

Fall 2022

Salesian Family Connections



*The Magazine for Family & Friends of the
Daughters of Mary Help of Christians*



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
Mary Immaculate Province - SUO
San Antonio - Texas (USA)

A Message from Sr. Bernadette

Dear Friends,

Our young people today are experiencing a radically different world than 50, 25, or even 5 years ago. Many wish to find a sense of belonging and purpose, and easily become discouraged by the negative influences surrounding them. Like St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello, who went out to meet the young where they were, and journey with them to an encounter with the Living Christ, so we are called to do the same.



The photo on the cover with Sr. Phuong Nguyen, FMA, and Sr. Valeria Jimenez, FMA, with the students from Mary Help of Christians School in Laredo, TX, brings much joy to my heart. These young people came to their school on a weekend to collaborate in a project for the care of creation. Their efforts not only beautified the area in front of the school's chapel, but it helped the students to understand that everything is connected – our relationship with God, with each other, and with creation. We are all interconnected and partners-in-mission in building a world of peace, solidarity, and hope.

With Gratitude,

Sister Bernadette Mota, FMA

Director of Mission Advancement



Our Mission

To provide Christian education and formation to the young, especially the poor, and women at risk; joyfully proclaim the Good News to all cultures; and promote the regeneration of a more just and humane society.

Salesian Sisters

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✉ dma@salesiansisterswest.org

Find us on Social Media!

🌐 SalesianSistersWest.org

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▶ Salesian Sisters West

Ministries Across the U.S.



Thank you for being part of the Salesian Sisters' mission of education and evangelization for the young, especially the poor, and women at risk. Here are some highlights of how your support is making a positive impact:

- Serving youth in 9 dioceses, 11 parishes, and 9 Catholic schools
- Accompanying 21 young ladies at various stages of religious formation
- Providing education and faith formation for youth and families
- Guiding 60+ young women as they discern God's call through the Fiat Project

It is with gratitude that we continue to serve the Lord, guiding others towards joy and holiness!

Follow the Salesian Sisters West on social media to learn more about our ministries!



From the Provincial

Growing Up after 150

FORMATION - SYNODALITY – INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

To say that our 150th Celebration was wonderful is an understatement! Thank you to all who planned and who were able to join us for days of remembering and renewing our “yes” to God’s call of walking with youth in the style of St. John Bosco and St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello!

Our celebration included walking down memory lane – a path of inspiration for tens of thousands. Our 150th was all about continuing this journey with the same, simple formula of holiness that began with the Virgin Mary’s “yes”. This formula continued through the centuries with St. John Bosco, St. Mary Mazzarello and on with those who have the courage to continue saying “yes” to God’s plan today.

One memory from my recent past goes back over fifty years ago, when I was sitting in my senior year chemistry class at Mary Help of Christians Academy in North Haledon, New Jersey, listening to our teacher, Sr. Fanny Flores. I was first amazed by how she taught the complexities of mind-boggling science without ever glancing at a teacher’s manual! Sorry, Sr. Fanny, but I’ve forgotten most everything except for the fascinating lab of duplicating crystals.

I learned that the way one grows crystals is by dropping a seed crystal into a receptive medium. Slowly, we saw how this medium began to duplicate the very form of the seed crystal so that no matter what part we examined, we saw the same dynamic structure repeated.



Celebrating 150 Years

This gives me the idea of a perfect 150th Anniversary gift. May our Lady help each of us cultivate the receptive medium that will grow the crystal of inestimable value – the seed crystal of Mary’s “yes.” Mary gave us the seed crystal at the wedding feast of Cana when she said “Do whatever He tells you.” Jn 2:5

The receptive medium?

- being attentive to God’s plan by listening to His voice (formation),
- walking together (synodality),
- and welcoming the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE (integral ecology) with the total availability of our whole being.

These are the three priorities from our General Chapter XXIV. If we can become with Mary a life-giving presence, we can say that growing up after 150 years will be our way into the future!



*By Sr. Rosann Ruiz, FMA
Provincial of the Western Province*



Building Networks

Navigating into the Modern Age of Technology



By Mia Swink

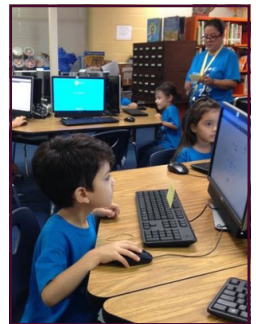
Several years ago, Brother Dennis Doose, CSC, approached Sr. Rosann Ruiz, who realized that they both shared the desire to enhance the use of technology in their schools. He expressed an eagerness to gain both expertise and funding that could be used towards the advancement of technology at St. John Bosco School in San Antonio, TX.

He is fondly known as the genius instructor who taught his students chemistry and then cutting-edge programming languages at Holy Cross in the 80's and 90's. Many of his students, including Past Pupil from St. John Bosco, Allen Bordelon, went on to excel in the world of technology with great success.

When Sr. Rosann recognized Brother Dennis' expertise and charisma for Catholic education, she welcomed him with open arms. Like the Salesians, Holy Cross Priests, Brothers, and lay collaborators are called upon to be educators of faith with a zeal to make God known, loved, and served. This was a perfect partnership with the Salesian Sisters!

With the help of St. John Bosco School, Brother Dennis developed business and technology plans that included professional development for teachers and staff, implementing technology into the curriculum, and methods for updating technology as systems advanced. This endeavor, along with the friendship and trust between Brother Dennis and the Salesian Sisters, transformed St. John Bosco School over twenty years.

Most recently, Brother Dennis and his former pupil and now colleague, Allen Bordelon, have assisted the Salesian Sisters with the improvement of internet services at the Provincial House. To this day, the Salesian Sisters hold deep gratitude for the selfless service, and long-term and far-reaching impact of Brother Dennis and Allen Bordelon. "They truly are our 'Guardian Angels of Advancement'," says Sr. Rosann.





Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

USA Western Province

Every bit helps! The following giving opportunities are for our various convents and ministries. You can support one, some or all of the projects. Thank you for your kindness.

Salesian Sisters' communities throughout our Province

- Used or new cars or minivans
- Desktops, laptops, or Chromebooks for our convents and schools
- Educational supplies and sports equipment for schools, parishes, and camps

Provincial House

- Sponsor a meal for 30 Sisters
- Fresh fruit or produce
- Household cleaning supplies
- Industrial stove
- Security camera system
- Raised planter boxes
- Industrial paper shredder
- Roof repair
- Outdoor Flood Lighting



Please contact us at (210) 431-4999 or dma@salesiansisterswest.org

View our Amazon Wishlist at <https://tinyurl.com/salesiansisters>
Shop at smile.amazon.com and select the **Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco Western Province** to support our mission.



Privacy Policy: Your name, address, and other information is held in confidence by our ministry and will not be shared in any way with any other organization without prior consent.

Salesian Sister's Reflection

An interview with Sr. Angel



By Kristie Garza

“My mother used to tell me, ‘Angelina, you have to be good, you have to know how to obey, and so you must pray to the Blessed

Mother for this’.” From childhood, Angelina’s mother taught her to always place her trust in Mary.

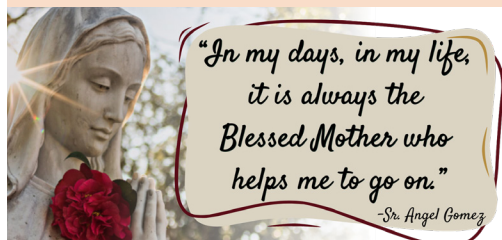
In 1953, the Sisters recognized something special in young Angelina Gomez, who was entering with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Mexico. Her kind, gentle and cheerful way would be perfect for the special mission of caring for a very ill Sister. Sr. Angel (as she is fondly called today) recalls, “I gave myself to God by caring for this dear Sister who I knew was going to meet Him soon.” Sr. Angel will never forget the grateful embrace that the Provincial gave her in gratitude for the tender attention she gave this dying Sister. They saw how much this dying Sister was loved, and they loved Sr. Angel that much more for taking good care of her. She knew our Lady helped her and would continue to help her to give all her love in whatever God would ask.

Angelina’s heart’s desire was to one

day be able to wear the religious habit as Mary’s Daughter. She left her wish in Mary’s hands. After making her profession, Sr. Angel was asked to go to San Antonio, TX where, to her great joy, she would be asked to wear the habit! Mary granted her wish! She would soon experience how difficult this move would prove to be, struggling in learning English, and working through unbearable heat. “She is our mother from heaven who helps us to love Jesus,” says Sr. Angel.

After 66 years of profession, Sr. Angel’s greatest joy has been working with children in early education. She chuckles at this memory, knowing that there was nothing she would not do for those beautiful children.

Her advice to those wanting to grow in their relationship with Mary: Speak to Mary often. Pray the Rosary, place your trust in Her and remember what Don Bosco always said: “Trust in Mary and you will see what miracles are.”



Friend a Sister Today!



How can you join and send your donation?

Friend a Sister connects Sisters with the community to enrich faith life and friendships. Upon donating, you are matched with a Sister who offers daily prayers for your intentions, and you have the opportunity to correspond. Donations support our elderly and infirm Sisters and our mission.

CHECK: Fill out form below;
check payable to Salesian Sisters.

Salesian Sisters: DMA
6019 Buena Vista St.
San Antonio, TX 78237

ONLINE: Sign up to donate
monthly/annually by credit or
debit, or checking/savings at
www.SalesianSistersWest.org/request-prayer/friend-sister

Yes, Sister, I am ready to join!

Name _____ Birthday _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day

Phone _____ ☐ Cell ☐ Home Phone

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



➤ Preferred means of
communication
(check all that apply):

- ☐ Mail
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone Call
- ☐ Text Message

➤ Preferred language:

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Vietnamese

➤ Check one:

- ☐ Match me with a Sister
- ☐ I am requesting Sister: _____

Suggested Gift Amounts

Monthly / Annually

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> \$15 | <input type="radio"/> \$180 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$25 | <input type="radio"/> \$300 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50 | <input type="radio"/> \$600 |
| <input type="radio"/> \$100 | <input type="radio"/> \$1,200 |

Journeying Together

By Kristie Garza

As we continue on this journey together, in synodality, we recall to mind what Pope Francis spoke to us in his apostolic exhortation entitled *Christus Vivit*, or *Christ is Alive*. He encourages the youth to find their roots both in the family and in the elderly. By doing so, we are able to share wisdom across generations.



“Roots are not anchors, chaining us to past times and preventing us from facing the present and creating something new. Instead, they are a fixing point from which we can grow and meet new challenges.” CV 200

Synodality is a way in which we collaborate with openness and dialogue to encourage the spiritual growth of one another, guided by



the Holy Spirit. The youth must know that God loves them, Christ sacrificed himself for them, and Christ is still alive!

Christus Vivit 199. “If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.”

We thank you with the most profound gratitude for continuing to encourage and support religious vocations.



www.VIDES.us



VIDES (Volunteers in Development, Education, and Solidarity) began in Rome in 1987 as a way for young adults to collaborate in Mission with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. In 1997, VIDES+USA was born in San Antonio, TX. Since then, over 350 volunteers have served in 8 different U.S. states and in 48 countries, living in community with our Sisters and Priests. They work side-by-side with them in schools, oratories, summer camps, boarding schools, health clinics, soup kitchens and many other ministries.

As a former volunteer myself, I can speak to the value of dedicating my time and talents to the service of others. Several years after college, I was agonizing over making a vocational decision when I found out about VIDES. The thought of living and working with Sisters as a volunteer (not a discerner!) was very attractive. I prayed that my experience would allow me to clarify my

vocational path. After spending almost two years in El Salvador, I was able to return to the U.S. and take the next step of entering religious life. Several other volunteers have also answered God's call to religious life or the priesthood, and several even found their future spouses! While not all volunteers enter into their lifelong vocation immediately after Mission, they do have the clarity of knowing what God is asking of them next. For some, that was to continue their studies in law, nursing, social work, or education. St. John Paul II very appropriately said, "Man cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of self." This has over and over been demonstrated in the lives of the VIDES volunteers.

We thank God for the beautiful men and women who have given of themselves as VIDES volunteers during the past 25 years and pray that many more will have the courage to go outside of themselves and serve those who are most in need!

By Sr. Sydney Moss, FMA

**"Man cannot fully find himself except through the sincere gift of self."
-St. Pope John Paul II**

Being a Guardian of the Earth

Believing in the Dreams of the Young



By Sr. Melissa Benitez, FMA

In 2022 alone, 2.3 billion people around the world faced water stress. Almost 160 million children were exposed to severe droughts. The hottest years on record have all been since 2015. This data presented by the United Nations points to a disheartening, yet inevitable truth that Pope Francis warned mankind about in 2015 with his encyclical *Laudato Si'*:

“Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its decisive mitigation is a moral and religious imperative for humanity.”

How can we respond to Pope Francis’s call of being guardians of the earth? The response begins with each of us as individuals. It begins with the little choices we make each day to reduce our ecological footprint. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asks us to refrain from “the throwaway society” that has permeated much of the world. We can simply reduce, reuse, and recycle. Cut back from using single-use plastic that is killing so much of our environment and wildlife. Use reusable items, such as taking a reusable bag to the grocery store. We can be mindful of our carbon footprint, carpooling whenever possible or even hanging our clothes to dry in the sun to conserve energy - most of the world doesn’t even use dryers. The possibilities are endless; we simply need to think outside the box.

Interestingly, however, our environmental crisis is an issue that is very near and dear to the hearts of our young people today. They are willing to propose creative solutions to today’s problems, and most importantly, put them into action with enthusiasm and wholeheartedness. Let us unite ourselves with our young people and listen to the solutions they have to offer. As Eleanor Roosevelt once wisely said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” As we move forward, let us never forget the words of Pope Francis, “Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.”



A Vocation of the Youth



By Celina Escamilla

After a drought this summer, we are finally receiving days of rain. This change in weather has arrived with autumn and the start of the new school year. It is a wonderful time to contemplate our vocation. Nature, with its changing colors and cool winds, seems to demand the refreshing of our mindset.

A practical way to reflect on my vocation as a Salesian Cooperator is to remember the foundations.

I started my journey as a Salesian Cooperator five years ago, yet there are still new things to learn and understand. Vocation refers to a

divine call. It is recognized and acknowledged

by the strong inclination towards a certain course of action. All Christians are called to spread the message of the Gospel around the world. Usually, the more we learn

of Christ, the more we know Him and want to share with others the knowledge of His love for us all. For Salesian Cooperators, the calling becomes even more specific: to serve the young and the poor.

In general, Cooperators can be described as members of the Church who seek Christian perfection in their particular state of life. Furthermore, they have duties to serve the youth in the Salesian spirit and within the educative method. Finally, they are in union with the Salesian Family

“Cooperators can be described as members of the Church who seek Christian perfection in their particular state of life.”

and shoulder their own responsibilities. As the years pass

and we age, the manner by which we serve the youth may change. It is our duty to remain open to the change of seasons, to learn from the youth we serve, and become life learners of this vocation for youth that Don Bosco put into practice for the salvation of souls.

Learn more about the Salesian Family at
<https://salesiansisterswest.org/who-we-are/salesian-family>

An Unconventional Gift



Mrs. Mildred Williams

Have you seen this portrait at the Provincial House? The generosity of our benefactors Colonel Frank and Mrs. Mildred Williams goes back to the mid-1900's. They owned many acres of land on the outskirts of what was then San Antonio, TX. They had given a large portion of their farmland to the city and to the school district to develop before having met the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesian Sisters), who were living across the street at what is now St. John Bosco School. Seeing how dedicated and loving the Sisters were with the children, Colonel Williams once said that if they had known the Sisters sooner, they would have given them all of their property! Instead, Colonel and Mrs. Williams gave what they had left – the house and land they were living on. Their original house sat on the corner of 36th and Buena Vista. The Williamses were generous with what they had and even provided food, a shower, and a place to rest to immigrants that were passing through. All from their front porch! The Salesian Sisters have gradually developed the property ever since.

Strategies for Charitable Giving



1 Life Insurance Beneficiary

Keep primary and contingent beneficiaries updated on life insurance & retirement accounts.

2

Qualified Charitable Contributions

Ask a professional how to make tax-free donations from your IRA distributions.



3 Market Investments

Avoid capital gain taxes by donating stocks, ETFs, mutual funds, and bonds that have appreciated.

4

Real Estate & Investment Property

Consult a real estate attorney on donating the net proceeds of a property sale or donating as an outright gift.



5 Seek Professional Advice

A team of professionals can help you create a plan that works best with your situation.

Institute of the Daughters of
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Salesian Family Highlight



By Maria Castillon

I have known the Sisters since I can remember - when I began Kindergarten. I remember the Sister who took my hand and said “All would be well,” and it has been! I am a Past Pupil, a Salesian Cooperator, and a VIDES Missioner. I am also a sister of a Salesian Sister who has always been my mentor! What can I say? Sr. Patricia King, the Provincial at the time, once told me that my DNA is Salesian! Yes, I believe it is. The love for Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, and Mother Mazzarello have impacted me.

I remember Sr. Isabel, my 4th Grade teacher, who was in charge of the Immaculate Mary Society at school. We had to work and do our best to be able to join. She planted a tiny seed in my mind about being a missionary – I wanted to go to Africa! I have not gone to Africa; instead, I went to Haiti. One of the memories I still carry with me is of the people of Haiti, specifically

their faith and courage under such duress when their world turned to rubble. It was the moment they began to sing that brought tears to my eyes. I still tear up remembering. They sang with all their hearts and voices that broke in unison, altos and basses, shouting with one voice of the mercies of God. Every part of the Mass was a new experience. I heard their sorrows and joys, hopes and new beginnings. They brought everything they had to the altar of God. After the first Mass, I felt humbled; here I was trying to bring comfort, yet I was comforted by their love and faith in God. They gave me the life-giving water of witnessing their reliance on God. I can still picture it in my mind and heart, something I will never forget!

As a Salesian Cooperator, a vocation given to me as a gift from God, has been a path to sanctity. Right now, my service as a Cooperator is being the President of the Past Pupils of the FMA at the world level. I don’t know why I am there. I only know that it is a privilege to be able to help the Association into the new “Era.” Many things have changed, but our commitment to keeping our hearts in union with the Salesian Sisters, with our hands working in the world, has not. I am Salesian through and through!



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