

DON BOSCO



TODAY

The Salesian
Bulletin
Year 130
Issue 1
Spring 2022

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Love, Nothing
with Constraint

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Lady, and you
will see what
miracles are

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of the Young

Accompanying
Young People in
Salesian Schools



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

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Welcome to our spring edition of the Don Bosco Today.

“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

Front Cover picture © iStock - 179134221

4 “Do all for love, nothing with constraint.”

We find the source of this spirituality in the many gestures and words of our Lord in the Gospel and in the simplicity of Don Bosco's proposal made to his young people, with the language and in the ecclesial context of the nineteenth century.



8 “Trust in Our Lady and you will see what miracles are.”

It was truly a miracle that on September 11 we were finally able to gather at our General House in Rome, and that not only did everyone make it to Rome, but that COVID stayed well clear of the Generalate and all present.



11 The Scripture Corner

I visited Cana on pilgrimage twice in 2015, and couldn't resist buying two miniature stone jars, which now adorn the mantelpiece in my room. So I'm reminded of Cana often each day. When I give retreats my first talk is usually on this Gospel reading because the symbolism is so rich and compelling. In the narrative, Jesus changes water into wine, abundant and of extremely good quality.

20 Affairs of the Heart

During this year 2022, we mark the 400th anniversary since the death of St Francis de Sales in Lyon. As a Salesian family, we know that his spirituality deeply influenced Don Bosco and consequently us Salesians, his sons. In fact, our name derives from him and not from Don Bosco!



24 Accompanying Young People in Salesian Schools

Accompanying young people is a central role of teachers in Salesian schools. That accompaniment of learners is a helping relationship aimed at removing the multi-levelled obstacles to learning in a young person's life. It includes and, at times, goes beyond the achievement of academic success. The word 'accompanying' implies a process of journey with the young person through growth and change.



A very happy Easter to you all.

Once again we have many interesting articles for you to enjoy, but I would like to start by drawing your attention to a very sad moment for us – the obituary of Fr Michael Cunningham SDB. Many of you will know that Fr Michael worked very closely with us here at Don Bosco Publications, writing eight books on Spirituality between 2003 and 2016. His cheerfulness when he came to our office is very much missed.

We are continuing our theme of Catholic Education in this edition with Fr David O'Malley's article on 'Accompanying Young People in Salesian Schools', and especially the central role it plays for teachers. Staff in schools continue to be under huge pressure, and if you get the chance, please say 'thanks' to any that you know for the important role that they play in the life of our young people.

The third article in our series, 'The Inspiration of the Young' tells the story of an Italian teenager, born in London in 1991, who was recently proclaimed Blessed by the Church. Carlo Acutis grew up in a society experiencing an explosion of the Internet, and the rise of social media sites.

We are also delighted to introduce you to 'The Scripture Corner', short reflections from Fr Michael Winstanley SDB are sure to become a popular section of our magazine.

I am pleased to announce that we will be going back to three magazines and a calendar for 2022 – spring, summer and winter. As always the winter edition will come with your

free copy of the Salesian Calendar. Within each magazine will be an envelope with which you can make any donations. Please note that we are truly grateful for your donations at anytime, but an envelope should never mean that you have to donate each time you receive one – please donate only if you are able to, when you are able to.

I finish my greetings with a short passage from the book, 'Blessed Carlo Acutis: 15 years of friendship with God' written by Umberto De Vanna, published by Don Bosco Publications in English in 2021.

"Like the majority of students, Carlo was not particularly fond of studying, even though he never had any great problems succeeding at school. He preferred to make time for his many other interests, computer science of course, music, friendships, and then prayer, especially daily Mass, and living faith and everything related to God's world. Overall, he was always careful to select what he experienced, to take care of himself, balancing his interests and hobbies with the duty of study and the demands of his soul."

Blessed Carlo Acutis pray for us.

Fr Bob Gardner SDB

Editor

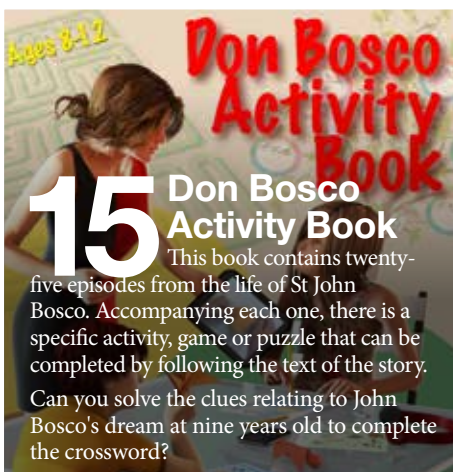
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12 The Inspiration of The Young

At the turn of the 21st century, Carlo was growing up in a society experiencing an explosion of the Internet and the rise of social media sites, which radically changed the way young people accessed information and communicated with one another. Carlo saw this as a perfect platform to draw attention to faith and the Eucharist.



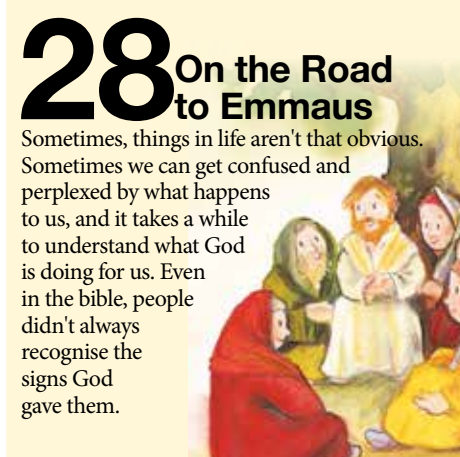
15 Don Bosco Activity Book

This book contains twenty-five episodes from the life of St John Bosco. Accompanying each one, there is a specific activity, game or puzzle that can be completed by following the text of the story. Can you solve the clues relating to John Bosco's dream at nine years old to complete the crossword?



18 Congratulations Mother Cazzuola!

"The heart experiences many different feelings, but there is one above all the others: and it is gratitude. Thanks to the Lord for having called us to this wonderful Institute that Our Lady wanted."



28 On the Road to Emmaus

Sometimes, things in life aren't that obvious. Sometimes we can get confused and perplexed by what happens to us, and it takes a while to understand what God is doing for us. Even in the bible, people didn't always recognise the signs God gave them.

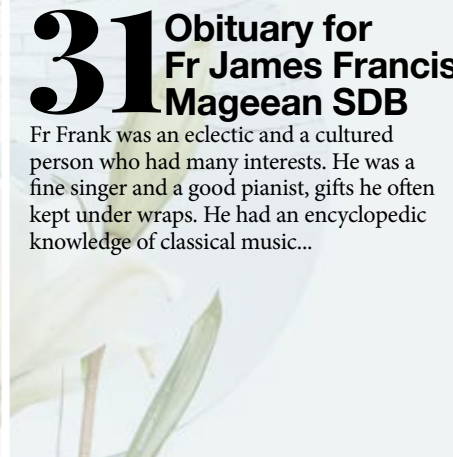


29 Obituary for Sr Bruna Livieri FMA

"In my life I ate the bread of love and the bread of tears, but on my horizon there never lacked the rainbow of God's love that has always made up for everything, even in the darkest night."

30 Obituary for Fr Michael Cunningham SDB

Many people have commented on his kindness and approachability, a true Son of Don Bosco. Throughout the twists and turns of his life, Michael's basic option was to follow the Lord in Don Bosco's way.



31 Obituary for Fr James Francis Mageean SDB

Fr Frank was an eclectic and a cultured person who had many interests. He was a fine singer and a good pianist, gifts he often kept under wraps. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of classical music...

PRESENTATION OF THE THEME
OF THE STRENNA 2022

**"Do all for love,
nothing with
constraint"**

(St Francis de Sales)

On July 23, 2021, the Rector Major, Ángel Fernández Artime, announced the theme of the Strenna for the year 2022, "Do all for love, nothing with constraint" (St Francis de Sales).





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Dear brothers, sisters and friends,
As 2022 is a year during which we will celebrate the fourth centenary of the anniversary of his death, the theme can only be that of the Spirituality of St Francis de Sales, the source of the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco, to whom our father and founder drank and who he contemplated at all times, especially when it came to defining the educational and evangelising style—to put it in our own language—of the emerging Salesian Congregation: “We will be called Salesians”.¹

We know that Don Bosco was deeply impressed by this extraordinary saint, who was an authentic inspiration for him, especially because he was a true pastor, a teacher of charity, a tireless worker for the salvation of souls.

As a young seminarian, John Bosco took this resolution before his priestly ordination: “May the charity and gentleness of St Francis de Sales guide me at all times. And in the

Memoirs of the Oratory Don Bosco declares: “[The oratory] began to be called St Francis de Sales... because [for] the part of our ministry demanding great calm and meekness, we had placed ourselves under the protection of this saint, so that he might obtain from God the grace to be able to imitate him in his extraordinary meekness and in the gain of souls”.²

Of course, this year’s Strenna will also be a wonderful opportunity to recognise and find oneself in the spirituality of St Francis de Sales and to

appreciate even more the magnificent characteristics of the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco, as well as the precious values of Salesian youth spirituality. No doubt we will see ourselves reflected in them and we will feel called to be today ‘more Salesian’ in our Salesian family, that is, filled with the spirit of St Francis de Sales, the spirit that permeates our Salesianity as the family of Don Bosco.

To be completely of God, living in fullness the presence in the world

This is probably the most ‘revolutionary’ proposal of St Francis de Sales. This was expressed with the usual depth and beauty by the eminent Pope Benedict XVI when he said that the great invitation that St Francis de Sales addressed to Christians is to “be completely of God, living in fullness the presence in the world and the tasks of one’s own state. My intention is to instruct those who live in the cities, in the marital state, at court ...” (*Preface to the Introduction to the Devout Life*). The Document with which Pope Pius IX, more than two centuries later, proclaimed him Doctor of the Church will insist on this broadening of the call to perfection, to holiness. It states: “[true piety] has penetrated to the throne of kings, in the tent of the

leaders of armies, in the praetorium of judges, in offices, in shops and even in the huts of shepherds.” (*Breve Dives in Misericordia*, November 16, 1877). Thus was born that appeal to the laity, that care for the consecration of temporal things and for the sanctification of everyday life on which the Second Vatican Council and the spirituality of our time will insist. The ideal of a reconciled humanity was manifested, in the harmony between action in the world and prayer, between the secular condition and the search for perfection, with the help of God’s Grace that permeates the human being and, without destroying him, purifies him, raising him to divine heights.”³

We find the source of this spirituality in the many gestures and words of our Lord in the Gospel and in the simplicity of Don Bosco’s proposal made to his young people, with the language and in the ecclesial context of the nineteenth century.

So, how can we ensure that it is also the source of inspiration and the pastoral and spiritual proposal for us today?

The centrality of the heart

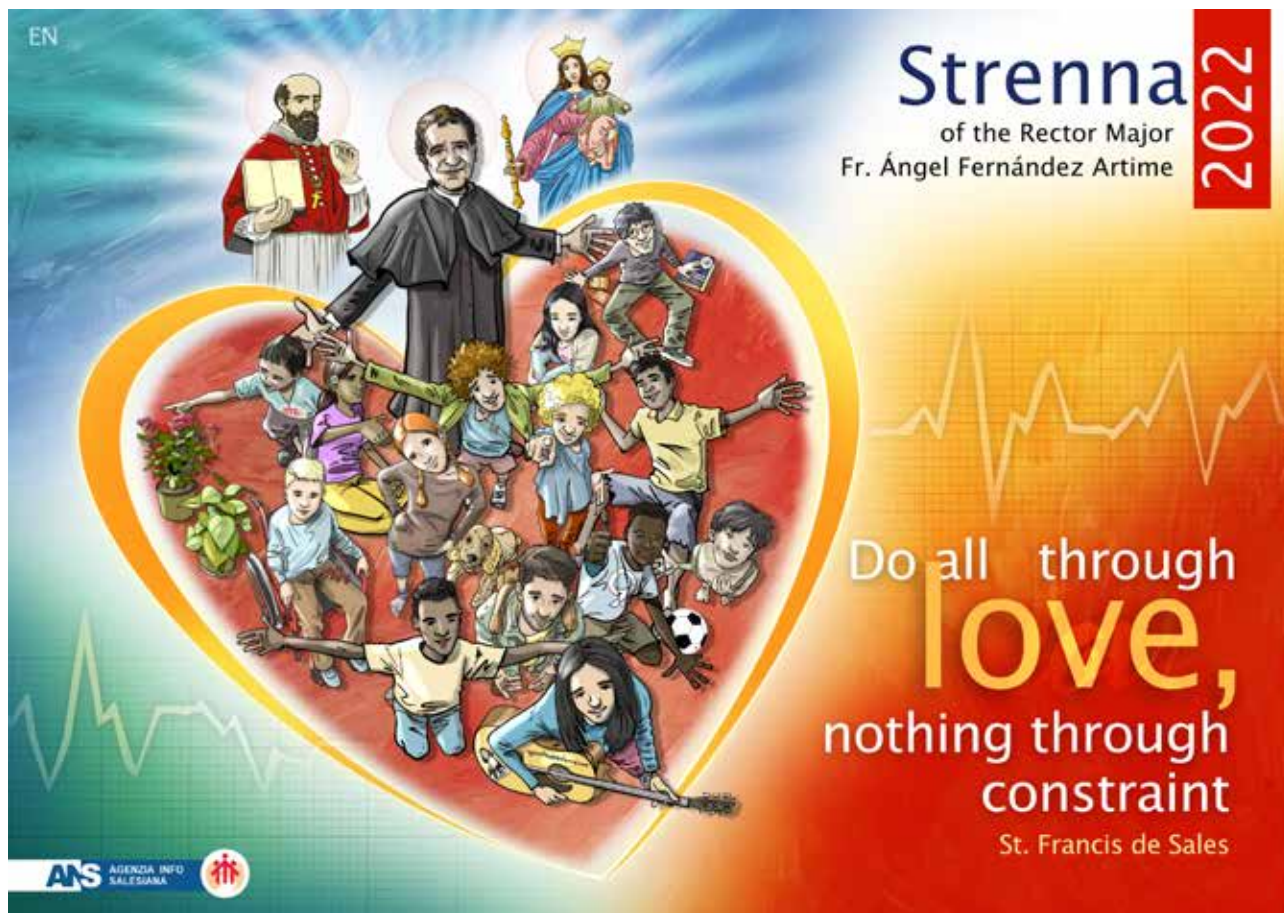
During his formation in Paris what triggers Francis’ conversion is the in-depth reading of the *Song of Songs*, under the guidance of a Benedictine father. It is for him a light that colours all his perception of both God and human life, both of the individual journey and of relationships with any other person.

Even in the symbol he chooses for Order of the Visitation which he founded, we can see how much the heart is the most speaking sign of all his human and spiritual heritage: a heart pierced by two arrows: *love of God and love of neighbour*, to which the two treatises that condense all his thought and teaching would also be corresponded. The first, *The Treatise on the Love of God*, is the fruit of his patient work of formation in the first group of Visitandines: these are the conferences written and republished in the form of a volume. It is also

¹ Cf. P. Chavez Villanueva, *Salesians of one hundred and fifty years*, (Rome: LEV, 2019), 40.

² G. Bosco, ‘Memories of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855’, in ISS, *Salesian sources 1. Don Bosco and his work*, (Rome, LAS, 2014), 1244.

³ Benedict XVI, *General Audience* [video], Paul VI Audience Hall, Wednesday, March 2, 2011.



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the basis of the formation of Maria Margherita Alacoque who, fifty-one years after Francis' death, has the revelations which opened in the Church the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Of the other treatise, that on love of neighbour, only the index remained, due to the untimely death of Francis on December 28, 1622, at fifty-five years of age.

The humanism of Francis, his desire and ability to enter into dialogue with everyone, the great value he placed on friendship, so important for personal accompaniment in the way Don Bosco would interpret it, everything was built on the solid foundations of the heart, just as Francis lived it.

Between providence and loving kindness

Two concepts that reflect St Francis' way of being close to the heart of God and opening his heart to others are his sense of Providence and his way of interacting with everyone: with gentleness and loving kindness.

This year's Strenna will also be a wonderful opportunity to recognise and find oneself in the spirituality of St Francis de Sales and to appreciate even more the magnificent characteristics of the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco.

His trust in Providence has roots from his training in Paris and Padua, from which he coined the expression 'holy indifference', meaning a complete and unreserved trust in the heart of God. I trust unreservedly in the heart of God, and this enables me to embrace every detail that the sequence of

events and circumstances presented to me each day. I have "nothing to ask and nothing to refuse" compared to what I know to be in God's hands anyway. Paul looked in the same direction when he wrote to the Romans: "We know that everything contributes to good, for those who love God, for those who have been called according to his plan. For those whom he has always known, he has also predestined them to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he may be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:28-29).

Essentially, gentleness of heart towards one's neighbour, even when they are unfriendly and unpleasant, is a reflection of the same trust, this time in regard to the human heart, always open to God's actions and always destined for fulfilment in life. Gentleness and loving kindness are missionary approaches, aimed at facilitating as much as possible in every circumstance and situation this encounter between grace and freedom in the heart of those who are before me. It is therefore not just a question of good manners.

If we think of the way in which Don Bosco reinterpreted this loving kindness in his educational system, we understand how deeply the motivations are nourished, exactly as happened for St Francis de Sales.

The internship of the mission in Chiabalese and the *Da mihi animas* di Don Bosco

The arduous experience of evangelisation in Chiabalese between 1593 and 1596 is where the mission sets the tone for his whole life. Those years can be read as a eucharistic education. The visible Eucharist, celebrated with a large crowd, carried in procession after years of emptiness, is the culmination of a long wilderness, where he is one who lives by the Eucharist and becomes its hidden presence among the previously hostile people, and whom he approaches and befriends one by one.

It is also very interesting to read those years as a eucharistic teaching. The visible Eucharist, celebrated, with a large crowd of the people, carried in procession after years of emptiness is the point of arrival of a long wilderness, where it is he who lives by the Eucharist and makes a hidden presence of it among the previously hostile people, and that he approaches and befriends one by one.

Taking into account that our Salesian presence is mostly among non-Catholics, this eucharistic spirituality becomes prophetic: from within the missions, Salesians patiently and steadfastly reach those to whom they are sent, without foregoing explicit preaching, but knowing how to wait for God's everlasting time, without waiting for the faithful to fill the church, but mingling with the flock wherever and however it may be.

All this speaks to us of Don Bosco's educational and evangelising passion through which, in the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist and of Mary in the life of the Oratory among his boys, he found the daily strength to realise the *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle*.

St Francis de Sales is an exemplary witness of Christian humanism; with his familiar style, with words which at times have a poetic touch, he reminds us that human beings have planted in their innermost depths the longing for God and that in him alone can they find true joy and the most complete fulfilment.

But how to communicate?

Francis de Sales is the patron saint of journalists. It is worth noting his charisma as a communicator, where there is a wonderful agreement between, on the one hand, the love and interest for reflection, culture, humanism in its most beautiful expressions, to be promoted, encouraged, harmonised by creating and favouring dialogue between those who are more capable and richer in these fields; on the other hand, Francis de Sales is a master of communication for all, a great disseminator for the means and conditions in which he lived. Just think of the enormous number of letters on which both his apostolate as bishop and saint was condensed.

In this too we have in Don Bosco a disciple who follows the zeal of the master, with the new means at his disposal (the 'mass press'): 318 published works of Don Bosco in 40 years... on average about one every two months. And at the same time, it is for us a message the utmost relevance and a real challenge in today's world, where communication is at the centre of reality.

Francis de Sales in the way of accompanying the young people of Don Bosco: charisms flourish and bear fruit in each other

There is a true 'communion of saints' within the educational and spiritual craft of Don Bosco, which was not born from nothing, but nourished by deep roots, the work of the Spirit in the history of the Church that preceded him. It is neither an addition nor a repetition: it is rather a new flowering and bearing of fruit that feeds on the work of the Spirit that enlivened the Church with Francis of Assisi and Ignatius, with Dominic and Teresa of Ávila.

It is a beautiful proposal for the Church today and for Don Bosco's Salesian family to cultivate the art of accompanying the journey of faith, especially of many boys, girls and young people of the world who do not know God, and who at the same time, hunger and thirst for Him, often without knowing it. It is very 'Salesian' to feel that they need "a friend of the soul",⁴ in whom to find advice, help, guidance and friendship.

I conclude these brief lines, along which the Strenna of 2022 for the entire Salesian family of Don Bosco in the world, with the invitation that Pope Benedict XVI addresses to us at the end of his speech, asking us to follow in a "spirit of freedom": "Dear brothers and sisters, in an age such as ours that seeks freedom, even with violence and unrest, the timeliness of this great teacher of spirituality and peace who gave his followers the 'spirit of freedom', the true spirit. St Francis de Sales is an exemplary witness of Christian humanism; with his familiar style, with words which at times have a poetic touch, he reminds us that human beings have planted in their innermost depths the longing for God and that in him alone can they find true joy and the most complete fulfilment."⁵

**Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB
Rector Major**

⁴ G. Bosco, 'Memoirs of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855', in ISS, *Salesian sources 1. Don Bosco and his work*, (Rome: LAS, 2014), 1184.

⁵ Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, 2011.



Trust in Our Lady and you will see what miracles are

At our Assembly in 2019, I was elected by the Province to take part in the twenty-fourth General Chapter of our Congregation along with the Provincial, Sr Pauline.

The moment was not only a moment of huge surprise but also one of absolute privilege. A blessing that I never imagined I would experience, especially at this ‘reasonably’ early stage of my religious life. The opportunity brought with it a sense of a real gift and of responsibility. A gift to feel that sense of trust and confidence in me, and with that the responsibility of representing this wonderful Province and those whose prayer and ministry have built it.

Although a General Chapter is a central element of the life of all religious Congregations, it can sometimes seem like a bit of a mystery and well-kept secret—a bit like the Vatican Conclave at the election of a new Pope.

When I returned from Rome in November and was back in school, one of our Year 6 students asked me: “So why were you in Rome for so long? What exactly is a Chapter?” Unsure of how to condense a two-month meeting into a few words, I explained that, for us, it was an international meeting of

174 Salesian Sisters from every Province in the world who gathered to pray, reflect, study, discern, share, discuss and finally try to come to agreement on decisions that would help give shape and direction to the life of our Congregation for the next six years—including the election of a new Mother General (Successor of St Mary Mazzarello) and her Council (Leadership Team). This could only be possible with a lot of prayer, listening and discernment in order to feel the breath of the Spirit nudging and moving us forward. I’m not sure how much wiser he went away—but hopefully a little!

As the time neared and the Chapter was definitely happening at the third time of scheduling, I have to admit an overwhelming sense of inadequacy and inexperience to embrace the occasion. But at the same time, the prayerful and affirming support of the sisters here was a great source of strength and peace to me.

I had a sense that this Chapter would be different to other Chapters because of the COVID restrictions that were in place but, not having anything to compare it to, it was still unique as an experience. As someone once told me, the only experience you have is the one you find yourself in.

The beginning of the Chapter usually involves some time in Turin and Mornese to pray, get to know each other and spend time in retreat in the company of our Founders in their places; but for us this year, our time of retreat and prayer was spent in the isolation of quarantine. When we finally



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came out of quarantine, it was amazing to connect with sisters I knew already from my novitiate days and my initial formation and to meet and share with so many new faces.

It was truly a miracle that on September 11 we were finally able to gather at our General House in Rome, and that not only did everyone make it to Rome, but that COVID stayed well clear of the Generalate and all present. Although I'm sure this was probably realised by the fact that we were under 'house arrest' for the duration of our time there. As Don Bosco said: "Trust in Our Lady and you will see what miracles are."

It was incredible to be part of an experience bringing together Salesian Sisters from every corner of the Salesian world where countless nationalities, languages, cultures, generations and experiences were represented, and where we were able to deepen our understanding of how our charism (still so alive and relevant today) transcends all these differences and is responding to the needs of our young people today, wherever they are. At the heart of all we did was the Word of God (in particular the Wedding Feast of Cana, which accompanied us from our pre-chapter Zoom meetings right through to the end of the Chapter) and the presence of Jesus and Mary amongst us.

Mother Yvonne opened the Chapter with the words: "It is important to desire to listen to His voice, to be alert, to have a heart that eagerly awaits the encounter." This *docibilitas*



was the spirit in which we embraced the work entrusted to us. The work of the Chapter followed the theme 'Life-giving communities at the heart of today's world' and Mary's words: "Do whatever He tells you". We began with a time of getting to know one another, being introduced to the process and way of working and of spending time in the Commissions we would be working in. Then, we were divided into five Commission Groups and then into further sub-commissions of about twelve to make the discussion and sharing a more helpful and powerful experience.

Our journey of prayer, discernment and sharing led us to focus on three significant choices:

- **Ongoing formation** (revive and witness together to the beauty of our Salesian vocation by living continuous formation for a renewed vocational drive);
- **Synodality** (working together in a lifegiving way);
- **Networking from a perspective of integral ecology** (listening to the cry of the young, the poor and the Earth, together with the Salesian family to protect our common home).

The key word connecting all of these was **presence**, the 'being there' as individuals, as communities, as provinces and as an Institute in the heart of today's society and world.

Following on from this, we made a commitment to involve the whole Institute in a concrete and continuous journey of ecological conversion, assuming the seven objectives of *Laudato si'*, in the spirit of the Preventive System.

Just as well we have six years!

The time of elections of Mother General and her Council, and the solemnity of the discernment that accompanies the process, was a totally unforgettable and inspirational moment that really moved me and has stayed with me. We were guided through the discernment by Don Pascual Chávez (Rector Major Emeritus) and to have been blessed with the opportunity of journeying through the Chapter with the sisters elected brought a whole new dimension to understanding the structure of the leadership of the Institute; to share in their journey, see their humility, their complete sense of trust and abandonment to the Lord is an inspiration to me as I journey in the everyday of my own call.

At the same time, it was also one of the biggest challenges as we were quite limited in our knowledge of one another due to not having much time together before the official work of the Chapter began, but it served as a huge reminder that this work is not ours but the work of the Spirit through us.

It was incredible to be part of an experience bringing together Salesian Sisters from every corner of the Salesian world where countless nationalities, languages, cultures, generations and experiences were represented...

The absolute highlight for me was undoubtedly the visit of Pope Francis to the Generalate and the atmosphere that surrounded it all: from hearing the night before that the plan had changed and we were unable to go the Vatican for an audience with him, to him walking through the doors of the Chapter Hall the next morning mid Rosary, the emotion which arose within is impossible to put into words. It was just pure gift to be in the presence of such a man of God and indeed a saint. His humble, down-to-earth, homely presence amongst us will stay with me forever, and his final words: "Pray for me; it's not easy to be the Pope", are words I hear and respond to every day. A day I will never forget.

The final words were from our new Mother General, Madre Chiara Cazzuola, who concluded the Chapter saying:

"The Chapter does not really end today, but continues, so it is time to come down from Cana to Capernaum, not alone, but with Jesus and Mary, to share life and mission together with the young people and the laity, to let God breathe in our existence and courageously face the challenges we will encounter."

We entrust ourselves to Mary to help us to be women who know how to bring the new wine of hope in this our history marked by so much suffering and hardship but blessed by the sweet Providence of the Father.

I look forward to our journey together back here in the GBR Province with Mary, be(ing) a life, giving presence.

Gill McCambridge FMA

THE SCRIPTURE CORNER

Wine at Cana

The story of the visit of Jesus and his mother to the village of Cana for a wedding celebration is the reading chosen for the feast of Mary, Help of Christians, as well as the second Sunday of the liturgical year. It's one of my favourite stories

from the Gospel of John. I visited Cana on pilgrimage twice in 2015, and couldn't resist buying two miniature stone jars, which now adorn the mantelpiece in my room. So I'm reminded of Cana often each day. When I give retreats my first talk is usually on this Gospel reading, because the symbolism is so rich and compelling. In the narrative Jesus changes water into wine, abundant and of extremely good quality. Although in my camera I have learned how to change water into milk by playing with the shutter speed, I've not yet managed to change it into wine. Perhaps, if I had Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom, I could manage that too. But such skills aren't necessary, anyway, since in this community, for, thanks to Fr Bob, the wine never runs out!

Although the wine doesn't run out, other things do in my life and probably in the life of most of us – like energy, time for prayer, enthusiasm for mission, creativity, compassion for others, patience and being positive. Life can at times seem rather heavy, barren, drab and flat. Months of Covid restrictions and accompanying fears and anxieties and frustrations haven't helped. As we look at our Church today, the thought may occur that the wine, though it may not yet have entirely run out, is certainly in shorter supply, and may have lost something of its bouquet and taste. We need something new. (Thank God for Pope Francis!) With the mother of Jesus, then, we need to turn to Jesus and ask for his help.

A nice glass of wine can bring a smile to one's face, a glow to one's inner self; it can be a real feel-good factor. As we sip our

favourite Aussie red or New Zealand Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, and ponder our situation, maybe Jesus would turn to us, and instead of suggesting we should fill the jars with water, would say: “*You* be the good wine, *you* seek to bring comfort and joy and new meaning and zest into the lives of those around; *you* be the feel-good factor, a source of life and enthusiasm...”

The empty wine glasses or cups at Cana spelled social disaster for the young newly weds. Jesus sorted it out for them. But an empty wine glass on the table can be a sign of hope – it is in my community when I enter the dining room and scan the table. Because a glass stands empty, and precisely because it stands empty, it can be filled. So being aware of our areas of inadequacy, weariness and need, needn't make us depressed; Jesus can sort it out for us too. Our empty glass can be filled. We know that Jesus can give new and abundant life, and a future which is rich and fruitful. We may even dare to hope that he has kept the best wine until now; in my own life I suspect that this is the case.

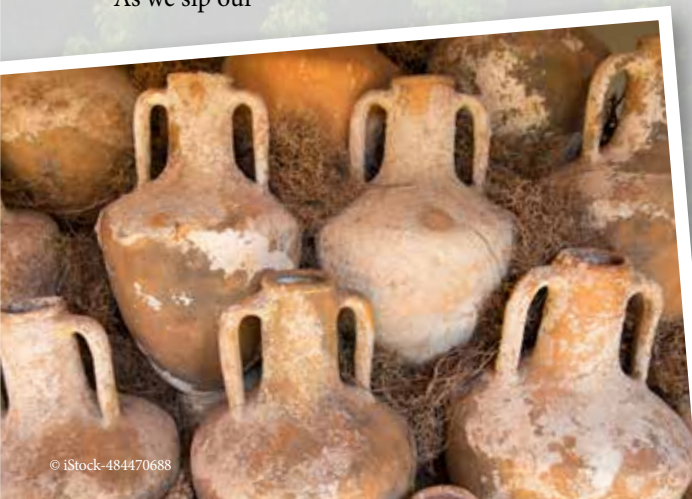
One aspect of the story which always fascinates me is the abundance of the wine which Jesus provided, 120 gallons – definitely good for a party! The same is true later in the ministry of Jesus when he provides the banquet of loaves and fishes for the people, and there is far more left over at the end than the meagre supply at the outset. Abundance seems to be God's way: count the blades of grass on the lawn, the trees in the local woodland, the pebbles on the beach, the stars in the universe, the people on our planet. All are pointers to God's boundless love. One area of abundance which has struck me recently is the amount of amazing kindness which human beings can show to others, great self-forgetfulness, care and creativity. Three of my friends have struggled with cancer over the past year, and whilst I recognise with gratitude the skill and care of consultant surgeons and nurses, I've also become aware of the abundance of kindness surrounding and sustaining them.

So, as we gaze into empty glasses, aware of inadequacies, problems, in ourselves, in those we live with, in our wider world, let's be alert to spot the signs of God's abundant love around us, and seek to reach out to others with generosity, and fill a glass with good wine.

Michael T Winstanley SDB



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The Inspiration of The Young

is a series looking at the lives of young people.

Carlo Acutis was born in London on May 3, 1991, to a wealthy Italian family. His Italian mother, Antonia Salzano, and Polish-British father, Andrea Acutis, were not especially religious, but still had Carlo baptised on May 18, 1991, in the church of Our Lady of Dolours, Chelsea. Not long after their son's birth, they finally settled in Milan in September 1991.

In 1995, when Carlo was four years old, his maternal grandfather died and was said to have appeared to him in a dream asking to be prayed for. Following this, Carlo developed a strong interest in the Christian faith, begging his parents to read him Bible stories about the young Jesus and the lives of the saints. He had a Polish au-pair who was more religious than his parents and would answer his questions, nurturing his innate curiosity. This interest continued to develop throughout his early school years, with the result that he was considered mature enough to make his First

Communion at just seven years old. After that, Carlo became a frequent communicant, making a conscious effort to pray before the tabernacle either before or after every Mass, as well as making a weekly confession. "The Eucharist," he said, "is my highway to Heaven." He had several models as guides for his life, especially St Francis of Assisi, for whom Carlo had great admiration, and also Ss Francisco and Jacinta Marto, St Dominic Savio, St Bernadette Soubirous and St Tarcisius.

The Eucharist is my highway to Heaven

Carlo attended primary school at the Marcelline Sisters of Piazza Tommaseo before moving up to the Jesuit Istituto Leone XIII high school in Milan. There, he continued to put Jesus at the centre of his life. When he was eleven, Carlo became a catechist. He

was so well prepared that he knew more than most of the adult catechists. He had an amazing memory and would read the Bible and remember entire passages by heart. He had the capacity to learn that was above and beyond what other people could. For Carlo, it was very easy to do. He would read the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church which was published under Pope John Paul II, and books on the faith every day. In simple, straightforward language, he encouraged his contemporaries to grow closer to God by receiving Christ's body at daily Mass.

“The more Eucharist we receive, the more we become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have the foretaste of heaven,” he told them.

A typical teen in many ways, he grew up in what most would consider an ordinary family: his parents worked, he went to school, he played sport, had several pets, and he loved watching films and playing video games. He enjoyed travelling, but his favourite place to visit was Assisi where he could be close to St Francis. Relatives and friends from his school days remember him as a bright, happy and generous child, who was always willing to go the extra mile to share his time and talents with them. He spoke up for and helped others without humiliating those in difficulty. He made a stand against bullying and defended a boy who was being taunted by his classmates because of his disability. If he knew that a friend's parents were about to split up, he would invite them to his home to make them feel supported and comforted. After school he volunteered his time with the city's homeless and destitute, often using his own spending money to buy sleeping bags for those sleeping rough. He also limited his video gaming and social media time to one hour a week so he would not be distracted by worldly things and would be able to focus on the Eucharist. According to his mum, Antonia, Carlo was very conscious of the potential harm and dangers of constant Internet and social media use. Carlo would say it was about balance: if someone spends his or her life only following ‘influencers’, they might only learn about what outfit to wear and “they completely forget about God,” she said.



He had the capacity to learn that was above and beyond what other people could.

His English language skills (a legacy from his father's family in England), together with his natural aptitude for science and technology, meant that he was soon devouring computer manuals and learning how to use the latest programmes for building websites, making films and networking with people on the other side of the world. Antonia notes that Carlo was all too aware of the dark side of this technology, with its threats to impressionable young people, but he also understood its potential and good, seeing it as an instrument that could be harnessed for preaching the Gospel.

Determined to master the complexities of coding and programming, he worked hard and applied his newfound knowledge and skills to updating and building new websites for his parish and school. Pier Luigi Imbrighi, the secretariat of the Pontifical Academy of the Martyrs, said that Carlo, “was an extraordinary expert, aiding us with great readiness to help and dedication in the creation of our website on vatican.va.” Carlo helped them promote volunteering

programmes through online advertising. Soon, his abilities were being recognised by people in the technology world and in the Catholic sphere, where he was acknowledged as a technology protégé. He simply wanted to use computers for good.

In a message to priests on Holy Thursday of 2003, Pope John Paul II published his last encyclical entitled *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, placing the Eucharist at the heart of the life and mission of the Church. The document, exploring the central mystery of the Christian faith, had a profound impact on eleven-year-old Carlo. The way that the bread and wine is transformed into the body and blood of the crucified Christ during the Mass fascinated him.

From this fascination an idea grew—he would create an exhibition on eucharistic miracles. Carlo wanted people to understand that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist by showing the moments throughout history when the Eucharist visibly became flesh and blood.

He then asked his parents to start taking him to all the places of the eucharistic miracles so he could take photographs, and two and half years later the project was completed. Carlo meticulously researched “about 136 eucharistic miracles that occurred over the centuries in different countries around the world, and have been acknowledged by the Church”¹ and created a collection of virtual panels with text and photographs recounting each event in an online museum. Besides creating a website to house this virtual museum, he helped create

At the turn of the 21st century, Carlo was growing up in a society experiencing an explosion of the Internet and the rise of social media sites, which radically changed the way young people accessed information and communicated with one another. Carlo saw this as a perfect platform to draw attention to faith and the Eucharist.



¹ <https://zenit.org/2015/07/20/eucharistic-miracles-shown-to-the-world-thanks-to-carlo/>

panel presentations that have been exhibited around the world. He was convinced that this online museum of miracles, now translated into a dozen different languages, would attract young people back to the Church.

Then suddenly in early October 2006, Carlo fell ill with flu. His condition quickly deteriorated, and he was admitted to hospital where blood tests confirmed a devastating diagnose of M3 fulminant leukaemia, a rapidly progressing, fatal disease. The fifteen-year-old boy who loved to laugh had days to live. Carlo took the news calmly, immediately offering all his sufferings for the Pope, the Church, and his own direct entry into heaven. "I am happy to die," he said, "because I have lived my life without wasting a minute on those things which do not please God." His immune system collapsed and on October 12, 2006, he suffered a brain haemorrhage and died. He was buried in Assisi according to his wishes.

For his family however, it was a crushing blow that they struggled to come to terms with. Encouraged by her son, Antonia had begun her own journey of faith, aided by a spiritual advisor, who told her that her child had "a special mission for the Church." To begin with, she recalls, she was unable to reconcile these words with Carlo's sudden death at just fifteen years old. "But my faith helped me to accept God's will," she says, "Slowly I came to realise that Carlo's mission was not here with us on earth, but rather to be an inspiration to others from heaven."

Not long after his death, the first reports of miracles attributed to Carlo's intercession were recorded. His



I am happy to die because I have lived my life without wasting a minute on those things which do not please God.

friends shared stories and personal memories through documentaries, websites and pilgrimages to his burial site in Assisi, the Umbrian hill town which he loved. In July 2018, Pope Francis declared him to be 'venerable', putting Carlo on the road to sainthood, and the following year cited him in the document *Christus Vivit* (Christ is Alive) marking the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on Young People. Carlo "knew how to use the new communications technology to transmit the Gospel," Pope Francis said, "to communicate values and beauty" without falling into "the trap... of consumerism and distraction."² Carlo was officially declared 'blessed' on October 10, 2020, in the Upper Church of the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi in Assisi.

According to his mother, Carlo has become, "God's 'influencer', gathering millions of followers who are being called back to their faith." In his short life, "he did all he could to help people understand that we are all called by God to eternal life," she says. Carlo

is already being seen as a patron saint of the internet, communicating these basic truths in simple language to young men and women of his day. "To always be close to Jesus," he told them, "that's my life plan." He achieved that goal and remained close to Jesus in whatever he did, whether it was praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament for hours, creating websites or going to school like every other teenager.

He remains an inspiration, especially to young people who aren't sure whether they could be both holy and 'normal' and individually unique. "All people are born as originals," he said, "but many die as photocopies." To

die as an "original," Carlo maintained, was to be guided through life by Christ.

More information about this inspirational young person can be found at:

U. De Vanna, *Blessed Carlo Acutis: 15 years of friendship with God*, (Bolton: Don Bosco Publications, 2021) available in our bookstore www.salesians.org.uk/bookshop

Eucharistic Miracles website: www.miracolieucaristici.org

Carlo Acutis official website: <http://www.carloacutis.com/en/association/presentazione>

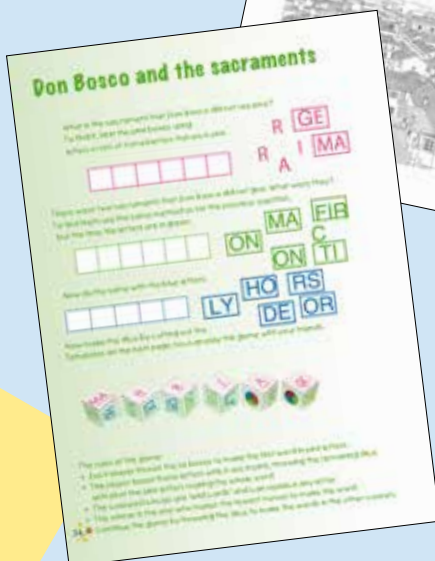
Sarah Seddon



² Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Shrine of the Holy House, Loreto, (March 25, 2019), n. 106.

Don Bosco Activity Book

PIERRE HOANG MINH CHIEN SDB



This book contains twenty-five episodes from the life of St John Bosco. Accompanying each one, there is a specific activity, game or puzzle that can be completed by following the text of the story.

Can you solve the clues relating to John Bosco's dream at nine years old to complete the crossword? Can you be like John the magician and make a magic box? Or perhaps you can identify all the things Don Bosco needed to celebrate Mass when he became a priest.

The Don Bosco Activity Book is a fabulous resource for families, youth groups and schools alike, offering opportunities for working together with children as they learn through play. Here at Don Bosco Publications, we enjoyed trying out the different activities ourselves, finding them challenging, thought-provoking and, more importantly, fun.

This colourful and engaging activity book is an enjoyable way to help children discover the life of a wonderful saint who was a great friend to children and young people. Recommended for ages 8 to 12 years.

Sarah Seddon

“

The moment you
doubt whether you can
fly, you cease forever
to be able to do it.”

Peter Pan, J.M.Barrie



Congratulations Mother Cazzuola!

In October 2021, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) gathered in Rome for the 25th General Chapter and elected Sr Chiara Cazzuola as Mother General of the Institute.

Mother Cazzuola previously held the role of Vicar General, where she worked closely with her predecessor, Mother Yvonne Reungoat, who has led the Institute since 2008.

Sr Chiara was born in Campiglia Marittima, Province of Livorno, Italy, in 1955. She joined the FMA into the then 'Santo Spirito' Province in Tuscany. She lived the first years of her formation in Castel Gandolfo, not far from Rome, and on August 5, 1975, she made her First Profession there.

She graduated in Literature and was a teacher for several years and, subsequently, Principal of secondary schools. She was the local and provincial delegate for the Salesian Youth Sports Clubs (PGS) and was a seasoned pastoral provincial coordinator of Youth Ministry.

Mother Cazzuola has been a community animator/leader and a provincial councillor as well. With the unification of the three Provinces of Emilia, Liguria and Tuscany, she entered the Provincial Council as councillor for formation and offered an effective contribution, favouring paths of communion and spirituality in simplicity, and a deep respect for people.

In 2007 she was appointed Provincial of her native Emilia-Liguria-Tuscany Province 'Madonna del Cenacolo', based in La Spezia. During the 22nd General Chapter (2008), she was elected as Visiting Councillor and Sr Cazzuola gave her availability by stating: "In a spirit of abandonment to the will of God and trusting in the help of the Lord, I say 'yes'."

Over the next six years she visited several provinces in America and Europe and gained a rich experience of Salesianity and interculturality. To each of her sisters, she gave attention and dedication, optimism with a smile, demonstrating the ability to grasp the seeds of life and hope in each person and in daily events. She remains a transparent and enthusiastic person about her vocation as an FMA and



has in her heart a great passion for young people. She is known to always express the capacity for frank, serene and collaborative relationships.

Mother General, Mother Yvonne Reungoat, chose her as Moderator for the 23rd General Chapter (2014), and in the same Chapter she was elected Vicar General, thus sharing up close the responsibility of its animation and governance with the Superior General.

To Mother's question after the vote: "Do you accept?" Sr Chiara replied with great emotion: "I trust the Lord and I entrust myself to Mary Help of Christians. This is why I say YES!"

During her inaugural Salesian Goodnight, Mother Chiara serenely expressed the following message:

"The heart experiences many different feelings, but there is one above all the others: and it is gratitude. Thanks to the Lord for having called us to this wonderful Institute that Our Lady wanted.

"This is a beautiful certainty that accompanies us. When we say 'Mary is present in our life, in the life of the Institute', we are telling the truth! Mother Mazzarella used to say to the sisters 'let's behave and live as if we always had Mary beside us'. And we really do, even if we don't see Her!

"So my thanks is for that. And then for each of you: for the amazement in every meeting, for the fraternity, the cordiality, for the welcome that is breathed every day, and which makes the universality of the FMA Institute visible. This gives us strength to live in the present and to look to the future with the certainty that it is Mary who guides us and is the source of our fidelity.

"Reading the Constitutions, we notice how the Marian dimension is present in all the articles. And we are constantly invited to be 'helpers' too.

"So, looking to Mary and living in communion with Her really means finding the source and also the strength of our



fidelity, and of the desire to be generative communities of life and vocational fruitfulness.

"Therefore, I entrust all of you to Her, and to you I entrust Her, so that we can truly keep Her in mind and let Her accompany us and make us obedient to the Word of the Lord."

A warm applause welcomed her official proclamation as Mother General and the 10th Successor of St Maria Domenica Mazzarello.

The FMA General Council 2021–2027

Mother Chiara Cazzuola	11th Superior General
Sr maria Luisa Nicastro	Secretary General
Sr Ena Veralís Bolaños	Economer General
Sr María del Rosario García Ribas	Vicar General
Sr Marla Ausilia De Siena	Social Communication
Sr Runita Galve Borja	Youth Ministry
Sr Nilza Fátima de Moraes	Formation
Sr Ruth del Pilar Mora Velazco	Missions
Sr Leslie del Socorro Sándigo Ortega	Salesian Family



Affairs of the Heart

Learning to pray heart to heart

During this year 2022, we mark the 400th anniversary since the death of St Francis de Sales in 1622 at Lyon. As a Salesian family, we know that his spirituality deeply influenced Don Bosco and consequently us Salesians, his sons. In fact, our name derives from him and not from Don Bosco! Throughout this year, we will be publishing the following article by Rev Dr Eunan McDonnell SDB, Provincial of Ireland, who is an expert in the field pertaining to this great saint and his very practical spirituality. I trust that you may find this article, split across our three Don Bosco Today issues for 2022, inspiring and helpful to your faith and relationship with the true King of Hearts, the Lord Jesus Christ!



“I love you.” If you were the one to utter these three words, surely you would hold your breath as you wait for the response. You would wait expectantly, hoping that the other person would reply with “I love you too.” In many ways, this is the starting point for understanding prayer from a Salesian perspective. God is always the one who is addressing our heart with love and, in a way, is holding His breath as He awaits our response: “Behold, I stand at the door (of your heart) and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in.”¹ If we accept this heart invitation and respond to this personal address with “I love you too”, then, heart speaks to heart. Prayer is born. The starting point for the person who prays, therefore, is always a response to the God who loves us first, so we always begin from “I love you too.”

As the relationship between the heart of God and the human heart deepens, the need for words decreases. This mutual delight in each other's company intensifies so that we begin to draw God's heart into our own.² Like a magnet, we are drawn to God by “*tire-cœur*” [literally ‘heart pull’].³ Just as a piece of metal becomes magnetised by the magnet that draws it, so too, we are *aimantisé* [magnetised] by God. If we allow ourselves to be ‘touched’ by God, we will become divinised by sharing in God's qualities. We can see this even in the young Francis de Sales who, as a student in Padua, develops the contemplative practice of resting near the divine heart. He writes: “As the body needs sleep to refresh and soothe its tired limbs, so does the soul need time to sleep and rest in the arms of its heavenly spouse to restore the strength and vigour of its spiritual powers that become exhausted and tired. Therefore, I will allot a certain time each day for this sacred sleep so that my soul, in imitation of the beloved disciple (John 13:23–24), will repose with complete confidence on the lovable breast, actually in the loving heart, of the Loving Saviour.”⁴

We are created with a capacity to love the infinite and this is why, as St Augustine noted, nothing else other than God will satisfy the deepest hungers of the human heart.

It is through this ‘reposing’ in the heart of Jesus that we learn to “listen to the heartbeat of God”⁵ and discover that Christ is *already* praying within us. Our call is to tune into this ceaseless prayer of Christ already flowing within us due to the Spirit of Love who has been poured into our hearts. Before we can adopt this practice of ‘reposing’ in the heart of Jesus, then, it is incumbent on us to understand first what we mean by the human heart.

The Human Heart

St Francis defines the person in terms of ‘heart’ which underscores our relational nature with others and *the Other*.⁶ The desires of the human heart revolve around love and even the experience of dissatisfaction reveals the infinite desires of the human heart for love. We are created with a capacity to love the infinite and this is why, as St Augustine noted, nothing else other than God will satisfy the deepest hungers of the human heart. Accordingly, the heart is at rest when it rejoices in the good, but is restless

when the good is absent because, as St Francis de Sales re-iterates, it desires the good.⁷ If we had all that was good for us, we would be without desire and without movement, but not being in possession of all our good, we search for it: “Our heart is anxious”; Francis de Sales starts from this anxiety.⁸ In sum, “God having created the human person in His image desires that, like in Him, everything in us be ordained by love and for love.”⁹ This Salesian *archaeological* and *teleological* understanding of the human person as a being originating from and destined towards love, has strong affinities with the spirituality of St Catherine of Genoa. For her, “the goal of the spiritual journey is defined by its

beginning. We have been formed by love, in love and for love. The truest ‘port’ of the human heart is the Pure Love in which it was first created.”¹⁰ God, who made our “heart even before it was made in the world seeing it only in His divine plan”¹¹ that it “would be forever united to His, for whom it was created.”¹²

The human heart is good because it is created by God who is good. This explains the Salesian insistence that at the core, or heart, of every person is goodness. Although we have been wounded by sin, human nature has not been corrupted. It retains its essential orientation to love,

¹ Rev.3:20.

² OEA IV:116; 162; 164. There are multiple references, in the *Treatise* which allude to God as the origin of the inspirations that he sends into our hearts. OEA IV:117; 128; 230; 232; 234; OEA V:89; 91; 100; 103; 344. References are taken from *Oeuvres Édition d'Annecy* and abbreviated as follows: OEA, followed by the volume (Roman numerals) and page (Arabic numerals). The English language translation is taken from Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. J.K Ryan (Rockford, IL: Tan book Publishers, 1975).

³ “Be a magnet to my heart” OEA V:19; T2:24. This explains why St Francis constantly makes use of terms expressive of “union”, “adhésion”, and “tirer”. See also, OEA VIII:153.

⁴ Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. William Dougherty, OSFS, ed. Joseph F. Chorprenning, OSFS (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 1993), 30.

⁵ John Philip Newell, *The Re-birthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings* (Woodstock, Vermont: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2014), 7.

⁶ It is not easy to define ‘heart’ in Salesian spirituality because St Francis ‘does not always use the term to signify systematically the same reality’ R. Mercier, ‘Spiritual Direction: Prophetic Insight and Pastoral Guidance Methods of Prayer according to St Francis de Sales’, *Indian Journal of Spirituality*, 18 (2005), 350.

⁷ OEA IV:44.

⁸ E.M. Lajeunie, *Saint Francis de Sales. The Man, the Thinker, His Influence*. Vol. 2. Trans. by Rory O'Sullivan (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 1987), 266

⁹ OEA IV:40.

¹⁰ J. Urdís, ‘Possessed by Pure Love: The Spirituality of Catherine of Genoa’, *Studies in Spirituality*, 6 (1996), 131–44.

¹¹ OEA XVI:300.

¹² OEA XV:91.

and this natural inclination to love God becomes an effective “crook by which God can gently hold us and draw us to himself.”¹³ This is possible because God’s love is breathed into us at creation. In his earliest book, ‘Meditations on the Church’, St Francis writes that Adam only becomes human whenever God *inspires him* (that is, breathes his life into him). This ‘mass of earth’ becomes human *only after* receiving the breath of love. As Pocetto reminds us, “thus love enters into the very make-up of the human person, into the innermost structure of our being... For this reason, human life is to be considered essentially as a life of freedom in love.”¹⁴ In us, all things must be set in order by love and for love: “Just as weight gives movement to the moveable parts of a clock, so love gives to the soul whatever movement it has.”¹⁵ This, then, is our universal calling to holiness, everyone is called to love. It is in and through our love of God and neighbour that we give glory to the God who is creating us now.

At a very natural level, that is, at the level of nature, we have been created in such a way so as to be able to receive God’s communication because the human heart is not only oriented to the good but created to love the infinite good. St Francis remarks that “God has planted in the *human heart* not only a special, natural inclination to love the good in general, but to love in particular and above all things his divine goodness.”¹⁶ As André Ravier points out, “the heart of God has made the human heart.”¹⁷ So, we can say with the psalmist, “He made us, we belong to Him.”¹⁸ If we were to attempt to translate what St Francis is saying into more contemporary language, we could say that we are ‘hard-wired’ for God. Our ‘natural inclination’ to God is borne out of our natural desire for God, and this means that we have an intrinsic God-ward orientation or an orientation to God. We have a fundamental basic attraction for God. Our attraction towards other human beings rests on this principle that we are drawn towards what we perceive to be good, beautiful and true. People are signposts on the journey since their beauty, truth and goodness points us to the supreme Beauty, Truth and Goodness that is God.

The Wounded Heart

In every great love story, there is an element of tragedy. This is also true of the love story between God and humanity. God is our God and our heart is His home. Although the human heart is created by God with a potential to love God and others, the journey towards true love is often short-circuited. This is because instead



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of transcending ourselves and becoming a gift in love, we seek self-gratification and our love becomes self-centred through sin, disordered desires, and self-love. It follows that the human heart is ‘arrhythmic’ in that it beats out of rhythm with the heart of God. When we are no longer in relation to the true and living God, we will quite quickly seek compensations, and the false gods of addiction become more attractive. It is a small step to become absorbed with the things God has created rather than recognising them as gifts from God. As St Francis teaches, however, we become homeless in this absorption, no longer living from our heart when something other than God possesses our heart. We are ripe for addiction. Such addiction reveals to us that our restless heart longs for the infinite God, but we get seduced by a ‘downward transcendence’ when we substitute the living God for some *thing* or some *one*. Such “desiring love, settling on an object extrinsic to the self, makes, admittedly, a movement outwards and indeed reaches its object, but this rootedness in the self draws it ineluctably back, to complete a circle (as *amor recurvus*) and finish where it began.”¹⁹ Accordingly, as Lavelle remarks, “the proper work of the will is in the ordering of our love; for the will dictates the consent or the refusal we give to love... the will regulates the course of love and must be vigilant to keep its flame alive and prevent it from being diverted to objects which may allure but can never satisfy it. Such objects are worthy of being loved only in the light of the Infinite Love which sustains the will itself and in which, once found, it reaches fulfilment.”²⁰ This emphasis on our free consent to love brings us to the threshold of the mystical life because it presupposes God’s prevenient grace already at work within us. In Salesian terminology this is the role of inspirations.²¹

Divine inspirations

St Francis teaches us that as well as refusing to make choices which lead us away from our deepest self and the

¹³ OEA IV:84.

¹⁴ Alexander Pocetto, ‘An Introduction to Salesian Anthropology’, *Salesian Studies*, 8 (Summer, 1969), 45–50.

¹⁵ OEA V:309.

¹⁶ OEA IV:77. See also, OEA IV:78; 79; 84; 137.

¹⁷ André Ravier, *Ce Que Croyait François de Sales* (Paris: Ateliers Henri Labat, 1976), 7.

¹⁸ Psalm 100.

¹⁹ James McEvoy, “The other as oneself: friendship and love in the thought of St Thomas Aquinas”, in *Thomas Aquinas: Approaches to the Truth*, eds. J. McEvoy and M. Dunne (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 24.

²⁰ Louis Lavelle, *Quatre Saints: De La Sainteté* (Livry-Gargan: SAGIM, 1993), 195–6.

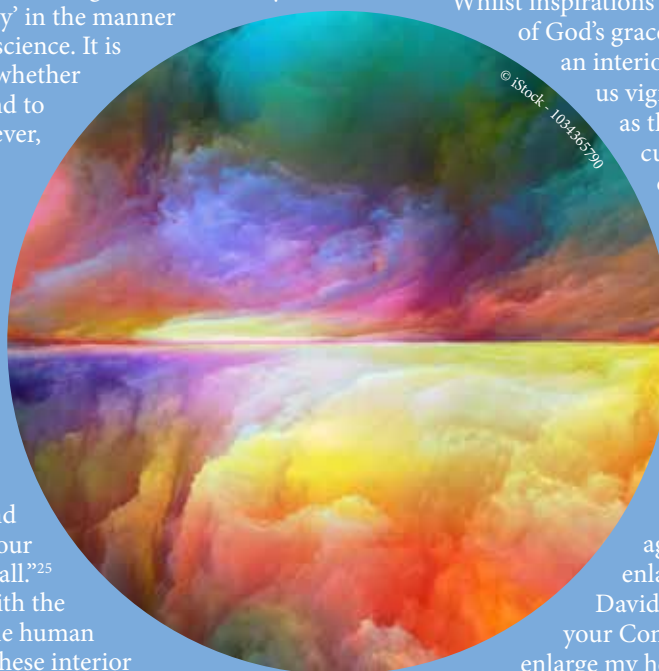
²¹ The theme of inspiration is treated in the *Introduction*, book two, chapter eighteen, OEA III:108–11 and extensively in the *Treatise*, book two, chapters 9–13, OEA IV:115–133; book four, chapters 5–6, OEA IV:228–36; book eight, chapters 10–13 OEA V:89–104.

path of love, we also need to be vigilant in monitoring the good desires of our heart, to foster these desires and help to bring them to fruition. In a letter to Jane de Chantal, St Francis de Sales writes: “I shall never stop praying God to perfect His work in you, that is, to further your excellent desire and plan to attain the fullness of Christian life, a desire which you should cherish and nurture tenderly in your heart. Consider this to be a work of the Holy Spirit and a spark of His divine flame.”²² What is at play here is the ability to recognise God’s Spirit at work in our good desires which in Salesian spirituality is simply called, ‘inspirations’. Often, we are more familiar with the role of temptations than its counterpart, inspirations.²³ God, as our supreme good, is able to draw us to Himself through the attraction of His inspirations. This is the particular mission of the Holy Spirit who pours into our hearts the first rays and perceptions of his light and vital heat.²⁴ Inspiration, then, is to the human person what the light and warmth of the Sun is to the Earth. In this instance, the inspirations, through which God reveals his will, are presented through the metaphor of light and heat. They are described ‘psychologically’ in the manner in which they affect our conscience. It is consequent on our free will whether we choose to resist or respond to this divine awakening. However, it must be noted that we do not awaken ourselves, it is the prerogative of these inspirations to bring about our awakening. As St Francis notes: “I cannot awaken, nor can I move myself unless you move me. But when you have moved, then, O beloved spouse of my soul, ‘we run,’ we two. You run before me, ever drawing me forward, and for my part I will follow in your path by consenting to your call.”²⁵ Here we come face to face with the essence of Salesian prayer, the human heart being drawn through these interior movements of divine inspirations into the very Heart of God. This, in turn, allows us to be led by the Holy Spirit because inspirations are always God’s initiative. Of course, although the divine goodness draws and attracts us, we are left free to respond: “In spite of the all-powerful strength of God’s merciful hand, which touches, enfolds

and bends the soul with so many inspirations... grace has the power not to overpower, but to entice our heart.”²⁶

The essence of inspiration is the way in which God addresses us intimately and reveals His will to us personally. As St Francis expresses it, “His *vital breath* is called inspiration because by it, supreme goodness *breathes upon* us and, therefore, *inspires* in us the desires and intentions of his heart.”²⁷ Inspiration allows for mutual friendship between God and us because Jesus reveals the ‘intentions of his heart’ and speaks to our hearts. As André Brix comments: “The Salesian method is situated at the level of freedom and personal inspiration. Inspiration reveals that God would like to act in an absolutely original and authentic manner in each freedom, so as to change the world and create it. It is not a question of forming a regiment of obedient robots. Inspiration is to do with my acting in a concrete situation where no-one else can take my place. We must let the exterior be born from the interior.”²⁸

Whilst inspirations remain always the initiative of God’s grace, nevertheless, we can foster an interior disposition that makes us vigilant and ready to respond as the occasion arises. The cultivation of such an interior disposition allows us to respond to these inspirations “carefully, frequently, and promptly”²⁹ while “leading an ordinary life to all outward appearances.”³⁰ This inculcates “the virtue of devotion” which “is nothing other than a general inclination readiness of the soul to do what it knows to be agreeable to God. It is that enlargement of heart of which David said, ‘I have run the way of your Commandments, when You did enlarge my heart.’” St Francis, therefore, “invites us ‘to do everything by love’ because he knows that love broadens the heart while at the same time keeping it simple and master of itself.”³¹ Indeed, St Francis argues that if we only “accepted God’s inspirations to the full extent of their power in how short a time would we make great progress in holiness.”³²



Used with permission from the Irish Salesian Bulletin.

²² Letter to Jane Frances de Chantal, 3 May 1604, OEA XII: 263-64.

²³ ‘Inspirations are ... all those interior attractions, motions, acts of self-reproach and remorse, lights and conceptions that God works in us and predisposes our hearts by his blessings, fatherly care, and love in order to awaken, stimulate, urge, and attract us to holy virtues, heavenly love, and good resolutions, in short, to everything that sends us on our way to our everlasting welfare.’ OEA III:108.

²⁴ OEA IV:130.

²⁵ OEA IV:132.

²⁶ OEA IV:126-27.

²⁷ OEA V:90. This allusion to inspiration as ‘breathing upon’ is derived from its etymological Latin source: *in-spirare* means to breath upon, indicating that it doesn’t come from within us but from God.

²⁸ André Brix, *Initiation à la lecture du Traité de L’Amour de Dieu*, Texte établi d’après l’enregistrement des conférences données au cours de plusieurs weekends en 1980–1981 à Ellezelles (Belgique), 287.

²⁹ OEA III:15.

³⁰ OEA III:6.

³¹ François Corrigan, *La Spiritualité de François de Sales: Un Chemin de Vie*. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1989), 143.

³² OEA IV:121.

Accompanying Young People in Salesian Schools



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Accompanying young people is a central role of teachers in Salesian schools.

That accompaniment of learners is a helping relationship aimed at removing the multi-levelled obstacles to learning in a young person's life. It includes and, at times, goes beyond the achievement of academic success. The word 'accompanying' implies a process of journeying with the young person through growth and change. It implies a quality of presence where the adult engages with the world of the young person and understands their hopes and dilemmas from the young person's perspective.

Accompanying is both professional and spiritual, since it takes the adult into the mystery of a young life and, at the same time, roots them in the professional standards and guidelines of their school. In that sense, all accompaniment, whether it is called mentoring, coaching or some other term, will have a spiritual dimension. That is because all these helping relationships touch questions of purpose and meaning in the lives of

young people. Purpose and meaning are the bread and butter of spirituality.

It is impossible to touch any aspect of a young person's life without encountering aspects of their soul.

It is not possible to engage with a young person about the poor quality of their work without touching aspects of their motivation. Why are they not bothered? What kind of self-image do they carry? What is the pattern of aspiration in their family? What events and relationships have made them reluctant to even try? Where has their hope and energy gone? Underneath the academic struggle there will be hidden obstacles to learning that need to be identified, and these will remain hidden until the young person establishes a relationship of trust with their accompanier, mentor or coach. Don Bosco said: "Confidence creates an electric current between youngsters and the adult, hearts are opened and weaknesses made known" (*Letter from Rome*, May 1884).

The coach, accompanier or mentor in a Salesian setting needs to establish a

warm and friendly relationship of trust with the young person. Such trust may be difficult for the young person to establish, depending upon their own history of relationships with adults. Gentle, non-judgmental persistence is needed. In the same letter, Don Bosco said: "How do you break through this barrier of mistrust? By a friendly and an informal approach with people, especially in free time. You cannot have trust in your relationships without this friendly approach and where it is not evident there can be no confidence."

Soul searching

Don Bosco's motto was "Give me souls, take away the rest." He chose this because he wanted to make it clear that he wanted to protect and nurture the spirit of young people: their soul. The soul can be seen as that part of a person's life that is in constant relationship with the mystery and meaning of life that some of us call God. It is the soul that engages in the search for meaning, that reaches out in compassion, that overflows with joy and creativity. It is the heart of being human. It is impossible to touch any aspect of a young person's life without encountering aspects of their soul. Even though our culture would like to separate this spiritual dimension from the external world, it is impossible to do so because we are all spiritual beings, and often wounded spiritual beings at that.

Therefore, accompanying young people is a vital part of our work as Salesian educators. We are never simply instructors or just providers of knowledge; something deeper is happening in the educational relationship: we are saving souls.

Some specific thoughts on Salesian accompaniment in school

An accompanying community

The accompanying relationship must be a safe place, not only in the sense of safeguarding but also in the atmosphere within which it is conducted. The creation of a safe space is at the heart of Don Bosco's approach to education. His original work in Turin, called 'The Oratory' was an enclosed space with only one entrance that was staffed all day. He ensured that no danger could break through to the young people. He also ensured that the young people always had an adult in sight if things got out of hand. Don Bosco was convinced that young people were basically good and believed that if they grew up in a safe place, they would flourish in their unique virtues and sense of vocation in life.

Informal one-to-one accompaniment and the 'word in the ear'

In school that means that accompaniment happens everywhere and that we can ensure a safe and optimistic space for young people and their teachers. The accompaniment happens naturally, constantly and

informally within the daily exchanges on corridors and in recreation. The accompaniment also includes young people journeying together through their school years, listening to their friends, sharing their advice and deepening their trust in one another. The same can be said of colleagues as they work on common tasks; they, too, accompany each other through understanding, compassion and advice. When those conversations happen, the soul is engaged, meaning is sought after, direction becomes clearer and resilience grows.

Don Bosco encouraged his staff to use the 'word in the ear', especially during free time. Catching a young person in the yard and making an encouraging comment can have a strong impact on a them because it is recognition of their inner life and an outward sign of the concern of the adult. You may say something as simple as: "Well done! Your uniform is perfect today" or you may ask about a member of their family or congratulate them on their team's success. All these brief engagements strengthen trust, create a sense of belonging and strengthen the soul of each young person.

Group accompaniment opportunities

Don Bosco used to gather all his students, especially those in the boarding section, and offer them a thought to close the day. Often it was something that emerged from that day, sometimes it was a story, occasionally he would express disappointment with their behaviour. He would always finish

on an optimistic note so that their spirit was lifted as they ended their day.

Assemblies. In school the nearest we have to this experience is the assembly. It is an opportunity to guide, instruct, uplift, warn and strengthen the sense of shared community values. It is a form of whole-school accompaniment. It reinforces the common spirit of the school and captures some of the elusive aspects of spirituality in a shared celebration of unity.

All small groups will have a similar dynamic of accompaniment. Don Bosco formed small groups of young people and gave them specific roles, and he also encouraged some young people to form their own groups. These groups always included some activity, which could be sport, drama, music or social concerns. They also included an element of learning guided by an adult as well as opportunities for prayer and celebrations. These small groups, apparently focused on producing a play, for example, also created opportunities to discover individual gifts and weaknesses that could be addressed either through the group or one-to-one with an adult. The accompaniment would be seen as a by-product of the activity by the young people, but the adult guiding the group may well see the accompaniment as the core purpose of the activity. Above all, the activity and the roles adopted by individuals would give the adult leader an insight into the giftedness in young people and their passions that could lead them to a deeper sense of purpose and vocation.

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Retreat experiences form another type of group accompaniment that can have an immediate and long-lasting impact on the spiritual awareness of young people. Teachers who accompany young people on these experiences, especially residentials, discover new depths and a deeper respect for young people who open up their experience on retreat. They return to school changed, with a wider horizon and stronger peer relationships. Above all, their sense of compassion and care for one another seems to have grown in a way that has a lasting impact on the whole school.

Accompaniment can therefore be seen as a common theme that runs through all relationships in a Salesian school. Every conversation is rich with spiritual meaning when reflected upon by the educator. Every engagement with a young person is an invitation to recognise the holy ground on which we stand as educators.

The qualities of Salesian accompaniment

A passion for helping others

In a Salesian school, the adult must have a passion for walking alongside others and helping them to grow. It is that genuine care that triggers the trust

Every engagement with a young person is an invitation to recognise the holy ground on which we stand as educators.

that allows the young person to let you help them. Otherwise, they will close up and resist, and the experience will be frustrating and sterile.

An optimistic approach to people

Don Bosco was always clear that young people were full of potential, and, despite a poor start, they could improve and lead a fuller life. When the accompanier has that attitude, it gives hope and courage to the young person who can then begin to change and become 'unstuck' from harmful attitudes and memories.

Non-judgmental

To fully help a young person open and explore their own path forward, you need to be non-judgmental. This

means fully immersing yourself in the world and needs of the young person and not imposing your own opinions, thoughts and judgments. Don Bosco realised that if a young person were already struggling in life, it was highly unlikely that it was wholly their fault but more likely it was due to the circumstances of their earlier years. With young people, Don Bosco believed that compassion and understanding should precede any judgement.

Ability to listen

Listening is a core skill for accompanying, and it needs focus and discipline, making good eye contact, remembering what has been said, not interrupting and reflecting on the emotional energy with which words are said. Listening also requires noticing pauses, themes, circular patterns of conversation and knowing when to intervene in a conversation. Don Bosco had an amazing gift for listening to young people, many of whom reported that he could look into their very soul. It is only when a young person feels that they really have been listened to that the accompanier and the young person are in the same place and understanding grows along with the capacity to change.

Don Bosco realised that if a young person were already struggling in life, it was highly unlikely that it was wholly their fault but more likely it was due to the circumstances of their earlier years.



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Keeps appropriate confidentiality

As an accompanier you will be privy to confidences that young people will not have shared with anyone else. They need to be able to trust that you will keep all conversations confidential within the safeguarding disclosure policies of the school. It is important that at the start of your accompanying process that you make this clear. That does not mean that sharing your general experience with a supervisor is not allowed, but that supervision conversation is covered by the same standards of confidentiality as the accompanying conversation.

Motivating

A great accompanier is one who can help motivate and inspire young people. Whilst personal motivation to change does need to come from the young person, an accompanier needs to be able to recognise and feedback the progress of the young person so that they know they are moving

forward. That appreciation of growth is experienced in Christian terms as a grace from God, a spiritual enrichment as well as an increase in competence or awareness. In Salesian accompanying, it is joy that is the great motivator as the helping relationship develops. Occasionally, the disappointment of the accompanier can also motivate the young person but only when a strong helping bond has been established.

Honesty

A good accompanier relationship is based on honesty between the adult and the young person. For the young person to move forward, they need to be prepared to be honest with themselves and their adult accompanier, and, likewise, the accompanier needs to be honest with the young person. A good accompanier is one who is prepared to give honest and appropriate feedback about their observations and who is also honest enough to say if and when their help is no longer appropriate.

Be a soul-searching detective

Accompanying can also be seen as a process of soul searching. The experience of mystery writers might be helpful here, as their detectives employ specific skills to uncover the depth of a situation. If the analogy works, it suggests that accompaniers should:

- Ask good questions
- Offer clues, not answers
- Engage emotions
- Reflect prayerfully on what they hear
- Expect distractions
- Provide support
- Allow time for struggle
- Be optimistic

But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven
by W.B. Yeats (1865–1939)

“Give me souls, take away the rest.” –
Don Bosco

Taken from: David O'Malley, 'Accompanying Young People in Salesian Schools', *Salesian Schools UK*, 11 March, 2022 [Blog], Available at https://www.salesianschools.com/post/accompanying-young-people-in-salesian-schools?cid=37cb707f-ee4c-4fee-83cb-bdd50cceaba7&utm_campaign=b529a050-2781-4b37-be9c-847ffd3dd3aa&utm_medium=mail&utm_source=so (Accessed 25 March 2022).

David O'Malley SDB



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On the Road to Emmaus

SUSANNE BRANDT AND
KLAUS-UWE NOMMENSEN

Sometimes, things in life aren't that obvious. Sometimes we can get confused and perplexed by what happens to us, and it takes a while to understand what God is doing for us. Even in the Bible, people didn't always recognise the signs God gave them.

This happened in Luke's Gospel. A couple of disciples were walking along a road, and they were feeling sad that Jesus had died. A stranger appeared and started walking with them and asking questions about what they were discussing, and they explained how upset they were over the death of Jesus. The stranger then started to describe to them how the prophets and Scripture had predicted what would happen.

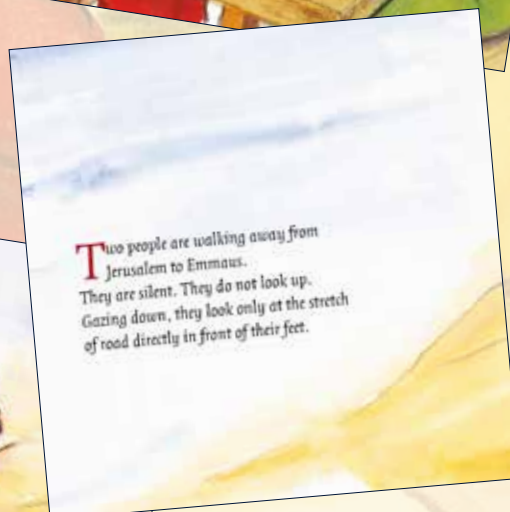
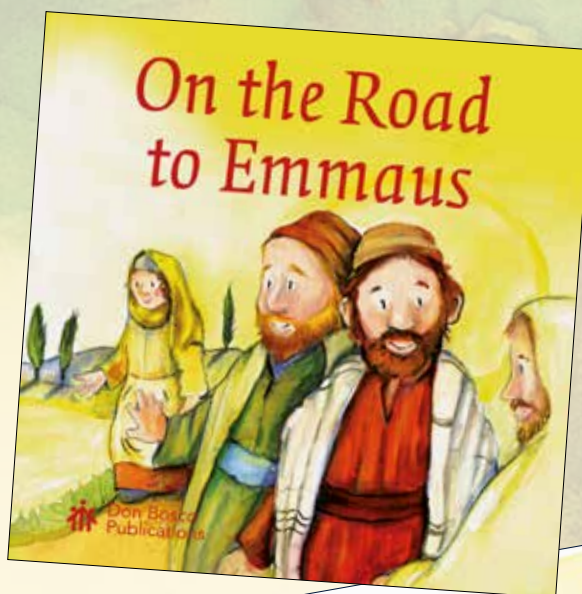
Imagine their joyful surprise when they realised that the stranger they had met on their journey was in fact Jesus.

Susanne Brandt and Klaus-Uwe Nommensen have taken the familiar story from Luke 24:13–35

and brought it to life for young children. Accompanied by beautiful illustrations by Petra Lefin, this book is ideal to read to your little ones, or to help emerging readers. The rounded corners make the book easy for small hands to handle too.

This Gospel story is a wonderful way to help young children understand that even though we don't always recognise or understand things that God is doing, we can trust that God is working for our good. Recommended for ages 3 to 8.

Sarah Seddon



OBITUARY FOR

Sr Bruna Livieri FMA



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On Saturday, May 29, 2021, in the community of Cowley, Oxford, the Lord called home to Himself, our dear Sister Bruna Livieri

Born in Padua, Italy, on September 18, 1925

Professed in Henley-on-Thames (England) August 5, 1954

Belonged to the British Province of St Thomas of Canterbury

Sr Bruna left a written message to be put into her biography on her death. This short personal message sums up the soul of Bruna and so begins her story.

"In my life I ate the bread of love and the bread of tears, but on my horizon there never lacked the rainbow of God's love that has always made up for everything, even in the darkest nights. I was born into a wonderful family, very modest, I would even say, poor, but full of peace and happiness. The good Lord was present each day and in every circumstance. Our Lady was always invoked—the mother who guides us. God was present in every created thing—the father who never abandons us, a merciful father, a father of love."

Bruna was born in Sant'Angelo di Piove di Sacco, Padua. She was the eldest of seven children, three boys and four girls. Her dad worked in a flower plantation as a landscape

gardener and her mum remained at home to care for the family. When she was five years old, her family moved to Villatora so that her dad could be near his workplace. It was here she got to know the FMA and began to attend the Oratory that she loved, especially the family spirit among the sisters themselves and with the children and young people.

Bruna finished school at the age of fourteen and stayed at home to help her mother with embroidery work which they sold. By the time she was eighteen years old, Bruna was already an active member of Catholic Action and the local parish priest spoke to her about vocation. She became ill with pleurisy, which caused her to defer the decision for six months. Bruna entered with the Salesian Sisters, but the pleurisy flared up again and she had to return home. On May 24, Bruna received a letter from Mother Linda Lucotti who wrote to encourage her not to lose heart. Bruna remembered her from the early days of the Oratory and Mother Linda's words to her then "You will be one of us."

A Benedictine priest, who was a family friend, encouraged Bruna to go to England and even bought her passport. She left Italy on July 8, 1949, and it wasn't until she was travelling through France that she realised what she was undertaking. No language and no real prospects! The story of her vocation from then on is marked by the rainbow of God's love on the horizon. With the improvement of her health and the direct intervention of Mother Linda Lucotti, Bruna joined the Salesian Sisters in the Anglo-Irish Province. Her prayer that first night was: "Lord, I am ready to follow you whatever happens."

Bruna made her novitiate in Cowley, Oxford, where she was very happy and was professed in Henley-on-Thames, on August 5, 1954. From that time onwards, Sr Bruna served the Province untiringly, notwithstanding the fact that she had poor physical health and never really had a command of the English language. Her deep love for the Congregation and the Province was strong and she was happy to do whatever was asked of her. However, she did feel that the lack of professional qualifications as a sister had an influence on her life even

though her natural giftedness, her resilience and fidelity in everything often veiled her real suffering.

What she missed out in professional training, she made up for with her tireless and wholehearted generosity and giftedness as cook, bursar, seamstress, embroiderer, infirmarian, assistant of the aspirants and postulants, and many other tasks. She put her gifts at the service of every community and whenever there was an occasion, she willingly took part in the youth clubs and shared her great gift of craft making and sewing with everyone and was noted for her patience and kindness. In her years of semi-retirement, Bruna found new energy in visiting the people of the parishes, and her greatest joy was being a eucharistic minister to the sick and housebound.

The number of communities she served testifies to her availability and readiness to move to any place of need: Henley, Cowley, Chertsey, Liverpool, Battersea, Kendal, Hastings, Paisley and Easterhouse. Many sisters remember Bruna for her great kindness, discretion, compassion and understanding; for her deep prayer life which sustained her in times of stress, pain and misunderstandings in community. She was thorough in her work, and in the ups and downs of life, a rock of sense and a mine of wisdom. Others remember that whatever she received, she insisted it went to the poor and sought them out when visiting in the parish.

Bruna only moved into retirement in 2016 when she moved to Cowley but continued to live with the community until the last few months when she needed full time care and assistance. Her body was weakening but her soul was still strong and alert, until, on the eve of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, she left us for the God she had truly sought all her life. Sr Bruna's last moments came unexpectedly, and almost in a hurry. She closed her long life in quiet and simple peace. Thank you, Sr Bruna, for the life you shared so generously with us. We will miss you but accompany you with our love and prayer.

**Pauline Clark FMA
Provincial**

OBITUARY FOR

Fr Michael Cunningham SDB



© Unknown

Michael J Cunningham was born on July 30, 1944, in Radcliffe. He had an older brother, Tony. For his secondary education, Michael first attended Thornleigh Salesian College for two years, and then moved on to the Salesian Missionary College, Shrigley. He entered the Novitiate at Burwash in 1963 and was professed the following year. After three years of study in Beckford, he obtained his BA as an external student at London University, and then he did a year's practical training in Chertsey and a second year in Shrigley. After a further year in Beckford, he went for his theological studies with Bernard Parkes to Upholland College, with Thornleigh as their Salesian base. This local choice rather than studies abroad was occasioned by the fragile health of his parents.

After completing his theological studies, Michael was ordained to the priesthood at Thornleigh. Whereas most new priests had a scriptural quotation on their ordination cards, Michael had a quote from Dan Berrigan, the American civil rights activist priest. By then he had become very interested in justice issues and in

politics, an interest which remained throughout his life. At this time, he became involved in the Movement for a Better World, an organisation dedicated to renewal after Vatican II. Michael then took up a post as teacher in Bootle for fourteen years, mainly of RE. During that time, he obtained a M.Ed. degree. He became Rector of that community in 1988, and for two years was Vice-provincial, before himself becoming Provincial in 1992, based in Stockport.

Of the many aspects of his provincial years, one significant venture was the beginning of the process to establish a better quality of care for the elderly members of the Province, and he established a team to discern the way forward, a discernment which later led to the communities at St Joseph's and in Farnborough. He also set up a planning office. After finishing as Provincial in 1998, Michael moved to Bolton as Rector for six years, before returning to Bootle as a member of the community. It was during this time that he developed his career as a writer, producing eight books on aspects of Christian spirituality. One significant theme was the transforming mercy of God. He also became involved in a centre for asylum seekers in the city, Asylum Link Merseyside. He is remembered there for his great kindness and patience. For many years Michael was engaged in the ministry of retreat preaching, which included visits to the Salesians in Ireland, the United States and Australia. He was also in demand for retreats to sisters at home and abroad. He was appointed Rector of the Bootle community in 2015, and continued in that role until his health started to fail and dementia began to set in. During these years he was particularly attentive to the spiritual needs of the FMA in Croxteth and Blundellsands. Eventually, he had to move to Bolton St Joseph's, and finally to Nazareth House, Prestwich, where he went to the Lord on October 16, 2021. His Requiem Mass was celebrated on October 30, 2021, at Thornleigh College Chapel, after which Michael was buried in the Salesian graves at Astley Bridge Cemetery.

Throughout his long life he remained a staunch supporter of Bolton Wanderers Football Club, through many ups and downs, usually attending games with his brother. Michael had a great sense of humour and was a wonderful raconteur, with so many stories, often based on his experiences with the young people in Bootle. Yet he was quite shy by nature and had a serious and contemplative side. One of Michael's key qualities was his commitment to disadvantaged young people and people who were struggling for justice, those on the margins. Many people have commented on his kindness and approachability, a true son of Don Bosco. Throughout the twists and turns of his life, Michael's basic option was to follow the Lord in Don Bosco's way. We can pray with the writer of the letter to the Ephesian community that now Michael may comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge and may be filled with the fullness of our God. It is with sadness mingled with gratitude for his life amongst us, then, that we commit him to Lord he served so generously and faithfully.

Michael T Winstanley SDB
Rector



OBITUARY FOR

Fr James Francis Mageean SDB



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James Francis Mageean, (known familiarly as Frank), was born in Farnworth, Bolton, on April 12, 1945. He had two younger brothers, Bernard and Danny. For his secondary education he frequented Thornleigh Salesian College (1956-63), where he came under the spell of St John Bosco. Consequently, he asked to be admitted to the Salesian Novitiate in Burwash. The assessment supporting his application described him as trustworthy, industrious, loyal and exemplary in his duties. 'He is of a quiet disposition', it said, 'very dependable and hardworking'. He was professed as a Salesian on September 8, 1964. His post novitiate report stated: "He is zealous, apostolic and tactful and is much esteemed by his companions. He has been an excellent novice and this gives good hopes for the future."

Frank then moved to Beckford for four years of further studies, obtaining a BSc as an external student of London University. After this he went to Shrigley for three years of practical experience of active salesian life. In 1970 he

travelled south to Battersea to obtain a teaching qualification, and then pursued a theological course at Heythrop College, part of London University, graduating with a BD. One member of the Provincial Council at the time cautioned that he was so generous with his time, that he might be prone to take on too much and, as a result, to over work. He was ordained to the priesthood in the Thornleigh Chapel on May 10, 1975.

For the next thirty years Frank was based in the Bootle community: for twenty years as a teacher, and for ten as headteacher. Throughout these years he showed great compassion for disadvantaged young people, reaching out to all who needed support, going the extra mile and even further to offer support and encouragement. He also looked to protect the interests of many people employed in school, seeking to ensure they received what they were due. For many years he supported an elderly priest in the parish of Aughton. Fr Frank also played a role in ensuring provision was made for the housekeeper when the parish priest passed away.

He nursed his elderly father over many months, travelling to Bolton to oversee his care overnight, whilst he was headteacher, and returning to school the next morning. Eventually all of this work took its toll, and Fr Frank decided to retire from school to look after his father on a permanent basis. Sadly, his father passed away shortly afterwards, and he was denied that opportunity.

Fr Frank was an eclectic and a cultured person who had many interests: He was a fine singer and a good pianist, gifts he often kept under wraps. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of classical music; he was a frequent attendee at concerts by the Liverpool Philharmonic and Hallé orchestras. He had a deep love for scripture and ancient languages such as Greek and Hebrew; he always kept a Greek lexicon with him and studied Hebrew in his spare time. He was fascinated by the written word and immersed himself in books and literature of all kinds.


After retiring from headship, he was

able to spend a sabbatical year in Australia, where his brother Bernard now lived. On returning to the UK, Frank was appointed as Parish Priest in St Gregory's, Bollington, where he spent ten happy and fruitful years, deeply loved and appreciated by his parishioners. During this time he served for six years as a member of the Provincial Council. Towards the end of his time in Bollington he began to slow down, struggling with the onset of dementia. He was relieved of his parish responsibilities, and moved to reside in St Joseph's, Bolton. There his condition gradually worsened, until it became necessary for him to be transferred to Nazareth House, Prestwich. After some weeks, he was rushed into North Manchester Hospital. While he initially responded to treatment, the effects of his dementia worsened and he departed this life on September 9, the day after Our Lady's birthday. After the funeral Mass in the local parish church of the Holy Infant and St Anthony, Frank was laid to rest in the Salesian plot of Astley Bridge cemetery, the place where his parents were buried before him.

Frank will always be remembered for his commitment to those in need, his generosity, and his immense kindness, a true son of Don Bosco. May he now rest in peace.

Michael T. Winstanley SDB
Rector



A person stands in front of a wall with vertical stripes of red, yellow, blue, and green. The wall has a brick-like texture. The person is holding a bunch of balloons: a large ice cream cone, a watermelon slice, a yellow smiley face with its tongue out, and a yellow smiley face with a heart. The person is wearing a blue floral shirt, light blue jeans, and white sneakers.

Live for today.
Learn from yesterday.
Hope for tomorrow.

Unknown

ARTS
FESTIVAL
VISUAL ARTS
STREET ART