A MESSAGE FOR THE PROVINCE

Dear Salesian Family,

Happy New Year to all! I hope all of you had a beautiful Christmas and a great start of a new year. You were in my prayers both at Christmas and as we began 2019.

I spent Christmas at the Provincial House with our small community of seven members. On Christmas Eve, the community gathered for an early dinner at a local restaurant and returned to the house to open our gifts from our KK (Kris Kringle). We spent some time enjoying what each of us had gotten from whoever picked our name and also sharing some stories of our family traditions. Later that evening, I joined the Corpus Christi Parish Community for the traditional midnight Mass which was at 10pm. I presided at the bilingual Mass (English and Spanish). The Mass was well prepared and the Church beautifully decorated. Thank you to the Corpus Christi Community for their hospitality and the dedicated ministry to the people of that area.

Christmas Day was relatively quiet. But, at 3pm, we joined together with around 40 Salesians from the North for a wonderful dinner and time together hosted by the Richmond Community of Salesian High and Novitiate. Our heartfelt THANKS go to Fr. John Itzaina, Director and his community for hosting so many of us. The evening included Hors d’oeuvres, a delicious meal of prime rib and Salmon, great deserts and a fun and entertaining game called “White Elephant,” which consists of getting a number, picking a gift from under the tree and stealing gifts from each other as part of the game. It was a fun evening, and we all left that evening quite content with the beautiful time we had together and grateful for all the hard work put into organizing such an enjoyable evening. Special thanks to our main cooks, Fr. Joe Nguyen, Br. Al Vu and Br. Jhonni Chamorro.

By now our schools have begun their new semester with staff retreats, in-service days and preparation for the return of our young people. I am sure our Parishes are taking a breather from the hectic Christmas activities and large crowds, before getting ready to celebrate our celebration of Don Bosco’s feast in a few weeks on January 31.

This year our Rector Major, Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, has given us our new “Strenna” or Theme for 2019: “So that my joy may be in you” (John 15:11) HOLINESS FOR YOU TOO. Hopefully, you have been able to access the commentary and the video on the Internet outlining this new theme and Fr. Angel’s message to the Salesian Family. We Salesians can boast of having 168 Saints, Blesseds, Venerables and Servants of God. We have 9 Saints, 118 Blesseds, 17 Venerables and 24 Servants of God. These titles describe the different stages leading up to Canonization.

Last year Pope Francis presented us with an Apostolic Exhortation called “Gaudete et Exsultate,” “Rejoice and be Glad.” It focused on our call to holiness. Following Pope Francis’ example and exhortation, Fr. Angel also wished to exhort the whole Salesian Family to listen and follow that call or vocation to holiness. Our Salesian holiness is lived out in a style which is made flesh in our present time and place (Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation is also very Salesian and down to earth). If you have seen the video with the Rector Major, put out by the communications department, Fr. Angel begins his commentary and presentation in a train station, right in...
the midst of young people and ordinary folks. The Rector Major writes, “It is not about a holiness for the heroic few or for exceptional people, but about an ordinary way of living an ordinary Christian life: a way of living Christian life rooted in the present day with the dangers, the challenges and the opportunities that God offers us as life unfolds.” (Strenna 2019 HOLINESS FOR YOU TOO). The call to holiness is really a call to radical love. St. John of the Cross is often quoted as saying, “In the twilight of our lives we will judged by our love.” What Pope Francis and Fr. Angel seem to say is that our lives are a call and vocation to love. That is what really matters. This love must be made flesh and made visible in our daily lives no matter where we are. Jesus made the Father’s love manifest in his life by what he said and did. Don Bosco also made God’s love manifest in his love for the young. For us holiness is living our lives to the full, making love manifest in different ways and always in a spirit of joy and gratitude.

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In reflecting on Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation and Fr. Angel’s commentary on the strenna, I was struck by the openness and wide vision of those presented as models of “lives of holiness.” Many of us grew up reading and learning of roles models of sanctity which were unattainable. These were men and women, young and old, who were too perfect or too “other worldly.” We admired their courage or life of discipline and penance or purity, etc. But, Pope Francis and our Rector Major, quoting other Popes, present to us a holiness within our reach. Ordinary men and women are presented, who although not officially canonized, live lives of fidelity and goodness, accepting their sinfulness, weaknesses and struggles in the area of virtues. They are our Mothers, Fathers, grandmothers, our aunts, our uncles, teachers, priests and “next-door saints” to repeat a phrase coined by Pope Francis. And, Pope Benedict XVI expresses this sentiment well when he wrote: “I should like to add that for me it is not only the great Saints that I love and know well who are the “sign-posts,” but also the simple saints, that it to say the good people that I see in my life, who will never be canonized. They are ordinary people, one might say, without any signs of heroism, but in every-day goodness I see the truth of the faith.” (Benedict XVI Catechesisis at the General Audience on 13 April 2011).

This month of January is sometimes referred as a Salesian month because of the feast of St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco. But it is also called a Salesian month because of the number of Salesian saints we remember and celebrate: January 8, Blessed Titus Zeman, January 15, Blessed Aloysius Variara, January 22, Blessed Laura Vicuña, January 24, St. Francis de Sales, January 30, Blessed Bronisłao Markiewicz, January 31, St. John Bosco. I would not be surprised if before long every month would be considered a Salesian month because of the long list of those considered Salesian saints. And, the list continues to grow.

I encourage you and myself to continue to reflect on what it means to be saints. Our Baptism is meant to bear fruit, to be the visible image of Jesus in the world, manifested in so many ways. How beautiful when this image is clearly seen in our communities. The history of our Salesian Tree has been remarkable in the number of holy men and women we can count as saints. Fr. Angel gives us a list at the end of his written commentary. It is proof that Don Bosco’s Salesian spirituality and style has borne fruit and continues to do so. I wish to end with a quote taken from one of Fr. Pascual Chavez’ first letters: “My dear brothers and sisters I can confidently state that the greatest and the most pressing need that we have today in our Salesian world is not to do more things, not to plan or replan initiatives, to open new foundations…but rather, to share what our lives individually and collectively communicate, our way of living the Gospel which develops and expands in time as the continuation of the way Jesus lived.”

Tomorrow I leave for San Antonio, Texas for a Salesian Family Day sponsored by the Salesian Sisters. I will also visit our parish, San Luis Rey, in Laredo. Next week we have two days of Provincial Council Meetings and on the following weekend, I plan on visiting our brothers in the post-novitiate in Orange, New Jersey. And, do not forget to pray for all of the youth gathered in Panama City for World Youth Day (22-27).

Let us give thanks to God for this new year with all the possibilities which will be offered to us. I encourage us to reflect on the strenna on holiness and make sanctity something personal and fully alive in our particular lives and environments. All Salesian Saints, pray for us!

With warm regards and gratitude,
Christmas Giving
St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church Cooperators and candidates support St. Mary’s Church

By Joseph Ng
St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church

In response to Father John Lam’s call to support our sister parish St. Mary’s Church, Salesian Cooperators and candidates of St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church, led by the Cooperator candidates the Mok family, collected 2 vans full of Christmas gifts and a donation of $500. Fr. Lam, Joseph Ng, and Rachel Cheung delivered the gifts to St. Mary’s Pastor Fr. Rafael Saiz and Associate Pastor Fr. Alberto Chavez.

Left to right: Fr. Rafael Saiz, SDB, Fr. John Lam, SDB, Fr. Alberto Chavez, SDB and Rachel Cheung
The Salesians of Saint John Bosco are dedicated to educating and serving the young people of the world, while following the Oratory model: home, school, church, and playground. No matter when and where, the Salesians strive to create a home where young people can feel welcomed and at peace, a school where life skills are taught and learned, a church where spiritual development occurs, and a playground to have fun and to be joyful. This Salesian Oratory model is best exemplified at Camp St. Francis, a four-week, over-night camp for young boys ages five to thirteen, with the addition of young girls during the fourth week.

Camp St. Francis is alive today as a result of charitable acts. Father William Ryan, a Salesian priest, took a group of orphaned boys from St. Francis School on a trip to the Santa Cruz beach in the late 1940s. During their journey, they came across a stalled car, and therefore decided to provide assistance to, who they soon found out, was the Leonard family. Impressed by how well Father William trained the boys, the Leonard family invited them to their home, which is where Camp St. Francis is today. In 1951, the family decided to give their entire nine acre land to the Salesians of Don Bosco, in hopes that they would create a welcoming home for all young people to have fun and to be themselves—what is exactly what Camp St. Francis is today!

Throughout the month of July, Camp St. Francis, located in Aptos, California, begins each day with a morning prayer and a Salesian “Good Morning,” which leaves a positive thought about the virtue of the day. After enjoying a delicious breakfast, the campers head to their activity sessions, which range from outdoor sports, fitness, archery, arts and crafts, theatre, mad science, skate park, or game room. We then have Mass or Catechetical session, followed by lunch, rest period, and then beach time. After dinner, the boys and girls are surprised with the Night Activity of the day. Our Night Activities on Mondays and Tuesdays of each week differ; they range from a Scavenger Hunt, to an Obstacle Course, or to Capture the Flag, to name a few. Every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week, the campers always look forward to Campfire, Talent Show, and Movie Night. We conclude every night with a snack and a Salesian “Good Night,” which leaves a positive thought for the boys and girls to go to sleep with. This is a brief insight into a day in the life of a camper.

Camp St. Francis is a unique experience that is centered on the Salesian charisma. Camp St. Francis exemplifies diversity.
Each and every camper has a different personality, a different background, a different story. No matter who they are or where they come from, Camp St. Francis welcomes everyone; this camp is a home away from home. Camp St. Francis is an opportunity for the boys and girls to have fun, to create lasting friendships, to try new activities, to discover their gifts and talents, and to learn about their faith.

The administrators and counselors at Camp St. Francis pour in passion to serve the youth, to make them feel welcomed, accompanied, and supported through all phases of life. They strive to fulfill the mission of Camp St. Francis, which is entirely what St. John Bosco has taught us: “It is not enough to love the young, they must KNOW that they are loved.” The youth at camp are taught to be good and honest people of this world; they are taught to always keep an open-mind, to experience building friendships which ultimately become family, and they learn to love, respect, and to be present with one another. The campers are called to live a life in service for others through the Glory of God.
Camp St. Francis had the pleasure of interviewing two of our campers, Gio Salinas and Lisandro Albor, who were both Counselors in Training (CITs) this past camp season. When asking these boys about what makes Camp St. Francis special to them, why should others support what this camp does, and how does camp impact them in the future, we can confirm that these two boys are true examples of how Camp St. Francis positively changes their lives as they grow and experience different aspects of life.

Gio Salinas, born and raised in Los Angeles, California, is in his 8th grade year at Santa Isabel school. He has been attending Camp St. Francis for the past three summers, starting his first year during the summer of 2016. He was a Counselor in Training, as well as an intern shadowing Assistant and Senior Counselors, where he learned the roles and responsibilities of a counselor, while enjoying another summer as a camper. After talking with Gio, he shared his personal experience at camp, stating that “camp is special to me because of the bonds created and the time spent with other campers. Camp is like another family away from home. The counselors teach us about our faith in God and how we can form a stronger relationship with Him.” Gio also told us that Camp St. Francis needs to be supported by the greater community. He mentioned that camp is a welcoming and safe environment where the campers are taught about Saint John Bosco and his works in serving the youth. He enjoys the different activities offered on a daily basis where he is able to get out of his comfort zone and meet new people. Gio also wants Camp St. Francis to be supported because “the cook makes amazing food for us and we are always treated as though we are a part of a big Salesian family.” Gio believes that Camp St. Francis impacts him now and in the future- he believes that he can build a closer relationship with God and has been taught to treat others with love and respect. He has gained leadership skills that he can hold on to for the rest of his life.

Lisandro Albor Jr., best known as “Jr.,” is from Watsonville, California, and is currently attending Watsonville High School as a freshman. Jr. has been attending Camp St. Francis for the past six summers, starting his first year during the 2013 camp season. Jr. was also a Counselor in Training, as well as an intern, this past camp season, while at the same time, living the camper experience. Jr. is a great example of someone who has been attending Camp St. Francis since he was a young boy, and is now exemplifying what it means to be a true leader for the youth. When asking Jr. about his personal experience at camp, he shared with us what makes camp so special to him: “Camp is special to me because not only do I get to spend my summer with my friends, but I also get to help out at camp and have fun while helping.” Jr. has definitely contributed greatly to camp- learning the roles and responsibilities of a counselor, being a role model for the younger kids, and helping to promote Camp St. Francis to the Watsonville community. He definitely agrees that camp should be supported; he believes that “others should support camp because not only is it giving kids a home, school, church, and playground, but it is also giving the kids, and the Counselors in Training, the support and opportunity to become leaders and role models for the younger campers.” Additionally, Camp St. Francis has impacted Jr.’s personal growth thus far, but he also claims that camp will impact him in the future as he continues to learn what it means to be a responsible, compassionate, and passionate leader to serve the youth.

Gio and Jr., starting as campers and now on their way to become counselors at camp, know that Camp St. Francis is a welcoming home for all youth members; an experience that allows kids to have fun and to be joyful, while learning life-long skills and journeying in their faith. Camp St. Francis needs the support from families, friends, and community members to help make camp an even greater experience for the youth who are served.
Christmas Celebration
Northern California

The Northern California community began their evening with prayer before dinner.

The community gathered around the Christmas tree, ready for some entertainment.

Its time for the community to pass out their gifts!

Left to right: Br. Larry King SDB, Br. Mike Herbers SDB, and Fr. Ted Montemayor SDB, relaxing in the community library.
(ANS – Rome – January 7) – The liturgical memorial of the Salesian Blessed Fr. Titus Zeman coincides this year with the 50th anniversary of his ascent to Heaven, which took place in his birthplace, Vajnory, Slovakia, on January 8, 1969. On that day a long Calvary ended, one that began in April 1951, when he was arrested, then tried, convicted, and transferred from one prison to another until March 1964. His release was followed by five years of life in conditional freedom, with relentless harassment, persistent and harsh persecution, and health issues due to imprisonment Fr. Zeman had fought against death for 18 long years. In the end he surrendered only to his Lord. The nurse who assisted would say she “had never seen a man fight so much against death.”.

His funeral on January 11 was a triumph of faith and affection. Several dozen priests concelebrated, challenging the Communist regime’s prohibitions. Some of the boys whom he had helped become priests rushed to participate in the event. The regime’s spies, present in the crowd, reported in their confidential reports that he had been defined a “martyr.”

Fr. Andrej Dermek, then provincial of the Salesians in Slovakia, could henceforth pronounce these words with good reason: “We meet in the cemetery ... like the first Christians in the catacombs. Perhaps it is thus for us religious. Life has dispersed us, but death brings us together.... In this place today begins to rest the fighter who fought to the end, the priest who finished celebrating the Mass of his life. This is a departure.... His life was always and everywhere a priestly life.”

Fr. Zeman would accompany young Salesians to Turin to complete their theology studies and be ordained. He did not make them fugitives; rather, he helped them become responsible people, able to form themselves for the service of the people of God. The truest and fullest judgment on the life and the sacrifice of Fr. Zeman comes from those who knew him; they said, “He was a saint, and he died a martyr.” On September 30, 2017, in fact, he was beatified as a martyr in Bratislava.

Special celebrations will be held at the provincial house in Bratislava and in the birthplace of Vajnory, where his mortal remains are kept. A solemn concelebration will be held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome, with the Rector Major presiding.
Justice for Immigrants

Submit a comment to DHS and DOJ to support vulnerable individuals’ and families’ right to seek protection in the U.S

By USCCB
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

BACKGROUND

On November 9, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) published an interim final rule that seeks to change existing asylum regulations as put forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). If courts allow implementation of this rule (and the corresponding Presidential Proclamation), it would dramatically amend existing law and prohibit people who cross in between official ports of entry at the U.S./Mexico border from applying for asylum. This change would greatly diminish existing protections for those fleeing persecution and undermines existing international and domestic law. Even those who present themselves at U.S. ports of entry could be subject to long waiting periods in Mexico before their U.S. asylum claim could be heard. Public comments on the interim final rule are due by January 8, 2019.

CALL TO ACTION

DHS and DOJ are accepting comments on the interim final rule until January 8, 2019. We ask that you submit your own unique comment to DHS and DOJ, asking that the federal government continue to protect those fleeing persecution and seeking asylum, regardless of how they entered the U.S., and honor its obligations to uphold due process. It is important to send a unique message in order to show DHS and DOJ the diversity of comments in opposition to the rule.
Here are some talking points that you can modify to customize the comment you wish to submit. We suggest you that you choose the first two points marked #1 and #2 and then at least four of the talking points below:

1. I write to express my strong opposition to the new Interim Final Rule, "Aliens Subject to a Bar on Entry Under Certain Presidential Proclamations; Procedures for Protection Claims" (83 FR 55,934; EOIR Docket No. 18-0501).

2. The rule is inconsistent with Catholic social teaching.
   - All human beings are children of God who deserve to live in safety and dignity in their own homes and countries. They have a right not to have to migrate, the right to stay home. But if conditions do not allow them to live a safe and dignified existence, every person has a right to migrate.
   - Every country has a duty and indeed a responsibility to control its own borders to keep its citizens safe. Part of that responsibility of control is also to keep migrants safe, particularly those who are forced to migrate due to persecution and who, as they migrate, are often victims of violence, exploitation, or human trafficking.
   - The rule fails to fulfill our nation’s international and domestic legal obligations related to refugees. As a nation of refugees and immigrants, the United States long ago signed on to obligate itself to provide the protections laid out in the UN Convention Regarding the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the UN Protocol Regarding the Status of Refugees of 1967. Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 to incorporate these obligations into U.S. federal law. As a result, existing law recognizes the urgent dangers facing people fleeing from persecution and provides an avenue for protection from those dangers.
   - The interim final rule runs contrary to the plain language of these international and domestic laws, which state that a person is eligible for asylum even if he or she does not enter through a port of entry. Neither DHS and DOJ nor the President have the power to unilaterally amend these existing protections.
   - Allowing individuals and families to seek asylum regardless of how they enter the U.S. is not only existing law, but it is humane policy. Our law on this matter flows from the experience that people fleeing for their lives have a desperate, paramount need to get themselves and their children to safety. Respecting that need enables us to avoid unconscionable rejections or expulsions of people.
   - Most of the children and families currently fleeing from Central America to our southern border are seeking protection from lawlessness, violence, and persecution, and many of them qualify for asylum or other U.S. legal protections. There are also some individuals fleeing from violence in Mexico who qualify for U.S. asylum protection. All these individuals deserve the full measure of U.S. protections.
   - The Administration (83 FR 55948) estimates that 70,000 asylum seekers would be barred altogether from asylum protection annually by this rule. Unaccompanied children would be among those barred from U.S. asylum protection.
   - The Administration (83 FR 55948) further estimates that the 24,000 asylum seekers per year who present themselves at U.S. ports of entry and who would be eligible for asylum would still face extended wait times in Mexico, which would leave them in harm’s way with violence and exploitation by human traffickers and other bad actors. There is added concern for Mexican asylum seekers, who would likely face the option of entering between ports of entry and not being able to access asylum or waiting for U.S. asylum processing capacity in the country in which they are being persecuted.
   - Restricting access to U.S. asylum will not deter children and families from seeking protection in the United States since it does not alter the pervasive root causes of forced migration in the violent areas of Central America. Please restore and strengthen the U.S. asylum system at the border, making it humane and consistent with U.S. values and with U.S. international and domestic legal obligations.

To send your comment, please type your personal message in the space between the two paragraphs below and hit send. If you received this message directly from Justice for Immigrants, your comment will be sent automatically to DHS and DOJ. We suggest you that you choose the first two points marked #1 and #2 and then at least five of the talking points above.

“I write as a concerned Catholic regarding the Department of Homeland Security’s ("DHS") and the Department of Justice’s ("DOJ") Interim Final Rule on "Aliens Subject to A Bar on Entry Under Certain Presidential Proclamations; Procedures for Protection Claims" (83 Fed. Reg. 55,934; EOIR Docket No. 18-0501).

[INSERT YOUR COMMENTS HERE]

For all these reasons, I urge the DHS and DOJ to rescind this Interim Final Rule and urge the President to rescind the corresponding Proclamation.

Sincerely,”
ROSEMEOAD, CA – January 3, 2019 - Don Bosco Technical Institute (Bosco Tech) will host an admissions information night for prospective students and their families on Thursday, January 17, at 5:30 p.m.

Interested middle and elementary school students are invited to tour the school’s extensive engineering and applied science labs and classrooms, and meet instructors and current students. Information will be provided about the new Biological, Medical & Environmental Technology (BMET) program, an addition to school’s five existing STEM majors.

“Bosco Tech offers a unique and proven college-preparatory, pre-engineering curriculum,” said Principal Xavier Jimenez. “And we’re pleased to get to share the details about our exciting new program. This informational evening is a great opportunity for families to learn more about what our students are accomplishing and to hear about their personal experiences at the Tech.”

Information on shadow visits and financial aid will be available. For information about the event or about the school, contact Director of Admissions:

John Garcia
jgarcia@boscotech.edu
626-940-2009

Bosco Tech is an all-male Catholic high school that combines a rigorous college-preparatory program with a technology-focused education. The innovative curriculum allows students to exceed university admissions requirements while completing extensive integrated coursework in one of several applied science and engineering fields. On Niche.com’s list of top boys high schools and Catholic high schools in California and the U.S., Bosco Tech boasts a college acceptance rate of 100 percent, with the majority of graduates pursuing STEM-related post-secondary majors and careers.

The school is located at 1151 San Gabriel Boulevard, Rosemead, 91770.

Visit www.boscotech.edu
Alumni Update: Alberto Gonzalez

By Gabriel Botello
St. John Bosco High School Student

Alberto Gonzalez is an alumnus of St. John Bosco High School and was a part of the graduating class of 2016. For two years, Berto has been bouncing around with different majors such as neuroscience and PPE (philosophy, politics, and economics).

As he was still trying to find what he truly wanted to major in, Berto landed an internship in Washington, DC during the summer where he decided to minor in computer science. With this decision, Gonzalez worked on getting an internship for the class the summer after.

After applying for many internships, Facebook University happily accepted him, and Gonzalez was also ready to get started.

“I said to myself that this would be my test,” said Gonzalez.

As the year went on, Berto began to learn more and more of and about computer science, even considering it as a major instead of a minor. The summer internship came along and Berto was prepped and ready to begin at FBU.

The program he was involved in was an 180-student program that taught the students mobile development over three weeks. After the three weeks of learning, the students were given an opportunity to build their own successful app using their knowledge they learned through the three weeks. The students were then given their own groups and five weeks to develop their app. The top three apps at the end of the summer got to meet and present their apps to the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg!

Berto’s team – after weeks of hard work – finally developed their app, “Surround.” This app was created to take a group of phones and turn them into a full 5.1 surround sound system with several phones as speakers and a couple as controllers. The app was so successful it brought Berto and his team to the number one spot, allowing them to ultimately present it to Zuckerberg.

This was a major accomplishment for Berto, as his family and his Bosco community is beyond proud of him. After working and studying so hard to get to where he is now, Berto expressed his thoughts.

“I was overjoyed! I had completed my test. Now, I am a computer science major and am returning to Facebook next summer,” said Gonzalez.
It was a gorgeous Christmas day in San Francisco, with the sun shining brightly on a cool and crisp afternoon. A calm after the storm from the night before on Christmas Eve, a night of hard rain and strong winds. Everything was in motion once again for the dinner for the homeless, poor, and the needy. The kitchen preparations were done the day before, from slicing ham, cutting vegetables, mixing ingredients, utensil and plate purchases, to the smallest decoration details from the planners of the St. Vincent de Paul group. Sts. Peter & Paul’s gym was lined with chairs and tables, topped off with utensils and cups, Christmas tree branches, ornaments and tangerines. At 2:00pm the doors were opened. 230+ guests came in the first hour. The servers continued their service until a bit past 5:00pm, busing and cleaning the tables, bringing the plates and cups and depositing them into the proper recycling, compost and waste bins, as directed by another set of volunteers.

The food was prepared in big trays inside the oven. The kitchen volunteers worked like a well-oiled machine, in an assembly line fashion. They filled numerous plates with sliced ham, grilled potatoes, grilled brussels sprouts, with a side of salad and whole cranberry sauce, all coming from the kitchen steaming and smelling very good. The younger volunteers present also did their share in distributing small plates of yummy apple or pumpkin pie. All this happened with background music entertainment from a piano player. After the dinner the guests went out to get some donated clothing that they can use.

The 30+ volunteers who came offered their personalized service, from grandparents to parents to children serving as greeters and ushers, food and bread servers, juice pourers and seating monitors. All worked with the common goal of making the guests as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

Many heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers, organizers, planners, and preparers. Thank you for sharing your time, talent and treasure on this holy day.

It was truly a day to share the true meaning of Christmas. For truly a Child is born for us, away in the manger, with Angels heard on high, on that Silent night, giving Joy to the world.

SS. Peter and Paul Parish
Sharing Christmas at SS. Peter & Paul School

By Deacon Edward Te
Deacon - SS. Peter and Paul Parish
St. Dominic Savio Parish
Monday Night Youth Group

By Janelle Siqueiros
Youth Group Leader

Every Monday at 7:00 PM, St. Dominic Savio Parish holds a youth group for teens and young adults in the community. Within each gathering, a new topic regarding teenage life and our faith is presented in a manner that engages participants to get involved. What is even more exciting is that we have a core team that plans each gathering for its specific needs and it’s planned by none other than youths themselves. Youth serving youth!

This last Monday, we had an exciting meeting – Youth: A Gift of God. Now many times, young people tend to complain about being too young to do thing, or what’s even more common is them spending their days behind a screen. For the gathering, the core team planned a lot of activities that brought the idea of being young, exciting. We had games like dodgeball and sing offs; and, although most would think of these activities as tiring and energy draining, the participants had the ability to enjoy it because of their youth. After all the games, we reflected on how being young is something sacred that, sadly, many take for granted.

To conclude the meeting, a lot of people started to share their memories of being a childhood and reminiscing what we cherished. We also gave thanks to Christ for allowing us to have the gift of being young, to be able to run, and to be able to enjoy life with little to no restraints. I encourage anyone who has any question to ask and without a doubt push themselves to attend one of our meetings! Our next meeting with be Monday, January 14, 2019 @ 7:00 PM.
This is the first write up for our Care Ministry in 2019, I thought it is appropriate to look back at our Care Ministry by examining some historical data and assess where we are at with this Ministry. The big question is: “What we have envisioned as goals for the Care Ministry 5 years ago, are they still resonate in 2019?”

Five years ago, the Elderly Ministry was changed to the Provincial Care Ministry to reflect the need to approach aging in a different perspective. Aging is what we all go through, there is no exception. However, there is no parenting class for aging. The mortality for death is 100%. Hence we recognize that to live with dignity, we have to begin with understanding this process even though there is no teacher guiding us or giving us lectures on aging. We explored what aging meant; we opened our eyes to the teachers or mentors around us; these are the folks who embrace the Lord, serve His people, and take what life brings with a very positive attitude. With the guidance of the provincial directors and especially the Elderly Ministry members Fr. Tom Prendiville and Bro. Ernie Martinez, we launched a comprehensive approach to healthy aging and graceful living.

There were two principles central to our belief to improve the health of our elderly are still relevant:

1) An infrastructure within each community where the special needs of the elderly are identified and taken care of. This includes seeking resources to care for our elderly, both in terms of community resources and the tangible help or helpers needed to provide the care.

2) An approach to the understanding of aging that is different from the sickness model to a health promotion model. Grounded in our belief is that aging is inevitable, but we could embrace aging not with fear but thrive with healthier living. This idea guides us to the need for health education on chronic illnesses prevalence among seniors and preventive measures that promote better health such as nutrition and exercise.

With these two missions in mind, the confreres in the Province quickly learned to access to community services that provide tangible support to the daily health needs of the elderly. The seniors in each center, especially those with medical need, are under the supervision of a dedicated team of helpers; the hired helpers assume the primary duty of the daily care, with a director who oversees the health care needs of the confreres.

Another observation is the importance of being able to live within the community in spite of their poor health. We recognize that social isolation, loneliness and depression are real. The confreres living in the community are the most effective “healers” in responding to the emotional and spiritual need of the elderly, while their day to day need rests in the skillful hands of the paid employees. We saw appropriate placement of care for elderly confreres, primarily with home care as the first option. Many of our elderly confreres enjoyed the pastoral love, compassion and loving attention from their fellow brothers.

The Care Ministry also has been diligent about health education. A weekly health related topic is available via InTouch. We have begun the health conversation since January of 2013 and we are still going strong with this education piece. The Care Ministry received good feedback on its weekly communication on its health promotion agenda. We are reaching audiences that are not only confreres but members of the Salesian Family who read InTouch.

One of the initiatives that we need to work on as a Province is the maintenance of a current health record for each confrere in his community. Without an up to date health record, there is no continuity of care. The community director and confreres in your community are your support system; they need to act responsibly to your medical need; the individual health issues need to be addressed by knowing what medical condition you have and how you want to be taken care of.

For those of us seniors, we know there is no rehearsal for death. How should we exit gracefully? This is my personal
belief: I need to live as healthy as I could, including proper exercise and diet. I feel obligated to my children who might carry the burden of caring for me if I end up with major disability. I have no prediction as to how my life would end, but as long as I can, it is my duty to keep myself as healthy as possible. For those who live in the community, you owe it to your community to live a healthy life. Likewise, the community owes you to keep you safe and as healthy as possible.

Beyond the personal level, one might ask: who is the “we” in the Care Ministry? We firmly believe that each confrere is a member of the Care Ministry. Let me ask you: Who can replace your presence, your pastoral love and your dedication to each other?

I am highlighting the outing of Br. Bruno (who is 93, living in the Don Bosco Tech community) as an example of the Care Ministry at work; it is the caring attitude of his community that keeps him happy and healthy; it is the friends in the community who let him experience the beach and the California sun; it is your love that keeps him going!

Your homework assignment from the Care Ministry this week:

Think of your contribution to the Care Ministry – You will be surprised how valuable you are.
"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