



SALESIAN COOPERATORS

U K PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

“Developing Our Mission with a Smile”

(Designed by Huyton Cooperators)

SUMMER 2007

Jesus

Others

You



MAMMA MARGARET'S ANNIVERSARY

During the weekend of 24/25 Nov 06, a party of nine Salesian Cooperators from Chertsey were privileged to be in Turin for the special celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Mamma Margaret's death. The group consisted of Ken and Barbara Greaney, Derrick and Margaret Hobbs, John Hoskins, Ray and Eileen Woolrich, and Brian and Pat Barnes. Readers will recall that Mamma Margaret had been declared 'Venerable' at the Vatican, just nine days before, on 15 November. The weekend celebrations were made even more special by that news, but the English group were just a little upset that the Pope had not waited until their arrival to announce the good news!!

On the morning of Sat 25th November we went to Capriglio (Asti Region), Mamma Margaret's village to witness the unveiling of a plaque in her honour and the official opening of a splendid new museum dedicated to her life. This was followed by three celebratory masses spread throughout that weekend. The first was in the parish church of Capriglio in which she was christened. The Rector of the Colle Don Bosco community, Fr Luigi Basset, welcomed the English contingent from the pulpit. He also welcomed another similar group of cooperators from the Czech Republic who had also travelled to be present at the celebrations.

On Saturday afternoon we visited Valdocco and enjoyed a visit to the Pignardi Chapel, the museum and Don Bosco's rooms. The tour was followed by the second mass, this one was in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, for and with the Valdocco community.

On Sun 26th November, the group made their way to Colle Don Bosco and revisited the Becchi and all the surrounding buildings. We were specially impressed by the wall filled with the Bosco family tree and also the new set of photos of the Rector Major's. That afternoon a superb professional choir of fifty voices gave a celebratory concert of selected songs and arias. The Bishop of the Diocese arrived to join the Colle Don Bosco community in the third great mass of the weekend.

On that day there was a big demand for the new figurine of Mamma Margaret with Don Bosco. Unusually for that time of year in Turin, the weather for the whole weekend was completely dry. We returned tired but blessed and privileged to have attended such great Salesian celebrations.

Pat & Brian Barnes, Chertsey

A Tribute to Margaret Connolly RIP



The Sunday morning mass at St Fergus' Church in Paisley on 25 March saw a wonderful gathering of the Salesian Family. It was the first anniversary of the death of Margaret Connolly, a great Cooperator and a very active parishioner. Margaret is fondly remembered by the St Fergus Parish Community and it was they who decided to obtain a statue from Italy of Don Bosco and have it put in place of honour in their church in the memory of Margaret. Fr Vincent Byrne, who has been in the Parish only two years, has seen that the influence of Don Bosco has been immense in St Fergus'. Devotion to the Eucharist and the Salesian style of living Gospel values has helped to form a strong and caring community. It was in this Parish that in 1969 that the Sisters established their first Scottish community and in time started a Cooperator Group. Since the last sisters left the Parish four years ago it is the Cooperators who are carrying on the Salesian work for the young with such enthusiasm.

The mass was attended by Sr Wilma, a member of the FMA Superior Council on official visitation as well as a good number of other sisters together with the Cooperators from Milton. Fr Bernard Parkes preached the homily and his predecessor as provincial delegate, Fr Bob Coupe, blessed the statue before folk made their way to the Hall for refreshments and to look at photographic displays of the Paisley Cooperators engaged in many activities.

Fr Bernard SDB

Sr Wilma FMA visit to Alvestoke

On 17 March 2007 Sr Wilma FMA, who was on a visitation from Rome to talk to each of the Salesian sisters, came to Alvestoke to visit and to meet Sr Mary Tracey FMA.

After her private visit with Sr Mary we had an enrolment service conducted by Sr Wilma. We had four ladies who became Salesian cooperators so increasing our numbers to fourteen.

We then sat down to a lovely three course meal when Sr Wilma talked about her life and experiences.

We are now looking forward to a visit from Fr Bernard Parkes, SDB in the near future.

Margaret Hobbs (Alvestoke)

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Fr Bernard visits all centres in the Province

The purpose of his visit was to highlight the skills and abilities required in those being nominated for the Provincial Council. Voting is to take place at this years Retreat weekend in Kendal. The present Council has requested as many cooperators as possible attend at least Saturday 20th Oct.

The theme of the week-end will be Spirituality, Prayer, and Action (SPA). The cost for the whole week-end is £80.



SALESIAN COOPERATORS



A word or two from Sr. Eileen & Fr. Bernard

As your provincial delegates we've been entrusted with the role of animating the cooperators throughout the country. As a practical step towards achieving this we thought we might use this newsletter and offer a regular page of reflection on something topical. So – here we are!

Uppermost in our minds at present are the forthcoming elections to the provincial council. You will remember we wrote a quite lengthy letter to you on this and Fr. Bernard explained the procedure to you when he visited your group, so there's no need to repeat all that here. We'd just like to urge everyone to pray about this renewal of the provincial council and consider nominating some suitable candidate (nominations in writing please to Fr. Bernard by July 31st).

You may be wondering, "what does the provincial council actually do?" The provincial council supports the local centres in various ways, including offering formation programmes, organising the annual retreat and other important occasions, building up bonds with the F.M.A's and S.D.B's and encouraging the members to be active and to be faithful to their calling.

We see these elections as a God-given opportunity to renew the council along the lines set out in the newly updated Project of Apostolic Life (P.A.L.). And in saying that we believe God gives this opportunity to all the members. We feel sure that we are standing at a turning point in the life of our province and all can play a part through discussion, prayerful reflection – and sending in their nominations!

Sr. Eileen FMA



SALESIAN SAINTS

ST MARY MAZZARELLO

Born in 1837 in **Mornese** in northern Italy, Mary came from a hard working peasant family. She was strong and hard-working. In her early twenties, while caring for family members during an epidemic of typhoid fever, she herself contracted the disease. Although

she recovered, she no longer had the strength to work in the fields and vineyards.

With her close friend, Petronilla, and guided by their parish priest, she set about learning dressmaking from the village tailor with the aim of setting up sewing classes for the local girls. Once their training was finished, they began their work for the good of the girls, teaching them a life skill and encouraging them to live their Christian life joyfully. She wasn't thinking of being a nun. She wanted a life consecrated to God while working for the good of the local village girls.

The parish priest introduced Mary to Don Bosco, whose work for boys in Turin was becoming well known. They recognised that they were kindred spirits. They possessed the same joyful optimism and were equally on fire with love for young people.

Mary agreed to be the cornerstone of a new congregation—the Salesian Sisters. They started in a new building in **Mornese**. It had been built to be a boys' school, so the parishioners were not too pleased to begin with, but were soon won over.

It was Mary's special calling to translate the Salesian Way into a life for women religious, creating a spirit of simplicity, joy and family that is known as the "Spirit of Mornese".

(With thanks to 'Salesian Footprints')



A Mothers Love

On 15th February 2006 a Catholic priest from Italy, Fr Andrew Santora, who volunteered to work in Turkey, was assassinated by a deranged young man whilst he was praying in his church. The man fired at the priest through an open window, shouting 'Allah is great!' Fr Andrew's parents are Salesian Cooperators of many years. His mother Maria now 88, was interviewed for the Jan 07 Italian Salesian Bulletin. Below is a summary of it.

Q. Please tell something about your Salesian experience?

Back in the sixties, work on the great church dedicated to Don Bosco at Cinecitta in Rome was nearing completion. My husband and I were both Cooperators and Fr Armand Butarelli, Provincial Delegate of the Cooperators, asked us, as members of the Provincial Council, to take responsibility for the formation of Cooperators. I think he felt we were a fairly level-headed couple who got on well with people and who had a knack for defusing potential dramas! This gave me a chance to meet some wonderful people—visiting their centres, taking part in their meetings and exchanging ideas with them.

I've been involved in Salesian ministry for about thirty years and been part of a team with two Salesian priests, leading retreats for Cooperators at Villa Tuscolana, and over a period of about four years I used to take poor children to summer camps along with one of those priests.

Q. Can you tell me why your priest son Andrew decided to leave Rome to work in a Muslim Country?

Andrew always wanted to be a missionary. The day he said his first Mass, he told me in confidence that his wish was to work in a country where they didn't have any priests. He said: 'People everywhere are children of God. We have to love them all, and they have the right to hear God's word'. I felt very proud of him with such missionary zeal, but at the same time I was very worried. If he went, would I ever see him again? Would any harm come to him? How would he manage so far from home and without me close by?

Q. After he went to Turkey, you kept in touch with him. Did he seem happy with the choice he'd made?

Very happy. I did let him know that I felt very anxious, but he told me not to worry. From then on I decided not to let on just how worried I was. I wanted him to be happy in what he was doing, and to feel that he had his mother's blessing.

Q. Your son's death was a great tragedy, even if also seen as a 'triumph' - a glorious martyrdom. Can you share something of your feelings?

What can I say? It leaves me deeply saddened. How can you describe the heart of a mother pierced with a sword. But I feel rather for the mother of the one who killed my son. They will say that my son is a martyr and hers an assassin, so I can only imagine the great sadness of a mother with such a son. I have felt, and still feel so much pain. I can only hope that my suffering will in some way serve the cause of peace in the World.

Fr Bob Coupe, SDB