A MESSAGE FROM WORLD YOUTH DAY

Dear young people,

World Youth Day has arrived and the theme is Mary’s response to God’s call, “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Her words are a brave and generous “yes”. It is the positive reply of one who understands the secret of vocation: to go beyond oneself and place oneself at the service of others. Our lives only find meaning in service to God and to other people.

There are many young people, both believers and nonbelievers, who when they come to the end of a stage in their studies, feel a desire to do something for those who are suffering. This is a strength in young people, a strength that all of you possess. It is a strength that can change the world. It is a revolution that can overturn the powerful forces at work in our world. It is the “revolution” of service.

To be at the service of others does not only mean to be ready for action. It means also to be in conversation with God with an attitude of listening, just like Mary. She listened to what the angel said to her and then she responded. It is by relating to God in the silence of our hearts that we discover our identity and the vocation to which God is calling us. It can be expressed in different ways: in marriage, in consecrated life, in the priesthood... All these are ways of following Jesus. The important thing is to discover what God wants from us and to be brave enough to say “yes”.

Mary was a happy woman, and this is because she replied generously to God and opened her heart to God’s plan for her. When God has a proposition for us, like the one he had for Mary, it is not intended to extinguish our dreams, but to ignite our aspirations. Propositions like this are meant to make our lives fruitful and produce many smiles and happy hearts. To respond to God positively is to take a first step towards being happy and towards making many people happy.

Dear young people, take courage, enter within yourselves and say to God: “What do you want from me?” Allow God to answer you. Then you will see how your life is transformed and filled with joy.

With World Youth Day officially beginning, I invite you all to prepare for it by following and taking part in the initiatives that are happening.

They will help you on your path towards this goal. May Our Lady be with you on this pilgrimage, and may her example encourage you to be brave and generous in your response.

Have a good journey on your way to Panama! And, please, do not forget to pray for me. See you soon.
World Youth Day
Salesian Youth Movement in Panama!

By Andres Neria
Delegate for Social Communications

Salesian Youth Movement USA West arrived in Panama City, Panama Tuesday morning, ready for World Youth Day 2019!

On route to the city!

Long travel but always with a smile!

Fr. Mel Trinidad, SDB prepping the group for the journey ahead

Opening Mass!!
Salesians from Guatemala and Panama!

Newly weds Andrea and Andres receiving a blessing from Rector Major Don Angel at the Salesian Youth Movement Gathering

Salesian Youth Movement USA West at the SYM Gathering that took place at Don Bosco Tech in Panama
Representatives Elena and Enrique with Rector Major Don Angel at the Salesian Forum

Representatives from USA at the Salesian Forum

Fr. Fabio Attard, SDB with Elena and Enrique at the Salesian Forum

First day of catechesis at the Instituto America

Camping out and waiting for Pope Francis to pass by!
So many times, as parents, we get busy and don’t have the time to play with our children, or at times, our children focus way too much time in front of a screen, instead of running outside playing games. Luckily for you, our parish, St. Dominic Savio, hosts an Oratory every Saturday from 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM. Now you must be asking… what is Oratory? Oratory is a program that invites children of grades Pre-K to 8th to come learn more about the gospel and the word of the Lord, while also getting to enjoy some fun in the sun!

Every Oratory, there is always something different in store and this past weekend was no exception. On Saturday, December 22nd, Oratory hosted a Christmas Extravaganza! In this special gathering, we had Santa come in and give every child a small gift, that they got to take home. The children were able to unleash their inner artistry and make Christmas cards, decorate gingerbread cookies, and cut out snowflakes! Along with these scrumptious delicacies, the children enjoyed some fun activities like “pin the heart on the grinch” and face-painting! Furthermore, to wrap up the whole event, there was a closing prayer to touch the hearts of the children and to reflect on what great things God has given them.

Lastly, if you’re interested in joining or to be a part of the Oratory team, please ask the Parish office. Teenagers are encouraged to come as well, so that they can get community service hours and help out with the kids and the activities! Our next Oratory will begin in the New Year, January 12th, 2019!

Happy New Year!
On January 16th, Fr. William Matthews, SDB, Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province and 19 Australia-Pacific pilgrims visited St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church on their way to World Youth Day 2019 in Panama City, Panama. Fr. John Lam, SDB, pastor of St. Bridget, Cooperators and parishioners welcomed the Australian province, and presented an overview of Saint Bridget’s 79 years history and the current activities, including the planning of the new Mary Help of Christian Center.

We pray that our Salesian brothers and sisters will have a safe and rewarding pilgrimage.

Left: Pilgrims from Australia-Pacific and their Provincial with Gina Robles, parishioners from St. Bridget Chinese Catholic Church, and Fr. John Lam, SDB

Right: From left to right; Fr. William Matthews, SDB (Provincial for Australia-Pacific Province), Fr. John Lam, SDB (Pastor), Fr. Brian Ahern, SDB, and Br. Jeff Miller, SDB
Christmas Is Not Over
By Sheila Kun RN, BA, BSN, MS, FCCP
Salesian Cooperator

That is right, we all got the same memo from Pope Francis; “You are the perennial Christmas.” The message is loud and clear, we are supposed to represent the spirit of Christmas and bring the Kingdom of God to everyone all year round. The Christmas season highlighted the need to help the poor. Many charitable organizations do most of their marketing in December, warming the hearts of those who are willing to share their surplus, at least once a year. But Pope Francis reminded us to be that Santa Clause all year round. Working with the Salesians for years on projects such as the summer camp and the Christmas Cheers to south of the border, it is fairly easy to execute the projects annually. On the other hand, to bring the Christmas spirit at all times requires more discipline and awareness that goes beyond the task. Being a Salesian, this idea is not new. Nor is it hard to do. I reflected on what Don Bosco would say: “Do ordinary things in an extra-ordinary way”. This carries a similar message that doing good does not require flying all the way to Calcutta and help with Mother Teresa’s charitable organizations. There is plenty of need around us if we are willing to open our eyes and assess the need of the people around us. In my situation, I can quote you a few examples of my personal experience at St. Joseph in Rosemead.

An elderly widower was struggling with the new adjustments of doing things on his own now; going to church alone, preparing meals by himself, and sorting his medical appointments. Our parishioners made a point of including him in all the church activities, picking him up from home, and reminding him of the upcoming schedules. He is showered with warm hugs and greetings, he is praised for dressing up nicely in all functions, and he is invited to all the parties and prayer services. At the end of the party, an extra dinner plate would be packed for him so that he does not need to cook dinner for that day. He is accompanied by all in this transitional phase of his life. That is the core idea of bringing Christmas to the people around you through the year. We have been brought up with the idea of giving gifts to the needy during the Christmas season is a nice act of kindness. Our behavior usually stops after the Christmas holiday. We would go back to our routine and the generosity kind of stops there until the next Christmas. But something more important than a gift you buy from Amazon is the spiritual gift of kindness. Many millennials nowadays would spend money to get the gift of an experience; it could be traveling to a new place, or checking out the famous ginger house at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Borrowing from their ideas, the provision of a positive experience to others is a powerful tool. To begin with, we have to be pleasant to ourselves first. Then your happiness would then radiant to others. A gentle greeting, a word of kindness and an act of paying attention to the special need of an elderly person all fit into this gift of experience. Tender loving care is priceless and at the same time probably costs you nothing. With this special gift in mind, we can advertise Pope Francis’ message loud and clear. We don’t have to wait for Christmas to be kind; we can do it all year around. You can use your gift and talent and decide how you give out this gift. My grandson Aaron, under the direction of his music teacher, experienced the power of giving in a unique way. On Saturday, the violin teacher and her students played the violin at a busy street corner in Pasadena. Amid their music sheets, stands and violin cases, they proudly displayed a message to the public: all donations will support the homeless. With music, they convey the songs of love.

Louis, my husband, sums up Pope Francis’s Christmas message this way: “Find your niche, do whatever you can, and whenever you can.” I totally agree; just like Nike’s motto: Just Do It! Let us bring Christmas to those in need every day.

Your homework from the Care Ministry this week:

“Be merry, and bring joy to others!”

The Care Ministry loves to hear your feedback: kunlouis@gmail.com
“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