

Fraternal and Prophetic Communities



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EDITORIAL

A Community that Becomes a Message



Every edition of the Salesian Bulletin tells stories. This edition of the bulletin, with its theme “fraternal and prophetic communal life,” reveals what lies behind every story. This reminds us that the Salesian mission is not primarily about buildings, programs, or events; it is about people whose lives are transformed through faith, education, fraternity, and hope.

We are invited to reflect on a fundamental question: What message does our life communicate? The answer is found not only in our words but also in the way we live, serve, and accompany young people.

The opening reflection of the Rector Major on Blind Bartimaeus challenges us to recover our spiritual vision: Like Bartimaeus, we are called to recognize our need for God's light so that we may become authentic disciples who see beyond appearances and respond generously to the cries of those on the margins.

This edition also takes us through the remarkable history of Salesian missionary presence in Eastern Africa. From the first missionaries who arrived with courage and hope to today's vibrant communities serving in Kenya and South Sudan, we witness a living testimony that God's providence continues to guide the Salesian Family. The inspiring journey of missionaries such as Fr. Edward Liptak remind us that vocation is never a coincidence but a response to God's loving call.

The article on Salesian symbols helps us look deeply at some of the symbols we see every day and to understand them not just as pieces of art, but to feel the emotions they evoke in us. In this issue, we encounter communities striving to become prophetic signs of the gospel.

Whether through safeguarding children, empowering street-connected youth, promoting technical education, strengthening social communication, supporting sustainable agriculture, or accompanying vulnerable families, the Salesian mission continues to creatively respond to the changing needs of society. Every initiative echoes Don Bosco's conviction that young people deserve not only education but also love, dignity, and hope.

A recurring theme in this bulletin is the importance of community. General Chapter 29 reminds us that our communities must become a message. In a fragmented world marked by loneliness, conflict, and uncertainty, joyful fraternity, mutual respect, and a shared mission become powerful forms of evangelization. Our communion is a proclamation of the Gospel.

The AfriConnect gathering reminds us that communication is far more than technology or media; it is a ministry of building communion, telling stories of hope, and giving voice to the gospel in today's digital world. Authentic communication begins with listening, grows through dialogue, and bears fruit in relationships that are rooted in truth and charity.

The stories gathered here invite us all to renew our commitment to becoming instruments of hope wherever God has placed us. May we continue the dream of Don Bosco: creating homes that welcome, schools that educate, parishes that evangelize, and playgrounds where young people discover joy, purpose, and the enduring love of God!

Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil

Focusing our “Vision”

A reflection on Mk. 10:46-52 – Blind Bartimaeus

The Message of Rector Major Don Fabio Attard

The account of the healing of Bartimaeus the man blind from birth is not merely the chronicle of a miracle, but a veritable parable in action regarding the condition of the disciple. This encounter between Jesus and Bartimaeus is the final episode before His messianic entry into Jerusalem, serving as the hinge between Jesus’s ministry and His Passion and Resurrection.

Bartimaeus the blind man who, once healed, sees and follows stands in luminous contrast to the disciples, who, despite having physical sight, have not yet understood. It is against this backdrop of contrasts that I would like to offer three brief reflections.

1. Jesus takes the initiative

Even before the blind man cries out, Jesus is already “leaving” Jericho (v. 46). The poor blind man’s cry changes everything: Jesus readies Himself and draws near to him “then Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him!’” (v. 49). Divine initiative directs its own movement to make itself present to those who cry out from the side of the road.

This is a constant feature of God’s pedagogy: when we “cry out,” we realize that He has already found us. This is the first gift, perhaps the greatest one we can receive. Within our journey of faith, the “blindness” we carry in its various forms is not a condemnation; rather, it is like a wound that can be healed. When we bring it to Jesus, His action not only heals the afflicted person but also transforms the way those who are near him see. Whether we ourselves are “blind” or are close to those who are, it is always Jesus’ presence that makes a difference. He reveals to everyone his or her own “blindness” and the indifference that often lies hidden.



Jesus changes each of us: He restores sight, awakens empathy, and invites us to acknowledge that, in some way, we all need “light”!

2. The humility to recognize our own blindness and our willingness to be healed

This first step comes when we are honest with ourselves. Bartimaeus cannot see, yet he has a voice. Even when he is told to be quiet, he cries out all the louder; his persistence is not arrogance, but the form that humility takes when it is authentic. For humility does not fall silent in the face of others’ indifference; it recognizes its own need and is not ashamed to name it: “Son of David, have mercy on me!” (v. 48).

Two truths exist in this cry: the first is a confession of faith in the person of Christ, voiced by someone who does not see with physical eyes yet clearly “sees” the One before him. The second is the unashamed acknowledgment of his own wretchedness, for he knows he stands in the presence of the Son of God.



Upon being called, Bartimaeus casts aside his cloakthe only possession he had. Nothing must hold him back now he is called. This is a powerful image for us today: true healing, which leads to authentic light, requires letting go of the things we cling to for securityor perhaps even out of fear.

Thus, the question Jesus asks Bartimaeus is the same question He asks each of us today: "What do you want Me to do for you?" (v. 51)

Bartimaeus asks for the one thing that is lacking: he asks to "see." True humility is the ability to give a precise name to one's own poverty before God, without substituting it with desires for power or superficial gratification.

3. The hardheadedness to remain blind before a wider vision

A thought regarding the crowd that initially wanted to silence poor Bartimaeus: one is led to ask, who was truly "blind"and perhaps even "deaf"? The crowd, in its indifference, represents a form of "blindness" distinct from Bartimaeus' physical affliction: it is the blindness of those who see perfectly well but do not wish to be disturbed in their narrow view of things. It is the same blindness that persists today when we are faced with the poverty we do not want to "name," let alone encounter.

This is perhaps the most urgent lesson for us today: there are forms of blindness that can be healed, like that of Bartimaeus.

Yet there are other forms that stubbornly resist the light because God's light is always fuller, freer, and more unsettling than our categories are disposed to accept.

The healing God offers is infinite and free; it does not operate according to the logic of merit, social status, or who has the right to be heard. Precisely for this reason, the temptation to silence those who cry out from the margins the poor, the young person in crisis, those who challenge our established practices with uncomfortable questionsis always lurking, even within our own communities.

Recognizing this hardheadedness in ourselves is not a cause for discouragement, but the beginning of a new and liberating journey. May Bartimaeus' boldness be a gift to us; may his cry find a home in our heartsnot just once, but as the enduring cry of those who know their vision always needs to be brought back into focus by grace. Only then, like Bartimaeus, will we truly be able to "follow Jesus along the road" (v. 52): true and authentic disciplesno longer merely healed spectators, but followers who have learned to see what truly matters.



Salesian Province of Eastern Africa(AFE)

From 1864 onwards, Don Bosco was in correspondence with St Daniel Comboni (1831-1881), a passionate missionary in Africa, and Archbishop Charles Lavigerie (1825-1892), the great apostle of Algeria, concerning possible Salesian initiatives in Africa. To them, he promised, "My sons will go to Africa." The first foundation on the African continent was established in 1891, three years after Don Bosco's death, when a group of French Salesians arrived in Algeria. Slowly, other countries (such as DRC, South Africa, Egypt, and other North African countries) began to see Salesian presences.

However, only during the 21st General Chapter (1977-78) did the Salesians decide to begin large-scale missions in the African continent, through what was termed

'Project Africa'. As part of this initiative, the Salesians arrived in Kenya on 10th January 1980, in the person of Fr Dario Superina from Italy, who took over the mission in Siakago.

A few months later, on 6th October 1980, three Salesians from India started the mission in Korr, in the present Marsabit county in Kenya.

Meanwhile, 15 Salesians arrived in Tanzania on 13th October 1980 to start three communities in Mafinga, Iringa, and Dodoma. These communities would only get formally established in the subsequent years. And in January 1981, three other Salesians, also from India, started a mission in Maridi, the then Sudan; within a year, the Salesians had to withdraw from this mission.



The First missionary expedition in Eastern Africa

In the following years, other works started in Kenya: Don Bosco Upperhill, Nairobi (October 1981), Embu (March 1983), Don Bosco Boys Town, Nairobi (1984), Don Bosco Utume, Nairobi (August 1987), Makuyu (January 1989), Nzaikoni (1991), Bosco Boys (1995), and Kakuma (1992/1998), DBYES, Karen (2000), Kitale (2023), and Meru (2024).

In the Sudan and later in South Sudan, the Salesian works have been marked by a varying tide of challenges and opportunities. After the exit from Maridi, works started in Juba and Tonj in 1983; however, these two presences had to be closed in 1986 due to the civil war. With this, attention shifted to Khartoum, also to cater to the people who had moved from the south. By 1989, we had two communities in Khartoum – St Joseph Tech and the Kalakala parish.

The works in Wau were formally started in 1987; it is the only community that has existed consistently until now. Later, work began in El Obeid (January 2002), now in the Republic of Sudan. In South Sudan, following the peace agreement, four communities were (re)opened, in addition to Wau, which had now become part of South Sudan: Tonj (2000), Juba (2006), Maridi (2010), and Kuajok (2019).

Initially, the communities under the care of the Salesians from India were part of the Salesian province of Bombay, even though the Salesians had come from various provinces; those from Italy belonged to the Italian Central Province (ICP). In 1982, the Delegation of Eastern Africa was created, subject to the Province of Bombay, with Fr. Tony D'Souza as the Delegate. Eventually, in 1994, Eastern Africa was established as a province comprising all communities in Kenya (including those run by the Italian Salesians), the Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda (where the Salesians from Poland had begun the mission). By 2006, Uganda joined with Rwanda and Burundi to form another circumscription (AGL – Great Lakes Province). Meanwhile, South Sudan had become a sovereign state.



Eventually, in 2023, Tanzania became a province of its own. Currently (2024), the Salesian province of Eastern Africa (AFE) consists of the communities and Salesians ministering in Kenya, and the Delegation of South Sudan and the Sudan.

Currently, there are over 150 Salesians ministering in the province. The three AFE countries present a wide variety of socio-cultural-economic landscapes, generating a myriad of educational and pastoral needs. While Kenya is generally a peaceful and fast-developing country, the Sudan has been marred by a civil war since April 2023, and hence, the three communities in the Sudan have been suspended. South Sudan, the newest country in Africa, has not yet settled into a sovereign state with proper political and legal processes, while the Salesians are able to be present and run the five institutions amid an uncertain calm.

Across the three countries, the Salesian works provide a variety of services: street boys projects in Nairobi and Kuajok, very elaborate work for the refugees and the host community in Kakuma with two parishes and eight TVET centres, the work for the Internally Displaced People (IDP) in Juba, a media centre in Nairobi and a radio in Tonj, 11 parishes in Kenya and South Sudan, 7 technical training units, and other academic schools – primary and secondary; in Nairobi we also have the Institute of Youth Studies at the tertiary level.

The Wolf Tamed!

Reflection on Salesian Symbols



Sahaya G. Selvam SBD

Every authentic spiritual tradition treasures its symbols. They are not decorations for the eyes but windows into reality. They invite us to linger, to contemplate, and eventually to become what we behold.

Symbols capture the mystery of human life that revolves around an inward journey towards the self, an upward journey towards God, and an outward journey to others and the rest of creation.

From a psychological perspective, symbols evoke cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. We perceive them and make sense of them; they move us emotionally; and they invite us to respond behaviorally.

In this series of reflections, Rev. Dr. Sahaya Selvam, a Salesian, presents some Salesian symbols that linger in his heart. These symbols include artifacts, paintings, and locations that highlight Salesian history, spirituality, and charismatic identity. They trigger deep thoughts, evoke feelings, and call out for a response in the form of authentic choices in the lives of every Salesian. These reflections are a personal journey; they might also invite the reader to join him in this journey.

In 2025, as the renovation of the Salesian Generalate at Sacra Cuore, near Termini station in Rome, neared completion, Silvia Allocco was commissioned to do the artistic work for the Salesian chapel and the chapel attached to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Silvia Allocco grew up at the Salesian Oratory at Bra, Cuneo, and is hence very familiar with Don Bosco and the Salesian identity and mission.

The symbol we are reflecting on here would seem very familiar to us, not the image itself, but the background to it. Yet, this painting has a twist to that familiar story. That paradox provokes our thoughts and evokes our emotions.

Young John Bosco's dream, at the age of nine, began amid conflict. The youth were in disarray, and Johnny himself was not in control of himself. He says, "Some were laughing, some were playing games, and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words, I jumped immediately amongst them and tried to stop them by using my words and my fists."

Then he hears the voice of the Shepherd, "Not by blows but by gentleness and love." Johnny's obvious response was, "Who are you, ordering me to do the impossible?" He

is entrusted to the care of the mother of the Lord.

And when he showed him the field where the boys had been fighting, Johnny saw that many goats, dogs, cats, wolves, and other animals had taken their place.

He was told, "This is the field of your work. Make yourself humble, strong, and energetic. And what you will see happening to these animals in a moment is what you must do for my children.

"I looked round again, and where before I had seen wild animals, I now saw gentle lambs."

Yes, he had to become humble, strong, and energetic. He had to tame his own wolves - his impetuosity for action and even violence, before he could turn the wolves in the field out there into lambs.

And he did it. He embraces the wolf in gentleness and love - the wolf within and outside him. In the image by Silvia Allocco, the young John Bosco encounters the wolf with gentleness and affection. Their foreheads listen to each other, as John is lost in contemplation. His right hand sinks into the wolf's fur. And the animal looks at him gently, rather surprised by the young man's courage and gentleness. Then there



is the divine hand on the wolf that enables John to befriend the wolf. And the words, “Benedico... Benedico...” boom out! I bless... I bless. It is not clear who is blessing whom! In the triad of affection, there is a deep expression of goodness – blessing!

Cultural and religious traditions are awash with narratives of wolves and dragons. From China to Scotland, from the Aboriginal peoples of Australia to the Inuit of the Arctic, every culture seems to have imagined creatures that embody the untamed forces of the self.

Sometimes they appear as fearsome beasts to be conquered; at other times, they guard hidden wisdom or sacred treasure. Whether wolf, dragon, serpent, or monster, they stand in the liminal space between the self and the mission in the world. Once befriended, the hero can ride it.

Against this cultural background, Allocco’s portrayal embodies the Salesian presence of blessing rather than condemnation, contemplation rather than control, and inner freedom over fear.

Incidentally, this image stands not far

from where the older Don Bosco shed tears on 16 May 1887 while celebrating Mass. At that moment, he understood in a single flash the meaning of his entire life. The words spoken by the Lady in his dream at the age of nine came flooding back: “In good time you will understand everything!”

Perhaps, at that altar of tears, the dream had finally come full circle. The wolves had become lambs, and some lambs had even become shepherds!



When An Embrace Sparks Controversy: What The Photo Of Pope Leo XIV And A Young Woman Reveals About Our Judgments, Our Wounds, And The Gospel

Courtesy: Duchess Audrey, Vatican News | 06/10/2026



On June 8, 2026, during a massive prayer vigil that drew tens of thousands of young people to the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Catalonia, a photograph quickly spread across Catholic social media. This happened during the Papal visit to Spain.

Two days later, as we write on June 10, 2026, the debate continues. The image shows a young woman wrapping her arms around Pope Leo XIV. A spontaneous gesture filled with emotion, welcomed by the Holy Father with an attentive gaze and a smile marked by kindness.

For some faithful Catholics, the scene is beautiful. For others, it is considered inappropriate, overly familiar, or even disrespectful toward the Successor of Saint Peter.

Yet before judging an image, it is often necessary to understand the story it tells.

And above all, it must be viewed through the light of the Gospel.

A photo approved by the Vatican is not a communication mistake.

Let us begin with a simple fact. This photograph was neither taken without

the Vatican's knowledge nor published by a sensationalist blog seeking controversy. It was distributed by Vatican Media and shared by Vatican News, the Holy See's official communication outlets.

The Dicastery for Communication is not an amateur organization. It brings together information professionals, journalists, photographers, and experts in institutional and ecclesial communication whose mission is precisely to faithfully convey the Holy Fathers's image and message. To believe that an inappropriate photograph would have been deliberately selected from among hundreds of images demonstrates a misunderstanding of how Vatican communications function.

This image was not published despite its message. It was published because of its message. And that message is infinitely deeper than what some hurried observers believed they saw.

WHO IS THIS YOUNG WOMAN?

During the major prayer vigil held in Barcelona on June 8, 2026, several young people were invited to share with Pope Leo XIV the wounds, questions, and struggles that had shaped their life journeys. Among them was a young woman named Desiré. Her testimony deeply moved the assembly. Marked by a childhood scarred by domestic violence, she recounted witnessing her Fr. attempt to kill her mother.

A wound that, years later, continues to challenge both her heart and her faith. Standing before the Holy Fr., she asked a question that resonates with countless people carrying deep emotional wounds: How can one forgive after witnessing such devastating evil?

Pope Leo XIV's response was one of the most powerful moments of the evening.

With great tenderness, he reminded those present that God is never the author of evil and that some wounds require time, patience, and a genuine journey of inner healing. The Holy Fr. explained that forgiveness is not primarily a feeling but a path:

"Forgiveness is a powerful remedy against evil." He also emphasized that reconciliation with one's past rarely happens instantly: "We move forward in small steps. Healing and forgiveness are often a process." In other words, forgiveness does not mean denying the suffering, forgetting the wounds, or justifying the unjustifiable. Rather, it means gradually allowing God to free us from what evil has left within us so that it no longer governs our lives.

In light of this story, the photograph takes on a new depth. What some perceived as an inappropriate gesture appears instead as the spontaneous expression of a young woman profoundly moved by words that touched one of the deepest wounds of her existence. And in such a situation, what would Christ have done? The Gospel shows us that He never pushed away those who came to Him with their wounds, their tears, or their hope. He looked first at their hearts.

The Successor of Peter seemed to do the same.

MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, ANOTHER WOMAN HAD ALREADY SHOCKED THE RESPECTABLE CROWD

The Gospel according to Saint Luke (Luke 7:36-50) recounts a famous scene. While Jesus is dining at the house of Simon the Pharisee, a woman known in the city as a sinner enters. She throws herself at the Lord's feet. She weeps. Her tears wet the feet of Jesus. She wipes them with her hair. Then she kisses them and anoints them with perfume. The reaction of those present is immediate. People murmur. They judge. They suspect. "If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is..." In other words: How can He allow her to do this? More than two thousand years later, the question is remarkably similar:

How can the Pope allow this young woman to embrace him? In both cases, some people focus on the gesture. Christ, however, looks at the heart. In both cases, some see a violation.

God sees a story. In both cases, some analyze appearances. The Lord contemplates suffering, gratitude, and hope.

THE POPE'S SMILE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN A THOUSAND COMMENTS

Let us look carefully at this image. There is no sign of discomfort. No tension. No embarrassment. No attempt to push the young woman away. Instead, there is a gaze. A direct gaze. Peaceful. Benevolent. A discreet smile.



The Pope's face does not express uneasiness. It expresses attentiveness. This photograph looks far more like a silent blessing than a simple embrace. A woman who has come back from the edge. A shepherd who welcomes her. Suffering meeting hope. A life that nearly ended, rediscovering its meaning. Through this image, one can almost physically understand the Gospel expression: "I was lost and have been found."

A WORD OF CAUTION: AN EXCEPTION DOES NOT BECOME THE RULE

Should we therefore conclude that anyone can now approach the Pope and touch him however they wish? Certainly not. The Catholic Church is a Church of communion, but also of order.

For centuries, encounters with the Holy Father have followed established protocols designed to protect his person, ensure everyone's safety, and preserve the dignity of the Petrine office. Traditionally, the faithful greet the Pope respectfully, through a handshake when offered, a bow of the head, or a brief exchange according to the circumstances. More spontaneous gestures occasionally occur, especially during encounters marked by strong emotion. Yet they remain exceptions. A pastoral exception never becomes a universal norm.

The mistake would therefore be twofold: To condemn this young woman outright. Or to imitate her gesture without considering the context. Christian wisdom consists precisely in distinguishing the general rule from the exceptional circumstance.

THE DANGER OF SEEING EVIL EVERYWHERE

This story reveals something deeper. We live in an age marked by suspicion. Real scandals have unfortunately wounded the trust of many believers. Such pain is understandable. Yet an unhealed wound can sometimes distort our perception. Eventually, we begin to see evil everywhere.

We suspect before understanding. We accuse before listening. We interpret before knowing. How many priests are viewed suspiciously simply for speaking with a woman?

How many religious sisters are judged because they maintain normal friendships with families? How many people are condemned because of a photograph taken out of context? Christians are called to discernment. But discernment is not suspicion. Discernment means seeking the truth before rendering judgment.

WHAT PSYCHOTHERAPISTS CALL "RELATIONAL HEALING"

Mental health professionals understand that a person who has endured severe depression or survived a suicide attempt often needs to rediscover trustworthy human relationships. A welcoming gaze. A word of hope. A presence that does not judge.

Such experiences can become important milestones in the process of inner reconstruction. This is precisely what the Pope sought to emphasize when he reminded young people that certain burdens cannot be carried alone.

Inner healing is not a magical event. It is a journey. A journey in which God often works through human instruments: a psychologist, a spiritual director, a faithful friend, a competent therapist, an attentive priest, or sometimes a life-changing encounter that restores the desire to live.

THE POPE'S MESSAGE: HOPE IS STRONGER THAN THE NIGHT

In Barcelona, Pope Leo XIV reminded those present that we are "We are created for eternity". and that the darkest nights of our lives can become places of rebirth. This conviction runs throughout the entire Christian tradition. No wound has the final word. No fall is definitive.

Listening to the Holy Father speak about suffering, healing, forgiveness, and hope, many had the impression that he was

echoing the themes developed in the book:

"Lifted By Love: When Divine Love Turns Our Wounds Into Strength".

We particularly recommend this book to those facing trials, to spiritual companions, and to anyone seeking to understand how God can bring light forth from humanity's deepest wounds.

WHAT THIS PHOTO REALLY TEACHES US

At its core, this image is not about an embrace. It is about our way of seeing. It confronts us with an uncomfortable question: When we witness something

we do not fully understand, do we choose suspicion first, or charity? The Pharisees chose suspicion. Jesus chose mercy.

Even today, some people look at this photograph and see only a gesture. Others see a young woman rescued from despair. A Pope who listens. Hope restored. And perhaps a quiet lesson from the Gospel. Sometimes the greatest mistake is not getting too close to Christ. The greatest mistake is remaining so far away that we never understand what is happening in the hearts of those whom He welcomes. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

WITH GOD, THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES

The Missionary Journey of Fr. Edward Liptak, SDB



Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil, SDB

This is the inspiring story of a Salesian priest, Fr. Edward Liptak, whose vocation was shaped by faith, family, and God's providence. From his humble childhood in a Slovak immigrant family in New Jersey to more than six decades of priestly ministry, including many years of missionary service and formation work in East Africa, he reflects on the people, experiences, and moments that guided his journey. His story is a testament to faithful service, lifelong dedication, and the conviction that, with God, there are no coincidental.

Describe your Early Childhood Life

My parents emigrated from Slovakia. My father worked as a bread salesman, and I often accompanied him. My mother shared his humble values. Our family included four boys; three of us helped my father, while the fourth served in the military during World War II and thankfully returned safely. At the time, we lived in a house that was still under construction.

All four of my grandparents came from the eastern part of Slovakia, now the Slovak Republic. Although we were of Slovak background, I attended Holy Name Parish in Passaic, New Jersey, which was of German origin. Passaic had

several international parishes, including Slovak, Italian, Polish, and Hungarian. We belonged to Holy Name, known for its active Holy Name Society.

How did your journey to the vocation of priesthood begin?

I was born to first-generation Americans, and my father ensured we grew up as Americans. We lived about 20 miles from Newton, New Jersey, a center of the Salesians of Don Bosco and also home to a Benedictine missionary congregation. Since our parish was part of the mission area in northern New Jersey, Benedictines often came to celebrate Mass.



It was there that I became close to our parish priest, Fr. John Euston, who inspired my admiration for the priesthood. My father's sister, Bertha, often encouraged me to become a priest. I still remember one day at our kitchen table when she asked again, "Eddie, why don't you become a priest?" Frustrated, I slammed the cabinet door and replied, "I am not going to become a priest!" Middle Europeans are known to be stubborn. So, I was a very stubborn 16-year-old.

One of the Salesian priests, Fr. Felix Penna, regularly visited our family. His lively and friendly personality impressed me, while the Benedictine missionary who visited was much quieter. When the time came to make a decision, I sought advice from Fr. John Euston. He simply said, "Go to Newton, make a retreat, and think about becoming a priest." That summer, I attended the retreat.

What was your decision after the retreat?

After the retreat, I became certain that if I became anything, it would be a priest who was also a teacher. For me, that meant becoming a Salesian of Don Bosco.

When I shared my decision with my father, he encouraged me with words I have never forgotten: "The Benedictines have a great past, but the Salesians have a

great future." Those words, spoken around 1948, strengthened my resolve. I suppose I inherited some of my father's ambition. He sold bread, and eventually I also became a salesman, but instead of bread, I came to "sell" what I call the "Wonder Bread," the Holy Eucharist, even to this day.

Describe your journey into the Salesian congregation.

Joining the Salesians came naturally after the retreat. At the end of it, I made my confession to Fr. Joseph Casselli, a respected Salesian from the Eastern Province of the United States. When I asked him, "Do you think I can become a priest?" he simply replied, "Why not?"

Back home, my father repeated his conviction: "Go to the Salesians, because the Salesians have a future. The older orders have a great past, but the Salesians have a great future." My mother was delighted because she had always prayed that one of her sons would become a priest, and it turned out to be me. Today, after celebrating my 90th birthday and more than sixty-one years of priesthood, I serve at Corpus Christi Parish in San Francisco alongside Fr. Al Pestun. We were ordained together on June 13, 1959, at Mary Help of Christians Church in Watsonville after completing our theological studies in Aptos. We now continue our priestly journey together, hopefully without another transfer.

"Go to the Salesians they have a great future."

Tell us about your formation.

My aspirantate took place during my fourth year of high school in West Haverstraw, New York, at a Salesian center that remains a pilgrimage site dedicated to Our Lady, Help of Christians. Its magnificent statue overlooking the Hudson River Valley continues to inspire devotion and peace.

After one year there, I studied Latin before entering the novitiate in Newton,

New Jersey, close enough for my parents to visit regularly. I later completed my Philosophy and Theology studies in the same community. Many people in this province know my parents because when I was a Theology student, my mom became our cook, and my father was the caretaker.

"From selling bread to sharing the "Wonder Bread" of the Holy Eucharist."

How was this transition period for your family?

My connection with the Salesians began shortly after the Second World War. I remember my elder brother returning safely from military service, while my father, who knew the Church well and enjoyed defending it, strongly encouraged my vocation.

My younger brothers, Bill and Jim, were twins. Sadly, Jim died of leukemia. His death deeply affected our family. My father blamed himself, believing he had not been religious enough. Jim had always wanted to become a priest, while I had once "slammed the door" on the very idea. I remembered that moment as I stood beside his dying bed.

Bill, the surviving twin, still feels the loss deeply. Today he is well known at Mary Help of Christians Parish in Watsonville, California, where he faithfully serves the parish community.

How were you Theology days?

I studied theology in Aptos, along Monterey Bay, for four years under outstanding teachers. One was an immigrant priest from Yugoslavia who had fled the war, and another was Fr. Arthur Lenti, renowned for his teachings on Don Bosco and Scripture. As the Church embraced a renewed focus on Sacred Scripture, I benefited greatly from their

guidance. Even today, I continue attending weekly Bible study every Tuesday evening.

During those years, I met Fr. Al Pestun, with whom I was ordained and continue serving today. Although we did not receive formal academic degrees, we were given excellent formation and strong pastoral training. I remain deeply grateful for those years and the foundation they provided.

How long have you served as a priest in this region, and where else have you worked?

After ordination, I was assigned to formation work within Salesian communities. I first served at a Salesian high school and later at Don Bosco Technical School in Paterson, New Jersey, where candidate Brothers were being formed. I was then assigned to Don Bosco College in Newton, New Jersey, where I worked with philosophy students and served as director for six years before leaving for the African mission.

In East Africa, I served in several formation roles. I was first assigned to Mafinga, Tanzania, where I helped establish the junior seminary while serving in parish outstations. Later, I became novice director in Moshi, then director of theology students in Karen-Nairobi. I also helped establish the post-novitiate formation programme for Salesian Brothers.

How did your vocation to the African mission come about?

My vocation to the African mission began while I was serving as director at Don Bosco College in Newton and was elected



to attend the 21st General Chapter, which marked the beginning of Salesian work in East Africa.

At the end of the Chapter, we were reminded of Pope Paul VI's appeal after his visit to Uganda, encouraging missionary congregations to foster vocations in Africa. The Chapter approved "Project Africa," and, nearing the end of my six-year term in the United States, I volunteered for the East African mission. I requested an English-speaking country and formation work. Although I was initially assigned to Nairobi, I was first sent to Mafinga, Tanzania, before eventually moving to Nairobi in 1989.

Tell me more

Looking back, my great-grandparent, Liptak, helped build Our Lady of the Assumption Church. My parents were married there, many of my family members were buried there, and my younger brother married there shortly before his daughter, Laura, was born on the Feast of the Assumption. These events strengthened my conviction that Our Lady of the Assumption had guided my missionary vocation, especially since I left for Africa on the Feast of the Assumption.

After a short stay in Rome, I traveled to Dar es Salaam and then to Mafinga, where I learned Kiswahili. Fr. Peter Matthew, a missionary from India, sent me to a former parish centre at Makalala. While celebrating Mass there, I noticed both an image and a statue of Our Lady of the Assumption. When I later asked Fr. Peter about them, he



smiled and said, "Didn't you know? This is Our Lady of the Assumption Parish."

I often say—and truly believe—that with God, there are no coincidences.

**"With God, there are
no coincidences, only
providence."**

How long did you serve in the African mission, and what roles did you hold?

I spent my first seven years in Tanzania helping establish the junior seminary while serving the parish outstations. My missionary vocation allowed me to dedicate myself to formation throughout my ministry.

I am grateful to have served in every stage of Salesian formation. I was involved in the Junior Seminary at Mafinga, Philosophy in Newton, novice formation in Moshi, theology formation in Nairobi and Karen, and later established the additional years of formation for Salesian Brothers. Earlier in my priesthood, I had also served as a catechist for Salesian Brothers in Paterson, New Jersey. Pardon me for being boastful, as even St. Paul allowed himself such a moment. Looking back at the age of ninety, I remain deeply grateful to have been entrusted with every stage of formation within the Salesians of Don Bosco.



The Beauty and Challenges of the Salesian Missionary Vocation: Leaving Everything to Bring Hope to the Young



Eric Owuor

Every vocation is a story of love. It begins with God taking the initiative, calling a person by name, and inviting him to leave behind the familiar in order to become a witness of His love. Among the many paths in the Church, the Salesian missionary vocation is one of extraordinary beauty. A life that combines the joy of following Christ with the privilege of walking alongside young people, especially those who are poor, abandoned, and searching for hope.

Inspired by the passion and vision of St. John Bosco, Salesian missionaries are sent wherever the needs of the young are greatest. They cross borders not as strangers but as brothers, educators, pastors, and friends. Their mission is not simply to build schools or parishes, but to build lives. They become signs of God's loving presence, reminding every young person that they are valued, capable, and deeply loved.

In Eastern Africa, this vocation finds fertile ground. The region is blessed with vibrant cultures, deep religious faith, and an overwhelmingly youthful population. Everywhere one looks, there is energy, creativity, and a longing for a better future. Yet many young people also carry heavy burdens. Poverty, unemployment, broken families, displacement, addiction, and unequal access to education continue to rob countless children and youth of opportunities to flourish.

This is where the Salesian missionary becomes a messenger of hope. Whether in a technical training institute, an oratory filled with laughter, a parish, a refugee settlement, or a home for vulnerable



children, the Salesian's presence speaks before his words do. He listens before he teaches. He accompanies before he corrects. He believes in the young long before they learn to believe in themselves. Through education, evangelization, and simple daily acts of kindness, he helps them discover that God has not forgotten them and that their future is brighter than their past.

Yet every beautiful vocation carries a cross. The missionary journey is not always easy. It demands leaving behind family, language, culture, and personal comfort. It means learning to love unfamiliar traditions, adapting to different ways of life, and finding joy even when everything feels new and uncertain. Missionaries often serve in remote communities where resources are scarce, infrastructure is limited, and the needs are overwhelming.

There are also quieter challenges the

loneliness that sometimes accompanies life far from home, the emotional weight of witnessing the suffering of children, and the patience required when change comes slowly. There are moments when plans fail, projects stall, or hopes seem delayed. Like every disciple of Christ, the missionary discovers that the path of love is also the path of sacrifice.

But these challenges do not diminish the beauty of the vocation. They reveal it.

True missionary joy is not born from comfort but from commitment. It is found in seeing a child smile again after experiencing rejection, a young person acquire skills that lead to meaningful employment, a family rediscover faith, or a former student return years later to say, "Because someone believed in me, I found the courage to believe in myself." These moments become the missionary's greatest reward.

The Salesian missionary vocation is sustained by a deep relationship with Christ. Daily prayer, the Eucharist, community life, and devotion to Mary Help of Christians provide the strength to continue even when the road is difficult. Like Don Bosco, Salesians trust that God is always at work, often in ways that cannot immediately be seen. Every act of kindness, every lesson taught, every encouraging word, and every silent prayer sows seeds that will bear fruit in God's time.

Our world needs this witness now more than ever. At a time when many young people are searching for meaning, authentic relationships, and reasons to hope, the Salesian missionary offers not only practical help but also the reassuring presence of someone who chooses to stay, to listen, and to love without expecting anything in return.

The beauty of the Salesian missionary vocation is measured by lives touched, dreams awakened, and hearts brought closer to Christ. It is the quiet beauty of giving oneself completely, trusting that every sacrifice made for the young becomes a seed of God's Kingdom.

Don Bosco once said, "It is enough that you are young for me to love you." Those words continue to inspire Salesian missionaries across the world. They remind us that the greatest mission is not simply to go somewhere new, but to become a living sign of God's love wherever He sends us.

For those who hear the Lord's call, the missionary vocation remains a daring adventure of faith. It is a journey marked by sacrifice, sustained by grace, and crowned with the joy of seeing young people discover life, hope, and Christ. Indeed, there is no greater privilege than to spend one's life helping the young realize that they are God's beloved children and that their dreams, too, can become part of His dream for the world.



AfriConnect 2026

Salesian Communicators Strengthen Identity and Mission



Fr. Sebastian Koladiyil, SBD



The Salesian Provincial House in Upper Hill, Nairobi, hosted AfriConnect 2026, the Regional Social Communication Meeting, from 1st to 3rd May 2026. The gathering brought together delegates from across Africa for a significant moment of reflection, fraternity, and collaborative mission.

Provincial delegates from different African provinces participated in the meeting, sharing experiences and reinforcing the network

of Salesian social communication across the continent. The event fostered a spirit of communion and cooperation among participants committed to advancing the Salesian communication mission in Africa.

Among those in attendance were Fr Jacques Nagalo (AOS), Fr Oscar Medah (AON), Br Laurent Minani (AGL), Br Clarence Watts (AFM), Fr Philemon Chacha (TZA), Br Samuel Job (ANN), Fr Andrew Reut (ZMB), Fr Sebastian Koladiyil (AFE), Fr Guy Mulaisa (AFC), Fr Guy André Abena (ATE), and Dn Kibrom Hagos Awala (AET). They were joined by Fr Sathish Paul (RMG), who accompanied the General Councilor for Social Communication, Rev. Fr Fidel Maria Orendain, representing the Social Communication Sector.

Fr Fidel Maria Orendain facilitated the sessions and delivered presentations on key themes, including, Communication Is Our Identity: Remaining Salesian in a World of Many Voices, Reframing the Identity and Role of Social Communication, and Crisis Management and Communication: The Salesian Way. He also provided a detailed explanation of the responsibilities of the General Councilor for Social Communication and those of Provincial Delegates. Each delegate was given the opportunity to present the communication initiatives currently being implemented in their respective provinces, as well as their future and development priorities.

During the meeting, a half-day was set aside for visits to various Salesian communities in Nairobi. At Bosco Boys, Langata, a small media facility was inaugurated and blessed by the Counselor for Social Communication.

The meeting also featured an insightful presentation by Dr Nicholas Ochieng Oduor, a communication lecturer at Tangaza University, on the theme: Digital Evangelization as Communication Ministry: Opportunities and Ethical Challenges for the Church Today.

The gathering concluded with a series of resolutions inspired by the presentations and discussions. Overall, AfriConnect 2026 served as a call to renew the commitment to social communication and to rethink its role and mission within the congregation and across the provinces of Africa.

Bosco Boys Nairobi partners with the Government



Fr. GODFREY MALIETSO



Three representatives from Bosco Boys participated in a Capacity Building Workshop held in Naivasha, Kenya, from 8th to 12th June 2026. The workshop was organized by the Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund. The Bosco Boys delegation comprised Fr. Godfrey Malietsu SDB, Madam Susan Ngugi (social worker), and Mr. Stephen Robia (Social worker).

The workshop brought together practitioners and stakeholders working with vulnerable children and young people, providing a platform for learning, collaboration, and strengthening professional competencies in child welfare and social protection. Among the key topics covered during the five-day workshop were the Street Families Report 2025, its findings, recommendations, and

validation process. Participants engaged in discussions to review and validate the report, ensuring it accurately reflects the realities and challenges faced by children and families living on the streets.

Another major focus of the workshop was Case Management, in which participants explored best practices for assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating support services for vulnerable children and families.

On 10th June 2026, the Cabinet Secretary for Gender, Culture and Children Services, Hannah Wendot, officially launched the 2025 National Census for Street Families Report and the Street Families Information Management System (SFIMS). The census findings revealed that the number of street-connected persons in Kenya declined from 46,639 in 2018 to 18,048 in 2025.

The workshop concluded with renewed commitments from participants and organizations to apply the knowledge gained, strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, and continue advocating for the rights, protection, and well-being of street-connected children and vulnerable families across Kenya.



Safeguarding & Protection For Salesians



John Njuguna

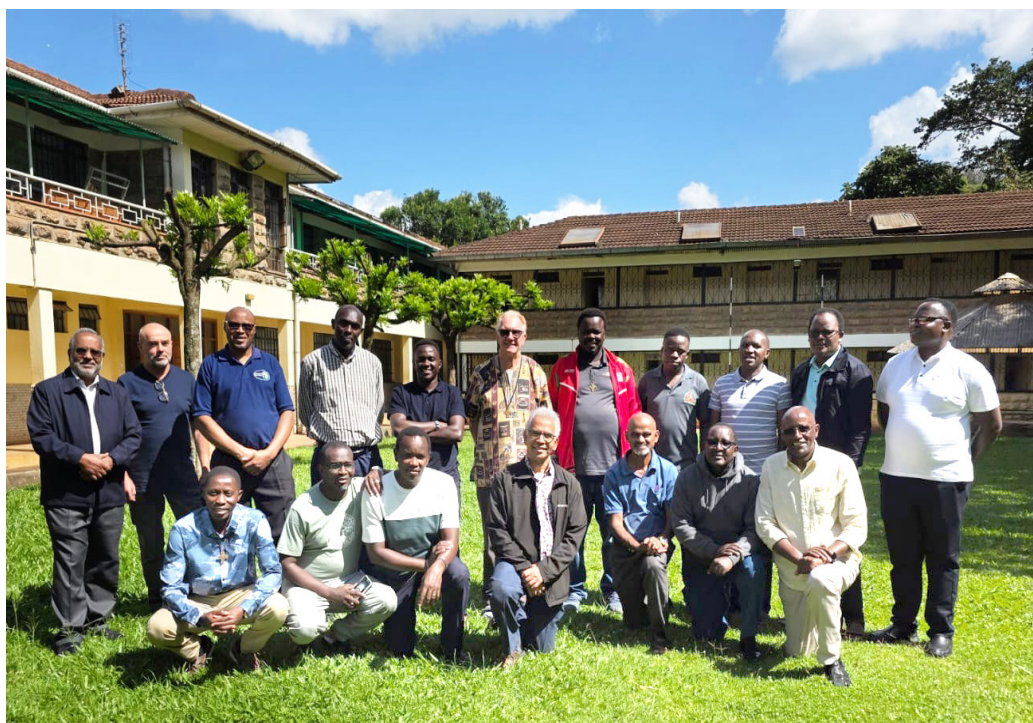
15 Salesians from various communities in Kenya attended a training on Safeguarding and the Protection of Children at Don Bosco Youth Education Services (DBYES), Nairobi, from 12th to 14th May 2026. Most of the Salesians who took part in the training were the heads of our different communities. The training was organized by DB Tech Africa. The Provincial of Eastern Africa welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of this training, which is not only for the benefit of the children but also for protecting ourselves before the law as caregivers.

Child safeguarding and protection aims at strengthening the capacity of educators and caregivers to recognize, prevent, and respond appropriately to child protection concerns. This is an important aspect of Don Bosco's Salesian pedagogy.

The safeguarding approach will inspire and improve our accompaniment, presence among the youth, positive discipline, mutual respect, and the creation of environments where young people feel valued and protected.

During the training, we reviewed various UN documents on Children, the Children's Act of 2022 (Kenya), and the challenges the Salesians and our Mission Partners face in providing care to children in need and other vulnerable persons in our various Centers. It was a worthwhile seminar, and everyone was very grateful to the Provincial leadership and DB Tech Africa for organizing this training workshop.

All participants were awarded a certificate upon completion of the training.



From Philosophers to Practical Trainees



*Nyaga Shimon
Mugambi*



Having spent years mastering the abstract world of Aristotle and Aquinas, ten Salesian brothers have officially been handed their reality checks, and they couldn't be more thrilled. From May 26th to May 30th, 2026, the Salesians of Don Bosco East Africa Province hosted an intensive orientation program in Nairobi, transforming these fresh philosophy graduates

into battle-ready, practical trainees set to deploy across various Salesian communities in the region. The five-day boot camp was meticulously designed to bridge the gap between lecture halls and the vibrant, often chaotic reality of frontline youth ministry.

The program kicked off with high energy on the first day as Mr. Annastacio Nyaga took center stage, equipping the brothers with dynamic animation techniques for children and youth. He emphasized that to win the hearts of the young, one must speak their language of joy, play, and presence.

On the second day, the tone shifted from external action to internal growth when Fr. Pinto delivered a talk on change and transition. Recognizing that moving into new communities can be daunting, Fr. Pinto challenged the brothers with a mantra, encouraging them to bloom wherever they are planted and to find growth in every new environment they encounter.

On the third day, the Vice Provincial, Fr. Nduati, tackled the intricate dynamics of community living. He reminded the young trainees that active ministry is empty without a deep interior life, noting that a practical trainee should create time to be in union with God despite a busy community timetable.

The fourth day focused on the official Salesian identity, where Fr. Matthew dissected the Salesian Ratio. He took a keen interest in the sections outlining the expected conduct of brothers during practical training, providing a vital roadmap for professional, moral, and spiritual excellence in the field.

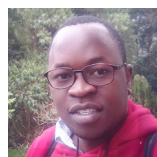
The final day looked straight into the demands of the modern digital age. Fr. Sebastian, the Provincial Delegate for Social Communication, stepped in to arm the brothers with crucial journalism skills, urging the trainees to become storytellers of hope and to actively practice these communication skills within their respective communities.

The intensive week reached its climax when the Provincial of the East Africa Province, Fr George Tharaniyil, arrived to close the program.

In a fraternal gesture, the Provincial patted the shoulders of the ten brothers and officially commissioned them to step out into their assigned communities, leaving them spiritually fueled and ready to serve the youth with everything they have got.

A Prophetic Community

Bosco Boys Kuwinda



Br. John Joseph

The Bosco Boys Community is a living witness to the Salesian spirit of fraternity, joy, and prophetic service. Inspired by the charism of St. John Bosco, our community warmly welcomes all who enter its doors with love, respect, and genuine hospitality. Whether they are visitors, benefactors, young people, or friends, everyone experiences the family spirit that makes our community a true home where God's love is shared in simple yet meaningful ways. This openness reminds us that our community is itself a message of hope, communion, and authentic Christian witness.



A special source of joy in our community is the presence of the boys and girls in our school and the boys in our boarding section. Their enthusiasm, laughter, and zest for life fill our home with vitality, while their daily interaction with the Salesians and pre-novices continually inspires us to renew our vocation. Each day offers opportunities to grow together through prayer, work, study, games, and recreation. The young people remind us that our mission is not merely to educate but to accompany them with love, patience, and hope, following the example of Don Bosco.

The dedicated leadership of our Rector, Fr. Cheryoit Katel, is another great blessing to our community life. Through his fatherly guidance, we are encouraged to live in unity, charity, and joyful service. His example inspires every confrere, pre-novice, and member of our community, including our staff, to carry out their daily responsibilities with love, humility, and dedication. Whether in pastoral ministry, formation, education, or the ordinary duties of community life, we strive to carry out every task with the conviction that love is at the heart of the Salesian vocation.



As we continue our mission, the Bosco Boys Community aspires to be a prophetic sign in today's world by promoting fraternity, prayer, and a preferential love for the young, especially those who are most in need. As one family, we seek to proclaim the Gospel not only through our words but, above all, through the witness of our common life. Indeed, our greatest message is the joy of living together as brothers in Christ, serving God and the young with one heart and one spirit.

Fraternal and Prophetic Communal Life: Living the Salesian Mission Through DBYES



Fr. Issac Maina

Fraternal and prophetic communal life lies at the core of the Salesian vocation and is vividly expressed in the mission of the Don Bosco Youth Educational Services (DBYES) community in Nairobi. Inspired by Don Bosco, the community combines brotherhood, prayer, and pastoral service with a commitment to empowering young people and responding to contemporary social challenges.

DBYES serves as a centre for youth formation, education, and pastoral outreach through several key ministries. It hosts the Salesian Formation Centre for Africa and Madagascar (SAFCAM), which provides ongoing formation and leadership development for Salesians and members of the Salesian Family across the continent. Beginning in July 2026, DBYES will also host fourteen deacons from Don Bosco Utume, further strengthening its role as a centre of formation and accompaniment for the Salesian Congregation. The community is also home to DBTECH Africa, which promotes technical and vocational education throughout Africa, helping young people acquire employable skills and improve their livelihoods.

Through Bosco Eastern Africa Multimedia Services (BEAMS), disadvantaged youth receive training in media, communication, digital content creation, photography, video production, journalism, and related fields, enabling them to become responsible communicators and professionals. DBYES contributes to higher education through its involvement with the Institute of Youth Studies (IYS) at Tangaza University, where a Salesian community member participates in the formation of youth workers, educators, and development practitioners through teaching, mentoring, and research.

Beyond education and formation, the



community extends its pastoral ministry to numerous religious congregations and institutions, including the Benedictine Sisters, Brothers of St. John of God, Little Sisters of St. Joseph, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Nyumbani Children's Home, Franciscan Elizabethan Sisters, and the Salesian Sisters (FMA). Through Eucharistic celebrations, confessions, retreats, spiritual accompaniment, and pastoral guidance, the community fosters communion and supports the spiritual life of these religious communities. The coexistence of these diverse ministries reflects a holistic expression of Salesian fraternity and mission.

Through collaboration among Salesians, lay partners, and young people, DBYES creates an environment of prayer, mutual support, and shared service. Its ministries respond prophetically to challenges such as unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, ethical communication, and the spiritual needs of the Church. In a rapidly changing world, DBYES stands as a beacon of hope, formation, and evangelization. Through SAFCAM, DBTECH Africa, BEAMS, the Institute of Youth Studies, the formation of deacons, and extensive pastoral outreach, the community demonstrates that authentic fraternity is lived through service, mission, and dedication to the holistic development of young people and society.

Cultivating Hope: Transforming Livelihoods through Sustainable Agriculture in Meru

Agriculture remains the lifeline of many families in Meru County. However, climate change, declining farm productivity, and fluctuating market prices continue to threaten the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. In response to these challenges, the Slovak Government, in partnership with the Don Bosco Development Outreach Network (DBDON), has launched an agricultural development project to promote sustainable livelihoods by distributing avocado and macadamia seedlings to farmers living around Don Bosco communities in Meru, Makuyu, and Kitale.

As Project Coordinator in Meru, I have had the privilege of witnessing the enthusiasm and commitment of the participating farmers. Their willingness to embrace this initiative reflects a shared determination to build a more prosperous and sustainable future through agriculture.

The project began with the identification and registration of farmers who met the required criteria. Quality avocado and macadamia seedlings were subsequently distributed, and I am pleased to report that all participating farmers in the Meru region have successfully planted their seedlings. This achievement marks the beginning of what we hope will become thriving orchards capable of transforming household livelihoods for generations to come.

However, distributing seedlings is only the first step. Successful orchard establishment requires continuous technical support and guidance. Our dedicated field officers therefore conduct regular follow-up visits to monitor seedling growth and survival, advise farmers on proper management practices, and provide timely solutions to challenges encountered during the early stages of cultivation.

Farmer education is equally important. Through training sessions led by



Br. Francis Mulu

qualified agricultural officers, farmers are gaining practical knowledge in orchard establishment, soil fertility management, water conservation, pest and disease control, pruning, and other climate-smart agricultural practices. These skills will enable them to improve productivity while ensuring the long-term sustainability of their farms.

The response from the farming communities has been overwhelmingly positive. Farmers appreciate not only the provision of quality planting materials but also the ongoing mentorship and technical support. Their commitment to adopting improved agricultural practices gives us confidence that the project will generate lasting economic and environmental benefits.

Beyond increasing household incomes, the initiative contributes to environmental conservation by expanding tree cover and encouraging sustainable land management. As the avocado and macadamia trees mature, they will provide reliable sources of income while strengthening the resilience of local communities to climate change.

Together, we are not simply planting trees. We are cultivating hope, resilience, and sustainable livelihoods for generations to come.



Bosco Boys Langata on the Go



Br. Samuel Morara



East Africa Women's League, Spring Valley Branch, visits Langata

On 18 June 2026, members of the East Africa Women's League, Spring Valley Branch, paid a heartfelt visit to the Bosco Boys Rehabilitation Center in Langata, continuing their long-standing tradition of charitable support for the institution.

The delegation arrived bearing donations aimed at improving the welfare of the boys under the center's care, a gesture that reflects the League's ongoing commitment to community outreach and social responsibility.

Father In Charge, brother assistant and the boys at the center warmly welcomed the visitors, whose generosity has, over time, made a meaningful difference in the lives of the young boys who call Bosco Boys home.

The visit stands as yet another example of the powerful impact that dedicated community organizations can have when they extend a helping hand to vulnerable members of society.

A Pilgrimage to the Resurrection Garden

On 12 May 2026, boys from the Bosco Boys Langata Rehabilitation Center took a spiritual pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Resurrection Garden in Karen-Nairobi, seeking reflection, healing, and renewed hope. Accompanied by their brother assistant, Salesian priests, volunteers, and caregivers, the young pilgrims walked in quiet procession through the tranquil grounds of the garden, pausing at the Stations of the Cross to pray and meditate on themes of forgiveness and new beginnings. As part of the center's ongoing efforts to nurture the boys' emotional and spiritual growth, the visit offered them a peaceful setting away from the challenges of daily life to reconnect with faith and community. Many of the boys shared that the experience left them feeling encouraged and grateful, with several expressing a renewed sense of purpose as they continue their journey of rehabilitation and personal transformation.



A Visit to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Upper Hill

On July 2, 2026, boys from the Bosco Boys Langata Rehabilitation Center accompanied by brother assistant and the staff made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Upper Hill, Nairobi, a site closely tied to the Salesian tradition that shapes their own community. During the visit, the boys toured the shrine grounds and spent time in prayer before the relic of Don Bosco. Drawing inspiration from his life's dedication to guiding and uplifting young people.

The pilgrimage offered the boys a meaningful opportunity to deepen their connection to the values of faith, mentorship, and second chances that underpin their own rehabilitation journey. Accompanied by their caregivers, the young pilgrims left the shrine with renewed motivation, many describing the

encounter with Don Bosco's legacy as a powerful reminder that transformation and hope are always within reach.

Students of Law from the Catholic University of East Africa Visit Langata

Law students from the Catholic University of East Africa spent a lively day at the Bosco Boys Langata Rehabilitation Center on 04 July, 2026, arriving in time for morning Mass and staying until around 4 pm for an afternoon full of shared activities and fellowship. Once Mass concluded, the visitors mingled freely with the boys, joining them on the field for a spirited football match, while others were welcomed into the kitchen to help prepare the day's lunch alongside the boys.

A basketball challenge soon followed, bringing more energy and friendly competition to the grounds, before everyone gathered to share a communal lunch together. As the afternoon wore on, the mood shifted into celebration, with students and boys coming together for a lively music and dancing competition that filled the center with laughter and rhythm. The day drew to a close with a final blessing, sending both the visiting students and the Bosco boys off with warm hearts and lasting memories of connection and camaraderie.



Our Community, Our Message



Br. Fredrick

In its literal sense, the word “community” makes us think of a place where people simply live together. But for us who are bound by the Salesian spirit, community denotes something more; it is mission in action, and faith lived together. Through its prophetic reflections, the General Chapter 29 reminds us that communities are more than just houses and structures. They are a message to the world. How we live together as a family speaks even before we preach.

In its essence, this is a manifestation of what Don Bosco dreamt of. As a visionary man, he did not build institutions first- he built a family. His main desire was that all should feel at home. It was from this inspiration that he famously stated that, “Here with you I feel at home.” He strongly believed that love had to be experienced and felt. And even at this contemporary time, this is what the young people are looking for: a place where they are loved, respected, and welcomed.

This dream is still alive in our Salesian communities. Our community life is anchored on simple but important things: supporting each other, eating, working,

and praying together. Though not always perfect, but it is always real. Who we are and what we become as brothers in mission is shaped by these small daily moments.

The presence of the young people makes life even more alive. Every day, young people come into our compound for different activities such as catechism, sports, learning, and prayers. Their unignorable presence bring questions, noise, laughter, energy and sometimes even confusion. And it is in their presence that we are reminded of who we are and why we are here.

At the local level, we meet many people who are searching. Some come with deep existential questions, seeking to understand life, suffering and hope. Others seek answers about faith. Even if people do not express it in words, there is a deep hunger for God. Our presence becomes very significant in such moments. Sometimes people don’t need big speeches- they need someone who cares, someone who listens, someone who is simply present.





It is at this moment that we are called to be “prophetic.” This word may sound ambiguous but for us it is a call to reality. It is a call to live in a way that portrays that God is real. It challenges us to choose kindness in a harsh world. It is an invitation to choose hope when things are difficult. It is an encouragement for not giving up even when life is difficult.

As Mother Teresa once said, “Do small things with great love” (A Simple Path, Page 13). This is the exact reality of a prophetic life as it is portrayed in our local communities. Leading a prophetic life does not demand doing big actions always but rather doing small daily acts with love: listening to a young person seriously, praying faithfully, encouraging someone who is tired, or teaching a child patiently.

Our community life teaches a very important lesson, that is, we are not perfect. Despite coming from different backgrounds, having different personalities and ideas, we are bound to live together. Sometimes misunderstandings may arise but they are not to derail us. They are moments of learning. Through them we learn to be patient, to forgive, and to start again. Through this, our community becomes real. Guided by the words of Desmond Tutu, “My humanity is bound up in yours” in the book (No Future Without Forgiveness), we grow together, we fail together, we rise together.

As Salesians, we ponder on the living words of Michael Rua that encourages us to remain faithful to Don Bosco’s spirit in our daily simple life. Our faithfulness is not portrayed only in big moments, but also in ordinary moments. The strength of our mission in the community depends on how we live together.

Reflecting on our community life, we realize something important: that our community is already a message. Through our exemplary life, people may not always need to listen to long sermons and read books, they only need to watch how we live. They see how we treat each other and they will notice if we are divided, joyful, or united. This is why to live a fraternal and prophetic communal life is not just an abstract idea; it is our daily challenge, our calling.

At the end, what we want people to identify and remember is simple: that in our community they find hope, respect, faith and they are always welcome. And in a special way, for the young people, they should feel that they have found a place where they can confidently proclaim: “I am loved. I am accepted. I belong.” May Mary Help of Christians guide our communities to remain close to the young, united and always joyful, just as Don Bosco dreamed.

A Season of Growth

Don Bosco Boys' Town



**Conrad Indumuli
Odera**



Since the beginning of the year, Don Bosco Boys Town Technical Institute has been vibrant with activities that have played a significant role in the spiritual, social, cultural, and personal formation of the young people.

The year began with an orientation program for new students, introducing them to the Salesian educational system and the values, family spirit, and preventive

approach of Don Bosco. During this period, the institute also introduced the House System to strengthen student participation. Students received T-shirts in different house colors to promote identification, a sense of belonging, and healthy competition among the houses.

January was also marked by the joyful celebration of the Feast of Don Bosco, dedicated to reflecting on his legacy of love and dedication to young people, especially those at risk. The celebrations continued with inter-house talent shows that showcased the creativity and diverse gifts of the students.

In March, the institute joined the world in celebrating International Women's Day, encouraging students to appreciate the dignity, equality, and invaluable contributions of women in society while fostering respect for one another. There was also a celebration of the feast of St. Dominic Savio.

Recognizing that effective youth formation depends on well-prepared educators, the institute organized a formation program for staff members. The training equipped them with valuable knowledge and skills to better mentor, accompany, and guide the young people entrusted to their care.

The month of May also held special significance with the celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, the principal feast of the Salesian Family. The celebration was made even more memorable with the blessing and unveiling of a new statue of Mary Help of Christians, produced within the institute using modern 3D printing technology. This is a proud fusion of faith and technical skill that reflects the identity of this technical institute.

Don Bosco would always ensure that the young people find enough time for playing to ensure physical wellness and team spirit. The community also organized sports days that promoted physical fitness, teamwork, discipline, and healthy competition among the houses. These activities were followed by the much-anticipated Community Day, during which the Maasai culture took center stage. Traditional songs, vibrant dances, colorful attire, and the participation of other cultural communities created a joyful atmosphere that celebrated unity in diversity and strengthened the family spirit within the institute.

Together, these activities reflect the holistic formation that Don Bosco Boys Town offers, blending faith, culture, talent, and technical excellence in shaping the next generation. As the institute looks ahead, this season stands as a reminder of the strong community spirit that continues to guide every learner along the Don Bosco path.

Don Bosco's Young People Reunited(Alumni 2008-2025)

Brief History

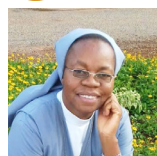
The World Confederation of the Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) was founded in 1908 by Blessed Fr. Philip Rinaldi, the fourth successor of St. John Bosco. The mission of the Association is to promote the teachings of St. John Bosco on unity: "You have to unite and help each other." St. John Bosco inspired this Movement as a direct extension of the Salesian Sisters' work. The Association, which is nonpartisan and non-political, serves as a transformative force in society by developing the FMA charism across diverse socio-cultural realities. It consists of people educated in an FMA work and lay associates inspired by the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

Today, the Association is an international organization serving thousands of people in over sixty countries. On March 19, 2026, it celebrated the 118th anniversary of its founding, having expanded into many nations worldwide.

Alumni Meeting – Makuyu, June 6, 2026

The FMA community, staff, and students of Don Bosco Day Secondary School, Makuyu, warmly welcomed the Past Pupils for their reunion. Guided by the theme "Recall, Renew, Relive the Dream," the gathering attracted 138 members. Many more wished to attend but couldn't due to unavoidable commitments or scheduling conflicts.

Established in January 2005, the school produced its first KCSE graduating class in 2008 and has since graduated 1,335 students. The alumni also maintain an active social media group of 345 members, encouraging one another and connecting members to employment opportunities.



*Sr. Laurenzia Ndwiga,
FMA Principal*

Past pupils began arriving from 8.00 a.m., joyfully reconnecting and reliving memories of their years at the school. The day began with a solemn Mass celebrated by Rev. Fr. Francis Kibe, SDB, a member of the 2011 graduating class. After Mass, participants shared a family meal before continuing with the day's program. Students entertained the gathering through performances and speeches. Present were three serving principals, Sr. Letizia Ngari, Sr. Caroline Kalondu, and Sr. Laurenzia Ndwiga, together with Sr. Virginia Bickford, one of the pioneer teachers, who shared memories and words of encouragement.

On behalf of the school staff, Deputy Principal Mr. Martin Mwenda welcomed the alumni. Past pupils shared inspiring life experiences, encouraging the current students to remain focused, use their remaining school years wisely, and make sound decisions as they prepare for life beyond school. The interaction motivated the students while showcasing alumni who now serve in public service and entrepreneurship.

To strengthen their unity, the alumni pledged to support disadvantaged students by establishing a charity fund and mentoring one another towards successful social integration. They also committed themselves to holding regular meetings to revive the Salesian spirit that shaped their formation at Don Bosco Day Secondary School.

The reunion concluded with a tree-planting ceremony, symbolizing the enduring unity, growth, and shared life of the Salesian Family.

Identity That Speaks, Network That Unites – My Experience



Sr. Mary Owuoth, FMA

I am happy to share with you a little of my experience during the Formation Course for Social Communication Coordinators, which took place from 16th to 28th March 2026 in Rome and Piedmont, Italy. I realize that what I received was not just a course but a true experience of renewal, both personally and for our mission.

Together with other sisters and lay collaborators from all over the world, I had the opportunity to reflect on the theme: “Identity That Speaks, Network That Unites.” This theme stayed with me deeply. It helped me to understand that communication is not first about tools, media, or technology but about who we are. At the Salesian Sisters’ Generalate in Rome, one of the strongest messages I received was that communication is a relationship.

We are called to build connections, listen, and to create communion. I also realized that, as an Institute, we are already a network, but we are invited to make this network more alive, more conscious, and more visible. Through the inputs from different experts, I was challenged to look at the digital world in a new way. It is not enough just to be present online; we are called to be meaningful. Our communication should accompany young people, help them find meaning, and respond to the realities they are living.

What touched me most was reconnecting with our Salesian charism. Looking at Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, I understood that their communication was very simple, yet very powerful. They were present. They listened. They created a family spirit. They made each person feel loved and valued. This is the communication we are called to live today. We also had practical sessions that helped us grow in areas like teamwork, leadership, storytelling, and even crisis communication. These gave me tools, but more importantly, they helped

me reflect on how I can communicate better in our own context.

Another beautiful experience was visiting Vatican Media, where I saw how the Church communicates to the whole world. It reminded me that even our small efforts here are part of a much bigger mission. Then we went on pilgrimage to the places of our origins: Turin, Colle Don Bosco, and Mornese. This was very special. Walking in those places made me realize that true communication comes from life, from our experience of God, from community, and from our love for young people.

Meeting our Mother General, Mother Chiara Cazzuola, in Mornese was also a great grace. She reminded us that communication begins from the heart, from a deep inner life that brings peace, gentleness, and authenticity into our relationships.

I feel a strong call to communicate better. To help build a culture of communication in our Province that reflects who we are and brings us closer together. This experience has renewed a desire to communicate not only with words, but with my life with presence, with joy, and authenticity.



Education With a Heart: Making the “Impossible” Possible



Alexis Nzayisenga

Mr. Alexis Nzayisenga, a past pupil of St. Mary Dominique Mazzarello Technical Secondary School (TSS) in Gisenyi, Rwanda, is currently a member of the teaching staff at the same institution. After completing his studies at the school, he earned an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management from Rwanda Polytechnic, Ngoma College. Given below are excerpts from his speech delivered to invited guests, parents, collaborators, and students on 13th May 2026, the Feast of St. Mary Mazzarello.

“Today, as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Mary Dominic Mazzarello, my heart is filled with deep emotion, gratitude, and reflection. This is not just a celebration for me, it is a moment to look back on my life journey and realize how far I have come through grace, perseverance, and the kindness of the Salesian Sisters and Salesian benefactors.

In my journey, I was truly alone. I had no family support, and I carried everything by myself. There were days when I had to be both a parent and a child to myself, thinking about school fees, survival, and my future all at once. The nights were filled with worry, uncertainty, and moments when I felt like giving up. But somehow, I kept going. Then God sent help to the Salesian Sisters.

You came into my life at a time when I had nothing to hold on to. You saw me not as a burden, but as someone worth investing in. You paid my school fees, supported my basic needs, and gave me something I had almost lost hope. Because of you, I am no longer walking this journey alone.

Even though my family was far away due to different life circumstances, your support became a form of family to me. You stood in the gap where I had nothing, and for that, I will never forget you. Your kindness is not just financial support it is life-changing love. It is a silent voice that told me, ‘You still have a future.’ It is a hand that lifted me when I had no strength to stand.

On this Feast of Saint Mary Dominic Mazzarello, I truly see her spirit alive in your presence. She dedicated her life to

caring for the young, the abandoned, and the forgotten. Today, through you, I have personally experienced that same spirit.

To all our distinguished guests, Fr. Fabien and all the Fathers, Sr. Roseline, Sr. Furaha, Sr. Josephine, Sr. Lydia, Sr. Providence, Sr. Purin, my father Mutabazi, teachers, staff, parents, trainees, past pupils, and friends of the school, thank you for being part of this special moment. Your presence is a great honor to me.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the Afrika Uwimana family and Patty Kayirere Balinda. Thank you for raising me with immeasurable love. Your kindness has shaped the person I am today. I will forever cherish your sacrifices, care, and belief in me, and I am grateful to call you my family.

I cannot end without expressing my sincere gratitude to Sr. Gisele Ndekezi Umurerwa, who first welcomed me with kindness and care. My heartfelt thanks also go to Sr. Catherine Urbanska, Sr. Virginia, Sr. Adeline, Sr. Irene Wawira, Sr. Ernestine, and all the teachers for their support and guidance throughout my studies. In a very special way, I would like to offer countless thanks to Sr. Emma, who spent so much time with me, cared for me like a mother, and did countless incomparable things in my daily life. Her love, support, and sacrifices will always remain in my heart.

As I conclude, I sincerely promise not to waste this opportunity. I will work hard, remain disciplined, and strive to succeed not only for myself, but also for the people who believed in me when I had nothing.

One day, I pray to become someone who can also lift others from silence, struggle, and loneliness, just as you did for me.”

News Bites from the FMA

1. Karare - Ecumenical Prayer Day

Bishop Peter Kihara of the Marsabit Diocese held an Ecumenical Prayer Day on 18th April 2026, bringing together Christians from different denominations across Marsabit County. The day was organized in a spirit of unity and faith to pray for the students of Bishop Cavallera Secondary School, who had been affected by an unknown illness that had persisted for nearly two months.

The gathering was marked by heartfelt prayers, moments of reflection, and messages of hope and encouragement. Leaders, priests from the Marsabit Diocese, Sisters (AOSK), parents, and faithful from the various denominations joined hands in seeking God's healing, protection, and guidance for all the affected students and the entire school community.

The event reminded us of the strength found in unity and the power of collective prayer. Through faith and perseverance, the situation gradually improved, and normalcy returned. Today, we give thanks to God for His continuous guidance, mercy, and help throughout this difficult period. We remain grateful for the support shown by all who stood with us in prayer and continue to trust in God's loving care for our school community.



Sr Virginia

2. A Meaningful Visit to Don Bosco Secondary/Senior School

Friday, 15th May 2026 was a great day for Sisters, students, and staff of Don Bosco Secondary School, Makuyu. A team of seven senior officers from Maranjau Prison visited the school to strengthen networking ties and address the learners on matters pertaining to life and opportunities.

The delegation was led by the Officer in Charge, Dr. Humphrey Young, whose main presentation highlighted matters concerning school life and the need to remain focused and become students of positive actions. He appreciated the responses from both the learners and the staff. Later, the team spent time with the Sisters discussing vital networking issues, and the encounter was deeply enriching.



3. AFE FMA National Mother Mazzarello Day

FMA institutes and youth groups in Kenya gathered at Makuyu Mission on 30th May 2026 to celebrate the National Mother Mazzarello Day at the primary school stadium. Junior and senior students participated in the event, which was mainly geared toward the older students.

Fr. David Mbogo, SDB, celebrated the Eucharist and reflected on the theme of the event: *"Like Mary Mazzarello, Let Us*

Do Whatever He Tells Us: Believers Free to Serve." In his homily, he emphasized how we can imitate the spirit of Mary Mazzarello by obeying God's will in our lives, just as Our Lady did at the wedding feast of Cana. Following the lunch break, the assembly gathered again for the final part of the programme, which consisted of entertainment based on the theme by different groups, interwoven with speeches. The theme song, written by Fr. Vincent Makaya SDB, was creatively presented by the various groups.

In conclusion, Sr. Anastasia Kibe FMA, the coordinator of the event, thanked everyone for their active participation in making St. Mary Mazzarello better known and loved.



4. Caring for Our Land

World Environment Day is officially observed every year on 5th June. It is the United Nations' principal platform for encouraging global awareness and action for the protection of the environment.

On 10th June, to mark the day's theme, "Inspired by Nature, for Climate, for Our Future," Sr. Florence Kiveke FMA, together with the staff and students of LV Technical Centre Makuyu, joined Emmanuel Skill Centre and Sagana Tech Institute at Murang'a GK Prison Centre. They spent the day planting 700 seedlings provided by the facility alongside prison officers and some inmates. The Officer in Charge expressed gratitude for choosing their facility and promised to ensure that the seedlings would be well cared for.



5. Siakago Market Cleanup

On 5th June 2026, the students and staff of Don Bosco Technical Institute Siakago, together with the students and staff of Mbeere North Institute, participated in a community clean-up exercise at Siakago Market as part of the World Environment Day celebrations.

The exercise was carried out with the support of the Siakago County Council officers, who guided the participants on the areas that required cleaning. Their guidance ensured that the activity was well organized and focused on the places that needed the most attention. During the exercise, it was emphasized that a clean environment promotes good health, prevents the spread of diseases, protects nature, and creates a pleasant place to live and work.



A candle in the desert:

Sr. Leela Pozholiparambil SNDS (84)

The candle that is consumed by being kindled, and the salt that disappears by being dissolved, have no regret; they feel only joy. This is the joy that comes from making ourselves a source of light and happiness to many." Our dear Sr. Leela fulfilled these words of our co-founder until she was called home to our Lord.



Late Sr. Leela was born on July 19, 1942, as the third of eleven children to Rappai and Theresa of the Pozholiparambil family in Avittathur Parish, Irinjalakuda Diocese. Baptized Mariam, she grew up with six brothers and four sisters and completed her secondary education in 1965.

Inspired by five maternal aunts who were religious sisters and a maternal uncle who was a priest, Sr. Leela nurtured a desire for consecrated life from an early age. In 1967, she joined St. Christina's Home, Pullazhi, where she also received two years of pharmacy training at Jubilee Mission Hospital. In 1971, she became one of the sixteen founding members of the Nirmala Dasi consecrated community established by

the late Bishop Mar. Joseph Kundukulam and Msgr. Joseph Vilangan. She made her first profession on December 8, 1973, and her perpetual profession on December 8, 1981.

Sr. Leela rendered invaluable service during the formative years of St. Christina's Home and the Nirmala Dasi community. She courageously faced the hardships of the early years and generously dedicated her life, talents, and energy to building the institution alongside the founding fathers. Blessed with natural leadership qualities, she became the leader of the first community group. During the first General Synaxis in 1977, she was elected the first Superior General of the Society and later served on the General Council. She exercised her leadership with humility, motherly affection, discipline, and genuine concern for every member of the community.

In 1983, Sr. Leela volunteered for the African Mission and was sent as a pioneer missionary to Korr in the Diocese of Marsabit, Northern Kenya. She faithfully served there for 35 years, caring for the sick, the orphaned, the abandoned, and the poor with exceptional compassion. Through her life of selfless service, she demonstrated that true authority is found in serving others. In 2017, due to old age, she returned to Kerala and continued her ministry for nine more years at Anugraha Sadan, Chalakudy. During her final month, she remained bedridden due to age-related illness. After receiving the Anointing of the Sick while fully conscious, she peacefully returned to the Father's house on April 28, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Having dedicated her entire life to God, Sr. Leela lived for the Church and society. She loved the poor, recognized their needs without being told, and cared for orphaned and vulnerable children with a mother's heart, bringing hope, dignity, and joy into their lives. Her life was marked by love, charity, mercy, disciplined prayer, and unwavering commitment to God's people. Giving thanks to God for the countless blessings received through Sr. Leela by the Holy Church, the Nirmala Dasi community, the Pozholiparambil family, and especially the African Mission, we pray for her eternal rest.

On April 29, 2026, the funeral Mass was presided over by His Grace, the Most Rev. Andrews Thazhath, Archbishop of Trichur. Surrounded by priests, sisters, relatives, and faithful, Sr. Leela was laid to rest at the Nirmala Dasi Sisters' Cemetery in Mulayam, Kerala.

May God rest her soul in Peace.

After the Final Whistle



Johnson Kottaram

There is no sporting event on Earth watched by more people than the World Cup. For a few hours, billions of human beings- believers and skeptics, children and elders, the rich and the poor- are drawn to the same spectacle. And precisely because of that reach, no other stage offers a greater

opportunity to transform our oldest instincts into our finest behaviour. What unfolded on the field was more than football. It was human nature under pressure. One team, confronted by the reality that it was being outplayed, reached increasingly for its oldest reflex.

When we feel control slipping away, our primitive survival circuits favour immediate action over thoughtful restraint. They seek to disrupt, intimidate, and neutralize the threat before it grows worse. The other team displayed something different.

They remained composed under provocation. They absorbed the late tackles, the shirt-pulling, the shoving, and simply kept playing their game. They trusted the discipline that had brought them there instead of allowing the opponent to dictate the terms of the contest.

The Argentine players entered the field making the sign of the cross. Whatever that gesture meant to each of them, it did not prepare them for the grace that defeat demands. They were given a rare opportunity, the kind that comes perhaps once in a lifetime, to lose with dignity before billions of witnesses. Had they done so, they might have won something greater than the trophy itself: the admiration of the world.

Instead, a more familiar reflex emerged. The same tribal instinct is now visible far beyond football. In public life, in politics, on social media, and even within families, losing on the merits is increasingly answered not with humility but with grievance; not with composure but with confrontation. That is why the final deserves reflection long after the highlights have faded. The brawl itself will soon be forgotten. What will remain is the question it quietly asked of every one of us.

When we are losing an argument, a position, a relationship, a reputation which part of ourselves takes over? The part that lashes out, or the part that remains free enough to choose dignity? The World Cup is, for one evening every four years, the largest public laboratory of human behaviour on the planet.

Under the gaze of billions, the deepest layers of our nature are exposed. Most of us will never play before a global audience. But every day, in much smaller arenas, we face exactly the same choice. Grace or grievance.

And if billions of watching eyes cannot persuade us to choose grace when it costs us almost nothing, perhaps nothing outside ourselves ever will.

Fighting Corruption With Christian Faith

“The wicked accept bribes in secret to pervert the course of justice.” (Proverbs 17:23)



Rev. Fr. Lazar Arasu, SDB

These words from the Book of Proverbs remind us that corruption is not a modern problem. For centuries, it has distorted justice, weakened societies, and denied the poor and vulnerable the dignity they deserve. Today, corruption remains one of the greatest obstacles to human development, particularly in many developing nations.

Corruption thrives in poor societies and nations. It creates a vicious cycle: institutionalized corruption makes the poor nation poorer. Ironically, some of the poorest countries in the world are blessed with abundant natural resources, fertile land, and youthful populations such as; South Sudan, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda yet, have strong Christian majorities.

This raises an important question for us as believers: Where is the faith we subscribe to, the Word of God that we contemplate, the prayers we recite have

gone. Christ in Isaiah 29.13; Matthew 15.7-9). tells us, “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” When our prayer is lip service, it means that our words and actions seem insincere or lack genuine conviction. It also means our prayer or worship is superficial or lacking true devotion and Our faith and actions are not aligned.

Sadly, corruption and bribery have infiltrated all aspects of our daily life and become the ‘new normal’. And we have to bribe to receive services which are rightfully entitled to us. Bribes are often disguised as “tokens of appreciation” or paying for expedited services. As Christians, it’s imperative that we scrutinize these practices through the lens of Scripture and contemplate our appropriate response to maintain our spiritual integrity and moral standing.

Ugandan Christians rightly honour the Uganda Martyrs through pilgrimages,

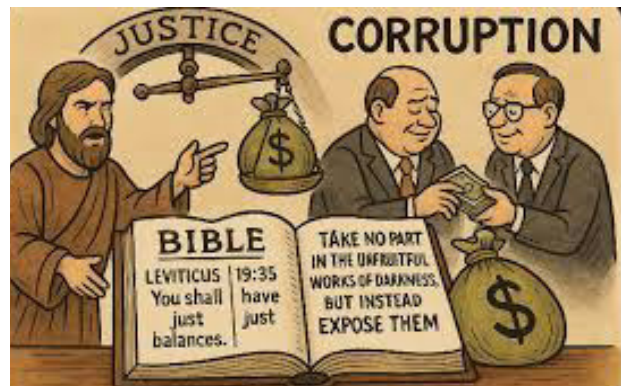


elaborate celebrations and lofty sermons. After promising to follow their footsteps, we all go back to our status quo the Lip Service. The words, 'your hearts are far from me,' calls us to examine our hearts and actions, ensuring that our faith is authentic and not superficial. Superficial faith leads to superficial faith a lack of a real relationship with God and the community around, and inconsistent behaviour where actions are different from what we believe and worship. With a shallow relationship with God, our faith becomes mere external actions and rituals, leading to emptiness and disillusionment. We pray for "Steadfast love and faithfulness (to) meet; righteousness and peace (to) kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10).

The early Christian martyrs were killed for refusing to worship idols and paganism. But today's idols often take the form of power, position, luxurious living and easy money gotten through fraud, corruption, nepotism, and exploitation. Today the world needs martyrs to show through their upright living and the true God of justice, righteousness and peace should be worshiped.

Pope Leo in the Vatican proclaimed a young Congolese Floribert Bwana Chui Bin Kositi, as a martyr of our times. He was a young civil servant of 26 years, working with Customs involving in imports and exports in DRC. He was killed in 2007 for standing firmly against corruption, to allow contaminated food items to be imported to the eastern town of Goma from Rwanda. His fellow workers persuaded him to collaborate with them in the corrupt act in order to gain. Having been annoyed by his uncooperative stand and for fearing to be exposed, they brutally murdered him and left his tortured body at the entrance of their office.

As it is with the lives of all the Christian martyrs, Chui too lived a virtuous and exemplary life and he exhibited his Christian faith in his place of work. He was a member of a Christian group called St.



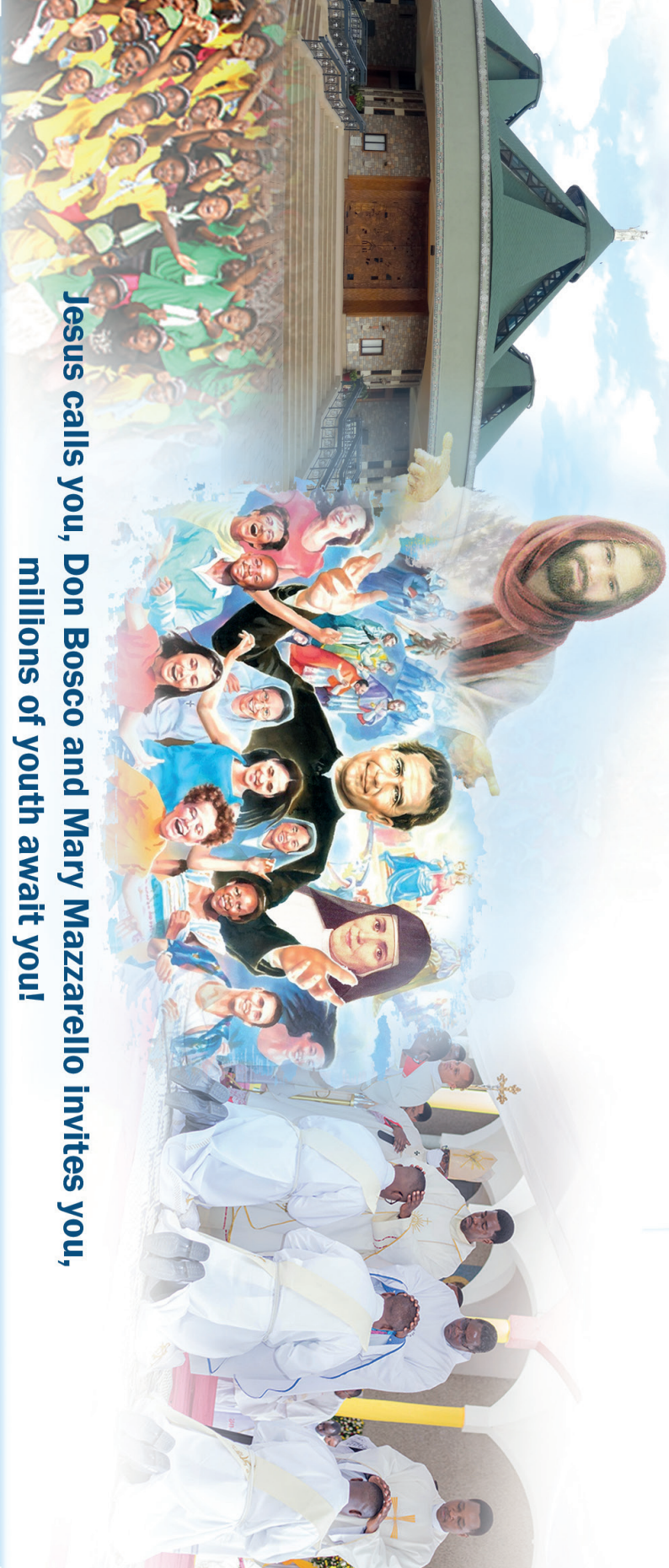
Egidio known for their peace initiatives among the conflicting nations and groups. In deed martyrdom is a gift given to the virtuous and peace-loving people.

Pope Francis' approval of his beatification, a step toward possible sainthood. In the conflict-battered Goma, where years of war have increased desperation and corruption, Kositi's designation as a martyr has eased some of the pain caused by his death. "Having died in difficult circumstance, he left us a fight that we must all continue as Christians, as people, as young people in the province of North Kivu," said Jean Jacques, a co-worker referring to the war-ravaged province where Kositi lived most of his 25 years before being killed.

Fr. Francesco Tedeschi, a priest who knew him said, "How much spoiled food, how much expired medicine, how many discarded things are sent to these places because there is this conception that these lives there aren't as worthy? And yet Floribert Chui, in his Christianity, wanted to put the value of the lives of these people, and above all the poorest, at the centre."

Poverty in Africa is a multifaceted problem with deep-rooted causes, including economic factors, political instability, conflict, health issues, education disparities, climate change, and historical legacy. May causes are man-made rather than natural calamity or anything else. We need martyrdom like acts to develop our nations and maintain justice and people. Let our faith and action go hand in hand.

God is calling you, will you answer? Is God calling you to be Salesian of Don Bosco?



**Jesus calls you, Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello invites you,
millions of youth await you!**

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