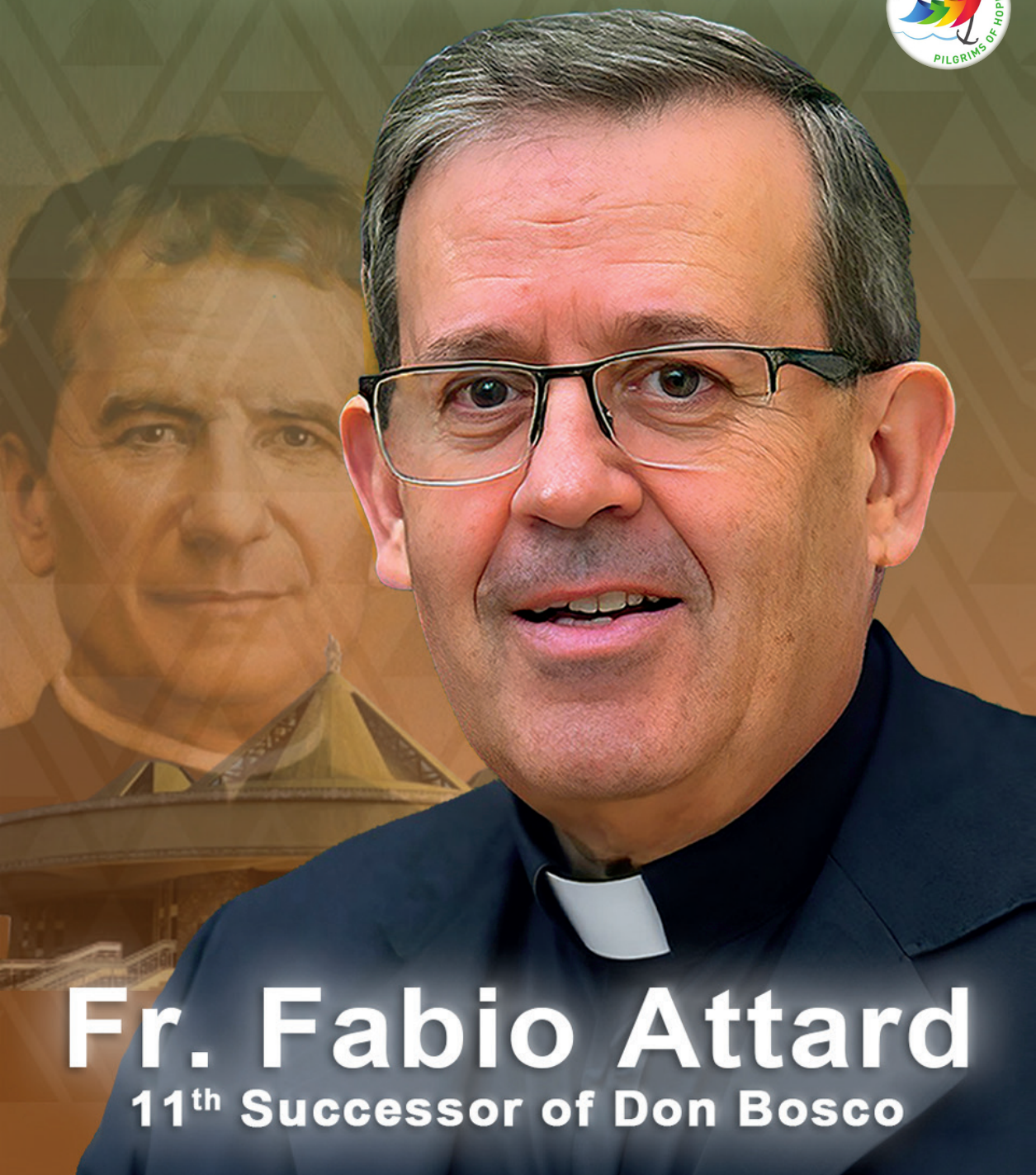




Salesian Bulletin

Don Bosco East Africa (Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan)

2nd Quarter - 2025



Fr. Fabio Attard

11th Successor of Don Bosco

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Fr. Fabio Attard

The newly elected Rector Major

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New Leadership, Renewed Mission: The Salesians Chart a Bold Path Forward

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation held at their Mother House of Valdocco in Turin and concluded on April 12, 2025, marks a pivotal moment for the Salesian Family worldwide. Under the theme “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to the young,” the Chapter elected Fr. Fabio Attard as the 11th Rector Major and set a renewed course for the Congregation’s mission. Attard’s appointment is more than a mere change in leadership; it is a testament to the Congregation’s enduring vitality and its unwavering commitment to the mission of St. John Bosco: serving young people, especially the most vulnerable, across 136 nations.

Fr. Fabio Attard, a Maltese Salesian with 45 years of service, including his 12 years as General Councillor for Youth Ministry, has been marked by a tireless dedication to education, evangelization, and social transformation, embodies the spirit of Don Bosco through his theological depth, pastoral zeal, and global vision. He has championed innovative initiatives, from strengthening technical and vocational training to fostering the active involvement of lay collaborators - a testament to his belief in a Church and Congregation that walks together, synodally, with the young at its heart. His first public act—visiting the Ferrante Aporti juvenile prison in Turin - echoes Don Bosco’s heart for the “struggling youth,” reinforcing the Preventive System’s relevance today.

Fr. Attard’s concluding address, detailed in the Final Document, emphasized personal conversion, deep knowledge of Don Bosco, and courage in addressing new frontiers like artificial intelligence and integral ecology. These priorities challenge Salesians to be sacraments of hope in a fragmented world, fostering spaces where young people find dignity and purpose. The election of his Vicar, General and Regional counsellors ensure a leadership team rooted in Don Bosco’s mission yet responsive to contemporary needs.

The third and final part of the interview with Fr. Tony D’Souza, first superior of Project Africa, Indian Delegation, talks about the challenges he faced, the little miracles of divine providence, and the incredible collaborators and benefactors. He also challenges young Salesians to be missionaries.

There is also a small tribute to Pope Francis, who left us in the Easter Octave, and to the new Pope Leo XIV, who was elected on 8th May 2025.

As we commemorate the 150th anniversary of Don Bosco’s first missionary expedition, the 12th Theological Symposium at Don Bosco Utume reminds us to sustain this missionary zeal.

Under Fr. Attard’s leadership, the Congregation is poised to deepen its roots in Don Bosco’s charism while responding boldly to contemporary needs. The Salesian Family stands at the threshold of a renewed future, confident that with Fr. Attard at the helm, it will continue to be a beacon of hope and transformation for the youth of the world. Let us recommit to being pilgrims of hope, walking alongside the young to build a world where God’s love shines through education, evangelization, and compassion.

All the information about the new Rector Major and his council is taken from ANS, the Salesian News Agency.



Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil, SDB

Fr. Fabio Attard

11th Successor of Don Bosco at the Head of the Salesian Congregation

Fr. Fabio Attard was elected as the 11th Successor of Don Bosco during the 29th General Chapter (GC 29) of the Salesians of Don Bosco after an intense journey of synodal discernment. Two hundred twenty (220) provincials and delegates gathered at the historic Mother House of Valdocco in Turin chose Fr. Fabio Attard as Rector Major. He will animate and govern a community composed of 13,750 consecrated members organized into 92 provinces across five continents.

The Reasons behind the Choice of Fr. Attard as Rector Major

Fr. Fabio Attard, 66 years old, with 45 years of Salesian life, is the first Maltese Salesian to hold this role and – even more uniquely – the first Rector Major to be elected outside of the General Chapter.

A multifaceted personality endowed with many talents, Fr. Attard's selection was influenced by his numerous and diverse skills – from theological research to organizational abilities, from visionary leadership to missionary spirit – as well as his willingness to serve wherever called. This includes his service in the General

Council, where he served for 12 years as Councillor for Youth Ministry, and outside of it, where he continued to work humbly and simply over the past five years, fulfilling his assigned duties (first as the Formation Coordinator for Salesians and Lay People in Europe, and later as Extraordinary Visitor on behalf of the Rector Major).

Fr. Fabio's Response:

Contacted by phone after the first round of voting in which he was elected Rector Major, Fr. Attard, with a calm yet emotional voice, responded to the question posed by the President of the General Chapter, Fr. Stefano Martoglio, whether he would accept this new





responsibility: "If my confreres have placed their trust in me, with the Grace of God, I will do my best."

While Fr. Attard quickly packed his bags to travel to Turin that afternoon, where a celebration awaited him with the Profession of Faith and homage of his confreres, enthusiasm for his election exploded across social networks and phone and digital communications.

The election of Fr. Fabio Attard marks a historic moment for the Salesian Congregation and the Salesian Family worldwide. Elected during the 29th General Chapter of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, Fr. Fabio Attard fully embodies Don Bosco's charism and now leads the Salesian mission dedicated to young people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, in 136 nations. With extensive theological, pastoral, and academic experience, Fr. Attard is called to guide the Salesian

Congregation toward a renewed future, bringing Don Bosco's dream to the heart of the contemporary world.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND FORMATION

Born on March 23, 1959, in Gozo, Malta, Fr. Fabio Attard grew up in Victoria, where he attended public primary and secondary schools. His vocation began to take shape during his years at the Major Seminary of Gozo (1975-1978). Later, he entered the Salesian aspirantate at Savio College in Dingli, Malta, before preparing for the novitiate in Dublin. On September 8, 1980, he made his religious profession as a Salesian of Don Bosco in Maynooth, Ireland.

Fr. Attard pursued his studies with great dedication, earning a degree in Theology from the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) and a Licentiate in Moral Theology from the prestigious Accademia Alfonsiana in Rome.

Ordained a priest on July 4, 1987, he embarked on a ministry deeply rooted in pastoral care and academic research.

A MISSIONARY AND EDUCATOR IN IN THE SERVICE OF THE WORLD

Fr. Attard's missionary spirit manifested itself from the early years of his Salesian life. From 1988 to 1991, he was part of the group of Salesians who initiated the Congregation's presence in Tunisia, in a predominantly non-Christian context, where he laid the foundations for evangelical and educational service. Returning to Malta, he assumed leadership roles as Rector of St. Patrick's Salesian School and the Salesian Oratory, where he served from 1993 to 1996.

In 1999, Fr. Attard completed his doctoral research on the theme of conscience within the Anglican sermons of John Henry Newman at the Milltown Institute for Philosophy and Theology. Thanks to his expertise, he became part of the faculty of the Pontifical Salesian University, during which he also co-directed doctoral theses at the Alphonsian Academy and contributed to the academic formation of future theologians.

A VISIONARY OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Fr. Attard's role as a global leader materialized in 2008, when he was elected the General Councillor for Youth Ministry during the 26th General Chapter. Re-elected for a second term in 2014, he held this position until 2020, guiding the Salesian Congregation in its mission for and with young people.

Under his coordination, the Salesian Youth Ministry Framework (2013) was published, a foundational document offering updated guidelines for Salesian pastoral work worldwide. Fr. Attard promoted global initiatives such as the International Congress on Youth Ministry and the Family (Madrid, 2017) and coordinated activities to address issues such as marginalization, poverty, and migration.

He also strengthened missionary volunteer programs and consolidated technical and vocational education and training (TVET) through initiatives like Don Bosco Tech Africa and Don Bosco Tech ASEAN, representing the Salesians at important international forums on youth policy, migration, and youth employment in Brussels and New York.

A BRIDGE BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL CARE

In addition to his administrative roles, Fr. Attard has always stood out as a builder of bridges between theology and pastoral care. In 2005, he founded and directed the Pastoral Formation Institute in Malta, dedicated to training lay people engaged in pastoral ministry. He continued to teach as a visiting professor at the Pontifical Salesian University, contributing to the intellectual and spiritual development of Salesian educators and their collaborators.

His contribution to the Universal Church was recognized in 2018 when Pope Francis appointed

him Consultant to the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life. His participation in the Synod on Young People (2018) highlighted his commitment to giving voice to young people and fostering their greater integration into the life of the Church.

A LEADER FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

At the end of his term as General Councillor, Fr. Attard was tasked with coordinating Salesian and Lay Formation in Europe from 2020 to 2023. This project led to the creation of a master's program for the formation of Salesians and lay collaborators, now managed by the Pontifical Salesian University in collaboration with the Youth Ministry Sector.



CARRYING FORWARD DON BOSCO'S DREAM

As the new Rector Major, Fr. Fabio Attard will lead a Congregation composed of 13,750 consecrated Salesians, organized in 92 provinces and present in 136 nations. With his deep spirituality, charismatic vision, brilliant academic career, and decades of experience, he is fully prepared to animate and govern the Salesian Congregation and the Salesian Family in the 21st century.

His election represents a new dawn for the Salesian Congregation, which, under his leadership, will continue to grow as a global force

for education, evangelization, and social transformation. Fr. Attard will inspire and motivate Salesians, lay collaborators, and young people worldwide to carry forward Don Bosco's mission: to be witnesses and bearers of God's love for young people, especially the most in need.

Under his leadership, the Salesian Congregation will continue to flourish, carrying forward Don Bosco's dream and transforming the lives of thousands of young people worldwide. He is called to lead the second-largest religious Congregation in the world, generating hope and light for new generations.

**CONGRATULATIONS FROM AROUND
THE WORLD for the New Rector
Major Fr. Fabio Attard**

Congratulatory messages and best wishes poured in from around the world for Fr. Fabio Attard, SDB, who was elected as the Rector Major of the Salesians. He will hold the term for the six-year term 2025–2031. Trust, appreciation, esteem, gratitude, and prayers for his mission are the sentiments shared by the various personalities who have expressed their thoughts.

**MESSAGES FROM THE SALESIANS
WORLD**

Among the first to congratulate Fr Attard was **Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime**, currently Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, who

led the Salesian Congregation for over 10 years (2014–2024).

"It was a pleasure for me to greet our Rector Major, the 11th Successor of Don Bosco, Fabio Attard, just a few hours ago, and I now do so again through ANS to express my best wishes, with all my affection, as a Salesian of Don Bosco – now with a different role in service to the Church, but always with a Salesian heart. I have truly prayed with faith and great desire for the Holy Spirit!"

"Dearest Fr Fabio, Rector Major, best wishes!" continued Cardinal Á.F. Artime. "The entire Congregation and the entire Salesian Family are happy about your appointment, and we will stand by you to make this wonderful, splendid, beautiful, and demanding service possible! Best wishes, with affection and my prayers."



Mother Chiara Cazzuola, Superior General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), who was present at the Salesian Mother House at the time of the election, expressed her sentiments to the 11th Successor of Don Bosco: "Dearest Fr Fabio, on my own behalf and on behalf of the entire Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), I congratulate you on the new mission entrusted to you within the Salesian Family and the Church. Like Mary, you have received a unique Annunciation mediated by the Chapter Assembly, and your 'yes' undoubtedly carries special fruitfulness, as it is united today with





the 'yes' of the Mother of God, who maternally accompanies the journey of the Salesian Congregation with wisdom."

Looking to the future, the FMA Superior General added: "I assure you of our prayers and support and invoke upon you and the Salesians who will be called to form the new General Council the grace of the Holy Spirit and the powerful protection of Mary, Mother and Teacher, as we continue our synodal journey in communion, co-responsibility, and joy, for the salvation of young people. With much affection and great esteem!"



Another **Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva**, who led the Salesian Congregation for two terms (2002-2014), also offered his words of support to the newly elected Rector Major: "Dearest Fr Fabio, first of all, I congratulate you on your election as the new Rector Major, the 11th Successor of Don Bosco. It is no coincidence that

your election occurred on the day the entire Church joyfully celebrates the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, for God continues to seek collaborators to carry out His marvellous plan of salvation. What He seeks is exactly what He has found in you: 'Here I am.'"

"You know well," continued Fr. Chávez, "that when God chooses someone, He enriches them with all the gifts needed to fulfil the mission entrusted to them – in this case, ensuring that God's 'dream' of seeing young people happy here and for eternity becomes a reality. As Rector Major, you are the father of the Congregation, the centre of unity for the Salesian Family, the



Successor of Don Bosco, and a faithful and prophetic guardian of the Salesian charism, spirit, and mission. As I extend my best wishes again, I assure you of my prayers and, above all, my availability. With affection, esteem, gratitude, united in Don Bosco."

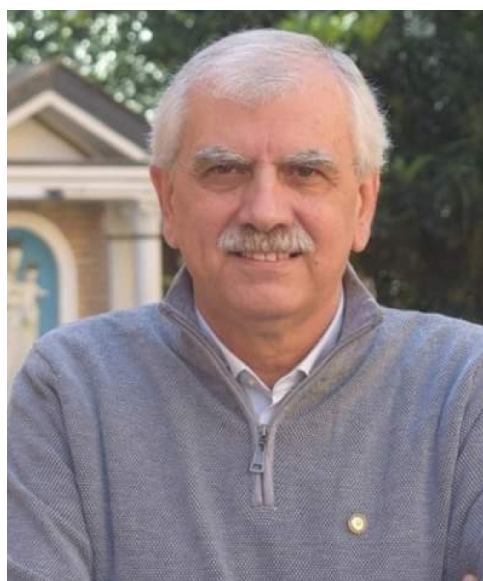


The World President of the Confederation of Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco, fellow Maltese Bryan Magro, also shared a congratulatory message: "As the largest group in the Salesian Family, Past Pupils and Friends of Don Bosco worldwide are rejoicing at the splendid news of Fr. Fabio Attard's election as Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation! I have known Fr. Fabio for over 40 years, even before he became a Salesian, and have worked closely with him for many years! I describe him as a father with a joyful character and a charismatic presence. He has always built strong relationships with young people and believes in the active involvement of laypeople in the Salesian mission. As

an organization composed mainly of laypeople, we assure the new Rector Major of our loyalty, support, and prayers to guide the Salesian Family during his term. This is a special moment for the Salesian Family to continue working in unity for the care of young souls in the world we live in today."



Antonio Boccia, World Coordinator of the Association of Salesian Cooperators (ASC), also declared: "Salesian Cooperators worldwide joyfully welcome Fr. Fabio Attard's election as the 11th Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation. To Fr Fabio, we guarantee our continuous support through prayer so that his ministry may bring renewal to the entire Salesian Family. I add my appreciation and gratitude to all the Chapter Members who were docile to the action of the Spirit."



Fr. Stefano Martoglio

The Vicar of the Rector Major

The 29th General Chapter of the Society of St. Francis de Sales elected Fr. Stefano Martoglio as the Vicar of the already entrusted to him by the previous Chapter.

According to the Salesian Constitutions, the Vicar is the first collaborator of the Rector Major in the governance of the Society and has ordinary vicarious authority. He acts in place of the Rector Major when absent or impeded. He is particularly entrusted with the care of religious life and discipline.

Fr. Stefano Martoglio was born on November 30, 1965, in Turin and is currently 59 years old. He entered the “Monteoliveto” Novitiate in Pinerolo

in 1984 and made his first vows in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin on September 8, 1985, and his perpetual vows on September 27, 1992, in Castelnuovo Don Bosco. He was ordained as a priest in Turin on June 11, 1994.

He has served the Salesian community as a Counselor for the Pinerolo work and for the San Domenico Savio work in Valdocco before becoming, in 2004, the Rector of the Mother House of the Congregation, also in Valdocco.

In 2008, he was appointed Superior of the Special Circumscription of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta (ICP).

He participated in the 25th General Chapter and was part of the pre-



chapter commission of the 27th General Chapter.

It was the 27th General Chapter of 2014 that brought him for the first

time into the General Council, electing him Regional Councillor for the newly established Mediterranean Region, created by that Chapter through the merger of the two previous Regions, Italy-Middle East and West Europe.

At the 28th General Chapter in 2020, he was elected for the first time

as Vicar of the Rector Major, and by virtue of this role, he led the Salesian Congregation from August 17, 2024, until this General Chapter, in accordance with the timeframes agreed upon by the Holy See following the nomination of Rector Major Ángel Fernández Arttime as Cardinal.

Fr. Rafael Bejarvano

The New General Councilor for the Youth Ministry

Fr. Rafael Bejarano was elected the new General Councillor for Youth Ministry during the 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation.

According to Article 136 of the Salesian Constitutions, "the General Councilor for Youth Ministry animates and guides Salesian educational and apostolic action in its various expressions, ensuring that youth remain the priority and that the Preventive System serves as the inspiration. He assists Provinces in developing their pastoral projects so that, faithful to Don Bosco's spirit, they respond to the needs of the times and places."

Fr. Rafael Bejarano Rivera, a Salesian from the "San Luis Bertrán" Province of Colombia-Medellín (COM), was born on December 1, 1977, in Buga, Colombia. He is the second of three children of Carlos Humberto Bejarano and Dioselina Rivera.

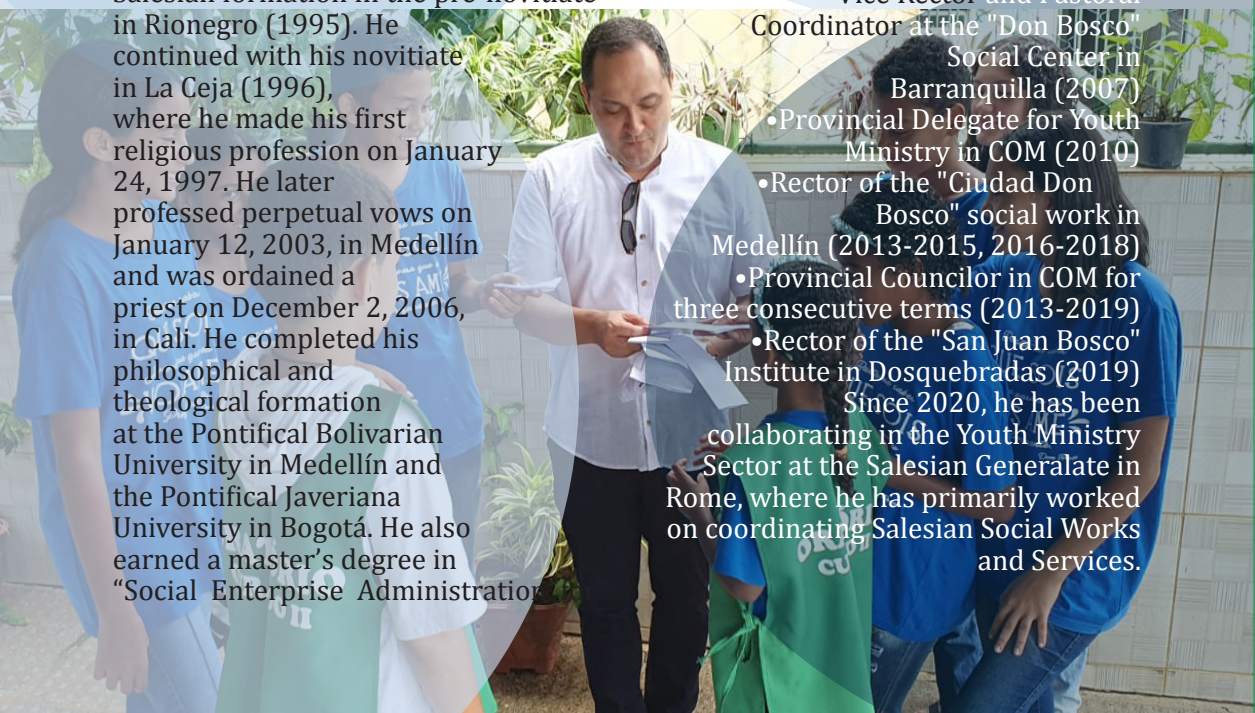
After studying at the "San Juan Bosco" Institute in Cali, he began his Salesian formation in the pre-novitiate in Rionegro (1995). He continued with his novitiate in La Ceja (1996), where he made his first religious profession on January 24, 1997. He later professed perpetual vows on January 12, 2003, in Medellín and was ordained a priest on December 2, 2006, in Cali. He completed his philosophical and theological formation at the Pontifical Bolivarian University in Medellín and the Pontifical Javeriana University in Bogotá. He also earned a master's degree in "Social Enterprise Administration



Innovation and Local Development" and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in International Cooperation for Development at the Pontifical Comillas University in Madrid.

Throughout his ministry, Fr. Bejarano has held various roles:

- Pastoral Coordinator at the "Hogar Jesús Adolescente" centre in Buenaventura (2005)
 - Vice Rector and Pastoral Coordinator at the "Don Bosco" Social Center in Barranquilla (2007)
 - Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry in COM (2010)
 - Rector of the "Ciudad Don Bosco" social work in Medellín (2013-2015, 2016-2018)
 - Provincial Councilor in COM for three consecutive terms (2013-2019)
 - Rector of the "San Juan Bosco" Institute in Dosquebradas (2019)
- Since 2020, he has been collaborating in the Youth Ministry Sector at the Salesian Generalate in Rome, where he has primarily worked on coordinating Salesian Social Works and Services.



Fr. Silvio Roggia

The New General Councilor for Formation

During the 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, Fr. Silvio Roggia was elected the new General Councilor for Formation.

According to Article 135 of the Salesian Constitutions, “the General Councilor for Formation is responsible for promoting the integral and ongoing formation of the members. He follows with particular care the initial formation in its various phases, ensuring that the content, study structure, formation methods, and facilities provide the necessary conditions for the growth of the Salesian vocation.”

This is the responsibility now entrusted to Fr. Silvio Roggia, an Italian Salesian originally from Piedmont, like Don Bosco. He was born on July 4, 1963, in Novello, Province of Cuneo, within the Diocese of Alba.

He entered the Pinerolo-Monteoliveto novitiate in 1982 and made his first religious profession on September 8, 1983, later professing perpetual vows on May 5, 1989, in Turin.

After serving for several years in Salesian houses within his Province, he embarked on a missionary journey, dedicating himself to serving poor youth in English-speaking West Africa (AFW). He worked as a Novice Master first in Ondo, Nigeria (1999–2005) and later in Sunyani, Ghana (2005–2012).

He spent nearly 20 years in Africa, from 1997 to 2016, also serving as Provincial Delegate for Formation (2013–2016) and Vicar (2010–2016) for the AFW Province.

He was later called to Rome, where, from 2016 to 2022, he collaborated



with his predecessor, Fr. Ivo Coelho, in the Formation Sector. During this period, he coordinated an extensive international research study involving over 4,000 Salesians - 3,500 young members and 500 guides and formators - to deepen understanding of initial formation experiences and Salesian accompaniment in the field.



Since 2022, he has served as the Rector of the international Salesian community of theology students, “Zeffirino Namuncurá”, located in Rome, Via della Bufalotta, and as a Councilor of the “Maria Sede della Sapienza” Vice-Province at the Salesian Pontifical University.

Fr. Fidel Maria Orendain

The New General Councilor for Social Communication

Fr. Fidel Maria Orendain was elected as the new General Councilor for Social Communication during the 29th General Chapter. He currently serves as the Provincial of the "Mary Help of Christians" Province of Southern Philippines (FIS).

According to Article 137 of the Salesian Constitutions, "the General Councilor for Social Communication is responsible for animating the Congregation in this area. He promotes Salesian initiatives in the field of Social Communication and coordinates, at the global level, the centres and structures managed by the Congregation in this sector."

Fr. Orendain, a Filipino Salesian, was born on April 24, 1965, in Manila and is currently 59 years old. He completed his Salesian novitiate in Canlubang (1984-1985) and made his first profession on April 1, 1985. He professed perpetual vows on March 24, 1993, in Parañaque, where he was also ordained a priest on December 8, 1993.

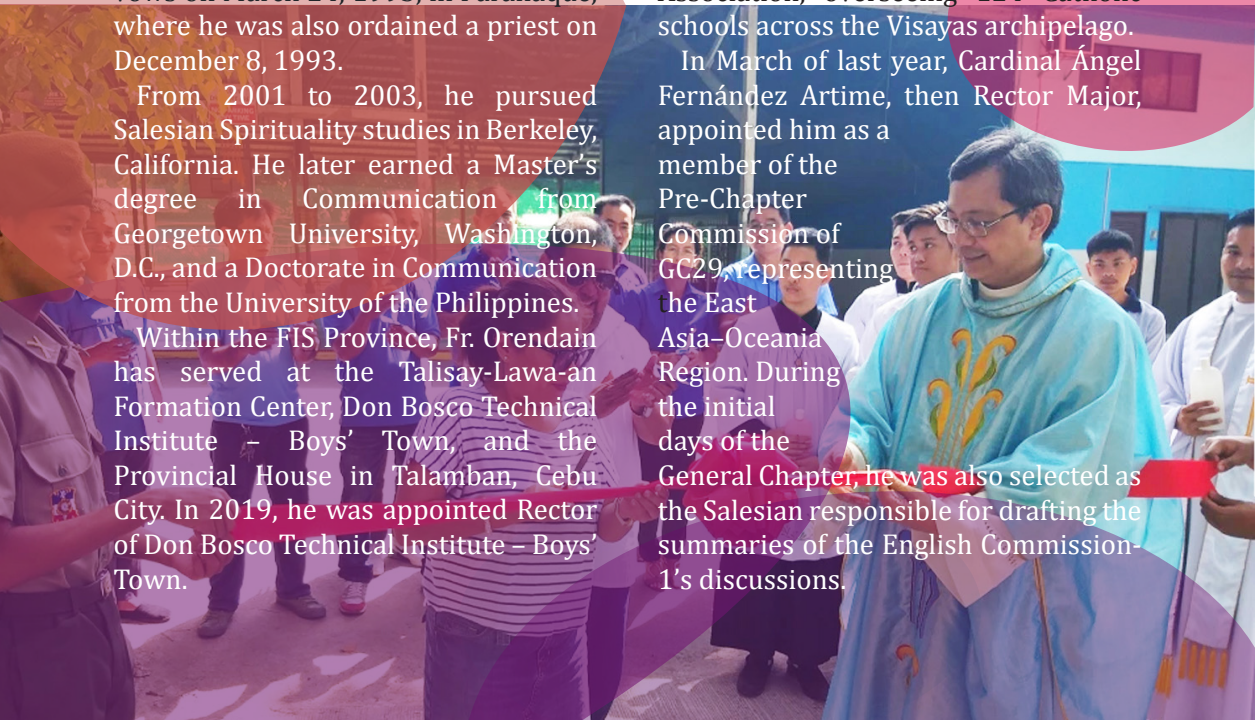
From 2001 to 2003, he pursued Salesian Spirituality studies in Berkeley, California. He later earned a Master's degree in Communication from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and a Doctorate in Communication from the University of the Philippines.

Within the FIS Province, Fr. Orendain has served at the Talisay-Lawa-an Formation Center, Don Bosco Technical Institute - Boys' Town, and the Provincial House in Talamban, Cebu City. In 2019, he was appointed Rector of Don Bosco Technical Institute - Boys' Town.



For over twenty years, he has been actively involved in Social Communication for the FIS Province. Additionally, he has held positions as President, Dean, and Vice Principal for Academics at Don Bosco Technical Institute - Boys' Town. He also served as Regional Coordinator for Region VII of the Philippine Catholic Education Association, overseeing 124 Catholic schools across the Visayas archipelago.

In March of last year, Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, then Rector Major, appointed him as a member of the Pre-Chapter Commission of GC29, representing the East Asia-Oceania Region. During the initial days of the General Chapter, he was also selected as the Salesian responsible for drafting the summaries of the English Commission-1's discussions.



Fr. Jorge Mario Crisafulli

The New General Councillor for the Missions

Fr. Jorge Mario Crisafulli was elected as the new General Councillor for the Missions during the 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation. Until then, he has served as the Provincial Superior of the Africa Nigeria-Niger Province (ANN).

The primary responsibilities of the General Councillor for the Missions are outlined in Article 138 of the Salesian Constitutions: he is responsible for promoting missionary spirit and commitment throughout the Salesian Society, coordinating initiatives, and guiding missionary activities to respond to the needs of evangelization in a Salesian style. Additionally, he ensures the specific preparation and ongoing formation of missionaries.

Biography of Fr. Crisafulli

Born on March 19, 1961, in Bahía Blanca, Argentina, to Salvatore Crisafulli and Gladia Gamberini, Fr. Crisafulli entered the "San Michele" novitiate in La Plata, where he made his first religious profession on January 31, 1980. Six years later, in 1986, he professed his perpetual vows in Junín de los Andes and was ordained a priest in Bahía Blanca on May 5, 1990.

After serving for a year as Vicar in the Villa Regina community in Southern Argentina, he worked for two years in Bahía Blanca before departing in 1996 as a missionary to West Africa, joining the Anglophone West Africa Province (AFW).

Missionary Work in Africa

- Sunyani, Ghana (1998-2003) – First as Administrator (1998-99) and later as Rector (1999-2003).
- Ashaiman, Ghana (2004-2009) –



Served as Administrator (2004-06) and later as Rector of the Provincial House (2006-09).

- Provincial Superior of AFW (2010-2016) – Led the Anglophone West Africa Province for six years.

- Rector of Don Bosco Fambul, Sierra Leone (2016-2022) – Played a crucial role in expanding social outreach efforts, particularly for thousands of street children in Freetown.

- First Provincial of the Nigeria-Niger Province (ANN) (2022-2025) – Led the newly established

"St. Artemide Zatti" Province. Fluent in Spanish, English, and Italian, Fr. Crisafulli now steps into his new role, bringing decades of missionary experience and leadership to the global Salesian Congregation.

Fr. Gabriel Stawowy

The New Ecomer General

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation elected Fr. Gabriel Stawowy from Poland as the new Ecomer General of the Congregation.

According to Article 139 of the Salesian Constitutions, "The Ecomer Geneneral administers the assets that do not belong to a specific province or house but to the entire Society. He coordinates and oversees provincial administrations, ensuring that their management aligns with the requirements of religious poverty and serves the Salesian mission. He also ensures compliance with the necessary regulations for proper administration."

Biography of Fr. Gabriel Stawowy

Born on Christmas Day in 1966 in Miedźna, Diocese of Katowice, Poland, Fr. Stawowy is the son of Teofil Stawowy and Malgorzata Niesyto. He entered the Salesian novitiate in Kopiec in 1984 and made his first religious profession on August 22, 1985. He made his perpetual profession on August 10, 1991, in Rumia and was ordained a priest on June 16, 1995, in Kraków.



Salesian Ministry and Leadership
Świętochłowice, Poland (1995-2002) – Served as House Councillor and Vice-Rector Nowa Huta, Kraków (2002-2011) – Rector for nine years while also serving as School Principal from 2006 to 2011. Salesian Province of Kraków (PLS) (2006-2022) – Held key leadership roles, including: Provincial Councillor (2006-2012); Delegate for Schools (2006-2012); Province Ecomer (2012-2022) Salesian Missions, New Rochelle, USA (2023-present) – Served as Assistant Director at the Salesian Mission Office.

Fr. Stawowy pursued further studies at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) in Rome and at Berkeley, USA. He is fluent in Polish, Italian, and English.

As the new Ecomer General, he brings decades of financial and administrative expertise to ensure the responsible stewardship of Salesian resources in service of the Congregation's mission worldwide.



Fr. Alphonse Owoudou

The New Regional of Central and Northern Africa

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation elected Fr. Alphonse Owoudou, from Cameroon, as the first Regional Councillor for the newly created Central & Northern Africa Region. This marks a historic milestone as Fr. Owoudou transitions from his previous role as the Regional Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region to lead this new region.

Fr. Alphonse Owoudou was born in Ebolowa, Cameroon, on April 30, 1969. His Salesian journey began with his novitiate in Lomé, Togo, from 1989 to 1990. He professed his perpetual vows on August 9, 1997, in Yaoundé and was ordained a priest on July 11, 1999. Fr. Owoudou is an accomplished academic who holds a Doctorate in Psychology from the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) in Rome. His academic and pastoral expertise has significantly shaped his leadership within the Salesian Congregation.

Fr. Owoudou has served the Salesian Congregation in various capacities across different locations. From 1999 to 2003, he worked as Economist in Port-Gentil, Gabon. He then moved on to serve as a Formator and Lecturer in Lomé, Togo, from 2007 to 2010. Between 2012 and 2015, he was appointed Principal and Formator at ISPSH in Togo. Following this, he served as Vice Provincial and Formation Delegate in ATE from 2015 to 2017 and subsequently became the Provincial of ATE from 2017 to 2020. His extensive experience in these roles has prepared him to take on the responsibilities of this new position with competence and vision.



Fr. Owoudou's ability to serve diverse communities is exemplified by his fluency in several languages, including Ewondo, Bulu, French, English, Italian, and Spanish. This multilingual skill set allows him to connect with people from various backgrounds, fostering greater inclusivity and collaboration in his ministry.

Fr. Owoudou was the Moderator of the 29th General Chapter, which is being held at Valdocco, Turin, Italy. His election as the first Regional Councillor for the Central & Northern Africa Region is a testament to his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to the Salesian mission. As the leader of this newly established region, Fr. Owoudou is entrusted with the responsibility of addressing the pastoral, educational, and social needs of the communities within Central and Northern Africa. His leadership will be pivotal in fostering growth, unity, and innovation, ensuring that the Salesian Congregation continues to thrive in this vital region.

Fr. Innocent Bizimana

The New Regional of East & South Africa

Fr. Innocent Bizimana was elected as the first Regional Councillor of the newly created East & South Africa Region during the 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation. His election marks a significant step in the development of the Salesian mission in this vital and diverse part of the world.

Fr. Innocent Bizimana was born on March 25, 1969, in Musha-Rwamagana, Rwanda. His Salesian journey began with his novitiate in Kansebula, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 1993 to 1994, where he made his first profession on August 24, 1994. He continued his formation in Kansebula and then in Madagascar, where he renewed his profession annually in Tulear, Antsirabe, and Ivato. He made his perpetual profession in Fianarantsoa in 2001 and was ordained a priest two years later, on August 9, 2003.

Fr. Bizimana pursued further studies from 2003 to 2005 at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) in Rome, where he earned a degree in Theology. Upon returning to Madagascar in 2005, he became a member of the Fianarantsoa community, serving as pastor and head of the oratory from 2007 to 2009. He was subsequently appointed Director of Ivato Notre-Dame de Clairvaux, a role he held for two consecutive three-year terms. After a year as Economist in Betafo, he returned to Ivato-Don Bosco, where he resumed his role as Director and was confirmed for a second term on May 3, 2019.

Fr. Bizimana has held numerous leadership roles within the Salesian Congregation. He was appointed Vice Provincial on July 2, 2014, and since



September 2016, he has served as Provincial Delegate for Formation and Responsible for the Salesian Family. Additionally, he was the Coordinator of Provincial Delegates for Formation for the Africa-Madagascar Region. His multilingual abilities—he speaks French, Italian, Malagasy, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda—have been instrumental in connecting with the diverse communities he has served.

In June 2020, the then Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, with the consent of his Council, appointed Fr. Bizimana as the Provincial of the "Immaculate Mary" Vice Province of Madagascar (MDG) for the term 2020–2026. His extensive pastoral and administrative experience, combined with his deep roots in the Salesian mission, positions him as a visionary leader for the newly established East & South Africa Region.

Fr. Bizimana's election as Regional Councillor is a recognition of his dedication, leadership, and commitment to the Salesian mission.

Fr. Roman Jachimowicz

The New Regional Councillor for Central & Northern Europe

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation has re-elected Fr. Roman Jachimowicz as the Regional Councillor for Central & Northern Europe, reaffirming his leadership and dedication to the Salesian mission in the region.

Born on November 13, 1967, in Gorzów Wlkp, Poland, Fr. Jachimowicz entered the Salesian Congregation and completed his novitiate in Swobnica, making his first profession on August 22, 1987. He professed his perpetual vows on July 31, 1993, in Rumia, and was ordained a priest on May 25, 1995, in Łąd. His academic background includes degrees in Theology from the Catholic University of Lublin and Pedagogy from the University of Szczecin.

Fr. Jachimowicz has held numerous key leadership roles in education and administration. He began his ministry as the Vice Principal of a school in Szczecin (1995–1998) before becoming its Principal (1998–2006). He later served as the Rector of the community and Principal in Aleksandrów Kujawski (2006–2015) and as the Economist of the community in Szczecin (2015). His leadership also extended to the provincial level when he was appointed Provincial of the Poland-Piła Province (PLN) from 2016 to 2020. Additionally, he has been actively involved as the Delegate for Past Pupils in the "St. Adalbert" Province of Poland.

Fluent in Polish, German, English, Russian, and Italian, Fr. Jachimowicz



brings a strong international perspective to his role. His re-election as Regional Councillor for Central & Northern Europe is a testament to his deep commitment to the Salesian mission, particularly in education, pastoral care, and community development.

In his second term, Fr. Jachimowicz will continue to guide and animate Salesian works across Central and Northern Europe, fostering the spirit of Don Bosco in the service of young people and the broader community.



Fr. Juan Carlos Pérez

The New Regional Councillor for the Mediterranean Region

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation has re-elected Fr. Juan Carlos Pérez Godoy as the Regional Councillor for the Mediterranean Region, reaffirming his leadership and dedication to the Salesian mission in this area. With extensive experience in youth ministry, education, and leadership, Fr. Pérez Godoy will continue to guide and strengthen Salesian efforts across the region.

Born on November 5, 1959, in Burguillos, Spain, Fr. Pérez Godoy began his Salesian journey with his first profession on September 8, 1978, followed by his perpetual vows on August 15, 1984. He was ordained as a priest on June 5, 1987. His academic achievements include a Licentiate in Ecclesiastical Sciences and a Master's in Youth Ministry and Catechetics, complemented by specialised studies in theology, catechetics, and education.

Over the years, Fr. Pérez Godoy has held numerous key leadership positions within the Salesian Congregation. He has served as Provincial Councillor, Vice Provincial, and Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry. He has also been the Rector of the Catechetical Study Centre, Director of Escuela de Tiempo Libre Don Bosco in Andalucía, and Provincial of the Seville Province (2000–2006). From 2014 to 2020, he led the Spain-St James Major (SSM) Province with distinction.

Beyond his roles within the Salesian



Congregation, Fr. Pérez Godoy has made significant contributions on a broader scale. He served as President of Catholic Schools of Andalucía (2002–2006) and National President of Catholic Schools of Spain (2015–2020), showcasing his commitment to Catholic education and its influence on young people.

Fluent in Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese, Fr. Pérez Godoy brings a rich multicultural perspective to his leadership. His reappointment as Regional Councillor for the Mediterranean Region underscores the trust placed in his vision and expertise.

As he continues his mission, Fr. Pérez Godoy's leadership is expected to further advance Salesian initiatives in youth formation, education, and evangelization, ensuring the spirit of Don Bosco remains vibrant and impactful in the Mediterranean region.

Fr. Michael Biju

The new Regional Councillor for South Asia

Fr. Michael Biju was re-elected as the Regional Councillor for South Asia during the 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation, extending his leadership for another term. Having already served in this role for six years, Fr. Biju will continue to animate and guide the Salesian mission across the region.

Born on March 19, 1970, in Idukki, India, Fr. Biju began his journey with the Salesians at the novitiate in Shillong, where he professed his first vows on March 20, 1988. He made his perpetual profession on May 24, 1996, in Shillong and was ordained a priest on January 5, 1999, in Moolamattam. A dedicated scholar, Fr. Biju holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in English, Philosophy, and Theology and a Doctorate in Moral Theology. Additionally, he has earned Postgraduate Diplomas in Human Resource Development and Bioethics, further enhancing his academic and pastoral expertise.

Following his ordination, Fr. Biju committed himself to both educational and pastoral ministries. From 1999 to 2002, he served as Assistant Director at Don Bosco Youth and Educational Services. He then took on the role of Vice Principal at Don Bosco Junior College in Azara, Guwahati, from 2002 to 2004, before serving as Socius at Sunnyside, Shillong, in 2006-2007.

His academic leadership reached new heights when he was appointed Dean of the Salesian Theological Studentate "Ratisbonne" in Jerusalem, where he served from 2011 to 2017, providing theological formation to students from all over the world. Upon returning to India, he became the Registrar of Assam Don Bosco University from 2017 to



2020, while also serving as Provincial Councillor of the India-Guwahati Province during the same period.

In 2020, Fr. Biju was elected Regional Councillor for South Asia, a responsibility that entrusted him with the animation and coordination of the Salesian presence across the region. Over the past six years, he has worked tirelessly to promote the formation, support Salesian communities, and ensure the continued growth of the Salesian mission. His re-election in 2025 is a testament to his dedication, visionary leadership, and the profound impact of his work across South Asia.

A multilingual leader, Fr. Biju is fluent in Malayalam, English, Italian, Hindi, and Garo, which enables him to effectively connect with Salesians and young people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. With his renewed mandate, he will continue to lead the South Asia region with unwavering commitment, ensuring that the Salesian charism remains a beacon of hope for youth and communities in the years to come.

Fr. William Matthews

Regional Councillor for East Asia-Oceania

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation has elected Fr. William Matthews as the Regional Councillor for East Asia-Oceania, entrusting him with this significant responsibility.

Born on June 3, 1971, in Mandalay, Myanmar, Fr. Matthews grew up in St. Joseph's Salesian Parish, where his faith and vocation were nurtured. In 1991, after completing his secondary education, he joined the Nazareth Aspirantate in Anisakan, taking his first steps toward Salesian life. In 1994, during the middle of his novitiate in Myanmar, his family migrated to Australia in search of a better future and to reunite with relatives who had settled there years earlier.

In 1995, Fr. Matthews re-joined the Salesians in Melbourne, Australia, and on January 31, 1997, he made his first profession in Lysterfield. He made his perpetual profession on November 29, 2003, in Ferntree Gully, Melbourne. His post-novitiate formation took place in Melbourne (Lysterfield, Oakleigh), followed by his practical training in Gawler and Ferntree Gully. He later completed his theology studies at Melbourne's Catholic Theology Center in 2004.

On June 20, 2005, Fr. Matthews was ordained a priest in Perth, Western Australia, which he considers his second home. His priestly ministry has been closely tied to Salesian education, where he has served as a teacher, assistant, and chaplain in various Salesian schools, including Ferntree Gully (Victoria-Melbourne), Gawler (South Australia), and Sunbury (Victoria-Melbourne).



At the provincial level, Fr. Matthews has held several key roles. Since 1999, he has been actively involved in Salesian communications, contributing to the Salesian Bulletin and managing multiple provincial websites, including the current one (<https://salesians.org.au>). For nine years, he served as Delegate for Social Communications. Additionally, over the past three years, he has taken on the responsibility of Vocations Animator, playing a crucial role in fostering new vocations.

In Australia's multicultural and multi-religious society, Fr. Matthews has also been deeply involved in pastoral ministry to Burmese refugees and migrants, particularly in Adelaide (South Australia), Wagga Wagga (New South Wales), and across Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand).

Recognizing his leadership, the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, with the consent of his council, appointed Fr. Matthews as the 11th Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province (AUL) on June 20, 2017, for a six-year term (2018-2023).

Fr. Hugo Orozco Sánchez

The New Regional Councillor for Central & Northern Europe

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation has re-elected Fr. Hugo Orozco Sánchez as the Regional Councillor for the Interamerica Region, extending his leadership and dedication to the Salesian mission. His profound commitment to pastoral work, youth ministry, and formation has established him as a guiding force in the region, ensuring that the mission of Don Bosco continues to thrive.

Born on July 30, 1968, in San Luis de Potosí, Mexico, Fr. Orozco began his Salesian journey by entering the novitiate in Chula Vista and making his first profession in Tlaquepaque on August 16, 1989. He later made his perpetual profession on September 10, 1995, and was ordained as a priest on March 15, 1997, in San Pedro de Tlaquepaque. His academic pursuits include a Baccalaureate in Theology from UPS Tlaquepaque (1997) and a specialization in Educational Psychology from the Normal Superior del Estado de Jalisco (1996).

Over the years, Fr. Orozco has played a pivotal role in various positions within the Salesian Congregation. From 1997 to 2004, he served as Pastoral Animator for Project Niño Don Bosco and as Provincial Delegate for the Preferential Option in the MEG Province. His leadership continued as Rector of the community at Project Niño Don Bosco (2004–2007) and later in Ciudad Juárez (2007–2010). From 2010 to 2014, he made significant contributions as Councillor Delegate for Youth Ministry, before assuming the role of Provincial of Mexico-Guadalajara (2014–2020).



Fluent in Spanish, Italian, English, and Portuguese, Fr. Orozco approaches his ministry with a dynamic and inclusive perspective. His re-election as Regional Councillor for Interamerica is a testament to his unwavering dedication and ability to inspire growth and transformation.

In this renewed mandate, Fr. Orozco remains committed to strengthening Salesian initiatives, fostering a deeper connection to Don Bosco's vision, and nurturing the spiritual and personal growth of the youth in the Interamerica Region.



Fr. Héctor Gabriel Romero

The New Regional Councillor for the America South Cone

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation has re-elected Fr. Héctor Gabriel Romero as the Regional Councillor for the America South Cone, entrusting him with this responsibility for a second consecutive term.

Born on September 10, 1971, in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, Fr. Romero began his Salesian journey at the novitiate in La Plata, where he made his first profession on January 31, 1991. He continued his formation and made his perpetual profession on October 5, 1996, committing himself fully to the Salesian mission. He was ordained a priest on December 11, 1999, in Córdoba, marking the beginning of his pastoral ministry.

Fr. Romero has pursued academic excellence throughout his Salesian vocation. In 1993, he earned a degree as a Professor of Philosophy and Education, specializing in Youth Ministry, from IFD Domingo Savio in Córdoba. He further deepened his theological knowledge by obtaining a Baccalaureate in Theology from the Catholic University of Argentina (UCA) in Córdoba in 1999. In 2016, he completed a Master's degree in Bioethics at the National University of Córdoba (UNC), broadening his understanding of ethical issues in contemporary society.

His extensive pastoral and administrative experience within the Salesian Congregation includes a variety of key leadership roles. From 2002 to 2007, he served as Rector of the Domingo Savio Aspirantate and Prenovitiate (ACO), guiding young aspirants in their vocational discernment. He was later appointed Provincial Councillor for the Province of Northern Argentina (ACO) from 2007 to 2009, followed by his



role as Delegate for Formation in 2009. Between 2008 and 2015, he served as Rector of the Post-novitiate (ACO – ARN), overseeing the formation of young Salesians. Additionally, he was Provincial Councillor (ARN) from 2010 to 2015 and Delegate for Formation (ARN) during the same period. Recognizing his leadership and commitment, he was appointed Provincial of Northern Argentina (ARN) from 2016 to 2020.

Beyond his provincial responsibilities, Fr. Romero has actively engaged in the global Salesian mission. He participated in the 27th General Chapter, contributing to discussions and decisions shaping the future of the Congregation.

A fluent Spanish speaker, Fr. Romero's re-election as Regional Councillor for America South Cone reaffirms his dedication to the Salesian charism and his ability to guide the region in the coming years. Before this renewed mandate, he served as Provincial of Northern Argentina (ARN), where he played a pivotal role in the formation and animation of Salesian communities.

Signs of Hope in a Fragmented World

The Concluding Message of 29th General Chapter given by the newly elected Rector Major

The 29th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation concluded on April 12, 2025, at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome, following the Eucharistic celebration. This moment marked the culmination of a journey of discernment, reflection, and prayer lasting 55 days, with the central theme “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to the young.”

The concluding ceremony, held around midday, was a moment of deep gratitude, communion, and renewed commitment to the future of the Salesian mission. The presence of His Eminence Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, titular of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, added an additional sign of spiritual support to the Congregation.

The Rector Major, Fr. Fabio Attard, delivered his concluding address, in which he shared the fruits of the Chapter and outlined the guidelines for the future of the Congregation.

In his speech, Fr. Fabio expressed profound gratitude for the experience lived during the General Chapter, describing it as a “moment of Salesian Pentecost.” He highlighted how the Holy

Spirit guided every phase of the Chapter through the method of “conversation in the Spirit”, and he invited the entire Congregation to continue on this path of listening and discernment.

Key Points from Fr. Fabio's Address

The Presence of the Holy Spirit:

The Chapter was experienced as a moment of Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit was constantly invoked and perceived, guiding the Salesians in their discernment.

The Chapter as a Milestone:

Fr. Fabio described the Chapter as a milestone that ensures continuity with the journey begun in Valdocco and is now renewed with the same spirit of commitment and dedication.

The Final Document:

The Chapter concluded with the approval of a Final Document, which will guide the Congregation from 2025 to 2031. However, Fr. Fabio emphasized that the value of this document will depend on the Salesians' ability to maintain the spirit of listening, openness, and accompaniment by the Holy Spirit.



Personal Conversion:

Fr. Fabio stressed the importance of personal conversion, emphasizing that every pastoral renewal must start with a profound and authentic change in the heart of each Salesian. Personal conversion, he said, is not an intimate experience but the foundation for renewed pastoral and spiritual care.

Knowing Don Bosco:

It is not enough to love Don Bosco; it is necessary to know him deeply. Fr. Fabio warned against a superficial knowledge of the Salesian charism, which risks reducing the mission to mere superficial activities. He urged Salesians to seriously study Don Bosco to embody his spirit in today's contexts.

A Sign of Hope in a Fragmented World:

In a world marked by conflicts, wars, and ideologies that strip young people of their dignity, Fr. Fabio reminded the Salesians that they must be a sacrament of hope, offering young people spaces for growth, welcome, and a future.

Courage and Authenticity:

He called on the Salesians to grow in fidelity and prophecy, emphasizing that these virtues form the foundation of the Salesian mission. The courage shown during the Chapter must serve as the basis for tackling future challenges without being paralyzed by fear.

New Challenges:

He identified two areas of focus for the future:

- Artificial intelligence (AI), seen as a new frontier for the Salesian mission. Fr. Fabio reminded that while AI can be a useful tool, it can never replace the human and pastoral touch that defines the Salesian charism.

- Care for integral ecology, which requires a change in mindset and an educational commitment to fostering a healthy relationship with creation.

The Vision of the Valdocco Oratory:

Fr. Fabio reiterated that the model of

the Valdocco Oratory—a home, a parish, a school, and a playground—must remain the permanent criterion for discerning and renewing every Salesian activity.

Words of Gratitude

At the end of his speech, Fr. Fabio expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Stefano Martoglio, Vicar of the Rector Major, for his contribution in guiding the Congregation during the preparation of the Chapter. He also expressed his appreciation to Fr. Alphonse Owoudou, moderator of the Chapter, for his dedication in coordinating the work. He thanked Fr. Pascual Chávez, for his valuable contribution during the Chapter and for agreeing to prepare reflections useful for implementing the directives of the Chapter. He welcomed and thanked His Eminence Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, for his presence and spiritual encouragement.

After these acknowledgments, the moderator, Fr. Alphonse Owoudou, officially declared the 29th General Chapter closed.

The ceremony concluded with all the Chapter participants turning to the famous painting of Mary Help of Christians, entrusting the fruits of the General Chapter in the hands of the Blessed Mother, and renewing their commitment to living Don Bosco's charism with authenticity, singing and praying the Marian hymn.

Looking to the Future

The 29th General Chapter has left a strong spiritual and pastoral legacy, offering a clear vision for the next six years. As Fr. Fabio emphasized: "When we are truly passionate about Christ and dedicated to the young, we discover that walking together is beautiful, even if it is challenging." With this perspective, the Salesian Family is ready to continue its journey, bringing hope, light, and love to young people around the world.

Fr Attard: 'Why I start from the Ferrante Aporti Juvenile Prison'

Marina Lomunno



For his first public meeting, the new Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr. Fabio Attard, chose the Ferrante Aporti juvenile prison in Turin. On Thursday, April 3, he visited the incarcerated youth at Corso Unione Sovietica. Behind juvenile delinquency, the Salesians of Don Bosco see the suffering of poor and abandoned young people.

“Passionate for Jesus Christ, dedicated to the young. For a faithful and prophetic experience of our Salesian vocation.” This is the theme of the 29th General Chapter of the Salesians, currently being held at the Mother House in Valdocco. Approximately 220 chapter members, representing the 136 nations where the Sons of Don Bosco are present, elected the new Rector Major, Fr. Fabio Attard, on Wednesday, March 25. In harmony with the Jubilee of Hope and the 2025 Strenna, “Anchored in Hope, Pilgrims with the Young,” he decided to meet first the “naughty and struggling youth,” as Don Bosco called them, “and whom today he would go out to find.”

On the morning of Thursday, April 3, Fr. Attard went to the Ferrante Aporti juvenile detention center in Turin to meet the detained boys, most of whom are foreigners, accompanied by his

fellow Salesian chaplain, Fr. Silvano Oni.

“This is where Don Bosco’s Preventive System was born,” Fr. Attard explains, “and from Turin, where the Salesian charism was born, we want to continue standing beside young people who have received less, because, as our founder recommended, ‘in every young person, even the most unfortunate, there is an accessible point of goodness, and the first duty of the educator is to find this point, this sensitive chord of the heart, and make use of it.’”

It is precisely the Saint of the Youth, the Rector Major recalls, who in his “Memoirs of the Oratory” recounts how he understood that – in 19th-century Turin, with many similarities to today’s global peripheries – it was necessary to give hope to the most vulnerable and poorest young people. “To see crowds of boys, aged 12 to 18, all healthy, robust, and bright, but to see them there idle, tormented by insects, starving for both spiritual and material bread, was something that horrified me,” Don Bosco wrote.

“Who knows,” I thought to myself, “if these boys had a friend outside who cared for them, assisted them, and instructed them in religion on feast days, who knows if they might stay away from ruin or at least reduce the number of those who return to prison? I shared this thought with Fr. Cafasso (his spiritual father, patron of prisoners, and confessor of those condemned to death, Ed.), and with his

advice and guidance, I began to study ways to make it happen."

It was 1855 at the "Generala" (as the juvenile prison in Turin was then called, now "Ferrante Aporti"): here Don Bosco visited the detained boys. From those afternoons spent playing and chatting with them, he invented the Preventive System, as a plaque dedicated to him in the corridors of the institution recalls.

For this reason, since then, the chaplains of the "Ferrante" have been Salesians, and they strive, following in Don Bosco's footsteps, as happens in all Salesian oratories worldwide, to love the youth: "more can be obtained



with a glance of charity and a word of encouragement than with many reprimands," the saint wrote. After all, Fr. Attard concludes, "Pope Francis, by opening the second Holy Door after St. Peter's Basilica at the Rebibbia prison, has shown us where we must bring hope and consolation."

WHEN THE LORD KNOCKS

The Message of the New Rector Major Don Fabio Attard, SDB

A confrere said to me, "Father, we just need your closeness, your listening, and your prayer. This consoles us, encourages us, and gives us strength and hope so that we may continue to serve the young, who are poor and wounded, afraid and terrorized!"

On March 25, 2025, the Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary. This is one of the most significant solemnities of our Christian Faith. On this solemnity, we commemorate God's initiative to become part of the human history that He Himself created. On that day, during Holy Mass, we



recite the Creed and when we profess that the Son of God became Man, we believers kneel as a sign of awe at God's marvelous initiative, before which we have no choice but to fall to our knees.

In the annunciation experience, Mary is afraid: "Do not fear Mary," the Angel tells her. After she expresses her question and is assured that this is God's plan for her, Mary responds with a simple phrase that remains for us today a reminder and an invitation. Mary, the Blessed among women, simply says, "Let it be done unto me according to your word."

This past March 25, the Lord knocked on the door of my heart through the call that my brothers at General Chapter XXIX addressed to me. They asked me to make myself available to

take on the mission of being Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales. I confess that then and there I felt the weight of the invitation and had some disconcerting moments because what the Lord was asking of me was no small thing. The point is that when the call comes, we as believers enter that sacred space where we feel strongly that it is He who takes the initiative. The road ahead of us is just simply to abandon ourselves into God's hands, with no "ifs" or "buts". Of course, none of this is easy.

"You will see how the Lord works."

During these initial weeks, I have still been asking myself, like Mary, what does all this mean? Then, slowly, the consoling words that one of my Provincials once told me began to come: "When the Lord calls, it is He who takes the initiative; what is done depends on Him. You just keep yourself ready and available. You will see how the Lord works."

In the light of this personal but very wide-ranging experience, because it concerns the Salesian Congregation and the Salesian Family, I immediately turned to my dear Salesian Confreres. From the very first moment, I asked them to accompany me with their prayers, their closeness, and their support.

I must confess that in these first weeks I already feel that this mission must be inspired by Mary. She, after the Angel's annunciation, set out to help her cousin Elizabeth. And so, I set out to serve my confreres, to listen to them, and to share with them and reassure them of the support of the whole congregation, especially for those living in situations of war, conflict, and extreme poverty.

I was struck by the comment of a provincial who is experiencing an extremely difficult situation with his confreres. After a very fraternal conversation, he told me, "Father, we just need your closeness, your listening, and your prayer. This consoles us, encourages us, and gives us strength and hope so that we may continue to serve the young, who are poor and wounded, afraid and terrorized!" After this comment, we remained in silence, he and I, with a few tears falling from his eyes and I must say from mine as well.

When the meeting was over, I remained alone in my office. I asked myself if this mission that the Lord is asking me to accept is but to be a brother alongside my brothers who suffer but who hope, and who struggle to do good for the poor and who have no intention of quitting? I could hear a voice inside of me telling me that it is worth saying 'yes' when the Lord knocks, whatever it may cost!



Part III.

Fr. Tony D'Souza

Rev. Fr. Tony D'Souza was the first superior of Project Africa, Indian Delegation. Here in part three, he talks about his return to his home province in India, the challenges he faced personally, the little miracles of divine providence, the wonderful collaborators and benefactors. He also challenges young Salesians to be missionaries.



**Fr. Sebastian
Koladiyil SDB**

What happened after you returned to India?

After some time, I was appointed a Rector in Panjim, Goa, and later became the Provincial in Bombay Province. This role allowed me to promote the missionary spirit within India itself. I was interested in the Indian mission for Gujarat(hindu majority state in India) and we started the mission there.

Later, I was sent to Kuwait, the Arab world, to establish a foundation there, which was a new experience for me. Through these transitions, I learned many lessons. I wouldn't say that the important thing today is to die in the missions but to give your life for the missions, wherever they are.

What major challenges did you face personally as a superior in the missions at that time?

I would say it is the 'theology of failure.' One of my key challenges was learning to accept things as they were, especially when they could not be changed. I came from Bombay Province, where funds were available for development.

However, in the mission, we had to rely on external agencies and careful planning.

When we were beginning, we had to be patient to get started in Africa. We had to wait, as some of the plans we had made didn't work. Some confreres who fell sick had to be sent back to their provinces, and replacements were not coming easily. Even though we began with a lot of enthusiasm, after some time that enthusiasm began to fade. We opened ourselves to getting missionaries from outside. That's how Fr. Edward Liptak, Fr. De Gaspare, and Aldo Rico came in to help.

Finances were also a challenge. But as I said, trusting in God was the ultimate solution. This theology of failure led to faith. Back then, we were struggling to get started. I had a vision, but not as bold as what is happening now in East Africa. I never dreamed of all that has happened now. For example, we never expected vocations to come up so fast, and a decent provincial community formed. Problems existed, one type or another. But looking at the overall picture today, I say it was worth it.

What kept you going despite the challenges?

I was always seeking something challenging for my life. When I was in Bombay, it didn't challenge me much. It was a comfortable apostolate. Even being provincial wasn't a challenge. I enjoyed it, but I wasn't getting the



satisfaction of truly giving myself, as something that happened in Africa. There were days when I felt exhausted, but happy that I had spent my life on a worthwhile cause. That was my evangelization. Understanding how God works in the missions. We think, it's all our work, but we face failures, and then success follows. That's how I see it. I don't know how others would look at the development of Salesians in East Africa. For me, the hand of God was always there. And, I could give you many examples of God's providence coming at the right time.

Would you like to mention one or two?

Certainly! On one instance in Nairobi, when we started, we had no place to stay. So, I asked the Jesuits to help us with accommodation and they were very generous. I asked them to lend me 4,000 Kenyan shillings for initial studies which I had promised to return before leaving. Rome had promised to send some money, but every day I would go to check at the post office but nothing had been sent.

On the day of my departure, I received a call from a lady in Nairobi. She had heard there was a Don Bosco priest and wanted to meet me. I told her I was leaving that night, but I'd see her another time. But she insisted. So, Fr. Francis, a Jesuit, suggested we drop by her place on our way to the airport. We



did and after a brief conversation, as we were about to leave, she handed me an envelope. It had 5,000 shillings. I owed 4,000, so I just gave the envelope to Fr. Francis.

On another occasion in Sudan, I had a ticket on Sudan Airways, but the flight was cancelled. There was only one flight a week. At the time, I was in charge of Kenya, Tanzania, and Sudan, so I had a tight schedule. Delaying the flight would mean waiting for another week. I talked to the Lutherans, who had a private plane flying the next day. I requested them to take me for the price of 400 dollars. When I went to the airport, the airport manager said I couldn't fly with them and that I had to use Sudan Airways. I explained to him about the situation but he still refused saying "That is not my problem". I pleaded with him, for three hours and even told him, "I will kiss your feet but please let me go" but he refused. The Lutherans couldn't leave without me since I had paid so they were still waiting for me.

Then a man walked in, greeted the airport manager, and they started speaking in Arabic. The man looked at me and asked "What's the matter?" I explained that I was invited by the bishop to start some educational projects and that I had to go because I had other programs to attend. He listened to me and signed my exit papers, and I thanked both of them and went to tell the Lutherans that I would



be coming. It was a very short walking distance. I wanted to make friends with this other man because I knew I would need him later on. I looked for him but couldn't find him. It was another example of being providence coming in at a time when I was stuck. I had prayed to god telling Him, "I'm not your tourist, God. Please help." And God did.

Do you have any additional thoughts about your early involvement and experiences in the Sudan mission?

One thing I'm deeply grateful to God for is the missionary experience. I worked in East-Africa, Kuwait, and Sri Lanka. This exposure gave meaning to my priesthood and vocation. That's what I'd like to propagate among our young Salesians. Live for a motivation that God will show you. Stay open. Don't limit yourself to one way of working. Be open to go where God calls you and in different ways. For me, missionary vocation is about that openness to be ready to go and serve where God calls you.

We need to promote that spirit among young Salesians. I feel they are smart and gifted but they are not ready to take risks. What I am propagating here is this "Prove to yourself that you are open to the mission and write a letter to your superior expressing your availability. If you are not ready to send it to your superior, write and put it in your diary. Just let God know that you are available".



That will help the congregation grow and create a young generation of people who are more faith-oriented in action. Otherwise, we'll move into a bureaucratic stage of our congregation of people being all organizers and managers. We are still blessed with vocations, but we must nurture and guide them in a Christian, missionary way. It's heartening to see the Rector Major himself appealing for missions. It's not just tradition but it's essential for the benefit of the congregation.

Are there any collaborators you would like to acknowledge?

I must mention Cardinal Otunga, a great collaborator and supporter of our work. He didn't just say "Take this land and do what you want." He followed up.

I recall a case at Boys Town. One worker complained to the Ministry of Labour about not being satisfied with his salary. We were summoned. So I called Cardinal Otunga and he said, "Don't worry, just go". When we arrived at the labor offices in Nairobi, he was already at the Ministry lobby. His presence drew attention. When we went into the office with the cardinal, the officer was surprised to see the cardinal. He jumped up and told the cardinal that they had not called him but he told the officer, "You called my sons, so I have come, you take care of them and I will go". The officer assured him they'd handle it since it was a small

issue. As the cardinal was leaving I told him, “Cardinal, tomorrow you’ll be in the newspapers... “Cardinal in Labour!” He was very good to us, and even gave us another piece of land later on.

There was also a strong Goan community in Nairobi that helped us immensely. Cardinal Otunga often spoke of them. They helped him build church buildings and supported us too. For example, the first building at Upperhill, housing a temporary church was funded by them. They would raise the money through various means like staging a drama among other activities.

I also want to acknowledge the funds we got from various funding agencies. The Swiss Embassy was the first. The Swiss ambassador visited and we had nothing to show him. We needed funds to get started. We had a Salesian, Lugano, who had connections with them. They are the ones who sanctioned the first project at Boys Town.

Many agencies, like Miserior and Misan, Sebero among others were our big donors. There were a few who were not encouraging.

Fr. Maschio, a missionary Salesian from Bombay helped us get funds to launch some projects in East Africa.

Would you like to mention any people who helped you in the beginning?

Yes, though I wish I could remember them all. During our first chapel inauguration on Upper Hill, many Goans were present. Our African contact was still limited then. The Cardinal pointed to a lady and said, “She should be able to help you.” That was Mama Dogo, a well-to-do, Goan and well-liked by Kenyans. She sent donations, sometimes with a piece of cake.



Others gave their time. I may not remember all the names but one was Tony Garvalo, a very committed man who rallied others to help. Another was Montero, Monty, who supported us early on. Many ladies helped us set up our kitchen. It was a beautiful pioneering period.

I would say, we should also support the canonization cause of Cardinal Otunga. I don’t know how we could do it but it needs some kind of push. This will also acknowledge our gratitude to him for the support he has given us. We owe him our gratitude for all he did.

Thank you, Fr. Tony



FRANCISCUS

The Enduring Legacy Left by Pope Francis

Pope Francis, the first Jesuit pope and the first from the Americas, has left an indelible mark on the Catholic Church and the world through his emphasis on humility, social justice, and inclusivity. His legacy, rooted in compassion and reform, reflects a papacy that sought to bridge divides and address pressing global challenges. Among his many contributions, the most significant legacy is his transformative approach to reorienting the Church toward mercy, environmental stewardship, and advocacy for the marginalized.

From the outset, Pope Francis signaled a shift in tone and priorities. Choosing the name Francis, inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, he embraced simplicity, famously opting for modest attire and living quarters over traditional papal opulence. This humility extended to his teachings, particularly his emphasis on a "poor Church for the poor." His apostolic exhortation **Evangelii Gaudium** (2013) critiqued unchecked capitalism and consumerism, urging Catholics to prioritize the disenfranchised. By focusing on economic inequality, he brought the Church closer to the lived realities of millions, challenging world leaders to address systemic poverty.

His environmental advocacy, crystallized in the 2015 encyclical **Laudato Si'**, is a cornerstone of his legacy. The document framed climate change as a moral issue, linking environmental degradation to social injustice. It called for urgent action to protect "our common home," influencing global discussions, including the Paris Climate Agreement. By integrating faith with science, Francis broadened the Church's moral authority, appealing to both Catholics and non-Catholics. His ongoing efforts, such as the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, ensure this commitment endures, inspiring ecological responsibility across generations.

Francis also redefined the Church's pastoral approach through mercy and inclusivity. His famous remark, "Who am I to judge?" regarding homosexuality, signaled a departure from rigid dogma, fostering dialogue on contentious issues like divorce, remarriage, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. The 2015-2016 Synod on the Family and **Amoris Laetitia** (2016) emphasized discernment over condemnation, allowing greater flexibility for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive communion. While controversial among traditionalists, this shift prioritized pastoral care, making the Church more welcoming.

His interfaith and geopolitical efforts further cemented his legacy. Francis built bridges with other religions, notably through the 2019 Document on Human Fraternity with Grand Imam Ahmed el-Tayeb, promoting peace and coexistence. His visits to conflict zones, like Iraq and South Sudan, underscored his commitment to solidarity with the suffering, amplifying his global moral voice.

Despite criticism from conservative factions for perceived ambiguity, Francis' legacy lies in his courage to confront modernity's challenges while grounding the Church in compassion. His focus on the marginalized, environmental ethics, and a merciful Church has reshaped Catholicism's role in the 21st century. By prioritizing action over doctrine, Pope Francis leaves a legacy of a Church that listens, heals, and advocates—a beacon of hope in a fractured world.



Habemus Papam!

LEO XIV

Pope Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois, has become a historic figure as the first American-born and the first Augustinian to be elected as pope, marking a new chapter for the Catholic Church. His parents, Louis Marius Prevost (of French and Italian descent) and Mildred Martínez (of Spanish descent), raised him in a devout Catholic environment alongside his two brothers.

Prevost's early life was shaped by his education in Catholic institutions. He attended his neighbourhood parish school in Chicago and later enrolled at St. Augustine Seminary High School in Holland, Michigan, a preparatory school run by the Augustinian Friars. After graduating, he continued his studies at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, earning a degree in mathematics and studying philosophy in 1977. That same year, he entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine and made his first profession in 1978, followed by solemn vows in 1981. He then pursued theological studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and was ordained a priest in Rome in 1982.

Pope Leo XIV's missionary spirit led him to Peru in the mid-1980s, where he immersed himself in the challenges faced by local communities. His work in Chiclayo, a city in northern Peru, became a defining chapter of his ministry. Arriving as a missionary in the early 2000s, he spent over two decades serving the people of Chiclayo, providing spiritual guidance, and addressing social issues such as migration and poverty. His dedication was recognized when Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Chiclayo in 2014, a position he held until 2023.

Prevost's leadership within the Augustinian order was also notable; he served as head of the order for two consecutive terms, further solidifying his reputation for humility, prudence, and warmth. In 2023, he was elevated to cardinal, and on May 8, 2025, he was elected as the 267th pope, taking the name Leo XIV.

In his first address from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo XIV emphasized peace and unity, delivering his message in Italian, Spanish, and Latin. He expressed gratitude to his Peruvian diocese and paid tribute to his predecessor, Pope Francis. Known for his commitment to the environment and outreach to migrants and the poor, Pope Leo XIV's leadership is expected to continue the pastoral and inclusive priorities set by Pope Francis while bringing his unique Augustinian perspective to the global Church.

Before Election, as a Cardinal he was member of:

Dicastery for Clergy, Evangelization, Doctrine of the Faith, Eastern Churches, Institutes of Consecrated Life, Culture and Education, Legislative Texts, and Commission for the Governance (Governatorato) of the Vatican City State.



The 12th Theological Symposium at Don Bosco Utume

150th Anniversary of Don Bosco's first missionary expedition

The 12th Theological Symposium convened on April 14th and 15th, 2025, at Don Bosco Utume, drawing together Salesians, members of the Salesian Family, representatives from various congregations, and lay participants. The gathering marked the 150th anniversary of Don Bosco's inaugural missionary expedition, a milestone celebrated as both a tribute to the past and a call to renewed missionary zeal.

Day One: Reflecting on Missionary Identity and Legacy

The symposium opened with welcoming remarks from Fr. Abel Njeru, Rector of Utume Theologate, who commended the strong turnout and set a tone of gratitude and reflection.

Rev. Dr. George Kocholickal (PMS) delivered the first keynote, urging attendees to reimagine Christian witness in a world increasingly marked by indifference. He emphasized that authentic witness is the work of the Holy Spirit and outlined the fundamental stages of discipleship: calling, leaving, following, and staying. These, he argued, are both the conditions and the ongoing vocation of every disciple.

Fr. Innocent Maganya followed,

focusing on the urgency and relevance of missionary activity in contemporary Africa. He stressed the importance of fostering a missionary spirit, particularly in regions most in need, and encouraged participants to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit, drawing inspiration from the original fervor of Don Bosco's first missionaries.

The day concluded with Rev. Dr. Alex Mulongo (SDB), who called for gratitude as the Salesian community commemorates its missionary heritage. He advocated for a renewed commitment to missionary work, urging Salesians to honor the past while embracing present challenges with determination and hope.

Day Two: Pilgrims of Hope and the Ongoing Mission

The second day began with prayers and opening remarks from Rev. Fr. Jose Padinjarepampil SDB, who linked the anniversary celebration to the Church's Jubilee Year, framing participants as "Pilgrims of Hope."

Dr. Sr. Mary Ngina (FMA) drew from the Pope's message, challenging attendees to become instruments of hope amid widespread despair. She highlighted



the importance of embodying hope in today's world.

Fr. John Korir (MCCJ) spoke on living as missionary disciples, both within one's immediate context (inter Gentes) and beyond (ad Gentes), sharing personal experiences from Egypt and encouraging all to be a light to the world.

Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil (SDB) reflected on "Project Africa" 45 years after its inception, recounting the challenges and successes of early missionaries in Eastern Africa. He called for renewed efforts to sustain and expand the missionary spirit both within Africa and globally.

Conclusion: Sustaining the Missionary Spirit

The symposium closed with remarks from Fr. David Nduati, Vice Provincial of AFE, who expressed gratitude to all participants and urged them to sustain the missionary spirit inherited from Don Bosco. Fr. Abel Njeru echoed these sentiments, and after a lively panel discussion, attendees were invited to conclude the event with a communal tea, symbolizing unity and shared purpose.



Do you think you're the only one dealing with tough challenges? Believe me, I've been there. While balancing my leadership role at school with spiritual duties and academic goals, I truly understand what you're going through. At Kenya's Naivasha Girls High School, I knew excelling academically was crucial for my future. I prioritized my studies but also joined the netball team, which revealed my leadership potential to my teachers.

By my third year, I was school captain, a club leader, an athlete, and active in the Catholic society. Managing these roles while keeping my grades up was tough. My only support came from my faith in God. Although I formed closer connections with staff, my academic performance started slipping as commitments piled up. Despite guidance from my teachers and support from my family, I struggled.

It was disheartening to see friends thriving while I felt unnoticed. I often fought back tears, relying solely on my faith. One day, my younger brother found me crying, and his words of encouragement reignited my hope. I resolved to turn my struggles into a testimony.

Fast forward to my fourth year: the challenges persisted. My faith remained, even during moments of doubt, as I continuously sought new strategies to reclaim my academic success. I can now testify true to my faith that I did get a good final Grade. All the struggle was never in vain. You keep doing you. God is watching He will bless at His right time.

Emeriziana Furaha Njeri
Don Bosco Boys Town

LEO XIV

