Dear Salesian sisters and brothers,

In five days we will be celebrating Christmas Eve. Many of you will be traveling and will be busy with different types of preparations for that beautiful day when we celebrate Christ's birth and God's incarnation, God becoming one with us through Jesus. I wish to extend to all of you a very blessed and beautiful Christmas. May you be surrounded with much love and peace. And, may the true joy of this season permeate your home and fill your hearts. You will be remembered at our Masses and prayers. Thank you to all of you for all you do to support the Salesians and our mission to the young. For those traveling, may the Lord and his Mother, the Virgin Mary, keep you safe.

The provincial council just finished two days of meetings at St. Luke’s Parish in Stockton. The provincial council met at Sunday, December 15th, with prayer, a climate check and dinner out.

On Monday, the provincial council met with the province delegates: Formation, Youth Ministry, Missions, Social Communications, Salesian Family, Finances and the Coordinators of Vocations and Education. We are grateful to the Salesian Community at St. Luke’s for their hospitality and for finding housing for all of us.

The meeting with the Delegates and the provincial council on Monday, began with prayer and a morning of reflection. The question presented for reflection was: In light of the recent news items regarding the Salesians, what is the narrative we want to promote? How do we continue to allow all the good that is being done for young people to be the narrative we tell? Despite some of the horrible things which have harmed young people in the past, committed by a few, nonetheless something we deeply regret, there is also much good being done and countless dedicated persons, both lay and religious, who continue to work untiringly to promote the mission of St. John Bosco and make a difference in the lives of youth. The morning session with the delegates discussed ways to promote the narrative and tell all the good being done. Part of the morning was also spent reflecting on what type of structure should we have for our future meetings. It was suggested that the day always consist of a formation piece, reflect together on our revisited Organic Plan, in the afternoon-share how the delegates are doing in their own departments and how they are advancing the plan of the province.

As a province we continue to promote the 6 priorities of our Organic Plan which form our vision:

1. To grow in the witness of apostolic consecration in fraternal communities
2. To seek out, call forth and accompany new vocations to the Salesian Religious life
3. To identify and form religious and lay personnel for the Salesian mission
4. To develop a planning mentality in all aspects of our apostolic and consecrated life
5. To respond prophetically in all our presences to the economically poor with a special focus on the undocumented
6. To develop the means to reach financial stability in order to support Province works, especially to reach poor and disadvantaged youth

As delegates and provincial council we finished a good and fruitful meeting with
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.

The following day, Tuesday, the provincial council met without the delegates to continue our discussion of province matters such as personnel, finances, ways to help some of our struggling works, updates on school visits by the Coordinator of education, update on PAD and reflection on some past events. The second day also ended well.

I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to the PAD (Province Assembly Days) committee for their hard work in organizing and getting things ready for our Province gathering-January 12-14. We begin with dinner on Sunday, January 12 and end with dinner on Tuesday, January 14. All Salesians confreres (SDB) who can travel are asked to attend this assembly. It is a way of showing unity and care for one another. The theme will be: “Accompanying One Another, Creating Our Future.” These two days will include reflection on our future, ways to accompany each other as brothers and thus accompany our lay collaborators and young people, time for fraternity and prayer. When our communities are united and living out our Salesian fraternal life well, the mission is enhanced and blossoms. When our fraternal life as consecrated Salesians is not lived well or lived at all, our mission to the young suffers. Please keep us in prayer as we prepare for these very important days.

We wish to congratulate St. John Bosco High School, Bellflower and Salesian College Preparatory, Richmond, both for winning the State Championship in their divisions. Many thanks to their coaches and staff who have worked so hard to form, train and accompany our young people who were part of the football teams. Thank you also to the school administration for their support. We Salesians are proud of you and are filled with pride and gratitude for who you are and all you do! THANKS! CONGRATULATIONS!

As many of you begin your Christmas vacation and holidays, be assured of a remembrance in our prayers during this Christmas novena. Have a beautiful and holy season. May God’s light which shone in the darkness through the birth of Jesus, continue to shine in your lives and in the lives of the young who give us inspiration and are a gift to us all. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

With warm regards and gratitude,

Fr. Jel
DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS
BR. AL VU, SDB
FR. THINH NGUYEN, SDB
BR. PETER LE, SDB
FR. TED MONTEMAYOR, SDB
FR. AL MENGON, SDB
FR. ALBERTO CHAVEZ, SDB

PRAY FOR
DCN. VIEN NGUYEN, SDB
BR. LEO IMBERT, SDB
BR. KRIS TRAN, SDB
BR. QUANG NGUYEN, SDB
BR. DAMIEN, HO, SDB
BR. JHONI CHAMORRO, SDB
BR. PETER LE, SDB
NOVICE: JOHN CASTONGUAY
NOVICE: KEVIN WHITE
PRE-NOVICE: EDDIE DE LEON
PRE-NOVICE: REEGAN LEDET
PRE-NOVICE: CHRIS GREEN
CANDIDATE: MICHAEL NGUYEN
CANDIDATE: THOMAS NGUYEN

PRAY FOR
BR. PAT BARBARIOL, SDB
FR. HAROLD DANIELSON, SDB
FR. ARTHUR LENTI, SDB
BR. JOSEPH LOCKWOOD, SDB
FR. AVELINO LOZANO, SDB
BR. PAT MALONEY, SDB
FR. ARMAND OLIVERI, SDB
FR. RICHARD PRESENTI, SDB
BR. BRUNO DE PRETTO, SDB
FR. ROBERT STEIN, SDB
BR. JERRY WEIRICH, SDB

REST IN PEACE
FR. LEO BAYSINGER, SDB
JOSEPH THINH NGUYEN
(BROTHER OF FR. THIEN)
MRS. ESPERANZA ROCHA
(RECEPTIONIST DON BOSCO TECH)

DECEMBER EVENTS
3rd
Board Meeting - Don Bosco Tech, Rosemead

5th
Feast Day: Blessed Philip Rinaldi

9th
Feast Day: Immaculate Conception

12th
Feast Day: Our Lady of Guadalupe

15th-17th
Provincial Council Meeting - Stockton

25th
Christmas Day
Keeping to a wonderful Local Center tradition Salesian Cooperators of Richmond hosted a Christmas Dinner for the community on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2019.

Cooperators brought their spouses and enjoyed some relaxing moments in the community living room both before and after the meal.

The meal featured dishes, such as ham, corn bread, bean casserole and yams, prepared by the Cooperators.

During the meal the community and Cooperators thanked Henry Moe, Local Coordinator, for his service and sang Happy Birthday to him as Wednesday was his birthday.

After the usual monthly meeting the Cooperators have dessert in the community dining room and community members join them. These, along with the traditional Christmas and St. Patrick’s Day dinners, become formative moments for the novices as they experience one more side of our Salesian Family Spirit.
By Zachary Boyett
Salesian H.S - Social Media and Alumni Relations Coordinator

Congratulations to Coach Chad Nightingale and the Salesian Pride on winning the 2019 California 6A Football State Championship! The Pride defeated Bishop Union High School of the Central Section 37-18 in front of their home crowd. The game was a historic moment for both Salesian and the community, being Salesian’s first State Championship title in football and the first for the city of Richmond. Salesian was one of seven NCS teams to play in the CIF Championship Bowl series and one of four to win the title.

The Football State Championship is another accolade to add to Coach Nightingale’s illustrious career. Since 2005, his teams have won six North Coast Section titles, including 2005, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2019, and have three runner-up finishes. Following their most recent NCS title, the Pride had their first opportunity to compete for the CIF Championship with a bid into the Northern California Regional Bowl where they defeated Santa Cruz High School of the Central Coast Section, 35-14.

The Pride had come a long way since August. Coach Nightingale remarked, “This year’s team began the season on uncertain terms because our participation numbers were so low, starting with 19 confirmed varsity players. When we kicked off in our first game against Bradshaw Christian, we had 23 players.” However, the seniors were determined to bring home a championship and immediately turned their season around. The Pride would win their next eight games, outscoring their opponents by 155 points.

The Pride were an unstoppable offensive force this season led by senior captains, quarterback, Ronald Robertson, tailback, Kareem Sullivan, receiver, Kailan Chang, and lineman Princeton Toki. The team averaged nearly 40 points per game on offense throughout their 15 games and finished the regular season 8-2, winning the TCAL-Rock Division Championship. This season, six players received all-league honors, including senior DL/OL, Princeton Toki, who will play for the UC Davis Aggies next fall.

The Pride rolled through the 2019 NCS Playoffs with three blowout victories over Stellar Prep, St. Helena and Ferndale, as they averaged over 50 points per game and held their opponents to less than half that in the three game stretch.

Following their State Championship victory, Coach Nightingale addressed his team as always but in a rare moment of unrestraint, he could not hold back his tears as he remembered their journey together. Coach Nightingale reminisced about their 42-7 loss to Riordan two seasons prior. He welled up with emotion as he thought about this special group that had stuck around from that doubtful season, to hoist up the school’s first football State Championship trophy.

Two seasons ago, Salesian football finished with a 3-6 overall record, one of the worst during Coach Nightingale’s tenure, causing doubt around the program. Even through tough times with little reward, the players were loyal to each other and committed to their coach. Choked with emotion, Coach Nightingale revealed, “You were the only guys I wanted to coach.”

Prior to that season, the Pride were predicted to be a dominant force but suffered from transfers and the loss of
confidence in the locker room. Coach Nightingale counted on his then sophomores to step up, including quarterback, Ronald Robertson. Coach knew that season would be difficult with a depleted roster and many young, undeveloped starters. Coach Nightingale thought about his 24 seasons as the head coach and commented, “Each year, any given team has a distinct identity, and that is particularly true for the 2019 squad. This team is special in many ways due to their ability, their perseverance, their dedication to one another, and their work ethic.”

The Pride embraced their identity. If you aren’t with us, you’re against us, and players didn’t look back on quitters. They didn’t want, and they would prove, they didn’t need anyone else. Ronald Robertson would help turn the Pride around his junior season while breaking Salesian’s single season passing touchdown record with the help of his favorite target, Kailan Chang. The Pride finished the season 6-4 but would continue to roll into the 2018 NCS Championship game where they suffered a heartbreaking loss to Middletown High School.

In somewhat Cinderella fashion, the Pride, with a unique group of seniors would bring home Salesian’s first State Championship trophy and forever be etched in school history. This team will forever have a chip on their shoulder, who persevered when others quit, worked when others wouldn’t, and won when others thought they couldn’t. Congratulations boys on an amazing season!
Congratulations to Coach Negro and the 2019 Bosco Football Team.

On December 19th, the Braves finished the 2019 season ranked #1 in the five top polls in the United States. The Braves are consensus National Champions!

St. John Bosco (Bellflower, Calif.) won the California Interscholastic Federation Open Division title on Saturday with a 49-28 win over De La Salle (Concord, Calif.) with a superstar performance from quarterback DJ Uiagalelei. In doing so, all but sewed up a National Championship for the Braves.
I have a confession to make; last week, we detailed the anatomy of the brain center that governs sleep. I have a feeling that each structure is pretty novel to you. I, therefore, take the liberty of dissecting each important part of the brain that regulates sleep and try to present the information slowly. To begin with, we will start with the hypothalamus.

Let us review the write up from last week:
The hypothalamus, a peanut-sized structure deep inside the brain, contains groups of nerve cells that act as control centers affecting sleep and arousal. Within the hypothalamus is the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) – clusters of thousands of cells that receive information about light exposure directly from the eyes and control your behavioral rhythm. Some people with damage to the SCN sleep erratically throughout the day because they are not able to match their circadian rhythms with the light-dark cycle. Most blind people maintain some ability to sense light and are able to modify their sleep/wake cycle.

From the Sleep Health from Harvard Medicine, the role of the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is further explained. The timing of transitions between sleep and wakefulness are also tied closely to the body’s internal biological clock located in the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN). This tiny structure—made up of approximately 50,000 brain cells—receives light signals directly from the eye, through the optic nerve. Light resets the clock to correspond to the day-night cycle. In turn, the clock regulates the timing of dozens of different internal functions, including temperature, hormone release, and sleep and wakefulness. The SCN promotes wakefulness by producing a powerful alerting signal that offsets sleep drive. The SCN promotes sleep by turning off the alerting signal. In addition, the SCN actively maintains sleep throughout the night even after sleep drive has dissipated in the second half of the night.

Neurons in a part of the hypothalamus called the ventrolateral preoptic nucleus (VLPO) connect directly to the many arousal-promoting centers. Rather than stimulating activity in these areas, signals from VLPO neurons inhibit their activity. By shutting down the arousal centers, the VLPO promotes sleep.

To summarize the above discussion, it seems like the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) in the hypothalamus turns off alerting signals, allowing sleep to occur. Similarly, the ventrolateral preoptic nucleus (VLPO) also can inhibit their activity and turn off the arousal centers, promoting sleep to occur.
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