

EX ALLIEVI Newsflash

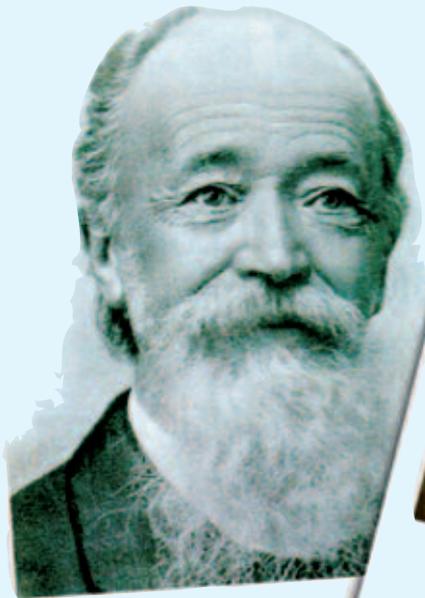
YEAR 10 - ISSUE 42 - 24 JUNE 2021

*Religious and Social magazine
of the World Confederation of Ex-students of Don Bosco*

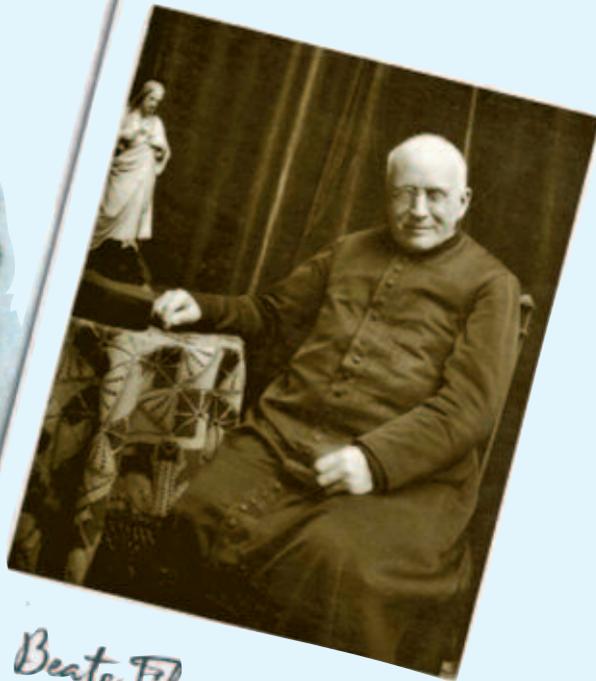


English Edition

(translations: Sandra Pistilli)



Carlo Gastini



Beato Filippo Rinaldi

Torino (Italia), 1870

Thank you



Much greater than the hills of Monferrato

All of Don Bosco's pedagogy is encapsulated in these autumn outings: familiarity and camaraderie; joy and celebration; a time to walk, as one walks along the paths of life; space for conversation and friendship; and Don Bosco's good and kind presence.

It was the month of August 2015. More precisely, it was the afternoon of August 15th and we were celebrating the 200th anniversary of Don Bosco's birth with 5,200 young people from all over the world in the International Youth Encounter (Sym Don Bosco).

Initially, with an idealism far removed from reality, we on the planning team thought it would be possible to walk with those 5,200 young people from Turin to the hills of Becchi, the place where John Bosco first saw the light of day. The distance would be about 35 kilometers. But we soon realized that we had to give up our plan. It would be very difficult to keep up a good pace with so many young people. In the end, we decided to do something very simple, which is directly connected with many of Don Bosco's autumn walks with his boys.

We started the walk in Castelnuovo Don Bosco, the town where he was baptized and where he celebrated one of his *first Masses*.

We walked those eight kilometers that separated us from Becchi together with that great column of young people — but under a torrential downpour all the way. The rain had been predicted — and it came. But this mattered nothing to us and much less to those young people.

I could not stop imagining Don Bosco surrounded by his boys, carrying baskets of bread for their lunch or snack, and musical instruments to cheer them up wherever they went.

Do you know that behind it all is a precious vision — one both educational and spiritual? I could continue to develop this thought myself in telling the story, but I have chosen to leave it to one of my Salesian brothers, José Miguel Núñez, who has an extraordinary talent for writing:

«For many years, Don Bosco used to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary at Becchi, accompanied by a handful of boys who followed him with unimaginable joy. They were the best boys of the Oratory. For all of them, it was a reward to be with Don Bosco for a few days on vacation. In the beginning there were only a few, but soon they numbered more than 100.

His first stable destination was the land of his birth and his beloved family home. Joseph, his brother, gladly welcomed that horde of boys and accommodated them as best he could in barns and stables, taking care to provide what was necessary. Certainly, there would be inconveniences, but good Joseph knew how to look the other way and make things run as smoothly as possible.

After 1858, Don Bosco established true "marches" through the villages of Piedmont and the neighboring provinces. He himself planned the itineraries and entrusted his boys to friends and benefactors who welcomed them into their homes or prepared some snacks for that "battle-ready army" — whenever it came to quelling hunger. Fruit, freshly baked bread, or a piece of cheese was generously offered by the locals, who were enthusiastic about the hustle and bustle that this priest brought for he had the reputation of being a saint. Though he tried to downplay this fervor, more often than not it was without much success».

The farmers left their tasks

Beautiful testimonies of those joyful days of celebration and of unforgettable experiences when accompanying Don Bosco for so many young people have been passed down to us. One of these boys, Anfossi, wrote this: «*Always remember those trips. They filled me with joy and wonder. I accompanied Don Bosco through the hills of Monferrato from 1854 to 1860. We were about a hundred young people and we saw how the fame of sanctity already surrounded Don Bosco. His arrival in the villages was a triumph. The parish priests of the surrounding area and usually the civil authorities also came out to meet him. The people looked out of the windows or went out into the streets and the farmers left their tasks to see the Saint...*». All of Don Bosco's pedagogy is encapsulated in these *autumn outings*: familiarity and camaraderie; joy and celebration; a time to walk, as one walks along the paths of life; space for conversation and friendship; and Don Bosco's good and kind presence. Like that of an adult accompanying another along his/her journey, he has a good and kind word for everyone and extends a gesture of closeness and solidarity with those who show greater difficulty in reaching the goal.

The music and the celebration flooded their hearts and reawakened enthusiasm in those young people. They were happy to be close to this father whom they admired so much and to whom they were so grateful. In perfect marching formation and playing their musical instruments, the advent of Don Bosco's boys in those small villages of Piedmont must have been quite an event.

God walked with them

The boys were filled with *wonder and joy*. To Don Bosco, it seemed as if he were in heaven as he rejoiced at the smiles of his young people and their festive songs. Prayer and benediction with the Blessed Sacrament in the village church were a constant.

Their father's affection was rendered worthy of their trust thanks to the familiarity they experienced along the way. Without knowing it, many of those young people would continue to travel with him throughout their lives — much greater than the hills of Monferrato.

I am thinking now about how important it is for us to invite our adolescents and young adults, our "digital natives" who live immersed in the digital world, to experience the richness of personal encounters (and not through a telephone screen): the precious exercise of listening to each other; of laughing together; of being silent during a simple prayer; of marveling at a sunset; of experiencing the joy of greeting the elderly who are resting for a while on their porch, watching people pass by—they who have already lived life abundantly, thanks be to God.

I leave you these words which the Pope addressed to us Salesians at our General Chapter: "*I like to think that we are still very capable of dreaming and of helping others dream*".

With all my heart, I wish you a happy summer.

*Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB
Rector Major*



The Father's Heart

On the 8th of December, 2020, Pope Francis published his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* for the whole Church to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. This event coincided with the [150th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco](#). In this letter, Pope Francis describes beautifully the Father's Heart and, according to him, it is with that Heart Joseph showed his love to Jesus.

Joseph saw Jesus grow daily "*in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour*" (Lk 2:52). He taught Jesus to walk, taking him by the hand, bending down to him and feeding him. In his role as the head of a family, Joseph taught Jesus to be obedient to the parents and to do the will of the Father: "*My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work*" (Jn 4:34).

Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour. In his relationship to Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father. "Like father, like son", Jesus' heart was formed in Joseph's heart, the heart that loved us during his life on earth, that poured forth its blood to the last drop on Calvary, his flesh heart showed God's infinite love: "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls*" (Mt 11:29)

Jesus' tender love showed the merciful father in the parable of the Prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32); Jesus does not condemn the prostitute (Jn 8:1-11); the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)... Are we ready to put ourselves in the shoes of our neighbors? Like the Samaritan, are we willing to go out of our own concerns to dedicate ourselves to those of the others?

We usually say that Don Bosco's heart is as large as the sands of the seashore... his love for the poor youth was immense... his heart was en-

tirely given to the young. These mean that everything that was his, intelligence, heart and will, physical strength, his whole being was directed towards what was the best for them, fostering the development of their full potential, including their eternal salvation.

Don Bosco is indeed a true father for his young and his fatherliness is more than friendship. It is an affectionate and powerful expression of commitment that offers significant guidance and inspiration for discipline and engagement. This fatherliness is love and authority: "*Knowing how to speak to the heart*".

I believe that each boy who lives in any Salesian setting could feel these words with which Don Bosco asked Magone: «*Dear Magone, I'd like you to do me a favour, ...just let me look into your heart for a moment*».

It is very touching to hear these words that Don Bosco addressed to his past-pupils: «*I can see that many of you are already balding, with grey hairs and forehead lined with wrinkles. You are no longer the boys I loved so much; however I feel that now I love you even more than before*».

Past pupils are Don Bosco's sons who carry on not only the education they received, but also the loving heart of the father, the heart that loved the young very much; the heart with the passion for the souls of the young: «*Da mihi animas*».

I am convinced that all Don Bosco Past Pupils have a piece of Don Bosco's heart in themselves. I would like to invite all of you to make this father's heart alive in yours, be active and creative in our common mission. That is the best way to say: «*I love Don Bosco*».

Bro. Dominic Nguyen Duc Nam, SDB



The General Assembly online at the end of November 2021

Dear Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco.

At the end of June 2020 has started officially the celebration of [our Jubilee year](#), announced in the occasion of our precious anniversary of [150 years of Past Pupils of Don Bosco](#). It has been in the middle of spreading Covid-19 pandemic, with many limitations and probably fears for the future.

Yet we have launched the 7 celebrative activities and we started the celebration. Today we are in the middle of the celebration of this very special Jubilee which is projected to last until the [General Assembly of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco at the end of November 2021](#).

Many of our local, virtual and personal celebrations and congratulations has been shared and executed. Many still awaits to be fully realized and enjoyed. But there is difference today. As we still fight the battle of the whole world health crisis, we start to see the light at the end of this situation. In the form of vaccination, medication and collective immunity grow I personally believe we will be able to live freely from our restrictions and fears as previously. As we approach this time we still need to reflect in the most adequate way possible.

Also because of the still difficult Pandemic situation, the Presidency of Past Pupils has decided about the [General Assembly of Past Pupils 2021 to take place in online space](#). For the very first time we will be able to execute such important meeting via internet. We approach this new reality with much of the humbleness and carefulness, but the World Presidency and I, we invite you to see this special and specific General Assembly as a positive challenge and as an opportunity.

Of course, we will miss personal sharing, visitation of the sacred and valuable places of Don Bosco's life.

On the other side, we might be able to be prepared more in advance, in more detailed ways and after all we might be able to make participate many more past pupils than any time before.



V Elective Assembly (Rome, 3-4 October 2015)

I am sure that the common holy mass, greetings of Rector Major and Regional Councilors of Presidency, or the reports of President and Treasurer will be interesting for hundreds and thousands of Past Pupils around the world. This extraordinary opportunity will give us the space to create different type of community. Somehow larger, bigger, better networked, live informed. [It can take closer to the idea of General Assembly so many Past Pupils from the whole world.](#)

Everyone could receive this way and option to observe elections of the new presidency and important part of Statute updates and amendments. I believe we will be able to open a new door for our Past Pupils fellows who has never had an opportunity to participate on the meeting of such scale and we might be able to raise much live awareness from the great association of Past Pupils of Don Bosco and from the Salesian Family in general.

I invite you to prepare very good for the General Assembly, to be ready to participate, to study materials, to propose if needed important changes and new ideas, to look for best candidates for new Presidency of World Confederation and last but not least to [pray for the success of the General Assembly 2021.](#)

I invite you to ask and look for the information and news from all available channels, but mostly from your regional councilors. They work with Preparatory and Electoral Commissions so they are always the right channels of communication for you.

Don Bosco used to say, that he want to be the leader of the progress of it serves for the Good. I dare to say, that Don Bosco himself would be very interested in such great goodness we are willing to create with the General Assembly.

Yours faithfully

Michal Hort



150 YEARS THE VALUE OF A MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

June, the 24th 1870 – June, the 24th 2020: 150 Years! It's the Story of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco. The Past follows us like a faithful friend, always by our side, at any time; every time the story continues thanks to the choices we do. That is why the anniversary is still alive this year, especially for the forward-looking initiative of the President Michal Hort to announce the [Jubilee of the Past Pupil](#).

The term "*Jubilee*" has biblical origins. It derives from *jebel*, the antler of the goat, which was sounded every 50 years to announce a holy year dedicated to the Lord. A periodic celebration of justice and peace, in the rediscovered harmony of relationships between men and with the nature.

The Christian Jubilee is a summons addressed to the whole world to abandon an irrational wandering, looking with honesty at the things that really matter and convert to the joy that does not betray because it is founded on the One, who alone can give it definitively. It is a message full of warmth, of closeness, of hope that suggests a style of presence alongside young people.

The call is mainly addressed to us Past Pupils, so that we remain certain that happiness resides wherever young people are, simply by giving them our attention. French writer Georges Bernanos (Paris February, the 20th 188- Neuilly-sur-Seine July, the 5th 1948) confirms it: «*It's the fever of young people that keeps the rest of the world at normal temperature. When young people get cold the rest of the world's teeth chatter*».

This is not about looking back in a celebratory way or enjoying some success, it is about looking forward. Memory contains the future. If we fell asleep, let's give ourselves a shake, let's take courage in both hands and push our steps with the others and for the others. «*When I saw young people all busy in the game, I am sure that the devil has a lot to do but he doesn't succeed in anything*», claimed Don Bosco.

During each annual convention of Past Pupils, it stands out visually the spontaneous formation of the first groups of young people and less young people. All of them with their memories of adolescence spent in that Salesian house. Greetings, information, more or less committed speeches link together. They don't want to manifest anything celebratory. They gratify. This cannot be denied.

Approaching, we are able to listen to some of their testimonies of Past Pupils: *«I remember that at school the teacher used to repeat often that: "History is a teacher of life" because those who do not know past mistakes they risk repeating them. Now, years later, I am even more certain that History is "surely a teacher of life". In fact we receive and learn this truth not so much from an abstract sermon as from a lived experience».*

Precisely in the context of the yearly convention, the didactic presence of the Salesians, reminiscent of attentive and welcoming acts, really stands out. Years later memory takes on the value of a message which, sprung from a Saint's heart, reaches us enriched by the experiences of the generations that have succeeded each other.

Let's listen to another testimony gathered from the center of the Oratory, always on the occasion of the convention. *«Indelible what a Salesian teacher taught: "In the book of life always have the strength to turn the page... but, at the same time, have the knowledge to never forget what you have read"».*

An anecdote taken from the Bollettino Salesiano of November 1, 1956 is emblematic. Title: *"Don Bosco at the University of Bangkok"*. *"At the end of the Academic Year of the University of Bangkok (Thailand) the salesian fr. G. Forlazzini, a teacher of the Catholic religion to the Bonzi leaders, was also invited and took his place among the teaching staff. The only priest's robe attracted attention of the Prime Minister who presided over the ceremony and who asked the Father where did he come from. After knowing he was the Director of the 'Industrial School of Don Bosco", he said: "I find this Don Bosco everywhere! I'm glad of it because he does good"*.

The attitude of us Past Pupils in going back along the history, allows to see first-hand that, even in our house, much progress has been made and maybe someone doesn't know it.

Closing the register of memories you could repeat what the tutor of Charles V, at the end of his task, said to the king: *«Sire, never forget the ideals of your youth».*

Pierluigi Lazzarini

MOVED BY HOPE

4. A LOOK AT OUR ORIGINS AND THE MANY WITNESSES OF FAITH IN OUR FAMILY

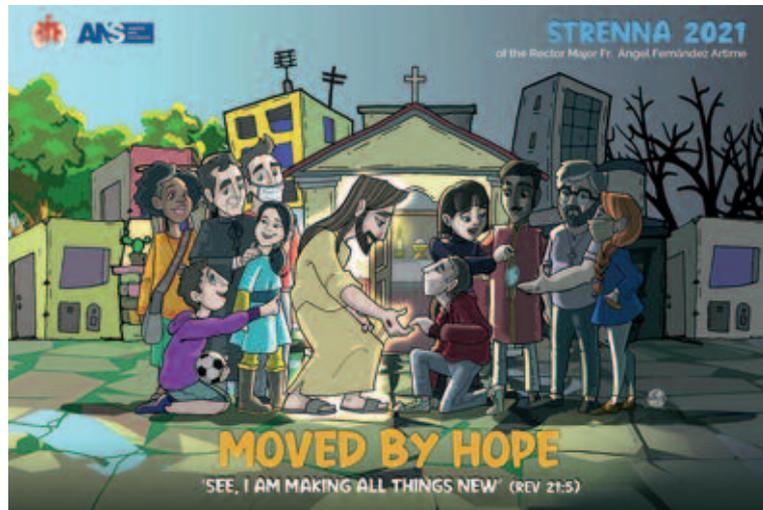
When we look at the experience of Don Bosco's life, we become aware that hope is a plant with deep roots that began long ago; roots that become stronger through difficult seasons and ways that require much sacrifice.

This was the case from John's earliest years at the Becchi, having lost his father, and with Mamma Margaret who had to face up to times of famine and all the problems of life together at home. When he had the very human hope that there might be a future for him, the one he dreamed of, being able to count on the help and protection of Fr. Calosso, the death of the old parish priest dashed that hope.

The family circumstances and the attentive and perceptive watchfulness of a mother who sought the best for her son – although her maternal heart suffered because of it – led John to become a migrant at twelve years of age.

But it was precisely in these circumstances that the word and even more so the example of his mother opened John's eyes to a broader horizon, and made him capable of looking upwards and ahead.

It would be the same again at the crucial moment of his choice of vocation, where Margaret would ask her son not to worry about her and her future and never to attach his heart to earthly securities: «If you decide to become a secular priest and should unfortunately become rich, I will never pay you a single visit! Remember



that well!»¹³.

Years later it would be Don Bosco, turning his gaze to the Crucifix, who would revive the heart of his discouraged, tired mother, rekindling in her that hope that would lead her to remain faithful until her death to the mission she shared with her son from the beginnings of the Oratory at Valdocco.

This strongly rooted hope would be so necessary for everything that Don Bosco experienced and that he brought into being from when he was in Turin until his last breath.

The tree is recognised by its fruits. The way in which so many young people's lives were made to rise from situations of abandonment and desperation to the point of achieving sanctity, shows how much hope had taken its abode in Don Bosco's heart; it was from this superabundance that he reached out to and transformed the lives of those he met.

Even in his most intense years of work, Don Bosco was never a solitary hero. He always had by his side Him who revived the flame

of faith, hope and charity in him. It was an accompaniment of the "on earth as it is in heaven" kind.

And also unlimited trust in Mary was the constant nourishment of hope for him. The more this trust was expressed in humanly impossible undertakings – we think of the building of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians and the beginning of the missions in South America – the more Don Bosco was the first to «see what miracles are».

Believing that there was always a point accessible to good in every heart, in every one of life's experiences, even one that seemed to be quite off-course, was the result of this being in tune with heaven, but it was also the result of the fundamental experience of accompaniment and supervision which Don Bosco the priest had treasured here on earth.

It was at Fr. Cafasso's school that Don Bosco learned to walk alongside the most desperate, in the prisons and in the poorest parts of Turin at that time. This was how Don Bosco not only "learned

¹³ *BMI*, 221-22 [English edition].

«See, I am making all things new» (Rev 21:5)

to be a priest¹⁴, but to become a pastor of that flock with a heart like that of those formidable sowers of hope who walked with him on the same streets of Turin's poorest peripheries: Cafasso, Cottolengo, Murialdo. Hope is formed and formed together: it is a fruit of the Communion of Saints "on earth as it is in heaven".

There is one moment in the history of the Oratory that we simply must recall because it is so close to the worldwide difficulty we all find ourselves immersed in due to the pandemic.

It is the end of July 1854. Cholera breaks out in Turin. We know the story so there is no need to repeat it here. The vision of faith and the practice of charity, including in a heroic way, was no private virtue, a characteristic just of Don Bosco or a few super-generous types; it was the lifestyle of that small educative community.

Hope is a community virtue, one that is nurtured through mutual example and through the strength of fraternal communion. This is also the witness of the Valdocco Oratory during the cholera, just like the experience of so many educative and pastoral communities during COVID times, and at the forefront are communities of doctors, nurses and health workers who have given and continue to give their lives to save the lives of others.

Moments of crisis like this bring out another feature of hope as Don Bosco lived it. He firmly believed in Providence. A faith and trust that grew ever greater with the passing of the years. It is a thread that ran throughout his en-

tire life and through everything he gave life to. It is perhaps the most tangible way in which one can contemplate "a splendid blending of nature and grace"¹⁵ in him: what he believed in his heart set his everyday steps and choices in motion, opening paths of hope for so many even when it seemed there were no more ways out.

So many other testimonies of hope

We find valuable examples and life models in Salesian holiness that encourage us to hope as a virtue and attitude of life in God. Let me make just a brief, quick reference to some.

Our confrere **Blessed Stefan Sandor (1914-1953)**: offers us a real example of what it means to move from division to unity and then to communion.

The strong sense of his vocation as a Salesian brother led him to make a real choice in defence of life; he deeply believed that his life had to be lived in the midst of his people and culture, which was going through moments of uncertainty and desolation. His upright attitude restores our perspective of "knowing how to stay" with our field of mission to enlighten those who risk losing hope, to strengthen those who feel they are failing, and to be a sign of God's love when he "appears" to be absent from history.

Blessed Stefan surmounted the walls created by the division between peoples and the enslavement to ideological totalitarianism, going out to meet others and overcoming all kinds of personal or social fears.

The story of **Blessed Sister Maddalena Morano (1847-1908)** is a very beautiful

one.

She stood out as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians for an apostolic daring that made her what Don Bosco always wanted from his daughters in the spirit of Mornese: to be living monuments of the Virgin. As "born teacher", she knew that the liberating act in her Salesian mission meant teaching her girls to open the frontiers of their hearts and minds so as to transcend the narrow confines of an oppressive culture of poverty and lack of opportunity.

She knew how to teach perseverance and not to give into threats; her feminine strength became the kindest and most convincing expression of the responsibility we have towards our vulnerable brothers and sisters. As a solution to the calamitous times she had to endure, she pointed out new directions to those threatened by isolation and taught them the immensity of the goodness of God.

In the **Servant of God Fr Charles Braga (1889-1971)** we find an example of pastoral intelligence, be it in his tireless dedication to the missions or in his accompaniment of members of the Salesian Family.

Without losing heart, but with the hope of those who place their faith in Christ our Lord, he had the patience that Don Bosco recommended so much for knowing how to accompany young people as they built a mature personality. This patience was the fruit of the love that flowed in his missionary heart, enabling him to build bridges rather than barriers between cultures. The call he felt to promote unity among people helped him to overcome the differences

¹⁴ G. Bosco, *Memorie dell'Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales*, in ISS, *Fonti Salesiane: Don Bosco e la sua opera*, LAS, Roma 2014, p. 1233 [Note: also available in the English edition of Salesian Sources, Bangalore].

¹⁵ *Costituzioni e Regolamenti SDB*, 21.

that could arise among others, convinced that he was always sustained by the divine grace that generates a culture of encounter.

Another valuable example is **Blessed Joseph Kowalski (1911-1942)**.

How much faith and courage were needed to give peace to others even when there was nothing else he had to offer other than his own life! Jesus' oblation love in offering his life for humanity gave us the greatest example of love. It is profoundly echoed by Joseph Kowalski: a confrere who was a witness to peace in the midst of war, who was serenity in the midst of confusion and mercy in the midst of hatred.

Servant of God Antonino Baglieri (1951-2007) is another model. The path to holiness so often requires a change of values and vision. This was the path experienced by Nino who, after long suffering, discovered the great opportunity to be reborn to a new life in the Cross.

Nino was always accompanied by his mother, who with love and compassion always believed in him and his talented life; he was also surrounded by lay and religious friends who reminded him of the beauty of communion.

He let himself be touched by the community that strengthened him, both in his personality and in his faith, and saved him. He understood that by allowing himself to be encountered by others he discovered who he was and gave meaning to his existence, marked entirely by divine mercy – even from his sickbed – to be a “craftsman of peace and joy”.

These and so many others are giants of the faith who lived a life of charity and understood what it means to have hope in all the significance that word has. Those who hope

know that they are not walking alone, and they also know that they need people to accompany and guide them on this journey.

Pope Benedict XVI expresses this so beautifully: «The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by – people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way»¹⁶.

5. A SALESIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

This is our time. It is the time we have been given for living. It might be most appropriate to ask ourselves what the best way should be for dealing with the post-pandemic period, and perhaps discover the value of hope at a time when most people are experiencing fear or just cannot wait for the moment to come when they can forget what has happened this year.

But can we really forget what has happened, forget the families who have lost relatives? Forget almost two million victims? Forget the faces of the weakest ones of our society? Forget so many people who have worked on the front line? Would it be right to forget all this? No, certainly not. Indeed, it would be the worst thing we could do. Thus, we ask ourselves if what we have been going through may be teaching us something, and if we are ready to change something, to rethink some of our values or life views...

~ We hope that the *confinement* we have experienced will help us to *open ourselves up*.

We are constantly on the move, in a hurry to respond to everything often in

a frenzied rhythm. Unexpectedly, “compulsory quiet” came our way, and perhaps it closed us in a bit on ourselves, within our homes, our families, in compulsory but essential quarantine. Many kinds of fear appeared: fear of the other, especially of the other nearby or not too far away; the fear of contagion coming from who knows where and generating and causing the greatest uncertainty.

This is why “*open up*” must be the order of the day. Open up spaces, settings, windows onto life. Open ourselves to encountering the other. Abandon everything that closes us in, recover the meaning of our openness, our openness of heart. Recover the vision of a broader horizon.

~ From growing *individualism* to greater *solidarity and fellowship*.

God's imprint on humanity is particularly evident in the ability to reach out to others in an act of solidarity with his creation. Selfishness is the opposite act, because it seeks self-satisfaction, makes us self-referential, generates and feeds the ever-growing culture of individualism that ends up manifesting how small we are.

During the pandemic we undoubtedly realised that we are too vulnerable, fragile and dependent. All of us. Not just a few. Under the same collective unimaginable and heartfelt threat, all of humanity feels it needs others. We live in need of each other, of mutual care. We do not want to be alone.

May this time teach us to bank more on solidarity and fellowship in the face of the “virus of individualism”.

How right Pope Francis is! Solidarity is the best victory over loneliness. «Soli-

¹⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 49.

arity finds concrete expression in service, which can take a variety of forms in an effort to care for others. And service in great part means 'caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people'. In offering such service, individuals learn to 'set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, "suffers" that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people»¹⁷. There are many who await our smile, our word, our presence.

~ Moving from *isolation* to the culture of *encounter*

It is certainly not easy to come out of our own isolation, especially when we think it is a value. In fact, it is often easier to remain isolated including out of fear of others' closeness. But in the human heart burns the flame that ignites the absolute necessity to be together: in family, with friends, in the local association, in a volunteer group, with school mates, with colleagues at work, with our football team.

This time of vulnerability offers us room for new kinds of empathy and reconnecting. It is the "culture of encounter" of the other as other. "Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes"¹⁸.

~ From *division* to greater *unity* and *communion*.

From this perspective we are aware that it is not possible to generate a culture of encounter without safeguarding unity; the same unity that the Spirit of God grants to those who enter into communion with him, and that unites us and spurs us on to live the same calling: that of being God's beloved children.

A lesson we have learnt from the harsh experience of isolation, of journeying apart in the boat of life because of closed borders (geographical and even spiritual), has allowed us to realise that in the end 'we are all in the same boat'. We are united by the humanity that we are.

But a humanity that has been affected. COVID is the first crisis to strike everyone worldwide without distinction. It is a huge paradox: a virus that has created division through fear now brings us together, urges us to be interested in one another. It unites us in an empathy made up of altruism, solidarity, concern. So many expressions of the common good and, we hope, of compassion and mercy.

It also brings us together in the search for solutions. And probably the selfishness that divides is a much more ancient and dangerous disease than COVID, one that existed earlier and must be cured. I hope that with the arrival of a vaccine for the virus we can finally vaccinate ourselves against the lack of communion, achieving victory over division.

What unites us is the medicine of the Gospel of hope and joy that makes us all the more human and children of God.

~ From *discouragement*, *emptiness* and *lack of meaning* to *transcendence*.

From claiming that we are "the absolute masters of our lives and of everything that exists" we have come to feeling that

we are very fragile.

Many families have found it necessary to invent a thousand different stories to explain to children why it is that they have to stay at home, far from their grandparents, their schoolmates and neighbours, without the possibility of going away for a fortnight or twenty days.

I recall the image in the film "Life is beautiful" (1997) where a father (Benigni), in the most unfortunate situation where they are in a concentration camp, invents a game to justify what they are going through for his son. That game becomes his salvation.

The emptiness of this time has been very damaging. We have moved from many certainties to the uncertainty of an unstable and insecure terrain. An emptiness that differs from nihilistic ideologies and which, in any case, opens us up to the need for transcendence.

The Lord speaks to us in this time. And what is he asking of us? What is he offering us? How are we welcoming it? «Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another»¹⁹. Here we are then: in extreme situations God continues to speak to us through the hearts of people who see and respond in an original, different way, a way that makes a difference.

We are not saved by our own strengths alone. No one is saved alone

«A worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we rea-

¹⁷ FRANCIS, *Fratelli tutti*, 115.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁹ FRANCIS, *Fratelli tutti*, 32.

lized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. As I said in those days, "the storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities...

Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another"²⁰.

Gone is the time for the belief that we can do everything with our own resources, on our own, like 'giants of vanity' for whom nothing is impossible.

We must overcome the facile narcissism that has convinced us that the universe bows down before us, deluding ourselves that we possess a "superpower" over everything and everyone ...

We have learned, because of this disease, how vulnerable we are; how much we need each other and that alone we are nothing.

We discover that the neighbour across the street is important: to say hello to everyone we meet; to erase anonymity and believe in "us" as part of me, without which we cannot live. The others are "me" declined as "we", much more dependent on the richness of humanity in its values of beauty and shared life.

Let us abandon fears. Let us create bonds. Let us grow. Let us stop rejecting the other because they are other, different, foreign, etc...
Let us start from an "us" that joins the plu-

ral and the different with the particular, rich, unique, unrepeatable and beautiful that belongs to each person, to each of us, precious as we are in ourselves.

We cannot be afraid to rediscover the fraternity that unites us as children of God, greatly loved in the Son (cf. Eph 1:5). Because of this we understand solidarity, fraternity, care for others, respect for the value of life, the dignity of the person, the truth of the other which is more than ever now a virtue.

We are too precious to give in to the empty selfishness of a disease called indifference, and to self-contemplation or self-referentiality. Especially with regard to our dear young people who are "the burning bush", the "holy ground" that saves us. It is they, our great hope, who project us towards a common future with many examples of sharing and common projects: in favour of creation and the environment, of our common home, and justice, freedom; peace and universal fellowship.

New responses are needed. A courageous life that is the bearer of something truly new.

To be ultimately like Don Bosco today, when cholera is called "coronavirus", it is necessary to go, to go out, to be a presence and a response.

More than ever: presence is witness!

That is exactly right: more than ever, presence and witness are needed. Our presence, and as a testimony, the joy that comes from our faith "that hopes", because «faith and hope go forward together»²¹.

And this especially for the young who we cannot leave on their own (more so now than ever!): they are waiting for us with open arms so that we can once again inhabit their lives, with the strength of a love capable of conquering everything, because in all this only love can triumph! We must once again dream the dream of the young. We must put ourselves in that situation which enables us to overcome what fear has prevented from becoming reality.

Oratories, youth centres, schools, training centres, social works, parishes: each of our works must allow itself to be flooded by the living, generous and revitalising heart of each young person who transforms homes (walls of silence) into spaces of life (of the life of young people).

We want that life! That is the life that saves us! We listen to the cry of young people who ask for presence, attention, accompaniment, availability, and who also ask us to show them the true face of God.

If we pay attention to them, if we listen to them, they will ask us with greater intensity to speak to them first of all about this Lord who enlivens our hope and who does not allow us to become discouraged or to give up (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). They will ask us to offer them the "bread of life" that nourishes our "being for them" and our "being among them",

to generate that life that the Lord wishes to give at this moment in history: the life that will have no end. It is the good news of the resurrection that revives our hope and makes us new people for a new time. Because this world will end. And only what we have loved will remain.

(Continue in the next issue)

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ FRANCIS, *General audience Wednesday, 20 September 2017*.

General Assembly of Past Pupils of Don Bosco 2021

Dear Past Pupils of Don Bosco.

The General Assembly of Past Pupils of Don Bosco 2021 is coming closer and I would like to re-invite and encourage you to start preparations towards this most important meeting of our Association.

Indeed it is special tool of our community which allows us to [candidate and vote for World Presidency](#) and which gives us the great opportunity to [update our Statute](#) and make it the most accurate for our needs and times we live in.

The call for your active participation is one of the most important calls and it is a duty for every federation of Past Pupils, for every member of World Confederation to take place among others.

This year surely it will be something new and specific since the [General Assembly along with all its parts will take place in on-line space](#). But the spirit remains the same. We are invited to reunite in order to work, talk and decide for the best of our association of Past Pupils of Don Bosco on the international and world level.

I am personally looking forward for each of you, to hear from you, to receive your ideas and proposals for the Statute amendments and for candidacies for new Presidency team.

For all this to happen I ask you to pay attention on the requirements of the Statute and previous praxis regarding the General Assemblies in past.

There are only two conditions we all need to be in accordance. The [members of World Confederation has to have in order their membership payments](#) and in case that there is some new member from last General Assembly in 2015 or there has been some changes in national federation statutes – such member has to submit its statute to approval of Presidency and to check of its accordance with the World Statute.

It is simple and quick as this for all of us to be able to meet and to talk decide and move forwards with our work and lives as Past Pupils of World Confederation.

At the same time I realize that for some of you it might be a challenge to fulfill the duty

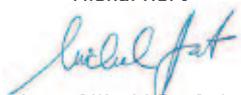
of paying membership fee. Let me assure all of you, that the money issue cannot and must not be the obstacle for any good and for your participation on World Confederation.

I invite and encourage you very much to contact me or our treasurer Bryan Magro on treasurer@exallievi.org in order to follow up with this topic or in any case of problems and need for help.

With short explanation and ask for solving any problem regarding the membership fees I am sure we will be able to find solution and together as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of Don Bosco continue in building association of Past Pupils of Don Bosco. I pray for you all and for the successful and fruitful General Assembly of Past Pupils of Don Bosco 2021.

Yours faithfully

Michal Hort



President of World Confederation
of Past Pupils of Don Bosco

Brazil



121 years of Salesian high school in Salvador celebrated



Salvador, Brazil - March 2021

The Salesian High School of Salvador commemorated its 121 years of foundation last March 11 through a Mass celebrated in the "Shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians" and broadcast online on the school's YouTube channel.

Fr Eudes Barreto Fernandes, Director of the Salesian presence, presided over the Eucharistic celebration, which was followed by the students of the institute, their families, educators, [past pupils](#) and many members of the Salesian Family.



Italy

Salesians Perugia: IN 2022 THE FIRST 100 YEARS OF PRESENCE IN THE CITY

(ANS - Perugia)

In 2022 the first hundred years since the arrival of the Salesians in Perugia will be celebrated. A real "jubilee", as Fr Wieslaw Dec explains, a Salesian of Polish origin who has lived in Perugia for three years.

«Our life is made up of rhythms, cycles, the alternation of ordinary days, ordinary time with holidays. I believe it is necessary to celebrate our anniversaries. For this reason, we started thinking about this centenary three years in advance, planning many initiatives to remember and show gratitude to God for what we have been able to do in the city of Perugia».

There are three watchwords that the Salesians use for this important birthday, as Fr Wieslaw reports: *gratitude, renewal and return to the young.*

«We are grateful to generations of lay people and benefactors, to the civil and religious authorities and to the whole Salesian Family who supported this work», explained Fr Wieslaw. *«Even before the events*





that we will do, rediscovering our basic identity with this jubilee is meant to be a thanks. Renewal: we would like to renew our fidelity to Don Bosco, but also to renew ourselves, to respond to the challenges of today's young people, even during the pandemic. Return to the young: we would really like to return to the young.

This jubilee is the means to make us close to the young, because we feel we have a great responsibility in Perugia but also to verify if our presence and our activities are at the service of the poorest young people. There is in fact much moral, value and spiritual poverty».

There are three stages to the Salesian presence in Perugia. The first began in advance of actually arriving in Perugia, when in 1915 a group of Salesian Cooperators already existed in the city.

«*They had*», explains the priest, «*the great merit of having prepared the arrival of the Salesians in the city. They have always been present in the Salesian house with a great charismatic quality. They strongly insisted that the presence of Don Bosco's heirs in Perugia become a reality.*

Other great work was done by the group of Past Pupils of the Salesian Institutes of Gualdo Tadino and Trevi that had formed an association in 1920. It was they who welcomed the first three Salesians to Perugia on 2 October 1922. A second stage is marked by the arrival of the Salesians to the 'Collegio Penna Ricci' until 1958. The bo-





arding school has formed generations of Perugians. Thanks to them, the Salesian influence in Perugia was very significant. The third period begins with 1958, when the Salesians move to their current location in Via Pellini. The new headquarters will house the middle school, the sports fields and the high school».



In 1981, exactly 40 years ago, the Vocational Training Center was born. The recreational spaces were completed with a new gym.

The Polisportiva Don Bosco has continued to grow until reaching about 350 members today. After the closure of the School, the Institute was transformed into a University Residence which today houses about thirty students.



«Today we have a great desire to continue to be present among young people and we are aware that we will have to reshape our educational proposal to be able to reach them», continues Fr Wieslaw. «We are facing a world that has completely changed in a few months. We are already working, meeting with the institutions to understand what offer we can give to the city. We are moving towards new projects to continue in our educational service. This situation is a favorable time to devote time and energy to serious reflection on the future of our educational proposal for young people in the city of Perugia».

Source: Perugia Today

Portugal



Extraordinary Visit brings hope to communities OF SETUBAL AND ESTORIL



Estoril

(ANS - Setúbal)

Fr Gildasio Mendes, General Councilor for Social Communication, spent two days of his Extraordinary Visitation, conducted in the name of the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, at the recent presence of the Salesians in Setúbal. He then continued his journey and reached Estoril.

"A joyful and fraternal presence that has greatly enriched the dreams and motivations among the confreres and in the Province itself for what is about to be delineated for this 'house'. His vision and sharing of the guidelines, coming from the Rector Major and the center of the Congregation, have brought us firm hope in the mission we are developing among those who need us most", commented the Salesians of Setúbal.

The time spent with the Salesian community, the Salesian Family and the parish's

Christian community marked the different experiences of April 30 and May 1, and manifested communion with the whole Congregation.

"The Hope he brought us will be an important light for those we welcome in this city", said the Salesians in Setúbal.

The Salesian presence in Estoril received the Extraordinary Visitation of Fr Mendes from 2 to 6 May: five days marked by moments of inspiration and warmth.

The visit began on the 2nd around 8 in the morning, when the community had the opportunity to welcome the visitor with much joy and fraternity during the prayer of Lauds.

Then it continued in personal dialogues with the Salesians and the leaders of the various sectors of the Salesian presence and a number of groups: educators, the Sale-

sian Family, the school administration, the [Past Pupils Center of Estoril](#), the parents' association, the vocation group, the pastoral council and finally the Salesian community.

In this last meeting, Fr Mendes declared he had come to listen and to learn more about the Salesian presence, which he did throughout his visit.

During this five-day visit, he never failed to address a kind and close word to all the students.

The students in turn showed him their joy and enthusiasm by offering him a gift or a cultural moment to thank him for his visit.

In conclusion, the whole educational-pastoral community thanked him for his closeness and wished him the greatest blessings of God.

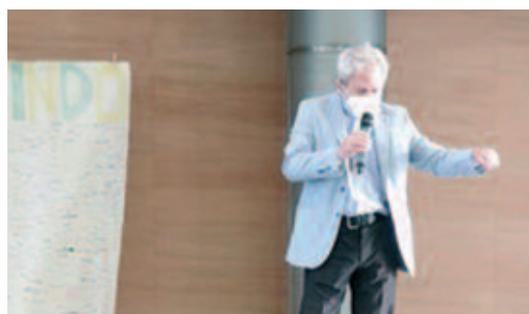
Source: Salesianos.pt



Estoril



Setubal



Estoril



Setubal

XII Congress of Past Pupils of Asia and Oceania



(ANS - Rome)

The 12th Congress of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco of Asia and Oceania will take place on 25 and 26 June, the first to be carried out digitally. The two-day online program envisions three sessions with the evaluation of the path taken since the previous Congress in Dili, Timor Leste (2016), reports from each Alumni National and Provincial Federation as well with two special inputs and the possibility for smaller group interaction.

The President of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, Mr. Michal Hort, wrote: «It is an honour and a pleasure for me to announce the Asia-Oceania Regional Congress of Past Pupils of Don Bosco. The originally planned Congress in Tokyo - Japan for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Since the Pandemic is still very real and challenging, after consultation with the

Presidency, Regional Councilor for Asia - Oceania Mr. Rajesh Gupta, and GEX Regional Councilor Mr. Niel Evangelista, we decided to have the Congress in 2021 but in online space on 25-26 June 2021.

I would like to encourage you personally to attend the meeting, since it is an important activity for the whole region which, I hope will bring a lot of fruits. Because of that belief, I will personally participate in the Online Congress... [also present along with the two Asia-Oceania World Councillors will be our World Delegate, Bro. Dominic Nguyen Duc Nam]».

The figure of Mr. Carlo Gastini (1833-1902) - founder and first leader of Don Bosco Past Pupils - will be highlighted in the context of the ongoing 150th-anniversary celebration of this largest Salesian Family Group. Also, the 10th successor of Don Bosco, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, has promised his presence and input. In addition to the Regional Councillor and

GEX Councillor, Mr Hort and the World Delegate for Past Pupils, Salesian coadjutor Dominic Nguyen Duc Nam, are also expected to attend.

The Past Pupils of Don Bosco are in 28 countries of the Asia-Oceania region, animated by their SDB delegates who belong to 24 SDB provinces (12 in South Asia and 12 in the East Asia-Oceania Region). Although the official 'Federations of DB Past Pupils' are not yet established in all 28 countries, this is the first occasion where all Alumni and Friends of Don Bosco may take part.

Since 1976 the Asia-Oceania Regional Congress of Don Bosco Past Pupils has been held every 4 years: 1976 (India), 1980 (Philippines), 1984 (Hong Kong), 1988 (Australia), 1992 (Macau), 1996 (South Korea), 2000 (Thailand), 2005 (India), 2008 (Philippines), 2012 (Thailand) and 2016 (Timor Leste).

Source: AustrAsia



India

Salesian Family in Hyderabad: ambulance and many initiatives FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS AND NEEDY



(ANS - Hyderabad)

The "Saint Joseph" Province of India-Hyderabad continues to work in many ways and without pause to help people infected with Covid-19, their families, and those suffering from the consequences of the pandemic. Among the most significant initiatives recently launched is an ambulance service made available by the group of [past pupils of the Don Bosco Institute in Mangalagiri](#).

The [Past Pupils](#) felt called to provide this good and much-needed service after having had to helplessly witness the death of many people - friends and collaborators - affected by Covid-19, due also to the unavailability of means of transport to reach hospitals with the oxygen.

[Mr. Ravi, the President of the Local Union of Past Pupils](#), together with other members and the Salesian community of Mangalagiri, raised funds and made friends and agencies aware of this cause. So they managed to buy an Omni Van and transform it into an ambulance.

The vehicle, which offers its service free

of charge to the poor, entered service last Sunday, June 13, 2021, after a ceremony that saw several [Past Pupils](#) participate, including the President of the "[SC Finance Corporation](#)" for Andhra Pradesh, [Fr Garlapati Michael Kishore, Provincial Delegate for Past Pupils](#), [Fr Parokaran Jose, Delegate for the Local Union of Mangalagiri](#), and [Fr Banda Suresh](#), who [thanked the Past Pupils](#) for their generosity.

Especially noteworthy, among the other initiatives recently carried out in the INH Province:

~ The "Don Bosco Navajeevan" center in Visakhapatnam accompanies migrants through an awareness program and the distribution of dry ration kits to 350 families.

~ The "Don Bosco Navajeevan" center in Vijayawada has also set up a transport service to and from hospitals for Covid-19 patients and their families, while it continues to provide hot meals to families in quarantine or in isolation, and also works to support the government vaccination campaign for the area's slum

dwellers and migrant workers.

~ The "Don Bosco Seva Kendra" (DBSK), the Provincial Planning and Development Office, with the support of many organizations such as "Zomato India", "Nestle India", "Accenture", and the "BoscoNet" of New Delhi distributed pre-cooked meals to over 700 people with Covid-19 in the areas of Bandalaguda Jagir Municipal; together with other NGOs, since May 6, it has served food to around 5,000 migrants in the Kuntlur area; and on 12 June it delivered 750 food rations to migrants from various villages - an initiative, the latter, that also saw INH Provincial, [Fr Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar](#), and [Fr Bellamkonda Sudhakar](#), Director of DBSK, directly participating in the operations.

Furthermore, it plans to distribute 6,000 food kits and 5,000 health kits over the next few months to day workers in rural areas who have lost their jobs in the Indian states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and southern Orissa. negli Stati indiani di Telangana, Andhra Pradesh e nel Sud dell'Orissa.

Thailand



Salesian Family's response to third wave of Covid-19

Bangkok, Thailand - May 2021

Thailand is experiencing the third wave of Covid-19, which causes between two thousand and four thousand new cases every day.

Hospitals and field hospitals are short of beds.

The Planning and Development Office of the Salesian Province of Thailand is coordinating the response to the emergency of the Salesian Family, which involves Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Salesian Cooperators, Association of Mary Help of Christians, Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Daughters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate, Sisters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate, and Past Pupils.

Specifically, the distribution of food and economic aid to those in need is carried out, without entering the so-called red areas.









Thailand

Efforts of Salesian Past Pupils TO FAMILIES AFFECTED BY PANDEMIC



Hatyai, Thailand - May 2021

In recent days, Salesians and Past Pupils have joined forces to help families affected by Covid-19 in the outskirts of the city of Hatyai, in southern Thailand.

About 1,000 people gathered in the Salesian school and received food and other basic necessities.



India

Past pupils of "Don Bosco Liluah" set up vaccination center



Calcutta, India - June 2021

The Past Pupils of the Salesian school "Don Bosco Liluah" of Howrah, belonging to the Salesian Province of Calcutta (INC), have organized a center for the administration of the vaccine against Covid-19 at the Institute's campus.

India



Vast, articulated Salesian commitment in fight against Covid-19

(ANS - New Delhi)

In the face of the new, violent wave of Covid-19 that is affecting all of India and the Indian Church within it - in the last few weeks alone 168 Catholic priests and 116 nuns have lost their lives - the Family Salesian multiplies her efforts and commitments in favor of the most needy.

In the Chennai Province (INM), the Salesian school of Egmore, with the [contribution of the Past Pupils of the institute](#) and other institutions, has set up a Covid-19 Care Center (CCC) with 104 beds and oxygen concentrators, to meet the ever-growing demand for beds and oxygen in the city.

Furthermore, the "Don Bosco Relief Service" (DBRS), under the aegis of "SURABI", the Provincial Planning and Development Office, and in collaboration with the "Don Bosco" work of Vazhikatti, Permabur, has supported hundreds of needy people with an emergency kit that includes rice, legumes, oil, spices, soaps, vitamins, medicines and a thermometer.

The beneficiaries are 500 street vendors in

Chennai, and about a hundred other marginalized people from around the city.

In Bangalore, another CCC, with 25 beds, was blessed and opened on May 19th by the Redemptorist Fathers. "BREADS", the Planning and Development Office of the Salesian Province of Bangalore (INK), is supporting the CCC with all consumables and oxygen concentrators, as well as with food for patients, doctors, staff and volunteers.

In Mumbai, the Provincial Planning and Development Office, the "Don Bosco Development Society" (DBDS), thanks to a collaboration with the company "AXA Business", reached another 200 poor and needy families in Pune and Chinchwad with rescue packages of foodstuffs, hygiene kits and toilet articles. This was funded by Services.

In total, over the past year, DBDS has reached and served over 750,000 people.

In Calcutta, in addition to the consultancy and medical assistance service for the needy started at the "Nitika Don Bosco", another Salesian assistance center was



Bangalore



Bangalore



Mumbai



New Delhi - Chandigarh

inaugurated on Saturday 22 May at the "Don Bosco School" in Park Circus. Several Indian media and television stations have also taken an interest in this initiative.



Furthermore, the Salesian Cooperators of the Unit of the "Kristu Jyoti College" are financially supporting the Salesian initiatives, while Fr Gilbert Choondal, Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry, Evangelization and Catechesis, has given life to Eucharistic adoration to implore divine help in this difficult situation.



New Delhi - Chandigarh

In Chandigarh, New Delhi Province, the Salesians collaborated to strengthen the government's health infrastructure, supporting 11 hospitals with personal protective equipment, hand sanitizers and masks; they offer a free ambulance service that has already benefited 90 families in the slums through regular medical checks and health services and the distribution of essential medicines and vitamins; they provide online counseling and learning services to around 400 children; and they distributed medical kits, toiletries and nutritional materials and foodstuffs sufficient for a month to over a thousand people.



New Delhi - Chandigarh



Don Bosco School



Kolkata



Bangalore



Kolkata



India

A Community of Care: Don Bosco Alumni Association's Response to Covid-19 Pandemic



(ANS - New Delhi)

2021 has seen the arrival of the much-dreaded second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. This wave has been characterized by a massive surge in the number of cases, particularly in India. In times like these, working for the survival and safety of others in whatever way is possible is a responsibility that all must take up. The [Alumni Association of Don Bosco, Alaknanda](#) is proof of the difference that can be made by individuals coming together as a strong, supportive community united towards a common goal.

Lockdowns have been reinstated, fresh directives issued, but the virus still wreaks havoc, with more and more people getting infected, leading to a massive demand for hospital beds, medication, oxygen, vaccines and other essential resources. The remarkable efforts of India's essential workers, most notably its medical professionals, are the strongest line of defence against the disease.

Also worth recognition are the networks of friends, family and colleagues that have been established and mobilized in order to share resources and combat misinformation in these dire times. Social media and

messaging apps have also facilitated this process, allowing relative strangers to lend a hand.

It is in this context that the [Alumni Association of Don Bosco School, Alaknanda](#), and the social media groups and networks that it has established have proved invaluable to its members and others.

Already a valuable source of information and connections on the professional front, these groups have become a thriving source of information during the pandemic, with three decades worth of Bosconians pooling their resources, connections and contacts in seemingly small acts of service that are crucial for the people who need them and add up to a remarkable repository of information to be further shared and disseminated.

Requests for information related to medicines, oxygen, hospital beds, plasma, vaccines and the like flood these groups every day. The response time to such requests is almost immediate, both in the group and via personal messages from individuals who are made aware of the needs of others.

Of particular mention are the doctors in the group who are invaluable for their experience, connections and advice. These in-



clude Dr Varun Khullar who has been providing medical services, food and dry rations to Covid-impacted and needy individuals and families through his NGO "*Chhoti Chhoti Khushiyan*". Also worth recognizing is Dr Kenshuk Marwah who is, in many ways, the glue that holds the Alumni Association together and whose insight and advice are freely available on the group as well as on news programmes, visible to the wider public.

Other medical professionals like Dr Vivek Saini, Dr Aseem Gulati, Dr Ashish Gupta, Dr Ankur Kataria and many others have been tirelessly working to combat the virus while also finding time to aid their fellow alumni on these groups and networks.

Recognising the efforts of every active Bosconian on these groups would be a mammoth task, regardless of which they continue to strive to be of service to their fellow Bosconians, their loved ones, and to society.

South Korea



DW Bio donates 100,000 KF94 masks to KOR Province for many Salesian families around the world

(ANS - Seoul)

The KOR Province has delivered 100,000 masks in the light of the resurgence of COVID-19, with the help of "DW Development Co., Ltd. Engineering & Construction".

Many countries are facing great difficulties in the aftermath of the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, developing countries are suffering from the threat of livelihoods while worrying about meals, aside from quarantine due to the aggravated circumstances of poverty.

In this situation, we share a story about the sponsorship of a good company that wants to help difficult conditions in the missions.

On Thursday, May 20, DW Development Co., Ltd. Engineering & Construction, and their affiliate, DW Bio, donated 100,000 KF94 masks called "Airdays" to the KOR Province.

The company has actively participated in social contribution activities by donating

more than 1 million masks it has produced to people living difficult lives.

Seung joon (Francis) Park, Vice Chairman of DW Development Co., Ltd. Engineering & Construction, who attended the donation ceremony on the day, told Br. Marco Choi, SDB, Provincial Economist and Mission Procurator of KOR Province,

«I hope that Korean masks with proven quality and safety are delivered to families of poor youths around the world who are facing difficulties.

As a believer, I am grateful that I can be a part of this because I believe that religion can do what the government or corporations cannot do in a country in a barren reality».

The donated masks this time will be delivered to poor families around the world through "Don Bosco Solidarity vs COVID-19 Relief" in Rome.

The KOR Province has launched a "Supporting Korean Masks" project in mission pla-



ces where the situation is more difficult due to COVID-19 in solidarity with good and meaningful people.

With the participation of the Salesian Family, [past pupils](#) and benefactors, we have directly provided more than 50,000 masks to East Timor, Mongolia, and Cambodia.

We also plan to deliver a total of 50,000 masks to Southeast Asia and Oceania regions, such as the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.

Source: Australasia



Slovenia

Solidarity for scholarships



Ljubljana, Slovenia - May 2021

The Planning and Development Office of the Slovenian Salesian foundation "Fundacija Don Bosko", under the leadership of Maja Žibert, a young former pupil of the Salesian school, responded to the needs and challenges caused by the pandemic with the charity event "Solidarity for Scholarships".

Together with the Slovenian Catholic Radio "Ognjišče", a series of radio broadcasts with experts on the anguish caused by the pandemic had, since January, been prepared.

On May 21, the last live broadcast was aired with a concert and guests to collect donations for students affected by the pandemic.

In the Salesian house of Ljubljana-Rakovnik the young animators, scouts and Salesians worked at the "call center", where they received phone calls with donations from listeners.

The support went beyond expectations.

At the end, Fr Marko Košnik, Salesian Province of Slovenia Provincial (SLO), who also worked at the call center, thanked everyone and said: «Marian devotion and solidarity always go together.

Don Bosco turned to Our Lady in his needs and was always helped.

His benefactors, instead, experienced Her graces to which Don Bosco recommended them».

Philippines



Lawaan: a Home for Heroes

(ANS – Talisay City)

It was a year ago when the Salesian Philippines South Province (FIS) made a formal agreement with the Region 7 Office of the Department of Health to use its retreat house in Lawaan, Talisay City as a temporary boarding for front-liners.

Front-liners had to isolate themselves from even their families for their own protection. They needed a safe place where they can catch up on much-needed rest away from their own wary neighborhoods who are afraid of those who come in and out of hospitals.

In the absence of gatherings, the “Don Bosco Retreat House” could stand idle throughout the pandemic. The local government suspended all common activities prohibiting retreats and recollections altogether. So for one year, it was converted as a home for heroes. Front-liners from several medical facilities in Talisay City and Cebu City stayed there. *Chester B. Hamoy, himself an alumnus of a Salesian school* and a licensed nurse, shared his experience: «During the first few months, I was very scared. I was at a loss due to the sudden changes. Roads were suddenly closed. I'm from Punta Princesa (a village in Cebu City).

I saw less people in the streets of the city. Barricades and military personnel were all around. At the same time, I was also con-

cerned for my safety due to people's discrimination of health workers who they accused of being carriers of COVID-19.

I have no firsthand experience since I have my own motorcycle and I rarely walk through the neighborhood but I have heard stories from fellow front-liners and I cannot help but be scared for my safety. At the same time, I was also scared for my family since my father has comorbidity and we are living in a compound owned by my grandparents together with relatives some of whom are also senior citizens. That is why I decided to look for a place to stay so that I can be at peace that my family will be spared from the virus».

Our medical professionals did not only need a place to stay, but above all a support community that will carry them through the psychological and spiritual challenges of the pandemic. Initially wary of each other, the front-liners that took refuge in the retreat house discovered a sense of community in their shared experience and struggle.

«A lot of struggles came in – there was fear of the virus, safety, financial problems, and family concerns. I was just so blessed that I was staying here. Attending the Mass every day made me forget my personal concerns for at least an hour. Before, I was not faithful to Catholic practices. I only go to Church to light a candle and pray. I do





not usually go to Mass on Sundays because I do not have the time anymore. But when I stayed here, I was so fortunate to have Fr. Eugene with us. The support he gave did not just help me spiritually but also my mental wellbeing».

Fr. Eugene Maglasang, SDB volunteered to stay with the front-liners in the retreat house. He offered them the best a Salesian could give – the gift of presence. He celebrated masses for them, engaged them at meals, and even organized a retreat for them in the mountains of southern Cebu. «He brought us to Mantalongon for relaxation which we really enjoyed. During that time we were already well-adjusted with the situation, there were lesser concerns in terms of work since the pandemic was better managed».

While the pandemic encouraged isolation and separation, a miracle happened among the front-liners in the retreat house. They started to bond together and support one another as a community.

«I had the opportunity to make new friends in my stay here in the retreat house since 90% of the occupants were also working in Talisay District Hospital with me. We had rules to follow, and we also had roles assigned to us. I have learned how to cook and tried to cook new recipes. It was a good diversion that we enjoyed outside work».
Many front-liners worked long hours in

their shifts. Chester for one worked 12-hour shifts. After a day of heavy battle with the pandemic, our front-liners found a home and a community they can call a family and come home to every day. The front-liners left the retreat house last May 10, 2021: «I am sad right now because we are leaving. I am having separation anxiety. I did not feel it until yesterday when I was packing my things and trying to sort out what to bring and what to throw away. Seeing all my stuff made me emotional and I find it funny because I am not an emotional person. I became attached to this community after being together for one year.

Yes, I am going back, but I will try my best to look for a place to stay because I still have concerns for the safety of my family. Even if I am already vaccinated, I am still afraid that I might still be the carrier of the virus because of my work. I still worry but the feeling is no longer as strong as when the pandemic started. I can say that there is already light at the end of the tunnel even if for the moment the light is still far».

The pandemic continues to rage around the world. There is hope because there are people like Chester whose profession has become their vocation. But heroes are humans too. They need our support and prayers. In this common struggle against COVID-19, the human community brings strength and hope.

Source: Australasia



East Timor



Flood victims needs shelter-food-medicines

(ANS - Dili)

A flash flood caused by torrential rains crippled areas around the capital city of Dili, East Timor, as well as some nearby islands in Eastern Indonesia (NTT), including the island of Flores and the Western part of Timor Island, Indonesia, in the early morning hours (3-5 AM) of Easter Sunday (April 4).



To date, reports claim there are some 160+ victims of landslides and houses buried under mud, kilometres of destroyed road, and thousands of displaced people.

In Dili, the water in the rivers rise as much as 2-4 meter above the ordinary level.

Although the main rainfall stopped on Monday (April 5), the water-level was still high. Rescue work continues to search and discover missing people and restore the basic roads and streets in the affected area.

The Salesians of Don Bosco (*Vice Province of St Callisto Caravario*, East Timor - TLS) with the headquarters in Dili-Comoro, one of the centres of this natural disaster, is now sheltering some 3,000 people who fled from their homes due to this calamity in its "*Comoro Don Bosco*" compound.





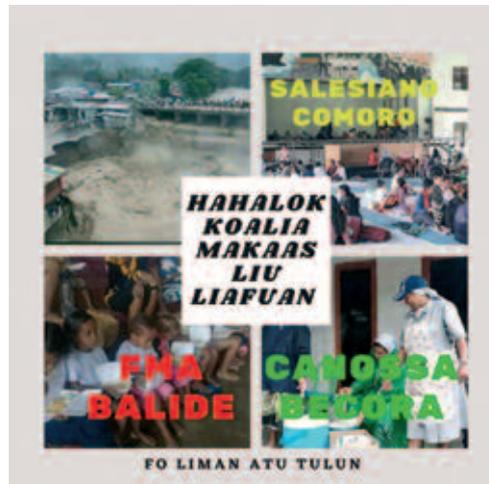
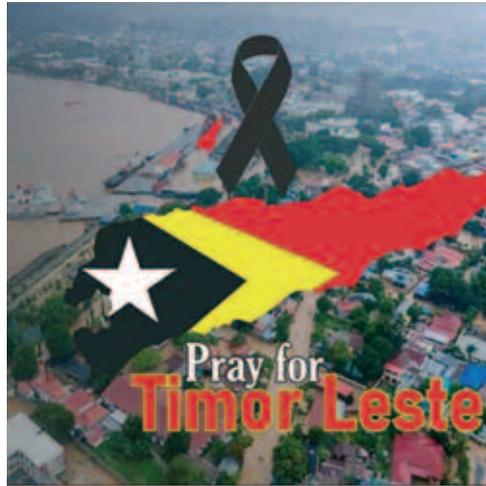
Some blankets, food and basic medicines were distributed.

Also, the archbishop of Dili, Virgilio da Silva, SDB, was present with his words of consolation to the flood refugees.

At the same time, the whole Salesian Family, with the Comoro FMA communities, Salesian Cooperators, ADMA and [Don Bosco Past Pupils](#) extend their hands to the victims.

At present, the TLS Vice Province has 11 canonical communities in East Timor, with 3 of them located precisely in the capital of Dili-Comoro district, with the parish of Mary Help of Christians; "[Don Bosco Technical Centre](#)", a TVET centre, with a large oratory; and a post-novitiate community with the Philosophy study centre. Also, the Provincial house is located in the Dili-Comoro venue. On the other hand, the Salesians of Don Bosco are not yet present in the Eastern Indonesia provinces affected by the flash floods, especially in Flores Island. The only presence is the Don Bosco community of Sumba, apparently without any major damages.

Prayers and any meaningful sign of solidarity is highly appreciated. "[We pray for the people of East Timor and Easter Indonesia!](#)" the Salesians say.





Brazil

Another solidarity action promoted BY PAST PUPILS OF SALESIAN HIGH SCHOOL OF SALVADOR



Salvador, Brazil - April 2021

"Hunger hurts! Feed the heart of those who need it". This is the theme of yet another solidarity action promoted by past pupils of Don Bosco from the Salesian high school in Salvador.

With the aim of supporting and alleviating the pain of people suffering from hunger, thirst, cold and loneliness, several kilograms of food and basic necessities were collected on 4 April through a solidarity *"Drive Through"*. Online donations were also collected and will provide for the purchase of warm clothes, blankets, water and hygiene products.

Spain



Footballer Carlos Soler and IKEA renovate classroom in "Entre Amics" Day Center for children at risk

Valencia, Spain - April 2021

On 14 April, the Valencia CF footballer, and Salesian past pupil, **Carlos Soler** presented a social project with the support of IKEA Valencia: one of the classrooms of the "Entre Amics" for children at risk of social exclusion at the "Salesianos San Juan Bosco" in Valencia was designed and furnished.

In this way, the footballer made his contribution to improving the education and common living space of many children. «I'm happy to be able to help people who really need it by doing something good. I don't

want my life to revolve only around football», said Soler.

The footballer designed his ideal home for IKEA, as a model to exhibit, and in exchange the Swedish company offered him the opportunity to choose a social project in favor of children. In the presentation, Soler inaugurated the classroom with the cutting of the ribbon and placed his autograph on the commemorative plaque of the social project.

He was satisfied with the initiative as well as with the function performed by the "Fundación Inicial Solidaria Ángel Tomás".





Italy

IUSVE, meetings of Higher Education School for Social and Political commitment continue

(ANS - Mestre)

"The universal destination of goods and the virtue of hope".

This was the theme of the fourth meeting open to the public of the Higher Education School for Social and Political Commitment, promoted by the Association of Salesian Cooperators and by the [Italian Federation of Don Bosco Past Pupils](#).

This year, the speaker was the Syrian Salesian Fr Pier Jabloyan, who is currently in the Cairo community (Egypt).

The meeting took place on Friday 14 May, from 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm, and was broadcast on the YouTube channel of the Salesian University Institute of Venice - IUSVE. As mentioned, the promoters of this im-

portant event were the Association of Salesian Cooperators and the [Italian Federation of Don Bosco Past Pupils](#), the two great lay branches of the Salesian Family, who decided to bear witness to the education received at the school of Don Bosco in the social sector through the establishment of the first university course of Higher Education for Social and Political commitment.

The latter is taking place thanks to the precious collaboration of IUSVE.

It is a high-level formation course, thanks also to the participation of teachers and experts of national and international fame, focused on the Social Doctrine of the Church declined according to the Salesian charism, to form "*Upright Citizens*" committed to the world for a better future.





Don Bosco Past Pupils

"A sleeping giant" celebrates 150 years

*Interview with Mr Michal Hort, Don Bosco Past Pupil
President of the World Confederation (2015-2021)*

Dear Mr. Hort. Warm greetings from the neighborhood. We are preparing to found the Ex Pupil Association in Hungary, and would appreciate if you could reply to us as an interview form into the following questions. We would like to have this short interview published also in our Bollettino to make people enthusiastic to join the new starting Hungarian Salesian Ex Allievi association. Thanks a lot in Advance for your ideas!

Can you tell us shortly about you? When and where did you meet the Salesians? What are you doing for living? As we know, you have a family as well.

«My name is Michal Hort, I'm 43 years old, I'm married, I have my wife Martina and my 3 kids Tereza, Filip and Matus. They are 10, 8 and 4 years old. I'm an entrepreneur, I have a consultancy company in the sector of EU funds. My company has currently 10 employees and we help our clients to get grants for their development and investment projects.

I grew up in the family with 5 children (I'm the oldest), where both my parents were

(and still are) past pupils of Don Bosco. My father always taught me to help the Salesians. I studied at the Salesian high school in Sastin (Slovakia) and then at the Bologna University in Italy.

So I've been raised and educated by both my parents and Salesian since my childhood. And for that I'm very grateful.

In 2015 I got elected the president of the World confederation of Past Pupils on Don Bosco.

For me to be a Don Bosco Past Pupil means everything»

In your current life situation, what does it mean for you being a Salesian Ex Pupil? Which effect had on you the pedagogy of Don Bosco?

«For me being Past Pupil of Don Bosco means everything. Education received is for me my way of life, my life plan. Now when growing older the words "*good Christian and honest citizen*" for me are the resume of what I want to be.

I want to point out that helping others

thanks to the education received by the Salesians and talents and skills given by God is what defines my everyday actions. Or at least I try my best. And this is for me the definition of Past Pupil of Don Bosco».

As Coordinator of the World Association, you have a general view on lots of local Associations. Can you share to us some good practices of them around the world?

«Before answering this question I would like to underline one important fact: Past Pupils are the movement all around the world (we estimate more than 100 countries, more than 30 million people).

There are approx. 14.000 Salesians all over the world. There are more than 3.500 schools and almost 4.000 Salesian operas all over the world.

Past pupils of Don Bosco are all those lay people, who passed through the hands of the Salesians not only in the schools, but also in the oratories, churches, social houses, etc. The movement is celebrating 150 years right this year. It's a "*sleeping giant*"



that has a potential to do a lot of good. We just need a lot of prayers and good tools and projects to help him up.

There are good examples of best practices on our Strategic plan 2015-2021 and on our web page.

There are many, pls see the documents and web page (www.exallievi.org).

I would point out for example educational courses for the high school children about the future employment; or Business club of Past pupils Entrepreneurs; or Family Weekends for the families of Past Pupils of Don Bosco and so on. You better see the web page and our strategic plan».

We are preparing to found the Association in Hungary. To what would you call our attention? Which focus would you recommend to us, Hungarian ex Salesian pupils?

«Every country is different, but in your case I would suggest:

- Appoint a responsible Salesian and one lay person to start with. Then this responsible person will create a small

team (preparatory team) for the Past Pupils. World Confederation can help a lot – sending you a simple 10 steps brochure how to proceed when establishing a new federation (asking to the Secretary general_secretary@exallievi.org)

- Start gather past pupils by making lists of addresses – even virtually; we live in the era of social media – use this to gather past pupils and let them know they are past pupils of Don Bosco.
- Defining a plan what to do; based on the strategic plan of the World Confederation».

What an Association can do for its members?

«Many things, but basically inspire them and help them grow as Past Pupils of Don Bosco; help them continue to live following Don Bosco; By gathering them create a community with the same values, priorities and goals.

Give them friends and group of people that can work and act together sharing plans,

problems and dreams; we live in the era of “crowd solving” and “crowd sharing”. For that you need a “crowd” – a community. Past Pupils movement is the right place to be».

What is expectable from the members, who are willing to join and what not? Obviously everybody has different life situation, activity level.

«To be a past pupil of Don Bosco. That means: use your professional skills and talents to help each other, help the Salesians and society they live in. To be active citizens and Christians.

For example: Are you a teacher? Can you help in the oratory or create a education group for the children of the Past Pupils? Or: are you a musician? Can you create a band that sings in the church during the masses and Salesian events? Or even: are you and accountant or lawyer? Can you help Salesians in your oratory with book keeping or legal issues?

And so on... in this way also other benefits can be reached. For example Salesians themselves will have more time to stay



with young people, dedicate more time for the souls, because us past pupils will have them with the "terrestrial" issues».

What message would you send to those people who are willing to enter to the Hungarian association?

«No matter what, being with Don Bosco is the right thing. Our way to reach heaven is not a riddle we cant solve. It has been solved 150 years ago by Don Bosco giving us the scheme for a fruitful and happy life.

Us in Eastern Europe we lived decades of oppression of Communism that did not al-

lowed us to live fully our faith and love of Don Bosco. Nowadays there are different threats to face and fight. Especially ignorance and disinterest.

Within the Past pupils of Don Bosco movement it's easier to fight and live our lives to the fullest».

How could you resume in one sentence the identity of the Salesian Ex Pupil?

«Be a good Christian and honest Citizen». Short, but complete. Think about it».

Marton Csany
Former pupil of Don Bosco from Hungary





Italy

Alin, from pupil to entrepreneur thanks TO SALESIAN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

(ANS - Serravalle Scrivia)

Alin Cazacu is a young past pupil of the Salesian Vocational Training Center (VTC) of Serravalle Scrivia in the province of Alessandria, Piedmont.

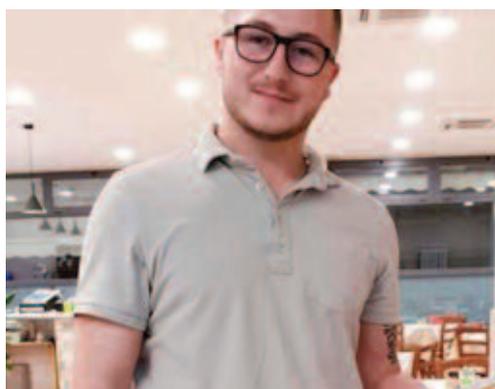
Thanks to his determination, his commitment, and the teachings received during his years as a student of the Salesian course in the Salesian VTC, he was able to fulfill his dream of starting his own business: he opened a pizzeria.

A serious preparation towards the world of work and the possibility of an internship in a firm so as to immediately put into practice what he had learned 'at his desk' were the keys to entering the world of work as a protagonist.

Today Alin is 27 years old and lives in Sardiniano. Three years ago - with his business partner and best friend - he opened the pizzeria "Il Quadrifoglio" in Cassano Spinola.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, they are only engaged in take-away, but the hope is to re-open the dining room to full capacity, since it had become a point of reference

for the neighboring townspeople. Alin attended the VTC course in Serravalle Scrivia as a sales assistant: «*A friend of mine recommended it to me. He told me about a beautiful environment, useful for learning and being inserted into the world of work*», he says.



The training course led him first to do an internship in a clothing store, then to start working in a pizzeria as an employee.

«*In the store, I put into practice the notions learned above all on how to approach customers, be polite and how to understand the needs of those in front of you.*

The course was very useful because they also taught me English - essential these days - and I was able to take the HACCP qualification for preparing and serving food

and drinks, which came in handy later, saving time and money. Finally, I have perfected the theoretical knowledge in internship: theory and practice for a complete formation».

The vocational school staff explain: "The course, completely free, includes 300 hours of internship, in collaboration with the commercial activities of the area, especially the outlet (the largest in Italy) in the third year of attendance, after the first two in which supplementary vocational subjects are taught".

Depending on the chosen address, the subjects taught change: "Sales techniques, cash management, organization of the point of sale ... in addition to English, Russian and business Chinese, languages required for dealing with customers who arrive in Serravalle".

Thus, after a few years as an employee, Alin and his friend decided to go on their own. Now he bakes and serves pizzas and can't wait to go back to setting the tables for all the customers who have learned to know him, appreciate his professionalism and taste his pizzas.

Source: Novi Online

El Salvador



Don Bosco University held "Probecas" meeting for benefit of young people wanting to excel

Boletín Salesiano
Don Bosco en Centroamérica

(ANS - Soyapango)

With the aim of strengthening the links between Salvadoran society and its Scholarship Program (Probecas), the Don Bosco University of El Salvador, through its Department of Social Planning, organized the traditional event "*It's Good to Give Education*" for the fourth consecutive year. It was held in mid-January, and which, due to the pandemic, took place in virtual mode.

Physical distancing was not an impediment to sharing a heartfelt evening among benefactors, scholarship winners, and the educational community, all gathered with the same purpose of continuing to support more Salvadoran youth to fulfill their dreams of improvement through higher education.

For the Rector of the UDB, prof. Mario Olmos, SDB, over the years what initially could only be configured as a charity dinner has actually become not only an event that raises funds for the scholarship pro-

gram, but also an opportunity to renew the meaning of what it means to help others and an opportunity for young fellows and benefactors to meet and exchange experiences.

The more than 80 benefactors who attended the event were able to learn about the success stories of the fellows Héctor and Ernesto Martínez, originally from the department of Santa Ana.

Héctor, a graduate in Aeronautical Engineering, and Ernesto, a student of the same course, shared their testimony of how the scholarship they received from the UDB transformed their lives and presented the path they had to travel to achieve their dreams.

Héctor, from a humble family, dedicated to fruit and vegetable farming, and Ernesto, who loves to volunteer with the elderly, did not even hope to be able to continue their studies after school.

But their curiosity, the desire to learn, the commitment to find how and where to fol-

low their dreams, the courage to try... and the support of Salesians and benefactors, made the difference.

For Andrea Martínez, an Electrical Engineering student, a scholarship goes beyond financial support: *«it teaches us to grow as a person, to be self-taught and makes us appreciate more the possibility of studying and continuing to fight to be professionals in the next future. It's a responsibility and to a certain extent it's also a challenge»*, she said.

Don Bosco University thanks the benefactors, the educational community, the **past pupils** and the scholarship students who were present at the Probecas event, "*It is Good to Give Education*", with which it is possible to continue to provide opportunities for study, formation and growth to the younger.

Erika Vanessa Méndez

Source: Boletín Salesiano en Centroamérica



Philippines

"Boscotify", a podcast for students of "Don Bosco Mabalacat"



Mabalacat, Philippines - April 2021

The leaders of the Student Council of "Don Bosco Mabalacat" started a podcast titled "*Boscotify*" with the aim of establishing an online debate between students and Salesian educators on some important topics that emerged during the pandemic. The topic of this date involved social networks, between over-exposure and addiction.

Salesian educator Ryan Manalo provided attendees with his valuable insights as an [Alumni mentor](#) and user of social networks.

He emphasized the importance of following the rules of social networking; and challenged listeners to know their priorities when it comes to using social networks and to make limited use of them if they realize they are not doing what they should.

Mr. Manalo concluded his talk by stating that everyone has the power to interrupt the effects of social networking addiction, as well as to harness its potential for their own good and for the good of society at large.



Boxed set publications on Rimini's Maria Ausiliatrice church

(ANS - Rimini)

A few days after the feast day of Don Bosco, the Salesian community of Rimini publishes a boxed set containing all the publications concerning its church of Mary Help of Christians.

The collection serves as a synthesis of the in-depth works developed in conjunction with two centenarians recently experienced by the community: that of the birth of **Blessed Alberto Marvelli** (21 March 1918), who was formed as a committed young Christian in the church of Mary Help of Christians; and that relating to the arrival of the Salesians in Rimini (1919-2019).

The boxed set, which consists of 12 publications, concerns the building of the Church of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice which is told in its historical, artistic and religious aspects with different display modes ranging from the brochure to the leaflet, booklet, text.

This choice of opting for a varied form instead of a single commemorative text has favored the celebration of the centenarians with numerous events placed in the year's main festivals and has met the interest of various readers: the professional historian, the lover of the territory, the parishioner who relives the times of his or her recent past and the tourist on a guided tour in the summer evenings.

Of all the texts, the "*Short Guide to the Church of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice*" by the



most qualified Rimini author in the sector is especially important, the work of historian Piergiorgio Pasini.

The text "*People and facts of the Church of Mary Help of Christians*", written on an eight-leaf leaflet to highlight the chronological path, is also of great interest.

Other specific publications are dedicated to the careful reading of some details of the structure, such as the stained glass windows or the tombstone of the Venetian refugees, or to the meticulous examination

of the Gothic style and religious symbolism present in the church.

And since a church exists only if it is lived by a community, people also find a place in the boxed set with publications aimed at remembering the many benefactors, the aforementioned **Alberto Marvelli**, and also the famous Salesian Fr Antonio Gavinelli, founder of the work.

All the graphic design was handled by the Kaleidon studio under the direction of Francesco Ramberti.

The texts by Sonia Bodellini and Adriani-Masini for the "extra large" format and the one on the Via Crucis, still being worked on, are not included in the collection.

"*It would be too much to wish ad perpetuam rei memoriam (as a perennial reminder of the thing), but sincere is the intention to leave memories and admiration*", say the Rimini Salesians.





Mayor of Funchal visits Salesians



Foto: Câmara Municipal do Funchal

Funchal, Portugal - April 2021

In view of the celebrations for the anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, the mayor of Funchal, Miguel Silva Gouveia, recently visited the Salesian school.

Here, [Mr. Gouveia](#), a [Salesian alumnus](#), also had the opportunity to meet with Fr António Marcelino, pastor of the parish "Our Lady of Fatima" in Funchal, and the Director of the school, Fr José Jorge, who accompanied the mayor on his tour of the facility.

With this visit, the municipality of Funchal wanted to affirm that it hopes to maintain the usual celebrations that bring together hundreds of faithful every year.

Colombia



Church of San Pedro Claver



Father Mario Restrepo Botero

CARTAGENA

I warmly thank all the Generations of the Salesian schools, San Pedro Claver Cartagena, San Roque Barranquilla and the suffrage of Medellín, for the prayers and solidarity, for the Teacher, the Educator, the poet and writer, [Father Mario Restrepo Botero](#), who has been able to overcome the inconveniences of the covid,

To the Past Pupil Dr Joh Jairo Hoyos who is always aware of his evolution, and the Salesians of the two provinces, it is always necessary in this walk of life to be aware of those who have been our Guides In our youth at school, let us not forget the Salesians who have been the heart of Don Bosco, Father Mario, my advisor who has given me strength to continue on the path of the alumni movement and to be aware of them.

Thank you Mary Help of Christians and the Lord who has listened to all the prayers for health, from our dear formator, Father Mario Restrepo.

A. G.

SALESIAN PAST PUPILS



Salesian Past Pupils. In these difficult times for mankind, it is necessary to strengthen the unity of the [Past Pupils](#) and, faithful to the promises of Baptism and Confirmation and cohabiting with the charisma of Don Bosco with which they participate to the mission of Don Bosco and of the Salesian family, to develop a communication strategy in order to improve the internal and external communication using all social networks and new media available; the public relations strategy can be implemented in order to increase the impact on Society and Church.

One of the Confederation's projects is the platform Business, [Past Pupils Entrepreneurs](#), in order to apply Christian and Salesian principles and ideals to the business world, defending values, sense of responsibility, honesty and human dignity and engaging to lead, in the Salesian projects, the family, which has entered another historical period. Let's join forces.

Alfonso Garcia
Past Pupils of Don Bosco



Colombia

NEW PRESIDENT

Guillermo Gutiérrez Piraquive Business Administrator, has been appointed President of the Salesian Alumni Association of the San Pedro Claver Province.

With Salesian charisma, leading the good relations between the Past Pupils and with a Roadmap, for the progress of this association, he has been a leader within his promotion 1969 Leo XIII, we wish him the best wishes in this beginning of the destinies of the Alumni Association of the San Pedro Claver Province.

A. G.



South Korea

Past Pupils celebrate month of Mary

Gwangju, South Korea - June 2021

On 1 June, the Past Pupils who graduated from the Salesian High School in Gwangju concluded the celebrations in honor of Mary.

Throughout the month of May, in fact, numerous events dedicated to her were carried out.

This year, due to the pandemic, the meetings were moved to the digital space, with the involvement of numerous students and teachers from the school.



Together with the Director of Gwangju, Fr Francis Kim, a video was also produced, available at the [following link](#).

Guatemala



Spanish ambassador visits "FR BARTOLOMÉ AMBROSIO SDB"



Guatemala City, Guatemala - May 2021

On May 12, the "P. Bartolomé Ambrosio SDB", a sector of the Salesian Work "*La Divina Providencia*", was pleased to receive the visit of the Spanish ambassador to Guatemala, José María Laviña Rodríguez.

The visit began with a dialogue with the directors of the work and the center, as well as representatives of the Board of Directors of the Marvelli Foundation and the [Past Pupils Association](#).

Subsequently, the ambassador visited the center's facilities, then met with the students in the Multipurpose Room, where he was welcomed with a song.

In the speech addressed to the students, the ambassador said he was very impressed by the work and the type of service that the center carries out, where young people have development opportunities, and encouraged them to continue to improve and to be an active part of the progress of the society.





Calcutta Alumnus guides experiential learning future proof



Dr. George Panicker

Calcutta, May the 23rd

«Together with the learning numbers and facts, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, communication, partner-

ship and creativity with a scientific and entrepreneurial attitude» said Mr. George Panicker, pupil of the Don Bosco Park Circus, Calcutta and founder of STEAM Research Pvt Ltd.

«The best way schools can help students become future-proof or ready for the future is to help them think, indulging on experiential learning through a practical methodology and perfecting their metacognitive abilities».

Mr. Panicker then stated: «The proven methodology to implement experiential learning is through S.T.E.A.M integrated programs (S.T.E.A.M.: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics).

STEAM promotes growth and change of mental processes related to thought, rea-

soning, memory and other areas of brain development acquired from a consolidation of the knowledge acquired through experiences.

STEAM is an environment in which a student can touch, hear and simply learn learning.

It promotes literacy of inventions by doing things and relating them to the real world and to their textbook topics and also adding the experimentation.

The different prototypes a student develops in a STEAM area or in the laboratory helps him to understand the applications and the relevant concepts for the real world».

Paul Cheruthottupuram (Calcutta)

Fiji Islands



Second meeting of Salesian Family



Suva, Fiji Islands - April 2021

The Salesian Family of the Fiji Islands met on 9 April for its second meeting since the group was formed last year, considering too the impossibility of other previous meetings being held due to the pandemic and cyclones that have crossed Fiji.

The first part of the event, with 20 participants, focused on the relationship between young people and adults; in the second part, instead, Don Bosco's response to the difficult situation of young people in the society of his time was presented: the foundation of the Salesian Congregation, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Cooperators and the [Past Pupils of Don Bosco](#).





Mexico

Regional Councilor for Interamerica meets Salesian Family groups

(ANS - Mexico City)

On 10 April – online – the Salesian Family of Mexico-South met the Regional Councilor for Interamerica, Fr Hugo Drozco Sánchez, as part of his Extraordinary Visit to the Salesian Province “*Our Lady of Guadalupe*” of Mexico-México (MEM).

The meeting consisted of a space for fraternal dialogue, in which Fr Drozco answered questions put to him by the communication and formation team of the [Past Pupils of Don Bosco in Southern Mexico](#) and the Delegates of the Salesian Family in Southern Mexico (Provinces of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and of the Salesians).

At the beginning, Fr Drozco concentrated on the presentation of the figure of Fr Paolo Albera, indicating in detail the virtues, limits, achievements and challenges of the “*Little Don Bosco*” to whom the Congregation has dedicated this year.

Then he answered various questions posed by some of the meeting's participants – who also took part from Northern Mexico,

Ecuador, Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador, Haiti, and Canada – and invited them to be capable of giving answers to everyone in the Church, even those who are far away, in the first place by bearing witness, patience and loving kindness, as Christ and Don Bosco would.

And in the face of social, political and economic proposals contrary to the common good, he invited us to commit: the [Past Pupils](#), for example, in politics, in support of political projects for the improvement of the country; members of other groups, in social work for the good of all, especially the young.

He also stressed that many times there are those who feel called to do good to young people, and that this impetus should be supported by small steps to bring them closer, with a smile, support, an empathetic attitude...

And he reminded everyone to be authentic, so that the charism inherited from Don Bosco and Father Albera may shine forth in their lives.

He asked the laity not to wait, nor to imitate

in toto the religious, who – he remarked, «*are still human beings, with limits and errors*».

Indeed, he made it clear that sometimes the example of the good laity also elevates the spirit of the Salesians.

Furthermore, he urged them not to be afraid of the doubts and questions of today's young people, but on the contrary asked to accompany them inside the Salesian houses, on the foundations of the Gospel. In addition to reiterating to avoid grumblings and gossip, in conclusion he stated that he saw a lot of work and a lot of hope in everything that is being done in the Provinces and in the works of Southern Mexico.

And finally he addressed “*an aside*”: of praise for the efforts being made in each charismatic area, and of encouragement for those areas that should be considered in order to develop and grow better.

After the meeting, Fr Drozco presided over the Vespers Mass of the Feast of Divine Mercy in the Parish-Shrine of Mary Help of Christians.

EX ALLIEVI Newflash

Religious and Social magazine of the World Confederation of Ex-students of Don Bosco

Director and Editor EX ALLIEVI Newflash

Opera Salesiana Teresa Gerini
Via Tiburtina, 994 - 00156 Roma (Italia)
tel. (+39) 06.409.003
Internet: www.exallievi.org

Direction and Editorial Coordination

Pierluigi Lazzarini
pierluigi.2208@tiscali.it

Collaborators of this issue

Don Ángel Fernández Artime SDB, Michal Hort, Bro. Dominic Nguyen
Duc Nam, SDB, Paul Cheruthottupuram, Marton Csany, Alfonso Garcia,
Vito Gentili, Don Václav Klement SDB, Erika Vanessa Méndez, Sandra Pistilli,
Gianfrancesco Romano, Don Rosario Salerno SDB, Nisaury Ventura

Photography and Images

Archivio Agenzia ANS, AustraLasia, Bollettino Salesiano Centroamerica,
Alfonso Garcia, Novi Online, Perugia Today, Salesianos.pt

The quarterly magazine (Italian, English, Spanish, French and Portuguese) is available on the official website www.exallievi.org in these deadlines: **EASTER OF RESURRECTION**; **JUNE 24** (birth of former students); **OCTOBER 5** (Blessed A. Marvelli); **DECEMBER 25** (Holy Christmas)

General House

Salesian headquarters
Via Marsala, 42 - 00185 Roma (Italia)
tel. (+39) 06.656.121 Centralino
Fax (+39) 06.656.12.556
Internet: www.sdb.org
E-mail: rmg@sdb.org

NUMBER OF OUR ACCOUNTS

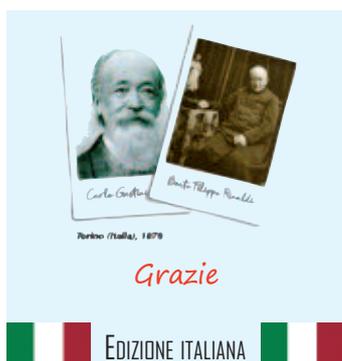
Name: Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco
Bank: Lombard Bank Malta p.l.c.
Address: Balzan, Malta
IBAN: MT 08 LBMA 0500 0000 0000 0144 0520 986
SWIFT Code: LBMAMTMT
Bank Account Number: 01440520986

Privacy notice: we process your personal data to the extent of your name, surname and email address, on the basis of Article 6 section 1 f) of the GDPR (legitimate interest in informing the organisation's members on events, news and updates regarding our organisation and the Salesian family), or, as the case may be, on the basis of your consent, exclusively for the purpose determined above, i.e. informing its members on events, news and updates regarding the organisation and the Salesian family via a newsletter. The controller of the personal data is the association Confederazione Mondiale Ex Allievi Don Bosco with its seat at Via Della Pisana III, 00163 Rome, Italy [Via Tiburtina, 994 - 00156 Roma (Italia)], Identification No.: 97066620580, email office@exallievi.org, phone No.+421 915 966 549. Your personal data are not provided to third parties, are not transferred to third countries or international organisations. Your personal data do not make part of an automated decision-making or profiling. The processing of your personal data is not a statutory or contractual requirement, nor a requirement necessary to enter into a contract; you are not obliged to provide us with your personal data. We shall process your personal data until you exercise your right to object to the processing / withdraw your consent. In case you wish to know more about the processing, please do not hesitate to contact us.

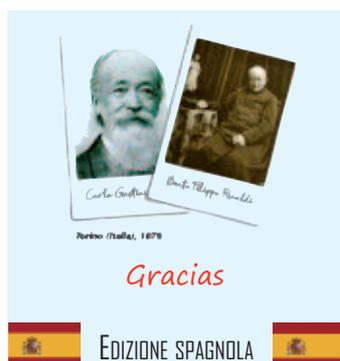
If you do not wish to receive our newsletters you are entitled, at any time, without any conditions or costs, to object to the processing / withdraw your consent, by sending an email to office@exallievi.org

Translations

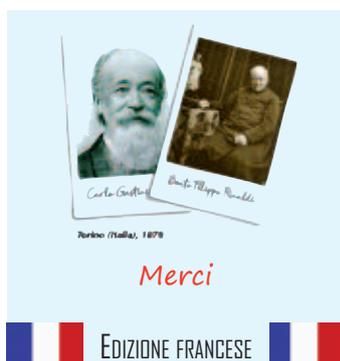
Ag. ANS - Sandra Pistilli



Ag. ANS - Nisaury Ventura



Ag. ANS - Sandra Pistilli



Ag. ANS - Nisaury Ventura

