

## Salesian Missions

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# SALESIAN SPOTLIGHT



## E-NEWS SEPTEMBER 2021

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR 32 YEARS



## Commemoration of Don Bosco's 206th birthday and Our Lady's Birthday 8<sup>th</sup> September

(ANS - Turin) - August 16 is always a special feast day for the Salesian Family: it is, in fact, the day on which the anniversary of Don Bosco's birth is celebrated. This year, in his birthplace, the 206th birthday of the Saint of Youth was celebrated with a

solemn Eucharistic concelebration presided over by the Rector Major's Vicar, Fr Stefano Martoglio, with the wonderful participation of many priests, including Fr Ivo Coelho, General Councillor for Formation. There were also many young people from the area's various oratories who took part in the celebrations to pay homage to Don Bosco.

Like every year, the celebration of Don Bosco's birth is also an opportunity to remember the dynamics of the Salesian charism that, having developed on this hill at the time almost unknown, then expanded and spread throughout the world, benefiting many young people. Even today, after so many years, thousands of children are growing up receiving the educational mark of Don Bosco.

Through the course of the centuries, among those who experienced very deeply the help from the mother of Jesus, was St. John Bosco. "Be devoted to Mary Help of Christians and you will see what miracles are," was one of his tireless sayings.



### "GRIGIO - GRAY", THE DOG WHO PROTECTED DON BOSCO

"Gray", èl Gris', in Piedmontese, was a mysterious dog that accompanied St. John Bosco for more than

thirty years, protecting him from dangers.

In the 1850s, Don Bosco was the victim of frequent attacks, and it was in those years that this dog began to appear, always protecting the Saint of Youth. Don Bosco wrote that he saw Gray for the last time in 1866, then he mysteriously disappeared.

Don Bosco was asked several times for his opinion on the nature of that animal, and he once replied: "To say that it is an angel would make us smile, but we cannot even say that it is a common dog."

Some nuns also said they were protected by "Gray". In particular it appeared:

- in **1893** while two Salesian sisters were returning from Assisi to Cannara;

- in **1930** in Barranquilla, Colombia, while the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians were building their school;

- between **1898 and 1900** in France, in Navarre, while some nuns went to look for chestnuts. **ANS**

### Most Holy Virgin Mary, Help of Christians,

How sweet it is to come to your feet,  
imploping your perpetual help.

If earthly mothers cease not to remember their children,  
how can you, the most loving of all mothers forget me?  
Grant then to me, I implore you,

your perpetual help in all my necessities,

In every sorrow and especially in all my temptations.

I ask for your unceasing help for all who are now suffering.

Help the weak, cure the sick, convert sinners.

Grant through your intercessions many vocations to the  
religious life.

Obtain for us, O Mary, Help of Christians,

that having invoked you on earth

we may love and eternally thank you in heaven. Amen.

# Golden Jubilee Father Patrick Naughton

27 June 1971 - 2021



Father Pat's  
virtual  
invitation to his  
Golden Jubilee  
Celebration.

The Candle was  
donated by  
Esme Heynes.

**50 Years**

**A JUBILEE OF DEVOTION**

**VIRTUAL INVITATION**

DATE Sunday 27 June 2021  
 MASS 11.30am, Virtual details will follow  
 SPEECHES 1.15pm, Virtual details will follow

Fifty years ordained  
Fifty years devoted to  
Our Salesian youth.

Inspired SDB  
Driven by Don Bosco's spirit  
Lifted by his faith.

Now we celebrate  
And invite you please to join us  
For his jubilee.

Padraic O' Neachtain  
Father Pat to most of us but  
Not so in Ireland.

Born speaking Gaelic  
Sisters, brothers, proud preservers  
Of his mother tongue.

Sláinte is táinte  
Health and wealth we must wish him  
Won't you please join us?

A wonderful effort was made by the team who arranged a spirited celebration with a connection all the way to Ireland.



Anybody who knows Father Pat will know that he is a humble man who always puts others before himself. He could not speak English when he arrived in this country, as his mother tongue is Gaelic. He progressed to teaching children at Bosco Randvaal and became Rector there. He was also Rector at Our Lady Help of Christians, Lansdowne. He was later elected as Provincial of the Salesians in Southern Africa, where he worked from Booyens, Gauteng. He transferred after this back to Cape Town, where he has built up the projects at the Salesian Institute. Respected and loved by many, we pray for God's richest blessings on him during this his Jubilee Year. Ad multos annos Father Pat and thank you for your dedicated service for all these years. **Photos courtesy Sydney Duval**

# Golden Jubilee Father Bart Walsh – 4<sup>th</sup> July 1971 - 2021

“According to Deuteronomy 34:7, **Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak, nor his strength gone.** Fr. Bart is 80 years old, his eyes are not weak, nor his strength gone, even though his legs are trying to be weak, but he will not allow them to be.

Now, this implies that Moses was 80 years of age when God sent him to pharaoh. I wonder if you should be worried, Bart? It would appear that Moses only started doing real work at the age of 80! But you are one up on Moses. If we combine your age and years of Salesian Priesthood it numbers 130 years, ten years more than Moses. Moses was/is a giant among all the prophets. In you, Bart, we have our own giant, literally and figuratively.

**You are a giant of kindness:** for this reason, people love you and remember you. We are all attracted to godness and kindness. We seek it out. You make time to be with people and you generously give of your time and energy to listen to them. Thus, people seek you out.



**You are a giant of compassion:** perhaps because you have had your fair share of physical pain, you are able to be compassionate to those who are suffering. You bare your suffering silently and with dignity. In doing so you are a role model of compassion.

**You are a giant of the Anawim:** the little ones of Yahweh. In this I think that you and Pope Francis were cut from the same cloth. Pope Francis, from day one of his pontificate advocated going to the peripheries and ministering to people there. Speaking to God’s people, it became very clear that throughout your priestly ministry, you have had and continue to have great care of the weak, the neglected, those who own nothing and therefore mean nothing to others. You have the capacity to make the small feel great and I can personally attest to that (my practical training).



**You are a giant of faith:** in the years I’ve shared life with you in Community, I realized something very important. On the outside you appear rough. You sound like a rebel and sometimes even like a heretic when it comes to matters of Faith. But I have come to realize that you state the controversial to draw out a response that comes from reason. I have come to realize that at the core you are a man of deep faith and belief, with a deeper love for the Church and the Salesian Congregation. If that was not true, why would you have offered your life to the Congregation and the Church? Why would you have stayed for so long being of service?

Yes, Bart, we have all come to realize that you are just one giant teddy bear and we love you! Moses watch out, there is a new giant on the block and he shows no sign of slowing down.

Fifty years of devotion to God, the Salesian Congregation and the Church is not an easy task. It is worthy of congratulations, celebration and most importantly, thanksgiving to Almighty God. The same goes for eighty years of life!”

*Homily delivered by Father Jonathan Daniels on the occasion of Father Bart's golden jubilee of Salesian priesthood, 21 August 2021.* Photos and article courtesy of Brother Clarence Watts



A joint celebration was had on 21 August, that of Father Bart’s Golden Jubilee and of his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

We wish him many congratulations and pray that God will continue to bless him and ease his suffering.



# Golden Jubilee Father Michael Whelton

20 June 1971 - 2021

“When I took the first big step in the direction of the Priesthood, I knew several religious – but I didn’t know any Salesian. That was in September 1955. My mother came with me to the aspirantate, St. John Bosco Missionary College, and left for home the following day. My friend Sean McGrath also came with his mother. I knew about Don Bosco, having read Anna Kuhn’s Don Bosco, a book which had attracted my attention. It was the life story of St. John Bosco. It had a white and green dust jacket with a drawing of John Bosco juggling vegetables. It was published in the United States. I read it a few times. I also read St. John Bosco’s Early Apostolate, and a booklet published in Pallaskenry, on St. Dominic Savio.

My Uncle Mick took me with him when he went to Nazareth House, Dromahane, to visit Jim Pyne. I had to stay in the parlour. I was on my own, and there on the table was the Salesian Bulletin from Pallaskenry. I devoured its contents. There was a photo of apprentice confectioners in a Salesian school in Australia. I had baked my first cake at the age of eight and by 1955, I had five years’ experience. My dream of being a missionary in Africa as a teacher of cake-making began with that photo.

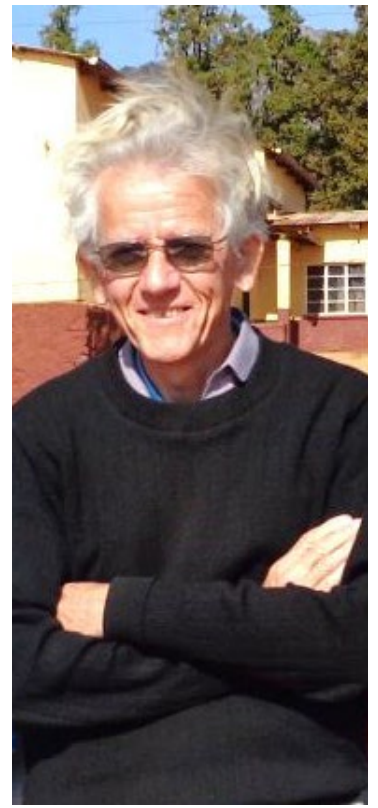


Father Joe Nolan was the Rector that first year. He later told others in my hearing that I was the only aspirant who had actually written a letter of application. I got to know Brother John Kirby that first year. He was sent to Swaziland at the end of that year. I joined the Missions group in my sodality and began to write to Nicholas Shongwe who was a student at Salesian High School. I met Father David de Burgh in 1958 and he spoke about the Novitiate that was starting in Clonlea the following year. I made a point of meeting Father Aeneas Tozzi who told us how he had seen Don Bosco in the Valdocco Oratory. I spoke to Father Hall, the Provincial, at least twice. I told him I would like to go to South Africa. All of this before I went to the novitiate.

After having lived fifty years as a Salesian priest, I would sum up my life as a Salesian, by saying that I’m a person who is ever ready to share my enthusiasm for Don Bosco – especially with Swazi youth. It’s an ongoing journey – an interior, reflecting journey, that I’m on.

The most memorable event in my life as a Salesian of Don Bosco was being the first Salesian to finish the Comrades Marathon. That was in May 1985. I’m still waiting to hear about the second.”

Father Michael celebrated his Jubilee with the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, in Malkerns, Eswatini. After the Mass and prayers, the Sisters thanked him for all that he had done for them and then they all enjoyed a delicious meal.



We wish Father Michael every blessing during this Jubilee year. May the work he does with the youth and the Sisters in Malkerns, continue to flourish.

Salesians, Religious, friends and young people are extremely grateful to him for his dedicated service to Eswatini.

Ad Multos Annos Father.



# 25 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

## BROTHER CLARENCE WATTS

"I grew up in an area called Gelvandale, situated in Port Elizabeth's Northern Areas where most families were moved from South End due to the Apartheid government's segregation policies. Childhood was great fun. I played cricket and football in the street, attended Fonteijn Primary school which was opposite our house and completed high school at St. Thomas in 1989. Great friendships were forged in our neighbourhood and at high school. I'm still in touch with some of my high school classmates. One Sunday after mass, I was walking home with my friend David and he asked me "Are you gonna become a priest one day?" What prompted the question was the fact that our parish priest Father John Clark spoke about vocations during his homily on that particular Sunday. Father John was very instrumental in my vocational accompaniment and has guided so many young people towards the Priesthood and Religious Life, especially from my parish of St. Joseph the Worker in Chatty.



After high school, I was trying to discern where God was calling me. I did some studies at Bethelsdorp Technical College, and it was during this time that Sr. Marguerite, a Good Shepherd sister, approached me in becoming involved in catechetics. I was a bit sceptical but gave it a try and worked with the senior catechists, with the confirmation youth. I really enjoyed engaging with young people and this was the seed that was sown for the Salesian vocation. Up until that time I had never heard of



Salesians or Don Bosco. Salesian life is right at the heart of youth work and the community aspect deepens the fellowship amongst Religious. after having lived 25 years as a Salesian Brother, I would say that life is an adventure with God, young people, and all those whom I have encountered along the way. It is difficult to sum up 25 years of so much that has happened.

The most memorable event in my life as a Salesian of Don Bosco was when I made my first religious vows on the 31st of January 1996 in Maputsoe, Lesotho. Another memorable event, was the years I spent at St. Francis Xavier Philosophicum from January 1996 to December 1997. I met some amazing young religious men from various congregations and backgrounds. Another memorable event was being in the presence of Pope John Paul II when he celebrated the Papal Mass in Germiston, Johannesburg in 1995. My practical training years at Bosco Youth Centre from 1998 to 1999 also stand out as a truly wonderful experiences with young people. Life is an event with many tapestries. My jubilee message in ONE sentence.

"You never gonna survive unless you go little crazy." I love this quote from the song Crazy by the singer Seal."

All God's blessings go to Brother Clarence during his year of celebration and beyond. May he continue to assist young people and possibly bring some vocations to the Salesian Congregation in this country. Ad Multos Annos.



# PERPETUAL PROFESSION - XOLILE SAMSON GALATA - 24 JULY



On Saturday 24 July, cleric Xolile Samson Galata made his perpetual profession at Savio Chapel in Walkerville, Johannesburg. AFM Provincial Fr. Joy Sebastian was the main celebrant. Also present were members of the Salesian Family [SDB, FMA, MSMHC] and the Salesian Volunteers of Don Bosco Centre. Xolile is the first Xhosa to become a Salesian. He comes from Viljoenskroon, a town in Orange Free State. As Xolile relates about his vocation story: *During one of the vocations camps which was held in Welkom, Archbishop Stephen Brislin, who at that time was in charge of promoting vocations in the diocese of Kroonstad, screened a video. The video was "Mission to Love", the latest Don Bosco movie. This was my first encounter with Don Bosco, and I fell in love with him.* **CONGRATULATIONS BROTHER MAY YOU CONTINUE FAITHFULLY IN YOUR VOCATION**



**SALESIANS** need the economic assistance to support people like Zolile. We would be grateful for any donations that our readers could help us with.



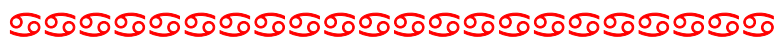
## MISSIONVALE CARE CENTRE



came about through the pure dedication and generosity of Sister Ethel. In addition, Sister Ethel, with the help of many generous people, has made the centre a beacon of hope, not only to the immediate community but to whole of Port Elizabeth. Whenever I have free time, I volunteer at the centre and assist with the soup kitchen. The



people at the centre have taught me many valuable lessons in life especially to be grateful for what I was given in life. When seeing the number of people in need, one comes to the realization that we can provide for ourselves. I have witnessed the works of God, working through his people and how one can make a difference in this world. God has created humanity, so that we are able to guide and protect each other. As we are all children of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us be positive and continue to help our brothers and sisters in need of love and protection. **Brother Joseph Juries SDB**



## ST JOHN BOSCO PARISH WESTRIDGE CAPE TOWN - HANDED OVER TO THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

On the 13 June 2021, after 45 years of loyal service, the Salesians of Don Bosco today celebrated the last Mass in the parish of St John Bosco, Westridge. We passed the baton on to serve, to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. God bless all those Salesians both of good memory and still alive, who tirelessly ministered to the people of this Parish. The end of an era! It saddens us, but we pray that the good work started by the Salesians will be continued by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Prayerful good wishes, the Maryland Sisters. **Father Jonathan Daniels** performing the hand over to the Oblates. May God bless them as they continue the work that Salesians began.



# RENEWAL OF VOWS, PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS AND NEWS OF THE FMA – SALESIAN SISTERS

**Sister Sylvia Mwansa renewed her Vows on 5 August at Boksburg Provincial House. She is seen here with the Provincial of the FMA Sisters in South Africa, Sister Marie Claire Jean.**



**The 5th of August is the FMA (Salesian Sisters or Daughters of Mary Help of Christians or simply 'Don Bosco Sisters') Foundation Day. This year Mother General Sr Yvonne Reungoat also released a special message from their birthplace in Mornese (Italy) on this occasion - just one year before their great 150th Jubilee celebration (1872-2022).**

**(ANS - Mornese) - Yesterday, Thursday 5 August 2021, the 149th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) took place. As per tradition, in Mornese, the birthplace of Mother Maria Domenica Mazzarello, Co-founder of the Institute, the perpetual professions of several FMA religious were celebrated during a Mass presided over by the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, in the presence of Mother**

General of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Mother Yvonne Reungoat, and many other Sisters.

Yesterday's celebration also took on particular connotations, due to the opening of the last year of the three-year period of preparation for the 150th anniversary of the Foundation of the Institute, which will be celebrated next year, and of the XXIV General Chapter, which the FMA will celebrate starting from mid-September.

*Currently the FMA Institute is made up of 11,225 sisters and has 310 novices. There are 79 circumscriptions (74 Provinces and 5 Vice Provinces), with 1,331 works in 97 countries around the world.*



## **Pope Francis names Sister Smerilli FMA as secretary of Dicastery for Human Development**

Pope Francis appoints Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, FMA, as the interim Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and as a delegate of the Vatican Covid-19 Commission.

The Pope has appointed Sister Smerilli "to replace Msgr. Bruno Marie Duffé and Father Augusto Zampini, respectively Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the same Dicastery, both of whom have returned to their dioceses." "I am grateful to the Holy Father," said Sr. Smerilli, "for the challenging task he has called me to take on, and I pray the Lord will help me honour this call in a spirit of obedience to the Church, with the humility, passion, creativity and ability to listen that it requires. My desire and commitment are to be able to serve the mission of the Church to the best of my ability, for as long as the Pope sees fit." **Vatican News**



# MSMHC WORK IN MALKERNS ESWATINI

The Sisters in Malkerns have been very busy this year. Earlier on in the year they held a Catechists Workshop conducted by Father Mbongiseni Shabangu. Fourteen Catechists attended and the theme was 'Teach like Jesus taught.'

They also conducted a Festive Oratory for the children who attend St John Bosco Pre-School.



Hope House has increasing numbers of sick people and without economic assistance the Sisters would not be able to help people who depend entirely on the Sisters for their needs.



Family visits are the main apostolate of the MSMHC. However, the Sisters only visited a few families due to the COVID 19 pandemic. They visited the bereaved families and those who were sick.

Fr. Odise Lazri SDB conducted a youth program in Sigcineni village. Around 70 youth had gathered for the program. The day started with Holy Mass at 9 a.m. followed by talks and group activities.



The Sisters also visited Focus Village where they distributed food to the families. And so, the work goes on as we pray God's blessing on all their activities. **Sisters Elsa, Susan and Mary Clara.**

**The Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC)** landed in the Chin Hills of Myanmar at the invitation of Bishop of Kalay, Feilx Lian Khen Thang. The pioneer sisters were Sr. Julie Mate, Sr. Mary Niang and Sr. Simona Gualnam. They reached the promised land of Myanmar 4 years ago (July 2017) accompanied by Sr. Christine Mynsong (General Councillor for Evangelization).

*The MSMHC is the 12th officially recognised group in the Salesian Family of Don Bosco. With 1,290 professed members in 205 houses and 87 novices (January 2021) they are the second-largest Congregation of religious women in the Salesian Family, right after the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA).*

*MSMHC members are in 10 countries: India, Myanmar, Hawaii (USA), Italy, Germany, Eswatini, South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.*





# WAVES OF CHANGE GOOD NEWS STORY - BABALWA GWE



Sea fishing is a large industry in South Africa, especially along the Western Cape coastline. The Salesian Institute Youth Projects realised the need for youth, with very low levels of education, to be gainfully employed in order to contribute towards the financial needs of their families and communities. The Cape Town harbour is on our doorstep and with the result we partnered with large sea fishing companies in the sector, as well as various training providers, to train some 200 young men and women each year. Most of the participants are men, as the nature of working in the maritime industry requires physical strength and lots of endurance, a job more suitable for men.

The Salesian Institute Youth Projects celebrated Women's month during August and focussed on those women, showing bravery and commitment in their quest to improve their lives by joining the Waves of Change

Programme. One of them is Babalwa Gwe, a 36-year-old woman from Kraaifontein in Cape Town. She went to college to study mechanical engineering but could not secure any employment. She has two boys, and to survive and look after her family, she took several short-term contracting jobs all over Cape Town, filling in for people on maternity leave for instance, and where needed and doing an array of tasks, from making beds, to administrative office jobs. It barely paid the bills, and she was not enjoying it.

The Waves of Change Programme was mentioned to her by a friend. Working in the maritime industry seemed like a viable option for Babalwa, despite it being a male dominated world. At first some of the training was intimidating, but eventually she got over some of her fears, for instance, to be submersed under water. "The first time was very scary, but then it was OK," says Babalwa with a proud smile. "I can do what men do, I can work hard, I can hold my ground!"

Babalwa has a dream of earning a steady income soon, being able to buy a house and maybe a car, and to be an independent woman. We believe that she will succeed. A determined and brave lady!

The Waves of Change Programme has provided Life Skills training to 209 (187 males, and 22 females) beneficiaries during 2021 with around 30% successful employments to date.



**WAVES OF CHANGE GRADUATION WITH - FATHER JOSEPH NGUYEN on the right**

**One of our Learn to Live students ready for his job interview – right.**



"Dear young people, keep running, attracted by the face of Christ, Whom we love so much, Whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters. Pope Francis

# DON BOSCO EDUCATIONAL CENTRE ENNERDALE



The Education Department issued a ruling that our Senior School Children should be separate from the Junior School Children. In order to cause as little trouble as possible, and with the least expense, it was decided at a Board Meeting, that a child safeguarding fence would be put between the two sections, with a gate, allowing the Juniors to have



access to the dining room for meals. The fence is rather an eye sore, however it has been



constructed with the proviso that a hedge is planted, making the site more attractive.

Salesian Missions was asked to help with the cost and so Father Robert Gore, Gale Wiles and yours truly went to inspect the fence. We received a hearty

welcome from Melany Goldsmith, who took us

on a tour of the grounds. We met several people in the process, one of them being the Principal of the Junior School - Laura Vicuna Educational Centre - namely Sister Motselisi, whose office is manned by a television screen showing remote camera images. "I have to care for my children," said Sister.

This was all followed by tea and scones. Lovely!



*Whatever you do, think of the glory of God as your main goal.  
St John Bosco*



# THE SEASON OF CREATION



**Pope Francis** sends a video message to launch the new Laudato si' Action Platform, bringing the Laudato si' Year to a close but continuing the battle to protect our common home. In his video message for the launch of the *Laudato si'* Platform, Pope Francis notes that "with the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, promulgated in 2015, I invited all people of good will to take care of the Earth, which is our common home."

This "house that hosts us" has been suffering for a long time, from "the wounds that we cause by our predatory attitude," laments the Pope.

He highlights the fact that "the current pandemic has now brought to light in an even stronger way the cry of nature and that of the poor who suffer most the consequences, highlighting that everything is interconnected and interdependent and that our health is not separated

from the health of the environment in which we live."

It is for this reason that we need "a new ecological approach," says Pope Francis. In this way we can "transform our way of dwelling in the world, our styles of life, our relationship with the resources of the Earth and, in general, our way of looking at humanity and of living life." We have a great responsibility, continues the Pope, "especially with regard to the future generations." "What world do we want to leave to our children and our young? Our selfishness, our indifference and our irresponsible ways are threatening the future of our children!" he warns.

Pope Francis then goes on to "renew" his appeal: "Let us take care of our mother Earth; let us overcome the temptation of selfishness that makes us predators of resources; let us cultivate respect for the gifts of the Earth and creation; let us inaugurate a lifestyle and a society that is finally eco-sustainable: we have the opportunity to prepare a better tomorrow for all. From God's hands we have received a garden, we cannot leave a desert to our children."

The Pope then goes on to explain that the *Laudato si' Action Platform* is "a seven-year journey that will see our communities committed in different ways to becoming totally sustainable, in the spirit of integral ecology."

He invites everyone to "embark on this journey together," and particularly calls on the involvement of "families - parishes and dioceses - schools and universities - hospitals - businesses and farms - organisations, groups and movements - religious institutes."

Work together, he stresses, as "only in this way will we be able to create the future we want: a more inclusive, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world." Bringing his message to a close, Pope Francis recalls that "there is hope."

Working together, he says, "each one with his own culture and experience, each one with her own initiatives and capacities, so that our mother Earth may be restored to her original beauty and creation may once again shine according to God's plan." **Vatican News**

The first of September has been established by Pope Francis as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. This World Day of Prayer also falls at the beginning of the Season of Creation, which concludes on 4 October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Ecology. This is an ecumenical season dedicated to prayer for the protection of creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles. Pope Francis composed the following prayer for his *Laudato Si'* encyclical.



## A PRAYER FOR OUR WORLD

"Creator God, who made our beautiful world, appointed us as its guardians and gifted us with everything we need, forgive us for the times we cause it harm; for the times our way of life affects our neighbours. Inspire us to care for the environment; to help rebuild lives and communities; to share in the griefs and anxieties, joys and hopes of all your people, so that all your creation may flourish. Amen."



**Pope Francis:**  
**"The poor enable us  
to discover the true  
face of the Father"**

## THE BOY WHO SLEPT ON THE COWS....



Andre was introduced to me, via WhatsApp, by a mutual friend residing in Cape Town. She told me about his magnificent voice and that he had sung the *Panis Angelicus* on the Feast of Corpus Christi, in the Salesian Church of Our Lady Help of Christians in Lansdowne. And so, I asked Andre if he would write an article for me for the Spotlight newsletter.

After exchanging messages over WhatsApp, Andre telephoned me and we had a most interesting conversation, after which I suggested that he write his biography and he said that a friend had gone one step further and suggested producing a film. Andre has lived in Chelsea, London for nearly 27 years.

### AND HERE IS HIS STORY.

"As a child I grew up on a farm in Ottery, Cape Town. It was during the apartheid days, and because I did not have a birth certificate, I could not go to school like the other children did. I started working on a farm at the age of

5 years old, looking after the cows in the field. I had to be up before 6 in the morning to shepherd them into the field. Imagine a bare foot, 6-year-old walking in the fields looking after the cows until 6pm. I gave each cow a name, and I loved them. I remember during lunch time when they took a nap, I would sleep on top of them.

I had a guardian angel during this special time in my life. He was a gentleman who used to cycle on the Old Strandfontein Road on his way to work. Every morning he would stop and give me his lunch. I did not know him and wish I could see him today and say thank you.

One day the cows were having their usual lunch time nap and I was sleeping on top of them. They farmer saw me and hit me with a whip in my face that the blood poured down. My mother heard what had happened, and she quickly grabbed my hand and we started running. We went to live on another farm where I worked in the fields. That farmer was much kinder, and he used to shoot a pheasant for me every Sunday.

Social Services eventually discovered that I was working on a farm at the age of 9 and they had me enrolled at school. No one at the school knew that I lived on a farm and that I sat around a fire in the morning to get ready. My mother always made sure that I was clean and presentable. Every teacher at school loved me

and I became a straight A student in primary school.

I started singing at the age of around 12 years old. I trained at The Joseph Stone and was party of the Eoan Group Singers, under May Abrahamse, who received a lifetime award for her work in the arts. I was the youngest singer in the group.

I never thought much of my voice because I was young and was singing with very experienced singers. I never realised that my voice was still developing.

I always wanted to become a pop singer and when I had my first training with May. I thought I would never go back, but I did. Opera somehow grows on you. On my way home from school, I always used to listen to the Afrikaans singers, and I think that also had some impact on me as a child wanting to sing.

At the age of 14 I worked in the supermarkets over weekends. I looked bigger than my age and so I could get away with it. I worked in a department store every Friday, Saturday and Sunday after school, until I finished my matric.

I remember in matric, one of my most favourite teachers, was my English teacher who got married to an English gentleman. I sang at their wedding in the Catholic Church. And he planted a seed in my heart saying that I should go over to the UK because there were many opportunities there.

I left the Department store and went to work for a hotel for a few months after finishing high school. The hotel was the Victoria & Alfred Hotel on the Waterfront. I remember one day I was standing next to a lady, and we were chatting. She was very taken with our beautiful country, and she

said this to me. I very forwardly asked her who she was, and she said that her daughter was the Princess of Wales "Princess Diana." Can you imagine my surprise...?

Princess Diana's mother was staying at the hotel, and we struck up a wonderful friendship. Every day we would have wonderful stories to tell each other.

When she was leaving, she especially came over to me with a piece of paper on which she had written her address, in Oban in Scotland. After the address she had written "keep on smiling and keep in touch." The Honourable Mrs Frances Shand Kydd and I kept in touch until she died.

Whilst still working at the hotel I met another wonderful English lady, Gwen Landsville, whom I did not know would play such a big part in my life. It was her first visit to Africa, and she had come for a month to write a book. We became very friendly, and she became like another mother to me. Whilst here she did everything in her power to ensure that I could make a life for myself in England, before she left Cape Town.

When I went to England, I stayed with her for a while settling in. She wanted to help me to develop my voice and put me in contact with various people in the music industry. Her best friend, Betty Bloom used to take me to music school every week. Betty was the grandmother of the actor Hollywood actor Orlando Bloom. Betty had one of those small dogs who could not sit still. By the time I got to my class I was covered in dog hair 🐕

I studied and worked in England. My voice matured and I became a Dramatic Tenor. I finally I could sing the arias of Puccini. My voice was at its peak and immensely powerful, and I could sing without a microphone. Once I even set off an alarm whilst singing.

I had the opportunity to sing in various countries in Europe. One of the greatest honours I had, was to sing in the first monastery of St Benedict, dating back to more than a 1000 years ago in Subiaco in Italy, called the Monastery of St. Scholastica.

I had some difficulty gaining entry to the Monastery because the Abbot emphatically told my friend and I Aerial view of St. Scholastica's Abbey that we were not allowed entry. "But he has come all the way from England," said my friend. That did not make any difference. "He is actually South African," said my friend. Talk about 'open sesame' the Abbot welcomed us with open arms, saying that one of the Monks was a South African. As a result, I was given a grand tour and allowed to sing. It was the first time that I sang Panis Angelicus. Never in my life had

I experienced such great acoustics. One of my best Italian friend's fathers is an artist and in their home is a photo of him presenting a sculpture of Saint Benedict to Pope Benedict.

Another interesting event was at a stately home in England where I played Normanno, the Captain of the Guard, in the opera Lucia di Lammemoor. The opera was outdoors, and it was a charitable event, for dogs detecting cancer in humans. The Patron of the Charity was Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall. At one time I was asked to sing in Germany and the welcome I got was incredible. Special place mats were made showing the South African flag and the words, "Welcome Andre." A few years ago, I was asked to sing at a Memorial Service and one of the hymns was Amazing Grace. While I was singing a woman ran crying, from the back of the church to the front and shouted out that her father had died the day before and that this was his favourite hymn. The congregation asked me to sing it again and I did so. This time the woman went on her knees crying, from the back of the Church to the

front. After the service I spoke to her



and she told me that I had the most beautiful voice, and she only wished that her father could have heard me sing. He father was Idi Amin! Imagine - dying in exile it became his favourite song...

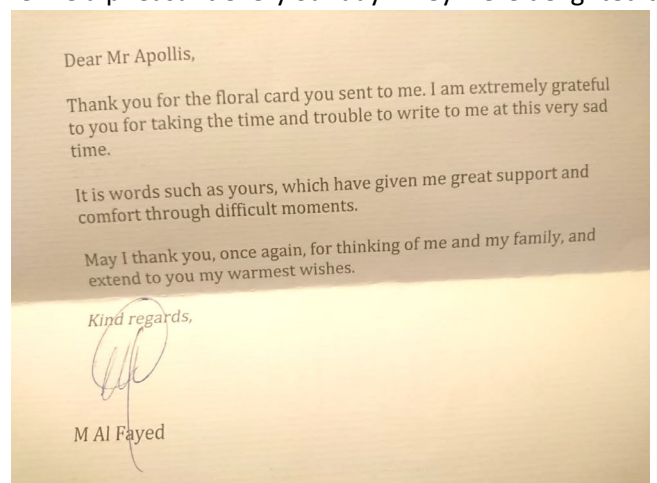
I said goodbye to my wonderful 'mother' – Gwen - 2 months before her ninetieth birthday. I spent the last two weekends with her. Before she died, I gave her an orchid and she was deep in thought. I asked her what she was thinking, and she asked me if I would sing at her funeral, which I did. On her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday I hired an operatic restaurant, invited all her staff, arranged a photo of Gwen on a grand piano, raised a glass and thanked them all on her behalf. It was the end of an era.

While spending time here in Cape Town I have been able to catch up with news from my birth mother. We have spent much time reminiscing. I also visited the family of the farmer who used to give me a pheasant every Sunday. They were delighted to make my acquaintance and to hear of their father's generosity.



Just recently England celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death of Diana Princess of Wales. I was walking along and looking at all the bouquets of flowers that had been laid down for her. I thought of Mohamed al-Fayed and decided to write to him on the anniversary of the death of his son Dodi.

Within 3 days I received a very emotional letter thanking me for my kindness. In my desk I have 2 thank you letters – one from Diana's mother and the other from Dodi's father. (Now that is something incredibly special. Ed.)



I am a child of God and I am blessed in so many ways. All that has been given to me was from the favour of God – He has rewarded me for my kindness to others, and my message to those who feel that they cannot achieve anything in life, is: Don't let your circumstances define who you are. Hold on to your dreams and you will see what God can do for you. My childhood enriched my personal relationship with God, and I am honoured to say that He has been the protection in my life."

Andre flew back to London in August and "by the grace of God" he was able to fly business class on Qatar Airways. And as he says, "the boy who slept on the cows was now flying business class."



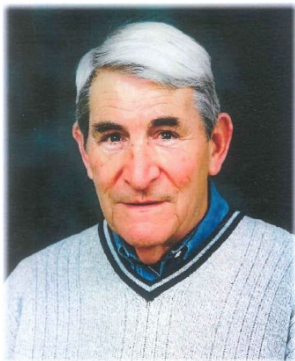
# Prayers Please



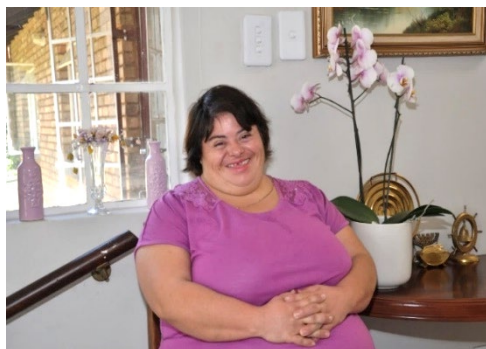
For an end to the pandemic and those suffering with the virus.  
For all Readers, Donors and Friends of the Spotlight.  
For those who have been retrenched and have no money.  
For the starving children and families, the world over.  
For all women who are used and abused.  
For all children who suffer at the hands of abusive adults.  
For the protection of Our Blessed Mother and Her Son.  
For all carers, nurses, doctors and those in religion who help without expecting thanks.  
For Adri Williams and Adrian who have cancer.  
For Cynthia and Colleen who need relief from their surgery .  
For a young man who has the virus.  
For an elderly lady who has had to move to Frail Care.  
For the people of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Haiti and America.

For all those who have gone before us, and especially for Pamela Lahoud – 22 June 2021; Ted Seabrook – 2 July 2021, Greg Libera, Dawn van der Horn – 22 May 2021 and Professor Bob Scholes – 28 April 2021. May they rest in peace.

*“Almighty, ever-living God, whose love surpasses all that we ask or deserve, open up for us the treasures of your mercy. Forgive us all that weighs on our conscience and grant us more even than we dare to ask. Through Christ our Lord. Amen*



**EDWIN ERNEST SEABROOK**, fondly known as Ted, also a Robertsham Parishioner, was totally dedicated to his work at the Parish. He was meticulous about his paperwork and his wife Iris said that “he always had his papers in order in whatever office he worked in.” Ted and Iris were married for 57 years, and they were a formidable force when it came to working together. They were devoted to their children, worked tirelessly for many charitable events, and supported each other to the end. Iris, Jodi, Shawn and the rest of the family would like to thank everyone for all their love, care and support, during this time. Ted will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.



**PAMELA LAHOUD**, our beautiful sister, passed away peacefully after a long struggle with heart failure. She will always be the youngest sister, the one who stole the hearts of all who met her She was joyful and happy and wonderful to be around. She charmed people with her childlike innocence. She had a zest for life and radiated such presence. She had the biggest heart and shared her love freely and danced like “everyone” was watching. She loved to sing loudly and out of tune, but it was a happy noise we will never get to hear again. She loved crafts and colouring in, and brought colour into our lives. She always remembered and was grateful whenever you did things for her, and she loved getting presents. Pammy you were a rare and



precious person who made this world a better place, an unforgettable presence in our lives. We will love and miss you forever. Don't stop dancing. Love Mom and all your brothers and sisters. May she rest in peace.



**Professor Bob Scholes** passed away on the evening of Wednesday, 28 April, following a hike in Namibia with friends and colleagues. He was 63 years old.

“The Wits University community is shocked and saddened by the sudden loss of such a giant in the field of climate science, not only in South Africa, but in the world. Professor Scholes was a true leader, a conscientious and dedicated scientist and a teacher to all,” says Professor Zeblon Vilakazi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University.

Professor Scholes was a Professor of Systems Ecology at Wits University. He was a Director of the Global Change Institute (GCI) at

Wits and a Distinguished Professor at Wits. He was also an A-Rated scientist. He was among the top one per cent of environmental scientists worldwide, based on citation frequency, and published widely in the fields of savanna ecology, global change, and earth observation.

Professor Scholes has led several high-profile studies and held high profile positions in the fields of climate change and environmental studies globally. He has been one of the lead authors in the assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on present and future impacts of climate change and how we can adapt to or reduce it. He has also been a member of the steering committees of several global earth observation bodies.

“We in the Faculty of Science are deeply saddened by Professor Bob Scholes’ untimely passing. He was doing what he loved the most, which was being in the great African outdoors that he has dedicated so much of his life to preserving for future generations,” says Professor Nithaya Chetty, Dean of the Faculty of Science at Wits University.

“There is much to do to continue with the legacy that Bob leaves. Bob will want for us to do nothing more than to continue with his work, even if we pause only for a moment to contemplate his leading contributions to Wits, South Africa and the world. Bob will be sorely missed. He is, in many respects, irreplaceable. Despite this, we must all dig deep to find a way to move on. Bob will want that.” Bob leaves behind his wife, Professor Mary Scholes and their son Stirling.

“Stirling and I are saddened by the sudden loss of Bob. He died doing what he loved. He was a loving husband and father. We are grateful for all of the support that we are receiving,” says Mary Scholes.

The Wits Community extends its sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues. May he rest in peace.



**ANNUAL RETREAT MOSHI, TANZANIA** At the foothills of Kilimanjaro, in the retreat house of the Franciscan Sisters in Maua, the annual retreat of the young Salesians from the post-novitiate of Moshi took place from 8 to 14 August. "Charismatic identity of the Salesian vocation" and "the cost of discipleship today" were the main themes for reflection. The retreat was animated by Father Patrick Anthonyraj, a member of the Youth Ministry Department. 37 young Salesians took part, accompanied by Father Evans Jefferson Ombaye and Father Mikel Garmendia. News via ANS



## Johannesburg Community Surprise!

Teatime on the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2021 (for the record), on the feast of the Visitation of Mary, the Johannesburg community received visitors. Mr Lucio and Mrs Elena Ciccotelli, with a close friend Ms Lori de Zorzi. They came bearing a gift, a portrait of Don Bosco. You may wonder what was so special! There are many pictures / portraits / prints / of Don Bosco. This portrait donated by Lucio (87) and his wife Elena has been a treasured possession of theirs for many years. Both of them were born in Italy and met and have lived in South Africa for nearly 67 years.



The portrait was painted by Elena's uncle, Gino Mazzoli (1900 – 1974), a renowned artist, well known in Italy as a post-war and contemporary artist.

Lucio presented the portrait of Don Bosco to the rector, Fr Robert, as he explained, with a tear in his eyes, that he wanted it to stay with the Salesians who he knew would also treasure it. At his age he wanted to ensure it was going to be safe and witness to the many past pupils who kept Don Bosco as a friend and reminder of their joy at the oratory and school. Everyone enjoyed, with their tea or coffee, a chocolate cake which our visitors also brought with them. The others present were: - Fr Alberto Villalba (Paraguay) he is the Vice Provincial, Fr John Coleman, Fr Dino Miotto, and Ms Gail Wiles, (who sent the article).



Dear Friends

The prayer list grows daily in this office. Death is becoming more of a reality than ever before and prayers of petition have intensified. Perhaps that is a good, but one gets the feeling of the desperation in families, in individuals regarding the many horrendous events that are taking place currently in our world. Every Sunday at the Angelus, the Holy Father beseeches us to pray for different intentions. And who can refuse, who can be unmoved to the plight of victims suffering at the hands of Mother Nature, by flood or fire. Who can be indifferent to the suffering of the women and children in Afghanistan who are terrified every second of every day? Or who can turn a blind eye to a President who blatantly declares that he will fight the Texas abortion ban and who supports the murder of thousands of innocent babies. And here in our own country, the curse of corruption, which renders so many helpless, without work and food for their families. Yes, the prayer of petition is a growing request. We are nearing October, the month of the Rosary, and my petition is perhaps we could all say the Rosary each day for all these intentions. It is not all drudge and hard work. No, let us look to the future with Hope that the Good Lord and His Blessed Mother will intervene for us.

This editorial is not without thanks to all you wonderful people, those known and unknown, who assist us with your prayers, donations and loyalty. Thank you sincerely for your constant dedication. Remember Our Lady's Birthday and lastly please pray for me as I do for you. St Thomas Moore would add: "So that we may merrily meet in heaven." Also thank you for your patience. This newsletter is rather late due to unforeseen circumstances. God bless and reward you all. Much love. Denise Hards



**CHUCKLE:** A woman brought a very limp duck into a veterinary surgeon. As she laid her pet on the table, the vet pulled out his stethoscope and listened to the bird's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head and sadly said, "I'm sorry, your duck has passed away. The distressed woman wailed, "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure. Your duck is dead," replied the vet. "How can you be so sure?" she protested... "I mean you haven't done any testing on him or anything. He might just be in a coma or something." The vet rolled his eyes, turned around and left the room. He returned a few minutes later with a black Labrador. As the duck's owner looked on in amazement, the dog stood on his hind legs, put his front paws on the table and sniffed the duck from top to bottom. He then looked up at the vet with sad eyes and shook his head. The vet then brought in a cat, which sniffed the bird from head to foot. The cat mewed softly and left the room. The vet said to the woman, "Your duck is definitely dead." He then handed his bill to the woman who said, "R2,500 just to tell me that my duck is dead!" The vet shrugged, "I'm sorry. If you had just taken my word for it, the bill would have been R50, but with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan, it's now R2,500."





# DON BOSCO

## GLOBAL YOUTH FESTIVAL

*Don Bosco Global Youth Film Festival (DBGYFF)* is the first worldwide festival from the Salesian Congregation to unite all our young people globally to come together on a common project where they can express their creative talents and be rewarded. This festival is our own festival and is a precious opportunity to make the name of Don Bosco resonate in the 134 countries where we are present, especially in the hearts and minds of the young people. The festival screening will take place on Thursday and Friday, **18 & 19 of November 2021**.

DBGYFF is structured as a creative global platform, through which young people from all over the world can showcase and build their dreams and aspirations. Inspired by the Strenna of our Rector Major, *"Moved by hope"*, it is a clarion call to encourage young people to become ambassadors of hope, and agents of transformation in our society.

DBGYFF is concerned about uniting, educating and motivating young people from all over the world to usher in, that bright ray of Hope to the whole of humanity in this post-pandemic time. DBGYFF thus becomes as an ultimate attempt to unite our many efforts to streamline them into one single festival, expecting to target millions of youth across the globe.

**DBGYFF**, aims to become an annual feature and **intends to be a film festival of global significance and a media event reaching out to a maximum audience**. All those who wish to participate in DBGYFF can upload their work between **24 July and 30 September 2021**.

DBGYFF is a unique opportunity for every young person to be an Ambassador of Hope.

For more information visit: <https://www.dbgyff.com>

### FEAST DAYS

- 08 Sept The Birth of the Virgin Mary
- 14 Sept Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 Sep Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 Sep St Matthew
- 29 Sep Ss Michael, Gabriel & Raphael
- 01 Sep St Therese of the Child Jesus
- 02 Oct Guardian Angels
- 04 Oct St Francis of Assisi
- 07 Oct Our Lady of the Rosary
- 18 Oct St Luke
- 29 Oct Blessed Michael Rua SDB
- 02 Nov All Souls
- 07 Nov All Saints
- 14 Nov World Day of the Poor
- 21 Nov Presentation of the Virgin Mary
- 21 Nov Christ the King



POPE FRANCIS "In her apparitions, Our Lady often exhorted the recitation of the rosary, especially in the face of looming threats to the world," said the Holy Father. "Even today, it is necessary to hold the rosary in our hands and pray for us, our loved ones and all people," he said. *Vatican News*.

*In all dangers go to Mary and I guarantee that she will help you.*  
St John Bosco

### LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Perhaps you would like to leave something to Salesian Missions in your Will. An enquiry can be made and the necessary form can be sent to you.  
Tel: 27 (0) 11 476 8315  
We would be extremely grateful.

♥ If a Tiny Virus can do this much Damage.... imagine what a Mustard Seed of Faith can Do.... ♥

### SALESIAN MISSIONS

PO Box 3209, North Riding 2162 • Tel: 27 (0) 11 476-8315  
e-mail: [missionoffice@bucknet.co.za](mailto:missionoffice@bucknet.co.za)  
[www.salesianmissions.co.za](http://www.salesianmissions.co.za)

**YES! I want to support the Salesian work with needy youth!**

Kindly fill in your Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email

Please pass this on to a friend if you don't need it!

### I enclose my gift of:

R150  R200  R250  Other R.....

will be made by (please tick)

Cheque  Debit Order  Direct deposit\*

Cheques payable to **Salesian Missions**

Please debit my bank account with R.....

Monthly  Once only

Type of account:  Cheque  Transmission

Name of account holder: .....

Bank: ..... Branch Code: .....

Branch name:.....

Account number:.....

Signature:.....

\*STANDARD BANK CRESTA 007254

A/C NUMBER 07 256 1572

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