



# INTOUCH

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

USA WEST PROVINCE NEWSLETTER • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

## A MESSAGE FOR THE PROVINCE



Dear Salesian Sisters and Brothers,

IWe have begun the beautiful and holy season of Advent. In the past, I have found this season to be quite busy and filled with many "Christmas " activities that "Advent" gets somehow swallowed up by so many other distractions. I realize that many, if not most of these activities, are good and of service to others. Even our Christmas parties or get-togethers bring people closer and help us connect with each other. That's a good thing!

For me, the Season of Advent has always had a somewhat somber and meditative mood to it. I am not saying that it is dark in a negative way but more subdued than other

seasons. The long winter nights, shorter days, the cooler weather, hues of blues and violets used for decorations, and candles burning in the darkness, bring to mind a virgin at prayer longing for the long awaited Messiah and listening in prayer to the voice of the beloved. Listening comes in many forms but when done in silence it becomes a powerful mode of listening. The theme of our strena this last year reminded us of the listening and accompaniment so much part of our Salesian DNA. The Rector Major constantly reminds us that young people need our listening ear, our presence, our Salesian accompaniment, always done with joy and encouragement. Advent is a time of listening to the Scriptures with greater effort, devotion and openness. The readings presented to us by the Church are extremely visionary, hopeful and up lifting. The Scripture readings present a world and Kingdom where God reigns, where peace is experienced everywhere, where walls are torn down and divisions erased, where people of all nations and backgrounds come together to form a "holy nation."

As a world and as a nation we are challenged to live this vision as presented by the Advent Lectionary. We who have accepted Jesus as our Messiah and King are given the



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- BR. AL VU, SDB 1<sup>ST</sup>
- FR. THINH NGUYEN, SDB 6<sup>TH</sup>
- BR. PETER DOUC LE, SDB 8<sup>TH</sup>
- FR. TED MONTEMAYOR, SDB 13<sup>TH</sup>
- FR. AL MENGON, SDB 19<sup>TH</sup>
- FR. MANUEL CAMILLERI 24<sup>TH</sup>
- FR. ALBERTO CHAVEZ, SDB 30<sup>TH</sup>

directive to heal the vulnerable, to comfort the sorrowful, to bring light where there is darkness, joy where there is sadness and liberty to all those who are captive in some way. May we live this season with the conviction that what we hear through the liturgies, the prayers we raise up to God and the reflections which form part of our daily lives help us bring God's flesh and presence to a world longing to be fed, nourished and loved. Let Advent be Advent and (not yet) Christmas!

Today I flew into Los Angeles to attend some meetings. I will fly back to San Francisco on Thursday and remain in the Bay Area until our Provincial Council meetings beginning December 16 – 18, at De Sales Hall in Bellflower.

This morning Fr. Mel Trinidad, Fr. John Roche, Fr. Itchan Laygo and Gina Robles who works in the Youth Ministry office, flew to Tampa, Florida to attend the NCCYM (National Conference of Catholic Youth Ministers). This had been planned a year ago. Our brothers who will be attending will return on Sunday, December 9th. Let us keep our brothers and all the adult youth ministers attending in our prayers. The role of the youth minister is not only to organize activities for the young but to be that animating presence among them and to accompany them to greater holiness and commitment to the Kingdom of God. A Salesian Youth Minister also is the "watchdog" constantly reminding us that as a Salesian ministry our priority is the mission to the young. They are our "first things first" on our agenda. Our Rector Major, Fr. Angel and Francis our Holy Father, constantly challenge us to be witnesses of a God who has entered our humanity in a most humble and simple fashion and to work for justice. They continuously challenge us to allow the young to be prophets and allow them to teach us and show us the way. They too have answers. Listen to them. I end this letter, as we begin Advent and prepare for the

feast of the Immaculate Conception, a day seen by Salesians as the beginning of Don Bosco's ministry to the young, with these words from tomorrow's lectionary readings, taken from the Prophet Isaiah. They are some of the most inspiring and beautiful poetry ever written, with a wide vision of what can be when God is allowed to be in charge of our life and we take his Kingdom seriously.

*"Then, the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.*

*On that day, The root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, The Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious." (The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: 11)*

May it be so! Have a blessed and beautiful Advent Season!

With warm regards and gratitude,

*Fr. Ted*



## Don Bosco Technical Institute

### Bosco Tech alumnus helps make history

By Karen Krynen  
Communications Officer

Bosco Tech alumnus Paul J. Ramirez (Materials Science '02), NASA JPL Parachute and Explosives Quality Engineer and Metallurgical Engineering Specialist, has a whole lot to celebrate! Recently, not only did Paul welcome a new beautiful baby girl, Noelle, but he got to see his efforts of four years make interplanetary history when the parachute he worked on allowed the billion dollar Mars InSight robot to safely land on the Red Planet's surface last week. Paul explains that he provided oversight of the source inspection manufacturing of the vital parachute and testing, final inspection, and packing of the parachute into the mortar—explosives that were involved in successfully deploying the 'chute.' Not content to rest on his laurels, Paul is already hard at work on the upcoming Mars 2020 mission that will employ the world's largest parachute. "Not only do we 'Dare Mighty Things,' which is the JPL motto, but we accomplish them!" he says. Congratulations on all counts to Paul and his family from his very proud alma mater!





## St. Dominic Savio Parish

### Youth Ministry and Thanksgiving!

By Janelle Siqueiros  
Savio Youth Ministry

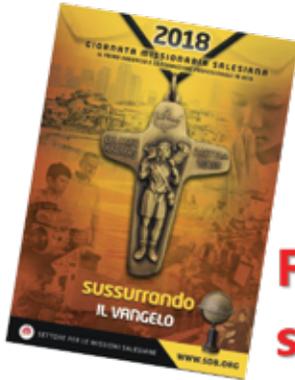
For St. Dominic Savio Church, there are many groups that make this church different from the rest. One of these groups is our Monday Youth Group. Our Youth Group provides a second home for many teenagers, which also engages them to learn more about themselves and Christ. Every Monday there is a new topic presented to the youth that challenges them mentally and allows them to think through God's teachings.

Recently, to get into the holiday season, we had our youth make a turkey and each feather corresponded to something they were grateful for in their life. As we dug further into the topic, they realized magnificent things that God was able to provide for them, and it truly shows how the little things really matter and, so often, they go unnoticed. Furthermore, to celebrate the things that God has provided for us, we the Youth Group has planned a Thanksgiving Potluck this Monday, November 19, 2018 at 7 PM.

As a teenager that has been coming to these youth

meetings, I can personally say that these meetings have truly shown me the value of life and why God has made the way things are for me. I know that through Him, I can do all things. These meetings are also very fun and everyone is welcoming, making this place have a homely and uplifting sensation. Lastly, we encourage any teenagers interested in learning more about themselves and their spiritual life!





## DECEMBER

### SALESIAN MISSIONARY INTENTION

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION

**For the Salesian Family at the service of Social Communication**

That the Salesians and the Salesian Family may have an evangelizing impulse and creativity in the Areopagus of Social Communication.

Today more than ever social networks, and Social Communication in general, are architects of culture. We pray that – with creativity, professionalism and intelligence – we may influence culture through the Gospel and our educative values.



**This Christmas SHARE the GIFT of an AWESOME STORY**

**HIS LIFE STORY IN A COMIC BOOK AVAILABLE**

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Tampa, FL 33610  
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AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[www.mhctampa.org](http://www.mhctampa.org)

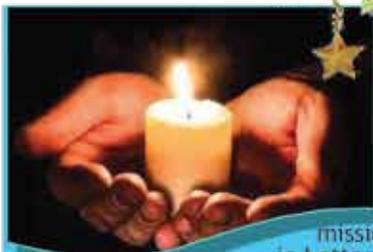
# CAGLIERO

N. 120 - December 2018



Newsletter for Salesian Missionary Animation

Publication of the Missions Sector for the Salesian Communities and Friends of the Salesian Mission



**T**he contemplation of the mystery of the incarnation fills the eyes and soul of the missionary: "Following the example of the Son of God who was made similar to his brothers in every sense, the Salesian missionary assumes the values of the people not yet evangelized and shares their anguish and hope" (Constitutions 30). May the company of Jesus, Joseph and Mary continue to forge and fortify the missionary who dwells in the heart of every Salesian! This is our Christmas wish from the Missions Sector to all of you, dear confreres and friends.

This time of preparation for Christmas can also become a time of intense missionary prayer. Pope Benedict XV is incisive in his exhortations in the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*. He urges a greater awareness and more effective prayer for the missions and for missionaries: "All Christians must, through prayer, help the preachers of the Gospel while they sweat in the vineyard of the Lord." The Congregation does so especially by proposing missionary prayer intentions for each month and through the active missionary role of prayer by the elderly and sick confreres.

Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Virgin of Bethlehem, pray for us!

*J. Basañes*

Fr. Guillermo Basañes, SDB - Councillor for the Missions

SALESIAN FAMILY SEMINAR IN SOUTH ASIA ON INITIAL PROCLAMATION

St. Paul VI tells us in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that the Church exists to evangelize (EN 14). The Seminar for the Salesian Family of South Asia, held at the Basilica in Bandel, on 7 and 8 November 2018, focused on Initial Proclamation today. There were forty-five participants from the SF (SDB, FMA, MSMHC, SMI, Disciples). The main purpose of the Seminar was the sharing of the fruits of five years (2010 - 15) of the study by the SDB-FMA on this theme in all the Salesian regions. We wished also to prepare animators on it within the SF. The participants put forward proposals to make Initial Proclamation a more fruitful contribution to evangelization in South Asia. Without listing them all, here is a brief summary.

1. **Initial P. at the personal level of spiritual growth:**  
Cultivate a profound personal prayer life, the Word of God, the Eucharist; Cultivate Marian devotion and imitation, reading and reflection.
2. **Initial P. through dynamic and joyful witness:**  
Be compassionate like Jesus; a welcoming approach to people; Cultivate sincere friendship with everyone, especially with people of other faiths.
3. **Training for Initial Proclamation:**  
Include it in the curriculum - the art of IP;  
Share experiences of Initial Proclamation.
4. **Dissemination of Initial Proclamation in the provinces**  
Organize study sessions, seminars, on IP;  
Use the normal meetings at the provincial level;  
Prepare lay people, especially young people on this theme.
5. **Initial Proclamation in all sectors of the apostolate**  
In every form of apostolate (schools, colleges, vocational schools, hostels, parishes, youth centres, etc.)  
Initial Proclamation should be a priority in the pastoral educational plan;  
Have personal contacts with students and guardians - visit their families especially in circumstances of illness, difficulties, death ... ; Revitalize the Salesian practice of "the word in the ear".
6. **Initial Proclamation among members of other faiths**  
Organize the celebration of Christian holidays like Christmas with people of other faiths  
Encourage pilgrimages, popular devotions and retreats;  
Make friendly visits to families especially in moments of pain;  
Promote inter-religious dialogue.
7. **Initial Proclamation in families**  
Turn families into missionaries / agents of Initial Proclamation;  
Help to revive the faith of fallen Catholics; Encourage family prayer.
8. **Initial Proclamation in the Salesian Family**  
Introduce it also to Salesian Cooperators and former students to bring in the secular perspective; Promote networking and collaboration among SF member groups on this theme  
Organize seminars on it, developing innovative ways of attracting people to Christ;  
Start missionary groups with the goal of evangelization, introducing them to IP.



CONGRATULATIONS CAGLIERO11 FOR 10 YEAR OF MISSIONARY ANIMATION!



INTOUCH · DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2018

## GOD CAN SURPRISE US AND GIVE US MORE THAN WE CAN EVER IMAGINE



**Y**eans ago, I never thought that I would one day be a missionary in Mongolia. It was clear to me that I had to be an engineer or, at the most, a missionary in the Czech Republic, an atheist country in Europe. During my primary and secondary studies, I was the only Catholic in my class. It was not easy to be a witness to our faith before my classmates.

I met the Salesians when I started my technical studies in the university of Prague, still in the communist period. Soon I joined their underground activities: small summer camps, "chaloupky" as they were called, and formation of animators and groups for sharing the Bible. Step by step I was discovering God's call to leave electrical engineering and follow Him, who is invisible but much more powerful than electricity.

In 1993 I became a Salesian and in 2002 a priest. After 3 years of service in the Salesian parish of Zlin, I received new responsibilities: starting a missionary voluntary service in our

Czech province, a school for animators, vocational animation and the Salesian Youth Movement. They were eleven years of total service under the protection and guidance of Mary Help of Christians. I discovered a Salesian world greater than I could ever have imagined.

In 2014, Pope Francis, through his first encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, unexpectedly but clearly showed me my way: "Let us go forward, then, let us go forward to everyone the life of Jesus Christ" (EG 49). That touched me a lot, together with the theme of the Salesian Mission Day 2015 "Lord, send me". When I translated it into the Czech language, I began to hear to a new vocation: "Give me more and more". I shared this with our provincial and after six months of discernment I wrote a letter to the Rector Major.

The traditional way of life of the Mongols is nomadic pastoralism. They move with their animals and their yurts several times a year due to the limited fertility of their pastures. Even those established in cities still think and act in a nomadic way. Understanding it is really a challenge.

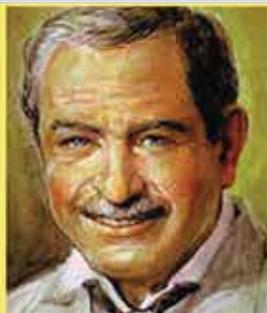
Mongolian is one of the most difficult languages in the world. The basic language course lasts two years. We are still searching for ways to express the fundamental terms of our faith in a manner understandable to a society of shamanic and Buddhist tradition.

Becoming a missionary in this country means becoming a child again, learning things from the basics. How many times I have reached my limits! I had to grow in humility and love.

One of my greatest joys is to watch people grow. It does not happen every day, but there are times when we can sense that we have arrived at a better understanding within the community or that some of the children have been touched by our service of God. The Lord has his way of working. He takes his time. It is different for each person. It was a great moment when some students became animators in the oratory and, again, when many new children joined us at the Don Bosco Centre. But the greatest joy is to be in the mission of God, to be a bearer of the treasure. I discover this ever more day after day.

"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts ..." (Heb 3: 7-8). I wish all of us could be more open to God's call every day, that we deepen our relationship with Him. He can surprise us and give us more than we can ever imagine.

Fr. Jaroslav Vracovský sdb—Missionary in Mongolia from the Czech Republic



### Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity

Fr. Pierluigi Cameroni SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

Blessed Artemide Zatti (1880-1951), Salesian brother. Thanks to his serious spiritual commitment, a sincere process of discernment and the desire to serve God and neighbor, he embraced the mission of Don Bosco. His vocation sprang from the reading of Don Bosco's life and out of his friendship with a "magnetic" Salesian, as was the parish priest Fr. Cavalli who was his model throughout his life. When he was struck by tuberculosis, his superiors suggested him to profess as a Salesian coadjutor. Zatti did not need to think long to realize that, whether a priest or not, he wanted to stay with Don Bosco. He stayed, living fully the original vocation of the "coadjutor".

For the Salesian Family  
at the service of Social Communication



Salesian Missionary Society

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an evangelizing impulse and creativity in the immense  
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## Homelessness

### A Call to Respond to Homelessness

By Sheila Kun RN, BA, BSN, MS, FCCP  
Salesian Cooperator

The late Fr. Chris once said: "Prayer without action is worthless." We took his teaching to heart. As you recall, the last 10 weeks we had been unpacking the meaning of loneliness, intimacy, and solitude. If you look around or just drive through our inner cities, you would find the worst type of loneliness and isolation. Yes, I am talking about the homeless people. In my 16 miles of commute to work every day, I witness tents along the side street on Vermont Ave, near the LA City College. I recognize the middle aged veteran with 2 dogs holding his sign: "We are hungry" at the entrance of the freeway. Even though I try to make it my business to give him a couple of dollars every week, I feel there is so much more we can do. On the days when I did not have the dollar bills with me, I hesitated to make eye contact. I can image how lonely it must be to be homeless. At St. Joseph Salesian Youth Renewal Retreat Center, the cooperators, inspired by the work of Johnny Martinez, the coordinator of our retreat program, we responded by committing ourselves to his Homeless Ministry.

It took one remark from Johnny to enlighten us: "Everyone needs spiritual food." For most of us, we concentrated our energy to taking care of the physical needs of the homeless. Thanksgiving has just slipped around the corner, you have seen the advertisement from the LA Mission to donate and feed the homeless. I thought an alternative approach to helping out this group is to attend to

their spiritual need. The stigma of enrolling oneself in a psychiatric or mental health program precludes many participants. But who could refuse spiritual food? What a brilliant way to participate in the Homeless Ministry!

Within the last 6 months, teaming up with Johnny, the cooperators from St. Joseph Center had 2 mini fundraising events. On an average, we have only 70 to 100 parishioners attending our 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. In spite of our small outfit, we managed to raise close to a thousand dollars earmarked for the Homeless Ministry. When one group of women who lived in shelters visited our retreat center with the collaboration from the Ignatius Loyola Religious Retreat Program, our cooperators were in charge of all their meals. Fr. Paul prepared a basket for each participant with personal items that they could use. The response was very possible; the participants felt the Salesian hospitality, enjoyed the home atmosphere, relished in the respect and privacy provided while they were discerning their spiritual journey. We just finished cooking for another weekend retreat for the women who lived in shelters – October 27 to 29, 2018. And the following weekend another group of male participants. We also addressed some of their physical needs by donating to a participant who had not had a mattress to sleep on for many years. Some needed clothing and household items. We were happy to do whatever we could to make a difference in someone's life. The coordinator from the Ignatius Loyola

Religious Retreat Program has booked another retreat for April 2019. I am so glad they now claim St. Joseph to be their preferred retreat center. This gives us another opportunity to reach out to the homeless and a chance to serve the under-privileged.

#### **Your home work from the Care Ministry this week:**

Identify the people around you who are at risk for isolation, and you do something about it.

*The Care Ministry welcomes your feedback: [kunlouis@gmail.com](mailto:kunlouis@gmail.com)*



# WELCOME!



*Thank you* for reading this year's Advent Reflection Guide, brought to you by **Catholic Apostolate Center** and **Catholic Volunteer Network**. This Guide contains Gospel reflections written by current and former volunteers, framed around the four pillars of faith-based service: Social Justice, Simple Living, Community, and Spiritual Growth. Each year, these reflections are shared with our community of volunteers serving the U.S. and around the world, former volunteers, prospective volunteers, and other friends and supporters .

As we approach this holy season of Advent, our unofficial theme is gratitude. In these times which are seemingly marked by powerful messages of intolerance, xenophobia, and violence, our volunteers and the programs they serve with give us hope and remind us of the ways in which God is active and at work in our communities. Last year, more than 28,000 people served with over 185 CVN volunteer programs, working in diverse fields including church ministry, education, health services, immigration services, social services, and many others. We are grateful for the courage these volunteers and lay missionaries demonstrate, often travelling far from home to serve in unfamiliar cities, isolated rural communities, and foreign countries.

In the Second Sunday of Advent, we read of John the Baptist and his message, inspired by the prophet Isaiah – "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." We are immeasurably thankful for all of our volunteers, past and present, each working in their own ways to make straight the parts of the path that have been neglected.

Thank you once more for beginning this journey with us. Whether you are a prospective, current, or former volunteer, a staff member of a volunteer program, or simply a friend and supporter of the Catholic Apostolate Center or Catholic Volunteer Network, we pray that these reflections will inspire your own contemplation and transformation as you prepare for the Christmas season.

Sincerely,

**Catholic Apostolate Center & Catholic Volunteer Network**

## LOOKING FOR MORE?

Looking for more inspiration? Catholic Apostolate Center hosts an extensive library of Advent resources on their website: [www.catholicapostolatecenter.org/advent-resources.html](http://www.catholicapostolatecenter.org/advent-resources.html)



Advent 2018

**INTOUCH • DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2018**

# REFLECTION

By **Mara Scarbrough**, Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry

**"Be vigilant at all times." - Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**

As we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus this Advent season, today's

Gospel reading challenges us to also prepare our hearts for the return of the Son of Man. In our current world it can be so easy to get caught up in the busyness of the season, or the superficial obligations that seem like requirements. Jesus challenges this idea with conviction, cautioning His disciples to live so that they will not be caught unprepared for His return.

In the Bon Secours volunteer program our service is focused on a "Ministry of Presence". This is a fancy way of saying that we are challenged to serve by "being", rather than "doing". It is a radical way of loving others well with a focus on intentional encounters that lead to an authentic connection with others and Christ. When we open our hearts to Jesus, our aim in interactions changes. The Lord has called us to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially our marginalized counterparts.

It can be easy to allow our hearts to grow numb to the pain and suffering in the world, especially if we are living in a way that is not mindful of the Gospel. The Advent season offers us a time to pause and examine our lives. As we prepare our hearts for Him, we are called to slow down and focus on the parts of our lives that strengthen our connection to God.



## PRAYER

*Come Lord Jesus, and settle into our hearts this Advent Season. Help us to seek You more each day in our service, in our homes, and in our souls. Help ignite in us fervor to serve You with joyfulness.*

*Lord, we ask that You help us live vigilantly, working each day to recognize the light of Christ in every interaction we have. Help us slow down so we may intentionally seek You in every encounter. Bless our bodies for Your service and our service for Your glory.*

## Focus: SOCIAL JUSTICE

As we celebrate the first week of Advent, the Gospel compels us to live mindfully. As Jesus commands the disciples to live vigilantly, he calls us to live with intentionality. It can be so easy to let our own anxieties or activities overwhelm us. When we live wrapped up in our own problems, we turn a blind eye to the suffering of others and miss the rich opportunities the Lord provides to encounter His love in all people. Social Justice calls us to encounter others in a radically intentional way. Living for the Gospel allows us to love in the way that God intended.

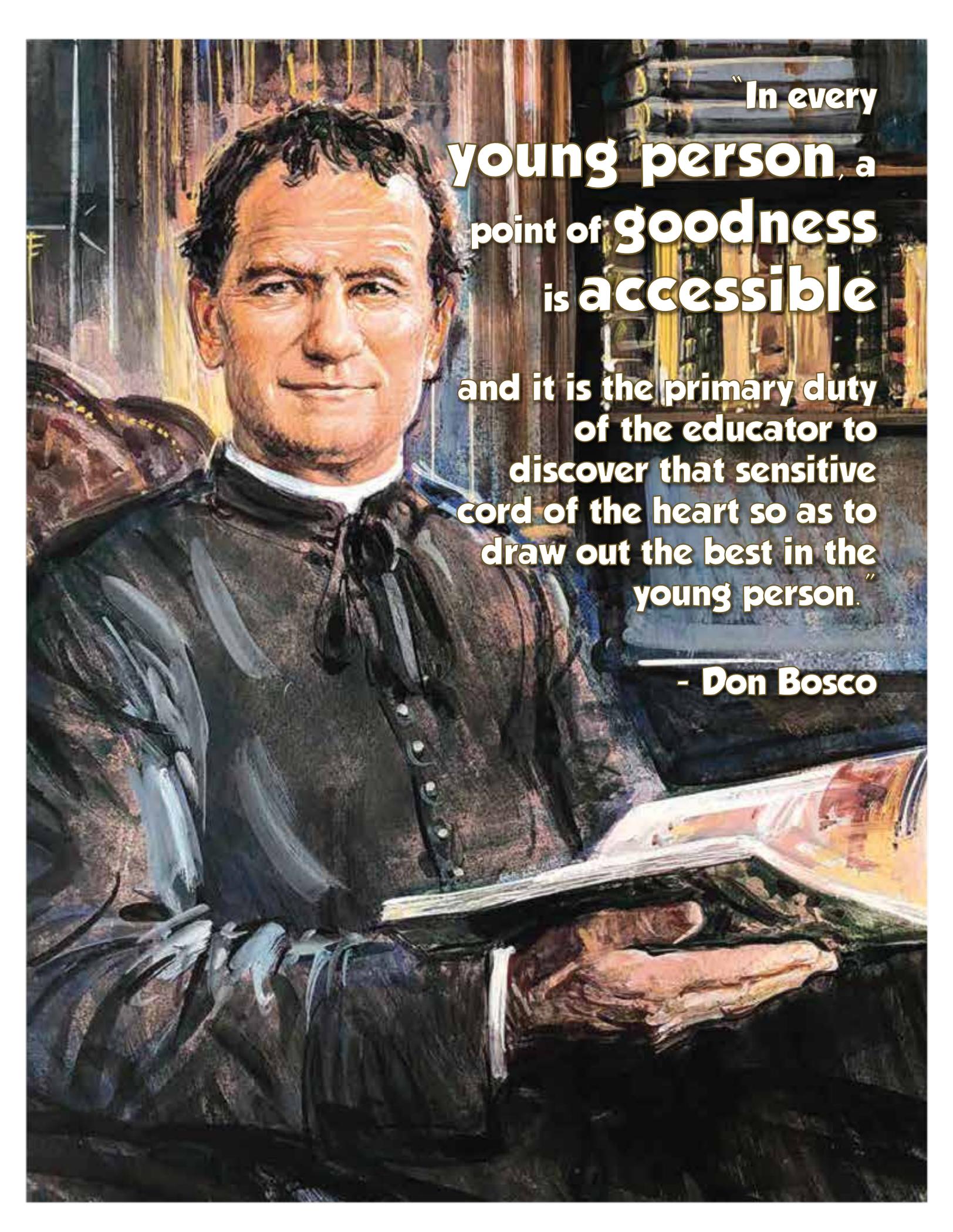
## SERVICE SUGGESTION

As we start this Advent season, we are all challenged to slow down and look for Christ in our world. In the second reading we implore the Lord to increase our love for one another. A way to spread love in your community can be to pick up trash in your neighborhood. This small act displays our care for God's creation and communicates our respect for those with whom we live. As you serve your neighbors in this way, actively name and notice the unique parts of your community that the Lord has provided. Take the time to thank God for the gift of His creation, which He generously invites us to participate in.



**Week 1 of Advent | December 2nd, 2018**

**INTOUCH • DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2018**



**"In every  
young person, a  
point of goodness  
is accessible**

**and it is the primary duty  
of the educator to  
discover that sensitive  
cord of the heart so as to  
draw out the best in the  
young person."**

**- Don Bosco**