



BOSCO NEWS

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Salesians of Don Bosco | Province of St. Philip the Apostle | Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry
Signs and Bearers of God's Love for the Young and the Poor
www.salesianym.com

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BOSCONews

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Salesians of Don Bosco
Province of St. Philip the Apostle
Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry
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WE'RE MOVING!



This summer, the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry will be relocating to the Provincial House & Offices in New Rochelle, New York

As of August 1, 2013, our address will be:

148 Main Street
New Rochelle, NY 10802

Tell us what's happening in your neck of the woods!
Submit your stories and reflections for the next
BoscoNews to bosconews@salesianym.com.

MARY, TRUE HELP OF CHRISTIANS

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Taken from the Canticle of Mary, this passage signifies how humble a servant Mary was to the Lord. Mary is as present in our lives as Jesus is. She provides us with a role model figure to show us that we are called to love others and surrender our lives to God. Mary was only about 14 years old when the Angel Gabriel appeared to her and asked her to be the mother of God. She bravely replied, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word."

Alex Steele, '13
St. Petersburg Catholic HS
St. Petersburg, Florida



As a preschooler at St. Jerome Early Childhood Center, I learned that I had two mothers. My earthly mother would return for me after three hours of playing, singing and painting. If I missed her while she was away, I knew that I had another mother, a heavenly one, who was with me always. This understanding remained with me throughout life. Now, as a teen, I still rely on the presence of the Blessed Mother in my daily activities and especially in my trials. She gives me comfort, peace and an understanding shoulder to lean upon. I tell her my cares and troubles and ask her to intercede on my behalf to her son, Jesus. Furthermore, Mother Mary serves as an example of who I am to be as a Christian woman.

As a Salesian, I learned that Mary is the Help of Christians. I have embraced this devotion and ask Mary for help in all my needs. I seek to have a deeper relationship with Mary in the future. As I enter college, I know that I will need her constant guidance and encouragement in order to follow God's will. I found the movie *The Nativity* to be very inspiring, and Mary's courage and faithfulness to God, exceptionally moving. I found that many situations in high school called me to be courageous. Standing up for what was right was not always popular, but in the end, I found that people respected my choices and later came to me for advice. It is not easy to be principled in our world today. We must rely on God's grace and the help of His mother in order to lead a holy life.



A depiction of our Blessed Mother appearing to Don Bosco during his *Dream of Nine* at Mary Help of Christians Academy.

MARY, MODEL FOR ALL



Tony Sepulvado, '13
Archbishop Shaw High School
Marrero, LA

Mary is an ideal figure of someone who showed immense faith in God and one whose persistence in the work of our Lord conquered the hardships that were thrown at her.

Even though she was young, she showed us important aspects on how we should live our faith today. One of the most important qualities that Mary showed us was her ability to listen to the call from God. Mary listened to the word of God that came through

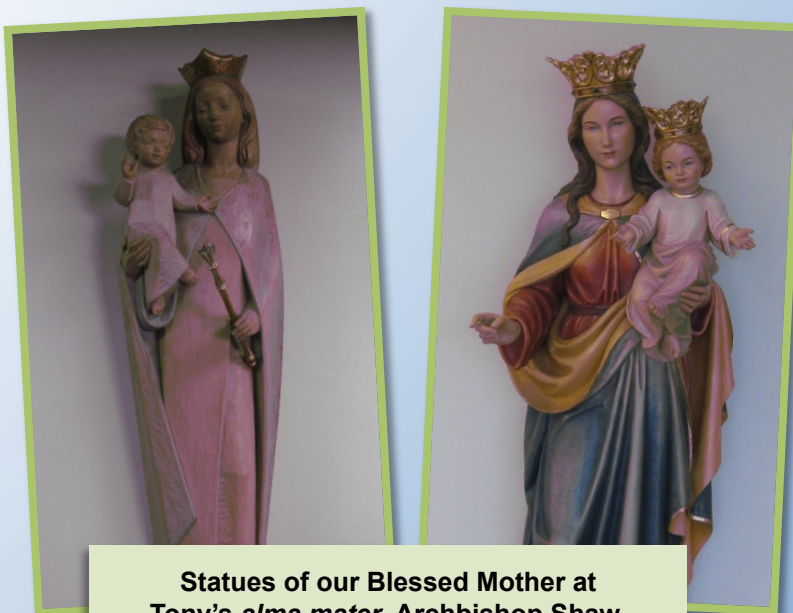
Gabriel, when she was asked to bear the Son of God. While Mary questioned Gabriel when he told her this, she accepted the task without hesitation. For us, God's plan won't be directly laid out, but we still need to listen for it.

Our vocation is one of the greatest choices that we have to make through God. We should use Mary as our example for how to respond to this call. While we may question God's plan for us, we should always accept it and strive to carry it out as best as we can. This is the manner in which Mary carried out the plan God gave her. This tested her faith in many ways, mainly because she was so young and under scrutiny from those around her. At one point, she was even faced with the threat of being stoned. Even though she was confronted with these obstacles, her immeasurable faith in God allowed her to continue forward and carry out what she was being called to do.

Just as Mary's faith was tested, ours too, will be tested when we carry out what God has in store for us. Again, we can use Mary as our example for how to carry out His will in a time of adversity, misunderstanding, and persecution. These obstacles thrown our way aren't going to be short lived. Rather, it will require a long-term commitment to overcome these difficulties.

Mary's struggles didn't end after Jesus was born, in fact, they worsened as Jesus got older. She had to accept the horrible fate of her son being persecuted and crucified on a cross. While this may have been hard for her to understand, she fully believed and trusted in God.

We may not know what's in store for us and why we are called to do certain things, but God does. If we are open to the call and pursue it even when times get hard, as Mary did, then God's plan can unfold into something beautiful.



**Statues of our Blessed Mother at
Tony's *alma mater*, Archbishop Shaw.**

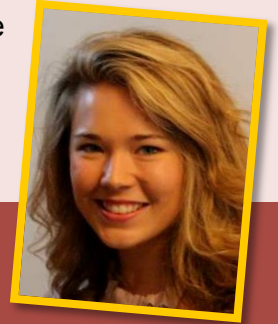
MARY, TRUSTING SERVANT

Mary, the Mother of God, trusted the Father whole-heartedly. Learning that she was the one chosen among all other women to bear the Son of God was the greatest honor ever bestowed on a person, yet can you imagine how fear might have crept up on Mary? How she was probably very nervous to carry Jesus? To tell Joseph? To have people look at her with eyes of misunderstanding as she walked amongst them, betrothed to Joseph – unmarried – yet pregnant? Long before Jesus spoke the words, “Fear is useless, what is needed is trust” (Luke 8:50, Mark 5:36), Mary was living these words.

Deirdre McDermott

Young Adult

Port Chester, New York



Doing the right thing in life does not always line up with doing the easy thing. Many times, the road that leads to choosing the right thing is the bumpiest of all. “What is needed is trust.” Mary teaches us that choosing to do the right thing may not always be the most comfortable or the easiest choice, but the reward with the Father is always the greatest. Mary said yes to God, bearing his Son and being a mother to Jesus. Mary teaches us tremendous trust and faith in the Lord through her simple, unyielding, powerful “yes.”

Jesus is the truth and the way. Jesus is love. It’s hard to imagine the intensity of the love between this mother and this child. Imagine what Mary felt as she watched her Son during His passion. Mary trusted that God’s plan was being carried out, yet the pain and grief she felt as she watched her Son struggle must have been unbearable. As Mary watched Jesus suffer, I think of how she did not know exactly what God’s plan was, but trusted in Him with her whole heart. I marvel at the way Mary placed her life in God’s hands. When I think of the heartache in our own lives, especially in this day and age, I look to Mary as an example of perseverance and pure trust in following the Father’s plan.

Mary never focuses on herself; she always leads us to Jesus. Through Mary’s example, we can learn a greater sense of trust and love for God and for each other. By praying to Mary and by keeping her in our minds, the road to the right thing may become much more bearable, even if it is bumpy.



**A statue of our Blessed Mother
in the St. Joseph Chapel at Mary
Help of Christians Academy in
North Haledon, NJ**

MARY, LOVING MOTHER



Niko Valladares
Salesian Domestic Volunteer
St. John Bosco Parish
Chicago, IL

Niko is currently living and serving with the Salesian community at St. John Bosco Parish in Chicago. He's originally from the West Bank of New Orleans, and as much as he loves the work he's doing in Chicago, he misses his family, especially his baby nephew Landon!

Sometimes people wonder why Catholics like to honor Mary. Each one of our responses should be, "WHY NOT?" Why should we not honor the woman who said "yes" to God and gave birth to our Savior? We as Catholics honor Mary and try to imitate her because she is the true definition of a great mother, and she was the first disciple of Jesus Christ. Mary is, of course, a person of faith, hope, and love. She is a human being just like each

one of us. She went through a great deal of struggle throughout her life, just like each one of us. Mary, by herself, perfectly realized God's will, and serves as the perfect role model for all of us.

I thank God for giving me such a great mother who can teach me in simple and quiet ways. My mother Mary has taught me, and can teach each and every one of you, to persevere in the hope of Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin became the mother of our Savior. Holy Cow, that has to be a big responsibility! I'm sure it wasn't easy at all; she was misunderstood and even jeered at by her community and peers. Mother Mary teaches me to expect that others may not always

understand the path I find myself on with God, yet persevering with Christ will always lead to a life closer to Him. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope with the grace of God, to persevere to the end, and obtain the joys of heaven (CCC 1821). The Blessed Mother was at the foot of the cross, watching her son get crucified to the cross. She didn't ask questions, but instead, offered him the love of a mother and her presence. She has taught me to trust in God's will even though the situation may seem dark, hopeless, and without purpose. She is truly a person of faith, and someone each and every one of us should look up to.

I am united with Mary through suffering. We as human beings experience sadness through our own suffering. I realize the fullness of Mary's humility when I think about the intensity of her shock, disbelief, and intense sorrow as she remained with her son from birth until death. His death was so horrific that nearly all his followers abandoned him. Yet, Mary, Mary Magdalene and his apostle John remained. I ask myself all the time; "What enabled Mary to remain with Jesus and preserved her through his suffering?" Mary's love for Jesus as his mother, and her faith and hope in his divinity, enabled her to endure the path to his death. Often when someone else is suffering, the best way we can help is just simply being with them and praying for them. Each one of us can imitate Mary in our own lives, by reaching others who are suffering. At times this can be relatively easy but at other times, the witnessing of suffering may require much greater effort. During the times when our suffering is most intense, we can remember Mary with her son's suffering. Yes, it can be hard, and at times we may feel as Mary did-- that we can't go on. Yet Mary teaches us that through our love for others, rooted in our love for God, and faith in the resurrection and power of God's grace, we have the strength and courage to persevere through any suffering the world presents.

How do children let their mother know they love her? They obey her, listen to her and run to her in times of need.

Lessons from Mother Mary are truly lessons that God taught her in the silence and openness of her Immaculate Heart. May we trust, listen, and run to our Mother in order to better hear and follow the will of her son, Jesus.

MARY, TEACHING US TO SAY "YES" TO GOD

If you walk into any room at Academy of Our Lady, you will notice three things on our wall: a crucifix, a picture of Don Bosco, and usually right next to Don Bosco, a picture of Mary, Help of Christians. These three images can likely be found frequently in all of our Salesian schools, because it is through Don Bosco and Mary that we focus our students on Jesus. In this month of Mary, we have an opportunity to reflect on the importance Mary had in Don Bosco's life and, in turn, in the lives of Salesian educators and students today.

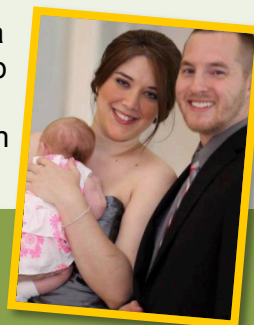
We all know the familiar story of Don Bosco's dream in which Mary guided Don Bosco to change the attitude of the misguided young boys by teaching them with loving kindness. At such a young age, Don Bosco may not have fully understood what Mary was calling him to, but he put his trust in her and through her inspiration, Don Bosco led many young souls to Jesus. What I did not know was that the people of Turin had been honoring Mary Help of Christians for many years before that famous dream.

Shortly before Don Bosco was born, the city of Turin welcomed Pope Pius VII, on his way back to Rome after being freed from exile in Savona. Napoleon had arrested and imprisoned the Pontiff for years, and he attributed his freedom to the intercession of Mary Help of Christians. This visit solidified a strong devotion in and around Turin to Mary under the title "Help of Christians." (You can learn so much from paying attention to the homily of an SDB!)

Saint John Bosco considered all that was accomplished in his oratory, only possible because of Mary Help of Christians. He encouraged his boys to keep this devotion as well, telling them, "Trust all things to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Help of Christians, and you will see what miracles are."

As an educator in a Salesian school, it is important to teach my students that same devotion to Mary. At AOL, our girls wear the word "Fiat" on their school blouses - a reminder to them to say yes to all God asks of them, just as Mary did. Our students know well that Don Bosco turned to Mary in all things, because as a school, we too turn to Mary at all times. Mary is the role model of a strong woman that I hope my students will continue to become. She said yes to God's plan for her to be Jesus' mother, despite the difficulties she would face because of that yes. She then raised her son only to watch him suffer and die for reasons she did not yet fully understand. The trust Mary had in God as she watched the Passion unfold is something to aspire to when faced with what seems to be impossible hardships in our own lives. It is Mary who can offer us comfort and Mary who can lead us to Christ when we turn to her for help.

Don Bosco gave his Salesian family a great gift when he taught us to trust in Mary. May all people, students, educators, and friends who spend time in our Salesian schools find an opportunity to reflect on our mother and become closer to her son.



Theresa Matelski
Coordinator for Youth Ministry
Academy of Our Lady
Marrero, LA

In addition to teaching and ministering to her girls at the Academy of Our Lady, Theresa is also the proud mother of Ana, who just turned 1 this month!



Juniors crown the statue of Mary Help of Christians at the Academy of Our Lady

MARY, CONSTANT PRESENCE



Fr. Pat Angelucci, SDB
Director-President
Salesian High School
New Rochelle, New York

Fr. Pat is completing his third term as the Director of the Salesian Community and President of Salesian High School in New Rochelle

It has been told that our Rector Major, Fr. Peter Ricaldone, was once asked to select a scriptural passage which he thought would best summarize the Salesian Congregation and its mission on behalf of young people. Many Salesians came forward to offer him suggestions which included phrases like: “let the little children come unto me”, or “unless you become like a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven”, or again, “if

anyone offers scandal to one of these little ones, it would have been better for him not to be born.” The suggestions were many and good. However, after listening to all of these and giving some thought and prayer to it all, Fr. Ricaldone opened the New Testament to the Gospel of John 2:1, and chose the words: “...and the mother of Jesus was there.” Those words, he said, gave the total summary of the life of the Salesian Congregation and its mission on behalf of the young. As the years of experience pass in my own Salesian life, I

continue to come to understand and appreciate more and more the wisdom and reasons for Fr. Ricaldone’s choice.

“And Mary the mother of Jesus was there...”, not just in Cana at Galilee, but also in the poor house in Becchi, where little nine year old Johnnny Bosco had his first dream, and the mysterious personage in the dream gave Johnny his teacher, “the one whom your mother has taught you to greet three times a day” – and from that night on, Mary’s presence was palatable in Don Bosco’s life. Mary was there when Mamma Margaret taught him catechism and spoke to him of the role and place of Mary in the life of a good Catholic. She was there in his meetings with Don Joseph Calosso. She was there when he found himself feeling lonely at the Moglia farm. She was there when he went to study in the city and when he went to the seminary. She was there in his friendships with Louis Comollo and Joseph Cafasso. She was there on his ordination day, June 5, 1841; and she certainly was there on the eventful morning of December 8, 1841, when Don Bosco tells us he met the first boy and began his work with the young with a Hail Mary and a simple catechism lesson. She was there in June, 1868, at the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, on whose walls are inscribed the words that Mary built this house for herself – through graces and miracles received through her intercession and the prayers of her servant, Don Bosco. In fact, Don Bosco himself tells us he never took a step in his mission or in the founding of his Society without first consulting our Blessed Mother.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was certainly there in May, 1887, at the consecration of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome when, while celebrating Mass at the altar of Mary Help of Christians, a worn out and feeble Don Bosco broke down and cried. When he was asked why he was crying so much, Don Bosco’s answer was both simple and profound: “only now have I come to understand the dream I had when I was nine years old!” And Mary was there on that train ride back to the Oratory after the celebrations in Rome for the dedication of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, when, with tears in his eyes, Don Bosco turned to his faithful secretary, Father Charles Viglietti, and said to him: “If only I had had more faith in Mary Help of Christians, how much more I could have done!” We know, and Don Bosco and the Salesian Constitutions tell us clearly, that the true foundress of the Salesian Society is Mary, herself. “Mary did it all!”

(continued on next page)

The Salesian Constitutions tell us that Mary was there as Don Bosco's teacher, as he lived the spiritual and educative experience which we call the Preventive System (C#20); and that she is present in the process, even today, as a mother who helps and infuses hope as we strive to evangelize the young people of today (C #34). Mary is present, I believe, because at Cana in Galilee she gave us the key to understanding Don Bosco's mission to the young – and to all we serve – when she tells us to “do whatever Jesus tells you.” This is, in fact, what Don Bosco spent his life doing -- and wore himself out doing: introducing his young people to Jesus, so that they could come to know and understand Him and to learn how to live as Jesus tells us to live. And this continues to be the challenge we Salesians face today in the new evangelization -- in our time, in our culture in our technological age -- how do we introduce Jesus to young people and teach them to live as Jesus tells us to live in a language and way they can understand? Certainly the one to help us and fill us with the hope that we can succeed, regardless of the over-powering voices that proclaim a message other than Jesus', is Mary -- the mother of Jesus -- and our mother. Mary the mother of Jesus IS here!

Just as Mary was present in Cana, and realized the difficulty that the young couple was facing before anyone else noticed, Mary recognizes the difficulties and challenges facing our young people today. In the same way she knew that those servants were going to be able to help that young couple only if they first met Jesus, she is anxious that we (servants of the young today) come to know Jesus more deeply, so we can help the young in their challenge of changing the water of life into the rich wine of faith and hope and love. Mary is constantly introducing us to Jesus, and constantly bringing Jesus along to meet us. And the formula for evangelization and for the fulfillment of Don Bosco's mission remains the same: “Do whatever He tells you!”

In a recent homily, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, told us that Mary is always in haste to help us – this is a key to her mission. As we reflect in this month of May on Mary's role in the life and mission of the Salesian Congregation, we see that the Holy Father's words have certainly been true for us. Truly, the Rector Major, Father Ricaldone got it right, “.....and Mary the mother of Jesus was there” – with Don Bosco at the very beginning, and Mary the mother of Jesus IS here today as Don Bosco's mission continues.



Statues of our Blessed Mother at Salesian High School.

SALESIAN FAMILY DAY AT SIX FLAGS



When I tell people that Jesus is in everything they do and everyone they meet, most times they have a hard time believing me. Some people say, "Jesus is in mass," or "Jesus is in prayer," or other statements such as these, and these statements are very true. But what some people don't realize is that Jesus is also in laughter, tears, and music. Salesian Family Day at Six Flags Great Adventure is one of the most joyous and Salesian activities of the year.

Allison Vaughan
St. Thomas More Youth Group
Hauppauge, New York

Many people ask me, what is a Salesian? And every time my answer is the same. I describe it in five words: faith, fun, friends, family, and food! We all come together to create this one family; this one being in Christ. And that is exactly what makes this day so very Salesian.

Salesian Family Day begins with people running off buses into the park and running to their favorite ride. Racing from ride to ride, running into different parishes as they race. You can practically feel the energy in the park. The great thing about this trip is that there is something for everyone. Whether you like roller coasters or not, the day is still so fun!

Personally, one of my favorite things about Salesian Family Day every year is the Mass, and that's because it is unlike any other Mass that I've ever attended. The music at this mass is astounding. Everybody is up and singing, even if they don't know the words. The best part of the Mass is the multitude and the variation of the people. There are so many different types of people, yet we're still all able to come together in our differences to complement one another. One big part of the day takes place right after mass. A boy and a girl from each group are awarded the Dominic Savio and Laura Vicuna Award. This award is presented to individuals who are not only dedicated to the work they do in their local ministries, but who are also joyful, faithful, gentle young Salesians, who love Jesus and Mary.

This year, I personally had an amazing time. Not only was I able to meet up with friends that I hadn't seen for a few months, but I also rode my first roller coaster! And let me tell you, it was scarier than I thought, but I'll definitely do it again! As a senior in high school, everything just seems to have more of an impact, and this is one day that I will not be forgetting for a long time. It is not only a day for friends and faith, but it's also a day to get closer to your own faith. Jesus comes into your life in many different ways, all you have to do is get on the roller coaster, and buckle in for the ride.



Left: Holy Rosary, Port Chester, arrives at the park.
Center: Fr. Tom Dunne during the Homily.
Right: Allison and Joe from St. Thomas More receive their Dominic Savio and Laura Vicuna Awards

Salesian Family Day at Six Flags Great Adventure is easily one of my favorite days out of the entire year. Imagine that you and 100 of your friends go to the movies and buy out the entire theater for one show. That's what that day is like for me. It's me and my Salesians friends taking over Six Flags with the spirit of Don Bosco.

The day started with mass said by the Provincial Father Tom Dunne, SDB. After everyone had their spiritual nourishment, there was a pep rally to pump up the crowd and get them moving. After lots of shouting, cheering, screaming, and phenomenal dancing, the groups were given a challenge by Super Girl via monitor. Their job for the day was to find the kidnapped

Joe "Brooklyn" Hadzovic
Bensonhurst YM Cluster
Brooklyn, New York



"Carmen Santiago," (who somewhat resembled Carmen Sandiego) and along the way, take pictures of rides, people, Father Abe, Bugs Bunny, Super Man and many others. The winners of this scavenger hunt would not only win a prize-- but be the first group ever to win this event. There was a lot on the line. The question on everyone's mind was which group would win? Would it be one of the biggest groups, like D.C. or St. Anthony's? Or perhaps a smaller group, like Corpus Christi from Port Chester or Our Lady of the Valley? Everyone left the room excited, then sprinted to the best ride in all of Six Flags: Lunch. After feeding their bodies, the participants dashed to their favorite rides, with true Salesian fire. There may have been rain throughout the day--but the park never closed—and it meant shorter lines for us! Even in the midst of the rain, the fire in everyone's heart could not be put out.

It was actually during the rain that the best moment in my entire Six Flags experience occurred. I was gathered with 16 other Salesian youth in line for bumper cars. We were singing at the top of our lungs and talking to anyone and everyone around us. When we finally got to the ride, there was an energy like no other. People stopped and just watched this giant group of teens fill up every single bumper car and totally steal the show. There was signing, shouting and more importantly love throughout the ride. When the ride was over, everyone who had been waiting in line or had stopped to video tape us had a huge smile on their face. They were filled with the joy that only the Salesian family brings. If you ask anyone else who was on that ride, they will tell you that it was the best part of the day.

The day drew to a close and the victory of the scavenger hunt belonged to Brooklyn's Bensonhurst Cluster of Youth Ministry. They may not have won a trophy, but their stomachs full of candy were good enough. As the last group finished to leave, a huge down-pour of rain came out of the sky. It was a blessed day filled with fun and love from everyone who attended. There's nothing quite like a day with over 400 Salesians!



Left: **Joe and Kelly** animate the Youth Rally
Center: **Carmen Santiago** receives her "award"
triggering a scavenger hunt to find her in the park
Right: **St. Anthony's in Elizabeth** gathers for lunch

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT



Karen Salmeron, '12
Don Bosco Cristo Rey HS
Takoma Park, Maryland

The Young Adult Retreat was a weekend retreat for young adults, which fittingly brought together twelve participants, the same weekend of Pentecost. Participants from three major cities (Chicago, New York and Washington, DC) came together to share themselves with one another. Throughout the entirety of the retreat, we felt that we were not brought together by accident, but by the power of the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother. For on the same weekend of YAR, Marian Day was to be celebrated at the Marian Shrine. Being able to celebrate and participate with the whole Salesian family was a reminder for me on why I love the Salesians so much. They demonstrated their true devotion to the Blessed Mother, with the crowning of the Mary statue, even in the rain.

YAR was a wonderful experience, with a message to reunited Salesian past pupils in a loving and spiritual setting. This year's YAR theme was, "Will You Stay with Don Bosco?" This theme really embraced the idea of the true meaning of being a Salesian for life. Throughout this retreat, the participants were encouraged to question themselves on how each was to continue living in the path of Jesus Christ. How were we being Salesian disciple, and living as an example for those around us? I personally came to the realization that a way of remaining in Christ and in Don Bosco was through prayer for the strength to not drift away, but to be an example of Christian discipleship.

In many ways, YAR was similar to a Leadership Retreat in the sense that throughout the weekend there were witness talks, time for small group discussions, prayer, Mass, adoration and reconciliation; but what made this experience different for me, were the talks. This time around, maybe because of where I am in life, I felt that I was able to relate on a more personal level to the messages portrayed in each talk and discussion setting. Personal growth is one of many attributes gained in YAR, as well as reassurance that the Salesian Family awaits your return with open arms and a loving heart.



I attended the 2013 Young Adult Retreat at the Marian Shrine in Stony Point, New York. I am an alumnus of Salesian High School in New Rochelle, New York -- class of 2011. I am a veteran of Salesian retreats, as I attended the March Leadership Retreat in 2010, and then came back as a member of the Young Team on the October Leadership Retreat that same year.

This retreat, however, was different than any other retreat I have been on. Fittingly, there were only 12 young people on the retreat, one for every disciple. I have been on retreats in the past with 50 or 60 kids, so this was a great change of pace. It was relaxed and beautiful, giving

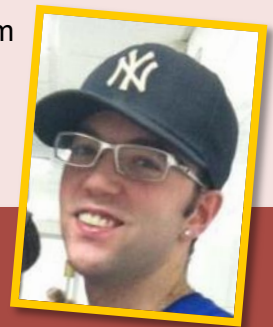
us the chance to be intimate with God, as well as to meet other young people from around the province. Attending the retreat were alumni of Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Washington D.C. as well as our friends from the local Stony Point area and from Chicago. Even though we come from different backgrounds and geographic areas, we came together in Christ as sons and daughters of Don Bosco. We were led by Salesian Domestic Volunteers Niko Valladares and Rachael Pineiro, as well as Salesian cooperator Nick Magrogan and of course-- Father Abraham Feliciano.

As usual, it takes time for young people to get acquainted, but we were given activities to break the ice. For example, we played hot potato with a tissue box; when it landed on one of us, we were assigned a funny thing to do. For example, I had to do three pushups every time the box passed me. On the second day we were together, we put on a skit describing young Johnny Bosco's dream at 9 years old, then attended mass for the Marian Day celebration. One of the most touching parts of the day was marching to the massive statue of Mary as we said the rosary, then watching as Niko and Rachael crowned our beautiful mother with a little help from a fire truck extension ladder. The Lord even put His blessing on the day with rain sprinkled from Heaven.

That night, however, is the part of the retreat that stands out for me. We attended adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and as always, Christ Himself touched everyone in different ways. Some people (like myself) were brought to tears. At this time, we also had the opportunity to attend Reconciliation and get right with God. In that moment, I could see God working in the hearts of everyone in attendance. As I glanced at the Blessed Sacrament, it appeared so bright to me that I had to look away -- as I realized that I was looking at the physical form of our Savior Jesus Christ. It was absolutely beautiful.

The next day, our retreat came to an end—but nobody wanted to leave. In just two days, we went from strangers to family. God worked and made us disciples in just two days. The Lord never ceases to amaze me. A friend of mine from Washington D.C. was with her friends and she said something that struck me. She spoke to Father Abraham and said, "Father, can we live here?" I just thought that line was so beautiful because in two days, we went from venturing out with strangers to crying that we had to leave. But in order to do God's work as disciples, we had to leave. During the final mass, Father Abraham said, "Is the world ready for us?" The answer was probably not. Then he asked, "Are we ready for the world?" My answer to this is -- with the help of Don Bosco, the guidance of Mary Help of Christians, and the power of God -- there is no doubt that we are.

Nick Mongelli, '11
Salesian High School
New Rochelle, New York



THE GOOD NIGHT MOTHER OF JESUS, MOTHER OF US ALL



Fr. Abraham Feliciano, SDB
Province Delegate for
Youth Ministry

One of the simplest, and yet sublime memories of some of my former students dates back to the first of my five years at Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in the Archdiocese of Washington. There was a young man, who was then a 9th grader waiting for his mother in the parking lot after school. He was extremely excited because it was his mother's birthday and he couldn't wait to give her the card, balloons, and flowers that he had bought for her.

As if the great affection and devotion with which he had carefully chosen them for her wasn't enough, he presented them to me for review and implicit approval. I could not help but marvel at his sincerity and eagerness. That May afternoon, his greatest desire was to make his

mother happy, and to express to her just how much her son loves her. He was (and still is to this very day), grateful for the gift of his mother and the role that she has played and continues to play in his life.

The month of May annually provides each of us with the opportunity to make our earthly mothers happy and to express our love for them in a special way through our celebration of Mother's Day. But it also affords us the opportunity to celebrate and honor someone else, our Heavenly Mother, Mary. Traditionally, the month of May has been designated by the Church as the month of Mary, and it is more than mere happenstance that Our Lady's month coincides with the annual celebration of Mother's Day (which is celebrated in numerous countries worldwide on different days throughout the month May). However, the question arises: do we realize the great gift that Mary is to the Church, the Salesian Family, and to each of us as disciples of the Lord Jesus? Do we really cherish the mother of Jesus as the mother of us all?

The singular role that Mary played in the life of Jesus is indisputable. The Gospel of Luke provides us with most of the information that we know about her and best describes who she was in the life of Jesus:

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." . . . Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'" (Luke 1:30-31, 38)

Though the Angel Gabriel announced that Mary would be the mother of Jesus, she was not only Jesus' mother. She was his first disciple, the first to believe and follow him, and the only one who was truly with him from beginning to end, from the moment of the Annunciation to the moment of the Crucifixion. She showed all of humanity how to make Jesus really the center of our lives.

And yet, Mary is much more than an extraordinary role model or the quintessential example of discipleship for us to emulate. While the Gospel of Luke tells us the most about Mary, it is the Gospel of John that best explains Mary's role in the life of the Church, and who she is to each of Jesus' disciples:

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." (John 19:26-27)

While on the cross, Jesus entrusted his mother to the disciple whom he loved most, John. But, in that moment, John was also representative of all of Jesus' disciples past, present and future. In giving Mary to John, Jesus was giving her to all of us. Mary is not only the mother of Jesus, she is also our mother, the mother of each and every one of us. As she was for Jesus, she also has been and always will be there for each of us from the very beginning of our earthly lives to the very end. She has taken each of us into her loving heart, and asks us to open the door of our hearts to her so that she might fill them with the love of her son. And, this is by the very will of Jesus himself who gave her to us while he was on the cross.

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What is more is that as Salesian Family, Mary has a preeminent place in our unique history and lives. In 1824, Jesus once again gave his mother to another John, a then nine-year old boy named John Bosco as mother, teacher, protector and guide:

"[Jesus] 'I will give you a teacher. Under her guidance you can become wise. Without her, all wisdom is foolishness.' [John Bosco] 'But who are you that speaks so?' [Jesus] 'I am the son of the woman whom your mother has taught you to greet three times a day.'" (Memoirs of the Oratory of St. Francis De Sales by Saint John Bosco)

Indeed, and as we already know, Mary would be St. John Bosco's guide from that moment on, and her role as his mother would only increase with the passage of time. Upon the death of his beloved earthly mother, Margaret Occhiena, who spent the last years of her life working beside Don Bosco in the first Oratory, Don Bosco entrusted himself and his boys completely to the maternal care of Mary:

"Most Compassionate Virgin, my sons and I are without a mother! Please be our mother from now on." (The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco- Volume V, p. 374)

Without fail, Mary has cared for the Salesian Family from its very beginning to our present day. She has taken a direct and personal interest in each of us, loving us, watching over us, and nurturing us, just as she did her son Jesus, John the beloved disciple, and St. John Bosco. In his circular letter on Mary as the mother and teacher of Don Bosco, Our Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chavez comments on Don Bosco's dream at the age of nine telling us:

She is this "lady of stately appearance ...wearing a mantle that sparkled all over as though covered with bright stars". She explains the vision and indicates the mission which God is entrusting to him: "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".

This last expression is extremely significant: receiving his orders from Mary, little John identifies her as the Mother of the young who are poor, abandoned and in danger; those who at the end of the dream are transformed from wild animals into gentle lambs, "which were all jumping and bleating as if to welcome that man and lady." (Letter of the Rector Major - AGC 414)

All of us who are members of the Salesian Family are the very "field of work" that Mary indicated to little John Bosco. We are the young, 'poor', 'abandoned' and 'in danger' (materially and/or spiritually) who are being transformed everyday into those gentle lambs. Mary is our mother, and we are her children. What gift shall we give to her? How eager are we to bring her joy? In what way can we let her know that we love her? More than cards, balloons, or flowers, the only gift that Mary requests of us is that we express our love and gratitude to her by loving and following her son, Jesus. She wants us to live well the life that he won for us with the Cross and his Resurrection, and she desires that not a single one of us be lost. As we bring to a close this month of Mary, and prepare for the months of summer, let us renew our love and devotion to Our Blessed Mother, and through her, our commitment to and love for her son, Jesus. By doing so, we will show genuine appreciation for her role in our lives and give her the best present she could ask for, making her unquestionably happy.

The Salesian "Good Night" is a tradition begun by St. John Bosco's mother, Margaret Occhiena Bosco during her time assisting her son in the very first Salesian Oratory. Practiced throughout the Salesian World today, the "Good Night" is a brief thought or message usually shared at the end of the day or at the conclusion of a Salesian gathering. Its purpose is to not only provide "food for thought", but also to offer the Salesian Family a focus, a theme, or a point of reference that assists in discovering the deeper meaning of the day's activities and events. It is a way to become more sensitized to God's action in our daily lives. By Don Bosco's own definition, the Good Night was the "key to good moral conduct, to the good running of the house, and to success in the work of education".

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SALESIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

Gospel Roads Summer 2013

Gospel Roads I

(intended for high school students)

New Orleans, LA June 15-22

Washington, DC July 6-13

Tampa, FL July 6-13

Toronto, ON * July 20-27

Stony Point, NY August 4-10

Gospel Roads II

(intended for youth & young adults, 18 and over)

Port Chester, NY June 22-29

*Limited space remains for some of this summer's retreats.
If you are interested in joining us for Gospel Roads, please contact
the Office of Youth Ministry as soon as possible!*

***For more information about Gospel Roads
please visit us online: www.gospelroads.org***



Statues of our Blessed Mother from Around the SDB and FMA Provinces of St. Philip the Apostle

**Left to Right: Mary Help of Christians Academy (NJ), Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School (MD),
Marian Shrine (NY), Salesian Formation House (NJ)**