Fr. Mario Rosso, SDB
Feb. 26, 1924 - Dec. 15, 2017

It is with very heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved Fr. Mario Rosso. Fr. Mario was called home to heaven suddenly on Friday morning. He had, as always, concelebrated the 9AM Mass, and when later in the morning a rectory staff member went to let him know he had visitors, he found Fr. Mario dead.

As all who knew him can attest, words cannot convey Fr. Mario’s presence --but when you encountered him, you knew that he loved YOU, he cared about YOU, and he wanted YOU to get to heaven. And he did all this with that inimitable twinkle in his eye. The stories of Fr. Mario’s heroic life will be told and retold by so many who knew him--especially among our Chinese Apostolate. Fr. Mario gave his life to Jesus Christ over 75 years ago and he has been giving it to us ever since. We are heartbroken, but we know that Fr. Mario wants us to be happy, because we are in the season of the coming of the Lord! Did he not always instruct us that we never need to worry so long as we kept Jesus in our thoughts, Jesus on our lips, Jesus in our hearts!

Fr. Mario with Sts. Peter and Paul community celebrated the Feast day of St. Andrew, Patron of our Salesian Province on Nov. 30, 2017
The annual Posadas 2017 at St. Joseph’s in Rosemead proved to be another successful and life-learning experience. “Posadas” is nothing new; everyone knows that we re-enact Mary and Joseph’s cold and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of shelters; in Spanish, the word means “lodging”. In this picture, you can see Fr. Paul Chuong was coaching the kids, I mean, the angels, the shepherds as to what their roles were and where they were from. Then it was Aiden, the boy who portrayed Joseph, he popped the question: “What is my line?” That is right, being, Joseph, the husband of Mary who accompanied this difficult journey, he should have a good line in this re-enactment. But for those who are well versed in biblical readings, we don’t remember famous quotes from Joseph. He seemed like to be a man of few words. Looking deeply into Aiden’s eyes, we felt that his passion to be the best caregiver was enough.

No words were needed to play the role of Joseph. A tender smile, a gentle hug, an attentive attitude towards every little detail in life and his forever presence at Mary’s side – these are the images of Joseph. No famous speeches, no scholarly remarks, this carpenter just obeyed what was thrown to him, to be the provider of the future Lord. Quietly and unconditionally he showered his wife with devotion and love. He did whatever he could to provide for the family. He labored long hour, he crossed the hard terrains to find shelter for his family and he accepted failure with humility when no lodging was offered for his family. However, he was focused; his only goal was to accompany Mary to her role of being a mother.

If you were to look at the dads in your own families, you will have no difficulty finding the shadow of Joseph in them. They work long hours, sometimes two jobs in making ends meet. Holidays are welcomed because these are times when they can earn extra money for their families. Reflecting back on our college days, the dads in our families found joy in providing for our families while doing double shifts. They trotted along the rough journeys of being new immigrants, they learned the new language, and totally took pride in their promotions as a result of their hard work.

During this Christmas, this Posadas, we come to appreciate our “Joseph” so much more. There must be a specific DNA to become a dad, and being the Joseph who sacrifices everything for his family. Back to our Posadas, Fr. Paul told Aiden: “being Joseph, your role is to take care of Mary, you don’t need to say anything special.” What a smart way to complete this beautiful re-enactment!

By Sheila Kun, Cooperator

The Joseph in Your Home

INTOUCH • December 17, 2017
**Visitation Schedule**
**Province of St. Andrew the Apostle**
**2017-2018**

**NOVEMBER**
15 – 20 St. John Bosco Community, Bellflower (The School community)
Thanksgiving
27-12/1 De Sales Hall

**DECEMBER**
1- 4 St. Dominic Savio Parish
5-8 OFFICE DAYS at the Provincial House, SF
9 -14 St. Francis Community (Parish, School and Camp)
11-12 Provincial Council (Camp St. Francis)
15 Provincial House Staff Christmas Party
16-18 Corpus Christi Parish, SF
(Christmas and New Year at the Provincial House)

**JANUARY 2018**
4-11 Salesian High and Novitiate, Richmond
12-15 St. Luke’s Parish, Stockton
17 Province Finance Committee
21-23 Provincial Council, Stockton
25 Directors/Pastors Meeting, Richmond
26-27 Corpus Christi, San Francisco
28-31 Post-Novitiate Curatorium, Orange, NJ

**FEBRUARY**
2-4 St. Bridget’s Parish, Los Angeles
5-11 Salesian High Community, Los Angeles
11-13 Provincial Council, De Sales Hall
16-19 St. Mary’s, Los Angeles
19-25 Don Bosco Tech, Rosemead
26 Novitiate Curatorium, Richmond

**MARCH**
1-4 Sts. Peter and Paul’s, San Francisco
5-8 Provincial Council, Santa Cruz
15 Directors/Pastors
16-18 Religious Education Congress
22-16 San Luis Rey, Laredo

**APRIL**
8-10 Provincial Council, Bosco Tech, Rosemead
15-21 Don Bosco Hall, Berkeley
22-27 Provincial House Visitation, SF

**MAY**
6-8 Provincial Council Meeting, Richmond

**JUNE**
2-8 Provincial Council Planning Meeting (Lake Arrowhead)
11-14 SES
17-22 Retreat at Three Rivers
17-24 SYLC

**REMINDERS:**
Rector Major’s visit: September 12-18, 2018
Extra-Ordinary Visitation: February-May, 2019 (Maria Arokiam Kanaga)
CURRENT AND FORMER VOLUNTEERS REFLECT ON THE ADVENT GOSPELS & THE FOUR PILLARS OF FAITH-BASED SERVICE:

Social Justice ◊ Simplicity ◊ Community ◊ Spirituality

Brought to you by:
A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. (John 1:6-8)

The first word that comes to mind upon reading this Gospel is humility. In response to questions from the priests and Levites, John explains that he baptizes not as Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet, but as “the voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘make straight the way of the Lord’.” John is so quick to point out this distinction, so quick to give credit where he feels credit is due. Reflecting back to my years of service as a Lasallian Volunteer and Good Shepherd Volunteer, I think I could have used a slice of this humble pie. How often did I consider myself “the light,” taking on the responsibility to serve, or save, the communities I entered? How often did I fail to see the parts of myself that needed saving, and that this saving work was never really mine to begin with?

Thanks to time, perspective, and most of all, the grace of God and those I have encountered, I continue to be humbled - moved beyond my self-righteousness, and into a space of more authentic listening, learning, and loving. These moments, in all their discomfort and vulnerability, become my testimony; through the gift of growth, I can “testify to the light.”

**Focus on: Community**

In this Gospel, the questions posed by John’s community invite him to name who he is and what he is about. Community often provides this challenge and gift - holding a mirror up to our past, present, and future and reflecting how all these complexities meld and meet the world.

How do your communities help you own your truth? In community, how can we help each other “testify to the light” within?

**Service Suggestion:**

Spend some time reflecting upon someone in your community who has helped you grow more into who you aspire to be.

Write a note of appreciation, take them out to coffee, or find some unique way to affirm them and acknowledge the influence they have had.

**PRAYER**

*OUR POWER TO BLESS ONE ANOTHER by John O’Donohue (Excerpt from To Bless the Space Between Us)*

In the parched deserts of postmodernity a blessing can be like the discovery of a fresh well. It would be lovely if we could rediscover our power to bless one another. I believe each of us can bless. When a blessing is invoked, it changes the atmosphere. Some of the plenitude flows into our hearts from the invisible neighborhood of loving kindness. In the light and reverence of blessing, a person or situation becomes illuminated in a completely new way. In a dead wall a new window opens, in dense darkness a path starts to glimmer, and into a broken heart healing falls like morning dew.

It is ironic that so often we continue to live like paupers though our inheritance of spirit is so vast. The quiet eternal that dwells in our souls is silent and subtle; in the activity of blessing it emerges to embrace and nurture us. Let us begin to learn how to bless one another. Whenever you give a blessing, a blessing returns to enfold you.
**REFLECTION BY TAYLOR GOSTOMSKI, FORMER AUGUSTINIAN VOLUNTEER**

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” (Luke 1:26-38)

“The journey is better than the inn,” was written by Miguel de Cervantes in his famous work Don Quixote. Former UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, used to use that phrase to describe how he liked the practices or “the journey,” better than the actual games or the “inn” in his work. Many of us want to get to the destination or result right away – whether it’s an actual trip or a goal we have set – that we forget the hidden treasure than can be the journey or process itself.

Take time to intentionally think about one of your favorite accomplishments. Was the only good part the moment you actually got your reward? Or was the process of getting there also satisfying? That’s not to say there isn’t hard work, sacrifices and suffering, but we can learn to take joy in that part too.

In today’s Gospel reading, Mary has, what I would imagine, a very human reaction to being visited by an angel of God and being told something big is about to happen and that she’s going to be a part of it. “Troubled”, “pondered”, being told to “not be afraid” and asking “How” are all pretty human responses. I wonder, if like many of us, Mary wanted to skip to the end of her story and know what was going to happen and whether or not she would be okay.

But ultimately, it seems Mary accepted the value of the process, the journey, when she trusts God’s will. Bearing God’s child, perhaps the “inn”, is a wonderful thing, but maybe the journey is also wonderful—the trust, courage and inner-strength that was required of Mary to bring Jesus into the world.

**FOCUS ON: SPIRITUALITY**

Spiritually, I struggle greatly with some of the classic big questions in life. Why is there suffering in the world? I also struggle with more practical questions like, what is my next career step going to be? I really want to know the answers to both of those, but maybe this passage about Mary can help remind us a) it’s okay to have questions and b) it’s also okay to not know the answers and wherever we are in life right now, we need not the answers or to know for it to be enjoyable.

**PRAYER**

God, teach us patience in the journey of life. For we often want to get to the destination so eagerly, we forget to appreciate what happens along the way.

Although the journey has its hardships, help us to see the value in those challenging times. Give us the strength to continue on the path set before us and to strive to seek moments of joy in situations where it may be sparse.

**Service Suggestion:**

If Christmas is our inn, then Advent is our journey. Let’s not only wait this Advent, being stagnant, but prepare, being active. Let’s prepare ourselves so that when the big day arrives, we will be able to more fully enjoy it. Maybe it’s preparing ourselves to have a better attitude when things don’t go our way in life, so that when the holidays come and, likely, something doesn’t go our own way, we are able to take it in stride and maintain our joy during this special time of year and share it with others.
Bosco Tech Makes the Season Merry & Bright for Children
876 Gift Boxes Shipped Worldwide This Season Alone

ROSEMEAD, CA. Nearly 900 children around the world will have a brighter Christmas thanks primarily to the hard work of Architecture & Construction Engineering senior Grayson Wade who again orchestrated the massive Operation Christmas Child shoebox donation drive, and the entire Bosco Tech student body who wholeheartedly supported and contributed to the effort.

As of this year, the campus’s commitment to the international non-profit outreach has resulted in the packing nearly 4,000 fully-stocked shoeboxes and the raising of $38,000 for shipping costs. More than a campus-wide effort, the school’s faculty, staff, and club members have been helped by other high schools, and organizations and businesses throughout the San Gabriel Valley, like Carrows and the Olive Garden.

Operation Christmas Child is part of the Samaritan’s Purse, a Christian humanitarian organization providing aid to people in need around the world. The organization impacts more than 100 countries.

“I think it’s important for us to remember that, globally, there are great needs out there,” said Grayson of the effort. “There’s much more out there than our own day-to-day lives.”

Special thanks to Grayson, his family, participating Tech students and faculty, and all who donated, packed shoeboxes, and supported this wonderful outreach!

Don Bosco Technical Institute
1151 San Gabriel Blvd,
Rosemead, CA 91770
www.boscotech.edu
This month the province participated in their third Praesidium Child Safety Audit. The Province was first formally accredited in 2011. The audit is a present-day snapshot of the Salesian’s current efforts in protecting children from sexual maltreatment. As you might already know, Praesidium accredits religious Institutes all around the world that serve youth. In order to become accredited, the Province must document that they are adhering to over 200 best practices in protecting children. These “best practices” are described in Praesidium’s 2016 Standards for Accreditation document, which consist of 25 general standards consisting of specific best practices that have been shown to prevent child sexual abuse in organizations. These standards fall into three broad categories: prevention of child sexual abuse (Standards 1-7), responding to child sexual abuse (Standards 8-18), and supervision of members on restriction for a credible accusation of child sexual abuse (Standards 19-25).

The Institute undergoes a rigorous audit every three to five years to make sure they are adhering to these standards over time. What is important about these audits is that the goal isn’t to punish organizations that fail to follow standards, but to help organizations move from a state of non-compliance to that of compliance. Although you want to have a best compliance rate as possible in preparation for the audit, it is important to view these periodic audits as opportunities for improvement. For various reasons, large organizations tend to regress over time, due to changes in leadership/staff, changes in roles of members and simple forgetting to follow policies. In addition, many large systems tend to be reactive to what is happening at the moment, versus proactive and focused on prevention. This audit, like the previous ones, has been an opportunity to improve the Salesian’s efforts in this most important endeavor - protecting children.

The audit process begins with the Province conducting its own internal assessment process by completing the Praesidium Self-Assessment Toolkit. This Self-Assessment is a checklist of each and every requirement included in the Standards. Praesidium recommends that this self-assessment not be viewed as a test or a predictor of success or
failure in the accreditation process itself. Rather, it is meant to serve as a means to internally assess the institute’s fulfillment of the Standards and to prepare the necessary documentation verifying the fulfillment of all the requirements prior to the accreditation site visit. As the Mental Health Advisor, one of my roles is to prepare for and facilitate the audit, which is why I may have contacted you over the past three or four months about specific documents that were needed.

The actual audit consists of a Praesidium staff member conducting a file review and interviews of all members on restriction, interviews of supervisors, a review board member interview, interviews with 10% of the members about their awareness of and perceptions of child safety efforts, and an interview with the Provincial. Praesidium also reviews all documentation such as policies, continuing education modules, and screening documents. The audit usually lasts about three days and ends with a general verbal summary of the strengths and areas for improvement. After the local audit, Praesidium prepares a comprehensive report outlining what requirements are unfulfilled and the documents and/or actions necessary for re-accreditation. Generally, this remediation process takes only take 3-6 months, but possibly longer, depending on specific issues needing addressing and the institute’s speed at providing the necessary documentation. Technically, the audit continues until all the final documentation is provided to Praesidium.

You may wonder, why go through all this bother for accreditation? The purpose of accreditation is so that the public, and the Church, can rest assured that children will be safe. As you may already know, there were no winners or losers with the Clergy sexual abuse crisis - everyone lost something. The victims had to endure terrible traumas at the hands of trusted religious leaders that would negatively affect their faith and their psychological wellbeing for the rest of their lives. The greater public lost faith in the Church. The majority of innocent religious members had to experience the shame and embarrassment of the actions of a few trusted brothers. Orders and dioceses lost millions of dollars that could have been spent on services for the public. And lastly, perpetrators of abuse who were enabled by the system didn’t receive the help they so desperately needed. The accreditation process is an exercise in re-building the public trust. Taking these proactive steps will not only prevent child sexual abuse, but will demonstrate to the public that child protection is an utmost priority to the Church. There is also another practical reason for the accreditation process. Because of the huge financial costs liability insurance companies paid to resolve the claims of the legal cases brought against the Church, insurance companies were unwilling to insure religious institutes unless they could prove that they were doing everything possible to prevent another child sexual abuse crisis.

There were many people who helped directly with this accreditation audit. I want to thank you for all your efforts. However, it was really the entire Province that helped with this process throughout the years. It also helped if you read the policies each year and signed your name to the Policies Verification Form, if you read the Continuing Education Modules and sent in your Verification/Feedback Form, if you remembered to do the all the appropriate screening procedures for novices, if you supervised a brother on restriction and completed the supervision forms, if you provided necessary documents for the audit, if you ever sought clarity about the child abuse reporting law or wanted to know more about health interpersonal boundaries, if you ever served on the Review Board, if you made sure you completed your duties pursuant to the Safe Children Policy or the Working With Youth Policy, or even if you talked with a brother who was having problems maintaining healthy boundaries with a child, youth or adult. To coin an over-used, but true, phrase, “It takes a village.” So thank you everyone for another valuable Accreditation Audit!
Christmas show of Saints Peter and Paul school, SF Dec. 14, 2017
Saints Peter and Paul School students collected toys for the children at Family House a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization that provides temporary housing to families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital.

DECEMBER

SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY FATHER’S PRAYER INTENTION

For old and sick salesians

That they may continue to radiate the joy of their vocation call and be intercessors for abundant graces of the Lord for the Salesian mission

Faith, hope and charity are the essence of Christian living, which lead us to the “fullness of Christ” (Eph 4,13). Whoever is years ahead on the journey has an even greater treasure to draw from. It is a treasure that is renewed as much as one gives. This could create greater communion among generations of confreres that challenges all cultural changes, language, tastes and fashions.

We pray that this dialogue and encounter between wisdom and experience on the one hand and the new generations on the other be really fruitful.
Our Beloved Sisters, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, have just completed a missionary jubilee year: 140 years since their first Missionary Expedition, the one led by Sister Angela Valais to their first American foundation in Uruguay. It is a fact that the SDB and the FMA share countless, beautiful pages of missionary history. For numerous Salesian missionaries ad gentes the FMA have been true mothers and sisters, who supported and encouraged them, sometimes in very adversarial circumstances! Read, for example, the testimonies of the missionaries in Ecuador about the care and attention they received from Blessed Mary Troncatti.

Mother Yvonne, on the occasion of these jubilee celebrations, wrote in her letter no. 972, asking the FMA about their missionary availability: “Dear Sisters, why not now? Do we perhaps lack confidence? Are we too lost in our short term emergencies? Has the universal outlook that was nurtured so well at Mornese now been weakened?” The same questions - translated and contextualized - and the same appeals, could be addressed today in their totality also to us, the SDB! Yes, a little less of calculations - which does not mean giving up an adequate and up-to-date reflection - and perhaps a little more generous audacity. It seems that this is what we still lack. Let’s help each other!

Thank you and courage!

Pope Francis gives us yet another missionary event: he has declared an extraordinary missionary month in October 2019, to commemorate the centenary of the missionary encyclical Maximum Illud. We share here a few thoughts from his letter of 22/10/17.

“The intention behind this missionary month is that of fostering an increased awareness of the missio ad gentes and taking up again with renewed fervour the missionary transformation of pastoral activity. This initiative can enable all the faithful to take heart the proclamation of the Gospel and to help their communities grow in missionary and evangelizing zeal. May the love for the Church’s mission, which is 'a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people' grow ever stronger!

Pope Benedict XV recognized the need for a more evangelical approach to missionary work in the world, so that it would be purified of any colonial overtones and kept far away from the nationalistic and expansionistic aims that had proved so disastrous. “The Church of God is universal; she is not alien to any people,” he wrote, firmly calling for the rejection of any form of particular interest, inasmuch as the proclamation and the love of the Lord Jesus, spread by holiness of one’s life and good works, are the sole purpose of missionary activity. Bendict XV thus laid special emphasis on the missio ad gentes, employing the concepts and language of the time, in an effort to revive, particularly among the clergy, a sense of duty towards the missions.

“Today, missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church and the missionary task must remain foremost. What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity. It has a programmatic significance and important consequences. ... Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission’... The Apostolic Letter Maximum Illud called for transcending national boundaries and bearing witness, with prophetic spirit and evangelical boldness, to God’s saving will through the Church’s universal mission. May the approaching centenary of that Letter serve as an incentive to combat the recurring temptation lurking beneath every form of ecclesial introversion, self-referential retreat into comfort zones, pastoral pessimism and sterile nostalgia for the past. Instead, may we be open to the joyful newness of the Gospel. In these, our troubled times, rent by the tragedies of war and menaced by the baneful tendency to accentuate differences and to incite conflict, may the Good News that in Jesus forgiveness triumphs over sin, life defeats death and love conquers fear, be proclaimed to the world with renewed fervour, and instil trust and hope in everyone.”

To each and every one, our best wishes for Happy Christmas.
I am a Salesian, originally from the Central African Province (AFC) in Congo. When I was a student at the Salesian school, I read the story of the first Salesian missionaries in my country. Their testimonies appealed a lot to me. They have contributed greatly to the evangelization and the social life of my people. I felt inspired. I began to personally discern a missionary vocation in my own heart. I felt deep within me a call to Salesian life, and, during my novitiate, I expressed my desire to be a missionary ad gentes, ad vitam. I was closely accompanied by my spiritual guide during my three years of philosophy. I wrote to the Rector Major to express my readiness for the mission. The missionary theme of that year became my daily prayer: “Lord, send me”. I thank the Lord for calling me to the 146th Missionary Expedition (2015) and to be a missionary in Sri Lanka.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a vast country and Salesians are not present everywhere. They are needed in many more areas of the country. With such a need for internal missionaries, the question arises why one should become a foreign missionary. The Salesian Congregation is missionary. It offers us the possibility of being a missionary in our own country or abroad because we belong to the great Salesian world. I felt the call of sharing my Christian and Salesian life with others wherever the Lord would send me.

As a missionary in Sri Lanka, my first assignment is to do my practical training (regency) in the studentate of philosophy. I feel great joy whenever we go out to meet the young people in a completely Buddhist village. This is our Sunday ministry. How nice it is to see Buddhist parents accompany their children to our oratory. We deal with the children and young people in a Salesian way and teach them a little English. I am happy to give myself to this missionary apostolate and I feel warmly welcomed. Sri Lankans are known for their genuine and spontaneous smile. It is really an oratory of joy, despite their material poverty.

I come from a culture very different from that in this part of the world. The daily diet consists of rice and spicy sauces; different local languages; bare feet in the church (temple, house) ... These are small challenges that I will gradually overcome in order to learn and appreciate this new culture. The missionary course in Rome taught us to be patient when experiencing “cultural shocks”. Personal prayer helps me overcome my personal challenges.

To young Salesians who would like to become ad gentes missionaries, I would say, we must always remember that a missionary vocation is a gift from God, who wants us to continue his mission all over the world. When we feel called to the missionary life, we give an immediate and positive response, because it is God’s own initiative in our regard.

Faustin BAHATI sdb
Congolese Missionary in Sri Lanka

The Venerable Attilio Giordani (1913-1972), a layman, husband, and father of a family, worked many years with Christian enthusiasm in the Salesian Oratory of St. Augustine at Milan. Then, with an extraordinary apostolic spirit, moved to Brazil. In his letters to his girlfriend Noemi, his future bride, written in 1942, in the middle of the war, he jokes: “Miss, we have had to clear out a lot masonry from our house and consequently we have a lot of place for joy. Miss, I want you to be cheerful. As for myself, thank God, despite the usual ailments, despite my advanced age with all the thoughts that come along with that, I am quite cheerful … It is my firm intention, and I invite you to pray for it, to always work for the glory of God and not for any other purpose. Miss, I confess that I dream of a family where the integrity of Christian peace and the innocent laughter of children (if the Lord grants us such a great grace) are not disturbed by any clouds.”

Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity
Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

Faustin BAHATI sdb
Congolese Missionary in Sri Lanka

So that they may continue to radiate the joy of the call and be intercessors of the Lord’s generous blessings on the Salesian mission.

Faith, hope, and charity are the virtues of Christian life, which lead us to “the fullness of maturity in Christ” (Eph 4: 13). Those who are led to experienced in life have an ever-increasing treasure to draw on. It is a wealth that is renewed, the more it is given. Even among confreres of differing generations we can have a communion of goodness that challenges all changes in culture, language, taste and fashion. Let us pray that this dialogue and encounter between wisdom and experience on the one hand and the new generations on the other may be truly fruitful.
I am approaching the subject of weight gingerly. Why? I don’t want people to think that I am critical of you just because you might be on the “heavy” side. I want to have a deeper understanding of weight and how that affects your health. For the coming weeks, we will unravel how our weight could change our health and more importantly what can we do about it. I dare not offend you by making broad statements about weight or obesity. Hence I was extremely happy to come across this website “Weight Matters” in their introductory statement about why weight matters. It begins with an opening statement which reflects my belief and my motivation to begin our conversation on weight.

The issue of weight matters to people in many different ways. It evokes many different emotions and can often be difficult to talk about with your healthcare provider, spouse, friend, loved one or others.

The most important reason why weight matters is because of your health.

There are many health implications that accompany excess weight, such as diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea and others. Sometimes weight can even affect emotional health as well. It is not uncommon for someone dealing with weight issues to be affected by depression or a lack of self-confidence.

Gaining excess weight and realizing the health implications is not always the easiest thing to recognize. In fact, most Americans do not realize that they are affected by excess weight or obesity, or even at risk for weight-related conditions. This is why it is so important for you to realize that YOUR WEIGHT DOES MATTER!

Let me begin by going into the physiological component of a fat cell this week. From Wikipedia in its definition of Adipocyte: Adipocytes, also known as lipocytes and fat cells, are the cells that primarily compose adipose tissue, specialized in storing energy as fat.

Risk factors for arthritis include:

- **Family history.** Some types of arthritis run in families, so you may be more likely to develop arthritis if your parents or siblings have the disorder. Your genes can make you more susceptible to environmental factors that may trigger arthritis.

- **Age.** The risk of many types of arthritis — including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and gout — increases with age.

- **Your sex.** Women are more likely than are men to develop rheumatoid arthritis, while most of the people who have gout, another type of arthritis, are men.

- **Previous joint injury.** People who have injured a joint, perhaps while playing a sport, are more likely to eventually develop arthritis in that joint.

- **Obesity.** Carrying excess pounds puts stress on joints, particularly your knees, hips and spine.
Obese people have a higher risk of developing arthritis.

**Complications**

Severe arthritis, particularly if it affects your hands or arms, can make it difficult for you to do daily tasks. Arthritis of weight-bearing joints can keep you from walking comfortably or sitting up straight. In some cases, joints may become twisted and deformed.

The Care Ministry welcomes your comments/suggestions: kunlouis@gmail.com