



**SALESIAN COOPERATORS  
UK PROVINCE NEWSLETTER  
EASTER 2009**



Lay Salesian Cooperators live out the commitment  
and the Salesian spirit in their ordinary  
circumstances of life and work.



*Designed by Huyton Cooperators*



## The Salesian Family Link Group

The group was formed just over a year ago with the purpose of finding ways in which the various parts of the Salesian Family can work together in collaborative manner. This was a direct response by the UK Province to a specific request from the Rector Major, Don Chavez. The original name of the group as given by Don Chavez is "Consulta" but we felt that our current name, although longer, does describe our role successfully.

The group has representatives from the FMA (Sr. Kay Young), SDB (Fr. Brian McGraw), Past Pupils (Peter Hunter) and VDB (Ina Coles), as well as me representing the Cooperators.

Since the first meeting the group has successfully organised the Salesian Family Days in Glasgow, Bolton and Farnborough and circulated a survey to find out views across the Salesian Family.

We now wish to build on the successes of the previous year.

We are already considering the planning of the next day for the Salesian Family, and with the support of the FMA and SDB Provincials we are working to coordinate the major dates within the calendar. In particular we are exploring the best ways of ensuring that clashes are avoided when events take place and more publicity is given to Salesian Events.

The Salesian Family Link Group meets about four times a year, and always welcomes your view and thoughts on how as a family we can work better together. Further to that, we know that many of the initiatives will only come to fruition with the support, prayers and work of all members of the Salesian Family.

Daniel Sharp (Coordinator of Cooperators)

## PRAYER INTENTIONS

One of the most important and rewarding activities that a Cooperator can participate in is that of prayer. With this in mind, the Provincial Council is planning to start a new initiative, enabling us to share our prayer intentions and news. Eleanor Neeley, as many of you know, is a member of the Provincial Council. She has kindly offered to coordinate this new initiative.

Prayer intentions and other news, such as birthdays, anniversaries and similar occasions that you wish to share with the whole province can be sent to Eleanor at any time. Eleanor will compile a list which will be distributed to centres and Salesian Houses each month so that we can be reunited in prayer.

Where appropriate, Eleanor will also arrange for a card to be sent to individuals on behalf of the Provincial Council if details are provided.

Eleanor's details are provided in the Salesian Directory or Email [eleanorneely@gmail.com](mailto:eleanorneely@gmail.com).

*Daniel Sharp Provincial Coordinator*

## HUYTON COOPERATORS MARCH MEETING



At our March meeting having read an article in Don Bosco Link magazine about children being trafficked in Liberia and another one in 'The Red Dancer' in which the Youth Ministry want to collect 500,000 pennies to save the eyesight of 5 children in a developing country, I proposed to our group that we support both these projects. We decided that we would have a raffle to raise funds to send to the Don Bosco Homes in Liberia who are now looking after these children. I was also agreed we will be putting a large sweet bottle in the church porch to encourage all parishioners to contribute to this well deserving cause.

*Vera Dring, Huyton Cooperators*



## SALESIAN SAINTS

### ST JOSEPH CAFASSO

Turin, in the north of Italy, was an amazing place during the nineteenth century. It was a centre of political and national upheaval and at the same time it was the centre of an astonishing flourishing of holiness. It is amazing how many canonised saints we find.

ST JOSEPH CAFASSO was born near Turin in 1811 so he was only a few years older than St John Bosco (born 1815) but Joseph had an enormous influence on John. They met in 1827. John was only 12 and Joseph was starting his studies for the priesthood. The contact and the influence was to continue.

Soon after his ordination Joseph became the Rector of a College in Turin where young priests received further pastoral training. At the same time he was very active in the prison ministry and helped many condemned criminals in their last hours before execution.

It was Joseph who encouraged the newly ordained John Bosco to spend some time at the College and advised him on the path his vocation should take. Joseph allowed gatherings of youngsters at the College (to the annoyance of some of the priests!) and also gave John Bosco financial support. John Bosco's visits to prison (following the example of Joseph) convinced him of the need young people had of help and support from an early age to prevent them having to be in prison at all.

Joseph remained Don Bosco's confessor and spiritual guide until his death (aged only 44) in 1860. Don Bosco preached at his funeral and wrote his life story. In fact it is from Don Bosco's book that most of our knowledge of St Joseph Cafasso is derived.

At his canonisation in 1947, Pope Pius XII said:

***“He was chosen by God for the sanctification of priests. May he pray to the Lord for priests worthy of the trust of their people.”***

*Fr George Robson (Huyton Delegate)*

## SISTER AGNES' LETTER

Hello everyone!! I have just been looking through the summer edition of the Newsletter and read:

“Welcome to Sr. Agnes Mc Guinness who is our new F.M.A. Provincial Delegate.” ..... from Co-operators everywhere !”.

I am sure there are many of you who are wondering “Where is she???”

I am here in New mains, and would like to say a huge “thank you” for these words of welcome.....a bit late ,I know, but none the less, very sincere.

I have already had the privilege of visiting some of you in Huyton, Milton and Paisley ..... and meeting others at the Family Day in Easterhouse. I had a warm welcome from everyone, and it is great to feel so much at home with the Co-operators. Thank you too, to those of you who sent messages via the e-mail.

Since taking up my new role, in November, I have had quite a lot of contact with the F.M.A. delegates, and am really grateful for all the support they have given to me. I am especially grateful to Sr. Eileen who has given generously of her time and expertise. Thank you so much for this Eileen, and for all you have done over the years for the Co-operators.

I have spent quite a lot of time trying to acquaint myself with the Co-ops scene in the Province and have been very impressed with what has, and is being done. A very special thanks to each member of the Provincial Council.....they made me so welcome.

I look forward to working with them and hope I will be able to fulfil my role adequately. I will certainly do my best!!

I really look forward to visiting the various centres and getting to know all of you. In the meantime, I wish you a happy continuation of Lent and many blessing in the wonderful Easter Season. May the Risen Lord shine on you and give you, and your families, all that you would desire. You will each have a very special place in my prayers. Please remember me in yours.

Very best wishes.

Sr. Agnes.

## SPIRITUALITY DAYS

By Eleanor Neely

We were met in Rome by Fr. Bernard Grogan who promptly whisked us ( Tess John, Fr Bernard Parkes ,Jessica and myself) to the Pisana. It was a large building set in rows and rows of huge pine and olive trees.

The entrance hall was filled with people exchanging greetings and frantically sorting out accommodation—an incoherent babble of many languages united in joyful anticipation.

We found our rooms and then the dining room ,where we had delicious meals and then the lecture room.

Each day we all met for the lectures. ( OK so we don't really speak Italian but we had Fr. Julian Fox translating for us via our headphones !)

The lectures were very inspiring and thought provoking. We also all met together each day for Mass. One day I was asked to read at Mass and I can recall how awestruck I was at the beauty and holiness of the occasion.

But, please don't think life was all work and no play. In true Salesian tradition we had a concert of singing and dancing with talented acts from many countries. We presented the Rector Major with gifts from our Province.

Another night was spent in Albano, in the hills outside Rome. A lovely meal was followed by a brilliant musical based on the life of Don Bosco. I have a lasting memory of the Rector Major leaping about on the stage and waving his jacket with great flair to a standing ovation.

We will all have our own memories but let me tell you of mine. As an only child I used to pray for some brothers and sisters to make a big family, but the Lord did seem rather deaf. Many years later I have a husband, two lovely children and two grandchildren whom I love dearly.

Then what does the Lord send me but my Salesian Family, thousands of them, some who I have met in Rome.

Doesn't the Good Lord do things in His own time and way.

DEO GRATIAS

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### Welcome to little Evelyn Rebecca!!

Emma and Daniel Sharp would like to share with the Salesian Family the wonderful news of the birth of Evelyn Rebecca who was born at 1:24 on Sunday morning 22nd March.

Daniel writes "All three of us are well and full of joy, if a little tired! We would be grateful for all your prayers at this time".

## FORMATION

During my 40 odd years as a Cooperator I have served on many Cooperator Councils at various levels and in several different capacities. In all that time it has been my experience that the one post which no-one rushes to fill is the role of the Formation Councillor or Officer. Why? Well I guess one reason is that it is perceived as a very demanding role and one which most of us perhaps feel we cannot measure up to.

In general terms Articles 15 and 16 in the Regulations Section of PAL speaks to initial and ongoing formation issues and - providing you read through them quickly !- they do not seem too daunting . However, the real hard work commences when one applies oneself to addressing the "nitty gritty" and seeks to draw up programmes that are tailor made to the local situation. In the Salesian Family we possess a huge depository of "raw material" and it is easy to get overawed as we wonder where the starting point should be. At what level should I pitch the material ? What should be the logical approach and sequence? What MUST be included? What SHOULD be included? What COULD be included?

In my view there is a crying need to "flesh out" model programmes that can be used - adapted as necessary - by all Centres. However, I am equally sure that most Centres already have material and programmes which have been "worked up" and used successfully in the past. So why not share that material with others? We need to share and promulgate best practice.

How for example do you guide "enquirers" who join your group ? Let me share with you what we in Chertsey have done in this area. It is not the only way and perhaps not necessarily the best way - but it seems to work for us.

In August 2007 we hosted a Cooperators Open Evening - an event which we will be repeating later this year. The evening was attended by 30+ people of whom 14 subsequently took up the open invitation to join us at our monthly meetings on a "Come and See" basis. Over the ensuing year they were encouraged to experience and learn more about the Salesian Family through participation at our monthly meetings, feast day celebrations, attendance at the Provincial Retreat Weekend and liberal use of the Centre's modest library of Salesian literature.

In January of this year we have 9 of the original 14 who have committed themselves to attend a special "Enquirers' Programme " of monthly meetings (at which there are always some enrolled Cooperators to give and show support) where we tackle such subjects as Salesian Spirituality and Charism, PAL (an overview), The Preventive System and the Salesian Apostolate. In June we mount a pre-enrolment discernment prayer session and in July we will have an enrolment of those who decide to make the Promise.

What sort of initial formation does YOUR Centre offer the Enquirer? Come on ! Let us share experiences and ideas. What works? What doesn't work? We have much to learn off each other in the formation field.

Ken Greaney (Chertsey)



## FAMILY DAY at BOLTON Celebrating 150 years



The day began with an opening service of Welcome to all the Centres. We are grateful to Peter Hunter (Past Pupil) who led the day. He also gave an input on the 150 years of past pupils and how they spread the Salesian message and the variety of ways they support Salesian work.

The first presentation was from Fr John Dixon who spoke of the first Salesian vows. The determination of Don Bosco not willing to compromise on his vision for his mission of working with young people. Early on he recognised the need of working together with, not only religious but lay people too. Fr John emphasised the key message for us today is “however difficult, we are invited in a journey of love for young people”.

Sr. Pauline followed with the Theme from the FMA chapter “Working Together”. She spoke about how Don Bosco sowed the seed of a few priests and laypeople and boys, which 150 years on has grown to many throughout the world. She stressed that our mission with young people can only grow if we continue to Work Together.

Fr Michael Winstanley gave input from the SDB Chapter. He talked about the variety of Salesian works throughout the world. He informed us that the Rector Major want the period 2009 -2015 to be a time to renew and re-launch Don Bosco’s way of work/mission. A key aim is to start afresh which involves deepening our knowledge and understanding of Don Bosco, his history, his charism, his spirituality and system of education and marketing it throughout the world.

Daniel Sharp spoke on behalf of the provincial council to update us on the Provincial Plan which will be implemented over the next three years.

We ended the day in a practical way with Fr Dave O’Malley whose presentation included making Don Bosco’s hat!! Under the headings of Reason / Religion / Kindness where a number of questions we were asked to reflect on.

Mass was exceptional—made special by so many young people providing the readings, music, in particular the solo singers.

We would like to thank all at Thornleigh who provided the wonderful hospitality throughout the day—especially the pasties.

*June Sharrock (Huyton Cooperators)*

## COWLEY COOPERATORS

### Salesian Sisters Mission in Vietnam

On the 15th March, Cowley Co-operators hired a barrow and sold goods donated by ourselves and parishioners at the local shopping centre and raised £380.00 for the Salesian Sisters mission in Vietnam. In total we have raised £1,100.00 since we started fund raising in October 2008. Every month we hold a cake sale and sell cakes and marmalade (which is legendary) at the end of weekend masses. This is not a new initiative, we have been doing this for many years but just thought people would be interested to hear about our latest efforts.



The day started the night before when we took goods to the centre for storage and were then back again at 8.00am the following morning to set up the stall. Everyone contributed whether it was helping on the day, giving goods to sell or turning up to purchase (hopefully not what they had already donated). There was a lovely atmosphere, it was fun as well as hard work. Many parishioners came and other people stopped to talk to us, occasionally asking about the mission. We also had a £10 and £4 donation just given for our cause.

At the end of the day we went home with happy and fulfilled hearts. We were delighted with the amount of money that we had made. Over the next few months we will be fund raising for the Parish building fund, and I know that as much effort will be put in to this as it was for the Vietnam mission. A big thank you and well done to everyone.

*Chris (Cowley Co-ordinator)*