



# Bosco News

Volume 5 | Issue 8 | September 2014



# Salesian Youth Challenge



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During the month of August, social media and the media in general was abuzz with numerous episodes and versions of the Ice Bucket challenge by everyone from celebrities to senior citizens, to clergy to young people. While most of the challenges have been either overwhelmingly humorous or genuinely inspiring, they have all had one two-fold purpose in

mind: to raise both awareness of and funds for researching a cure for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's Disease). To date (or at least the time of the writing of this reflection), over \$88.5 million have been raised toward this cause, and well over 6 million gallons of water (not counting the ice) have been poured out. It is truly remarkable how this phenomenon has developed and spread in such an extraordinarily short time. Multitudes of people from all walks of life, ages, cultures, and places have accepted and completed the challenge.

Also during the month of August, there is another special challenge that has been put forth, and while it is directed at the entire Salesian Family, it is in a particular way directed at our youth and young adults. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (the 199<sup>th</sup> birthday of St. John Bosco), the Rector Major (the tenth successor of Don Bosco), Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB officially opened the Bicentennial year in which we are preparing to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of St. John Bosco. In a video address to the whole Salesian Family, he specifically addressed youth and young adults saying:

*"To the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement . . . I would to say exactly what I believe Don Bosco would say to you today: My dear young people, young people around the world, in the Church, in Salesian houses, we need you. We need you because you are the first ones to walk side by side with us. The first to share the experience of life and faith you have had. So your best result for this bicentenary is your commitment to this Salesian Mission, Don Bosco's mission to young people who come after you,"*

The Rector Major has issued a "Salesian Youth Challenge" to the youth and young adults of the world. Our world is wounded, hurt, and sick in so many ways. Ninety seconds of television news or the home page of most news sites instantly reveal tragedy after tragedy that occur in daily life: earthquakes, Ebola outbreaks, war in the Middle East, etc. There is a real need for a "cold bath" of faith, hope and love to raise awareness of God and His people, and to strengthen our bond as his children. There is a real need for individuals, especially young people to serve as living examples of youthful holiness.

There are few things as powerful and as hope-inspiring as a young person committed to actively and happily living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. When a young person is close to Jesus Christ, when he or she participates fully in the life of God's family on earth, and when he or she consistently strives to bring the love of Jesus Christ to each and every person God places in his or her life each and every day, he or she is God's special instrument impacting and changing the lives of God's children. St. Paul, in a letter to his young disciple Timothy, writes:

*"Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity . . . Do not neglect the gift you have, . . . Be diligent in these matters, be absorbed in them, so*

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*that your progress may be evident to everyone. Attend to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in both tasks, for by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.” (1 Timothy 4:12-16)*

As with the Ice Bucket challenge, the “Salesian Youth Challenge” could meet with moments of hesitation, doubt or avoidance altogether. A young

person might question whether or not he or she is “qualified” to help someone, or whether or not he or she is “good enough” to lead others to Jesus. But, the main thing that God asks us to do is to stay close to Him and to be faithful. Ultimately, we need to totally rely on Him, and let Him work through us. After all, in most of the Ice Bucket challenges shown on television or social media, the vast majority of the participants had as their main task staying put while someone else did the “work” of pouring the ice water on them. They had to say, “yes” and remain steadfast in living out their “yes.” This is no less true in our lives as disciples. The prophet Jeremiah was called at a young age to serve God, also wrestled with doubt, and had to learn early on to rely completely on God:

*“‘Ah, Lord God!’ I said, ‘I do not know how to speak, I am too young!’ But the Lord answered me, ‘Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you – oracle of the Lord.’” (Jeremiah 1:6-7)*

When we trust in God and rely on Him, while giving Him our best, He **always** takes care of the rest.

St. John Bosco believed that with God, young people could meet the challenges that the world sends them. He believed that young people were God’s special gift to the challenges of this world and that through them, God could do many wonderful things, even miracles. In a book that he wrote especially for young people in 1847, called *The Companion of Youth for the Practice of Christian Piety*, Don Bosco states:

*“Although He loves all people whom He created with His own hands, He has a special affection for the young, who delight Him. You are the joy and the delight of the Creator. He loves you because you still have time to do many good deeds. He loves you because your very age means simplicity, humility, and innocence, . . . Because you know that the Lord loves you so much at your age, you must resolve to try your best to respond to His love by doing everything you can to please Him and by avoiding everything that might offend Him.”*

Don Bosco challenged the young people of his day to do good things for God and God’s people. Today, in the person of his successor, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, he is once again challenging our young people to do great things for God and God’s people. Now more than ever, we need young people who are willing to meet the “Salesian Youth Challenge” and help fill the world with more faith, more hope and more love. Will they accept and meet the challenge? Along with Don Bosco and Fr. Ángel, I believe they will.

# Coming Soon

**We are excited to announce that our website is back up and running, and is better than ever! Check it out at [Salesianym.com](http://Salesianym.com)**

## **OLR 2014:**

**Stony Point, NY (October 6-9, 2014)**

## **Annual CYM Meeting:**

**San Antonio, TX (December 1-3, 2014)**

## **National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry: San Antonio, TX (December 4-7, 2014)**

The Annual CYM Meeting will be happening in conjunction with the NCCYM. For details and information about the Salesian package and for registration, please contact Program Coordinator, Rachael Pineiro at [rpineiro@salesianym.com](mailto:rpineiro@salesianym.com).

## **Gospel Roads III: Nicaragua**

**(December 27, 2014 – January 3, 2015)**

Please contact Salesian Youth Movement Coordinator, Tanya Acosta at [tacosta@salesianym.com](mailto:tacosta@salesianym.com) for detailed program information and registration.



**Salesian Youth Ministry**



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