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Mama Margaret helped Don Bosco develop the "Family Spirit" as the basic of salesian spirituality.

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Mama Margaret tenderly cares for a sick lad.

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THE FAMILY THE CRADLE OF LIFE

MAMA MARGARET THE MODEL

By Fr. Pascual Chávez, SDB



The mother of Don Bosco, Margherita Occhiena, can be the model of every mother. Hers is a message of strength, of optimism, of hope against all hope.

The earliest memory Don Bosco had was the hand of his mother. Little Johnny was only two and he didn't want to leave the room where his father had died. He tells the story himself: “*My poor son,*” my mother said, ‘*come with me, you no longer have a father.*’ Having said this she broke down and started crying as she took me by the hand and led me away. I began crying too because she was crying.” The hand of Margaret, who though torn apart by grief and apprehension about the future, is kind and

firm: She will never leave her sons. It is her first important message: “*We may have suffered a blow, but we are going ahead, and whatever happens you can count on me.*” Margaret was then 29 years old, little John 2, Joseph 4, Anthony 14. For Anthony Margaret is the “step-mother.” What’s more he is a rough teenager, a good worker but stubborn and jealous.

Margaret is a very “modern” mother: responsibility for the family rests on her shoulders. The classic comment about mothers nowadays could sound like this: “Mother is on her own!” Today, mothers are alone in many ways. Either because they have double work, outside and at home, or because

they are separated with children to look after, or because they are left alone with the task of educating their children. “My husband takes no interest in these things,” they say, as though justifying a lack of attention which in reality is a serious fault. Mama Margaret is above all present. Hers is a total effective love, made up of few words, much activity, constant example, absolute self-giving. She was an illiterate country woman with a wealth of wisdom and extraordinary good sense. Everyone agrees in emphasising the determining role she had in the formation of little John. Her lessons were simple and profound.

For example: Determination and courage are the ingredients needed for success. No one ever sees Don Bosco “discouraged.” Nor his mother. At home everyone has to give a hand. Margaret soon gets the boys used to working in the house and in the fields. John had to do his best to pay for his schooling. He learned how to be a tailor, a blacksmith, a waiter, a barber. At Valdocco too no one was “spoiled.” When a boy ran to Mama Margaret to get her to sew a button on his coat, she offered him a needle and thread: “Why don’t you try? You need to learn to do a bit of everything.”

Temperament has to be under control. Each son had a different temperament which needed to be kept under control. With sweetness and patience Margaret softens Anthony, who has a rough edge. She closely follows John’s development:





Mama Margaret gave of all she had to help others.

“John had that self-confidence in what he did that can easily turn into pride. Margaret did not hesitate to correct his little tantrums from the start, before he was capable of being morally responsible,” Fr. Lemoyne writes.

Quarrels and misunderstandings among the brothers are not solved with lectures. Mama Margaret understands the validity of



Mama Margaret at prayer with her three young sons.

Anthony’s point of view when he doesn’t appreciate John’s desire to study and she acts accordingly, though she probably had tears in her eyes as she prepared John’s bundle as he went off to work as a stable boy far from home.

The sons have their path in life along which they need to be accompanied. As soon as she understood her son’s vocation she clearly told him: *“Listen to me carefully, John. I want you to think things over calmly. When you have made up your mind follow the path you have chosen without letting anyone distract you. The most important thing is that you are doing God’s will. The parish priest wants me to get you to change your mind since in the future I might need you. But I’m telling you now, your mother doesn’t come into this. God is all that matters.”* This really is “giving one’s life.”

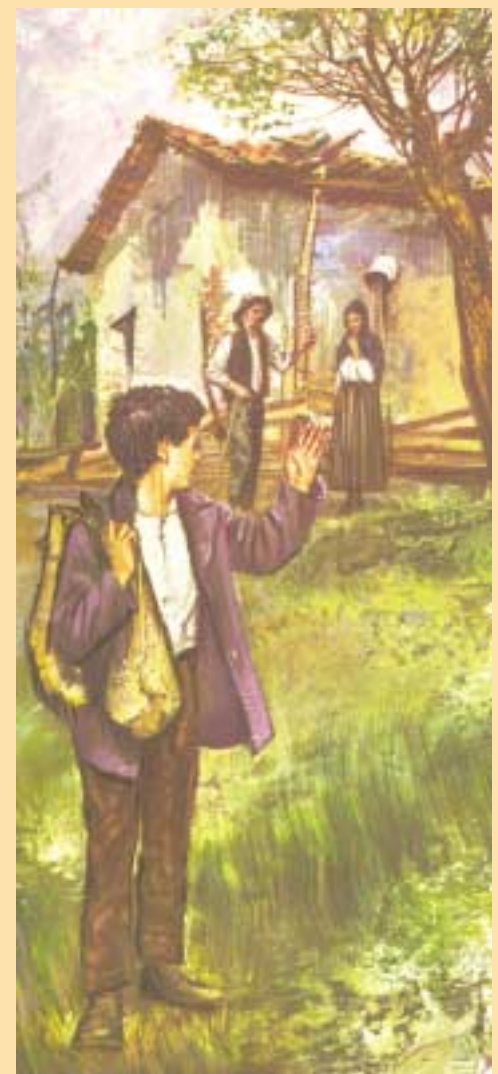
Joy and peace are the salt of life. Margaret kept an eye on things but not in a suspicious or overbearing way. She knew how to give correction with a smile and take life with a sense of humor. When she left her little paradise at the Becchi to follow Don Bosco to a dreary and notorious suburb, with her son she sang a cheerful little song.

Talking, chatting, telling stories are vitally important in family life. And in the little

house at the Becchi there was also time to talk about dreams.

Conscience is a fundamental guide. From the time they were very small the Boscós learned to tell right from wrong, without hypocrisy or deceit. They knew exactly what they were supposed to do and not to do. On her death-bed Margaret could tell her son: *“My conscience is at peace. I have done my duty in everything as far as I could.”*

God is learned about in the family. Prayer, the catechism, a sense of divine providence, the sacraments, acts of charity: all of this little John Bosco learned at his mother’s knees. At those knees the Preventive System was born. Here then is the model for the whole Salesian Family.



Little John off to work as a stable boy on a nearby farm to earn money for his education.

11th Meeting of Provincials of the InterAmerica Region October 18 – 22, 2006 Puerto Rico

By Fr. David Purdy, SDB



For one whole week the fourteen provincials of the fourteen provinces of the InterAmerica Region of the Salesians gathered in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, about an hour's drive from the capital, San Juan. On this Caribbean island, 100 miles long by 40 miles wide, there are six Salesian works in Puerto Rico, in the cities of Aguadilla, Aibonito, Catano, Orocovis, San Juan [Calle Luz] and San Juan in the Cantera district. These works comprise parishes, youth centers, and schools. Making up the rest of the Antilles Province are the islands of Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

After one day of retreat, three major topics were reflected upon, discussed and plans formed for the future. With the help of Father Giovanni Mazzali, the Economer General of the Salesians Society, the first topic worked

on was the call to Evangelical Poverty and its implications regarding how we Salesians administer and staff our works. Practical guidelines were offered regarding transparency in the financial administration of our Salesian works. With the help of Fa-

ther Adriano Bregolin, the Vicar General of the Salesian Society all were asked to reflect on a second topic, namely, the challenging issue of Salesian Formation, that is, how Salesian brothers and priests and those wishing to be part of Salesian life are formed or trained in carrying out Don Bosco's dream of working with and encouraging young people to be the best they can wherever they find themselves. Two centers were studied, that is, Don

progress being made with the Salesian Cooperators and the many other Salesian organizations founded during the past one hundred years — all working for and dedicated to the salvation of the young. How can the fourteen provinces better interact and help each other make progress according to the recent letter of the Rector Major Father Pascual Chávez, *The Salesian Family Today?* How can each province and the whole region realize the

power and influence the Salesian Family has throughout the Salesian world? Preparation for upcoming Province Chapters was discussed and for the General Chapter #26 in 2008, in Rome, was also reviewed.

Our stenna for 2006-2007 is the reality of the family as we are asked to **“Celebrate Family — Be Home for Others!”** From October 18th to October 22nd the province leadership within the InterAmerica Region

in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, endeavored to realize their family connection by addressing their renewal of evangelical poverty, by re-energizing their training programs and by their dedication in fostering stronger relationships within the larger Salesian Family.



Fr. Adriano Bregolin (front row center) and Fr. Esteban Ortiz (on Fr. Bregolin's left) with the provincials of the InterAmerica region at their October meeting in Puerto Rico. Fr. David Purdy is at the top row right.

Bosco Hall, Berkeley, California and the Center for Salesian Formation, Quito, Ecuador.

A third topic was the Salesian Family and, again, this was led by Father Bregolin and his team. Each provincial described the

An Upbringing Rich in Humanity

By Fr. John Papworth, SDB

The humanity of Don Bosco was nurtured in what is now known as a “One Parent Family.” Given the degree to which his heart went out to the youngsters drifting into the city of Turin when he began his work as a young priest, his up-bringing must have certainly been rich in humanity.

Instilled in him in that family circle was a deep sense of the importance of “a home,” knowing where one belongs, where one’s life is firmly anchored. As we know from the stories of his extraordinary endeavors as a young priest and the struggle he had in establishing the Oratory at Valdocco, this anchor was an unhesitating, total faith in the providence of a loving God. The strength of his faith and the fuel of hope flowing from the same source were infectious and gradually shaped the spirit of the whole community and institution being formed around him. But what was the stabilizing cornerstone for this dynamic spirit?

It is very interesting to note that Don Bosco chose to name the character of the social climate of the original Oratory in Valdocco – “The Salesian Family Spirit.” The inspiration that indicated this title must have arisen from some very telling experience.

Throughout the years of expansion of the Salesian Mission to the four corners of the earth and into many different cultures, the challenge for Don Bosco’s followers has been to establish this same characteristic spin in the communities that formed around new foundations. Part of the challenge was the very notion of “Family Spirit.” In large boarding schools it was not easy to see how this “tag” applied. As the effort of generations of Salesians striving to meet this challenge ebbed and flowed over the years, the quality of the lived spirit rose and fell similarly.

In his exhortation to Salesians around the world as he announced the “Strenna” (the Theme) for 2006, the Rector Ma-



Statue of Don Bosco and St. Dominic Savio, with painting of Blessed Laura Vicuña in the background.

yor, Fr. Pascual Chávez, strongly encouraged a return to the sources of the “Salesian Family Spirit.” Responding to this call and thumbing through the pages of “Memoirs of the Oratory,” “Don Bosco” and “Mama Margaret mother of Don Bosco,” (the latter two written by Teresio Bosco) it is clear that there was one very central figure that played a most important role in the development of this characteristic “Family Spirit.”



Don Bosco and Mama Margaret going to Turin after his illness.

After a bout of very serious sickness which necessitated a return to his home village, where he was once again in the care of his mother, Don Bosco came to a very clear realization. His mission in life from here on was to be devoted 100 percent to caring for “his boys.” But how was he going to manage this at the Oratory where facilities were very primitive, and in Valdocco an area of Turin that had a reputation for being a rather dangerous and seamy area of the city? In a conversation with a friend Fr. Cinzano during his convalescence this good friend who knew the family very well, suggested, “You have your mother. Get her to come with you to Turin. You will have an angel at your side.”

Don Bosco was stunned by this suggestion and it was not until quite some time later that he plucked up the courage to approach his mother. “Mama, you have seen how much the boys of the Oratory like me and how poor they are. (*They had come to visit him during his extended sickness.*) At the beginning of November I am going back to them. Once you said to me that if I became wealthy you would never enter my house. You have seen how poor I am and how my poor boys have so much need of help. Besides, living alone in that area is risky for a priest. Would you come and be a mother to my poor boys?”

So it was that Mama Margaret became the mother of “his poor boys” and he filled the role of a caring father who endeavored to provide for them in every way. His mother did exactly as she had done for him and his brothers — she created a home and formed a family in which they could belong. In short she

was the cornerstone on which the “Salesian Family Spirit” was founded.

The testimony of Don Rua (the successor of Don Bosco), speaking of his boyhood at the Oratory, is very telling: “I knew Don Bosco’s mother personally at the Oratory in Turin. She was mother to me for five years, that is to the day of her death. Good Mama Margaret as we called her, was a wonderful woman, endowed with all the virtues of a truly Christian mother. She was gentle, approachable, patient, and full of love for all the poor little orphans.” Finally the testimony of another boy, John Villa, who attended the Oratory: “I knew Don Bosco’s mother whom we, oratory boys, affectionately called Mama Margaret. She was the typical peasant homemaker, a woman imbued with a genuine Christian spirit. Back at her home place in Castelnovo she had enjoyed the esteem and respect of everyone. Once settled at the Oratory in Turin, she truly took



Don Bosco dedicated his whole life to working with young people, especially those in most need.

on the role of a good caring mother to all of us young fellows. We loved her and trusted her completely, and were greatly edified by her virtue.”

These testimonies are clear evidence of the significance of Mama Margaret in “ensuring that special attention is given to the family, the cradle of life and love, and where one first learns how to become human.”

She is most certainly a cornerstone figure in the development of the “Salesian Family Spirit.”

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Don Bosco leaves his home and returns to Turin with his mother at his side.

“What do you want me to do for you? Lord, that I may see.”

Don Bosco on Education — *in Loco Parentis*



By Fr. Arthur Lenti, SDB

Don Bosco's personal experiences as a youth, as well as his ministerial experiences as a young priest in Turin, provided the basis for what he came to recognize as a divine call to devote his life to the service of disadvantaged young people.

In 1846 he replied to the Marchioness Barolo's ultimatum with the words: "My life is consecrated to the good of young people. I thank you for the offers you're making me, but I can't turn back from the path which Divine Providence has traced out for me." His commitment had solidified into an option by which the young, especially if disadvantaged, became the absorbing concern of his ministry.

Father Michael Rua wrote: "Don Bosco took no step, spoke no word, undertook no work that did not have the salvation of the young as their object."

Don Bosco the Educator

Don Bosco's love for young people found its expression not only in that he sought "to educate" but also in his style and method of education. Father Lemoyne, his biographer, writes:

Kindness was habitual with Don Bosco. This was the basis of his system, for he was firmly convinced that to educate young people one must find the way to their hearts [...]. Young people



Don Bosco and Mama Margaret at Valdocco

were immediately won over by his noble, gentle manner, his cheerfulness and the timely graciousness of his words.

Don Bosco's educational approach was evident in any situation in which he met young people. But it is best observed in the situation where he could be present to them in a sustained manner, as became possible with the establishment of the "Home Attached to Oratory of St. Francis de Sales" (*Casa Annessa*). The home provided shelter for apprentices and students, and there in the fifties and sixties Don Bosco was directly and continuously involved in education (though not normally in the classroom).

But although the boarding establishment (or school) turned out to be the privileged scene of his educational experiment, the educational principles he developed have much wider and more varied application. Don Bosco regarded every situation in which he came into contact with young people as an educational situation.

Don Bosco's Educational Method and Style

Don Bosco had a *comprehensive concept* of education. It entailed the total development of the young person, bringing out to the best possible effect the person's potentialities in view of his/her functioning as a mature Christian adult in society—a good citizen and a good Christian, as he would say.

Don Bosco was a practical educator, but he also wrote; and the educational insights that emerge from his many writings that have educational significance are numerous and innovative. We may draw on them for a description of his method and style. These are observed at several distinct but related levels.

At their most fundamental level of *educational philosophy*, his educational method and style stemmed from an original, personal synthesis of humanism and Christian faith—a synthesis that he achieved out of select educational traditions, out of his cultural experience, out of his own personal history, and out of his life with young people over many years.

At the level of *operation*, we observe that this method and style functioned on a *family model* and on a cluster of principles embodied in the trinomial *Reason, Religion and Loving-Kindness*.

At the level of *educational strategy*, Don Bosco placed crucial importance on *protection-prevention* and on *assistance* through the sustained, helping *presence* of the educator.

At the level of *means-tools*, skillful use was made of such educational reinforcements and formative instruments, as work and study, religious practice, moral rigor, and a great variety of play activities (games, sports, outings, theater, music, celebrations).

All these elements, taken together, describe Don Bosco's educational method and style. We here can only focus on a few of these characteristic elements.

Family Model and Environment

If asked to give a brief practical description of the task of the educator, Don Bosco would have compared it to the task of *good Christian parents* with respect to the education of their children. For it was Don Bosco's conviction education entailed an *affective relationship* between educator and pupil, such as may be found in a *good family*. Consequently he sought to create an environment where such a relationship could flourish, and where the "operative" words were *familiarity, affection and trust*.



Amid the hectic activity of the Oratory, the watchful eye of Margaret was always in the background.

Familiarity for Don Bosco meant family-style relationships and a home-like way of living and working together. Its result is the *family spirit*. Don Bosco placed great importance on this approach because he believed that only through it would the educator be able to establish a personal relationship with the youngster. He wrote: "Without familiarity there is no affection, without affection there is no mutual trust, and without mutual trust there is no personal contact, and therefore no education." [*Letter from Rome* of 1884.] Don Bosco closed the *Letter on Punishments* of 1883 with the words: "Remember that education is a matter of the heart, of which God alone is the master." [*Biographical Memoirs* XVI, p. 376.] "If the educator does not succeed in winning the youngster's heart, he labors in vain. If a youngster does not open his heart to the educator, education fails." [Peter Braido, *Il sistema preventivo di Don Bosco*, p 205.] By these and similar words Don Bosco meant to emphasize that a Salesian house (oratory, hostel, school, even if very large) should ideally be like a home, and that all the people in it should live together as in a good Christian family.

The home-family ideal here functions as a model to be approximated as much as possible. In modern times, the family image has lost much of its traditional real and symbolic quality. The very notion has lost much of its appeal in a culture that has practically succeeded in dismantling the home as the affective space where an individual receives fostering love and care from people to whom in turn he relates in love. Don Bosco, however, maintained the "traditional" view of the family. This is the concept Don Bosco had of the family. His childhood experiences both good and bad persuaded him that family life was a value that could not be dispensed with. The educational community (such as it exists in a school, for instance), in Don Bosco's view was truly educative only when it fostered as much as possible the affective bonds and relationships that are at work in a good Christian family.

Many testimonies on how Don Bosco tried to create a family environment in the Oratory community could be cited. Bishop John Cagliero testified: "The life he led in common with us made us feel as though we lived not in a hospice or school, but in a family, under the guidance of a most loving father who had no other concern than for our spiritual and temporal wellbeing." [*Biographical Memoirs* IV, p. 203.] Albert Caviglia writes: "Don Bosco saw life in an educative community as lived in affective sharing as in a family. He would say, 'I want us all to be one heart.' [...] We all felt part of a family." [*La pedagogia di Don Bosco* (1955), p. 18f.]

The "family model" to describe the educational relationships was a traditional one. However, it usually stressed the father-son relationship, rather than other family relationships. The educator was "a father" to the youngster, who related to him as a "son"—a relationship that was indeed character-

ized by mutual affection, but also by a certain severity and aloofness on one side, and by awe and respectful distance on the other. Don Bosco corrected this image by the aid of other family relationships. The educator ought to manifest his *loving-kindness* as *tender loving care* as in a good family, where it characterizes the mother-child relationship. He also wanted the educator to draw close to, and be with, the youngster in a spirit of equality and comradeship. In a family, this defines the relationship between brothers and sisters. The educator should be father, mother, brother and sister to the youngster.

Whenever Don Bosco had occasion to speak to his Salesians involved in education he would invariably recommend this family-style approach. Bishop John Cagliero in a memoir quotes Don Bosco's words: "One must have the heart of a father, rather than the head of a superior." [*Biographical Memoirs* XVIII, p. 834.] In a letter Don Bosco wrote that being a "superior" means being an "educator," and that means being "father, brother, and friend" to the youngsters. [Eugene CERIA, *Epistolario* IV, p. 265.] "Every youngster who comes to a house of ours should regard his companions as brothers, and his educators as those *who take the place of his parents.*" [*Regulations of the Houses* (1877).]

The "family model" to describe the educational community was not the only one available to Don Bosco from tradition; but apparently he considered it the best. In his mind, just as the family is the prime educational community and is naturally designed for the education of the child, so any educational community should ideally and optimally reproduce the family situation. There were also personal reasons for such preference. Peter Stella, for example, believes this to be an aspect of Don Bosco's personality, harking back to his experience of having been orphaned as a small child. [*Don Bosco: Life and Work*, p. 295.]

Familiarity and Family Spirit at Work

How does familiarity, the family spirit, affect the educational approach?

First of all, by its very nature, it does away with the *institutional mentality*, the superior-inferior relationship and the official style.

Secondly, and above all, it should do away with *authoritarianism*, which is abuse of authority. Abuse of authority and power destroys the affective relationship, and therefore the educational effort, by releasing aggressive reactions. This has wider application than in the school. The young person, who is thus humiliated or cowed into submission always suffers serious, and sometimes irreparable, harm—not the least of which is the loss of self-respect and of the capacity for decision, and the planting of deep-seated

hatreds. Abuse of authority and power by a parent, for instance, can have devastating effects.

In his *Treatise on the Preventive System*, Don Bosco wrote that recourse to authoritarian repression is the easiest way to deal with a problem, but it has never made anyone a better person. On the contrary, it only causes bitterness and resentment. According to Don Bosco, educators in a Salesian school are not "bosses." They may not impose their will on the youngsters only because they are in charge. This is why he insisted so much on "reason." He wrote in fact that his educational method is based on *reason, religion and loving-kindness*.

The above remarks have shown the importance Don Bosco attached to *loving-kindness* for education. We know also that he attached fundamental importance to religion (both as faith and as practice). But what did Don Bosco mean by *reason*?

First, reason understood as *fair play* meant that the educator and youngster are both subject to the rule. Not whim but the rule must prevail: rights and obligations must be constantly respected and lived up to by all concerned.

Secondly, reason also meant *reasonableness* or *measure*. Everything demanded of the youngster must be reasonable in the sense that it must be proportionate and possible—especially with regard to work assignment, discipline and religious practice.

Thirdly, reason understood as *rationality* meant that the validity of all educational decisions and demands is explained, to motivate the young person for an intellectual commitment and participation.

Don Bosco's educational method and style, based as they are on the family model, are rich in suggestions. The many pointers that emerge may therefore indeed inspire and encourage Christian parents in their difficult task as educators.



Don Bosco sought from the very beginning of his ministry to keep young people busy in healthy recreation.

CELEBRATE FAMILY. BE HOME FOR OTHERS!

By Michael and Judy Alvarez

The communion and daily sharing lived in the home in times of both joy and difficulty represent for the children the most practical and effective pedagogy in the broadest horizons of society. – Fr. Pascual Chávez, SDB Rector Major

Reason, religion, loving kindness, active presence, cheerfulness – are all sacred words in our lexicon of things Salesian. Called by Don Bosco the “Preventive System,” we often think of these words in terms of our ministry with the young – in schools, clubs, and parishes. Yet Don Bosco meant these words to have meaning in our daily, common, everyday relationships – in our homes and religious communities, in the neighborhood and the marketplace, at ball games and dance recitals, in restaurants and gas stations. These words represent a spirituality of how to be with people – of how to be “home for others” in relationships of unity and service.

As a family – that somewhat miraculous phenomenon of living with a spouse and a couple of kids – the application of the Preventive System is especially challenged. One reason for this is that oftentimes we fall into the mindset that these people we live with are incapable of reason and therefore one is tempted to give up and the whole system disintegrates. To effectively practice the Preventive System, one must become the consummate optimist. One must never give up. One must believe that attempting to reason with a stubborn spouse, a slobbering toddler, or an emotional teenager will lead to a relationship of acceptance and happiness. One must believe that each year’s attempts and failures with such religious family practices as family Lenten resolutions, Advent wreath rituals, or a weekly decade of the rosary during October, will not go un-rewarded. One must believe that thankless acts of cooking dinner, cleaning clothes, paying bills, and driving everyone everywhere throughout the interstate highway system, will eventually earn a glance of gratitude and love. One must also believe that all the efforts of being present at soccer games and Christmas pageants, dragging the family to museums and summer camping trips, and enduring stares of loathing as one turns off the television to gather for family meals, will endure as warm, appreciative memories for the rest of their lives.

We look to the preventive system to transform our family life from a daily struggle to live with people who are not us, to seeing that each spouse and child is unique and in their own stage of life with particular quirks, needs, and seeds of heroism. These elements determine the manner in which one can

be reasonable or faith-filled with a child or teen, prompted by the creative power of loving kindness. As Don Bosco said, “education is a matter of the heart.” The kind word and forgiving face to a child in trouble imprints every act of discipline with the assurance of love and helps everyone to keep going and growing. With loving-kindness we learn patience and new approaches to supporting each person’s growth in life and relationships. The preventive system helps us to shower our families with respect, faith, loving kindness, presence and cheerfulness. In these and so many ways we tell each other that we belong and are here for one another.

Family relationships of unity and service may feel like a long, uphill journey, but there are flowers along the way. The sullen teenager turns into a babbling brook of personal stories that drench your thirsty heart. A “me-centered” child reaches back through some act of kindness and you see their growing capacity for mutual care. Encounters at the dinner table turn to laughter, recounting humorous moments from daily life or movies, gathering memories from shared experiences or sharing new jokes and riddles. And at the end of the day you remember gratefully the spouse who managed to prepare a home-cooked meal, despite being dog-tired and the other who again went the extra mile, taking and picking up kids and then finishing dishes upon their return.

As the years passed and children mature, new relationships of unity and service open beyond the family. Things get busier, but better than ever, as teenagers find their place in new worlds of friendship, high school, parish, sports and service. The schedule is crazy and logistics a juggling act, but you know deep down that the invested energies of life and love, like underground springs, have welled up and are beginning to flow to a thirsty world waiting for new witnesses that can “be home for others.” And a new chapter in the “miraculous phenomena” called family opens ever more to its mission for the world.



Michael and Judy Alvarez and their children (Teresa and Bobby).

St. Francis Dedicates New Arts and Science Complex

By Fr. John Itzaina, SDB



The left building is the Art Center and the right facility is the Peter M. Salatich Science Center.

A substantial bequest to St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School, Watsonville, allows the school to complete the Art and Science Center, its third building phase in six years!

On Sunday, December 3, 2006, at 12:30, Bishop Sylvester Ryan, the bishop of the Diocese of Monterey and Very Reverend David Purdy, the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco blessed and dedicated the Art and Science Center on the campus of St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School.

The president of St. Francis High School, Fr. John Itzaina, announced that

the newly finished Science Building was dedicated in memory of Peter M. Salatich. Peter M. Salatich, who passed away in October 2004, remembered the school in his will with a home on Carmel Street and an apple ranch on Green Valley Road.

“The substantial donation of the late Peter M. Salatich to the school,” Fr. Itzaina said, “created an opportunity that Bishop Ryan and Fr. Purdy couldn’t pass up. Without this generous donation, St. Francis wouldn’t have been able to complete the \$4.2 million project.”

St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School opened in 2001 in rented



Fr. David Purdy offers a blessing while Bishop Sylvester Ryan looks on. Note the statue of the school patron, St. Francis in front of the podium.

quarters at Holy Cross Parish in Santa Cruz. In the first phase, completed in 2002, St. Francis raised more than \$11 million for eleven classrooms, a parking lot and general site preparation. The second phase, finished in September 2004, raised more than \$5.9 million dollars for the building of the Borina Athletic Center and Strawberry Fields. This phase was dedicated in September 2004.

“I wish, on behalf of St. Francis, I could have thanked Mr. Salatich for his generosity while he was still alive,” said Fr. Itzaina. “We have a St. Francis Legacy Society for those who have included St. Francis in their planned giving, but most of the time we never know that they have remembered St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School.”

The Art and Science Center project, Phase III of the Capital Campaign, continues to raise the \$4.2 million needed to complete the financing of the project, continues to substantially increase the school endowment for needy and promising students, and to provide operational money for the upkeep and maintenance of the two new buildings.



The empty Peter M. Salatich science facility pictured at the dedication above was taken over by students as they returned from their Christmas vacation.



By Fr. Ralph Murphy, SDB



Pope Benedict spent vacation at Salesian compound.

Les Combes.

On July 28, 2006 Pope Benedict XVI wrapped up his one year and 100th day as pope flying back from Les Combes,

near Mont Blanc, from a 17-day vacation, using the same mountain chalet owned by the Salesians of Don Bosco that was used for a decade by his predecessor, John Paul II. The Salesians provided Benedict XVI also with a new piano last summer. He is particularly fond of Mozart and of Bach. Incidentally, the pope is also “our parishioner” during his summer stay near Lake Albano, since the Salesians operate the Parrocchia Pontificia of Castel Gandolfo.

Fr. Pascual Chávez assumes new post. Rome.

Fr. Pascual Chávez, Rector Major of the Salesians, has been elected President of the Union of Superiors General (USG). The election took place at the end of the

annual General Assembly of the USG, with the theme “Together for the Kingdom,” held at the Salesian International Headquarters in Rome. The members of the USG at the end of the elections announced the election as President of Fr. Pascual Chávez, Rector Major of the Salesians for the three year period 2006 - 2009. Fr. Chávez succeeds Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers), who was President for the period 2003-2006. Fr. Chávez is the second Rector Major of the Salesians called to this office, as Fr. Egidio Viganò (1920 – 1995), VII successor of Don Bosco, was President of the USG for the three year period 1983-1986.

Mexican Martyrs Guadalajara, Mexico.

On November 11, 2005 thirteen martyrs who died proclaiming “Viva Cristo Re” were beatified. Two, Salvador Huerta Gutiérrez and Ezequiel Huerta Gutiérrez, were respectively the father and uncle of Sr. Dolores Huerta, FMA. Salvador was born in 1880, he was a mechanic known for his goodness and as a good businessman. He was arrested and tortured and taken to the cemetery of Mezquitán where he was killed. Ezequiel was born in 1987. He was a professional musician, specializing in the organ. He had an excellent singing voice. After his arrest he was tortured until he lost consciousness On April 3, 1927 in the early morning he was taken to the cemetery and killed along with his brother.





Fr. Silvio “Mago Sales” Mantelli is flying over Don Bosco Shrine at Colle Don Bosco.

**Magic, Salesian Style
Colle Don Bosco, Italy.**

It was the ninth annual magicians’ celebration which gathered together jugglers, prestidigitators, magicians and sleight of hand artists at Colle Don Bosco. Our well known Salesian magician, Fr. Silvio “Mago Sales” Mantelli, has basically the same educational and creative goals of all the Salesians of Don Bosco. From the Apostle of Youth he has taken and improved his own magic repertoire, and with Don Bosco’s identical aim: to do good, to spread joy, and to help the young. A group of more than 400 visitors gathered after Holy Mass to watch with rapt attention the afternoon “Magic Show” featuring magicians from all over Italy. The final much expected act was the parachute jump of Mago Sales himself from a plane together with his proud flight instructor.

SS. Peter and Paul Salesian School lives the Motto. San Francisco.

By Sister Rachel Crotti, FMA

Here at Saints Peter and Paul Salesian School, we are living the 2006 Salesian Strenna (“Celebrate Family—Be Home for Others.”) in a variety of ways that show we are committed life-givers. Sometimes this means simple giving a smile of encouragement, a word of greeting or a helping hand. Sometimes we have the opportunity to extend beyond the confines of our local community and, in a very real way, embrace the world—or at least help our needy brothers and sisters on the other side of the world

In the last few weeks, FMA novice, Vuong Do, was with us from Rome for nearly a month. She enthusiastically participated in our outreach of prayer and service. Fr. Silvio Mantelli, SDB, the Salesian Magician, (Mago Sales), was residing at the parish during the same time and he performed a spec-

tacular magic show for us that resulted in school families giving a voluntary mission donation. What we called our “mission triduum” was carefully planned by Vuong and the four officers of the SSL (Salesian Service-Learning) Mission Club from grades 7-8. The first of our three days was Mission Sunday, October 22nd. At the 8:45 a.m. Mass, some of our children represented nations of the world that evangelize and are still ever in need of evangelization. Monday the Magic Show thrilled the student body and brought in over \$700. Tuesday, the 24th, the Mission Club, once more under the direction of Novice Vuong Do, sponsored a Family Mission Rosary for Peace at 5:00 p.m in our beautiful parish church. The attendance was small yet all parishioners, sisters, priests, and school family members were represented in a powerful moment of prayer. We are committed to continue to find ways to concretely live our Salesian Strenna (motto) into the new year and are confident of succeeding because we are guided by “God’s love for life!”



The magician is Mago Sales.



Sister Kathleen Gibson, FMA, and novice Vuong Do, among young people at SS. Peter and Paul Salesian school.

Sierra Leone nurtures young people and their families.
By Fr. Albert Mengon, SDB

By now, in all the church rectories throughout the Catholic world, the Sunday Mission collections have been carefully accounted for and proudly taken to their respective Chancery offices. Soon enough, all these drops and trickles, will find their way to the heart and center of the Catholic world, Rome, to become a small fortune, a precious help for the poor, the needy, the unschooled, the abandoned, the marginalized. It is truly amazing what many small contributions can do! The Salesian Mission in Sierra Leone is just a tiny living proof of this typical Catholic solidarity. Examples:

Christiana Charles lost her father and mother when she was a student in one of our Primary schools. The missionaries identified Christiana as deserving of help. Now Christiana is finishing her high school, at the Saint Augustine Secondary School, which, this year, celebrates 20 years. For 20 years the school has been a home, a haven, an oasis to thousands of girls and boys.



Abubakkar and Isatu his wife are both Muslims but are glad that their children attend the St. Ann church. St. Ann church is in Sierra Leone. Abubakkar is a long time faithful and devoted teacher in one of our Primary Schools.

The Rinaldi Trust

The Rinaldi Trust assists economically needy youth who wish the benefits of a Christian education from a Salesian School. The Trust collaborates with the Salesian Schools of the Western Province to provide Catholic education for students who are financially unable to attend the school of their choice. The Trust is funded with gifts from concerned donors.

The Rinaldi Trust will grant the following amounts this school year.

Don Bosco Technical Institute, Rosemead. 6 students will be awarded \$34,000 in assistance.

Saint Francis High School, Watsonville. 5 students will be awarded \$13,000 in assistance.

Saint John Bosco High School, Bellflower. 7 students will be awarded \$24,500 in assistance.

Salesian High School, Los Angeles. 12 students will be awarded \$22,000 in assistance.

Salesian High School, Richmond. 14 students will be awarded \$34,000 in assistance.

The total assistance awarded in 2006-2007 was \$127,500. This allowed 44 student who would not otherwise have been able to attend the Salesian school of their choosing to receive a Salesian education .

The Salesians of Don Bosco—USA West established this fund in 1977. The generous contributions of donors support The Rinaldi Trust. Support of the Trust allows the Western Province to provide these scholarships. Your generosity allows these students to succeed! *Thank you.*

You can contribute to the Rinaldi Trust and assist future students who are in financial need by sending your gifts made payable to the *Salesian Society* to the following:

The Salesian Society
Attn: Rinaldi Trust
1100 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

SALESIANS of DON BOSCO

SDB

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