

Designed by Huyton Cooperators



**SALESIAN COOPERATORS
UK PROVINCE NEWSLETTER
CHRISTMAS 2008**





YEAR OF ST PAUL

June 2008—June 2009



JOY IN THE LORD

One of St Paul's favourite churches was the Christian community at Philippi. His letter to them is full of joy and of his affection for them. We know it as the Letter to the Philippians. Its Christian Optimism is an ideal for us to aim at.

*“Christ is proclaimed and for that I am **happy**. And I will go on being **happy** too because I know that this is what will save me.”*

*“I will stand by you all to encourage your advance and your **joy** in the faith”*

*“Make my **joy** complete by being of a single mind”*

*“Even if my blood has to be poured as a libation over your sacrifice then I shall be **glad** and join in your **rejoicing**.”*

*“I wish you **joy** in the Lord!”*

*“My sisters and brothers and dear friends, my **joy** and my crown!”*

*“Always be **joyful**—I repeat, be **joyful**!”*



*“I am full of **joy** in the Lord.”*

The joyful optimism of St Francis de Sales is what made him attractive to St John Bosco who suggested to young people: **“Serve the Lord in gladness.”**



St Dominic Savio summed up this Salesian Spirituality, that derives from St Paul's message, by his words to a friend: “Here we make holiness consist in always being **happy**.”

Fr George Robson SDB

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REFLECTION OF COOPERATORS MEETING 9TH OCT 2008

St Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans, “ Do not model yourselves on the world around you , but let your behaviour change.”

Sometimes we may ask ourselves, “ What does God want from me today, what can I do in the world today, a world that seems to be so obsessed with possessions, things and appearances, so much so, that those things can come before people.”

Is that the sort of world we want ?

No, for as Don Bosco, Mary Mazzarello and Mamma Margaret showed by their lives, in their devotion to people, that God wants a world of love, a world of peace, a world of harmony, a world where people are respected for who they are, God's special creation.

As cooperators we too, like them' try to follow in the steps of Jesus. Not in ways that reach the headlines, but by using the gifts God has given to us to reach out to the world around us, in our families, in our community, reaching out to the sick and the house-bound and to our young people, witnessing to Christ's love wherever we may be.

Don Bosco became a witness, a sign, to all around him of the dignity of each person and of Christ's concern for each individual. This is still the gospel message of today, the gospel we are called to live and which will never be outdated.

Don Bosco tried to follow the path of Jesus, by the way he lived his life. Jesus went out to find the lonely and the lost. What did Don Bosco do ? He walked the streets of Turin, journeyed to France, to Spain, everywhere he could, to bring souls to the father. He looked for the poor on the streets, and brought them home with him. He listened to the beating hearts of others, to their hopes and their fears.

In our lives today when we look at the world around us, and we see so much sadness so much seemingly lack of purpose in their lives of so many of our young people , and so many broken relationships. We may well ask, as cooperators, “ What kind of church do we want to see today.”

What are our hopes for the future , our families, our community, our world.

Jesus needed his apostles to understand and support him. Today, he needs us to understand and support him , to be one with him in mind and heart, to be one with him in prayer and in love and compassion for others.

Just like Jesus, Don Bosco could be in the middle of a crowd, he could be surrounded by hundreds of boys and yet see those on the margins, the timid, the lonely, the unhappy, and those he would call to him for a cheerful word or a simple pat on the head.

To all he gave his loving smile and showed his deep concern for their welfare.

Everyday Jesus calls us to reach out to the world around us, to the people around us, as Don Bosco did, trusting in God's love, trusting in each other's love, to be signs of hope in our world. Jesus, by his life, showed that the church is not just a building, the church is you, the church is me, the church is all of us, the church is wherever we happen to be.

Whatever we are, what matters is how we relate to others. We also have to speak and work, to build a world of peace and harmony, a world where people come first. Isn't that the world God wants ?

Following Jesus is an adventure, and we remember his words to us too.

“ I will always love you “

Terry Gilvin Deacon Gilmoos



In the Footsteps of Our Founders

The Cooperators retreat was excellent with many attending this year. There were three talks on the above theme.



Fr Michael's talk focussed on three words to sum up Salesian spirituality: Presence; Service and Generosity. Don Bosco is present throughout the world sowing God's love in parishes, schools youth clubs etc. His service was one of love and mutual friendship, where rank doesn't matter. Generosity is at the heart of Christian discipleship—Our lady said 'yes' to doing God's will; Don Bosco gave his time totally to his young people. We were challenged as to what our response is? In summary he said these are three characteristics of God incarnated in Jesus. Lived by Don Bosco and handed on to the Salesian family.

Ken talked about Fr Philip Rinaldi who was the second successor to Don Bosco. He became a priest at 23yrs, Rector at 28yrs, and Vicar General at 45yrs a position he held for 21yrs. His style of leadership made him extremely popular and he showed great interest in the Cooperators as well as the Sisters. During his reign as Rector Major the number of SDBs doubled, the sisters expanded and cooperators got improved status. Ken said that among all his qualities it was his ordinariness which stood out.



Sr Georgina spoke about Mary Mazzarello. Similar to Philip Rinaldi, she was very ordinary. She had a simple faith with a strong devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Despite many trials she would pray daily from her prayer window. As she grew older she had a desire to help young girls. Her strong faith and work with young girls mirrored that of Don Bosco's work. She admired Don Bosco and he was impressed with her. He helped her and she in turn was good for him—it was a good partnership bearing much fruit.

Trip to Pot Shrigley was a highlight of the week-end. Paul was surprised by how popular this trip was. Over thirty people signed up to go and were not disappointed. A Salesian old boy showed us around and arranged coffee for us.

Thanks to Fr Martin and all the staff at Savio who made us welcome. As always the food was excellent.

Thanks also to the young volunteers—the music at services was superb and nothing was a trouble to them.

Well done to our new Provincial Council for organising a successful retreat.

Huyton Cooperators

A RETURN TO OUR SALESIAN ROOTS

In the wake of the 1988 centenary pilgrimage to Turin the Chertsey Cooperators seem to have acquired a 10 year itch ! Ten years (1998) after the Centenary pilgrimage Fr Eric Darwell led us back to Turin and this year (2008) 33 Co-operators and parishioners again took to the road to revisit their Salesian roots.

The 10 day pilgrimage was made by luxury coach and we visited selected shrines in France both on our outward and return journey. The first overnight stop was in Nevers where we had the privilege of celebrating Mass in the room where St Bernadette commenced her novitiate and where she was to tell “her story” to the assembled Sisters just before she died. We then visited Paray le Monial (St Margaret Mary Alocquot) for a guided tour prior to wending our way across to Ars (St. John Vianney) where the next morning we celebrated Mass on the altar where his casket is mounted.

The next four nights were spent at Colle Don Bosco under the watchful care of Fr Egidio SDB who proved to be a most wonderful host over the three full days we spent there. Fr Luigi Bassett – the Rector – greeted us and gave us an introductory talk about Colle Don Bosco prior to us setting about exploring the area for ourselves before taking a most magnificent lunch (banquet might be a more appropriate word !) in the Mamma Margaret Restaurant.

Whilst at Colle we celebrated Masses in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians (Becchi), the Lower Church (those of you who have visited Colle before must remember that “dynamic” painting at the back of the altar) and in the St Francis of Sales Chapel (Valdocco). Visits were made and guided tours taken around Don Bosco’s rooms and the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians as well as excursions to Castelnuovo d’Asti, Mondonio (where Dominic Savio died), Caprigio (Mamma Margaret) as well as a full day in Mornese (Mary Mazzaello) where we celebrated Mass, took lunch with the sisters and roamed around Valponasca (where the house with the “little window” can be found).

Our Trip to Italy, France and Switzerland

On 23rd August a group of cooperators met at Gatwick to begin our pilgrimage. First we flew to Turin where we spent three days following in the footsteps of Don Bosco. I expect we all have memories of special places, for me, Turin and Colle Don Bosco remain most special.

Then we moved on, via Mont Blanc and the lovely town of Chamonix to Annecy where we explored the Old Town and found the roots of Salesianity in the life of St Francis de Sales who had inspired Don Bosco by his sanctity.

We took time out one day to visit Geneva where we had a guided tour of old historically interesting places and new world renowned centres like U.N.O. and W.H.O. We finished the day with a visit to Lake Lausanne and a boat ride to Evian.

We flew from Geneva to Rome where we relaxed at the Palazzola. Highlights were the visit to Castel Gondolfo to see Pope Benedict and receive the blessing at the Angelus and also our day out to Rome where we had Mass at St Pauls outside the Walls. We also visited St Peter’s and the Trevi fountain.

A wonderful experience was only due the effort involved in planning and being there with us to share the visit and our deepest thanks go to Fr Bernard and Eamonn who were wonderful!

Eleanor Neely (Bollington)

Don't forget to send YOUR articles for the next magazine.

**REPORT FOR PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING
15th NOVEMBER 2008**

The Provincial Council held its Autumn meeting at St. Dominic's Parish, Huyton on Saturday 15th November. We were made very welcome by Father George Robson SDB and June Sharrock, the local Coordinator.

The meeting reviewed a very good response to the recent Retreat which appeared to have been very well received. The Provincial Plan, which had been presented at the Retreat, formed the main body of the meeting and I am happy to report that there is progress on all sections of the P.P.

The minutes will be distributed to all Delegates and Local Centres. If any one knows of a cooperator who is detached from a Centre please send me their details and I will put them on the mailing list. Our next meeting is in Streatham on 15th March.

Paul Barnes
Provincial Council Secretary
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Messengers of Love

God created us to be our unique selves,
Not like toy soldiers off toy shop shelves
To be accepted for who we are
God's special creation.
Not to be used by forces of manipulation
Allowed to be compassionate, gentle and kind,
Bringing those around us, peace of heart and mind,
Complaining and critic, only create clouds up above,
God made us to be messengers of kindness and love.

Deacon Terry Gilvin (Gilmooss)

On our final evening at Colle, Don Egidio took us out into the hills to experience a typical farmhouse meal at the house of a Salesian past pupil. It was a most wonderful finale to our Turin stay; the meal consisted of several courses with a different wine "tastings" to go with each of them and the opportunity at the end of the evening to buy bottles of wines to take back home. Judging by the numbers of bottles purchased it was just as well that we were going back on the coach as there would have been quite a lot of "excess luggage" to declare if it had been by air !

On leaving Colle after morning Mass we travelled to Annecy (Francis of Sales) for a two night stopover with plenty of time to explore this most beautiful town at our leisure. We had Mass in the Basilica and were privileged to be seated on the actual sanctuary for the celebration.

Visits to Notre Dame Cathedral and a final Mass at Rue de Bac (Catherine Laboure and Vincent de Paul) brought our pilgrimage to a close. Grateful thanks are due to every single pilgrim who helped make this such a special experience for all. Special thanks to Fr Pat Sherlock SDB, our spiritual animator and Sr. Georgina McPake FMA who did so much behind the scenes (advice, contacts, translations, negotiations etc) to make the pilgrimage possible.

Would you like to join us in 2018 ?

Chertsey Cooperators

Association of Salesian Cooperators
Article for Provincial Newsletter
“Provincial Council Residential Weekend”

The Provincial Council Residential Weekend this year was held at the Jeremiah Centre, Efford, Plymouth from 7.00 pm Friday 20th to 1.30 pm Sunday 22nd June 2008

The Jeremiah Centre was an old manor house used by the Carmelites and then the Redemptorists in the past. It was due to be demolished recently but a couple from the Plymouth Diocese asked to be allowed to use it as a Retreat/ Conference Centre. We were one of the first to use it and were given good rates!

There were 10 of us present for the whole weekend. We met for dinner on the Friday after which we made a start on discussing our thoughts for a Provincial Plan which we feel will give us direction over the next 2 or 3 years. This gave us a sound basis and structure for the rest of the weekend.

After a good night's sleep we spent most of Saturday addressing the following topics: **Communication, Formation, Finance, Vocation, Growth and Collaboration**. This has formed the basis of the Provincial Plan document presented by Daniel Sharp at the Retreat in October.

We did give ourselves a little break from the discussions by visiting Plymouth Hoe and reminiscing on Sir Francis Drake (see picture of the group). In the distance we could see the steeple of Plymouth Cathedral which is 150 years old this year. Bishop Christopher Budd is a Salesian past pupil and was aware of our use of the Jeremiah Centre. In the evening after dinner we were entertained by Della Shenton who provided a DVD show of Bethlehem and the work the Salesians are doing there producing bread each morning for poor families and wine for the rest of us! (She brought some samples which went down well!) Della runs Retreats to the Holy Land and sells the wine to parishes and Salesian Houses including altar wine plus “David's Tower” and “Star of Bethlehem” to name but two of the range.. Her e-mail address is della@desertdawn.net if you wish to obtain more details mentioning where you read about it.

Sunday morning was devoted to finishing off our discussions on the Provincial Plan and addressing the action points for our March meeting held at Savio House. In between times we said Morning Prayer celebrated Mass in a little chapel and used the Wednesday Word sheet to prepare for the readings. (This is available weekly as a preparation for the following Sunday and can be downloaded on www.wednesdayword.org - I can recommend it as we now use it weekly as a discussion document for 30 minutes in my parish in Truro)

Finally the weekend closed with lunch and an opportunity to thank Kathleen Pill and Sister Eileen McGarry for their commitment to their Salesian vocation on the Council, we will miss them both for their friendship and valuable contributions.

Paul Barnes

Provincial Council Secretary

