

Canada and Eastern USA



Salesian Family Snippets



News of the Salesian Family Near and Far

► MY NOMINATION AS CARDINAL

Don Ángel's wish to continue to serve others—in a different way.

SALESIAN PIONEERS OF NORTH AMERICA

Learn about Fr. John Focacci, SDB, the first novice master of the province of St. Philip the Apostle.





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IMPORTANT DATES

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

Oct. 6-9: Salesian *Family* Festival,
Don Bosco Prep, Ramsey, NJ

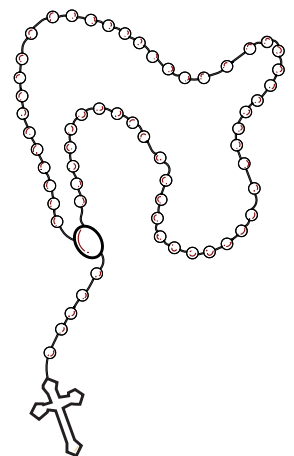
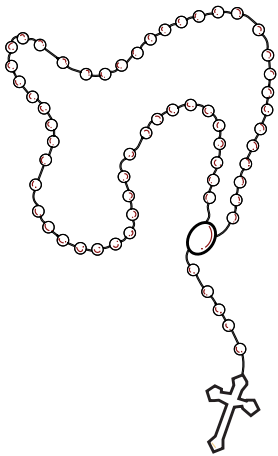
Oct. 11: Thanksgiving Day, Canada

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

Oct. 22: World Mission Sunday

Oct. 23: St. Louis Guanella,
Founder, Servants of Charity

Oct. 29: Bl. Michael Rua, SDB



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Don Ángel speaks at the seminar promoting the causes of beatification and canonization of the Salesian Family last month in Valdocco.
Photo courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

I wish to continue to serve others—in a different way.

My Nomination as Cardinal

I feel that I share what our holy Founder stated in 1884: “I see ever more what a glorious future has been prepared for our Society, how it will spread and what good it will be able to accomplish.”

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

Dear friends of the Salesian charism, I send to each of you my sincere, fraternal, and affectionate greeting. The *Salesian Bulletin* has “suggested” to me that I prepare this greeting not as I’ve done at other times, telling you of something noteworthy that I’ve experienced, but speaking of myself, of this new reality that awaits me. I’ve experienced something of what I’ve studied regarding the person of our father Don Bosco. He found it difficult to speak of himself, and still more difficult to voice what he was feeling. In my case, I have to admit that it’s a little more difficult to speak or to write of the most recent things that have happened to me; but I admit that sooner or later I have to do it, and the message of the *Salesian Bulletin* that comes into the hands and the hearts of so many friends of Don Bosco’s charism is a good way of sending this personal message.

After the unexpected news (for me, especially) by which the Holy Father Francis announced my name, too, among the 21 persons whom he has chosen to “create” cardinals of the Church at the next consistory on September 30, thousands of

people have asked me, especially Salesians of Don Bosco and members of the Salesian Family around the world: “What will happen now? Who will accompany the life of the Congregation for the near future? What steps await us?” You can well understand that I’ve put to myself these very questions, while I’ve thanked the Lord in faith for this gift that Pope Francis has given us as the Salesian Congregation and as Don Bosco’s Family.

Reading with our faith, aware of the great deeds God has done and what we know through his Word, we can say that God loves surprises. It’s usual in the Bible for God to say: “Go! The road will be revealed to you.” One important thing that Don Bosco has taught us is, “Let nothing upset you, and put your trust in God’s Providence.”

I feel that I share what our holy Founder stated in 1884: “I see ever more what a glorious future has been prepared for our Society, how it will spread and what good it will be able

to accomplish.” I was able to speak personally with Pope Francis after he made his Angelus announcement, assuring him of my availability, that he can count on me for service of any sort. I answered as Don Bosco did when he was asked to build the Sacred Heart Church in Rome—in this case, an aged and sick Don Bosco, who was also aware of the burden and the responsibility for a Congregation being born. Don Bosco answered: “If this is the Pope’s order, I obey!”

With simplicity, I told the Holy Father that we Salesians have learned from Don Bosco to be always available for the welfare of the Church, and in particular for anything the Pope might request. So, while I thank God for this gift that’s for the whole Congregation and the Salesian Family, I express my gratitude to Pope Francis by assuring him that all the members of our great Family will pray for him more fervently and intensely. As I said, our prayer will always be accompanied by our sincere and profound affection.

What will happen now?

I must share with you that I’ve been deeply touched by Pope Francis’s sensitiveness in our regard by taking into account that my service as Rector Major shouldn’t change immediately from one day to another. For this reason, after about half an hour after his announcing my nomination following the Angelus on Sunday, July 9, the Holy Father sent me a letter in which he spoke of the time necessary for me to prepare for the general chapter of our Congregation before I take up whatever

he intends to entrust to me. As always, the Holy Father has shown that he’s attentive, cordial, and particularly fond of and highly esteems the charism of Don Bosco. These sentiments in my own name and the name of the whole Salesian Family, I reciprocated.


I’d like to share with you the arrangements that the Holy Father communicated to me. The Pope has decided that, for the benefit of our Congregation, after the consistory on September 30, 2023, I may continue my service as Rector Major until July 31, 2024. After that date, I’ll present my resignation as Rector Major, as our Constitutions and Regulations require, so as to put myself into the hands of the Holy Father for the service that he’ll entrust to me.

This is as much as the Pope has communicated to me. We can expect the 29th General Chapter in a year, that is, in February 2025. My vicar, Fr. Stefano Martoglio, will assume the government of the Congregation *ad interim*, as our Constitutions establish, until the celebration of GC29. Finally, I still have to mention and answer one other question that many of you have: what task will the Holy Father give me? Pope Francis hasn’t told me yet. Furthermore, I think this is ample time for what’s to be done most opportunely.

In any case, I ask all of you, dear confreres and members of the groups of our Salesian Family, to continue and intensify your prayer—above all,

for Pope Francis. He asked specifically for that at the end of the private audience he granted me.

Finally, I ask also that you pray for me, as I face the prospect of a new service in the Church which, as a son of Don Bosco, I accept in filial obedience, without having sought it because I truly believe that in the Church the services we provide can’t be and must never be sought or claimed as if we were concerned about making a personal career. What belongs to the “world” is inappropriate for us as servants in the name of Jesus. And we must differ (very much, I hope) from any worldly standard. To all this our beloved Father Don Bosco bears witness before the Lord Jesus.



I thank you for your love, the closeness you’ve expressed in these weeks with the numerous messages that have come to me from every part of the world. I feel addressed to me the same words that the Madonna said to Don Bosco in his dream at nine years of age – whose second centennial will be celebrated next year: “In due time you’ll understand everything.” And we know that for our Father that came, in effect, almost at the end of his life, at the altar of Mary Help of Christians in the basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which had been consecrated the day before, on May 16, 1887. From the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, I send you an affectionate and grateful greeting, entrusting everything and everyone to her, our Mother, who will continue to accompany and sustain us. As always, I greet you with immense love.

 **In, With, and For the Church** 



*The "playground" in full effect today at Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, NJ, where the Salesian Family Festival will take place.
Photo courtesy of Don Bosco Prep's Facebook*

Salesian Family Festival Update **Purchase Entrance Tickets Before the Price Increases**

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

These are the last three days to get entrance tickets to this year's Salesian Family Festival before the 20 percent increase on Friday, September 29. With this in mind, we encourage everyone who wishes to join us in two weeks to buy your tickets ASAP.

Purchase your tickets here before the price goes up on Friday!

Additionally, please keep an eye out in your inboxes for a MailChimp email from Sr. Denise and Fr. Tom with some exciting news about the Festival.

God bless you all, and we pray to see you at the Prep soon!



*The clergy of St. Anthony Parish, Paterson, ca. 1950. Seated l-r: Fr. Robert Tabacco, Fr. Modesto Valenti, Fr. Focacci, and an unidentified priest. Standing: Fr. James O'Hara, Bro. George Vida, and Fr. Aloysius Ronchi.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Provincial Center Archives*

Salesian Pioneers of North America **Fr. John Focacci, SDB**

BY FR. MIKE MENDEL, SDB

Fr. John Focacci was the first novice master of the province of St. Philip the Apostle, holding that office from 1904 at Troy, NY, to 1919 at Cold Spring, NY, whenever there were novices—which wasn't often.

John Focacci was born at Amborzasco in the province of Genoa on May 24, 1875, and enrolled in the Salesian school at Sampier d'Arena in 1887. From there he progressed to the novitiate at Foglizzo in 1892 and made perpetual profession on October 2, 1893. He studied philosophy at Valsalice and began theology. He did a year of military service and was mustered out as a sergeant in 1896. He completed theological studies in Parma and was ordained there on March 18, 1899. He taught at St. Benedict's School in Parma for five years, including three as catechist (director of religious activities).

In November 1904, Fr. Focacci came to the U.S., assigned as catechist and master of novices at St. Joseph's School in Troy. The novitiate was inaugurated on December 8, 1904, and canonically erected the following June 19. He had ten novices, of whom three persevered as Salesians: Filomeno Ferrara, Louis

Galli, and John Setaro. When Fr. Borghino moved his province headquarters from San Francisco to Troy, Fr. Focacci also served as province secretary (1905-1911) and a member of the provincial council. He remained a provincial councilor until 1917.

Without novices, he was prefect of the house in 1907-1908. In the spring of 1908, an extraordinary visitor noted that Troy remained the canonically established novitiate, but the province's three novices were in Italy that year.

In July 1908, Fr. Focacci moved to Hawthorne, NY, with the entire school, where it became Columbus College (a high school). He was the school's prefect until 1910, then became catechist. He became a naturalized citizen in June 1911.

Fr. Focacci began a long, off-and-on-again service at St. Anthony's Parish in Paterson, NJ, in 1911. He was pastor there until 1918. Meanwhile, anticipating a good number of novices, the province erected a novitiate at Hawthorne in August 1917. The school's destruction by fire in December

1917 scotched that plan. Consequently, it next was canonically erected on April 3, 1918, under the patronage of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; it was intended for a house loaned by the New York Archdiocese at Cold Spring.

So, Fr. Focacci was called upon to be master of novices at Cold Spring in August 1918. On September 8, a dozen young men, several of them past pupils of Hawthorne or Ramsey, began the novitiate year; 11 finished it and made their first profession on September 8, 1919. That class included Edward De Martini, Thomas De Matei, Joseph Haluch, and Edward Peugeot. By then, however, Fr. Focacci's health had failed and he was absent for a couple of months.

The superiors desired that he continue as novice master. Fr. Paul Albera believed that the Lord had blessed his work in that office. But Fr. Focacci begged off on account of his health and returned to Paterson as assistant pastor (1919-1923). There would be neither a novitiate nor novices in the province until Fr. Francis Binelli arrived in New Rochelle in 1921.

Fr. Focacci became St. Anthony's pastor again in 1923. He bought additional property to make a playground, and buildings to turn into a parochial school and a convent. When he was assigned to Port Chester as director and pastor at Holy Rosary Parish in 1925, an unidentified Paterson newspaper wrote, "No one regrets the necessity to sever the ties more than Father Focacci himself, who has grown to love Paterson



*The novices and superiors at Troy in 1904-1905. Seated l-r are Fr. Filomeno Ferrara, novice, Fr. Silvester Rabagliati, director, Fr. Michael Borghino, provincial, and Fr. Focacci.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Provincial Center Archives*

and its people more than any other place in his priestly career."

At Holy Rosary he paid off the parish debt and built the Don Bosco Community Center, which provided recreation for the young during the Depression as well as other valuable services. He remained in Port Chester until 1935, when he began to have heart problems and sought a lighter form of ministry. At his departure, a testimonial dinner was held for the "gentle and beloved friend of every resident of Port Chester," and the guest of honor himself "choked with emotion as he rose to reply to the tributes showered upon him" (*Daily Item*, Oct. 3, 1935).

Fr. Focacci passed through a rapid series of short pastoral assignments: Don Bosco College in Newton, NJ, as confessor and teacher (1935-1936), then a year at Mary Help of Christians in Tampa as confessor (1936-1937); FMAs' chaplain at North Haledon (1937-1940); St. Michael's School in Goshen, NY, as confessor (1940-1941); Transfiguration Parish in New York as an assistant pastor (1941-1945); New

Rochelle as confessor (1945-1948). His health continued to deteriorate, and by 1948 was so bad that he received Extreme Unction (as it was called then). But he was able to return to Transfiguration for a year, and in 1949 to St. Anthony in Paterson one last time. He died in Paterson on April 5, 1952.

Fr. Ernest Giovannini, the provincial, celebrated Fr. Focacci's funeral at St. Anthony, and Fr. Aloysius Trifari, who had succeeded him in Port Chester, preached. Bishop Thomas A. Boland of Paterson attended along with numerous clergy, religious, and a crowd of parishioners who overflowed the church.



Fr. Focacci was remembered as a calm, spiritually minded man, an understanding confessor, and a devoted laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. In his obituary letter his pastor, Fr. Modesto Valenti, noted his affability and good sense of humor. He memorialized him as "always and everywhere a true, zealous Salesian priest [who] knew how to earn the affection of everyone who knew him" and as a venerable spiritual guide to his novices and many others.



*A young girl sitting with and listening to her mother.
Photo by Kampus Production from Pexels*

Parenting the "Don Bosco Way" Part VI, Discipline

BY FR. PETER GONSALVES, SDB

The complete article was originally printed in The Examiner of Mumbai in January 2004. With Fr. Peter's permission, we will reprint it here in Salesian Family Snippets one section at a time over the coming months as a means of preparation for our Salesian Family Festival 2023. Please see the [April 2023 issue of Salesian Family Snippets](#) for a brief curriculum vitae of Fr. Peter Gonsalves, SDB, and Part I of this article. This article is also available in [Spanish](#). Subsequent sections can be found in the successive issues.

N.B. - Fr. Peter has assigned new terms to the traditional ones of the "Preventive System of St. John Bosco." The term "Rapport" replaces that of "Loving-Kindness" in the familiar trinomial of "Reason, Religion, and Loving-Kindness." "Rapport" is the "third 'R'" of Fr. Peter's trinomial. Further, he gives new nomenclature to our familiar "Preventive System," calling it, instead, the "Expressive System of St. John Bosco." Last, he denotes "Salesian Assistance" as "Presence."

Don Bosco's abhorrence of the "repressive system" of education that controlled children by fear of punishments led him to believe that a type of education without punishments was actually possible. The system of expression was born. It is an

educational method that seeks to create an environment that is so conducive to an all-round growth that it puts the child in the "moral impossibility of doing wrong"—just as a doctor would emphasize the practice of preventive health care measures as a necessary requisite for staying healthy.

But if, as a last resort, punishments need to be administered (as indeed sometimes they are inevitable), here are 10 important points for parents to remember.

- 1.) The child has a *right to know* what is right and wrong, what can be done and what must not be done. Parents should not punish if they have not communicated the rule to the child or have not stated clearly their disapproval of the child's offending action.
- 2.) Do not administer a punishment without giving at least two *warnings* to the child. This delay will demand greater control on the part of the parents but it will help them to avoid erratic and injurious punishments which could later cause them remorse and guilt.

- 3.) The punishment must be *proportionate* to the transgression.
- 4.) The *timing* of the punishment must follow the transgression so that the child will associate the two and not repeat the transgression.
- 5.) The punishment used must be *consistent* so that the child will know that whenever a rule is broken, punishment is inevitable. When consistency is maintained, it is enough to signal the first two warnings and children are sure to stop misbehaving.
- 6.) Whatever form of punishment is used, it should be *impersonal*, that is, the result of violating a rule and not because “You are bad!” This will ensure that the child will not interpret the punishment as caused by a personal defect that will lower his own self-worth.
- 7.) Punishment must be *constructive* so as to motivate good behavior in the future. Physical punishments are not the only type of punishments. Denying the child a favor, or giving an additional amount of work to be completed, can be as effective.
- 8.) Especially when the *reason* for the punishment is unclear, a brief explanation may help the child to recognize it as fair and just.
- 9.) Punishment must lead to *conscience building* to help children develop self-determination and inner control.
- 10.) Punishment must *never humiliate* – neither in words nor in action. It must never be seen as an act of “meanness” or revenge on the part of the parent. Punishments administered in these ways create in the child deep scars of resentment that take years to heal.

Be careful not to give anyone reason to think that you act under the impulse of anger. It is difficult to keep calm when administering punishment. But it is very necessary if you are not to give the impression that you are simply asserting your authority or giving vent to your anger.

Let us look on those over whom we have a certain authority, as sons. Let us be determined to be at their service, even as Jesus came to obey and not



*Happy mother and children hugging.
Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels*

to command. We should be ashamed to give the least impression of domineering. We should only exercise authority in order the better to serve the boys.

...There must be no angry outbursts, no look of contempt, no hurtful words. Instead, like true fathers, really intent on their correction and improvement, show them compassion at the present moment and hold out hope for the future.

In serious matters it is better to ask God's help in humble prayer, than to make a long speech that wounds those who hear it and does no good at all to the guilty ones. (Letters of John Bosco, 201 and 205)

Conclusion

The system of education of Don Bosco serves as a wise and time-tested framework for every parent. It is intensively challenging while at the same time amply rewarding. Indeed, parenting—according to the educational method of Don Bosco—is the delicate art of growing with your child. Peter Gonsalves is also the author of Growing with the Young, Don Bosco's Art of Educating - in cartoon, Exercises in Media Education, and Exercises in Peace Education. Copies of this article in its entirety and these other works by Fr. Peter will be available for purchase at the Festival.

See you at Don Bosco Prep on Friday, October 6, for the opening of the Salesian Family Festival 2023!



(from left to right) Sr. Eileen Joseph, FMA; Sr. Francine Guilmette, FMA; and Sr. Alphonsine Basque, FMA, at their jubilee celebration in September.
Photo courtesy of Salesian Sisters - Daughters of Mary Help of Christians' Facebook



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



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



**"Don't be afraid, Our Lady
will send us all that is necessary."**



- St. John Bosco



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