



# Salesian Family Snippets



*News of the Salesian Family Near and Far*

## ► **CHILDREN IN A FAMILY**

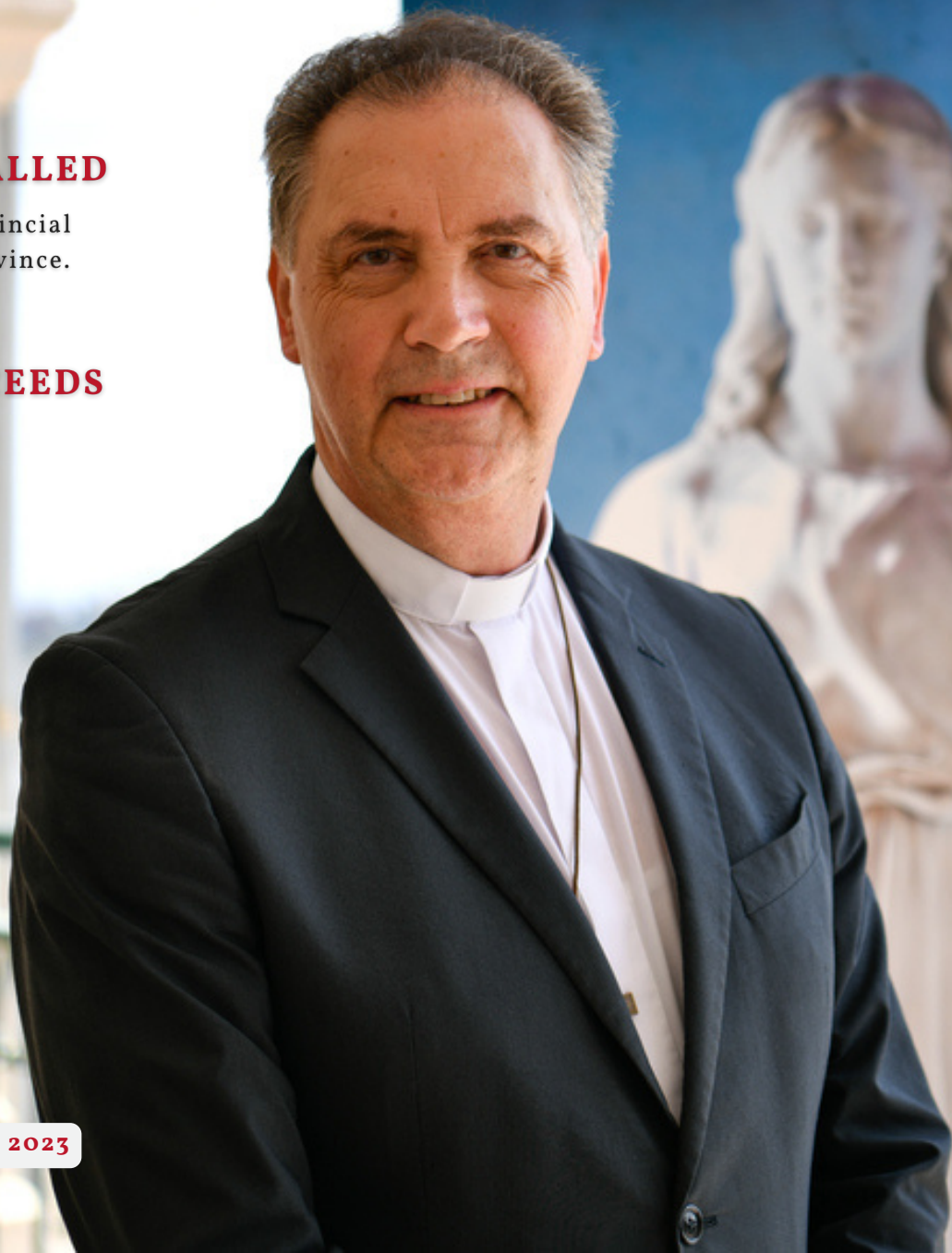
Rediscover the value in our relationships.

### **FR. DOMINIC AND FR. FRANCO INSTALLED**

As provincial and vice-provincial for the SDBs in the SUE Province.

### **SR. COLLEEN SUCCEEDS SR. JOANNE**

As provincial for the FMAs in the SEC Province.





# In This Issue



## LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

**Children in a Family** 03

## IN, WITH, AND FOR THE CHURCH

**Explore the Schedule** 05  
*for This Year's Salesian Family Festival*

**Don Chávez in the Provinces** 05

**Fr. Dominic and Fr. Franco Installed** 06  
*as Provincial and Vice-Provincial for the SDBs*

**Sr. Colleen Clair Succeeds Sr. Joanne** 07  
*as Provincial for the FMAs*

**“God is the Author of All Things“** 08  
*SDB Professions*

**They Said, “Fiat!”** 08  
*FMA Professions*

**Six Lay Missioners Commissioned** 09  
*at Salesian Retreat*

**Salesian Pioneers of North America** 10  
*Br. Anselmo Petazzi, SDB*

**Parenting the "Don Bosco Way"** 12  
*Part V, Presence*

## OUR FAMILY ALBUM

*Requiescat in Pace* 14



## IMPORTANT DATES

**Sept. 10:** FMA Jubilee Celebration, Montréal, QC

**Sept. 22:** Bl. Joseph Calasanz, SDB, and 94 Companions, Martyrs

**Sept. 30:** Consistory in Rome: Cardinal-elect Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB SDB Jubilee Celebration, Marian Shrine, Stony Point, NY

**Oct. 5:** Bl. Albert Marvelli, EXA-DB Virtual opening of the Oratory Day and Salesian Family Festival, October 6-9

Visit

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

*Cover photo courtesy of Ageniza Info Salesiana (ANS) | Photos on the "In This Issue" courtesy of Canva Pro*





The Rector Major (center) and Salesian and Christian Family after the Mass to commemorate the Centenary of the Consecration of the Basilica of the Adolescent Jesus in Nazareth  
Photo courtesy of Agenzia Info Salesiana (ANS)

## Children in a Family

Rediscover the great value of closeness, friendship, and simple joy in everyday life, and the value of sharing, talking, and communicating.

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

I'm writing these lines, dear friends of Don Bosco and of his precious charism, as I read the draft of the *Salesian Bulletin* for September. My greeting is the last thing inserted: I'm the last to write—just as Don Bosco used to do—so as to be in step with the content of the forthcoming issue.

This month, as we begin a new academic year in our schools and oratories, I'm pleased to see that the articles have a great missionary flavor (about the Philippines and Papua New Guinea) and, at the same time, the simplicity of a "Salesian mission" in our house in Saluzzo, with its "local flavor."

Reading this *Bulletin* makes me appreciate something that is very much ours, very Salesian, and which I'm sure is very pleasing to many of you: I'm referring to the great value of closeness, friendship, and simple joy in everyday life, and the value of sharing, speaking, and communicating. This is the great gift of having friends, of knowing that you are not alone, and feeling loved by so many good people in our lives.

While thinking about all this, I was reminded of a sincere and very honest testimony of a young woman who wrote to Father Luigi Maria Epicoco, which he published in his book *The Light in the Distance* ("La luce in fondo: attraversare i passaggi difficili della vita"). It's a testimony that I'd like you to know about because I consider it to be the antithesis of what we try to create every day in every Salesian house. This young woman realizes, in a certain sense, that there is no success or fulfillment if the most human of encounters or beautiful human relationships are lacking. The beginning of this school year brings us back to all this.

This young woman writes about herself: "Dear Father, I'm writing to you because I'd like you to help me understand whether the longing I've been experiencing in recent months tells me that I'm strange or that something important to me has changed. Maybe it will help you if I tell you a little about myself. I decided to leave home when I was just eighteen. It was a way to escape from an

environment that seemed so oppressive to me, one that was suffocating my dreams. I went to Milan to look for work. My family was unable to give me financial support for my studies. I was angry with them for this, too. All my friends were looking forward to choosing a major. I had no choice to make because I had no monetary support. I looked for a job to make a living; for years, I dreamed of being able to study. I succeeded and, at the cost of great sacrifices, earned my degree. On my graduation day, I didn't want my family to attend. I thought that farmers who had attained only an eighth-grade education wouldn't understand anything about my studies. I told my mother only that everything had gone well. Her tears momentarily awakened in me a sense of guilt that I'd never felt before. But it was of little account. I became who I am by myself; I was never able to count on anyone nor did I want to do so. Even where work was concerned, I made my own career because I chose to 'join forces' with myself.

"I have been this way for years. And I don't understand why only now, in the heart of the lockdown of this pandemic, a longing for my family has erupted inside me. I dream of telling them everything I've never told them. I dream of hugging my father. At night, I wake up and wonder whether it's possible to emancipate oneself from such significant relationships. I've never even allowed the stories I've had over the years to cross the threshold to true intimacy. But now everything seems so different to me. Now that I'm barred even from deciding for myself to step out

of my house, or from going to meet with someone whom I consider important to me, the awareness of the great lie that I've been living all this time has awakened in me.

"Who are we without relationships? Maybe just unhappy people looking for affirmation. Now I understand that, in reality, I did everything I did because I was hoping that someone would tell me who I really was. But I cut off the only ones who could have helped me answer that question by shutting down relationships. Now their lives are at risk, hundreds of kilometers away from me. If I should die, I'd like it to be among them and not among my successes."

#### A joy shared

I appreciate the honesty and courage of this young woman who made me think a lot about our reality today. It made me reflect on the lifestyle that so many families pursue—one in which the important thing is to achieve success, make a good salary, and fill our days with things to do so that everything turns a profit, etc. But we pay a very high price in order to live—not outside our houses but, more and more—outside ourselves. There's a danger of living without being centered, i.e., of "missing the mark." Believe me, dear friends, you can't imagine how noticeable this is in the boys and girls of our houses, our playgrounds, and our oratories.

Don Bosco's second successor, Father Paul Albera, recalled: "Don Bosco educated by loving, attracting,

conquering, and transforming. He enveloped us all—and almost entirely—in an atmosphere of contentment and happiness, from which pain, sadness, and melancholy were banished.... He listened to the boys with the greatest attention as if the things they were saying were all very important."

The first joy in life is to be happy along with others: "A shared joy is a double joy." The "password" for an educator is, "I feel at home with you." His or hers is a presence that has the intensity of life.

One of Don Bosco's biographers, Father Eugene Ceria, recounts that after a visit to Valdocco, a high-ranking member of the clergy declared: "You have a great treasure in your house which no one else in Turin or in any other religious community has. You have a room which anyone who is filled with affliction enters and then comes out radiant with joy." He was referring to Don Bosco's room. Another biographer, Father John Baptist Lemoyne, noted in pencil, "And a thousand of us have experienced this." One day Don Bosco said: "The young among us now seem to be like so many children in a family, all little proprietors of the house; they make the interests of the Congregation their own. They say 'our' church, 'our' school, and call 'our' concerns whatever concerns the Salesians."



So this is why this new academic and pastoral year is an occasion to take care of ourselves in what is most essential and most important—for *our* family.



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



*Salesian Family at a Labor Day gathering at the Don Bosco Residence in Orange, NJ  
Photo by Sr. Elfie Del Rosario, FMA*

**Explore the Schedule**  
for This Year's Salesian Family Festival

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

This year's Salesian Family Festival will take place from Friday, October 6, through Monday, October 9, at Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, NJ. This fun and once-in-a-lifetime event will beautifully embody this year's Strenna: "As Yeast in Today's Human Family: the Lay Dimension of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco."

Explore the **exciting \*schedule** for the entire festival. Highlights include guest speakers, food, panels, workshops, and more! The Salesian Family Festival is bilingual and hybrid, being both in-person and virtual. The fee for virtual attendance is \$30.00 per person.

For both in-person and virtual attendance, register first in **English** or **Spanish**, then follow the instructions on the confirmation page and/or in the confirmation email to make entrance tickets. This includes tickets for virtual attendance and to book hotel rooms if needed.

We're excited to welcome you to our festival! Register between now and the end of the month before the price increases on Friday, September 29!

*\*Schedule is subject to change out of necessity.*



*Photos courtesy of Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB; Sr. Maria Colombo, FMA; and Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA*

**Don Chávez in the Provinces**

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

The Salesian Family has been blessed to have been accompanied by Fr. Pascual Chávez, the Ninth Successor of Don Bosco. Explore the photo collages above and on page 13 for some of the many highlights of Don Chávez's visit!

We invite you to also read some of Don Chávez's reflections and homilies over this past summer.

- The Feast of St. Mary Magdalene*
- Message to the Salesian Cooperators of North America*
- Homily for Wednesday, August 2*
- Renewal of Professions (FMAs)*
- First Professions (FMAs)*
- Perpetual Professions (FMAs)*
- Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord*
- Fraternal life, space for human maturation*



(from left to right) Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB; General Councilor for Interamerica Region Fr. Hugo Orozco Sanchez, SDB; and Vice-Provincial Fr. Franco Pinto, SDB  
Photo by Ms. Vicky Weekley

## **Fr. Dominic and Fr. Franco Installed as Provincial and Vice-Provincial for the SDBs**

BY FR. MIKE MENDEL, SDB, AND MISS JULIA ST. CLAIR, PROVINCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.SALESIANS.ORG 08/14/2023

**(New Rochelle, NY – August 14)** – On Saturday, August 12, the General Councilor for Interamerica Region Fr. Hugo Orozco Sanchez, SDB, installed Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, as provincial and Fr. Franco Pinto, SDB, as vice-provincial of the SUE Province.

The ceremony took place with a votive Mass of St. John Bosco in the chapel of Salesian High School and began at 10:30 am ET. About 100 people took part in the Mass, including 32 concelebrating priests, 12 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, 10 Salesian brothers, two novices, members of Fr. Tran's family, numerous Salesian Cooperators, the incoming group of Salesian Lay Missioners, and staff from the provincial center, Salesian High School, and Salesian Missions. Salesian alumnus Chris Moronta led the sacred music.

After Provincial Secretary Fr. Dave Moreno read Fr. Dominic's letter of appointment from the Rector Major, Fr. Hugo spoke to Fr. Dominic. He stated how it's very natural for Salesians to give their lives to young people. He advised Fr. Dominic that

the love for his 132 confreres that the Rector Major has entrusted to him is also part of loving Jesus.

"Love them as a father, even if they're older than you," Fr. Hugo beamed. "I know with your goodness and your intelligence you will be able to do it very well."

Fr. Hugo used the Gospel (Matthew 17:14-20) to comment on the paternal love of the father of the possessed boy. He urged Fr. Dominic to learn from this father, who suffered from the danger that took hold of his son. Fr. Hugo also noted that while Jesus was upset by the crowd's lack of faith, the father expressed his faith. He urged Fr. Dominic to pray for his confreres.

"Jesus healed the boy, an act that points to the saving power of God," Fr. Hugo continued. "Our education of the young has the same purpose: to point out God's love, especially for youth who are in danger. For this, we place our trust in Jesus."



Next, first Fr. Dominic, and then Fr. Franco professed their faith in the Christian creed and the teachings of the Catholic Church. They then signed their official documents, which Fr. Hugo also signed.

At the end of Mass, Fr. Dominic shared some words based on the World Youth Day pilgrimage he attended recently. He was impressed especially by Pope Francis's frequent repetition: "God loves you." Therefore, Fr. Dominic reminded us that we are here today because God loves us.

"Jesus came to reveal God's love to us, and we are here thanks to the Holy Spirit who pours God's abundant light on us from the moment of existence," Fr. Dominic exclaimed.

He voiced his gratitude for Don Bosco and the guidance of Mary Help of Christians. Fr. Dominic shared that we're privileged to be missioned to the young in our province. He thanked everyone who has supported Fr. Franco and him in the past and will continue to do so.

Additionally, Fr. Dominic gave a shoutout to Fr. Joseph Vien Hoang, SDB, who helped him join the Salesians. He finished with a shoutout to Fr. Tim Zak, SDB, his predecessor, who he mentioned had been in charge of formation while he was a candidate in Orange. Then, everyone expressed their gratitude to Fr. Tim through a long applause.

Following the Mass, everyone celebrated with Fr. Dominic and Fr. Franco at a luncheon in Cassin Commons.

Please pray for Fr. Dominic and Fr. Franco as they begin their terms as our provincial and vice-provincial. Mary Help of Christians, pray for us! St. John Bosco, pray for us!



Applauding Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB, and Vice-Provincial Fr. Franco Pinto, SDB  
Photos by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Explore photos from the day on [Flickr](#) and [Shutterfly](#)!



Sr. Colleen Clair, FMA Provincial  
Photo by Sr. Christina Chong, FMA

## Sr. Colleen Clair Succeeds Sr. Joanne as Provincial for the FMAs

FROM THE SALESIAN SISTERS OF ST. JOHN BOSCO, DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

On the Solemnity of the Transfiguration, the SEC province commemorated an important historical moment as we welcomed our new provincial, Sr. Colleen Clair, who succeeded Sr. Joanne Holloman in leadership of the Sisters for the next six years.

An alumna of Mary Help of Christians Academy (Class of 1988), Sr. Colleen was also previously the head of the school. She spoke of entrusting her new role to the prayers of her Sisters and the guidance of Our Lady. We pray for Sr. Colleen as she begins her term of service and thank Sr. Joanne for all that she has done as she returns to a role she previously held, as directress of novices.



Warm embraces following Sr. Colleen Clair, FMA's installation  
Photos courtesy of Salesian Sisters - Daughters of Mary Help of Christians' Facebook

Check out photos from the day on [Flickr](#)!



(from left to right) Br. Pascal, Bishop Taylor, and Br. John  
Photo by Ms. Vicky Weekley

## “God is the Author of All Things” SDB Professions

FROM WWW.SALESIANS.ORG  
08/18/2023

On Tuesday, August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption, Br. Paul Hotovy and Br. Francis Nguyen renewed their religious profession. Their profession renewal occurred at 3:00 pm ET Mass at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School.

The following day, on the birthday of St. John Bosco, Brs. Pascal Mukuye and John Taylor made their first religious profession as Salesians of Don Bosco at the Marian Shrine chapel in Stony Point, NY. Fr. Dominic Tran, provincial, received the brothers’ vows in the name of the Rector Major and gave the homily. Br. John’s uncle, Bishop Anthony B. Taylor of Little Rock, AR, presided at the Mass; he received both a warm welcome from those present and warm thanks from the Salesians.



(first photo, from left to right) Br. Francis, Fr. Louis Molinelli, SDB; and Br. Paul  
(second photo) Bishop Taylor and Br. John (center) with their family  
First photo courtesy of Fr. Lou Molinelli, SDB | Second photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

Read the articles on **renewed** and **first** professions!



(from left to right) Sr. Kelly, Sr. Jessica, Sr. Juliana, and Sr. Pamela Rose  
Photo courtesy of Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

## They Said, “Fiat!” FMA Professions

FROM THE SALESIAN SISTERS OF ST. JOHN BOSCO,  
DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

On Friday, August 4, six Sisters made their vows for another year, and three Sisters made biannual vows for two years. The following day, all the Sisters in the SEC province celebrated their religious profession, in memory of the first Salesian Sisters making their vows in 1872.

This year, Sr. Kelly Schuster, FMA, made her perpetual vows. Then, at a separate Mass, Sr. Jessica Castillo, FMA; Sr. Juliana Alfonso, FMA; and Sr. Pamela Rose Suresca, FMA, made their first vows as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.



Sr. Kelly during and after making her vows of perpetual profession  
Photos courtesy of Salesian Sisters - Daughters of Mary Help of Christians' Facebook

Learn more about professions in **this newsletter!**





Newly commissioned SLMs with Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran, SDB (center left), and SLM Program Director Mr. Adam Rudin (right)  
Photo by Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB

## Six Lay Missioners Commissioned at Salesian Retreat

BY FR. MIKE MENDEL, SDB

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON WWW.SALESIANS.ORG 08/18/2023

**(Stony Point, NY – August 18)** – During their weeklong retreat, toward the end of three weeks of orientation, six Salesian Lay Missioners (SLMs) were commissioned in St. Joseph’s Chapel at the Don Bosco Retreat Center in Stony Point, NY.

Provincial Fr. Dominic Tran presided over the rite, which took place within a celebration of Evening Prayer II of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. He was assisted by Mr. Adam Rudin, director of the SLM program.

The six new SLMs and their destinations are Marjorie Baldenweck (Poipet, Cambodia), Genaro Cantú (Colima, Mexico), Jocelyn Escudero (Phnom Penh, Cambodia), Jerome Pederson (Tampa), David Ramirez (Colima, Mexico), and Antonia Soave (Ulan Bator, Mongolia). A seventh candidate, Benigno Monteverde (Dili, East Timor) was sick in his room at the retreat house. Yet another SLM, Alexandra Bendixen, is doing a short mission in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and receiving orientation on-site from SLM Mara Fenn.

Fr. Tran took as the keynote of his homily Mary’s Magnificat, which was part of the gospel reading at Mass in the morning

and which the congregation was to sing shortly during Evening Prayer. Mary proclaimed that God had recognized his lowly servant, who was blessed by God.

Fr. Tran stated that Mary was blessed because she had become the God-bearer. What God gave to her, he has given to all of us; we are blessed, and we are God-bearers through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

He continued: What we celebrate in Mary’s Assumption will be ours one day. We are already with God through His presence within us, and we are charged to bear Christ to the world. The SLMs have the dignity of bringing Christ to others as missionaries. They’ll help the people they go to, to recognize God in their lives; and those people will also help the SLMs more deeply discover God in their own lives.

Finally, Fr. Tran affirmed that the Mother of God is with us. What a treasure! The Mother of God accompanies us as we bring Christ to the world.

*jesus  
loves  
you*

Explore photos from the day on [Shutterfly!](#)



Br. Anselmo Petazzi, SDB  
Photo courtesy of Salesian Provincial Center Archives

## Salesian Pioneers of North America Br. Anselmo Petazzi, SDB

BY FR. MIKE MENDEL, SDB

Br. Anselmo Petazzi, SDB, though not as prominent as some of his clerical confreres, was one of the early stalwarts of the St. Philip Province.

Anselmo was born at Menaggio (Como), Italy, on Aug. 8, 1877, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1894. Fr. Michael Ribotta, SDB, informs us that he was living in Boston, peddling fruit from a pushcart. Coming upon a copy of the *Bollettino Salesiano*, he wrote to the editor urging the Salesians to come to Boston to aid the city's abandoned youngsters and asking for more information about Don Bosco. Fr. Rua saw his letter, and the two began to write to each other.

When Fr. Rua dispatched the first four Salesian missionaries to the U.S. in 1897, he asked Anselmo to meet them in New York and escort them to San Francisco. He did so, and the group reached their destination on March 12. Anselmo stayed, becoming a parishioner at Sts. Peter and Paul Church and the parish's sacristan. On April 2, 1898, he became the first Salesian novice in the U.S., directed by Fr. Raphael Piperni ([profiled in Snippets, Feb. 2023](#)). Bro. Anselmo professed triennial vows on

Aug. 15, 1900, in San Francisco, renewed them there on Jan. 24, 1903, and renewed them again on Jan. 2, 1907, at Troy, NY. He professed perpetually on May 23, 1910, at Hawthorne, NY.

After six years of ministry at Corpus Christi Parish in San Francisco, where he was sacristan and visited parishioners, Br. Anselmo was sent east to join the staff at St. Joseph's School in Troy, NY, as sacristan, teacher, and also infirmarian (1906-1908). He went with the Salesians and boys when they relocated to Hawthorne, NY, and took up the same duties until 1915. He returned for another short period to Corpus Christi.

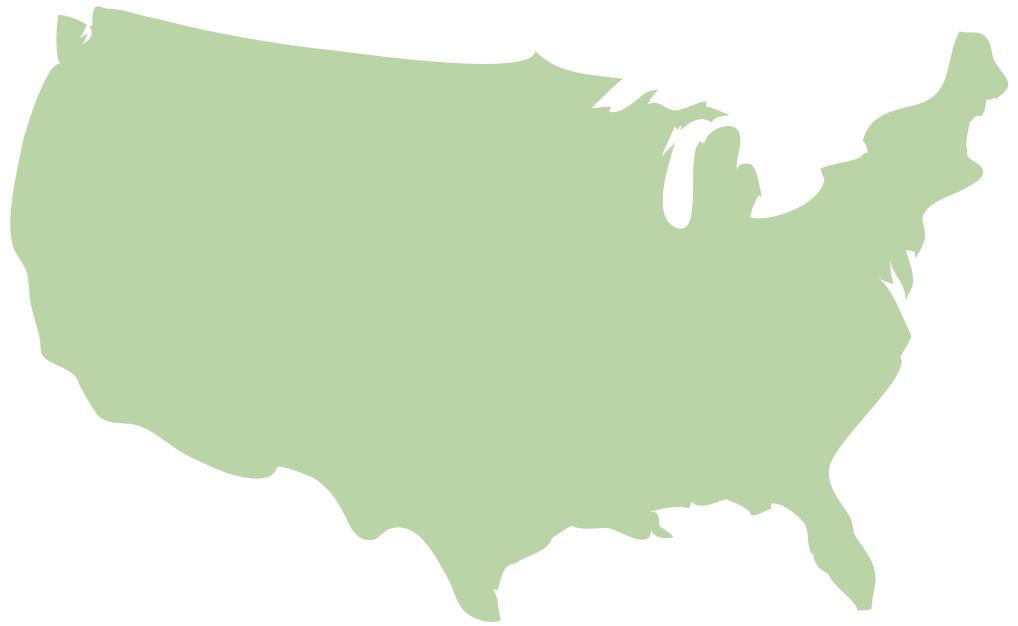
When the new youth center in Philadelphia, needed help, especially for catechesis, Fr. Coppo sent Bro. Anselmo at the beginning of 1917. There were numerous Italian immigrants, including youngsters in moral danger from life on the streets. The Don Bosco Institute received good coverage in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Standard and Times*, whose 1915 almanac described its object



as “to give religious instruction to boys of the public schools of the neighborhood and provide them a safe place for amusement when out of school; organize young men in clubs for the improvement of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social conditions of the members, with evening lessons on religion and literary subjects; evening trade school.” Bro. Anselmo had a great deal to do with that during 1917-1919. His ministry also included visiting Italian prisoners in jail.

A memo from Philadelphia, apparently by Br. Anselmo, reports that on the first Sunday of March 1917, “34 young men, age from 14 to 23, received their first holy Communion, after one month of daily instruction.” The next month, “39 young men from the age of 17 to 30, received their Communion after being away from the church for 3 to 10 years. These young men were picked up from the street corners and saloons.” On the day before Palm Sunday, “over 200 young men and boys went to Confession in the Institute chapel and received Communion next morning.” Similar reports followed as long as the Salesians remained in the City of Brotherly Love.

For most of his Salesian life, however, Br. Anselmo ministered in parishes, most notably for 22 years at Holy Rosary in Port Chester (1919-1941), as sacristan, catechist, director of the altar boys (some of whom were young adults), and moderator of various parish groups both young and old. He also assisted briefly at St. Anthony in Elizabeth, NJ (1924-1926), and Mary Help of Christians on 12th Street in Manhattan (1926-1928).



Practically all the young people of Holy Rosary belonged to one group or another and so were influenced by Brother. The boys’ clubs numbered at least 200 members, and the clubs for adults at least 400. One of his first groups was the Don Bosco Athletic Club, who en masse enrolled as Salesian Cooperators in September 1920. According to Brother’s obituary letter by Fr. Dominic Cecere, “he never tired of instilling in the minds and hearts [of the young] sound principles and doctrines of the Church, so as to make them good Catholics and good citizens.”

Br. Anselmo was affected by frail health, particularly stomach ailments, for most of his life. Evidently, that didn’t prevent him from being a zealous apostle of the young, and others, right up to his last day. For several weeks he’d been preparing more than 250 youngsters for Confirmation. After a busy day of catechesis and prayer on May 20, 1941, a cerebral hemorrhage felled him in

Holy Rosary’s rectory. Fr. Cecere had just enough time to anoint him. He wrote of Brother: “We can be quite sure that death didn’t surprise him because he lived familiarly with it. He prepared for his final journey as good Salesians know how with his use of time, awareness, piety, and devotion.”

An unidentified local newspaper reported, “Two generations of Port Chester men and boys, literally thousands of them, lost their most beloved friend when the Rev. Brother Anselmo Petazzi, one of the founders of the Don Bosco youth movement in Port Chester and for 22 years on the staff of the Holy Rosary Church, died unexpectedly last night.” His obituary letter noted: “Practically the whole town of Port Chester paid their respects, while Brother was laid out in the church.... The funeral Mass saw an overflowing church.”

Br. Anselmo was 64 years old and had been professed as a coadjutor brother for 40 years. He was laid to rest in the Salesian cemetery in Goshen.



*A happy family united in each other's presence  
Photo by RDNE Stock project by Pexels*

## Parenting the "Don Bosco Way" Part V, Presence

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."*

The three R's, of Don Bosco's system of Education, namely Rapport, Religion and Reason are not three separate principles. They are parts of the one nurturing tree that fosters growth through the indispensable presence of the parents. This

"presence" of the parent in the life of the child is the epitome of Don Bosco's educative system.

Strangely, the demands of work culture, the craze for upward economic mobility, and the desire to live above one's means seem to make "presence" a rare commodity for parents today. They are not easily available to their children. Thus a mother is substituted by the grandmother or a babysitter, the father becomes a visiting uncle, and the "missing presence" is replaced by teddy bears, Barbie dolls, toy AK-47s, and of course, the friendly TV.

But, presence in the sense of being physically in a room is not enough. For rapport, religion and reason to be truly lived out with one's children, parents have to be present in a way that is qualitative. This calls for a type of presence that has the following characteristics:

- 1.) *A motivating presence:* one that infuses enthusiasm, encouragement and is optimistic. The presence of the parent infuses in the child a thirst for knowledge through



the tactful use of queries, experiments, and exposure to new and educative environments.

2.) *A personal presence:* The presence of the parent is such that each child feels known, loved, and accepted. This is all the more essential when relating to children having different levels of intelligence who are weak, handicapped, and underprivileged.

3.) *An incarnational presence:* As explained under the section on “rapport,” loving what your children love or “getting under their skin” has an important purpose: seeing the world through their eyes will make them want to experience the world and the values you live by.

4.) *A creative presence* that is open to the joy of discovery. Life is too rich, too precious, and too varied to be experienced between the fine print of cold textbooks or within the walls of classrooms. Being open to discovery means being ready to try new ways, new solutions, and new ideas. Risk is a necessary ingredient of all creative learning.

5.) *A preventive and corrective presence:* Children are apt to forget rules. Being there with them would help prevent exposure to harm. Furthermore, timely reminders do help. But, these reminders must be respectful of the offender. Accusations, name-calling, sarcasm, lecturing, moralizing, and generalizing are to be avoided. Faults are best corrected by being *reasonable, polite, factual, firm, and to the point*. If corrections do not work, it is usually the manners in which corrections are given that are often to blame. But, there could be other reasons such as frequency, timing, tact, and context that may have to be looked into.

A presence that instills fear and punishment does more harm than good. This is humiliating and can be manipulated dangerously by a parent who lacks self-esteem. Punishments are often merely short-term benefits to satisfy the parent's need to take control of a difficult situation. They rarely prove to be helpful in the long run. In his letter to his Salesians, Don Bosco advised:

*"My sons, how often in my long career has this great truth come home to me! It is so much easier to get angry than to be patient, to threaten*

*children rather than persuade them. I would even say that usually it is so much more convenient for our own impatience and pride to punish them than to correct them patiently with firmness and gentleness."* (Letters of John Bosco, 201)

*Part VI – “Discipline” – will appear in next month’s issue of Snippets.*



*Photos courtesy of Fr. Mike Mendl, SDB; Sr. Maria Colombo, FMA; Sr. Denise Sickinger, FMA; and Mrs. Jennifer Passerino*

Explore the Flickr albums for the following events from the FMAs:

**Blessing of the Habits**

**Profession Renewals**

**First Professions**

**Perpetual Professions**





(from left to right) Sr. Katie Flanagan, FMA; Don Chávez; Sr. Kelly; Sr. April Cabaccang, FMA; and Sr. Christina Chong, FMA  
Photo courtesy of Sr. Christina Chong, FMA



## Our Family Album



*Requiescat in Pace*



(from left to right) The Rector Major and Br. Gérard Richard, SDB  
Photo by Fr. Alain Léonard, SDB

**Br. Gérard Richard, SDB**



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



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



**"...faith alone can make us happy in  
this life and in the next."**

**- St. John Bosco**



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