Dear Salesian sisters and brothers,

This Friday we celebrate the Feast of Mary Help of Christians! Happy Feast day to all the Salesian Family. As all of you well know, Mary Help of Christians meant so much to Don Bosco. From the age of nine years of age, when Don Bosco had that famous dream, Johnny Bosco saw Mary (the women his Mother taught him to pray to three times a day) as a Mother and Teacher. Mary was to be Don Bosco’s guide and she was to accompany him, his Salesians and his boys for the rest of their lives. For Don Bosco, as we read in the story of his visit to the Salesian Sisters in Nizza, was tangibly present and visible. He felt her warmth and care. She was not an academic idea or figure in the sky. She was as real as Mama Margarita was to him. Don Bosco taught his boys to invoke her help daily with three Hail Mary’s and instilled in us that belief that if we trusted and believed in her intercession, we would see miracles! Truly, we as a Salesian Congregation, have been blessed by her and many have witnessed miracles due to her intercession and love. May this feast of Mary, on May 24th, inspire us to strengthen our devotion and belief in her presence and guidance. Mary continues to walk among us.

Don Bosco felt that every young person who came to our schools or one of our works, was sent there by Mary. That is a powerful message which reminds us of the dignity and specialness of each young person we encounter in our ministries. To reject one of them is to reject Mary’s wish to treat each young person with reverence, respect and love. We pray for our young people, especially, those who will be graduating these weeks. May Mary accompany them and guide them.

A special thank you to the Salesian Sisters and ADMA. The Salesian Sisters were identified by Don Bosco as the living memorial of Mary Help of Christians. They were to be a memorial, not of stone or steel, but a living memorial of Mary, living among us. ADMA, also founded by St. John Bosco, was founded as an organization to help promote this special devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Both the Salesian Sisters and ADMA have been wonderful reminders of this devotion and the love Don Bosco had for Mary and wanted his Salesian Family to cultivate and spread. “Have Faith in Mary Help of Christians and you will see miracles.” May it be so for each one of us.

Last Saturday, I attended St. John Bosco High School’s Gala in Bellflower. The Gala was held on the school grounds of SJB. More and more our schools are organizing their Galas on their school grounds rather than a hotel or reception hall. It seems that bringing donors and friends to the place of ministry has a greater impact than holding the function at some distant hotel. This gives all an opportunity to see the school and interact with the young who are involved in different functions during the night of the event. At St. John Bosco, the students welcomed the guests, served the meal, gave some testimonials, played in the band that performed and helped remind us of why we were there. Many thanks to all those who participated and to the team that worked so hard to organize and put everything together. It entails many hours and much dedication. We are grateful for the work and love which is quite obvious during an event like this. It was fun to be there and help honor the Chavez Family who had two sons graduate from Bosco and have been friends of the school.
We pray for the sick and suffering in our province, that they will be restored to full health.

Bless those who have grown old in your service and give them courage and strength in their faith.

Be with us as we discern our life’s work and guide us in the way we are called to follow in the footsteps of your Son.

We ask you this, that in everyone and in everything glory, adoration and love may be given to the Most High Lord of all things, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Congratulations to the Bosco Braves community!

Tomorrow, I drive down to Watsonville for a Members meeting at St. Francis High School. This school is jointly run by the Salesians and the Diocese of Monterey. The Members (owners) consist of the Provincial with three Salesians or those appointed by the Provincial and the Bishop and members appointed by the Bishop. While the responsibility of running the school is the Board of Directors along with the school administrators, the Salesians and the Diocese have the responsibility of supporting and helping to maintain the Salesian Charism and helping to keep the school going. A lot of good is done in all of our schools. And, as I travel, I see the dedication and commitment of so many lay persons. It is admirable and encouraging to witness the love and strong faith they have in the Salesian mission and Spirit. THANK YOU!

These days, most of our schools are preparing for Baccalaureate Masses and Graduation Ceremonies. We wish to CONGRATULATE all of our graduates and wish them the best of luck! We also wish to thank all of our staff members and school administrators for their commitment and dedication. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! We are proud of your service and professionalism. We are also proud that you hold “SALESIAN” so dear to your hearts!

On Friday, May 24th, I will be presiding at the bilingual Mass of Mary Help of Christians at St. Dominic Savio Parish in Bellflower. During the Mass, several people will be inducted as Salesian Cooperators. On Sunday, at St. Bridget’s Salesian Parish, others will be inducted as Salesian Cooperators there during one of their Masses. I too will be presiding. One group is mostly Spanish speaking and the other English speaking. We are grateful for this gift to the Salesian Family. As we know, the Salesian Cooperators were dear to the heart of Don Bosco. The Association of Salesian Cooperators is the movement of laity of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco. It is also one of the three main branches of the Salesian Family founded directly by Don Bosco in 1876. They are Catholics who are living the Gospel message in the spirit of Saint John Bosco while choosing to live in the world. The other two branches founded by Don Bosco are the Salesians Priests and Brothers and the Salesian Sisters.

Let us give thanks to God and to Mary for this wonderful blessings and movements that help promote Don Bosco’s dream to reach out to the young, especially, those who are poor and most in need. Mary Help of Christians, pray for us!

Please keep our province in prayer as we prepare to attend the Provincial Chapter at Three Rivers from June 16-21, 2019. The Directors and elected delegates of the province, plus delegated members of the Salesian Family will be participating. The theme chosen for next year’s General Chapter in Turin is “What kind of Salesians for the Youth Of Today.” It is a very relevant topic as we look at our ministry to and for the young and reflect on our response, preparation and presence among them. How do we interact with the young today. Are we still working and acting out of outdated models of education and irrelevant ways of interacting with them? Fr. John Itzaina is the moderator for our Provincial Chapter. I wish to thank him for his availability and generous service. Fr. John is already committed to other province ministries and services but generously said, “yes” to moderate our provincial chapter. Please pray for the success of the Chapter and for its effectiveness in our service and presence among the young.

With warm regards and gratitude,

Fr. Jed
Congratulations
Class of 2019!

Education is a matter of the heart
- Don Bosco
Say Goodbye to Soda

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

I have a confession to make. The sin was committed last week. It was the sin of omission. Last week in our discussion about the benefits of water, I pointed out that beer and alcohol should not be counted as part of the daily liquid intake. However, I forgot about a very important liquid that we should absolutely avoid at all cost: Soda. Let us review the data from the Wellnessmama.com write up on Soda. Then you can make your own conclusion.

An average American drinks approximately 56 GALLONS of soda a year.

Facts to consider:

- A single can of soda contains the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar. This amount of sugar, especially in liquid form, skyrockets the blood sugar and causes an insulin reaction in the body.

- Soda contains phosphoric acid, which interferes with the body's ability to absorb calcium and can lead to osteoporosis, cavities and bone softening. Phosphoric Acid also interacts with stomach acid, slowing digestion and blocking nutrient absorption.

- In diet sodas, aspartame is used as a substitute for sugar, and can actually be more harmful. It has been linked to almost a hundred different health problems including seizures, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, diabetes, and emotional disorders. It converts to methanol at warm temperatures and methanol breaks down to formaldehyde and formic acid. Diet sodas also increase the risk of metabolic syndrome, which causes belly fat, high blood sugar and raised cholesterol.

- Harvard researchers have recently positively linked soft drinks to obesity. The study found that 12 year olds who drank soda were more likely to be obese than those who didn’t, and for each serving of soda consumed daily, the risk of obesity increased 1.6 times.

- Sodas contain High Fructose Corn Syrup, which obviously comes from corn. Most of this corn has been genetically modified, and there are no long term studies showing the safety of genetically modified crops, as genetic modification of crops has only been around since the 1990s. Also, the process of making High Fructose Corn Syrup involves traces of mercury, which causes a variety of long term health problems.

- Drinking soda regularly causes plaque to build up on the teeth and can lead to cavities and gum disease.

From Reader’s Digest:
Plastic soda (and water) bottles contain a toxic chemical called bisphenol A (BPA) that can leach from bottles into soda...into you. Emerging evidence links BPA to a myriad of maladies, including immune system depression. Diet soda actually contributes to weight gain. A study of 1,550 people concluded that people who drink diet soda have a 41 percent increased risk of being overweight or obese for every can or bottle they drink per day! Turns out, any sweet taste signals body cells to store fat and carbohydrates, which makes you hungrier. Sweet tastes also promote insulin release, which blocks your body’s ability to burn fat. The hard truth: No published study has ever proven that drinking diet soda will help you lose weight.

Conclusion:
There is absolutely no nutritional value in soda whatsoever. Not only are there many harmful effects of soda, but there are not even any positive benefits to outweigh them. Soda is an unnatural substance that harms the body. There are many preservatives and chemicals in your soda to make the color attractive and the taste appealing. The chemicals are very potent. Try putting a penny in a glass of one of the brand name of cola. The next morning, it will shine like a star. Think about what these chemicals do in your intestines. I remember going on a cruise. One of the health promotion tag line reads: it takes 14 days to flush the toxins from your soda drinks. All I could say was “Wow”! If I knew sodas were so bad, I would have stopped much sooner.

Your homework assignment from the Care Ministry this week:
Let us take a pledge: Goodbye Soda!

The Care Ministry welcomes your comments/suggestions:
kunlouis@gmail.com
The Province Youth Ministry Office is hiring!

Job Openings:
Office Support Assistant
(Full Time)

For more information contact:  
Ms. Gina Robles  
Youth Ministry Associate  
(562) 925-2250 ext. 203  
gina@salesianym.org
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"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