

Don Bosco

The Salesian Bulletin
Year 125
Issue 3
Winter 2017

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If there's a story you think we should be covering, let us know!



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"When we are about to do something let us see, first of all, whether it is for the greater glory of God. Having made certain of that, go ahead, do not hesitate for your work will be successful."

Don Bosco

Welcome to the winter edition of the Don Bosco Today.

I recently returned from a short visit to Gibraltar and got a huge shock when I realised that back in Manchester, the temperature was about 15 degrees lower than what I had just been enjoying . . . welcome home, I thought to myself, and welcome to the onset of winter; time to dust down the old winter coat.

The winter Don Bosco Today has a simple theme running through it—that of celebration. We feature a very interesting conversation with the headteacher of the Salesian College in Farnborough, the motto of which is '*Virtus Sola Nobilitas*' ('virtue is the only nobility'). Phoenix 2017 is packed full with fun and laughter. Clare, our reporter, even found herself running along pathways trying to get the 'right' shot to sum up the programme; 'Are you all right, Miss?' said one of the concerned youngsters!

Continuing the theme of celebration, we report back on fifty years of ministry and education in Savio Salesian College in Bootle, the Ordination to the Priesthood of Kevin O'Donnell SDB and the Final Profession of two of our Brothers in Battersea.

Have a look at #KeepingUpWithTheSalesians as Georgia reports back on the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the whole Salesian family across the world celebrated together as Pope Francis authorised the decree recognising the martyrdom of the Servant of God, Tutus Zeman.

You should have received the Salesian Calendar for 2018 with this magazine, and I hope it gives you much pleasure during the coming year—we are also very proud of our new children's Christmas book (a leaflet is

also enclosed). This is our first venture into the children's Christmas market and we hope that you get a copy and enjoy the wonderful story of Joel. Please pass on the word about the book, and remember to contact us if you need any more calendars.

As we start Advent, I want to thank you all so much for your support and prayers over the past year. Your generosity to our work is also deeply appreciated. And so, I want to wish you and all your family and friends a very happy and joyous Christmas when it arrives, from all of us here at Salesian Link and Don Bosco Publications.

**Deep in the night
the voice of the waves on the shore
announced to us: Christ is born!
Son of the King of kings
from the land of salvation,
the mountains glowed to Him,
the plains glowed to Him,
then shone the sun on the mountains high
to Him.
All hail, let there be joy.**

[Celtic Daily Prayer Book One]

Fr Bob Gardner SDB

Editor

Salesian Link

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On Saturday June 10, people from all across the UK came together to celebrate fifty years of Salesian education in Bootle, Merseyside.

15 Ordination to The Priesthood

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Everyone said that this trip would change my outlook on life. I got back a few weeks ago, and I have only just had the opportunity to process some of the things I experienced in Tanzania when I visited Don Bosco School, the Salesian school in Moshi.

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"I closed my eyes and did not dare open them again. As I sat in the place where Mary so readily agreed to do as God asked her, I was absolutely terrified of allowing myself to see what God might be asking me to do. 'Anything but a baby,' I thought..."

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On Saturday July 16, 2017, the Sacred Heart Parish, Battersea played host to the joyous occasion of the Final Profession of Brother Joseph Tran SDB and Brother Gregory Echegwo SDB as Salesians of Don Bosco in the British Province (GBR).

28 Titus Zeman—Salesian Priest and Martyr

Blessed Fr Titus Zeman was born in Vajnory, Slovakia, on January 4, 1915. He suffered with poor health from early childhood.

29 Arthur—A Parable for Young Adults

Once upon a time there lived a great spotted pig named Arthur. Arthur lived alone in an angry mess with only concrete walls to run against and waste food to wallow in.



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THE MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR
Don Ángel Fernández Artime

Having Deep Roots, Being Flexible, And Being Rich in What Is Essential

I shall never forget the wise life lesson which the fir trees
of the beautiful forest of Vallombrosa gave me.



My cordial greetings, dear readers, and all the members of our dear Salesian family. I wish to offer you in this issue of *Don Bosco Today*, a reflection that I made from a very concrete experience that I had recently—a lesson from nature.

In July I had the opportunity to spend a serene, peaceful week of spiritual retreat with the members of the General Council. We stayed at the monastery of Vallombrosa near Florence. It is a simple, austere place where one can find the beauty of nature 3,300 feet above sea level. It is a place that invites prayer; it is very cool, surrounded by thousands and thousands of fir trees—many of them more than 65 feet tall. It is one of the most important forest areas of Italy, for it breathes a lot of oxygen back into the atmosphere.

It was here that I learned a lesson in biology that left its mark on me. I noticed that those pine trees were very tall and stood very straight, but their foliage was very sparse with few branches and few needles. It is almost as if they have only what is essential to live and grow through the proper functioning of their leaves and cells.

I asked an expert about this, and he told me that those pine trees have three special characteristics: very deep roots, a very flexible trunk and a very small canopy (branches and leaves). The reason he gave for all of this made me marvel all the more.

The roots of these fir trees must be very deep to enable the trees to find moisture and water, most especially in the summer when the soil is arid due to searing temperatures, even in the mountains.

The tall trunks, many as tall as 85 feet, he told me, need to be very flexible so that they can sway when at the mercy of bad, windy weather. If they were stiff or rigid, if they lacked this flexibility—made even more critical due to their great height—they would easily snap in high winds.

Finally, having a very skimpy canopy is an evolutionary trait acquired to protect the tree during heavy snowfalls. If they were full, with many branches and leaves, they would break under the weight of the snow and put the entire tree in danger.

I was awestruck. Explained in this way, the reason for their structure was obvious. My thoughts turned immediately to us. I said to myself: what an incredible metaphor! What a life lesson from nature for us humans!

If we can learn how to live according to these three characteristics—roots, flexibility and lightness—we also may grow tall and straight and have endurance. With deep roots and a great inner strength that permit us to find the “fresh water” of serenity, calm and peace, even in difficult days or times that we really do not like, we will not collapse.

If we are able to be flexible in what matters and versatile when something important is at stake; if we can replace intransigence with dialogue, listening, patience and closeness born of love, we will not easily break.

If we truly seek only what is essential: what is authentic, what is absolutely necessary and what fills us the most, many other things will become totally relative, and we will feel fuller and richer—filled in every sense of the word.

It seems to me that this lesson taken from nature comes at a very opportune moment during this year in which we are inviting families to be schools of life and of love. The lesson is also valid for personal relationships, for the bonds within the home, for school

and education, and for the accompaniment of children.

Indeed, it is most fitting for our loving relationships and friendships, as well as being apropos for our work relationships. In short, it is right whenever who we are, how we are and how we develop and mature are in play.

I believe I will not easily forget this lesson whenever I contemplate a forest, especially one of tall and straight fir trees.

At the same time that I greet you all with cordiality, I invite you to marvel also at this delightful lesson from nature itself. What a beautiful footprint the Creator has left on it.

May you be happy!



“What a life lesson from nature for us humans!”

Fact File:

Salesian College is an independent Roman Catholic school in Farnborough, Hampshire, England. It admits boys from the age of 11 to 18, and girls in the Sixth Form.

Motto: *Virtus Sola Nobilitas*
(Latin: "Virtue is the only nobility")

Founded: 1901

No. of students: ~640

Headteacher: Mr Gerard Owens

GCSE Results (2017): 99% gained 5
A*-C/9-4 grades inc. English and Maths





I am in the countryside, about an hour outside of London and I can hear no traffic. It's strange. Being guided by two sixth-form students, hundreds if not thousands of faces smile back at me from the walls: year picture after year picture form a corridor of history dating back decades.

It's a week before the summer break, there's an airy atmosphere as the school's mechanism begins to slow, and the boys showing me around have been told to meander, "Mr Owens is [still] a busy man, don't you know!" I'm told with a grin. As I'm taken around the school, I'm told of myriad school trips, annual pilgrimages, Don Bosco Day celebrations, masses, parties, prayers and exams (of course). After seeing old buildings, new buildings, curious students, excited students and hungry students, I arrive back at the reception desk, and am promptly greeted by Ged Owens, headteacher of Salesian College, Farnborough, an independent boys' secondary school and mixed sixth form. Sitting down in his office, I, being the consummate professional, begin in the most obvious place, "So, how did you get here?"

Ged smiles and recounts a moment of divine intervention, or at least, divine coincidence. He'd been working as a deputy head at an academy in Lewisham, South East

London, and, after a particularly challenging day, he happened upon the 'Times Education Supplement'. Although not looking for a job, he flicked to the jobs section and spotted a vacancy for a headteacher's position at a Salesian school in Farnborough. Deadline: three days. And that was that!

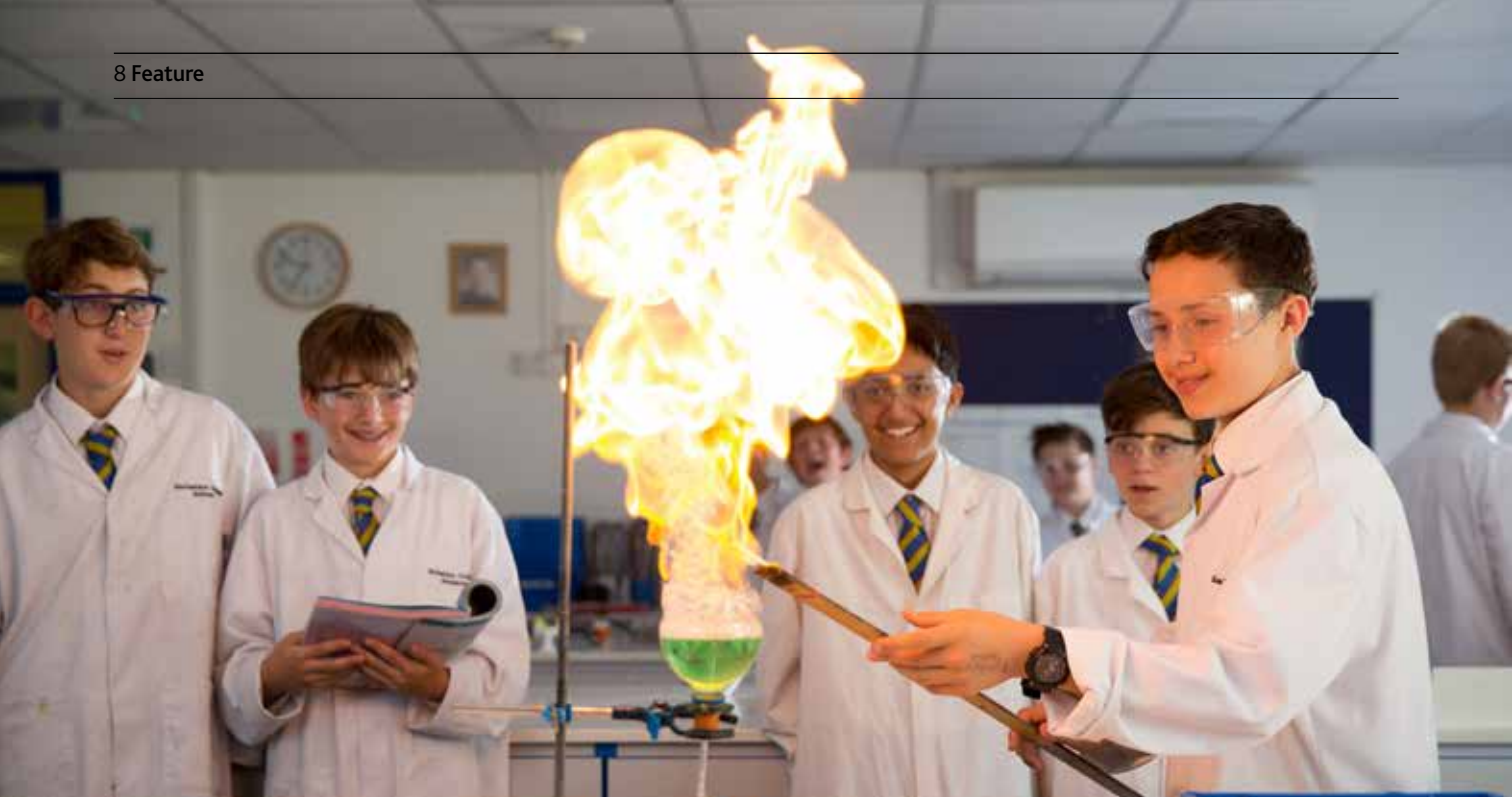
Thinking back, Ged tells me his first encounter with the Salesians happened several years earlier when accompanying a student from Lewisham to their work

experience placement at the Bosco Centre, Rotherhithe. In addition to seeing the amazing practical and pastoral work that goes on there (see DBT Winter 2013), he recounts having, "The most amazingly wonderful chat with this dynamic nun." She was the late Sr Cecily Dunn, an enigma of a woman whose devotion to the young was nothing short of inspiring.

On telling Sr Cecily of his Catholic background, she asked, "So what are you doing there if you're one of us?" And, unbeknown to him at the time, it is this notion of returning, of coming back, that would lead Ged to Salesian College, Farnborough.

"One of the benefits of being a Salesian headteacher is coming with the experience of somewhere different," he tells me. Prior to working in Lewisham, Ged had worked at only Catholic schools; he recalls having to resist the urge to make the sign of the cross at one of

One of the benefits of being a Salesian headteacher is coming with the experience of somewhere different



his first assemblies, adrift from the usual proceedings, but cites this, the opportunity to teach in a completely different environment, as integral to his personal and professional development. He describes getting the job at Farnborough as somewhat of a “homecoming”, a moment of recognition of what he had been missing, and a new-found appreciation of the Salesian charism, characterised by the students’ knowledge that, “More than anything else, they are known and loved.” And this notion of love, in all of its visceral and profound manifestations, was even remarked upon by an Ofsted Inspector, who, quite unusually, admitted they were struggling to fit that specific word into their report, lamenting that, “It’s not really a technical term, but you can really feel it as you walk around the school.” His identity as a Catholic *and* as a Salesian, Ged argues, allows him the, “Immense privilege to use the word, ‘love’, in a very un-mushy, profoundly correct way,” and thus the inspector’s appraisal seems only too appropriate.

Speaking of his time in Lewisham, Ged refers to the faculty’s “inability to support each other,” and to recognise “a spiritual dimension” of life, citing an example of a staff bereavement, which many struggled to deal with. In contrast, he sees Catholic education as providing and supporting not just a *sense*, but an *actual* spiritual, physical and emotional togetherness. In testament to this, he cites the fact that, despite 60% of the school’s intake not being Catholic, “almost all will identify as Salesian,” because they feel like they belong in this community, regardless of their faith. He sees this as intrinsic to Salesian practice

“Everybody knows everybody, and what you [parents] are actually looking for is a sense of community that means your son is not lost.”

and endemic of Salesian Schools across the country—networks, he says, that provide support, friends, and “a common basis from which to work,” and this aligns perfectly with what Sr Cecily told *me* was her main aim as a Salesian Sister back in 2013: to “create family.”

Speaking of community, Ged muses on Salesian College’s status as a fee-paying school—unlike the other Salesian schools in the UK. He suggests that many people choose fee-paying schools because “it’s grander, it has bigger things,” however, he points out that actually it’s the opposite: “We’ve got 640 students. Everybody knows everybody, and what you [parents] are actually looking for is a sense of community that means your son is not lost,” something that is only reiterated by the immense sense of heritage celebrated by the school almost everywhere you look. In stark contrast, he notes that many state schools are facing cuts, and often when funding is allocated, it is done so with the aim of maximising size and not

necessarily the standard of learning, the cohesion of the school community or investment in the pastoral well-being of students in mind.

Using this as a convenient turning point, I confront what I would term, ‘the elephant in the office’: is there not an inherent tension in having a *Catholic* Independent school? Are we not taught to be preferential to the poor, rather than paying for education that is universally available at no cost? I put this to Ged, and his response is comprised of several elements:

"First and foremost," he says, "our Church actually offers a lot to human creation because it's got a special message to us of salvation." He recalls a conference he once attended, particularly one of the questions put to the delegates, 'Can we end world poverty?' This question, huge as it is, is interesting as it poses further questions on both a macro and micro scale: there's the 'we' of us as individuals, the ones who get up each morning and bemoan our aching legs, then there's the larger, collective 'we': communities, countries, humanity. "If somehow, *we* did manage it," Ged continues, "would that then render the Church surplus to requirements?" Realising this was a rhetorical question, I let him continue and he goes on to describe the Church not just as a spirituality based in charity, although this is obviously integral, but "it is a message to all people in all places at all time ... it's much more than just an economic situation".

Picking up on the notion of teaching social justice to students, Ged asserts, "It's not right to teach social justice to the poor and ignore the rich. If you're going to change the world," he says, "it's all people." He makes the point that instilling the value of social justice becomes more pointed in an independent school because, sad as it may be, they are the ones perhaps more likely to be in the position (at least financially) to help do something about it. Referring back to the argument that Catholic education and independent schooling are somewhat disparate, Ged envisions a lamentable world, "Where rich people go away without having a conscience so they can carry on screwing the poor". With this in mind, he sees it as one of his responsibilities to ensure that the young people in his school are *aware* of their privilege, making a point of posing the question to them, "How do you make the world a better place from your privileged beginning?" Furthermore, he speaks of the transcendent power of the Salesian ethos: it is about the meaningful interactions between people, and between a person and God. "The setting," he argues, "is almost immaterial. Just because this is what we might term a 'privileged'

setting does not heighten or denigrate the importance or significance of spiritual and social education." I am reminded of the idiom, 'better the devil you know' at this point: Ged is arguing that it is much better to be able to influence those with privilege, rather than to completely ignore them in favour of only serving the poor. Consolidating this, he suggests that, "Maybe it would be a good situation if there were no private schools in the country, but there are..."

It is also important to dispel the stereotypes often associated with those we loosely refer to as 'privileged'. Although conceding that many of the families whose students attend Salesian College are very affluent, and thus having to pay school fees is not a big issue, Ged emphasises the individual circumstances of each child, their background and their financial situation. He highlights that some families make huge sacrifices in order to finance their education, and that many attend because they have been awarded scholarships. He also goes on to broaden the idea of private education, drawing a comparison between

'leafy suburb' culture where families may pay a considerable sum of money in order to move into a particular catchment area and gain a coveted [state] school place, and that of independent schools where fees are paid termly. Both, he suggests, involve financial investment in education, but one is often seen

as indulgent and elitist, whereas the other an unfortunate reality of the application process.

Acknowledging the inherent "iniquity" in our system of education, he reiterates the importance of an independent school, and specifically a *Catholic* independent school, ensuring that students, "Leave the school aware that they have a responsibility to the world, an awareness of themselves as unique creations of God." This notion is particularly interesting given that the majority of students at Farnborough are *not* Catholic; however, the charitable and altruistic sentiments underpinning Catholicism are evident in many of the school's endeavours, such as their 'Share the Light' charity that sponsors education for young people in the city of Joy in Zambia. In addition to myriad other bake sales, sponsored runs, etc., each year *every* student in Year 12 is expected to go to Lourdes with The Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) and, even though many of those will not be Christian, Ged attests to the success of the trip, saying that it, "Creates a dynamic whereby people understand ... that there is something about the world that is spiritual." In addition to encouraging bonds between sixth-form classmates, this trip encourages students, regardless of faith, to question their spiritual identity in an environment of openness and discussion.

We are about a Catholic way of teaching, not necessarily a teacher of Catholics





It's worth noting that, in the context of a discussion largely based on the various manifestations of *difference*

—rich/poor, Catholic/non-Catholic, Ged, time after time, keeps going back to his time in Lewisham and to his mantra at that time: “God made them all!” This cuts through the lines of differentiation and promotes the common humanity between us all. Confirming this, he describes how he has come to the realisation that, “We are about a Catholic way of teaching, not necessarily a teacher of Catholics,” and this is

integral in how we position the school in the context of the wider Salesian Mission: it is not a factory for young Catholics, but a school intent on helping to produce young people who are aware of their spiritual identities, their obligation to society and those less fortunate, and are prepared for what life may throw at them. Students’ aforementioned sense of specifically *Salesian* identity is telling, and this is testament to its ability to not just coalesce with its Catholic roots, but to grow its own and speak to all people about all things. As Ged declares, “There’s something in the simplicity of our messages, of the profound humanity of our experience, that is beautiful to behold.” I have found this personally evident universality applicable across the Salesian presence both nationally and internationally, and this, too, is evidenced in the practical application of the Preventive system, “a real straight-forward” method of adaptation, rather than reaction.

A school intent on helping to produce young people who are aware of their spiritual identities, their obligation to society and those less fortunate, and are prepared for what life may throw at them.

As we begin to run out of time, Ged recalls an episode of ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ where a celebrity traces his family back his great-great-grandfather, who had been a Methodist minister and a deputy headteacher. They visit the place where his school had been, and find there is no trace of it—it has been long since demolished. They visit the chapel that he had preached in, where he had warned against the demons of alcohol, and they find that it has been converted to... a Wetherspoons. Irony aside, this illustrates Ged’s overarching point: when the physical has gone, when the students have left the college buildings behind, all that matters is the people they have become. It is about the values they hold, the opinions they share, and the principles by which they choose to live their lives. “*Da Mihi Animas*,” he recalls, with a wry smile.

Farnborough Salesian College is unique in our province because it represents the only Salesian independent school. Despite me using this as a point of difference, what strikes

me is how incredibly similar it is to every other Salesian institution I’ve come across. Yes, students pay for their education and yes, many of the students here are probably very wealthy; however, that’s not to say that the poor or less fortunate have no presence. Students’ dedication to charity is unerring, their hospitality and friendliness is remarkable, and their ‘Salesian-ness’ is undoubted. Just as Ged’s appointment

as headteacher felt like a homecoming, the school helps to develop young people who, regardless of faith, will feel at home in the Salesian community, taking our values and practising them as their lives progress. As Ged suggests, perhaps it would be much better if there were no private schools, but there are. And because there are, it’s probably best to be a Salesian one.

Sam Legg





Phoenix 2017

Summer is a lively time for Salesian Youth Ministry (SYM) as they deliver projects and activities for young people during the holidays. This year, I went to see what goes on at the Phoenix Summer Camps, and I had almost as good a time as the young campers.

Phoenix Summer Camps aim to give an active holiday to young people in need of a break. Each year, several schools bring ten Year 7 students each, along with two members of staff, to make new friends and enjoy fun indoors and out. They learn more about cooperation, support each other and share prayer together—all in Salesian style.

The camps are planned and led by the Salesian Youth Ministry team, with support from additional volunteers, and 'base camp' is Savio House, the Salesian youth retreat centre in the Cheshire countryside. From here, trips to other locations add to the huge variety of activities the Phoenix programme offers, including swimming in Stockport and fairground fun (with fish and chips of course) in Blackpool.

This summer, two Phoenix camps in July and August hosted sixty young people from six schools. The first camp overlapped with both the Rise Young Leaders' camp for Year 11 and 12 students, and the new Young Adult Programme (YAP), which offers preparation and a taster to those considering joining the Savio House team in the future. This was planned to enable the older students to gain skills and experience from supporting the team animating activities on Rise and Phoenix.

I spent a day with the first of the Phoenix groups as they took a trip to the banks of the River Mersey, near Stockport, for a day of exciting outdoor activities.

At 10:30 on the dot, minibuses arrived at Burnage Rugby Club bringing Year 7 pupils from Thornleigh Salesian

College, Bolton; Our Lady's Catholic College, Lancaster; and St James' Catholic High School, Cheadle. Unfortunately, at 10:35, the blazing sun hid and the rain poured down, but the high spirits of the youngsters could not be dampened!

Team leader Jessica speedily arranged the young people into three groups to take part in a range of activities, which were provided by Venture Out.

Several sets of mystifying apparatus provided devilishly tricky tasks for team-building exercises, as groups competed to carry a wobbly ball on a plate through ropes that frustratingly seemed to snare an unwary team member just as the end was in sight—putting them right back to the start!

Over at the archery range, some of the young people hit the bull's eye, but even those who were off-target enjoyed what, for almost everyone, was a totally new experience.

On the River Mersey, getting into the canoes down the steep river bank was the first challenge. Then, the groups had to paddle upstream to the weir and turn their craft around for the easier trip back downstream, before learning some fancier manoeuvres.

Chatting to the young people over lunch, I asked what they had enjoyed most about their week so far. The previous day's trip to Blackpool was top of everyone's list, with Tuesday's water activities at Savio House coming second, along with that day's canoeing. Many of the young people told me they were really enjoying meeting people from other schools and making new friends, and I had already been struck by how

well students from the three schools were mixing and getting on with each other.

During the camps, Savio House is transformed into the amazing Land of Phoenix, a realm where knights, kings, princesses, lords and ladies roam in full regalia, along with the odd dragon. In a land like this, the possibilities are endless, but the ground rules, the leadership and the chivalrous atmosphere ensured that whatever happened, we were all steeped in courtesy, kindness and good humour.

I entered this magical land on the first full day of the second camp to see what went on when everyone was settled at base camp. The three schools taking part were The McAuley Catholic High School, Doncaster; All Saints Catholic High School, Sheffield; and Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Ellesmere Port. The Phoenix team was joined by Theresa, Moses, Theo and Chloe, who had taken part in YAP the previous week. You can find out more about them and the YAP on our website.

The day began with morning prayer, which the Ellesmere Port Catholic High School students had prepared with guidance from the Phoenix team. The themes of cooperation, care and kindness were evident from the start.

The ice was broken with a few jokes. My favourites were: "What you get if you cross an owl with a skunk? Something that stinks and doesn't give a hoot!" and "I'm reading a book on antigravity: I can't put it down!"

John, the team leader for this camp, focused attention on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians that love never gives up. As a model craft heart was passed round for all to decorate,

he encouraged everyone to think of little acts of kindness they could carry out to show more love to people, adding to the heart during the week whenever they felt anyone had shown love to them. He stressed the importance of being a team and helping each other to be caring.

The tranquil mood changed after prayer when the thirty Phoenix campers were put into their groups and, working with team members, they came up with a group name and a lively chant to motivate each other. Then, the newly-named Savio Snakes, Crazy Kids and Dragon Slayers set off to begin the first of the day's activities. The challenges included constructing an apparatus to protect a dragon's egg, which had to be launched in the air to test it (some eggs were broken!). 'Drunk football' is one of the funniest things I've ever witnessed: the teams worked in pairs with one of each partner wearing vision impairment goggles as the other talked them through kicking the ball past Br Joe the Jester in the goal mouth.

After a break, the young people were encouraged to talk about the things they had learned from the activities, and how they had recognised the different talents each of them had that could be used by the group as a whole. The overall conclusion was that the best resource a group has is its own members, so making sure everyone has a chance to use their talents is the best way to succeed.

The afternoon session got off to a quiet start, but soon there was drama, as Auntie Bernie, one of the school staff, seemed to have been mysteriously poisoned, and we were all sent off in groups on a series of quests to find the ingredients for an antidote. These included a strange version of chess where



the rest of the team had to give instructions to help another member beat the dragon across the board. The quests took us through the grounds, up and down hills—and at one point, the group I was with was sadly thwarted by some curious cattle with a worrying glint in their eyes.

Fortunately, the ingredients were found in time to revive Auntie Bernie, though most people were showered with the potion as well.

After such an energetic afternoon, something more relaxing was called for, and John led a session on the importance of names and symbols, explaining the crests and logos of the three schools and the Salesians of Don Bosco. Everyone was invited to create their own heraldic shields for the doors of their rooms, using pictures and words that described important aspects of themselves and their lives.

The entertainment continued with a demonstration of a traditional Belgian dance, which everyone then tried out—with pretty hilarious results. And finally, it was time to go outside to where Fr Roman had prepared the campfire. Sue and the rest of the team led everyone in some terrific campfire songs, and marshmallows were toasted and eaten with chocolate biscuits. The day came to a close with the Goodnight given by the volunteer, Moses.

I'm still impressed by the spirit I found among the young people, with little things like the way each of them thanked Fr Roman as they left the campfire, and the young man who waited down the hill for me to catch up, and asked, "Are you okay, Miss?"

The teachers and chaplains I spoke to felt Phoenix was a great boost to their students' confidence and self-esteem, and made a noticeable difference to how they worked with and valued others.

I'm so proud to be part of a Salesian Province that has such dedicated, experienced and professional youth leaders and volunteers, who relate to the young people they support just as Don Bosco wanted, and were happy to give up some of their summer holiday to make sure sixty young people had an experience they will treasure for a long time.

It was a tremendous privilege to spend time at the Phoenix Camps, so thank you to the SYM team, the staff from the schools, and of course, to the Phoenix campers!

For young people who've been having a bit of a tough time, Phoenix provides fun and friendship and the chance to develop their social skills and teamwork. Sue and the Youth Ministry Team are always keen to hear from more schools who would like to be part of the Phoenix Camps. If you'd like to bring a group or become a volunteer for next year's camps, contact her on sue@salesianyouthministry.org.uk

Clare Lewis



SAVIO SALESIAN COLLEGE

CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF MINISTRY AND EDUCATION

On Saturday June 10, people from all across the UK came together to celebrate fifty years of Salesian education in Bootle, Merseyside.

In his homily, the Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP, praised the work of the Salesians especially in the field of education: "Don Bosco founded a group of people to be alongside young people ... being with young people at every stage of their life ... as our Gospel today (the Emmaus story) makes clear. This accompaniment of young people enabled Don Bosco to draw out of them the gifts that God gave them, so that they can be the people that God wants them to be."

The gifts during the offertory procession were led by the head boy

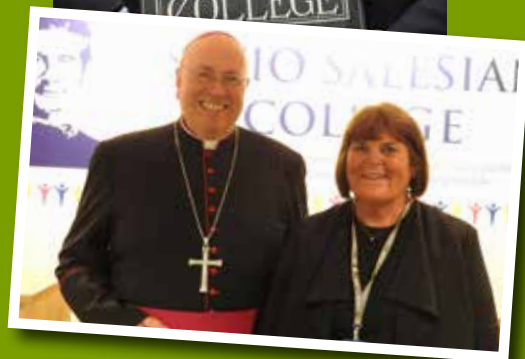


bringing the Shield of St Martin's College, a distinct reminder of where the Salesians arrived 50 years ago; a photograph of the student chaplaincy, carried by the head girl; and a copy of the Salesian Constitutions.

The college choir, in their uniforms, led the congregation in singing, and they performed several pieces immediately after the Mass had finished, as the archbishop blessed the refurbished College Chapel. A statue of Dominic Savio, a gift from the Province, was also blessed.

Under a splendid marquee set up in the college gym, a wonderful buffet was served to all the guests.

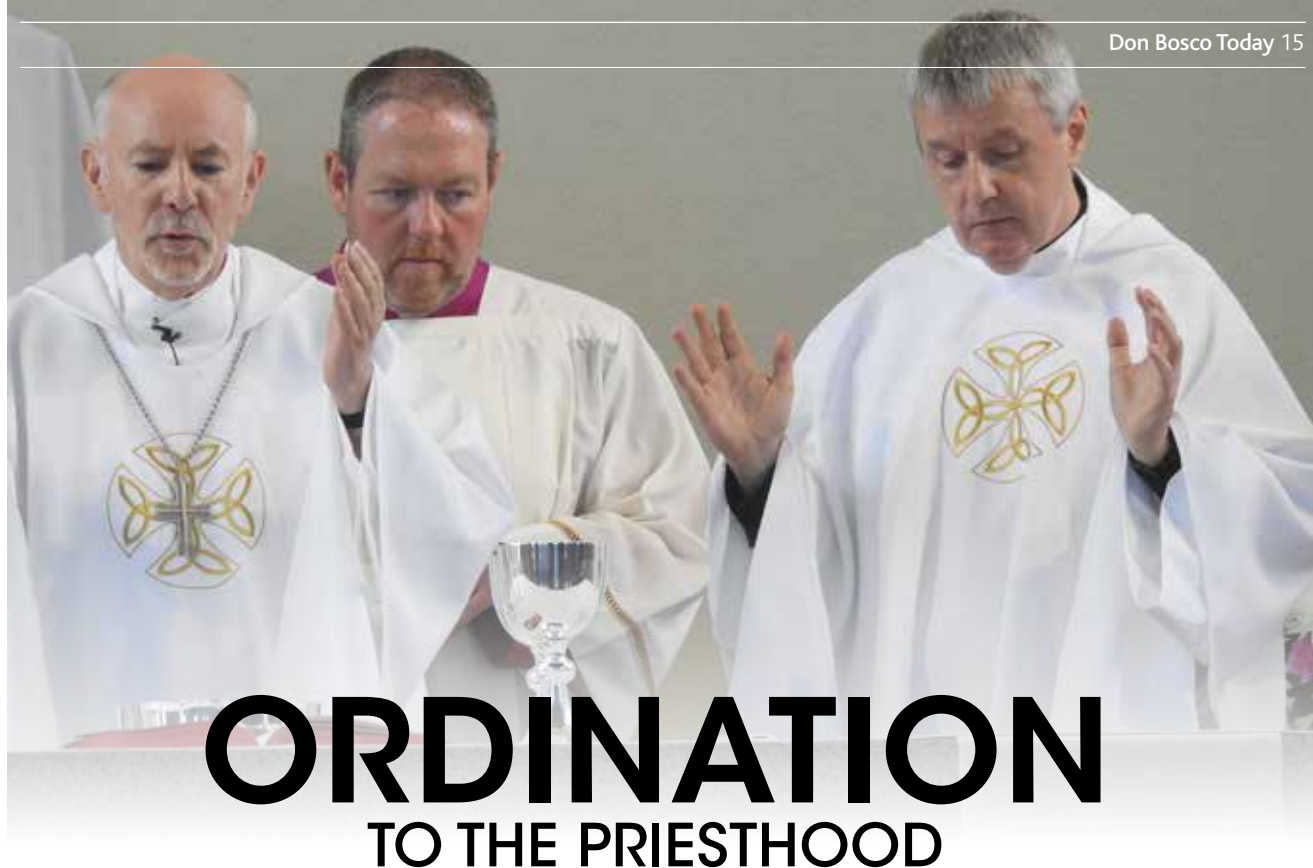
After lunch, there were a number of speeches recording fifty years of ministry and education. The former MP of Bootle, Joe Benton, led the tributes; there were contributions from the Provincial, who had been the headteacher for 10 years; and other



SDBs recounting many stories, as well as anecdotes from staff and pupils, along with votes of thanks. With thanks to all for a wonderful celebration, and an especial vote of thanks to the former executive headteacher, Mrs Frances Harrison.

Salesian Link





ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

On Saturday June 17, 2017, in the Parish Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, East Kilbride, Scotland, our brother Kevin O'Donnell SDB was ordained to the priesthood by the Right Reverend William Nolan, Bishop of the Diocese of Galloway.

In the presence of his mother, sister and brother, Fr Gerry Briody SDB (Provincial) and supported by his Salesian family, Kevin promised to:

- discharge the office of priesthood as a worthy worker of the Order of Bishops;
- exercise the ministry of the Word worthily and wisely, preaching the Gospel and teaching the Catholic faith;
- celebrate faithfully the mysteries of Christ handed down by the Church, especially the sacrifice of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- to pray constantly for the people entrusted to his care;
- to be united more closely every day to Christ the high priest.

Finally, Kevin promised obedience to those in authority in the Salesian Congregation.

This joyous occasion was celebrated by many friends, family and parishioners in the congregation in a church beautifully prepared with displays of

flowers. The Province was particularly blessed by the presence of Fr Tadeusz Rozmus SDB, Councillor for the Region of Central and Northern Europe, who flew in from Rome to join us.

In his homily, Bishop Nolan reminded Kevin about the care a shepherd must have for his sheep, and that people should not meet a 'grumpy priest' even at 2 o'clock in the morning!

A reverent silence descended on the congregation as Bishop Nolan called for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as he laid his hands on Kevin's head. Fifty priests followed the bishop in laying their hands on Kevin's head as they prayed for him and his ministry.

At the end of the service, Bishop Nolan politely spoke directly to Kevin, offering him 'a parish by the sea' if he was ever looking for a new job ...

We thank God for his blessings on our Province and the joy of a newly ordained priest. Kevin has now taken up his ministry in education in the Salesian School at Chertsey.

Salesian Link







“ Fall seven times,
stand up eight.” ”

Stephen Bush



Educational Strategies

DON BOSCO STYLE

Everyone said that this trip would change my outlook on life. I got back a few weeks ago, and I have only just had the opportunity to process some of the things I experienced in Tanzania when I visited Don Bosco School, the Salesian school in Moshi, to support a project to enhance school leadership and teaching and learning in mathematics and science.



During our time there, we had the opportunity to meet with leaders from various Salesian schools to look at strategies that have helped Thornleigh Salesian College to improve, which we feel could be transposed to the Tanzanian (Salesian) system.

In addition, our science and maths teachers taught topics that had been identified as areas of importance by the staff at Don Bosco School. I had the opportunity, along with Alison Burrowes, the headteacher at Thornleigh Salesian College, to meet with other Salesian school leaders. I spoke to all students about the importance of education and staying focused, and we even got the opportunity to speak to the Director of Education for West Tanzania, who was very interested in some of the strategies that we shared in the sessions.

So did it change my outlook on life? First, no matter where you go in the world, and I have been lucky enough to visit Salesian schools in many places, the young people very quickly feel familiar and it feels like you have known them for years. The atmosphere in Salesian houses and schools is also something that has a commonality. It is hard to explain, but I always feel the same welcome and spirit when I stay with Salesian hosts. So, in this sense, working with Salesian children and colleagues was second nature to me, and I quickly adapted to meeting the students and to getting to know some of their stories. I suppose the real 'outlook-changing' experience for me is when you venture beyond the walls of the school. Walking along roads formed from dust, you encounter Tanzanian people who live in conditions that you perhaps teach about but never expect to witness first-hand. Families live in small shacks with basic, or no, amenities, and they often share these structures with several family members. Even in such cramped and impoverished conditions, it is almost impossible to find a family who will not smile and welcome you as you approach them. They will share anything that they have, and they present themselves

immaculately for Church each Sunday morning to express their faith with great pride.

As 'first timers' to Tanzania, my teaching colleagues and I ventured out with sweets and balloons to distribute among the children that we met on the streets. One of the most enduring memories, and indeed an 'out-look changer' for me personally, was when we gave two siblings a red balloon on a Saturday morning. Their faces lit up and they instantly began playing. On the following Tuesday, as we travelled to a meeting, Alison Burrowes and I saw the same children playing with that red balloon; with smiles on their faces, they were oblivious to the poverty that we are so aware of around them. It made me think of some of the gifts that my children receive at Christmas that are resigned to a redundant pile by the New Year. Luckily, we had travelled with a Polish Salesian Seminarian who has volunteered at Thornleigh Salesian College for the past academic year, Brother Krystian Lapinska, who took some amazing photographs to preserve the events that we were blessed to experience.

Having taught RE for 16 years, I have stood in front of thousands of students and spoken about the developed and developing world divide. I recall getting a very good lesson observation judgement once while using Christian Aid's 'Trading Game' resource, and then keeping that lesson as one of my golden resources. Working in Tanzania gave me the reality behind the messages that I have delivered for so many years. You can walk in thick dust on makeshift roads,



treading carefully and being wary of the hazards around you, only to walk around a corner and encounter the breathtaking sight of Mount Kilimanjaro rising from above the clouds. An abundance of natural resources stored like treasure are worthless to the Tanzanian people, and so they allow developed nations to mine their resources in return for cash and infrastructure such as roads and industry. We took some fantastic photographs, but they will not do justice to the first-hand reality and the fine detail that the naked eye witnesses. The glistening ice at the top of a mountain and the river, fed by the melting ice from Mount Kilimanjaro, that precedes the view, rich with green vegetation and the main source of fresh water and cleaning facilities for most people in Moshi villages. Such grandeur and beauty set in a place of extreme need and poverty; those images will stay with me for a lifetime.

So, what did we achieve in the eight days while we were away? Our Salesian vice-provincial, Fr Bob Gardner SDB, accompanied us on the visit, and his presence brought great joy and honour to the Salesian community in Moshi. Our key host, Fr Vincent Makoyo SDB, had visited England a few months prior and explained the importance of the partnership between the schools. We share the same goals in England as in Moshi: we want to do everything that we can to ensure that young people have the greatest possible life chances provided to them via a first-class education and the support that comes with the Salesian approach. To this end, it was my pleasure to help to unpick with colleagues both the Salesian models of 'Home, Church, School and Playground'



and the RUAH (respect, understanding, affection and humour) principles that underpin life in Salesian establishments. It was clear to see that these elements were fundamental to the work of the teachers in Tanzania, but quite often, colleagues do not name these aspects or celebrate them as core Salesian values. This provided us with an opportunity to remind staff of the teachings of Don Bosco and to allow them some time to reflect upon how they display these values and provide a home, a playground and a Church for students to accompany their formal education.

Every two years, Thornleigh Sixth Form supports schools, clinics and orphanages in Tanzania by fundraising to send a group of students over to work in the area for just under one month. Each Thornleigh student raises money to take part in this project, and we are currently recruiting for the next group who will travel over in 2018. As we toured the grounds of Don Bosco School, Moshi, we were mobbed by students who wanted to know where our students from the previous visit were. They recalled lessons that our students taught, time spent talking and laughing and, most importantly, a legendary football match between staff and students of Don Bosco School versus staff and students of Thornleigh Sixth Form. The hard-fought match ended with a Thornleigh victory, two bloody legs for Fr Bob and a promise of a return match when our next group of students visit in the summer of 2018. In addition, our students taught in local primary and secondary schools, volunteered at a local clinic and spent a week decorating rooms in an orphanage. I often speak to the sixth form students at Thornleigh about this project, having never personally





been to Tanzania. I can now talk with experience and passion about the life-changing work that takes place there every two years. Our teaching partnership is now growing rapidly thanks to the support of an organisation called PiXL (Partners in Excellence), who are currently working with other schools in Tanzania and have now offered funding for over 40 schools in the part of the country that we work in to take advantage of PiXL initiatives and strategies that can be shared at regional meetings. In this sense, we are looking forward to going back over soon to present to more school leaders. Don Bosco said that “It is not enough for a child to be loved, they must know that they are loved”. Our hope is that some of the work that we are sharing with colleagues in Tanzania will help students to develop on an individual level; no student will be left behind and more students will be able to access post-16 education that could be transformational to their lives and the lives of their families.

It was not all just work though. We did have the pleasure of visiting a national park and the world heritage site, the Ngorongoro Crater. The ability to observe God’s creation in all its splendour, moving from a herd of wildebeests to a pride of lions, turning a corner and witnessing a giraffe eating from a tree and a leopard relaxing on a branch, really did offer those ‘numinous’ moments that alert you to the presence of something greater than yourself. As we journeyed back to Moshi on the Friday night to fly home, we arrived in the school community at 6pm. Despite it being the start of term, the end of a full week of school, having little to eat and lacking energy, at least fifty students were still in the school grounds playing traditional Friday sporting activities. Smiles beaming across faces, friendships clear to

see, with a true Salesian ethos alive and well thousands of miles from here. Even though we have never met Don Bosco personally, in those moments, we know we are walking side by side with him and continuing his legacy each day.

Tonino Passarello



In the footsteps of Jesus

(#KeepingUpWithTheSalesians)

I've been struggling with faith for quite some time. I got to a point, during Easter 2016, where I decided to take a break from faith. And so I did. It just so happens that while taking this break, I moved in with nuns, trained to be a Religious Education teacher and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.



Saturday 27th May

I set off for Savio House to meet fellow pilgrims ahead of our journey to the airport. I was nervous, excited, but most of all, I was praying for a miracle. Surely a pilgrimage to the Holy Land would provide me with some kind of giant spiritual experience that would conquer all my doubt? Surely! I arrived at Savio House to find pilgrims throwing out clothes to make room for holy souvenirs. It wasn't long before we made our way to Manchester Airport listening to my 'pilgrimage' playlist, which only consisted of one song, 'Lighthouse' by Rend Collective, much to the disappointment of my fellow travellers. We met the rest of our group at the airport, and everything went without a problem until we landed at our stopover in Paris. After spending eight hours walking 11,000 steps in the 33-degree heat of the Charles de Gaulle airport in search of food, I was fairly grumpy. This stopover really made me question my decision to come on a pilgrimage. 'Only another 6 days of this...'

Sunday 28th May

We flew through the night and arrived in Tel Aviv at around 5 am. We were greeted by our wonderful tour guide Bassam, and we began the journey to our hostel in Nazareth. The early start showcased the most beautiful sunrise—although this was perhaps wasted on most of us as we were catching up on sleep lost during the flight. Our hostel was directly opposite the Basilica of the Annunciation, where the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus. Some of us were blessed enough to have a room looking out over the basilica.

I can safely say that it was not a blessing from 6 am the following morning when the bells began to ring approximately every eight minutes. After recovering from our night flight, we headed straight out into Nazareth to begin our tour. Bassam walked us around the local area showing us the Greek Orthodox Basilica of the Annunciation built around a spring from which it is believed Mary was drawing water at the time of

her visit from the angel Gabriel. We were able to spend a great deal of time exploring the Roman Catholic Basilica of the Annunciation before Fr Jakub Ruzniak celebrated our first Mass of the pilgrimage.

A moving moment for us all: our pilgrimage had officially begun in the place where it all started many years ago.

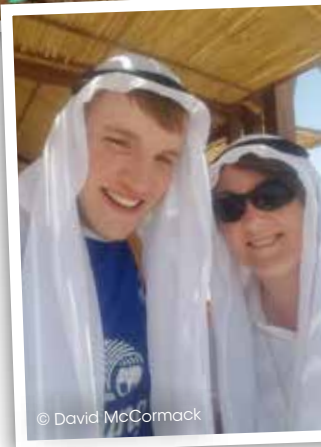
One of the more subtle moments of joy followed this experience as we visited the Salesian community in Nazareth. As we were being given a tour of the school and church, it became apparent that there was going to be a wedding there at some point that day. While we were all slowly meandering around the church, obviously taking various selfies with statues of Don Bosco, the groom was growing impatient right behind us. The

wedding was supposed to be happening there and then. We

were quickly escorted to a balcony around the side of the building, which allowed us to see the most spectacular views of Nazareth. At this moment, much to the surprise of the Salesians of Nazareth (and probably the wedding party), we decided to burst into a quick verse of Martin Poulson's anthem 'Friend of the Young.' This was not the only time that we would burst into song during the week.

I returned to the basilica that evening and found myself entirely alone in there. I closed my eyes and did not dare open them again. As I sat in the place where Mary so readily agreed to do as God asked her, I was absolutely terrified of allowing myself to see what God might be asking me to do. 'Anything but a baby,' I thought.

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© David McCormack

Monday 29th May

Our first port of call was the beautiful Mount of Beatitudes situated close to the Sea of Galilee. As you arrive, you walk past a small flow of water with a sign that says 'Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as scripture says, rivers of living water flow from within them.' Absolutely beautiful—we'd better go and have a drink. Thinking I might even experience the miracle I had hoped for, I was about to drink the living water! Alas, upon approaching the little spring, another sign told us that this water is not for drinking. It wasn't going to be as easy as I'd hoped.

A particularly busy day on our pilgrimage saw us in the place where Jesus fed the 5,000, and where the more recently discovered Magdala Synagogue is situated. There, we met a fantastically energetic tour guide called Mary. When she recognised the logo on our shirts, she told us that she'd fallen in love with the Catholic faith when she met the Salesians of Don Bosco: a sentiment that I certainly share, even in times of great struggle.

Next was our boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus walked on water and preached many times. We were given time to reflect silently on where we were and what we had seen so far. The engine of the boat was switched off as we sat on still waters and soaked up the atmosphere (and the sunshine). Before too long, as with any Salesian gathering, we were up on deck dancing, singing and enjoying the experience together.

After lunch, when some people had braved trying 'St Peter's fish', we headed to the Church of the Primacy of St Peter before going for a paddle in the Sea of Galilee. While praying inside, I was again afraid to hear what God might be asking me to do. In addition, I also felt a little redundant. Peter is the rock on which Christ built his Church, Mary is the Mother of God, and I am ... mainly just a little confused. We continued to Capernaum where we celebrated Mass

before heading to the River Jordan to renew our baptismal vows together. During the ceremony, I remembered my baptism that took place in my secondary school chapel in 2010 and how my faith journey had developed from there. I was particularly grateful to be able to renew my baptismal vows with a group of people that have sustained my faith even in the most difficult of times.

Tuesday 30th May

We experienced what could only be described as 'Alton Towers on a budget' as we drove in small vans up to the top of Mount Tabor, the place that we assume the transfiguration took place. The scary ride up was easily balanced with the peace we met at the top. We were looking over vast areas of land, admiring the view when, all of a sudden, out of the corner of my eye, I could see something shining bright in the light. I assumed that the Lord was gracing us with our own personal view of the transfiguration. Finally, the miracle I was hoping for! I turned around expecting to see Jesus in clothes as white as those washed with Daz, accompanied by Elijah and Moses. Yet my hopes of another miracle soon came crashing down again. I realised that all I had seen was the sun reflecting off Sue McDonald's bright white shins as she was putting on some sun cream! With no miracle in sight, it was time to head to Mass. Someone decided it was necessary to belt out a verse of 'Days of Elijah' which, again, appeared to be ill-received by the pilgrims in the main chapel.

Today we were heading to Jerusalem but not without stopping off at the Mount of Temptation and the Dead Sea. When we arrived at the Mount of Temptation, we found a few little shops and a few large camels. Funnily enough, some of us were tempted to go on a short ride before we continued on our way to the Dead Sea. Our tour guide told those of us at the front of the bus about the dangers of being in the Dead Sea, while those of us at the back of the bus were taking bets on who might not float in the water (I had 10 shekels on it being Siobhan Garth). Floating in the Dead Sea was a strange but welcomed experience. The post-swim shower situation was a very strange encounter that was



© Dan Antonio

not in any way welcomed. It gave those of us unfortunate enough to have been in attendance at World Youth Day last year shudders to see the lack of privacy. Due to this shock, we settled for a restful evening when we arrived in Jerusalem.

Wednesday 31st May

The next morning, we started off with a visit to the site of the Ascension and the Pater Noster Church, where Jesus gave us the 'Our Father'. We hadn't managed to stick to many of our prayer times as scheduled in our pilgrimage handbook, but it seemed especially important to get this one in. We stood together and prayed the 'Our Father' in the place it was first received. It's hard to fully comprehend where you are on a trip like this, but this moment hit home a little more easily than I had found in other areas.

A splendid walk down the Mount of Olives towards the Garden of Gethsemane gave us a spectacular view of Jerusalem. Upon reaching our Mass slot in the Garden, the mood changed. We had a chance to reflect on Jesus' time in the garden on the night he was betrayed. "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). It was a particularly poignant moment for most people on the trip as we celebrated Mass in the Basilica of Agony. How often have we wanted God to take away our cup of suffering? How often have we been able to keep sight of God's will, even in the face of this suffering? I had run away from faith at the first sign of trouble, so I found this moment particularly moving. As someone so incredibly stubborn, I have not always been open to God's will, and this certainly doesn't make for an easy relationship. Yet in this place, I felt more connected to God than ever before. In all my doubt, suffering, stubbornness and reluctance, God was slowly opening my eyes, heart and mind.

We stayed around the area for a while, visiting the tomb of Mary among other things, before visiting the Salesian University in Ratisbonne. While there, we managed to meet up with a few old friends and make a few new ones, then headed back to our hostel for a free afternoon. A large number of us sneaked out to take part in a 700-year-old pilgrimage tradition: getting a tattoo! An everlasting reminder of our trip to the Holy Land, the people whom we journeyed with, the places that we'd been and the experiences that we'd had. I tried to explain that to my mother upon returning home, but she was largely unimpressed when I showed her the little Jerusalem cross that I now have on my left ankle.



Thursday 1st June

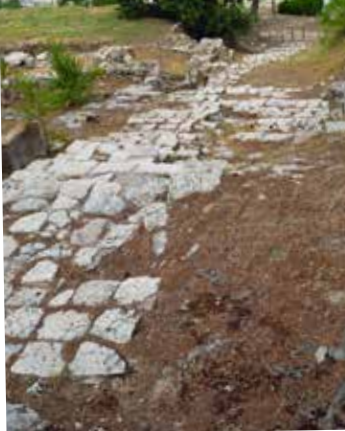
Day 5 saw us start at the Church of the Visitation in Ein Karem. Our tour guide had suggested we had rather a large climb facing us before we arrived at the Church of the Visitation, but if pregnant Mary could do it, then we were sure we could give it a good go. Just to be on the safe side, we prayed the rosary together as we ascended up to the church. Fr Jakub led us in a beautiful Mass wearing a rather exotic blue and gold chasuble with the image of Our Lady embroidered on it. A young woman, who had been in there praying at the time we started our Mass, stayed with us. We did what Salesians do best and welcomed her joyfully to our celebration. If she's anything like me, you're stuck with her forever now. Afterwards, we managed to find another Salesian community to visit, and this one produces wine. Yes, you read that correctly, THEY MAKE WINE. Your move, UK province; your move.

We continued to the best lunch of the week before stumbling across the Chapel of the Shepherd's Field, which has amazing acoustics. Our music maestro, Daniel Antonio, led us in a few verses of 'Taste and See' before we officially signed a recording contract with the hope of releasing our first pilgrimage album in July 2018. Watch this space.

In the afternoon, it was time to visit Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity, where Jesus was born. It was undergoing refurbishment and was distinctly busier than anywhere we had been previously, but the experience was just as meaningful. One of the side chapels had a sign stating, 'We are hoping that if you enter here as a tourist, you would exit as a pilgrim. If you enter here as a pilgrim, we hope that you exit as a holier one.' I'm unsure what I was to start with, but I would certainly be leaving the place with a different understanding of my faith, for the better.

Friday 2nd June

The final day of our pilgrimage was here, already. We had packed so much in, but it felt as though we had been there for no time at all. We started at the Holy Sepulchre, which was only a short walk from our hostel. We had to queue for our final Mass of the pilgrimage at the site where Jesus died. Although it was a solemn occasion, Fr Jakub reminded us that there could be no resurrection without death. As we waited to pray at the place where the crucifixion took place, a priest decided to fill up the oil lamps above our head. This involved forcing a ladder between us all and then dubiously dangling a six-litre bottle of oil above us. Even this huge distraction couldn't dampen the atmosphere. Well, it did a little, but all that was to be forgotten when we placed our hands at the place of the crucifixion. Afterwards, we congregated as a group and walked the Way of the Cross, praying at every Station. Some streets were busy and crowded, but again it would have been difficult to detract from the experience we were having. We moved slowly through to the place where Jesus was buried and lined up solemnly to enter the tomb to pray. Once you reach the place where Jesus was laid to rest, you meet a small man who taps on the wall to indicate that your time by the tomb was up. I worked out that he didn't have a strict timing system but gave people approximately 6 seconds to get in, kneel and pray, which roughly corresponded with him taking crisps out of the bag next to him and eating



them. Time was of the essence. Although faced with another reasonably funny distraction, we were able to focus on where we were and what we were seeing, with no consideration of the distractions until afterwards. Surely we had seen it all? No. Not yet! We wandered over to the place where Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper and the Church of the Dormition before heading to the Western Wall.

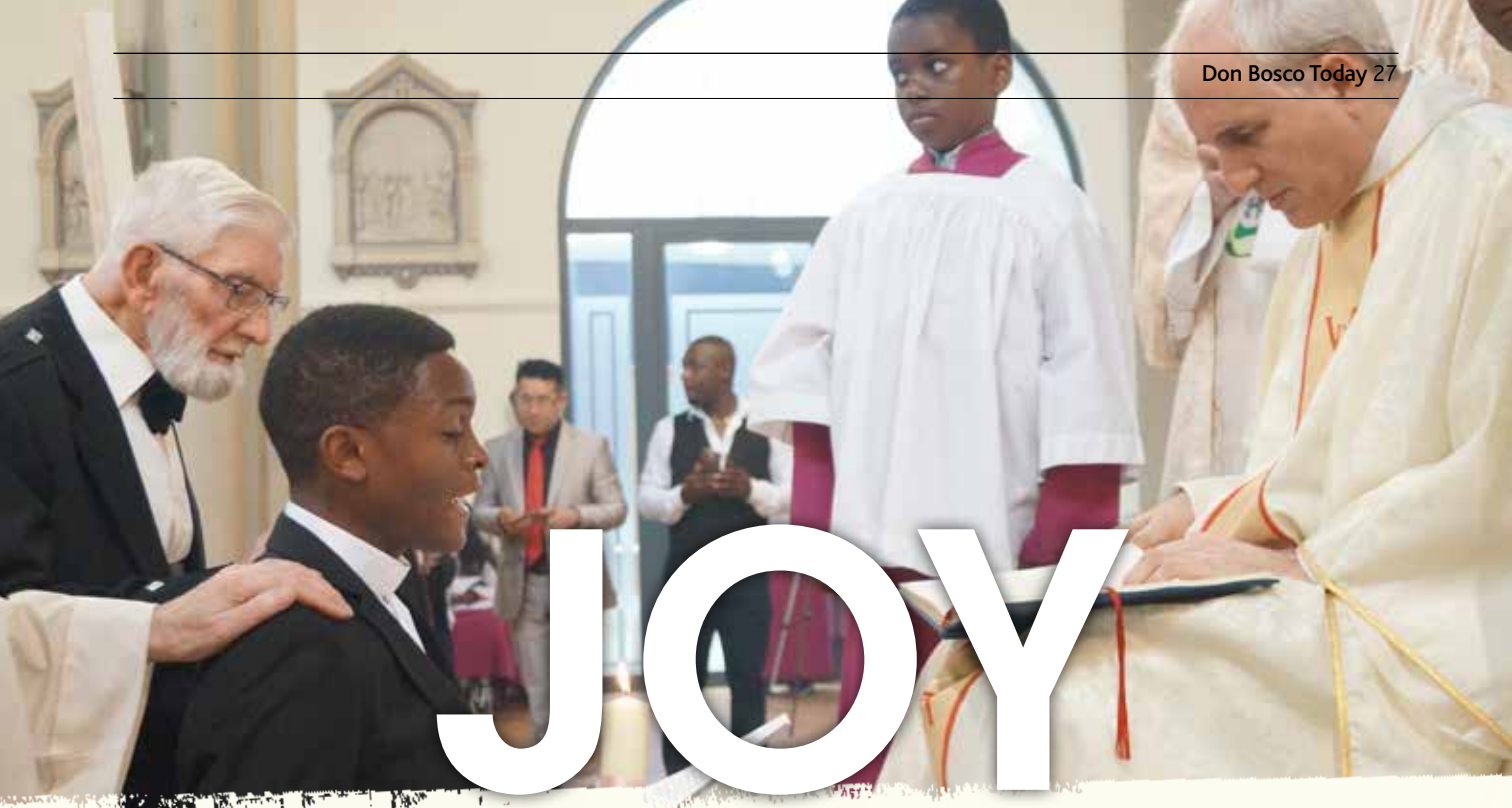
And with all that done, our pilgrimage was over. What an experience. I haven't been able to share every moment with you, otherwise you'd find yourselves as tired from reading it as we were when living it! We had done so much in so little time. It's hard to sum up in words exactly what it meant, and that, of course, will be different for all of us. The pilgrimage

I am still struggling, but I have come to see that it is virtually impossible to take a break from faith when you are called to be a follower of Christ.

did not offer me the giant miracle I so desperately sought at the beginning of the week, but it did provide me with a profound spiritual experience—one that will take many weeks, months or maybe even a lifetime to process. I am still struggling, but I have come to see that it is virtually impossible to take a break from faith when you are called to be a follower of Christ. I am eternally grateful to all my fellow pilgrims, who made the experience so meaningful, especially to Sue, Fr Jakub, Fr Bob and Dan, who organised such a wonderful week, and to those who led us in the tradition of Salesian Goodnights. To all those in the Salesian family that have welcomed me since my arrival in 2014, I thank you for sharing joy and laughter, for walking with me in the difficult times and for reading these soppy articles that I write. I am renewed in faith at every encounter.

Georgia Knowles





OF FINAL PROFESSIONS

On Saturday July 16, 2017, the Sacred Heart Parish, Battersea played host to the joyous occasion of the Final Profession of Brother Joseph Tran SDB and Brother Gregory Echeowo SDB as Salesians of Don Bosco in the British Province (GBR).

In the presence of Fr Guillermo Basanes SDB, the General Councillor for Salesian Missions, taking the place of the Rector Major, Bro Greg and Bro Joe made public their desire to be Salesians for the rest of their lives, taking the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

Surrounded by over twenty fellow Salesian priests and brothers, there was a spontaneous outpouring of joy as they received the crosses signifying their Final Profession.

Music for the celebration was provided by the parish musicians (plus a few additions!) and the church was full of parishioners singing God's praises at the witness of these two young men

placing God at the centre of their lives in a very special context—that of Salesian religious life.

Bro Joe and Bro Greg were joined by members of their families, members of the Salesian family and many friends on their special day.

The parish priest, Fr Gerry O'Shaughnessy SDB, spoke to the many young people in the church asking them directly whether God was calling them to the religious life and priesthood.

Our Provincial, Fr Gerry Briody SDB, welcomed Fr Guillermo in Spanish, much to the delight of the international gathering (Fr Guillermo being a native of Argentina).

After the ceremony, the celebrations continued in St John Bosco College with a very fine buffet presented by the parishioners of the parish.

The Province is very grateful to the Rector, Fr Tom Williams SDB and the local community for hosting such a glorious event.

Bro Joe and Bro Greg both came from their home countries of Vietnam and Nigeria to the British Province as part of the Congregation's 'Project for Europe'—and we give thanks to God for his continued blessings to the Salesians of the British Province.

Salesian Link



TITUS ZEMAN

SALESIAN PRIEST MARTYR



Blessed Fr Titus Zeman was born in Vajnory, Slovakia, on January 4, 1915. He suffered with poor health from early childhood. After a sudden recovery from an illness at the age of 10, he promised Mary to “be her son forever” and to become a Salesian priest.

He became a novice in 1931, made his perpetual profession in 1938 and was ordained in 1940 in Turin. In April 1950, the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia banned religious and began deporting many of them to concentration camps. To enable young religious to complete their studies, Fr Zeman organised expeditions to pass them through the Iron Curtain to Turin, but on his third venture in April 1951, he was caught.

In February 1952, Fr Zeman was condemned to twenty-five years in prison. He was forced to endure long periods of isolation and to work with radioactive uranium without any protection. In 1964, after experiencing thirteen years of torture and hard labour, he was released early but never recovered from his ordeal. It wasn't until 1968 that he was granted permission to publicly celebrate Mass.

His poor health after his prison release contributed to his death in his home town on January 8, 1969. He was revered for his holiness and his martyrdom.

The testimony of Fr Zeman is the incarnation of Jesus' vocational call and pastoral guidance for young people, especially for young Salesian confrères, which became his true passion. He once said, “Even if I lost my life, I would not consider it wasted, knowing that at least one of those I had helped had become a priest in my place.”

The diocesan inquiry started in the Archdiocese of Bratislava February 26, 2010. On February 27, 2017, Pope Francis authorised the decree about the martyrdom of the Servant of God Titus Zeman.

Fr Titus Zeman was beatified on September 30, 2017 in Bratislava in the presence of the Rector Major.

Almighty God,

You called Fr Titus Zeman to follow the charism of St John Bosco.

Under the protection of the Help of Christians he became a priest and teacher of the young.

He lived according to your commandments, and was known and loved by his people

for his warmth of character and readiness to help anyone.

When the Church's enemies suppressed human rights and freedom of faith

Fr Titus did not lose courage and persevered on the way of virtue.

For his faithfulness to the Salesian vocation

and his generous service of the Church he was imprisoned and tortured.

He bravely resisted his torturers and was humiliated and laughed at for it.

He suffered everything for love and in love.

We ask you, Almighty Father, to glorify your faithful servant so that we may be able to venerate him as a Saint.

We ask you this through Jesus Christ your Son, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Help of Christians.

Amen.

Salesian Link

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ARTHUR

(A Parable for Young Adults)

Once upon a time there lived a great spotted pig named Arthur. Arthur lived alone in an angry mess with only concrete walls to run against and waste food to wallow in. To Arthur, surrounded by grey walls and grey skies, the outlook seemed totally bleak and empty. Each day unrolled with a thud as his chute opened and food slid down a chanel into his trough. Today, rain splashed over his ears mixed with his tears and ran off his nose into his food. It was not a good day.

It wasn't easy to look Arthur in the eye because his long floppy ears fell right over them. On one ear, the right one, there was a black spot that made Arthur look cute and even attractive. But Arthur felt neither cute nor attractive, in fact he felt fat and forgotten, and, for all that he ate most of the day, Arthur felt quite empty inside.

One thing that Arthur liked best of all happened in autumn. He often got turnips to eat during autumn and he saved them until night-time when he would roll them up and down the channel. When he nuzzled them up and down

the channel for no reason at all, it felt good, and deep inside him there was a silent chuckle. Each time the turnip danced around at the end of his nose, the chuckle got stronger until Arthur's side began to ripple with private mirth.

But that was in autumn and Arthur had not seen a turnip since Christmas, three months ago. The spring sunshine pushed its way into Arthur's sty, and Arthur lay warming his bristles and smouldering with boredom. He heard the chute clang, although it wasn't time for food, and with a mighty effort Arthur lifted his right ear to look. There was no food at all, so he dropped his ear and exhaled wearily. He heard his breath echo off the concrete walls and he sighed again. This time, there was no echo. He held his own breath and waited, and then he heard it: a breath like his own but different! Something had come down the chute and was IN the sty.

Arthur sprang into immediate action and shut both eyes tightly. He needed to think. This 'something' had come down the chute and it wasn't food, it was alive, like him maybe! But maybe this thing wasn't like him at all but horribly different. Arthur lay and thought of all the ways this 'something' might look, then he decided that it was probably even worse, so he

continued to lie still. Suddenly his sty, once so safe and so boring, had become an arena in which life and death might have to be fought out. He thought of the years past with no exercise and the folds of fat that lay around him like icing on a cake, and Arthur groaned inside.

Eventually, fighting back the fear that glued his eyes together, he looked out from under that spotted ear and saw ... Well to be honest he didn't see, because there was nothing there! Arthur felt foolish and relieved at the same time and was just about to get angry with himself when he heard the 'something' again! There was a 'something' there, but you couldn't see it. Arthur blinked and looked some more. No, the sty was definitely empty but a presence was breathing IN the sty, not an echo, not anything at all but 'something' was there.

Arthur groaned; this was worse than he could ever have imagined. How can you fight an invisible foe? He had imagined great toothed animals with red eyes, or jelly-like slimy things with sharp nails. This was worse than them all. You could tread on it and not know; it could creep up on you and frighten you. Arthur didn't know if it was fat or thin, long or short. It was as totally strange as anything he had ever seen, or not seen before!

All day Arthur lay in the corner, grabbing what sunlight he could to keep him from shaking with the icy fear he kept inside. Even when the food came, he didn't move; he just opened one eye and stared. He was petrified because every time he breathed, the 'something' breathed too and it was very, very close. As darkness fell, the ache in Arthur's stomach grew stronger, and it eventually spurred him into action. He stood on shaky legs and looked around him in the gloom. There was nothing to see, but Arthur summoned all his courage and spoke into the air.

"Who are you?"

"You're hungry," a voice said, "and your cold. Why don't you eat?"

"Because I'm scared of you," Arthur blurted out. "I can't see you, I don't know where you are."

"Do you know where YOU are?" asked the voice in gently reply.

Poor Arthur couldn't answer, because he'd never been anywhere and had only seen grey walls and grey skies. This 'something' was cleverer than he was and he felt even

more scared. So he ignored it, just walked over to his food and began to munch. But the 'something' followed him and seemed to settle down by his side, content to wait, but what for?

Eventually, Arthur stopped eating and looked around. Maybe, he thought, with hunger gone 'it' would disappear too. But no, there it was regular as clockwork, its every breath mirroring his own. Arthur sighed; he couldn't pretend any more. This was new and it wasn't going to go away.

"How come you've got no body?" Arthur jabbed the question into the air on his right.

"I think you've got enough body for both of us." And as it spoke the 'something' chuckled and it seemed to Arthur that he had heard this 'something' before.

"Everything's got to be seen or it's not real. Even pigs know what much," said Arthur, almost pleading.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," said the 'something'.

"Well of course you wouldn't," Arthur snapped, "or you'd be nothing."

"In that case," said the 'something', "you are now talking to nothing and maybe you're going mad."

Arthur thought hard in the silence that followed. This was a very clever 'something' and he was scared of it. Yet there was a good feeling when he talked. He hadn't really talked properly since he was a piglet and he remembered now that he liked to talk.

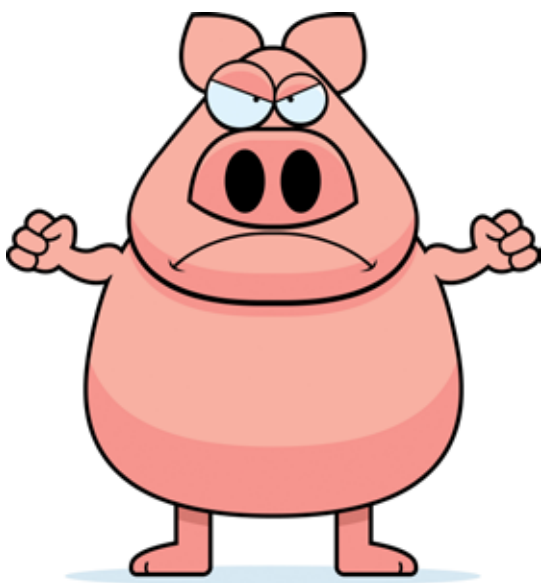
"Where do you come from?" Arthur asked more gently.

"Nowhere," replied the 'something', "I've been here all the time."

Arthur shuddered. Somehow he knew that it was true, and yet he did not want it to be so. It meant that all those years wandering around in the sty, moaning and groaning, lying bored to death in this corner, all that time this 'something' had been there, silently watching. Arthur began to realise with

**If you want to get out,
and be as free as you
want, you must learn to
establish trust...**





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horror that here was something that knew all about him, could look into him and see through him. It was no use pretending. Strangely enough, that thought made Arthur more relaxed. He gave in and slumped down next to the trough. It was not that the 'something' was cleverer than Arthur but that it seemed much wiser and more relaxed. Arthur knew now that he needed to know more. So he began to ask questions slowly at first then faster and faster until the 'something' chuckled again and asked him to slow down. Sometimes the 'something' would laugh at Arthur and say he was asking the wrong question but generally Arthur got good quick answers. He had never thought so much in his life!

The 'something' told him he was on a farm and that the sounds he could hear were other animals just like himself. Perhaps one day he would meet them. Suddenly, Arthur's sty changed in his own mind; from a safe place, it became a prison. In his mind, full of anger again, Arthur imagined himself charging at the door and breaking out. He told the 'something' what he wanted to do and even began to jig about ready to attack the door.

"No, no," said the 'something', "that won't do. It was your own anger that put you in this solitary sty years ago before you can remember. You have to find a different way."

"I am not angry!" snapped Arthur. "It's my right to come and go as I please!"

The 'something' said nothing to that outburst and Arthur felt

ashamed. Eventually the 'something' said: "If you want to get out, and be as free as you want, you must learn to establish trust with the rest of the farm."

"What's trust?" asked Arthur, sighing, "I've never heard of it."

"It means recognising the goodness and wisdom in others and relying on it," said the 'something'.

This was a lot for Arthur to take in so he thought about it, but still it made no sense.

"Tell me again, please," said Arthur, "What is trust? I must be very stupid."

"No, you're not stupid," said the 'something', "You just live in your own little world and it's impossible to learn trust without letting others into your world."

"So I'm never going to learn!" cried Arthur with mounting desolation.

"It's up to you" said the 'something'. Arthur was about to protest but the 'something' continued:

"Outside this sty, in a big green field, there are twenty others just like you. Just before midnight, one of them will come to your door and open it. It can only be opened from the outside. If you are brave enough, you can get out and meet them, but

you must leave your anger behind and always be back when your food arrives each morning."

Arthur couldn't believe it. After all these years this is what he had hoped for. Yet until this moment he didn't know it.

The 'something' somehow nudged him inside his head, "Remember that if you want to continue to go in and out, you must try to understand and trust others. If you continue to be angry and

hopeless, then you will have made your own prison."

The 'something' paused, "It's up to you Arthur to learn to trust and build friendships that will set you free. Remember I am always with you and with everyone you meet; we can always talk".

With that the 'something' went. Like a bubble bursting, it had gone.

But, as the moon rose that night, Arthur was standing by the sty door with confused feelings of anticipation and disbelief. For hours he stood staring at the door until a cloud lifted off the moon and the door clicked and silently swung open. Arthur gasped at the ordinariness of it all, and with a trusting heart walked out into a new life.

Fr David O'Malley SDB

You just live in your own little world and it's impossible to learn trust without letting others into your world.

“

When you compare
me to another child,
you lose sight
of the child I am.
I am uniquely me
just like you are
uniquely you.

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