

DON BOSCO

TODAY

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

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Welcome to our winter edition of the Don Bosco Today.

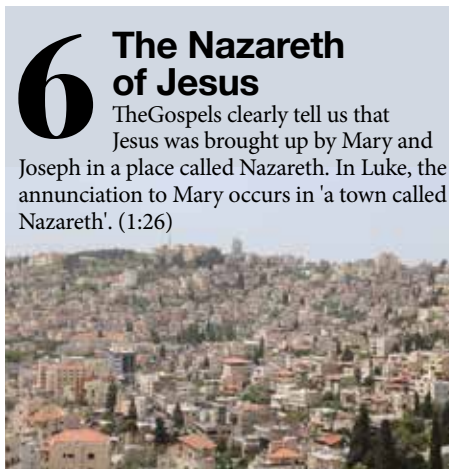
“When we are about to do something let us see, first of all, whether it is for the greater glory of God. Having made certain of that, go ahead, do not hesitate for your work will be successful.”

Don Bosco

Front Cover picture © SalesianLink/LOBO



3 Children in a Family
"I have been this way for years. And I don't understand why only now, in the heart of the lockdown of this pandemic, a longing for my family has erupted inside me ..."



6 The Nazareth of Jesus
The Gospels clearly tell us that Jesus was brought up by Mary and Joseph in a place called Nazareth. In Luke, the annunciation to Mary occurs in 'a town called Nazareth'. (1:26)



10 The Inspiration of the Young
As dawn broke on July 12, 1997, a baby girl announced her arrival, kicking and screaming into a world where the birth of boys is celebrated with rifles resounding through the air, while girls are hidden away behind a veil of disappointment and household chores.



20 The Rector Major is created a Cardinal
The Ordinary Public Consistory at St Peter's Square on September 30, 2023, was indeed a celebration of the universality of the Church and a renewal of the thrust of evangelisation, during which the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, was officially created Cardinal.



23 Lots to spot in Creation
In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. Upon this blank canvas He created all kinds of wonderful things: the sun, moon, sea, plants, flowers, fish, birds, animals, and, of course, us!



24 Being a Salesian University Chaplain
For the last fifteen years, I have had the privilege of being a university chaplain, first at Newman House Chaplaincy Centre for London Universities, and for the last eleven years at Royal Holloway University of London in Egham.

Contents

It is good to be able to speak to you in our latest Don Bosco Today. The last year has been one of considerable turmoil and pain for so many people; wars, the cost of living and the weather have been, among many other things, topics that have exercised our minds and hearts day by day. In the light of all this, I do want to take the opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your incredible support and generosity towards the work of the Salesians during this time.

This morning I came across a letter from God (written in a book for young people!)—I found it both very moving and encouraging on a wet cold November morning; I would like to finish our year with it:

My Own Child,

I've been watching over you since before you were born. I know all you've seen and everything you've experienced from your earliest days. I have felt every single hurt you've endured and each tear that you've cried. I know about the inner wounds you bear, and, yes, I can see each scar.

Nothing is hidden from Me, and nothing is too difficult for Me. I long to touch those deep places inside you that still ache and sting. I want to make you healthy and whole. Won't you allow Me to do my healing work in your heart?

As I heal you, I will replace your broken spirit with the wholeness of My spirit. Sometimes healing can take time, but I am all you need. And when I'm finished, you will have a completely new heart, strong enough to hold all the love I have for you.

In gentle love,

The Great Physician

I truly wish you all the happiest of Christmases with every blessing and good wish for you and your families for the New Year, 2024.

Fr Bob Gardner SDB

Editor

Salesian Link

robert.gardner@salesians.org.uk



Taken from Melody Carson, Letters from God for Teens, (New York: Popular Publishing Company LLC), p104

14 A Message from World Youth Day

Memory becomes a force of hope. It reminds us that God is also present in our personal history, thus memory opens the way to the future; even in darkness, it is light and star that guides us.

15 The Miraculous Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish

Jesus and his friends have been talking to and helping many people all day. It's hot, it's dusty, and now they want to rest and go out onto the lake and enjoy some peace and quiet. But the people want to hear more from Jesus and run to the other shore to wait for him there.

18 Ordination to the Priesthood

The GBR Province was delighted to celebrate the Ordination to the Priesthood of Rev Steven Lloyd SDB on July 15, 2023 in St James' Church, Bootle.

27 World Youth Day – Lisbon

"Mary arose and went with haste".
(Luke 1:39)

"I leave you with these thoughts. Carry on: if you fall, get back up; walk with a goal in mind, and train each day of your lives..."

30 Obituary for Sr Helen Carey FMA

We thank you Sr Helen, for your life, given so generously to the Province and to each sister who shared life with you. We will miss you, but we have the great consolation and joy of knowing you are in the presence of the God who filled your life.

31 Obituary for Sr Rose Cavanagh FMA

Sr Rose left very little written about her life, yet those who lived with her, remember her with deep affection as a person who brought calmness and peace, no matter what she was going through.



The Message of The Rector Major
DON ÁNGEL FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME

CHILDREN IN A FAMILY

was reminded of a sincere and very honest testimony of a young woman who realises, in a certain sense, that there is no success or fulfilment if the most human of encounters or beautiful relationships are lacking. This young woman writes about herself:

“Dear Father, I’m writing to you because I’d like you to help me understand whether the longing I’ve been experiencing in recent months tells me that I’m strange or that something important to me has changed. Maybe it will help you if I tell you a little about myself. I decided to leave home when I was just eighteen. It was a way to escape from an environment that seemed so oppressive to me, one that was suffocating my dreams.

“I went to Milan to look for work. My family was unable to give me financial support for my studies. I was angry with them for this, too. All my friends were looking forward to choosing a major. I had no choice to make because I had no monetary support. I looked for a job to make a living; for years I dreamed of being able to study. I succeeded and, at the cost of great sacrifices, earned my degree.

“On my graduation day, I didn’t want my family to attend. I thought that farmers who had attained only an eighth grade education wouldn’t understand anything about my studies. I told my mother only that everything had gone well. Her tears momentarily awakened in me a sense of guilt that I’d never felt before. But it was of little account. I became who



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I am by myself; I was never able to count on anyone nor did I want to do so. Even where work was concerned, I made my own career because I chose to ‘join forces’ with myself.

“I have been this way for years. And I don’t understand why only now, in the heart of the lockdown of this pandemic, a longing for my family has erupted inside me. I dream of telling them everything I’ve never told them. I dream of hugging my father. At night, I wake up and wonder whether it’s possible to emancipate oneself from such significant relationships. I’ve never even allowed the stories I’ve had over the years to cross the threshold to true intimacy. But now everything seems so different to me. Now that I’m barred even from deciding for myself to step out of my house, or from going to meet with someone whom I consider important to me, the awareness of the great lie that I’ve been living all this time has awakened in me.

“Who are we without relationships? Maybe just unhappy people looking for affirmation. Now I understand that, in reality, I did everything I did because I was hoping that someone would tell me who I really was. But I cut off the only ones who could have helped me answer that question by shutting down relationships. Now their lives are at risk, hundreds of miles away from me. If I should die, I’d like to be among them and not among my successes.”



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I appreciate the honesty and courage of this young woman who made me think a lot about our reality today. It made me reflect on the lifestyle that so many families pursue—one in which the important thing is to achieve success, make a good salary, and fill our days with things to do so that everything turns a profit, etc. But we pay a very high price in order to live, not outside our houses, but more and more outside ourselves.

There’s a danger of living without being centred, i.e., of ‘missing the mark.’ Believe me, dear friends, you can’t imagine how noticeable this is in the boys and girls of our houses, our playgrounds, and our oratories.

Don Bosco’s second successor, Father Paul Albera, recalled: “Don Bosco educated by loving, attracting, conquering and transforming. He enveloped us all, and almost entirely, in an atmosphere of contentment and happiness, from which pain, sadness and melancholy were banished... He listened to the boys with the greatest attention as if the things they were saying were all very important.”

The first joy in life is to be happy along with others. “A shared joy is a double joy.”

Fr Ángel Fernanández Arttime
Rector Major



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The Nazareth of Jesus

The Gospels clearly tell us that Jesus was brought up by Mary and Joseph in a place called Nazareth. In Luke, the annunciation to Mary occurs in “a town in Galilee called Nazareth” (1:26); from that town Joseph and the pregnant Mary head for Bethlehem (2:4); after Jesus’ birth and presentation in the temple, “they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth” (2:29). At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus “came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up”, and makes his famous mission statement in the synagogue there (4:16; see Mk 6:1; Matt 13:54).

In Matthew, after their sojourn in Egypt, Joseph “made his home in a town called Nazareth” (2:23). Much later, as the adult Jesus enters Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday, the people of Jerusalem ask about the identity of the person entering the town amid such enthusiasm and are told: “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee” (21:11). At the beginning of the Fourth Gospel, Jesus calls Philip to follow him, who then seeks out his friend Nathaniel to tell him about “Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth”, and he replies in derogatory terms about the place (1:45–46). At the end of the Gospel, the notice fixed to the cross of Jesus on Calvary reads in three languages: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (19:20).

Recent archaeological research confirms that an early first-century settlement existed on the same site as the present city of Nazareth. This settlement was very probably identical to the



Nazareth of the Gospels. The settlement was in the centre of the modern city, encompassing both the Church of the Annunciation and a site where the Sisters of Nazareth have a convent. The Nazareth of Jesus was a small town (or large village) located on a hillside about 1300 feet above sea level in land-locked Lower Galilee; it is not mentioned at all in the Hebrew Bible or the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus or early rabbinical literature, which suggests its lack of importance. It is possible that the place got its name from a Davidic clan which came from Babylon around 100 BCE, when there was immigration from Babylon and Persia, at the time of John Hyrcanus, (134–104 BCE), Aristobulus I (104–103) and Jannaeus (103–76). The prophet Isaiah wrote that “a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, from his roots a branch (netzer) will bear fruit” (11:1). The name may be derived from the Hebrew stem for ‘shoot’, and its equivalent term ‘branch’. The population was Jewish, probably descended from the house of David; other inhabitants may have also moved there from Judea.

The Mediterranean lies twenty miles to the west, the Sea of Galilee fifteen to the east. This stretch of water was also referred to as the Lake of Genneseret, a name derived from the Hebrew word for a lyre or harp, a connection inspired by its shape. At that time, Galilee, like the rest of Judea since Pompey’s invasion in 63 BCE, was under Roman imperial occupation. Most Roman troops, four legions, were based in Syria; the Roman governor resided in Caesarea on the coast with about 3,000 troops, and there was a small garrison in the Antonia fortress overlooking the temple in Jerusalem. The Romans normally used client-kings appointed from the local aristocracy in order to maintain peace and collect the taxes. So it was that Jesus grew up when Herod Antipas was tetrarch, responsible for Perea and Galilee (4–39 CE). Herod rebuilt the city of Sepphoris, which the Romans had destroyed. The Gospels do not mention this cosmopolitan and affluent Greek-speaking city, though it was only four miles from Nazareth. It had about 25–30,000 inhabitants, a large amphitheatre, houses with frescoes and mosaic floors, a bank and a fortress. Herod designated it as his capital city. Some scholars suggest that Joseph and Jesus may



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have had a role in its reconstruction, commuting from Nazareth each day. Recent archaeological work on ancient Nazareth seems to imply a rigid demarcation between the strict Jewish Nazareth community and this affluent city, which renders this opinion unlikely. The city of Tiberias, constructed on the western shore of the lake and named after the emperor, became the capital in 18 CE. In his ministry, Jesus seems to have chosen not to visit either city. “Insofar as these Herodian centres represented the alien cultural and religious values of the empire and the willingness of some Hellenised Jews to collaborate with that system, they were intrusions into the traditional loyalties of the villagers.”¹

Estimates of Nazareth’s population vary from 120 to 2,000. Several scholars, along with local guides, favour around 500. Houses were built on the south, sunniest slope of the hill, probably in tightly clustered groups of single or two-roomed buildings with a dirt floor, around a central shared courtyard or patio, with a communal oven and grindstone. Some would have had a cave as part of the living space, or underground cisterns for water or storage. The inhabitants would be family or kinship groups. There was a good well at the northern end of the town; there were probably no public buildings, no market, maybe not even a proper synagogue. The stone was

mainly limestone, which was soft and pleasantly bright and clean looking compared to the dark basalt of places like Capernaum. Research conducted in this over the last twenty years suggests that first-century Nazareth’s houses included well-built multi-roomed structures; objects found there indicate everyday life beyond a basic subsistence level. The roofing consisted of wooden beams covered with reeds, mud plaster and compacted earth. Clothes, fruits and vegetables were dried on the roof; it also provided an extra place to sleep. Animals were penned in the courtyard or the house itself. Rubbish and sewage found their way into the alleys or streets, so the atmosphere could at times be unpleasant, and was quite unhealthy!

Unlike Judea, Galilee was beautiful, green and fertile. It is usually divided into three areas: Upper Galilee, which is over 3,000 feet high, the source of the Jordan, and sparsely inhabited; Lower Galilee, an area of lower hills, including Tabor and Hermon, and the fertile plain of Jezreel, containing numerous villages (maybe as many as 200), and the city of Sepphoris; and the Lake Region, which was densely populated, with a good fishing industry, and the important cities of Capernaum, Magdala and Tiberias.

The main activity in the Nazareth area was agriculture, subsistence farming. There were vineyards and olive groves on the terraces which had

¹ E. Johnson, *Truly our Sister*, (New York/London: Continuum, 2003), 154.



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been laboriously constructed on the hillside; rainfall and drainage were good, and the soil was rich in calcium. Wheat, barley and millet grew on the broad hillsides; fruit and vegetables, like dates, figs, pomegranates, melons, lentils, chickpeas, cucumbers, onions and garlic, grew in the shadier areas. The average temperature was about 11°C in January and 27°C in July and August, so Nazareth had quite a pleasant, sub-tropical climate. The women made bread, which entailed milling and grinding the wheat into flour. The villagers also ate fish (probably pickled by the lakeside), eggs, fowl, cheese, yogurt, lamb and, on special occasions, beef. They ate two meals a day, in the late morning and the evening. There was a common cistern, millstone, olive press and winepress. A winepress, hewn into the bedrock at the base of the terraces in Nazareth, has been discovered; it dates back to the time of Jesus. It was customary for everyone to help out with the olives and grapes. Most families would have a few sheep or goats, maybe some cows. The community was also involved in quarrying stone for building, perhaps more so than other neighbouring settlements. Life expectancy was in the thirties; to reach fifty was rare; infant



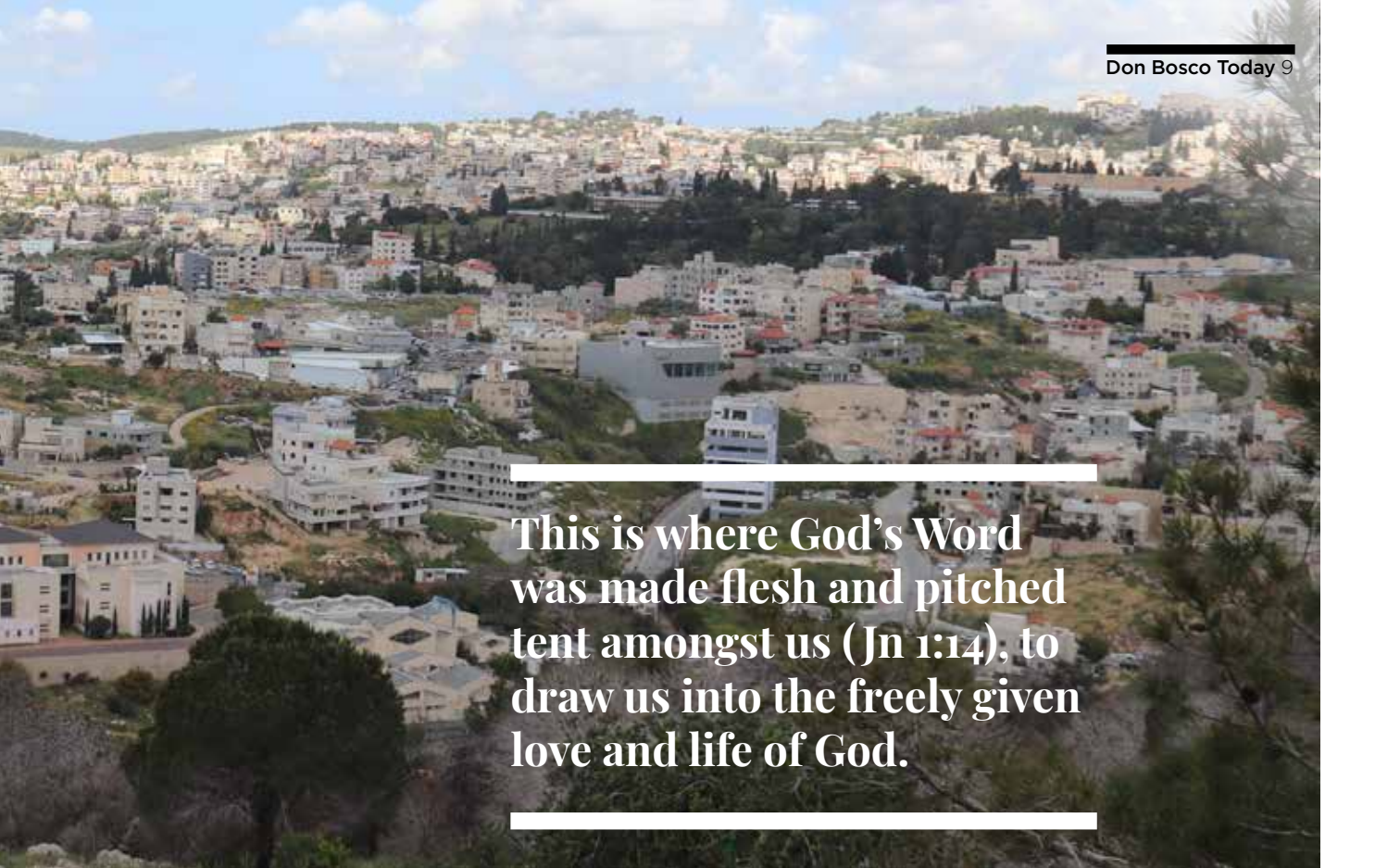
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mortality was 30%; 60% died before the age of sixteen; few lived until sixty. People suffered from iron deficiency, malaria, arthritis, tuberculosis.

In the villages the families were closely knit, and the extended family or clan was a strong unity; there was a vibrant sense of community. People needed one another and supported each other for survival, especially in difficult times. Upholding family honour was important. Jesus seems to have been uncomfortable with traditional patriarchy and with the situation of women. Clothing was simple: the men wore a loincloth, a tunic, usually of cotton or wool with two vertical stripes, a cloak or mantle, and sandals. Women's dress was simple and plain. Women would weave, spin and sew, making

and mending the clothes, as well as fetching the water and cooking. They would also work in the fields, or small plots of land near the living quarters, and, of course, look after the children. Life was difficult for many. The taxes were severe: there was the temple tithe and the impositions of Rome and of Herod. Some of the peasants had their own land, others were tenant farmers. For many, existence was precarious; there was great fear of falling into debt. This was the peasant world of Jesus. Joseph was a *tektōn*, a carpenter, stonemason, cartwright and joiner all rolled into one, and Jesus followed him in this. The family probably cultivated a small plot of land as well.

The common everyday language of the people was Aramaic, as also in Jerusalem; Galileans had their own accent. Some Aramaic words have found their way into the Gospel text (*abba*, *corbona*, *talitha kum*, *cephas*, *raqa*, *rabbuni*). Jesus probably knew some Greek also, which was necessary for business purposes, for Greek was the *lingua franca* of the educated, business and ruling classes across the empire and had made great inroads into Palestine, but he was probably not fluent in the language. Greek was commonly spoken in the local city of Sepphoris.



This is where God's Word was made flesh and pitched tent amongst us (Jn 1:14), to draw us into the freely given love and life of God.

How much education Jesus would have received is debated. In Galilee few people were literate; access to books, parchment or ink was minimal. He probably knew Hebrew passages of the Bible by heart; some suggest that he may have been able to read and understand it, and perhaps even used it when debating scripture with Pharisees and scribes. He was naturally very intelligent. His parents, especially Joseph, would have seen to his religious education. Some think Jesus did have education in scripture and became a 'scholar'. John Meier maintains that Jesus was able to read from the scriptures; his teaching is imbued with the outlook and language of the sacred texts of Judaism, which suggests his religious formation in his family was intense and profound, and included instruction in reading biblical Hebrew.²

Everyday piety was anchored by two institutions: the family household and the public assembly or synagogue. The people prayed to God in the home twice daily; purity laws were kept; children received instruction about the Law; Sabbath was faithfully observed. In the synagogue assemblies, as well as

prayers, the Word of God, Torah and prophets were publicly proclaimed and commented upon. Despite being unable to read, the people were able to develop familiarity with the text; they knew and prayed the psalms. The Word of God spilled over into everyday life, especially in their care for their neighbour. Another important aspect of the religious life of the people was the celebration of the feasts, often in the home. The feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles were pilgrimage feasts, when folk travelled to Jerusalem for the celebration. Because of their economic situation and the time involved, the villagers would not have been able to make the journey to Jerusalem very often, some perhaps once in a lifetime, others once a year.

By the 380s, a large cave church existed under what is now the convent of the Sisters of Nazareth. In the Byzantine period (fifth to seventh centuries), a large church stood there, the Church of the Nutrition, (dedicated to the upbringing of Jesus), described in a seventh-century pilgrimage account. For three centuries the Muslims ruled Nazareth, but the crusaders recaptured

it, and another church was built. The latest archaeological work (2006–2016) on that site by the British archaeologist and scholar Ken Dark³ confirms the existence of a house with sufficient room for nine or ten people to eat and sleep there. The finds from the house indicate neither greater wealth nor poverty than most Galilean dwellings of the same date, and suggest a normal Jewish family life. A *tektôn*, he suggests, would probably live on the outskirts of a settlement where access to timber and/or stone was easier than at the centre. The house shows considerable knowledge of the properties of the local geology, and a high degree of skill in working with the stone. This could indeed be the house where traditionally Jesus was brought up, but we cannot be certain. However, as we have seen, we do now know a great deal about Nazareth, the place and world he grew up and lived in, immersed in ordinary, Jewish peasant village life with all its struggles, hardships and challenges, and, no doubt, its joys too.⁴ This is where God's Word was made flesh and pitched tent amongst us (Jn 1:14), to draw us into the freely given love and life of God.

Michael T. Winstanley SDB

² John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, (London: Doubleday, 1991), 1:276.

³ Ken Dark, *Archaeology of Jesus' Nazareth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

⁴ For further reading, see Joel Kauffman, *The Nazareth Jesus Knew*, (USA: Nazareth Village Press, 2005); Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus through Galilee with the Fifth Gospel*, (Rosh Pina: Corazin Publishing, 1992).

The Inspiration of The Young

Still just a girl who wants to learn



October 9, 2012, wasn't the best of days for 15-year-old Malala Yousafzai. It was the middle of exam season, although being quite bookish, Malala didn't mind exams as much as some of her classmates. School had begun at 9am, later than the usual 8am start, much to Malala's relief, who, like most teenagers, could effortlessly sleep through the prayer calls of the muezzin and the alarm calls of crowing cocks.

The school day over, Malala eagerly awaited the arrival of the school bus to carry her home. Although Malala's one-storey, concrete home was only a 5-minute walk away from school, since the time of the Taliban, and upon the worried insistence of her mother, she had taken the bus with the other schoolgirls. Despite it being October, the cooler days were being thwarted by the lingering heat of summer, and the cramped bus was hot and sticky as it trundled along the dusty road beside the sun-baked stinky stream. The girls were gossiping, laughing and joking with the bus driver as usual, but as the bus turned right off the main road at the army checkpoint and rounded a corner passing the deserted cricket ground, Malala's life changed forever.

As dawn broke on July 12, 1997, a baby girl announced her arrival, kicking and screaming into a world where the birth of boys is celebrated with rifles resounding through the air, while girls are hidden away behind a veil of disappointment and household chores. The villagers of Mingora in the lush Swat Valley, Pakistan, commiserated with the mother, Tor Pekai, and there was no skyward volley of bullets to congratulate the father. However, Ziauddin Yousafzai is different from most Pashtun men. He instantly fell in love with his daughter, naming her after the greatest Pashtun poet and warrior woman of southern Afghanistan, Malalai of Maiwand. A wise and progressive man, he knew there was something different about his child, to whom he would sing the song about her namesake written by the poet Rahmat Shah Sayel of Peshawar as he cradled Malala in his arms. He was right.

For the first few years of her life, Malala's hometown was a popular tourist spot known for its vibrant summer festivals, and the surrounding Hindu Kush mountain range boasts one of the oldest ski resorts in Pakistan, Malam Jabba.

Malala's father has long been an outspoken social activist and advocate of universal education. He had worked hard to surmount numerous financial and political obstacles to realise his dream and establish the Khushal Girls High School and College in Swat. The school, rare in its focus on science, women's rights and literature, all subjects forbidden by the Taliban, became Malala's playground where she spent many carefree days. Even before she could talk properly, she would toddle into classes and chatter as if she were a teacher. By the time she was four years old, she was established in classes for much older children, listening in enrapt wonderment and hungrily devouring everything that was taught. For Malala, the valley was a happy, sunny place, and no one could foresee the dark clouds gathering beyond the snow-capped mountains.

Malala was ten years old when the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP; sometimes called Pakistani Taliban) "arrived in the night just like vampires." Members stealthily ingratiated themselves with Malala's Pashtun community by portraying themselves as saviours dedicated to rooting out government corruption. The leader of the group was Maulana Fazlullah, who was a charismatic speaker, and his inspiring sermons were rousing calls to clean living, and he advocated a return to Islamic law as a superior alternative to secular Pakistani law. However, as time progressed, his captivating charm crumbled as he declared that owning a television, playing music and dancing were sinful. Men were forced to grow beards, and women and girls forced to wear burqas. Fazlullah also began destroying or shutting down girls' schools, banning women from any active role in society, and preaching against giving women

too much freedom. Suicide attacks were widespread, and the group made its opposition to a proper education for girls a cornerstone of its terror campaign. By the end of 2008, the TTP had destroyed over 400 schools.



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Determined to go to school and with an unyielding belief in her right to an education, Malala decided to stand up to the Taliban. She was just eleven years old when her father took her to a local press club in Peshawar to protest the school closings. Incensed by the increasing threat to her way of life and education, she delivered a speech asking: "How Dare the Taliban Take Away My Basic Right to Education?"



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Determined to go to school and with an unyielding belief in her right to an education, Malala decided to stand up to the Taliban. She was just eleven years old when her father took her to a local press club in Peshawar to protest the school closings. Incensed by the increasing threat to her way of life and education, she delivered a speech asking: "How Dare the Taliban Take Away My Basic Right to Education?" This drew the attention of Pakistani media. When the TTP announced that all girls' schools in Swat would be permanently shut down on January 15, 2009, the BBC approached her father in search of someone who might blog for them about what it was like to live under TTP rule. Malala promptly volunteered, and on January 3, 2009, her first entry of the 'Diary of a Pakistani schoolgirl' was published on BBC Urdu online, and two weeks later on the main BBC news website. Using the pseudonym Gul Makai, a reference to a heroine in Pashtun folklore, her first entry entitled 'I Am Afraid' details her nightmares about a full-blown war in her hometown. Her nightmares quickly became a frightening reality, as Malala and her family were soon forced to abandon their home due to rising hostilities between Pakistan and the Taliban. They returned after three months, and Malala once again used the media to continue her public campaign for her right to go to school. Later that year, the New York Times featured a short documentary about Malala's fight to protect girls'

education in the Swat Valley in which her true identity was publicly revealed. This also made her a target, with the Taliban issuing a death threat against her.

On October 9, 2012, a hooded Taliban gunman boarded a school bus, asked for Malala, and shot her in the head.

Over the next few years, Malala and her father began speaking out on behalf of girls' education in the media. They campaigned for Pakistani girls' access to a free quality education. To Malala, education is the birth right of every human being and is neither Western nor Eastern in nature. By 2011, the Pakistani army had forced the Taliban out of Swat Valley and Malala and her friends were able to return to school. She was nominated by human rights

activist Desmond Tutu for the International Children's Peace Prize. Although she did not win, that same year she earned Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize. Malala Yousafzai was now a household name.

On October 9, 2012, a hooded Taliban gunman boarded a school bus, asked for Malala, and shot her in the head.

Ten days later, Malala awoke from a medically induced coma in a hospital bed in Birmingham, UK. Miraculously, she had suffered no major brain damage, but the left side of her face was paralysed, and she would require many reparative surgeries and rehabilitation. The outpouring of support from around the world was immeasurable. The Taliban's attempt to silence her had paradoxically resulted in making her campaign global. Malala slowly recovered,

staying with her family in Birmingham, where she returned to her studies and to activism.

Nine months after being shot by the Taliban, on her sixteenth birthday, Malala addressed an audience of 500 at the United Nations in New York, urging world leaders to change their policies in favour of peace and prosperity, to protect women and children's rights, and to ensure free compulsory education for every child all over the world.

"The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them."

In 2013, Malala and her father launched the Malala Fund, which works to ensure girls around the world have access to twelve years of free, safe, quality education. Among her many awards, in 2013 Malala won the United Nations Human Rights Prize, awarded every five years. She was named one of Time magazine's most influential people in 2013 and appeared on one of the seven covers that were printed for that issue. In October 2013, the European Parliament awarded Malala the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in acknowledgment of her work. In 2014, she became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. In July 2015, with support from the Malala Fund, she opened a girls' school in Lebanon for refugees from the Syrian Civil War.

Malala completed her education in Birmingham and was accepted to the University of Oxford to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics. She graduated in 2020, while using her enhanced public profile to bring attention to human rights issues around the world.

It is noteworthy that Malala fights the Taliban with words, not weapons. Her actions demonstrate that,

Malala has become a potent symbol of unwavering resilience and courage in her fight for the right of young girls to be heard and to receive an education.

while a woman's face may remain hidden, her voice cannot be silenced. "The written word is a powerful weapon against the Taliban's brand of religious totalitarianism. They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed. And then, out of that silence came, thousands of voices. The terrorists thought that they would change our aims and stop our ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage was born."

Malala has become a potent symbol of unwavering resilience and courage in her fight for the right of young girls to be heard and to receive an education.

"Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world."

Cairo—October 5, 2017.

Sarah Seddon

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A Message From WYD

We are in Lisbon with many young people from all over the world, accompanied by their bishops and priests, consecrated men and women. They are beautiful and serene young people who are in airports, on the streets, in churches, in public places, are lively but composed, polite and kind. They offer us a particular vision of youth and of the Church. It is a young, dynamic, smiling, hopeful Church, in stark contrast to the statistics which highlight its inevitable decline, lack of flowering, certain death.

But let's try to look at the present from the past. It would be interesting to look out of the window of the Valponasca and try to see in the distance the faces of our young men and women that perhaps Mother Mazzarello dreamt of or saw. Certainly, her gaze, like that of Don Bosco, was always stretched outward because it was always in God. Who knows if they will have seen us too...

I leave it to the reflection of each one to recover these vital elements. August 5 (anniversary of the foundation of the FMAs) is a special date of thanksgiving and amazement for the Lord's goodness, which still pours out abundantly on our religious family. We feel deeply united with our Sisters of the five continents as a family which belongs entirely to Mary and owes everything to Mary, that prolongs in the Church the love of Don Bosco and Mary Domenica Mazzarello for the young, for the little ones and the poor.

Memory becomes a force of hope. It reminds us that God is also present in our personal history, thus memory opens the way to the future; even in darkness, it is light and star that guides us. On this day, we wish to revive the memory of all that God has done in the Institute and we open ourselves to hope because His love is eternal and is always new.

There was a strong contrast between the smallness of the town, its geographical isolation, poverty, the lack of culture

of the first community, and the breadth of missionary horizons that characterised it.

There was generous and self-sacrificing dedication to the girls of the town, community life, implicitly, ardent love for Jesus, strong love for Mary. In Mornese, as in Nizza, Mary was not a guest but Mistress and Lady of the house.

The name of the Institute is already the synthesis of our identity: Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a living monument of gratitude. Don Bosco had already built a Basilica for her from which the glory of Mary Help of Christians would flow. But that wasn't enough for him! He wanted to raise for her a living monument of living stones. From here came the idea of the Institute that matured in his heart specifically in the years in which the temple was being built. He who had experienced Mary's power and tenderness would have liked to sing eternal gratitude to such a solicitous and powerful Mother. We are linked to Mary and to her mission which arises from her spiritual motherhood towards all humanity.

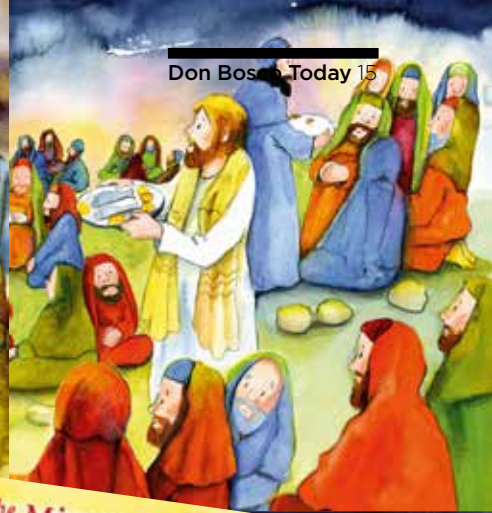
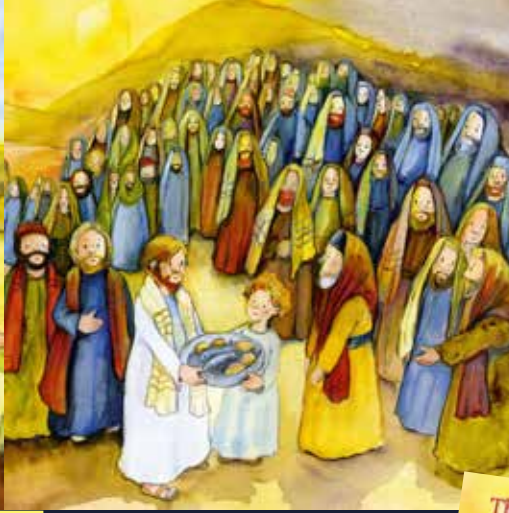
As Mother, Mary is called to generate in us the image of her Son, and in her and with her, we are called today to express her motherhood which generates life, which generates Jesus in the hearts of young people.

Let us pray for each other that this may really be so. In our prayers, we continue to accompany the young people who at this World Youth Day have met Pope Francis and, above all, the Lord, and who at Fatima have met with Mary in a special way. May she still be the guide and the powerful help that supports us in the fundamental choices of life and urges us to the unconditional gift of self.

Sr Chiara Cazzuola—Mother General

© FMA/Rome





The Miraculous Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish

SUSANNE BRANDT

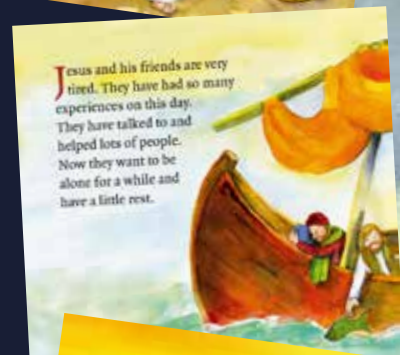
Jesus and his friends have been talking to and helping many people all day. It's hot, it's dusty, and now they want to rest and go out onto the lake and enjoy some peace and quiet. But the people want to hear more from Jesus and run to the other shore to wait for him there.

When evening comes, Jesus realises that the people must be hungry. But in their rush to hear him, everybody has left their homes with no snacks or provisions. Except for one boy who has something with him. But how can 5 loaves and 2 fish satisfy all those people? Jesus knows, and all five thousand are filled!


Susanne Brandt has taken the familiar Gospel story according to Mark 6:30–44 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.

The story of Jesus feeding the 5000 is one of the few biblical stories to appear in all four Gospels. This story is popular for children as it teaches the importance of sharing, making the most of what you have, and that Christians must place their trust in God. Recommended for ages 3 to 7.

Sarah Seddon





A child wearing a dark jacket, a patterned beanie, and a striped scarf is holding a blue mug. The child's foot is visible, wearing a colorful rainbow-striped sock. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with warm, glowing lights, suggesting a festive or winter setting.

**“For it is good to be children
sometimes, and never better than
at Christmas, when its mighty
Founder was a child himself”**

Charles Dickens

Ordination To The Priesthood

The GBR Province was delighted to celebrate the Ordination to the Priesthood of Rev Steven Lloyd SDB on July 15, 2023.

Family, friends and members of the Salesian Family travelled to St James' Church, Bootle from all over the world.

The Right Reverend Luc Van Looy SDB travelled from Belgium to preside at the celebration, laying his hands on Steven's head and calling upon the Holy Spirit.

With thanks also to The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco, and its headteacher, Mrs Sue Bougarde for hosting lunch after the ceremony.

People were delighted with the musical group (local and far afield) and the singing of the choir of Thornleigh Salesian College from Bolton.

Thanks go out to the group of Altar Servers who travelled from the Sacred Heart Parish, Battersea.

And of course, huge thanks to the parishioners of St James' themselves, who supported Ste over many years, and who fully participated on the day.

Steven celebrated his first Mass on Sunday July 16 at 10.30am in Bootle.

**"My soul finds
rest in God alone"**

Psalm 62





Rector Major created a Cardinal by Pope Francis

(ANS—Vatican City)

The Ordinary Public Consistory at St Peter's Square this morning, September 30, 2023, was indeed a celebration of the universality of the Church and a renewal of the thrust of evangelisation, during which the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, was officially created Cardinal.



There was great emotion for the entire Salesian family when the Holy Father Francis pronounced the official formula for the creation of the twenty-one new cardinals, and even more so when, face to face with the Rector Major kneeling before him, he presented him a red skullcap and biretta, the cardinal's ring and publicly assigned him the 'Salesian' diaconate of the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Via Tuscolana.

The subsequent moment of embrace of Card. Fernández Artime to the Holy Father was at the same time a symbolic gesture, a sign of fidelity in ecclesial service, and also an expression of unyielding closeness and affinity between the two pastors.

Earlier, in the solemn rite which witnessed the first of the twenty-one nominated cardinals, the Augustinian Card. Robert Francis Prevost, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, gave a message of homage and expressed his thanks to the Pontiff on behalf of all. He emphasised how the cardinalate brings with it honours, but above all responsibilities, and the sense of inadequacy of the new cardinals in the face of the greatness of the service to which they are now called. However, in a spirit of trust in Divine Providence and in the Pontiff's farsightedness, he renewed everyone's adherence to the task assigned, to be carried out with absolute dedication, utmost humility and total loyalty.

After the reading of the New Testament passage of the Pentecost (Acts 12:1–11), the Holy Father offered some hints to the new cardinals —valid also for all members of the College of Cardinals.

"Before we are apostles—priests, bishops, cardinals, we are Parthians, Medes, Elamites. This should awaken in

us awe and gratitude for having received the grace of the Gospel in our respective peoples of origin. I believe that this is very important and should not be forgotten," said the Pope, urging the newly ordained cardinals to preserve "amazement and gratitude" for the action of the Holy Spirit reaching them in their languages and peoples, through the mediation of so many people: parents, grandparents, catechists.

For this reason, Pope Francis continued, almost as if to suggest a pastoral style of proximity and simplicity, it is important to remember that 'faith is transmitted in dialect', and that before being 'evangelisers' one has all been 'evangelised'.

The Holy Father's last mention was of the universality of the College of Cardinals, an expression of a "symphonicity" and "synodality" that is proper to the whole Church. "Diversity is necessary; it is indispensable. But every sound must contribute to the common design. And for this, it is fundamental to listen to each other, and the conductor of the orchestra is at the service of this kind of miracle that is the performance of a symphony each time."

The Holy Father concluded stating that it is precisely the

image of the orchestra, that teaches "always better to be a symphonic and synodal Church ... in the consoling trust that we have the Holy Spirit as our master: the inner master of each one and the master of walking together", who "creates variety and unity" and who "is harmony itself".

The celebration ended with the Holy Father's Apostolic Blessing for the approximately 12,000 faithful present in St Peter's Square for this festive day, who, under a still summer sun, then lined up for the traditional 'courtesy visits' to the new cardinals in the corridors of the Vatican Apostolic Palace.

There was great emotion for the entire Salesian family when the Holy Father Francis pronounced the official formula for the creation of the twenty-one new cardinals, and even more so when, face to face with the Rector Major kneeling before him, he presented him a red skullcap and biretta, the cardinal's ring and publicly assigned him the 'Salesian' diaconate of the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Via Tuscolana.

Words from the Rector Major

I've experienced something of what I've studied regarding our father Don Bosco. He found it difficult to speak of himself, and still more difficult to voice what he was feeling. In my case, I have to admit that it's a little more difficult to speak or to write of the most recent things that have happened to me; but I admit that sooner or later I have to do it, and the message of the Salesian Bulletin that comes into the hands and the hearts of so many friends of Don Bosco's charism is a good way of sending this personal message.

After the unexpected news (for me, especially) when the Holy Father Francis announced my name among the twenty-one people whom he has chosen to create cardinals of the Church at the next consistory on September 30, thousands of people have asked me, especially Salesians of Don Bosco and members of the Salesian family around the world: "What will happen now? Who will accompany the life of the Congregation for the near future? What steps await us?" You can well understand that I've put these very questions to myself, while I've thanked the Lord in faith for this gift that Pope Francis has given us as the Salesian Congregation and as Don Bosco's family.

With a faithful understanding, knowing the great things God has done and what we know through his Word, we can say that God loves surprises. It's usual in the Bible for God to say: "Go! The road will be revealed to you." One important thing that Don Bosco has taught us is: "Let nothing disturb you, and put your trust in God's Providence."

I feel that I share what our holy Founder stated in 1884: "I see ever more what a glorious future has been prepared for our Society, how it will spread and what good it will be able to accomplish."



I was able to speak personally with Pope Francis after he made his Angelus announcement, assuring him of my availability, that he can count on me for service of any sort. I answered as Don Bosco did when he was asked to build the Sacred Heart Church in Rome—in this case, an aged and sick Don Bosco, who was also aware of the burden and the responsibility for a Congregation being born. Don Bosco answered: "If this is the Pope's order, I obey!"

I told the Holy Father that we Salesians have learnt from Don Bosco to be always available for the welfare of the Church, and in particular for anything the Pope might request. So, while I thank God for this gift that's for the whole Congregation and the Salesian family, I express my gratitude to Pope Francis by assuring him that all the members of our great family will pray for him more fervently and intensely. As I said, our prayer will always be accompanied by our sincere and profound affection.





sun



star



river



mountain

Lots to Spot in Creation

BETHAN JAMES

In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. Upon this blank canvas He created all kinds of wonderful things: the sun, moon, sea, plants, flowers, fish, birds, animals, and, of course, us!

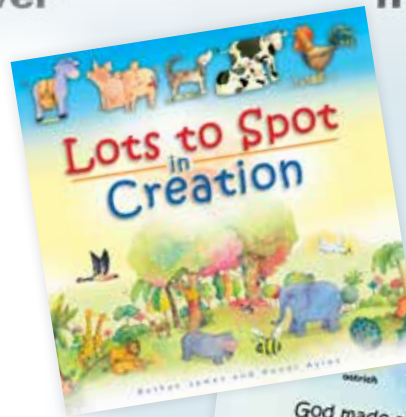
This delightful book will help little ones explore many things that can be spotted in creation and celebrate the world God has made. Working through a gamut of living things for young children to learn about and identify, this colourfully illustrated book also works through these amazing things in our world in the same order as the creation story.

Bethan James has taken the familiar creation story and brought it to life for young children. Accompanied by beautiful illustrations by Honor Ayres, this book is ideal to read to your little ones, or to help emerging readers. It has a hardback cover, so it will be durable enough to withstand many hours of reading and discussion.

At the end is a mirror in which children can see themselves, because 'God made me!' too.

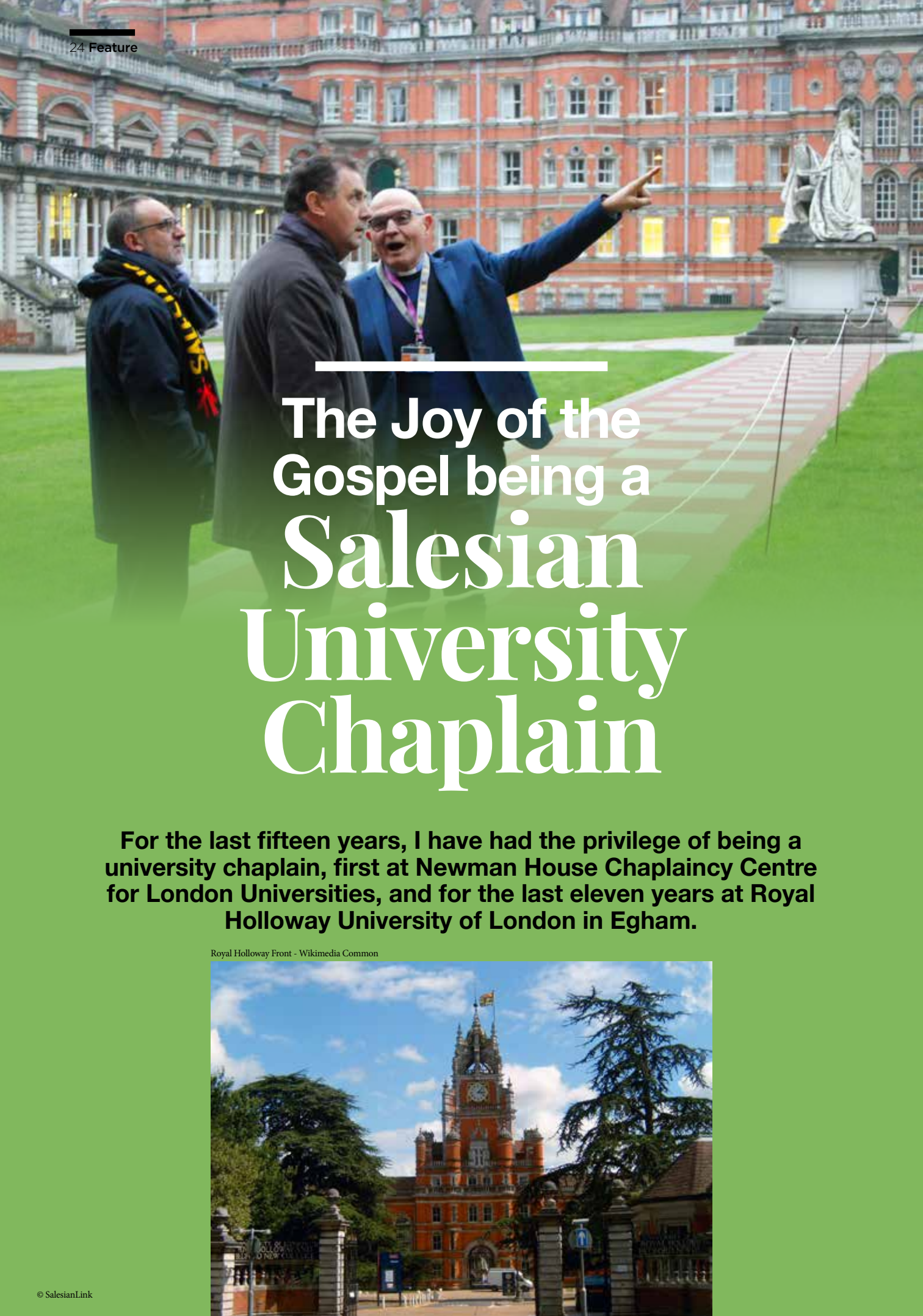
Recommended for ages 2 to 6 years.

Sarah Seddon



winter
snow

hills

A photograph of three men standing on a green lawn in front of a large, ornate red brick building with many windows. One man in a blue jacket is pointing towards the building. A statue on a pedestal is visible to the right.

The Joy of the Gospel being a Salesian University Chaplain

For the last fifteen years, I have had the privilege of being a university chaplain, first at Newman House Chaplaincy Centre for London Universities, and for the last eleven years at Royal Holloway University of London in Egham.

Royal Holloway Front - Wikimedia Common



These years have been full of the Salesian joy: the joy of being with young people; sharing their joys and sometimes their sorrows; sharing the mystery of self-giving Christ's love for them. In Pope Francis words:

We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. ...For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others? (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n.8)

After my time teaching at Ushaw College in Durham, I always had a yearning to work with young adults, but that wasn't the mission that I was given. When I moved to Battersea and it was not possible for me to continue as a school advisor for religious education in Arundel and Brighton, the Provincial suggested I look at university chaplaincy. "How do I do that?" I asked. He replied: "Ask your friend, Cardinal Cormac." Sceptically, I replied: "So how am I going to do that?"

The next week I had travelled by train to a funeral in Crawley which the cardinal had presided at, and when I got back to the station, who was on the platform but the cardinal himself, and he said: "Come and join me." I explained that I didn't have a first-class ticket, so he came and sat with me in standard class and asked me what work I was doing. He said that he'd love to have the Salesians in Westminster, so I grasped this opportunity, saying that I'd love to be a university chaplain and enquired as to whom I should write. He replied: "Write to me." And so began the most fascinating part of my Salesian and priestly ministry.

I spent four happy years at Newman House as an assistant chaplain and made some wonderful friends. Sitting in the chaplaincy library and being around when the students were cooking their meals afforded me a wonderful channel into listening and making friends. I learnt so much in that international residential and Catholic setting for fifty students. The kindness and genuine care for each other and openness to sharing their faith and their lives was inspiring to me.



© John Dickson

I looked after two groups: the law students and the medical students. We had regular meetings and invited some wonderful speakers to address us. Engaging with the issues that arose from law and medicine for young Catholics led to some fascinating discussions. It was here that I met Rev Pippa Turner, the Anglican chaplain to the University College London (UCL) Medical School, and became a regular at her medics' lunches, where we met all sorts of students: Anglicans, Jews, Muslims, Agnostics and even the odd Catholic. In a very unstructured way, we gradually shared our joys, sorrows, hopes and fears, and built a genuine trust in each other.

When I saw the position at Royal Holloway advertised, I immediately applied. This was a very different type of role as part of an ecumenical and multifaith chaplaincy team. The iconic renaissance chapel at Royal Holloway and its wonderful choir, with the daily sung Morning Prayer gave a solid start to my days as the Catholic chaplain. I was blessed that my predecessor, Russian priest Fr Vlad Nikiforov, had left me a wonderful Catholic Society president and secretary, who were an amazing help in supporting me through the experience of the freshers' fair in welcome week. Standing at the Catholic stall, giving out cakes and engaging with anyone who passed by and making friends with the other stall holders with their amazing variety of events and clubs on offer was a joyful experience.

At my interview with the student panel, I was asked if I would give a Sunday Mass in the university chapel,

and thus began our regular Sunday evening university Masses. We began by assuming that we could use the tiny roundel chapel at the back of the university chapel, but it soon became clear that we needed the whole chapel to accommodate the numbers. The weekly Catholic Society meetings and the Sunday Mass became the visible aspect of building a community of students and staff, and our Friday lunchtime Mass was always well attended.

The sense of being a visible community who connected after Mass as a group attracted attention from other students who were not Catholics but who were always welcomed, some of whom, after years of attending, eventually decided to become Catholics themselves.

The Sunday evening university chapel service was a wonderful opportunity to engage with the choral scholars, who regularly sang at our services, and with Anglican and other Christians in attendance. The Christmas Carol services were superb musically and a wonderful moment to celebrate the ecumenical and multifaith community that we are.

One of the students on the panel at my interview was the president of the Students' Union, who asked me what contribution as Catholic chaplain I could make to 'SHAG' week—the Students' Union sexual health week. I replied saying: "I thought I might be better on the theory of relationships than on the practical." Everyone laughed, and afterwards she asked me if I would like to be a guest on her radio show. It was a version of BBC Radio 4's 'Desert Island Discs'.



© John Dickson

and I was delighted. What a wonderful opportunity! After one term, she told me that the pressure of work was making the show too difficult, and would I like to take it over. So, for the last eleven years, I have had a weekly radio show called 'Shipwrecked with Fr John', where I have interviewed students and staff and had the wonderful privilege of being part of the Insanity Radio team at the university. What a wonderful group of talented and dedicated young people! Running a radio station that has a local licence and has to broadcast live content, even outside termtime, is a huge undertaking.

What was marvellous was seeing the care that the student leadership takes to develop the talents of the students and encourage them to become confident broadcasters.

When I asked Fr Vlad if he had any advice, he replied that he didn't give advice, but asked if I wanted to know who the most vulnerable students on campus were. He identified the Muslim students and the gay and lesbian students (LGBT).

With his encouragement, I met up with the Muslim elders and began to attend the regular Friday prayers at the university, and I was always welcomed. The fact that at my induction Mass in the university chapel, one of the leaders of the Muslim community came and led a prayer at the end of Mass, was a mark of the immense esteem, friendship and trust that we had built up.

Gradually, I took on the role of developing the multifaith dimension

of the university chaplaincy: I helped the Hindu community to organise their Arti (Hindu worship) in the chapel and sometimes attended; organised with the help of a Jewish professor, the annual university Holocaust Memorial Service that was led for us by the rabbi and congregation of the Weybridge Synagogue; served

on the appointment committees for the selection of the Muslim faith advisor and the Muslim chaplain, both of whom became wonderful friends.

My introduction to the LGBT students was more challenging. After a leading politician had made some disparaging remarks, which were reported in *The Times* newspaper, two students approached the chaplains requesting permission to create a photoshoot session in the chapel on the theme of 'spoof gay weddings'. The chaplains demurred and I expressed my thoughts that the chapel was not a place for making political points.

The following week, I was informed that there was an anonymous internet campaign to force my resignation. I had no idea it was happening. A week later, this became the topic of the leading article in the student newspaper, 'The Founder', entitled: 'Queer State of Affairs'. It forcefully argued that in a liberal democracy, an anonymous internet campaign to oust a chaplain, who had no way to defend himself, was itself extremely illiberal.

The next day, two students knocked on my door wishing to apologise. At that point, I had not seen the article, and I was astonished. This was Royal Holloway at its best. A year later, I found out that the editor of 'The Founder' was a student I had met at the formal hall society dinner who had a very strong sense of fairness. This event made me focus much more on the needs of the LGBT students, so when gay weddings could be celebrated in the university chapel, I worked with our chaplaincy assistant to overcome the bureaucratic

obstacles, which took five years, to have the university chapel registered for same-sex weddings.

When I look back, I have so many highlights, but our pilgrimages to Rome are there at the top of the list. Sharing the wealth of art and history of Rome is a great privilege. To see and hear the Pope in the general audience and be there for the opening of the Holy Doors at the basilica of St John Lateran was wonderful. While we were waiting, I was interviewed by the national public broadcasting company of Italy (RAI), and they asked me about the students I had brought with me. I explained that we were a multifaith group from England. Then they asked if one of the students was a religious sister of a new community. I told them that she was Muslim student, and they were astonished.

University chaplaincy for me is a sort of Oratory experience: students engage with chaplaincy if they want to; it remains a really free encounter. The quality of the community and outreach that we build up will depend on the temperament and talents of the chaplains, which will differ considerably, but the sense that we aim to share the joy of our encounter with the Lord is at the heart of it. We really are a eucharistic community, a community that gives thanks and shares whatever gifts we have. The Catholic Society was always known for its capacity to eat, drink and enjoy good company and for its moments of deep prayer, especially on our annual retreats.

As I look back, I have so much to thank God for. What wonderful young people, so gifted and talented, so rich in faith and goodness and so willing to share. To quote Pope Francis:

Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others. (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n.11)

My hope is that other Salesians will be excited by the possibilities and offer themselves for this ministry.

John Dickson SDB



Theme of WYD:
“Mary arose
and went
with haste”
(Luke 1:39)

“Many realities that attract us and promise happiness are later shown to be what they really are: soap bubbles, superfluous things that we don’t need and that leave us empty inside.”

“Friends, I want to be clear with you, for you are allergic to falsity and empty words: in the Church, there is room for everyone. Everyone. In the Church, no one is left out or left over. There is room for everyone. Just the way we are. Everyone.”

“I would like to look each one of you in the eyes and tell you: do not be afraid.”

“The Lord does not point a finger, but opens his arms. It is odd: the Lord does not know how to do this [pointing], but that [opening his arms wide]. He embraces us all. He shows us Jesus on the cross, who opened his arms wide in order to be crucified and die for us.”

“Love is risky. We must take the risk of loving. Yet, though it is a risk, it is a risk worth taking, and Jesus accompanies us as we do. He always accompanies us, always walks with us. Throughout our lives, he is always by our side.”

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"Have the courage, then, to replace your doubts with dreams. Replace your doubts with dreams: do not remain hostage to your fears, but set about working to realise your goals!"

"God sees how good you are. He alone knows what he has sown in your hearts."

"I leave you with these thoughts. Carry on; if you fall, get back up; walk with a goal in mind, and train each day of your lives. Nothing is free in life, everything has to be paid for. Only one thing is free: the love of Jesus! So, with this free gift that we have—the love of Jesus—and with the desire to carry on the journey, let us walk in hope, let us be mindful of our roots, and move forwards, without fear. Do not be afraid."

"That is the only time, the only time that we are allowed to look down upon others: when we are offering to help them up."

"Joy is missionary. Joy is not just for oneself; it's for sharing something with others."



OBITUARY FOR

Sr Helen Carey FMA



© Unknown

Born in Kilworth, County Cork, Ireland on October 13, 1935

Professed in Turin, Italy on August 5, 1955

Belonged to the British Province of St Thomas of Canterbury

Early in the morning of January 22, on the feast of Laura Vicuna, our dear Sr Helen went home to God. The feast is significant in that Sr Helen's whole life was spent in the education of children and in parish catechesis. Her heart and her work were always for the young with a deep concern for the disadvantaged and those who struggled.

Sr Helen was born in the village of Kilworth, County Cork, the second of seven children, four boys and three girls. Her vivid recollections of her family and the life she lived at home for fifteen years before entering the Institute, never ceased to fill her with gratitude and a real sense of reverence for the loving care her parents gave, notwithstanding the sacrifices and hard work entailed in giving the children a good upbringing and education. She was inspired by their deep faith in God, particularly when faced with difficulties and challenges. Helen described her home as a place of love and prayer and though life in those times was a struggle to make ends meet, acceptance and gratitude were lessons she learnt from an early age. To the end of her life, Sr Helen held her family in

great esteem and was so grateful for their love and concern for her.

As Helen grew up, she loved helping and working with children, and that desire was always close to her heart. When members of different religious families visited her school, she was inspired by a Dominican Sister and afterwards spoke with her parents about becoming a Dominican. However, when Helen visited her brother who had entered with the Salesians in Ireland, she was impressed by the kindness of a Salesian who engaged her in conversation about her future and suggested she contact the Salesian Sisters, whom she had not heard of up to this point. So began Helen's vocation journey with the Salesian Sisters. She described her first visit to Fernbank, Limerick, and was moved by the welcome, friendliness and obvious joy and serenity of the sisters. Helen was now ready to leave home, and her parish priest wrote the briefest of references that says volumes: *Nellig (Helen) is an excellent girl. I could say too much in her favour.*

In 1952 Helen went to Sandgate, England, where she became a postulant and then a novice. She went to Casanova, Turin, for the second year of her novitiate, which she described with enthusiasm. She enjoyed the rich experience of being with novices from thirty-nine different nations and looked back on that time with deep gratitude to God and the Institute.

Helen was professed in Casanova on August 5, 1955, and on her return to England she became assistant to the novices and continued her studies. For the next years she taught and studied and then qualified as a primary teacher in 1963 from Southampton Teacher Training College.

Although her health was never strong, she never wavered in her dedication and commitment to the mission and to community. Her mission, for the most part, was teaching, parish catechesis and youth clubs in the community of Cowley and also in London. She was an outstanding teacher and catechist and had a unique aptitude for involving and training lay people in the mission. Sr Helen was instrumental in starting the cooperators group in Cowley, which to this day is flourishing. She developed a team of catechists for the Children's Liturgy of the Word in the parish. In addition to this, she started a youth club and trained the leaders in the Salesian way. These continue today with dedicated volunteers.

After retiring from teaching, Sr Helen had sabbatical time in Mill Hill, and then moved to Easterhouse, Glasgow, where she was fully involved in pastoral ministry on the parish team of St Benedict's. She also worked in the primary school in learning support and in the children's clubs.

Helen moved to Battersea in 2011 and found time and energy to volunteer in St Mary's Primary School, which she loved dearly. She was also involved in catechesis in Sacred Heart Parish. Once again, when the need called, she joined the community in Beckenham in 2016 to be a founding member of the project for asylum seekers. On her return to London, she continued, while her health allowed, to volunteer in St Mary's Primary School and to be a welcoming presence to all who came to Battersea.

Helen's health deteriorated quite seriously from 2019 onwards, but she persisted in being independent and a presence in community. However, in October 2022, she moved to Cowley to be given excellent care by the carers and the community. Until the very end, Sr Helen's love for the Province and keen interest in the journey of restructuring at this present time was so evident in her desire to participate in any meetings, and when she was unable to do so, she wholeheartedly supported each step with her suffering and her prayer.

God called Sr Helen home to Himself on the morning of January 22, 2023, in a sleep of peace. We thank you, Sr Helen, for your life, given so generously to the Province and to each sister who shared life with you. We will miss you, but we have the great consolation and joy of knowing you are in the presence of the God who filled your life.

Pauline Clark FMA
Provincial



OBITUARY FOR

Sr Rose Cavanagh FMA



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Born in Castleblakeney, Galway, Ireland on November 23, 1930

Professed in Henley-on-Thames (England) August 5, 1953

Belonged to the British Province of St Thomas of Canterbury

On hearing of Sr Rose's death, the spontaneous words of sisters in the province tell of

Sr Rose's simplicity, kindness and gentle ways, her sense of humour in all kinds of weather and a keen astuteness and desire to learn. Her faith was deep, and she often surprised people by her insights into life and spirituality and this was evident in her serenity and her hidden life of service. Sr Rose left very little written about her life, yet those who lived with her, remember her with deep affection as a person who brought calmness and peace, no matter what she was going through. She loved the outdoors, the beauty of each season and all God's creatures. During her many years in Brettargh Holt, Kendal, she availed of this time to enjoy and share her presence with the many groups who came to experience the quiet and beauty of the surroundings.

Rose was born in the small village of Castleblakeney, Galway. Her family were devout Catholics and formed part of a close-knit community in the heart of the country. Her mother's family were farmers and owned a mill, and her father's family were in the building trade. Her father served in the army and died from a gunshot wound towards the end of World War II while Rose was still at home. She remembers how her mother never got over his loss. Rose had a twin brother, Paul, now deceased, who lived and worked in California. She had another brother Frank who died quite young, and has a surviving sister, Lily, who remained very close to Rose. Due to Covid, Lily and Rose had not seen each other for a few years and the news of her sudden death came as a shock for Lily and her family.

Rose described her home life as very good and happy. She went to the local National School and remembers the parish priest who did so much for the school and that many vocations blossomed from there for the priesthood and religious life. Rose was involved in fundraising for the missions and very active in school and parish projects and stated that her vocation came to light during this time. Rose commented that she was not a good student and just scraped through the exams.

However, when older, she expressed her regret at not having studied more, and throughout her life, she always strived to learn. Her teacher described Rose as most diligent, industrious and trustworthy. Rose finished school at fourteen years old and went to work in a shop in Ennis, County Clare. The priest of the parish knew Rose well and was influential in accompanying her. He wrote: I am well acquainted with Rose. She worked here in Ennis and was most attentive in her job. She is of excellent character, religious, devout, hardworking and not a bit worldly in her outlook. She is most anxious to enter a religious community and I have been able to help her make contact with the Salesian Sisters.

Rose began her formation in Salesian life in Fernbank, Limerick, in 1950. What most attracted her was the kindness of the sisters on her first visit. From there she went to the novitiate in Henley-on-Thames where she made her first profession in 1953 in the hands of Mother Luisa Oreglia. Sr Rose then started her years of mission in the service of the communities. She wrote: I went to Sandgate immediately after

my profession and worked hard in the kitchen, garden, laundry and sewing room and assisted the children in the playground. She showed great skill in noticing what needed doing in a house and was a great support to the bursar in foreseeing the maintenance tasks. Sr Rose moved around the Province wherever there was a need. She lived in the following houses, at different intervals: Hastings, Highfield, Farnborough, Cowley, Limerick and Cahiracon (Ireland 1967–1971), Battersea, Kendal and finally in Cowley where she moved when her health declined. The last years of Sr Rose's life were not easy, as her physical suffering increased with symptoms that weren't easily diagnosed until recent months.

Sr Rose walked gently on this earth and her presence among her sisters kept that gentle step and kind presence towards all. When the Father called her home on Wednesday, June 1, 2021, in the community of Cowley, Oxford, she went quietly in her sleep as the month of June began with Sr Rose's great devotion to the Sacred Heart—a devotion she had nurtured from childhood.

Thank you, Sr Rose, for the life you shared so generously and faithfully for sixty-nine years as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

**Pauline Clark FMA
Provincial**





Wishing you all a very happy,
holy and peaceful

Christmas

with every blessing for 2024.