiti. He was instrumental in negotiating a concordat in 1954 between the Dominican government and the Holy See. The Church, including the Salesians, enjoyed the support of the dictator Trujillo and supported him in turn, until the late 1950s. The bishops broke with the regime in 1960, which contributed to the dictator's overthrow the next year.

On a voyage in 1939, Abp. Pittini met Auxiliary Bishop Richard Cushing, director of Propagation of the Faith in Boston. When Bp. Cushing was promoted to archbishop of Boston five years later, Abp. Pittini remembered their meeting and approached him about opening a Salesian work in Boston—to fulfill something Don Bosco had seen in a dream (BM 16:308). Thus in 1945 the



Abp. Richard Pittini, SDB, during his time as provincial.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Provincial Archives

Salesians opened a trade school and oratory in East Boston.

In 1945 Abp. Pittini began to go blind, but that didn't slow down his ministry or his travels. Completely blind by 1948, he composed a memoir, published in English as *Memoirs in My Blindness* (Paterson: Salesiana, 1952). He died in Santo Domingo on December 10, 1961, "like a patriarch" whose long life was replete with goodness and self-giving for souls.



Abp. Pittini's plaque (left) in the garden of the Salesian Provincial House.
Photo by Ms. Julia St. Clair

Abp. Pittini is one of four provincials monumentalized in the garden of the provincial house at New Rochelle.



In the Salesian Family Know



Salesian Cooperators and Family at the formation day.
Photo courtesy of Ms. Elizabeth Wlodzimierski

Faith and Fellowship Midwestern Cooperator Formation Day

BY MS. ELIZABETH WLODZIMIERSKI,
SALESIAN COOPERATOR

On Saturday, October 28, the St. Mary Mazzarello Salesian Cooperator Center gathered for formation, faith, and fellowship. Members gathered from Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Crystal Lake, IL. Fr. Tom Brennan gave a talk on Salesian Identity and the Salesian Cooperator 150th theme "A Dream Remembered" which led to fun and fruitful conversations.



The afternoon was spent in prayer and discussion. Lisa, Marcial, and Elizabeth led reflections and discussions based on Malu Zarate's "Towards 150 Years" Project of Apostolic Life (PVA) reflections. It was a blessed day of formation and fellowship.



Our Family Album



Requiescat in Pace



Sr. Catherine Novo, FMA

Photo courtesy of Sr. Maria Colombo, FMA

Sr. Catherine Novo, FMA



**Let Us Rise Up
Through God's Love**



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



**"Everything fades away,
but not our gratitude."**

- St. John Bosco



Our email address is:

contact@donboscosalesianportal.org



Copyright © 2023 Salesian Family of Canada and Eastern USA. All rights reserved.