

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SALESIAN FAMILY



DON BOSCO TODAY

THE SALESIAN BULLETIN • YEAR 116 • ISSUE 1 • SPRING 2008



BOSCO BRAVES P9



LEARNER P18



COURAGE TO DEFEND P20



Editorial

Dear Friends

The Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Paschal Chávez, has suggested as the theme for this year 2008:

Let us educate with the Heart of Don Bosco

I am sure many readers will wonder why I chose for the front cover the picture of Bosco Bear, who appears regularly on our very successful children's page. The reason was that I felt it captured something of the Heart of Don Bosco, being with young people, enjoying their company, bringing joy into their lives. Anyone who has spent time with young people, away from their usual surroundings, on a residential retreat, on an adventure holiday, round a camp fire, will appreciate what a difference such an experience can make to the lives of young people. Don Bosco's earliest experience of changing the lives of young people began in this way. He walked the tight rope, he did conjuring tricks, not just for entertainment, but to gain their confidence and lead them to an understanding of the spiritual riches in their lives. The essential starting point of Don Bosco's approach was always **presence – being with young people.**

Fr Chávez expresses it very clearly in these words:

Things have changed so much from Don Bosco's times. However we have an approach from him which, in its simplicity, is successful if we find a way to make it work. Our approach is: to love young people. Don Bosco used to say You achieve more, with a look of affection, with a word of encouragement than with constant reproaches.

Loving them is not a theoretical attitude, it means:

- Accepting them as they are.
- Spending time with them.
- Sharing their tastes and interests.
- Demonstrating trust in their ability.
- Tolerating what is a passing mood.
- Quietly forgiving what is involuntary or the result of immaturity.

For Don Bosco, education starts out from the real situation of each person, from his or her human and religious experience, from his or her anguish and anxieties, joys and hopes, always favouring experience and witness in the transmission of faith and values. Its aim is that Jesus may be accepted more as a friend who saves and makes us children of God, than a lawmaker who loads us up with dogmas, precepts or rites.

The actual words of the theme for 2008 are:

Let us educate with the heart of Don Bosco to develop to their full potential the lives of young people, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, promoting their rights.

An example of promoting the rights of young people is clearly seen on page 20, in the work of the Salesian Bishop, Flavio Giovenale in Brazil.



Finally we are reminded that all Don Bosco's work is based on the good news of the gospels. Fr Michael Winstanley, our provincial, offers us a wonderful personal insight into the Gospel of John in his new book Symbols and Spirituality. This book makes excellent reading for Lent and the Easter Season.

Anthony Bailey SDB
Editor

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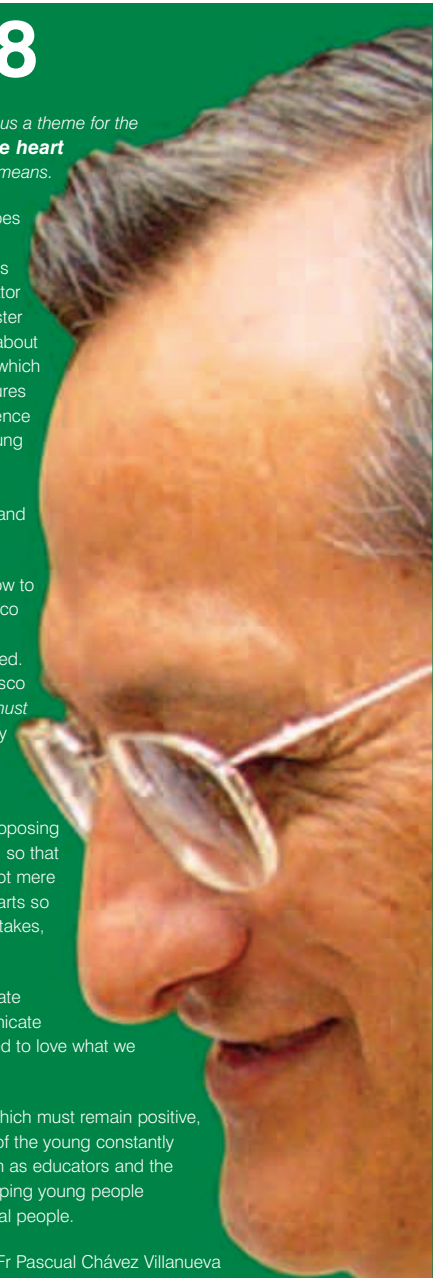
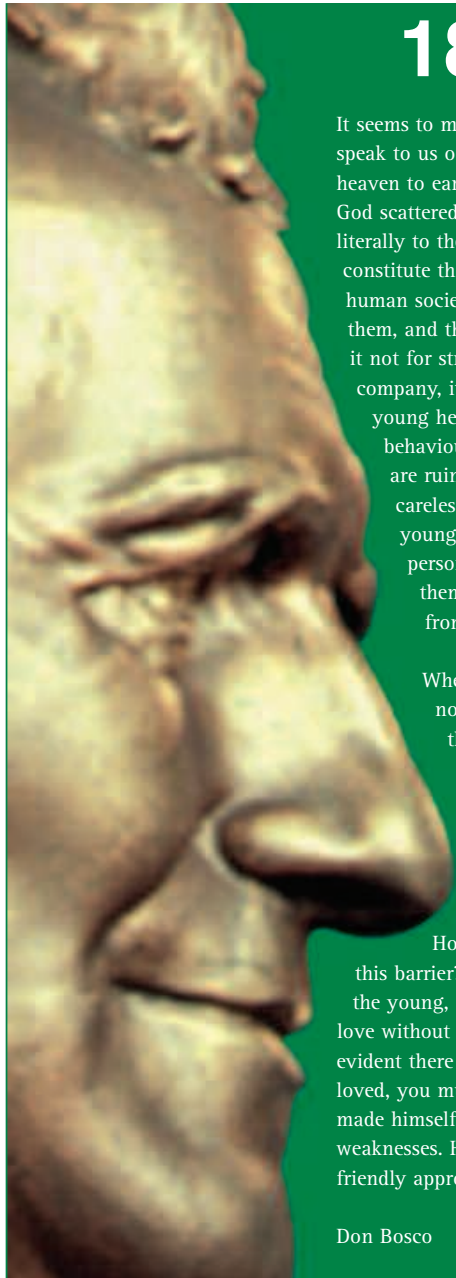
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1883

Don Bosco

2008



It seems to me that the words of the Holy Gospel which speak to us of the Divine Saviour come down from heaven to earth to gather together all the children of God scattered all over the world, could be applied literally to the young people of our times. They constitute the most vulnerable yet valuable section of human society. We base our hopes for the future on them, and they are not of their nature depraved. Were it not for struggling parents, idleness, mixing in bad company, it would be so easy to inculcate in their young hearts the principles of order, of good behaviour, of respect, of religion, because if they are ruined at that age, it is due more to carelessness than to ingrained malice. These young people truly have need of some kind person who will take care of them, work with them, guide them in virtue, keep them away from vice.

When teachers are thought of as superior and no longer as fathers, brothers and friends; they are feared and little loved. And so if you want everyone to be of one heart and soul again for the love of Jesus you must break down this fatal barrier of mistrust, and replace it with a spirit of confidence in you.

How then are we to set about breaking down this barrier? By a friendly informal relationship with the young, especially in recreation. You cannot have love without this familiarity, and where this is not evident there can be no confidence. If you want to be loved, you must make it clear that you love. Jesus Christ made himself little with the little ones and bore our weaknesses. He is our master in the matter of the friendly approach.

Don Bosco

*Every year the Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez, offers us a theme for the year, this year the theme is **Let us educate with the heart of Don Bosco**. Fr Chávez explains what this theme means.*

There is a word, not much in use today, which describes Don Bosco's heart, sums up what Don Bosco learned and advised: that word is loving-kindness. Its source is charity, as the Gospel presents it, for which the educator takes account of God's plan in the life of each youngster and helps him or her to be aware of it and to bring it about with the same liberating and magnanimous love with which God loves us. It is a friendship nurtured through gestures of familiarity. In turn it creates confidence: and confidence is everything in education, because only when the young person entrusts us with their secrets is it possible to interact, only when he or she opens the door of their heart can we communicate values, noble sentiments and high ideals.

Educators need to understand their own times and how to adapt to them, with the creativity of an artist. Don Bosco was a true artist of loving-kindness: by building trust through familiarity and friendship he made himself loved. This had to be appreciated by young people. Don Bosco used to say, *It is not enough to love the young. They must feel that they are loved*. This does not mean giving way to them or adopting unacceptable approaches. It is a firm kindness.

Prevention is the art of educating in a positive way, proposing what is good in an attractive way; it is the art of acting so that young people grow from within, with inner freedom, not mere superficial conformism; it is the art of winning over hearts so they go on cheerfully doing good, correcting their mistakes, preparing them for the future.

It is not enough to communicate; we must communicate ourselves. If we just teach a concept, but not communicate ourselves, we are teaching but not educating. We need to love what we communicate and those we are communicating with.

We must not only form the mind, but also the heart, which must remain positive, faced with the challenges that culture and education of the young constantly pose. For this reason, we have to cherish our vocation as educators and the educational process in all its dignity, which means helping young people develop all their potential, to the point of becoming real people.

Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva

Proud to be a Salesian



**I am not a priest
I am not a religious brother
I am a Salesian Cooperator**

What does that mean?

Don Bosco had a concept of the Salesian Cooperators as his co-workers, working alongside priests and sisters fulfilling the mission he had started. Whilst in certain situations this may still be true, it is very much more the case, that today, especially in the United Kingdom, many Cooperators spend a

lot of time working independently of the other members of the Salesian Family. In these circumstances, it is more difficult to describe this vocation. Even I, as a Salesian Cooperator, have difficulty putting into words the meaning of my vocation.

The question is often asked, even by other members of the Salesian Family, *What do the Salesian Cooperators do?* Perhaps the asking of this question demonstrates the misconceptions that many have of the vocation. I would say that there is not much that we Salesian Cooperators do not do, and then focus attention on why we do what we do, and the choices we make by living out our vocation.

The key to understanding the life of a Cooperator is to realise that the personal commitment that each of us makes transcends the membership of a local centre. The promise I make gives a clear indication of how being a Cooperator is very different from membership of other organisations. When making my promise, I am committing myself, in the presence of God, to carrying out Don Bosco's mission of salvation of the young and the poor to the best of my ability, whatever my personal circumstances. Living out that promise is the vocation I have signed up to for life.

It should be possible to see that living out of the promise will be unique for each Cooperator, and that, due to changes in personal circumstances through age, family or work the choice of action for each one can change significantly over time. Salesian Cooperators live out their mission on many different levels. Firstly, at a personal level, often within the family, secondly within their ordinary circumstances of work and thirdly, through collaboration with the Salesian Family in practical projects for the young and the poor. Many of us choose to work directly with young people, whilst others are best placed to provide support through prayer and charitable work to help fund the work of the Salesian Family within this country and abroad.

The phrase Charity begins at home has a clear parallel in the Cooperator's life. I have to make clear choices about how I live my life, based on Gospel values, and implemented through the inspiration of Don Bosco. For me, as a Cooperator, the three elements of the Preventive System form a significant part of my family life. The Cooperator, as a parent or grandparent, leads by example, faithful in the power of daily prayer and the importance of the sacraments. The kindness shown to all, especially the young is a true Salesian characteristic. By foregoing any repressive forms of discipline with their own children, but instead using the power of reason, the Cooperator parent endeavours to

make their home as welcoming as the Oratories of Don Bosco. A perfect example for many Cooperators would be Mamma Margaret, through her endless devotion to her son, and also her complete selflessness in helping Don Bosco raise the many boys he had taken in. For many Cooperators, living out their vocation is about remaining true to the vision of Don Bosco within their own homes.

A Cooperator is also called to consider their vocation within their everyday lives outside of the family. In their workplaces a Cooperator is called to uphold Gospel values, and to show a particular attention to those just starting out in work. This can present a real challenge due to the demanding nature of modern work, where the values of the company may not be in direct correlation with those of the Gospel. A Cooperator is called to take an active part in the social, economic and political life of their society. Again, the challenges that this presents are obvious, but all the time a Cooperator has the mission of Don Bosco at their heart, primarily considering the interests and needs of young people in their actions.

When working with young people, Cooperators strive to do so in a very Salesian way, whatever they are undertaking. Again the Preventive System is an inspiration to them, and the concept of Presence with the young is very near to their hearts. Due to their calling, Cooperators of any age have a natural way with young people, sharing laughter and play with them, and using reason, religion and kindness to teach the difference between right and wrong.

The Salesian Cooperators vocation is about ordinary people living ordinary lives, inspired by the Gospel and the mission of Don Bosco. Cooperators are devoted to Don Bosco, but are not simply an appreciation society. They are called to put into action the teachings that are available to them, particularly wherever there are young and poor. They choose to do this in a way best suited to their own circumstances in life. They combine a personal lifestyle which reflects Gospel values, along with a real desire to do all they can to be practical people, working with the Salesian Family to give young people opportunities in life that might have passed them by.

Daniel Sharp

Fr Pat McGrath SDB 1921 - 2007

Every day, Fr Pat, a faithful disciple, would join Jesus his Lord and Master on the hill of the Beatitudes and following the gaze of the Lord, would look into the eyes of those in need. This man on a mission in his flat cap and black coat was on his way to seek out those who were hungry for encouragement, a kind word, a cheerful greeting. He found them in the school yard, in the staff room, on the street, in the care home, on the hospital ward. Each, in their own way, came to know the Lord's blessing through the presence of a kindly, gentle, son of Don Bosco.



Pat's home was the family farm in Ballyskea, County Galway, as one of twelve children. His was a hard but very happy childhood. He became a Salesian novice in Beckford, near Gloucester at the age of 18, and was ordained in 1952. Pat was a devoted teacher. He was keen to see his students do well, always encouraging the best, even out of the most underachieving of pupils. Pat had always been good at sport so he took teams for soccer and hockey. But many will simply remember him for his presence in the yard before school and at lunchtime: showing interest, giving an encouraging word, adopting an air of mock seriousness while telling a joke. In total, Pat was to teach at the Salesian College, Battersea, for 27 years. But in 1986 came his retirement from the classroom at the age of 65. In September 1987 Pat joined the newly formed Parish Team, in Battersea, with Fr Dennis and myself and with it began one of the most pastorally fruitful periods of his

priestly life. Pat was one of those members of the community who would toss in a few controversial words and then quietly withdraw leaving the rest fighting it out. He wasn't naturally a reflective person, but he was a deeply prayerful man. He was totally committed to his Salesian priesthood, on fire with a faith first formed on Celtic shores, and I am sure that over his 67 years of Salesian and priestly life, Pat's unity with the Lord brought about a transformation in many hidden, inner ways we would find hard to imagine. The fruit of Pat's service, in union with the Lord, is seen in the many, many, people who have been blessed by his ministry; helped to live life to the full. In recent years, at Salesian funerals, Pat and I would wander round the gravestones together and remember with affection all those who had gone before. He was always so grateful for his Salesian Vocation and from his hospital bed expressed his thanks for all he had received from his Salesian life. My abiding memory is his smile and the kindly welcome at every meeting. We all loved him a lot. I think Fr Pat always saw himself as merely a small cog in a much bigger concern. Even now he is probably slightly embarrassed at being the centre of the Lord's attention. But the things once invisible are now visible. What was hidden is now revealed in glory. Patrick, enter into the joy of your Lord!

Fr Peter Breally SDB

The Bear Facts Hello Children



My friends and I have decided to invite groups of children to our forest for an adventure holiday. They should have a tremendous time.

As well as having fun they will learn how to look after themselves: making their own bed, packing their own bag, cooking, washing up. They will become more grown-up.

The children will be put into 4 groups,

1. The Chunky Monkeys
2. The Groovy Girls
3. Bosco's Braves
4. The Cool Cats



I am looking forward to seeing everyone enjoy themselves. I'm also looking forward to campside food. I love my grub! Rio wants a good laugh. He thinks he's funny but not everyone agrees! Molly hopes the visitors will learn some new skills and Suzi hopes there aren't any accidents.

Rio has been practising some magic to entertain the children.

I'm going to do my water in the glass trick, he said.

Rio put a glass of water on the table and put a tea-towel over it.

Right, he said. *I'm going to drink the water without touching the towel.*

Impossible, I said.

Rio knelt on the floor, went under the table, put his face to where the bottom of the glass was and began to make drinking sounds....glug....glug....glug....glug.

That's it, he announced.

Never! I don't believe it, I said. I whipped off the towel and said, *There!*

The water is still in the glass.

Rio picked up the glass and drank the water.

I told you I could drink the water without touching the tea-towel, he said with a huge smile on his face!

I was lost for words, which was unusual!



AUTUMN COMPETITION

The winner of the autumn magazine competition Words in Words was NAT ROOHAN from Astley Bridge in Bolton with 58 words. Well done Nat, and he received a copy of one of our most popular books 101 Saints and Special People.

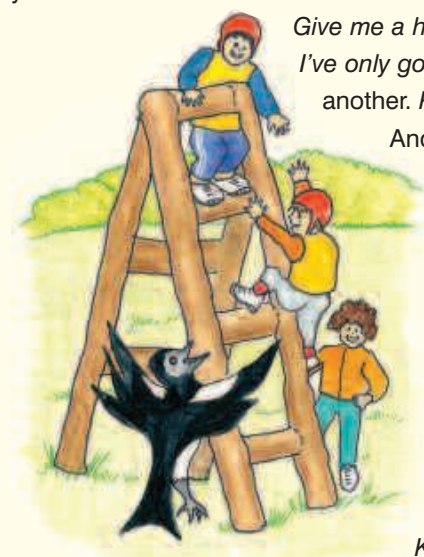
Thanks to everyone who entered the competition and we hope you submit an entry for the puzzle in this magazine.

Bosco Bear



Early one morning:

Toot-toot-toot, went Bosco's horn.
Rise and shine campers, he shouted. It was 7 o'clock, time to get cracking.
 The Chunky Monkeys (led by Molly) were on the Jacob's Ladder, which was made of logs set a metre apart. You couldn't climb up unless someone helped you.



Give me a hand, shouted one boy.
I've only got two and I need them both, joked another.
Pull... push... heave... help!

And one after another they reached the top.
 One boy said he cold manage on his own. He managed to fall off!
 The Bosco Braves were canoeing. They had painted their faces like Red Indians. You could bearly tell who they were as they whizzed down the River Snake.

Bosco was in a canoe with a little girl called Libby.

Keep an eye out for rocks

and don't forget the waterfall, said Bosco.
The waterfall! shouted Libby. She turned round suddenly to look and the canoe wobbled, and really wobbled, and oh no - CAPSIZED!

Luckily Bosco was an expert canoeist and a very good swimmer and he did an Eskimo Roll using his paddle and the canoe went right over and came up again! Libby didn't know whether to laugh or cry.
Catapulting, capsizing canoes! said Bosco.



DON BOSCO PUBLICATIONS
 GOOD BOOKS - GOOD NEWS - GOOD PRESENTS

DON BOSCO PUBLICATIONS BOOKLIST

NEW BOOK from Fr Michael T Winstanley SDB

Michael Winstanley is a Salesian of Don Bosco. He is a graduate of the Salesian Pontifical University (Rome) and London University. He has lectured in biblical studies at Ushaw College, Durham. He has given retreats in many countries and been involved in a variety of adult education programmes. He is presently Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Great Britain.



In this book, Michael has achieved a remarkable marriage between a serious and accurate reading of the text of the Gospel itself, a close familiarity with contemporary scholarship, and the eminently human, yet symbolic, religious and spiritual world in which we all live. Michael adds a further element to his exploration of John's Gospel - himself! With great courage he shares some of his most treasured experiences.

Symbols and Spirituality speaks to anyone who wants to know how the sacred text of the Gospel of John, so treasured within the Christian tradition, has spoken to the minds and hearts of Christians for 2000 years. It is an invitation to a better understanding of myself, of ourselves, and of our relationships, as individuals and communities, with God and with one another. As always with Michael's writing, every sentence has been thought through, and every image carefully sculptured. This book is a delight to read. Francis Molony



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M T Winstanley SDB
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GOOD BOOKS - GOOD NEWS - GOOD PRESENTS



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Rio's Cool Cats were doing archery. Rio thought he was Robin Hood! He wore all-green clothes, even green trainers!
Come on kids, he said. I'll show you how to hit a bull's eye.

Rio took aim and fired. He just about hit the target. Next to go was a little girl called Ella. She took aim and hit the bull's eye!
Oh! E-r-r-r, good shot, said Rio, trying to sound pleased.
Suzi was in charge of the Groovy Girls doing abseiling. She was really frightened but the children said, *Come on Miss, if we can do it so can you. Suzi wanted to join in. I've got to,* she thought. *I'll close my eyes and say a prayer!* She climbed to the top of the steps, put on the harness, leaned back and down she went. She was so proud of herself!

Late in the evening:

Everyone was warm and dry again and they met around the campfire for supper.
Yum...mee! Yum...eee! said Bosco. He liked his food!

Sausages, bacon, beans, toast, cake, bacon, beans, sausages, toast, sausages, bacon and beans.
Great!



Team Work

When you have a group of people trying to do something it is very important that they help one another. Team-work is something to learn as soon as possible. When you get older, and get a job, many of the people you work with won't be your own friends but, at work, you all have to pull together.

At the same time as helping the team, however, each person has to do his or her best and to do that you need to develop your skills to do different things. Outdoor centres help young people to be more organised, more careful, tidier, and more confident.

If you want to be a good team member you have to work hard: you must never give up and if something is difficult (if you are losing) you have to try even harder. You never moan at your team-mates but you do help them by saying *Well done! or Hard luck! or Come on, we can do it!* This is LEADERSHIP. I was in a team once and someone said *the best thing about being in this team is being in this team.* And it was true!

Spot the Differences Competition.



Send your entries on the form below to: **DON BOSCO PUBLICATIONS**
Thornleigh House, Sharples Park, Bolton, BL1 6PQ
Email: boscobear@salesians.org.uk

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

Name _____

Address _____



























Postcode _____

Text a day



I had just returned from a conference in Rome on *Evangelisation in Europe*, where the Rector Major had challenged us to go home and do something different to make a difference. I asked one or two members of the Youth Ministry Team about texting a Thought for the Day, and we thought if 30 people signed up it would be a success. (Currently there are 910 people).
Fr Bob Gardner SDB

Comments on text a day

-  I love getting a text everyday as it helps me in my spiritual journey.
-  May I thank you for the wonderful refreshing texts you send each day.
-  Hi. I really appreciate the texts you send me; they really help me in the day ahead.
-  Just to say thank you for the refreshing quote every morning.
-  The teenage angels that I work with now create their own quote of the week!
-  Your messages bring hope, courage and friendship very near.
-  I think it's a great way of spreading words that could change someone's life.
-  Your texts in the morning are like a breath of fresh air.
-  Thank you so much for daily texts. I often forward them to my family.
-  Thank you so much for texts. They keep my faith alive!
-  It has changed my life so much. I now have a real relationship with God. Thank you.
-  The texts add something special to each day. Don Bosco would have signed up too.
-  Some of the texts come through at exactly the right time. Your service is valued.
-  Can you send me a nice message 'cause Spurs lost to United. Thanks!
-  I love receiving your beautiful texts each day.
-  Great to start each day with something to reflect on. Thank you.
-  I think this is a fantastic service! I wouldn't be without my daily Salesian text.
-  I'm sure Don Bosco is very proud of you.
-  Your texts are really very good and they are very interesting as well.
-  This is so popular in our family.
-  Thank you. May God richly bless you all, and the work you do for Him.
-  Your inspirational messages are wonderful. God Bless.
-  Thank you for your daily reminder of how God so loves the world.
-  I often find your messages give me a lift in a morning.
-  Your texts fill me with hope and inspiration.
-  Texts are fab! Thanks xxx

The service is aimed at young people at Secondary School, and adults
To sign up for the service – text 'Interested' to 07939891422

What did I learn?

Fr Michael T Winstanley SDB

Our Salesian Provincial



“I’m filled with wonder at what Don Bosco unleashed into the world”

What did you learn from your father?

From dad I learned the value of patience, gentleness and the desire to do well whatever I’m doing. Also how important it is to support and encourage, whilst respecting individuality and freedom.

What did you learn from your mother?

From mum I learned to pray, to have God in the centre of my life, to care about others, and to seek always to be true and genuine.

What did you learn from studying in Italy?

How enriching it can be to live alongside and make friends with people from different geographical areas and cultures, and what a lasting impact a good teacher can have on your life. I also realised that I could enjoy Italian food and wine!

What did you learn from teaching in a seminary?

I learned that I am far from comfortable with certain aspects of the institutional Church, especially clericalism. I came to realise how much I enjoy teaching scripture, and how much at home I am with that age group. I came to appreciate the idealism, goodness, generosity and high quality of so many young men.

What did you learn from the young volunteers you worked with in the retreat house?

I learned that it is not only possible for young people and Salesians to live and work together, but that it is also energising, creative, enriching and good fun. I experienced the thrill of seeing the volunteers grow in confidence; develop new skills and leadership qualities. I became more sensitive to their struggles too.

What did you learn from being Provincial of the Salesian Province?

I learned to appreciate and admire the deep humanity, religious commitment, and dedication to young people of the Salesians of the province. I came to see my role as listening, encouraging, supporting and enabling. I have also become more in touch with the European and international dimensions of our congregation. I gratefully acknowledge the vibrancy and professional quality of our ministries, our willingness to collaborate, our openness, and I’m filled with wonder at what Don Bosco unleashed into the world.

What did you learn from your friends?

From my friends I have learned that it’s OK for me to be me! Also how difference can be enriching, and how important it is to be able to share, to trust, and to accept people as they are. And how beautiful and life-giving friendship is.

What did you learn from your mistakes?

That it isn’t necessary to be infallible. That acknowledging my mistakes actually builds up trust and enhances relationships. That people are very understanding and forgiving.

What did you learn from writing the book Symbols and Spirituality?

The writing of Symbols and Spirituality has confirmed my appreciation and excitement about John’s Gospel, and my conviction that it can be both fascinating and life-giving. I have realised again how much I enjoy studying and researching the Gospels, and how easily I become absorbed in it all. I’ve learned again how valuable the criticism and suggestions of others can be. For the first time I’ve come to know how demanding publications can be for the editor!

Courage to defend the rights of young people

Last November, an event in the State of Pará in Brazil, caught the attention of the national and the international press. A girl, who ironically became 16 years of age on the 10th December, World Human Rights Day, was arrested and put in a cell with 34 men. For her they were 20 days of torture and rape.

The Child Protection Council soon discovered that this dreadful incident was the tip of an iceberg of corruption, drugs, and a conspiracy of silence involving a network including the civil Police (and in part also the Military Police), drug dealers, the Judicial system and the Government of the State of Pará. The intervention of the Child Protection Council, an official body responsible for the defence and care of children and adolescents, created and maintained thanks also to the efforts of the Diocese, brought public attention to the incident and an official enquiry was launched.

Bishop Flavio Giovenale SDB of Abaetetuba in the State of Pará in Brazil, intervened through diocesan structures, condemning those involved in the case of the girl. Avoiding the attention of the major media, the Bishop focused on certain key areas. He met with representatives of the Institutions involved: The Courts of Justice, the Civil Police, Military Police, and the Lawyers' Association of Brazil. Also taking part in the meeting was a personal representative of President Lula, and the Special Secretariat for Human Rights. Towards the conclusion of the meeting, which was conducted in a business-like open manner, the Bishop was able to speak as he clarified certain ideas and statements that had not been correct. The same thing happened in the course of a meeting of the Commission on Human Rights of the Federal Parliament which went to Abaetetuba to investigate the case.

On the 4th December, Bishop Giovenale received an anonymous letter: *We know what you are doing. We shall let the dust settle and then we shall settle up. You have upset too many people.* It appears that the President of the Lawyers' Association of Brazil-Pará has received a similar threat. Also threatened were the five members of the Child Protection Council, the two catechists who from the beginning followed up the case and the coordinator of the Youth Pastoral Ministry.

As the case developed, some public bodies obstructed the Child Protection Council. The Diocese, and in particular Office for Youth Ministry saw to it that the case did not get covered up; the publicity given to the case of the girl led to some promises of action being taken:

- Setting up prisons with special sections for women and adolescents (of the 132 State prisons in Pará only 6 at present have cells for women).
- Creating a database of prisoners to avoid them getting lost in the judicial system the newspaper "O Liberal" of Sunday 9 December published the fact that of 7,167 prisoners in the State of Pará only 1,466 had faced a trial, and sometimes it takes 14 months before this happens.

- Starting enquiries involving the police forces at all levels and for the first time in the State of Pará, the Home Office and the Judicial System.
- Replacing the police directly involved in the case.
- Setting up a Commission, at national level to deal with hundreds of small cases before the courts (according to the media in the space of a week, it dealt with a large number of cases that had been pending for years).

It is not the first time that Bishop Giovenale has been threatened. Immediately after his arrival in the Diocese of Abaetetuba, he tried to encourage efforts for human development and education to combat the culture of economic and social stagnation resulting from drug trafficking. He gave a considerable support to the creation of vocational training centres, youth centres and other social structures such as the support given to the work of the Child Protection Council in Abaetetuba.

Bishop Giovenale wrote a letter: *"The case of this poor girl must not be forgotten. I am trying to speed up some of the pastoral and social projects in progress. In particular I am working hard, in collaboration with the Departments of Education of*

the Local Authorities and of the State, to reduce the levels of school truancy and to complete the work of restructuring the vocational training centre of Cristo Trabalhador, so as to be able to continue to give the opportunity of a future to our youngsters."

However, there were two sad episodes, on Sunday 27th January, which cast new shadows and troubled the Bishop who had previously received a number of threats on account of the stand he had taken against injustice and corruption. In the early hours of Sunday morning, when the Bishop was on his way to the airport with the diocesan representative for Child Services, their car was stopped by three strangers who after forcing them to lie face down with guns pointed at the heads, robbed them.

Some hours later Bishop Giovenale received an anonymous phone call: *This is the undertakers. You'll be the next!*

Thanks to the intervention by a number of organisations including Amnesty International, the Bishop has been given some guarantees by the government authorities; the police have assured their full support for the Bishop.



Responsible Citizens

Fr Paschal Chávez reminds us: *Work together with young people, with all your strength in every way possible, so that they too may become active and responsible citizens in society.*

My name is James Murray, and I'm a sixth-form student at Thornleigh Salesian College and the Member of UK Youth Parliament for Bolton North East. I was elected for a year in 2007 and as it comes to the end of my term in office, the elections being held in February, I have been asked by the editor, to explain how a young person can work to improve society.

The other Youth MP for Bolton, Niall McGloin and myself have been working hard trying to see the new candidates through the election process, preparing future young people for the role. We have launched two new schemes recently.

1. The first is Bolton Youth Area Forums which are held prior to an Area Forum with the local councillors. We then feed back what young people have said about the area. After attending a few meetings we became far too aware that the average age at these meetings was over sixty, and the reputation of Bolton's angelic young people was taking quite a battering, at the somewhat unengaging meetings! The new youth forums will perhaps change the balance and show that youth views do matter and can be constructive.
2. The second project that we have launched is part of a National UK Youth Parliament initiative, in which we are aiming to hold joint surgeries with the local Members of Parliament, David Crausby, Ruth Kelly and Dr Brian Iddon; trying to narrow the gap between the generations holding the future and the decisions being made in parliament. The first of these events was held in our Thornleigh Sixth Form Centre, with David Crausby.

There have been some very practical tasks to do as youth MPs during the year. We sit on the local Children's Trust, which is a highly influential steering group for the children and young people services. We have chaired cash panels to decide on grant applications made for youth projects in the town. There have been project launches to attend and speak at, and many other events we are asked to attend. A lot of time is spent trying to gauge the needs of young people. We consulted them by visiting their local areas and looking at the facilities already provided.

I attended the national sitting of the Youth Parliament in Scotland for a week at the end of the last academic year, and there was a North West regional residential course in early May. At these we organise national campaigns, getting petitions together and gathering information and consultation about young people's services to try and get them improved. I was on the transport group at the national sitting, as this was a major concern with young people in my area.

In light of having more time on my hands after the February elections I have also been fundraising to cover some of the costs of attending a week long conference in America, with two fellow Year 12 students. The GYLC (Global Young Leaders Conference) aims to gather young people designated as future leaders, and educate them in the workings of international politics. The conference is to take place in America in early June, and will cost £4050 each.

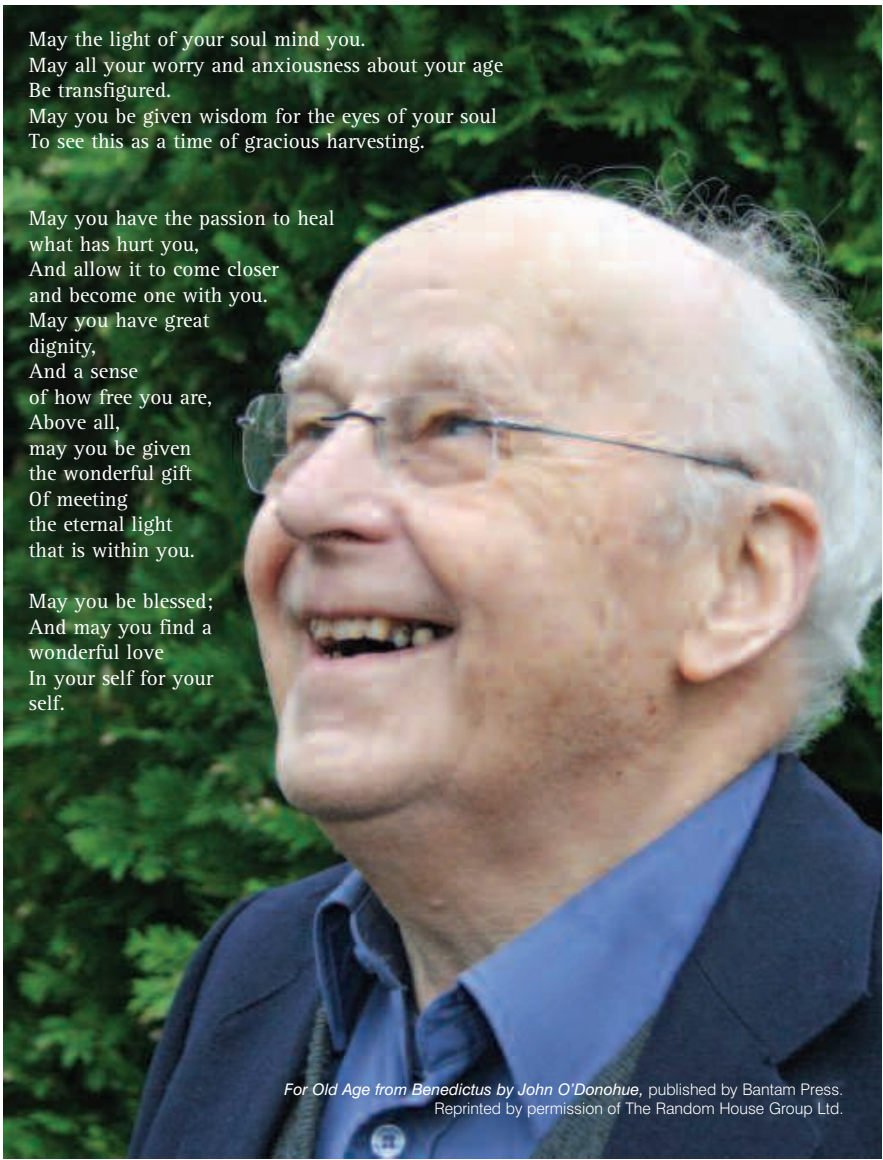


Currently everybody has been working tirelessly towards a school talent competition dubbed Our School's Got Talent. This will be a good fundraiser and has also had the whole school showing interest, and stirred up quite a buzz. Over thirty acts, from across all years, rose to the challenge with all sorts of musical, singing and dance styles. Lower school and upper school have both produced some real competition, through three rounds, for places in the February finals. The competitors have worked really hard and encouraged massive support from their friends to cheer them on. We would like to thank everybody involved for all their efforts, especially the Judges and all our friends who have given up much of their time for us.

So that is what is happening from our point of view, and we are keeping ourselves quite busy as you can see. The role of youth MP is thoroughly enjoyable and a worth-while service. It is great to see the suggestions we make acted upon and the Youth Parliament's influence on government. I would recommend this role to any young person who has an interest in their community, and would want to improve the services provided for the young people they may represent as a Youth Parliament Member.

James Murray.

For Old Age



May the light of your soul mind you.
May all your worry and anxiousness about your age
Be transfigured.
May you be given wisdom for the eyes of your soul
To see this as a time of gracious harvesting.

May you have the passion to heal
what has hurt you,
And allow it to come closer
and become one with you.
May you have great
dignity,
And a sense
of how free you are,
Above all,
may you be given
the wonderful gift
Of meeting
the eternal light
that is within you.

May you be blessed;
And may you find a
wonderful love
In your self for your
self.

*For Old Age from Benedictus by John O'Donohue, published by Bantam Press.
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