

"I CAN'T WAIT!!"

How often have you heard someone say: "I can't wait!" And yet you know they **HAVE** to wait - for their birthday or for a new baby brother or sister or for **CHRISTMAS**.

The Church gives us a way of using this feeling. We are invited to enjoy and make good use of the time of **LOOKING FORWARD** for something. Looking forward to Christmas is called **ADVENT**.



The **ADVENT WREATH** and the **ADVENT** or **JESSE TREE** and the special **ADVENT CALENDAR** are all ways of making good use of this

time.

Once **CHRISTMAS** comes, the important thing is to **ENJOY** it! Don't be led astray by the Summer Holiday adverts or the Easter Eggs in the shops the next day!!

You couldn't wait - well now **CHRISTMAS** is here so make the most of it. Plan to spread your celebration over all the time between **CHRISTMAS** and **EPIPHANY**



A HAPPY CHRIST MAS !

St Benedict's Celebrates



A solemn Re-dedication Mass was celebrated by Motherwell's Bishop Joseph Devine on Friday, October 8th in Easterhouse. The occasion was the opening of the beautifully refurbished Church - at last!!

A piper led the procession in true Scottish style into the packed Church. The new Parish Priest, Fr Charles Garrick and the former P.P. Fr Michael O'Meara were joined by other SDBs, Diocesan Clergy and Salesian Sisters who had served in the Parish. Both Salesian Provincials attended as did the Diocesan Chancellor Frank Cassidy. He did sterling work supporting and guiding us - and part financing the project. After years of praying in a cold and damp church which should have been demolished, and sixteen months of waiting and praying in other premises for the work to refurbish the listed building to be completed. The patience and loyalty of parishioners was rewarded.

"St Benedict's Church has been totally transformed and will now serve as a sign to the passer-by of God's presence in a neighbourhood of humanity", were the Bishop's words. The Church is painted inside and out in white so does present a wonderful spectacle to the area. Hopefully the parishioners will experience in their spiritual lives a similar renewal - as the Bishop challenged us to "rise to the challenge and be an even more significant sign of God's presence.... This is the day the Lord has made for you. Let us rejoice in the fact that it has finally come."

We thank all those who prayed for a happy outcome and worked so hard to make the evening so special. Come and see us some time!

Sr Eileen, Provincial Delegate, Easterhouse, Glasgow, Scotland

MARLENE'S VISIT TO OXFORD

Thursday 8th July was a red letter day for our Province as we were blessed with a visit from Marlene Frederick, our representative on the World Consulting Body.

She was in Oxford that week for a family wedding and was keen to seize the chance to meet us. Despite torrential rain, cooperators from no less than six of the southern centres were present at Cowley and were very uplifted to hear Marlene speak about the organisation of our Association and about commitment, communication and solidarity. Afterwards there was time for all to mingle while partaking of light refreshments. Marlene enjoyed the chance to meet individuals and it was good, too, for members to get to know fellow cooperators from other centres. As a mark of gratitude we presented Marlene with copies of the Sean Devereaux biography and Wendy Wright's book on Francis de Sales, "Heart Speaks to Heart". Kathleen Pill, and the Cowley Cooperators and Sisters deserve our special thanks for helping set an excellent atmosphere and for their superb hospitality.

Fr Bernard, Provincial Delegate

CHRISTMAS CRAFT NIGHT

Tess Johns' annual craft night was held at St Dominics on 11 November. This year instead of making Christmas Cards we made hanging decorations and gift boxes. We progressed to using glue and soft material - but ours looked nothing like the prepared examples brought by Tess. Fr George provided us with coffee, biscuits and lovely choccies! He decided not to join in as he didn't feel very creative (but we know he was scared of the competition!).

The raffle raised funds for the Laura Vicuna appeal in Brettagh Holt. Lucky Vera D won **FOUR** of the prizes and Fr George one, Croxteth Cooperators also had a share of the prizes. The evening was enjoyed by all. Our thanks to Tess for organising this.

Huyton Cooperators, Liverpool

DRAMA IN EASTERHOUSE

Our school of St Benedicts was closed as the children moved into the NEW building, together with the children originally from St Clare's and St Collette's. It was sad to see the original buildings lying empty - a haven for the vandals to cause trouble. After about seven attempts over the weeks they finally got a good blaze going and the school went up in flames! The firemen decided this time to let it burn, so on a sunny evening the neighbours came out in their summer finery to watch the spectacle!

Our Sisters who live next door were not so sanguine! Fortunately the firemen and the police hosed down the trees between us and the school and watched carefully to keep us safe. I imagine our concern when they advised us to come to the ground floor - together and be sure that if we felt unsafe to evacuate!

We watched concerned from the porch, a bit like Nero, with coffee(!) in hand, as the flames and sparkes approached nearer. Eventually about midnight we felt safe enough to go to bed. 2.00am dawned with a horrendous crash and from then til 4.30am the demolition took place!!! Not much sleep was had.

At least we know we don't have a disaster waiting to happen. We remember the good times spent in the school and many past pupils walked past with perhaps a tear in the eye!?!

Sr Eileen, Provincial Delegate, Easterhouse

COOPERATORS RETREAT 2004 “Let’s Hear the Music and Dance”



We were delighted in Bollington to host the 2004 Retreat at Savio House in October. On Friday evening we gathered, with Fr Bernard, in the Mews Hall to welcome the travel weary and pray together.

Saturday offered much food for thought. After leading us in meditation Fr Graham Forristalle gave an extremely thought provoking talk on the Beattitudes which drew us right into the epicentre of Salesian Spirituality and Mission.



After lunch Sr Kay invited us to dance. Were we ready? Yes we were, for it was an invitation to “Dance with God” and when God calls the tune we have to respond to every rythm and be in step with the God who guides our steps. We prayed together, addressed relevant issues and shared our thoughts as Salesian Family.

In the evening Rachel, a Savio Volunteer shared with us her experiences of Salesian Life in a ‘goodnight’ that Don Bosco would have been proud of.

Later, followed much frivolity as we sang, joked, danced and reminisced over a few bottles of wine. Dorothea, a Volunteer from Bavaria entertained us superbly on her accordian. Well done Dorothea!

On Sunday we joined the Savio Community for Mass. The theme of the Liturgy was Dance and the joy of living lives of “Dancing to the beat of His Heart”. Mass ended with Frs Bernard & Graham dancing down the aisle!!

THE R.A.L. (Regulations of Apostolic Life)



In the summer edition of our Newsletter, I commented on the draft proposals for a renewal of the Cooperators Regulations first written by Don Bosco in 1876.

The New Edition of the RAL is to be known as The Statute of the Institution, setting out the inspiration and basic aims of the Salesian Cooperators.

Since then we have also received the draft version of The Regulations of Implementation. As their name implies these are more technical and determine the way in which the Association is organised. It is a relief to see that they are translated in a much clearer way than the draft Statute.

It remains true that it is very important for all Cooperators to take an interest in this re-working of the RAL. It is meant to spell out and inspire us to follow a way of life. It is to be hoped that the Provincial Council will collect together the views of the different centres and forward them to the Central Council.

It is good that we can be inspired by the first Salesian Cooperator to be beattified. Blessed Alexandrina da Costa can be a model and she can help us with her prayers. We would also like to see Mamma Margaret being recognised in the Statute as Don Bosco’s inspiration and first Cooperator. She could be mentioned in the section dealing with the history of Don Bosco’s first work at the Oratory in Turin.

The written Rule is important. Give some time to reflecting on it and make your suggestions for its improvement. Much more important is the LIVING RULE that is expressed in practice by our way of life as Salesians.

Fr George Robson, SDB, Huyton Delegate, Liverpool