

Spring 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,

With the challenges and uncertainties we are facing today, let us remember the words that St. Mary Mazzarello told us: “Courage let us go ahead with great and generous hearts”. We are invited to accompany Jesus along the way to the cross which leads to new life in the resurrection.

With Him as the source and with the help of Our Blessed Mother, light will always prevail.

The enthusiasm of Sr. Thuy Huong Nguyen and our young women in formation on the front cover shows that Jesus is alive! It is He who stirs in our hearts the desire to do great things with our lives. With the strength of the Holy Spirit, we can journey together with great courage, making the world more human and fraternal. It is because of your collaboration that our mission with the young is thriving today and will continue in generations to come. Thank you for your generosity and be assured of our daily prayers for you.







In gratitude,  
Sr. 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; proclaim the Good News to all cultures; and promote the regeneration of a more just and humane society.

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# 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, 12 parishes, and 10 Catholic schools
- 20 young ladies at various stages of religious formation
- In-person, hybrid, and virtual education and faith formation for youth and families
- 150th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on August 5th, 2022

# Celebrating Vocations

Novices Sr. Shaila Mathai, Sr. Claire Ramos, and Sr. Valeria Jimenez are lovingly and diligently preparing to commit their lives to Jesus as women religious, making their first profession on August 5th. Sr. Theresa Khong is making her perpetual profession as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians on that same day. They share their thoughts with us:

What are you most grateful for as you prepare to make your perpetual profession?

**Sr. Theresa:** I'm grateful that God is the one who has called me to be a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians. To belong all to Mary, our Mother, is one of my greatest joys. The support, prayers, and love I have received from my community has helped me on this journey, and I know they will continue to do so. Without them, I would not be here today.



What advice would you give to young people who are discerning their vocation?

**Sr. Shaila:** Have courage! Discerning is scary and there are always going to be unknowns, but in the words of St. John Paul II, "Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure."

**Sr. Claire:** Take that leap of faith! It is scary at first, but it will be an adventure where you meet wonderful people and grow in love with Christ and His people.

**Sr. Valeria:** Do not be afraid! Whatever He has called you to live will bring a joy and peace that cannot be expressed. Seek the sacraments and entrust yourself to the Blessed Mother; she will show you the way.



*We thank you with the most profound gratitude for encouraging and supporting religious vocations.*



# Unity in Diversity



*By Sr. Monica Wheeler, FMA*

There is much talk in our current times of diversity, equality, and acceptance. Unfortunately, our society falls short at times in efforts to honor and value the dignity of each person, fueling the divisions it seeks to remedy. In my experience as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, I have discovered a different and beautiful way.

The joy of unity in diversity lived in our communities is not an obligation, but a natural result of something which runs far deeper. Our unity is found in the source of all unity: Jesus in the tabernacle at the center of all our houses.

In Him we believe that the longings of each person to experience inclusion and acceptance can be satisfied. Our communities are built on the deepest possible inclusion, not of human origins, but rooted in our unity as beloved children of God. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The unity of the Mystical Body triumphs over all human divisions.”

Through our shared call to religious life, we are gathered not through affinity, cultural commonalities, political parties, or aligning opinions. Instead, we are drawn together around our one great love, the source of Love Himself, Jesus Christ. Anchored in this love, the flowering of cultural expressions in all forms of diversity find their honored place as we seek to glorify God together. In a world struggling to cope with divisions based on race, class, gender, age, politics and more, religious life offers a prophetic message of hope – a message that unity in diversity is both possible and beautiful when we are rooted in a sincere love of Christ and a common desire for His glory.

# A Little Word

## *The effects of positive encouragement*



*By Sr. Cherily Galley, FMA*

“It’s too embarrassing! If I sing my heart out again, I’m going to risk my voice cracking. Besides, I don’t want to see the kids at church making weird faces at me again.” I could not verbalize how I felt then as a pre-teen whenever my parents or older siblings questioned why I did not sing out like I used to as a carefree 6 or 7 year-old in our family band. The disappointment from those I loved, and the fear of embarrassment were bottled up inside of me. Most of all, I was upset that my voice could not “go back.” I felt helpless and responsible over something out of my control. I decided to save myself in the only way I could think of: no more singing. At least no more solos, and I tried to play things safely by quietly blending in with my sister when we sang at church. I kept this up into my teen years, even though my self-consciousness did not hold my singing captive as strongly as it did at the beginning. However, the joy of singing was replaced by caution and fear of the microphone.

When I was 16, my sister asked me a simple question as she brainstormed with me over what college classes I should take. “Why don’t you join Choir?” I hesitated. Not that! “I don’t know,” I responded. “That would mean I’d have to sing.” “You don’t have to do a solo,” she replied. “Just sing what everyone else is singing.” Her encouragement motivated me to join. That was a turning point in my life. Her little question helped me to find confidence and rediscover my love not just for music, but specifically for singing. When I was 21 my oldest brother, a seminarian at that time, asked me, “When are you going to join a group of Sisters again? If the first community didn’t work out, find another one.” I was annoyed at first, but his invitation gave me the boost I needed to actively discern my vocation.

Now I am a Salesian Sister leading a small choir at St. John Bosco School and studying music education. Little did I know that the



small phrases of encouragement I received would shape me into who I am today. The powerful effect of encouragement can bring about amazing graces in someone's life. St. John Bosco taught educators to say a good word in the ear of a young person to help him/her make better choices. All it takes is a small phrase to change someone's life. Will you speak a word of encouragement to someone today?



# Upcoming Events



We are getting ready for another amazing summer! We will offer in-person summer camps in San Antonio, Houston, and Colorado this year, as well as a one-week virtual summer camp! Visit our website for more information: [salesiansisterswest.org/summer-camps](https://salesiansisterswest.org/summer-camps)



On August 5, 2022 we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of our Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Come celebrate with us at the Salesian Family Fun Fest on Saturday, August 6th at St. John Bosco School in San Antonio, Texas. Go to [salesiansisterswest.org](https://salesiansisterswest.org) for complete details and to learn about other events throughout our province as we celebrate 150 years with joy and gratitude.

# Stories from Our Communities



## Cristo Rey Catholic Church Austin, TX

Our Religious Education students gather to pray the Rosary to Mary Help of Christians for peace in the world. Together let us invoke the powerful intercession of Mary, to free humanity from the dangers of war, hatred, and violence.

## Mary Help of Christians School Laredo, TX

Our young people are excited to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. What a blessing to know that Our Blessed Mother is present and walking in our daily lives.



## Corpus Christi Parish San Francisco, CA

Catechists from Corpus Christi Church recently became members of ADMA (Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians). ADMA is one of the four groups founded by St. John Bosco for lay people to experience the beauty of entrusting their life to Jesus through Mary.



## Our Lady of the Snow Convent Colorado Springs, Colorado

Our Sisters are leading a vibrant young adult ministry in the Diocese of Colorado Springs. The fruits are amazing with vocational callings, missionary impulse, and a renewed sense of belonging to a faith-based community. Praised be the Lord for His goodness!



## St. Francis of Assisi School Bend, Oregon

Our students participated in the Salesian Art Competition to celebrate St. Mary Mazzarello and the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christian. We are excited to announce that we had two 1st place winners and two finalists. We are so proud of all who participated.



## St. Dominic Savio School Bellflower, CA

Congratulations to our Academic Decathletes and Coaches. We had several scholars place in the top 3 in science, current events, english, literature, and logic.



# From the Provincial

## DOCIBILITAS

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



I'm sure everyone has heard the story of the blind men touching a part of the elephant and then trying to describe the elephant to one another. One said that the elephant was very much like a snake, another disagreed, saying it was more like a tree trunk, and another exclaiming, "No! It's very much like a fan!" Life is so much like this little anecdote. There is always the danger of taking the part for the whole which distorts the truth, not only of the whole, but of the part. What to do to keep from taking the part for the whole? The answer is DOCIBILITAS, a concept the Sisters are unpackaging around the world to keep from piecemealing our reality, making it more difficult to find lasting happiness.

Docibilitas is one of many gifts given to us by our recent 24th General Chapter. Basically, docibilitas can help us keep from fragmenting the truth, thinking the whole story is only one experience, like the blind men in the story. A person with docibilitas doesn't pretend to be in a perfect situation with perfect people along life's journey and knows how to grasp from every situation what is true, beautiful and good; knowing there is always something To learn or unlearn from everything, whether it be good, bad or indifferent.





# Friendiversary

Sr. Tuyet Nguyen and Denise Marquez celebrate **their one-year “friendiversary”** in the Friend-a-Sister program. Last school year Denise was honored as Teacher of the Year at St. James the Apostle School in San Antonio. She also was the runner-up for Archdiocesan Teacher of the Year. Our Salesian Family rejoices with Denise who completed her formation to become a Salesian Cooperator!



## Will you friend a Sister?

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 elder and infirm Sisters and our mission.

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

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Check one:

☐ Match me with a Sister

☐ I request the following Sister \_\_\_\_\_



Suggested gift amount: Check one, monthly or annually

Annually \_\_\_\_\_ \$180 \_\_\_\_\_ \$300 \_\_\_\_\_ \$600 \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,200

Calculated monthly as \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100

# Donor Highlight

## Interview with Anita and Francis Averill

### How did you meet the Sisters?

Our oldest child, Dr. Francis Cullen Averill III, began at Mary Help of Christians School in 1988-89. Our other children: Arleen Lorraine Averill (Thigpin) and Charles Jerome Averill were also students at Mary Help. Back in those days parents were very involved with the school -- bingos, jamaicas, painting, etc. Over the years we have developed lasting, loving, spiritual friendships with many of the Sisters. Some moved away from Laredo, and we do try to stay in touch. We have been associated with MHCS for over 30 years.



*Anita and Francis Averill  
with Mother Yvonne Reingoat, FMA*

### Why do you support the Salesian Sisters and their mission?

The students' academic life is strengthened by their spiritual life at Mary Help so that whatever they do and wherever they go, they know that prayer got them to where they are and will continue to sustain them. On a personal note, I, Pancho Averill, had cancer in January 2012, a very aggressive form of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. As with any form of cancer, you go in not knowing what to expect and are scared of what possibly lies ahead. At that time my wife was involved with the school and asked the Sisters for prayers for my health.

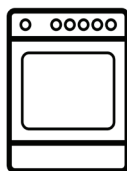
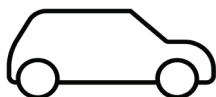
Fast forward to today, I am glad to report that I was released from the hospital in September 2012 and that my last scans were cancer free. I am a firm believer in the power of prayer and I know that is why I am here today. I had the opportunity to personally thank many of the Sisters for their prayers, and was completely shocked when I would meet someone not from Laredo who would say that they had prayed for me. As far as Africa and Italy they knew my name and confirmed they had me in their prayers. I owe my life to God and my Salesian friends.



## How has your friendship with the Sisters impacted your life?

We have a strong spiritual bond with the Sisters. We know that they keep us in their prayers as we keep them in ours. Many people do not get to see Sisters as the persons they are apart from the spiritual life at school. Over the years we have started a tradition of delivering food for the Superbowl game. Some Sisters were fans, some were not, yet they enjoyed the food and fun. We are very blessed to have the Salesian Sisters in our community and in our lives.

## Curious about our wish list?



Every bit helps! The following giving opportunities are for our various convents and ministries. You can support part of or an entire project. Thank you for your generosity in financing any of these needs.

### *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 youth

### *Provincial House*

- Large statue of Mary Immaculate
- Industrial stove
- Walk-in refrigerator and freezer
- Hedge trimmer
- Fire extinguishers
- Industrial shredder



For the items above contact us at 210-431-4999 or [dma@salesiansisterswest.org](mailto:dma@salesiansisterswest.org)



You can also donate household items for the Salesian Sisters. Find our wish list on [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and type in **Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco Western Province**.  
[salesiansisterswest.org/support-our-mission/kind](https://salesiansisterswest.org/support-our-mission/kind)

*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.*

# Donor Highlight

## Friendship in Christ with John and Beth Hughes

*By Sr. Bernadette Mota, FMA*

The Eucharist and hardwood floors brought Mr. and Mrs. Hughes and the Salesian Sisters together in the fall of 2019. The Sisters were in the process of renovating and expanding the convent chapel in Colorado Springs when the need for new flooring introduced them to John and Beth Hughes, the owners of O'Briens Carpet One. They not only helped the Sisters with wonderful flooring for the chapel, but even more, established a beautiful friendship with them rooted in Christ. They are inspired by the Sisters' immense joy shown in their everyday lives, their work, and their radiating love for Jesus and their neighbor.



Through the sacraments the Hugheses have found God's immense love. Their Catholic faith has been the foundation of their marriage, family, and business. They credit the Church, with holy priests and religious who teach by their example of charity and generosity, for opening up doors to so many wonderful Catholic relationships and for making a difference in the community.

Our Blessed Mother continues to lead John and Beth to her Son Jesus. Mary's suffering through her Son's passion has renewed their devotion to the Cross. After visiting Fatima a few years ago, their love for the rosary brought them much comfort, especially through the past couple of years. They pray the rosary daily and are regulars at the monthly Rosary Night at the Salesian Sisters convent.

***Thank you, John and Beth Hughes, for being part of our Salesian Family, and for your love and support for our mission.***

# Celebrating Our Jubilarians!

We rejoice with our Sister Jubilarians who are celebrating 50, 60, and 70-year anniversaries of their religious consecration.

They have a combined 290 years of loving service as  
Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.



Sr. Assunta Sanchez  
70 Years



Sr. Claudette Germain  
60 Years



Sr. Martina Ponce  
60 Years



Sr. Celine Lomeli  
50 Years



Sr. Juanita Chavez  
50 Years

2022 Jubilarians







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