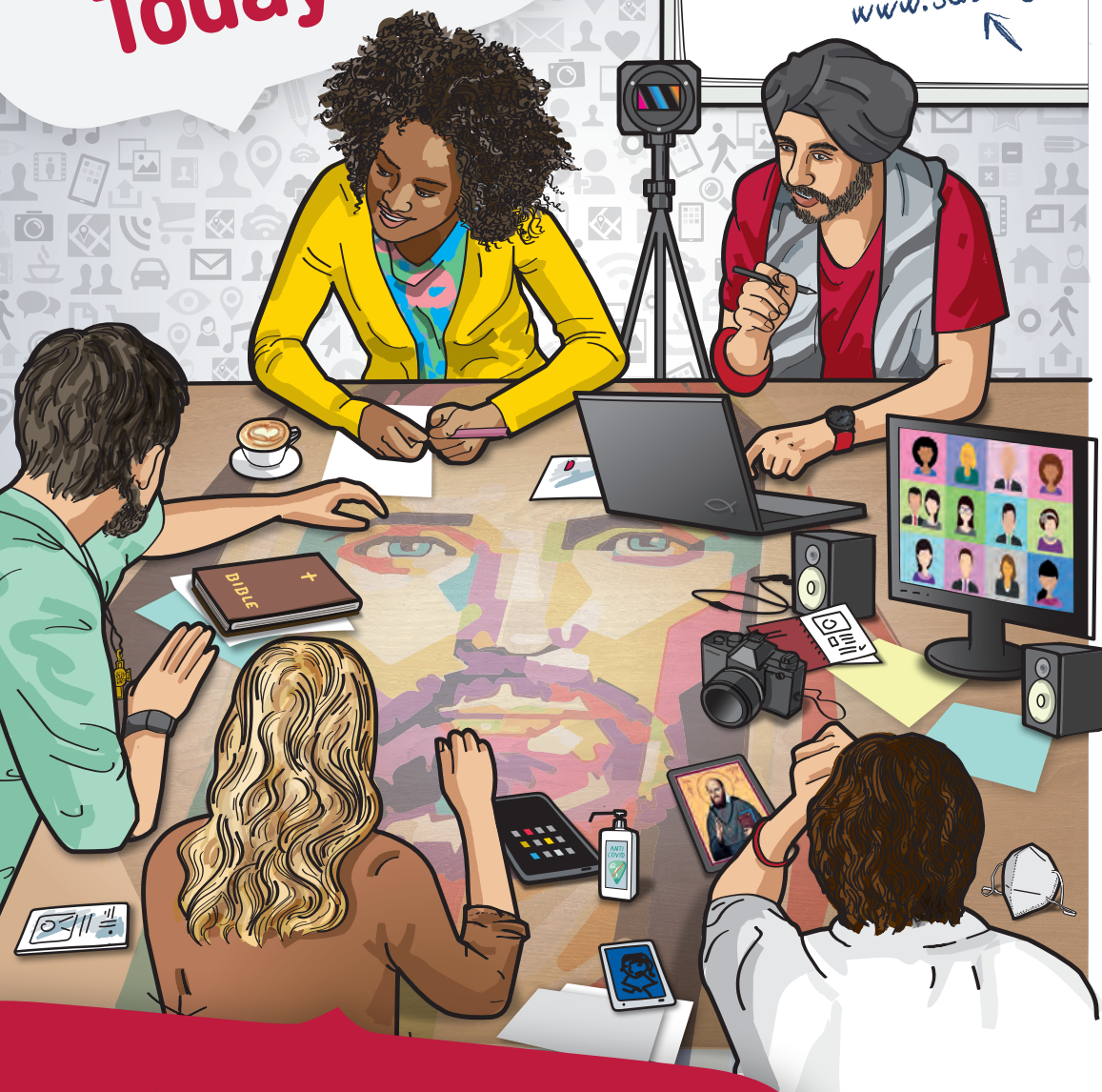


Communicating Christ Today



20 } SALESIAN
22 } MISSION DAY



SALESIANS
DON BOSCO



salesian
missions
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INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATION OF THE POSTER



“COMMUNICATING CHRIST TODAY - # MissionariesOnline”: evangelising is an act of relationship that needs the right means of communication to convey the message of the Gospel. This year the Salesian Mission Day intends to create a link between missionary animation and social communication by addressing the theme of proclaiming the Gospel in the world of social media.

The poster for WMD 2022 has five young people gathered around a table, communicating in a simple way with the aid of technological tools that are part of our everyday life: smartphones, computers, tablets... The diversity of cultures is not an obstacle, and the world of social networks brings people together and unites them. St Francis de Sales, whose portrait on the tablet reminds us of his 400th anniversary, accompanies the work of transmitting the Gospel in ever new and creative dynamics. The core of everything, permeating all communication,

is Jesus whose face is at the centre of the poster. He is the messenger and the message that we want to bring to young people with our lives, even when we use social networks.

The reflection within this booklet is guided by the three elements that make up the theme: **Communicating**, through a concrete experience of media education; **Christ**, the true source of all forms of communication of the Gospel; **Today**, exploring the relationship between young people around the world and social media.

Further insights are given to us by the letter of the Rector Major, the interview with three General Councillors and the lectio divina on the passage from Romans 12, 9-21 “Let love be without hypocrisy”.

For a Salesian reference, we have included a reflection on effective communication in Salesian style and a presentation of ANS, a precious resource for the Congregation and the Church. The introduction to the mentality of today’s youth – the “millennials” and “Generation Z” -, the experience of a priest on the frontlines on these issues and the voice of some young people of the SYM will help us translate concepts into life experience.

The testimonies of holiness of Francis de Sales and the young Carlo Acutis show us that this is a path to heaven.

Some graphic game activities accompany the text and can be used with the young people to reflect on the themes of WMD 2022.

The project chosen to be supported this year is the Salesian radio network “ARTESBOL” in Bolivia.

The work for the realisation of the WMD materials, under the guidance of the Missions Sector, has involved many people from different provinces all over the world. The prayer was composed by Mattia, a young student who lives at Sacro Cuore, in Rome, and is involved in the pastoral activities of the house.

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LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Dear friends,

I greet you with great pleasure at the beginning of this year and offer you a beautiful theme for the Salesian Mission Day 2022, a theme that is of utmost importance for all of us: **how to communicate Christ today**.

We all know very well that we cannot avoid communicating. We communicate even without saying a single word. As I meditate on the theme of this WYD, these three things come to mind:

1. Authenticity. To communicate Christ well today we need to be true, authentic. Do not fall into the temptation to make a good impression, to seem better, to be more attractive and more praised. Try, rather, to be than to do and to impress. Only in this way can we be credible communicators and true missionaries.

2. Listening. Today, words have lost their weight. What counts are images, symbols, stories, concrete people. Many things cannot be done because of Covid. However, we have a new opportunity to communicate. Both with others and with God. It is a good time to deepen our relationship with God, to listen to him attentively and to listen to young people. Their presence and their activities on social networks, with a boundless desire to get as many likes as possible, are often a cry to be heard, to be taken seriously.

3. Positivity. If we want to communicate Christ as missionary disciples, we must communicate the Gospel. And what else is the Gospel if not the “Good News”? We should try to see the good in everything. Even in difficult situations and despite the fragility of today’s world. Like Christ who saw even in sinners the deepest potential for good; like Don Bosco, who always looked at the positive side of every young person.

Do not be afraid to be creative, to enter the field of the media, of social networks, to see this space as a great gift from God and not as a threat or danger. I am sure that Don Bosco would do nothing else today, but always with adequate formation, prudence and the heart of an educator. He would certainly be one of the most active followers, supporters, to be close to young people, to share this digital space with them in a personal way, to educate them with good examples, to bring them closer to Christ.

Let us walk together on this beautiful and adventurous path.



D. Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB
Rettor Maggiore



#SALESIANMISSIONDAY

In 1988, the centenary of Don Bosco's death, Salesian Missionary Day (SMD) was launched, where a missionary theme was proposed to the whole Salesian Congregation to strengthen its missionary culture. The first recipients are the Salesian community and the Educative-Pastoral Community (EPC), then all the youth who belong to the Salesian Family.

Each province chooses the date or period that best suits its own rhythm and calendar to live this strong moment of missionary animation.

The SMD is not necessarily a one-day event; it is important to offer an educational-pastoral itinerary lasting several weeks, of which SMD is the culminating point, as an expression of the missionary spirit of the whole EPC.

This booklet is addressed to Salesians and educators who want to receive some hints for their own formation and animation of SMD. The SMD poster helps visualize the theme and is an invitation to all, so it is important that it be located strategically in every Salesian institution. The videos are available on YouTube, on the channel "Settore per le Missioni Salesiane"; they are addressed mostly to the youth.



#Prayer

Missionary activity springs from and is sustained by the encounter with God. All members of the EPC contribute through prayer accompanied by sacrifices made for Salesian missionaries and missionary vocations. Every 11th of the month is an occasion to pray in the light of the monthly Salesian Missionary Intention. Each year, with the SMD theme, a specific prayer is proposed.

#Project

Each year a project is proposed for the entire Congregation. This is an important part of SMD dynamics, not just to raise money, but to be an educative experience for young people of concrete solidarity. The Province Delegate for Missionary Animation (PDMA) promotes solidarity through various initiatives, in particular during the intense liturgical seasons, and the whole provincial community is equally invited to make a monetary contribution as an expression of missionary solidarity. It is highly appropriate that at the conclusion of the celebration of the SMD whatever is collected is offered during the **Eucharistic celebration**, that is, as an offering to God, and for the Salesian missions.

#Evaluation

The evaluation after the SMD is as important as the preparation and celebration. Consideration should be given to how SMD was able to foster and promote a missionary culture in the local or provincial community through the year's proposed theme. Collect suggestions for improvement in the future.

#Theme

The theme of 2022 SMD is "Communicating Christ Today - Missionaries Online", a point of contact between missionary animation and social communication. It is a modern and relevant topic and full of challenges for Salesian educators. Starting from the thoughts of three General Counsellors on "Communicating", "Communicating Christ" and "Communicating Today", various other means are offered to develop the theme: interviews, lectio divina, insights, experiences. The materials are intended to be a useful tool for reflecting on how to evangelise in today's world, particularly through social media.

1988

Guinea: The dream continues

Zambia: Project Lufubu

Timor Leste : Young Evangelisers

Paraguay: Street children

Peru: Christ lives on the Inca trails

Togo: Don Bosco and Africa - a Dream Come True

Cambodia: Missionaries, Builders of Peace

India: In dialogue to Share the Faith

Russia: Lights of Hope in Siberia

Madagascar: Young Man, I say to You, Arise

Brazil: Yanomami – New life in Christ

Japan: The Difficult Proclamation of Christ

Angola: Gospel, Seed of Reconciliation

Papua New Guinea: Walking with Young People

Missionaries Among Young Refugees

Commitment for Human Promotion in the Mission

India: Arunachal Pradesh – The Awakening of a People

Mongolia: A New Missionary Frontier

Sudan: The Salesian Mission in Sudan

HIV/AIDS: The Salesians' Answer – Educating for Life

Missionary animation – Keep Your Missionary Flame Alive

Europe: The Salesians of Don Bosco walk with the Roma-Sinti

America: Volunteers to Proclaim the Gospel

Asia: Telling the Story of Jesus

Africa: Journey of Faith

Europe: We are the others - Salesian attention to Migrants

Lord send me! – Salesian Missionary Vocation

Come to our aid! Initial Proclamation and the New Frontiers in Oceania

... And they stayed with us: Initial Proclamation and the Indigenous peoples of America

Whispering the Good News. Initial Proclamation and Vocational Training in Asia

"Without knowing it, they hosted angels." Initial Proclamation among Refugees and IDPs in Africa

Europe: Initial Proclamation through Oratories and Youth Centres. "Rejoice..."

One Father, One Family – Missionary Solidarity as Initial Proclamation

Communicating Christ Today.
#MissionariesOnline

2022



COMMUNICATING: VILLAGE ARTISTIQUE DON BOSCO

An inspiring Salesian project of a new “media playground”



Fr. John Paul Swaminathan SDB
Don Bosco Intuition Entertainers Media - Paris

The media industry is growing rapidly worldwide, expected to reach almost USD 7 trillion by 2030. A growth of more than 10% per year. And likewise, private institutions of arts and media education is growing astonishingly fast. With tuition fees increasing sharply above inflation rates, media education is be-

“The digital environment is characteristic of the contemporary world. Broad swathes of humanity are immersed in it in an ordinary and continuous manner. It is no longer

coming more and more expensive, depriving passionate and talented youth the opportunity to study and gain meaningful employment in this burgeoning field. The media industry is rapidly becoming an industry of the elite, excluding the voices of talented youth due to their economic deprivation. These voices need representation

Digital justice for the abandoned, the disadvantaged, for refugees and migrants

Village Artistique Don Bosco (VADB) in Paris believes that all members of the global community deserve equal access to media technology. For this reason, they reserve 30% of the student intake for those who are abandoned, disadvantaged, or who are refugees, migrants, or from underdeveloped regions. Perhaps more than any others, it is these people whose stories need to be told. These excluded voices, the 'rejected rocks', are the ones they want to support to become the 'cornerstones' of a digitization reform movement. Given access to the necessary training, they will become the vehicles of change in the communities they come from through their access to, participation in, and common ownership of the media.

"The objective of Village Artistique Don Bosco is to form a new generation of artists and media professionals, 'good Christians and honest citizens', who will fill the digital streets of the world".

A new generation of media professionals

VADB will not just produce outstanding artists and craftspeople, but citizens with a deep commitment and passion for what they do. They will be endowed with a conscience, inspired to give back and help bring peace and harmony to humanity throughout their career. With the spirit of Don Bosco and the Salesians at the heart of their curriculum they will empower a new

merely a question of 'using' instruments of communication, but of living in a highly digitalized culture that has had a profound impact on concepts of time and space, on our self-understanding, our understanding of others and the world, and our ability to communicate, learn, be informed and enter into relationship with others. An approach to reality that privileges images over listening and reading has influenced the way people learn and the development of their critical sense". (Christus Vivit, 86: The Digital Environment)

"Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except in the sincere gift of self to others" (Fratelli Tutti, 87)

generation of global creators who understand and respect the power of the media and who will rise to key positions in the new creative economy.

An international Salesian community

- There are Salesians all over the world who are very interested in arts and media. Some have great talent and experience in such matters. VADB will be their international destination, a place where Salesians can come and learn, and in turn, teach and mentor others. They will “*Ensure adequate professional and ethical training*” (GC27, n. 75), and take intensive media retreats, building on existing skills and knowledge. Or they can take their very first steps in understanding media creation, then return to their communities as media missionaries.

Life is more than technology

From the moment of Gutenberg’s first printing machine people have been in a struggle between the value of a message and the speed at which it can be communicated. For media to travel at today’s speed it must contain a very simple message. It has to be inspirational, and have real depth if it is to make a lasting impact and ‘go viral’. An over-emphasis on technology has the media industry chasing this train, resulting in a downward spiral to messages that are simple and fast. The consequence is a flood of content that is superficially entertaining, increasingly sensational, and/or controversial.

“When the digital world becomes omnipresent, the influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. Efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches.” (Pope Francis, 2015)

Yet, put to good use, this technology could inspire us to unite on a global scale. It could “*make us feel closer to one another, creating a sense of unity of the human family which in turn can inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all*”(Pope Francis).

■ Media education is the basis

So, how does VADB direct technology and put it at the service of 'good digital citizens'? The answer lies in education. Currently the trend in media education is to place mastery of a machine and software, with its pre-defined programmed set of ideas, above that of the inspired human idea. Students at VADB will in future identify what a machine is capable of and allow its programming to become their idea, instead of first developing the idea, then choosing the machine that will best help them bring it to life. In service of the inspired human idea, technology is of immeasurable benefit.

There are very practical steps Village Artistique Don Bosco will take to confront this issue. They will place media philosophy, media history and critical media studies front and centre in the curriculum, making them mandatory for all students. They will teach the history of human communication, artistic endeavours, and the artist's historic relationship to spirituality. Through the support of student projects, they will aim to connect their abilities with a sense of moral and social responsibility.

■ Salesian media can shape the world's future

Media has always had a powerful influence in shaping our reality. Just as media has the power to breed complacency, indifference and the acceptance of our current situation, in the right hands, hands formed patiently, passionately and lovingly by the Salesians of Don Bosco, it will have the power to make phenomenal change. Please, join VADB on this journey!



MISSIONARY EVOLUTION?

COMMUNICATING CHRIST

Fr. Silvio Roggia SDB

Sector for Formation



If we look at the gospel at its first source, which is the life of Jesus of Nazareth, we could say that person, medium and message are the same reality. He is his gospel. It is already clear in the first verse of the first of the gospels that have come down to us: “Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God” (Mk 1:1). It is not the beginning of a treatise on theology. It is the beginning of Him, who is gospel. Everything that He was and lived becomes the message that Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, Paul and millions of others continue to make their own and pass on from generation to generation.

Let us try to focus on the MEANS, on the way in which the gospel made itself present and began its journey.

“With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them...” (Mk 4:34)

He communicates with stories and images that come from the life experience of those around him who listen to him: fields, furrows, seeds, nets, boats, sheep, shepherds who carry them on their shoulders after finding them, importunate friends, Pharisees, sinners with their eyes on the ground, miserable Lazarus, insensitive rich Epulonians, those who run into brigands, those who turn away, Samaritans who take care of them... These stories are so vivid and true that they never cease to be heard and to make their way into the heart after millennia, in all cultures. Christ is evangelising today. He has not stopped doing it and he will never stop. The how is so alive because it is “symbolic” in God’s way.

Let us pause on what has become the symbol par excellence: the cross. What could be more communicable through the centuries than his capital execution, exposed naked, nailed to that slave scaffold outside the walls of Jerusalem? It was supposed to be the infamous end of everything and instead it was a beginning that, like it or not, inexorably marks history from then on. If the cross is the highlight, no less powerful are those other symbols where he put together his maximum and our minimum, with the bread and wine that every day, in tens of thousands of different cultural contexts, pronouncing in hundreds of languages his own words, continue to be received as his body and blood. And what is the purpose of this communicative art, which, without writing a word, has never ceased to make people talk about itself through the millennia? The purpose is the one already contained in the first verse of Mark: “Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God”. The purpose is to come across him, as the “good thing” that changes your life; it is an encounter, a ‘one-to-one’ rapport, that immediately becomes a ‘one-with-all’ relationship.

Those who evangelise in our time can try to follow in his footsteps.

1 - Be Gospel, before saying or writing it.

They must be able FIRST to see it, to touch it. In the story of the sending of the twelve for the first missionary experience, the announcement of the close Kingdom is what they must say after having already cast out demons and healed all infirmities and diseases (Mt 10). The Kingdom of God is first seen and touched. The Word is not separated from life.

A proclamation that does not start from life is always less convincing, all the more so today where digital technology has made the message “touchable”, with young people above all, who no longer trust what is institutional and comes from above: they are extremely sensitive to the authenticity between who communicates and what they are trying to transmit.

2 - The parable of real life.

People's experience contains the seeds of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is here, in your midst. Learning to recognise it and to tell about it is already gospel. The scandal of the Incarnation, against which so many heresies have rebelled over the centuries, forces us to believe that God loves our lives and blends into them, even in situations and especially in faces that we would easily have considered distant and alien. This is what happens with the centurions, the lepers, the publicans, the sinners at the well of Samaria or at the feet of the teacher, the Samaritans...

The direction that the missionary life of the Church as a whole is taking today, moving from the mission "ad gentes" to the mission "inter gentes", is moving precisely towards an ever-deeper faith in the mystery of the Incarnation and Pentecost. God inhabits our history and is all the closer the more distant we are. "Every authentic prayer is aroused by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every man" (*Redemptoris Missio* 29).

3 - The gospel martyrdom.

Martyrdom is a term that is very much present even before Easter, and even more so from then on, to signify everything that evangelisation was at its source. For us it is inevitable to immediately think of bloody and painful connotations, even to the violent loss of one's life. But this is like a finishing line that has no meaning if there is no path leading to it. Martyr means first and foremost WITNESS. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Matthias is chosen to replace Judas so that he may be a MARTYR, a witness with the other eleven to the resurrection, since he was with them "all the time that the Lord Jesus lived among us". (Acts 1:21) Martyr/witness: perhaps this is what best says what it means to evangelise in the footsteps of Christ Jesus. One can only bear witness to the gospel: to show it through one's own life experience already impregnated with the same gospel. The main proof that this is how it works are the saints, who have touched and changed the hearts of so many fellow travellers, immersed as they were in life stories, ages and contexts that were anything but easy. The witness that comes from the holiness of life is an art where the evangeliser without realising it gradually becomes the gospel.

All this must be applied to the current situation in which we, as Christians, therefore missionaries, find ourselves here and now. The digital world, especially the social media, is a medium and a place where we are called to be present and to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus. Evangelising means becoming part of this Kingdom which is His, which is alive and at work, which is ultimately He Himself, before us, through us, in spite of us, and will be even more so after us, for ever and ever.



VIRTUAL WORLD OF TODAY'S YOUTH

New insights from a missionary perspective



Juan Carlos Montenegro

San Francisco Province (SUO), USA

Jesus' command to "Go and make disciples" (Matt 28:19) continues to resound to us today. Our love for Christ challenges us to go beyond our boundaries and reach out to people particularly young people of our society today. To do this we need to see reality from their perspective, understand how they process information, and how this information influences their behaviour. Nonetheless, our primary Salesian mission as educators-evangelizers is to bring them closer to Christ and Christ to them.

Generational differences could be a challenge that does not help us transition to being 'fully' present in this new playground where the young people have built their own language, developed their own rules, and created new, different expressions and a sort of meaningful relationships. This new playground is a virtual world where today's young people live, interact, dream, engage, and suffer. The love and missionary zeal of Don Bosco move us to embrace this new reality with hope, faith, and pastoral charity.

If we don't know the new reality young people face in the virtual world, our proposal and accompaniment as educators-evangelizers will be insignificant and irrelevant. The *Salesian Youth Ministry Frame of Reference* (2015) calls us to be present in this 'new courtyard'. Now more than ever, we need to innovate and to adapt our Salesian style of being present among the young.

To understand what's happening in this new virtual courtyard, the Missions Sector conducted an online survey at the Congregational level seeking to understand our young people, what they think, what they do, what they expect regarding the contents, possibilities and the use of the social media. The online survey in 6 languages involved 1,731 young people between 13 and 18 years in age from 37 countries and 6 different continents. They are all from our Salesian educative-pastoral communities. It is important to keep this in mind because the responses from young people who are not from the Salesian environment may differ.

The result of this survey, in English, updated to September 2021, is available by clicking this link

<https://es.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-F5KNPWRJ/>

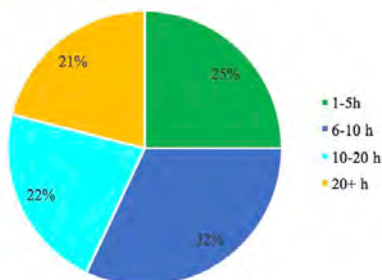


KEY FINDINGS:

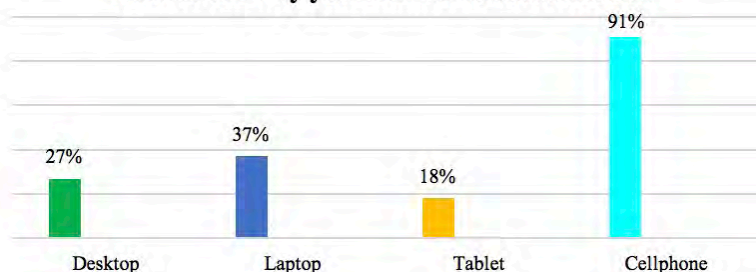
- It is clear that the greater use of the internet is associated with a decline in the participants' communication with members in the household, a decline in the size of their social circle, and an increase in their depression and loneliness. These are important topics to keep in mind when planning our accompaniment of the young.
- 91% of our young people use mobile phones to access the social media. These devices are associated with behavioural problems and possibly even health problems. Connectivity among 75% of the sample is more than 6

hours per week but may be over 20 hours in some cases. The connectivity to the internet has a lot of implications, like a shift in the development of social skills, relationships, knowledge, etc.

How many hours per week are you connected to social media?



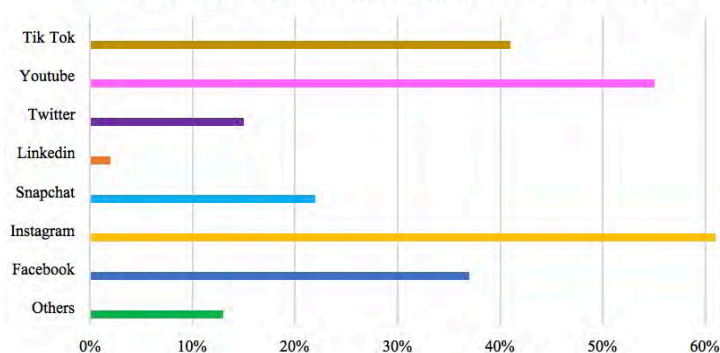
What is the way you connect to social media?



- The respondents perceive online bullying, paedophilia, fake news, predators, and hackers as the biggest threats in the use of the social media. 26.40% of our young people affirm that they have been bullied.
- Due to lack of supervision and/or formation and accompaniment young people are exposed to online adult content; the urgency for the educative presence of adults starts with kids at the age of 11-13 years. That is the moment when, according to the survey, they are most vulnerable to surf on webpages with adult content.

- In regard to our presence with religious content, 72.56% of the young people who took this survey have been exposed to some type of religious content. 47.72% believe that the internet helps to develop their relationship with God.
- Our youth visit websites that are related to videos – music, games, tutorials, etc. 88% of the sample prefer video as the type of content.
- Young people's preferences are for WhatsApp (64 %), Instagram (61%), YouTube (41%), Tik Tok or Facebook (37%), and Messenger (33%). This information helps us choose where to be to communicate with the young. We may spend a lot of fruitless effort on platforms that the young do not visit. Maybe our channels for communication must be Facebook for parents, and Instagram for our young people.

What is the social platform that you use the most?



This survey is a powerful challenge to us, educators and evangelizers of the young, to be present among our young people on the social media in a relevant and significant way.

The survey is open and available in several languages. Anyone may participate until June 2022 by clicking on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/newplaygrounds>



Fr. Alejandro Rodriguez SDB



STIRRING UP INTEREST IN JESUS VIA TIK TOK

An interview with Fr. Matt Lowry

Fr. Matt Lowry is a priest of the Diocese of Phoenix, USA. He has been the pastor of the *Holy Trinity Catholic Newman Center* for the last 12 years. His primary ministry is among college students. The young people were the ones that led him to get involved in the social media: “I relied upon students along the way to use different social platforms.” He uses the social media as a medium for the Gospel. It is a way to reach out to people who are not coming to church. At the height of the COVID pandemic it was suggested that he should be on Tiktok, and his response was, “You just tell me what to do, and I will follow your ideas with my own sensitivity.” The TikTok account was created and since then things just developed. Now it has over 146.6K followers with 3.3M likes (<https://www.tiktok.com/@catholic.jacks>).

“We have the best thing on the planet, the joy of the Lord, so let us share it out into the world!” Fr. Matt has found a creative way to do it with the whole world, literally. What about the ‘fear’ of being on social media? “I was afraid that I may do something that will harm the Gospel or hurt people.” This is the risk

that needs to be taken to be out there in these new courtyards. It is something different, it is something new, but we are called to accompany our young people wherever they are. “At the end of the day, it is not about me at all; the creative one is the Holy Spirit. It is leaning on God and saying: God, this is your work”.

The digital world is so foreign for so many adults that we don’t have much feedback about the benefits of being present there. Many young people in normal conditions feel disconnected from the Church and God. Through the social media, they feel connected, want access, and are grateful when we are present there with them. The social media gives them the chance to express how they feel, and from that, some healing can take place.

As part of our missionary outreach, the social media has helped Fr. Matt “to reach out to students that I could never reach otherwise.” When we are creative, young members of the Church watch our social channels, but we also have people from different beliefs who are open to listening to what we need to say. One once told him: “I am an atheist, but you make some great points.” These are some gifts that we can find on social media; we don’t only evangelize our own young people, we can evangelize any young person and anyone who never even comes to our church.

Some recommendations on being present in these new playgrounds:

1. Seek the Lord and ask for guidelines to get ready to enter these new fields.
2. Create a team with a mix of personalities that will help prepare posts on social media: remember, young people are experts in this field.
3. Just do it! Do not wait to be an expert; just jump into it.

In his final thoughts, Fr. Matt shares that social media has challenged him to be more attentive to the reality of the young. It has helped him share God’s love by listening and responding to the Gospel of the Lord.

How has this article challenged you to enter these new courtyards?

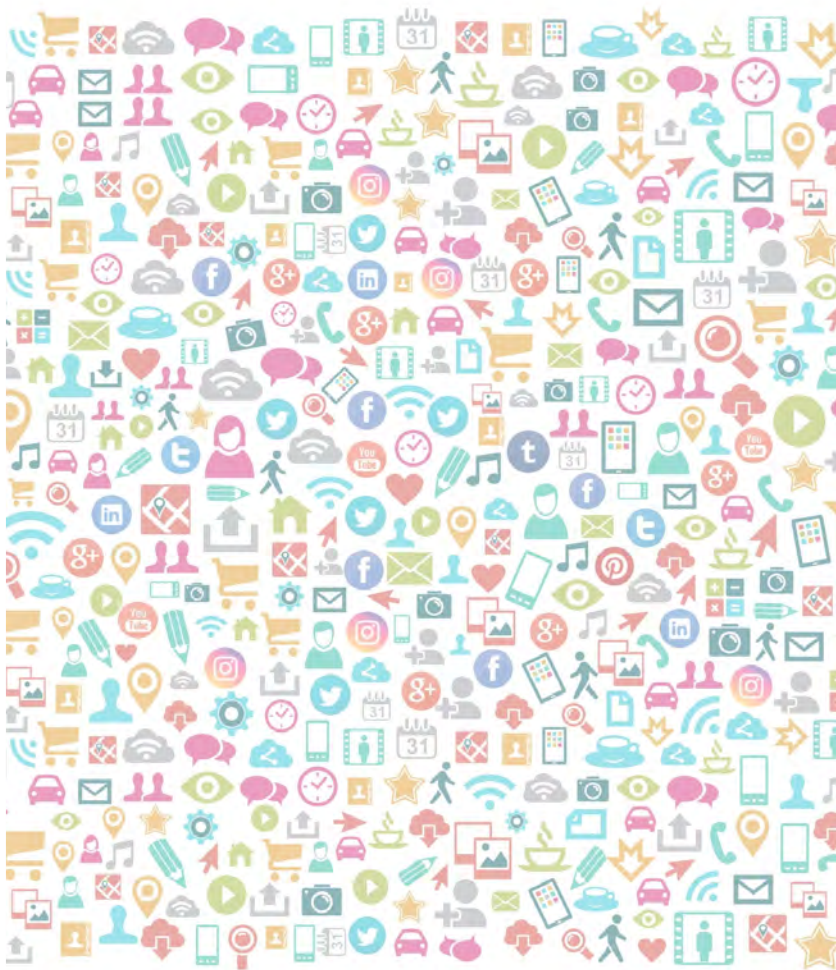
To watch the whole interview scan the QRcode



GAMES

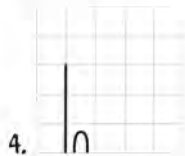
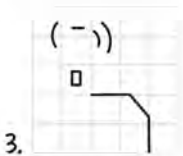
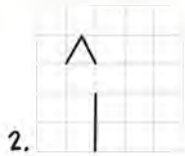
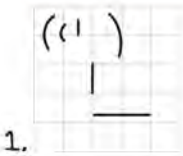
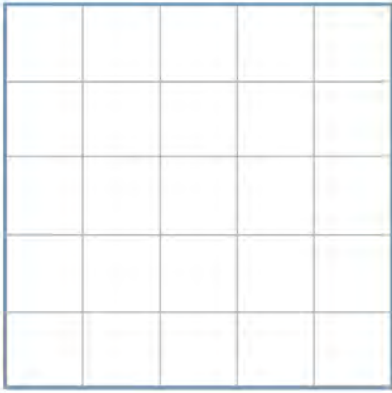
Who is waiting for you there?

Blacken the icons that represent social networks.



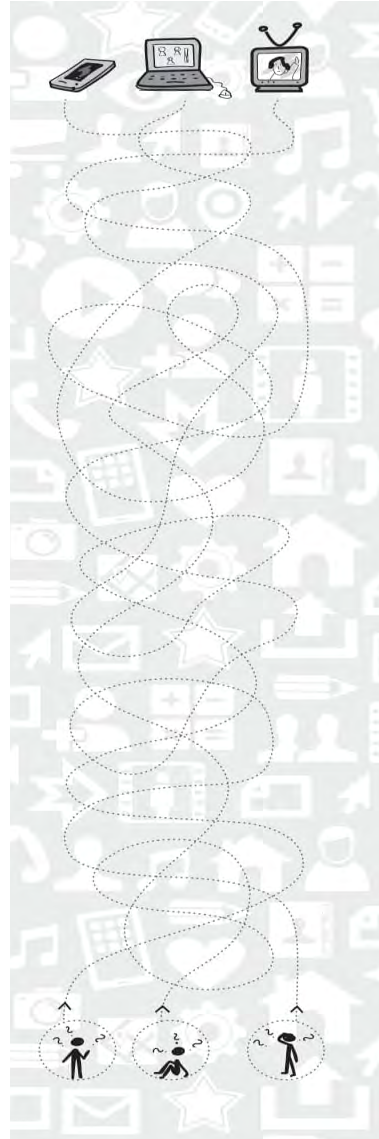
Let's be on the signal...

Draw in the empty grid the strokes shown in the four small grids below.



...and in touch

Associate a technological tool with each person.





TODAY'S COURTYARDS: OVER TO THE COUNCILLORS

The theme of this year's SMD 'Communicating Christ Today' touches on three Salesian sectors that are increasingly working together, while respecting the specific perspective of each – Missions, Social Communication and Youth Ministry. That is why we are presenting this interview with all three councillors.

Fr Alfred Maravilla – Councillor for the Missions (AM)

Fr Gildasio dos Santos – Councillor for Social Communication (GS)

Fr Miguel Angel García Morcuende – Councillor for Youth Ministry

*Dear Confreres, There are three words in the motto of this SMD. We would first like to ask you a question about **communicating**. We all communicate, we all need to communicate. As per your experience, what **do we neglect most in our communication** – we educators, animators, Salesians – with young people?*

GS – The young have a linguistic code to interpret their lives and reality. A great challenge for us is to enter into this code in a friendly and interactive way. The language code of the youth passes through their heart's feelings, affections, desires for relationship and trust. Love young people in the name of God and enter into their lives to make a path of faith and Christian life.

MG - The topic of communication is very delicate because we often run the risk of talking about 'challenges'. There are challenges, indeed, but we should rather enter into the subject of concrete operational possibilities. This is because our young people are already 'there'; they invest their time, they live connected through the technology they carry and bring with them. All this raises questions of the first order for youth ministry, almost 'forcing' certain rethinks.

AM - Communication involves several components that we need to consider seriously: first of all, the sender who encodes the message by choosing the best channel through which the message is relayed – like the social media, print media, etc. – from the sender to the receiver. The receiver, in turn, analyses the message in his context and interprets it in ways both intended and unintended by the sender. Finally, the feedback indicates how accurately the message was received.

*The second term in the motto is '**Christ**'. Many young people try to get closer to Christ or to deepen their personal relationship with Him, but they say that **the Church does not help them much** in this, quite the opposite. What would you advise them to do?*

GS - Jesus Christ teaches us that to proclaim the Good News is to walk together, to make a process of change of mentality, to be open to the new, to learn, to deepen and to involve. The Church teaches us through history that evangelising requires closeness, walking together. The closer we are to young people, the more we walk with them on today's road to Emmaus, the more we can discover together with them how to live their faith in the Church with commitment and joy.

MG - Within youth ministry, on the one hand we keep in mind to move from 'content' to 'people'; on the other hand, we also realise that in practice we sometimes do not know what is essential for faith. Recovering the content of the Gospel, Jesus Christ, is the right thing to do with young people. As educators-pastors it is necessary to ask ourselves if each of us has something to offer and if our own testimony of faith can provoke attraction and serve as an appeal. What young people are looking for are relationships, friendship, participation, protagonism, freedom, intimacy, concern, information, relief, belonging, support, feelings, closeness. Does not the Salesian educative-pastoral proposal have something to do with all this?

AM - Jesus Christ is not a doctrine to be believed but a person to be encountered. Therefore, proclaiming Him means making sure that all our activities foster an overwhelming and exhilarating experience of Jesus, which is capable of stirring an interest in His person. That leads to an initial adhesion to Him, or the revitalization of faith in Him. Without this concern to foster initial proclamation, any effort to evangelize will be sterile because initial proclamation is that spark that leads to conversion and begins the process of evangelization.

The word “today” leads us to reflect on how we can avoid being locked into the forms of the past which no longer have the capacity to reach today’s people, especially the young. What can help us to follow and make good use of current trends and, on the other hand, not limit ourselves to looking for the best form?

GS - - Don Bosco lived the way of educating and evangelising starting from the pedagogy of the heart of the good shepherd who welcomes and loves in the name of God. I like Don Bosco’s expression: deeply human, deeply holy. Every pastoral methodology has as its centrepiece the example of the Good Samaritan. Love witnessed in service to others, especially to the poorest and suffering, always generates new and relevant messages. The content of some messages passes through this way of loving and serving.

MG - With the media, a real living continent has been created, with the vocation of being a common and public place. If youth ministry does not intervene in this space, then it will be responsible for its own absence. We have an obligation to reposition ourselves and then choose how to act. No one would live in the digital world if they did not see in it some opportunities for growth, both for themselves and for meaningful relationships. This is why young people are always trying to be noticed in this virtual space, often through images and short catchphrases. In any case, the need remains to be part of something, an important part.

AM – Today the social media are part of our lives. They allow us to communicate with hundreds of thousands of people with one click. Thus, the challenge to every believer, to every Salesian educator, is to use the social media by offering young people content that will help them personally encounter Jesus in some way. Our present fluid culture searches for something stable that helps make sense where nothing is considered permanent. Today the social media provide a unique opportunity to address questions concerning virtue, relationship, and faith in Jesus Christ. Let’s seize this opportunity!



LECTIO DIVINA: COMMUNICATING CHRIST TODAY



Fr. Fabio Pasqualetti SDB

dean of the Faculty of Social Communication Sciences,
Università Pontificia Salesiana - Rome

The concern of many Christians today is how to proclaim Christ in a world that lives without God, highly technologised and scientifically distant from any kind of theological and spiritual discourse. In pastoral work and catechesis, anxiety increases when it comes to understanding what language to use with the new generations, what to propose to them so that they are attracted to the figure of Christ. Since social networks dominate human relations, the reasoning that is often used is the following: since young people are on social networks, it is there that we must be present. This logic is plausible, but it does not solve some problems. For example, once you are on social networks with a nice profile, who do you talk to? What do you have to say that deserves attention? What changes in our lives and in the lives of others?

Can there be a Christian proclamation without a novelty of life? And what does this novelty of life consist of?

Let us be inspired by Paul's letter to the Romans.

Romans 12:9-21 **Let love be without hypocrisy**

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly, affectionate to one another with brotherly love, giving preference to one another with honour; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, giving to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be proud but associate with the humble. Do not be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but leave room for God's wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

We communicate not only what we know, instead, above all, what we are. While what we know may be as cultured and sublime as literature, art, science, etc., what we are is what makes what we say credible. In other words, the true proclamation is our behaviour and not our words. **By their fruits you will recognise them** Mt 7:16.

Communicating Christ without living in His Spirit is of no use, it only generates indignation. We have learnt this the hard way from the paedophilia scandal. Scandals are not only in the sexual sphere. There are also the scandals of the economy, power, justice, respect for the environment and everything that is against the dignity of the person, especially the most defenceless.

It is not by chance that I chose this passage, which begins with **Let love be without hypocrisy**.

In the online Italian Treccani dictionary hypocrisy is defined as: "Simulation of

virtue, religious devotion, and in general of good feelings, good qualities and dispositions, in order to gain the sympathy or favour of one or more people, deceiving them.” Jesus’ invectives against the Pharisees in the passage in Matthew 23:23-39 always begin with **Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.**

If the essence of Jesus’ message is that God is love and that to love Him we must love those around us, this love must be without hypocrisy.

It would be enough to take this first sentence of Paul seriously to change our existence.

In the world of social networks, dominated by the rules of profit, hypocrisy is the rule of the game. Think of how many profiles are made to please others, to be ‘socially’ accepted, to receive more *likes*, to appear what one often is not.

Speaking to some educators in the city of Buenos Aires in the 1990s, years of social and political crisis, the then Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio challenged them, saying:

In a society where lies, subterfuge and hypocrisy have led to the loss of the basic trust that allows social bonds to be established, what novelty is more revolutionary than the truth? To speak truthfully, to tell the truth, to set out our principles, our values, our opinions. If we constantly force ourselves to avoid any kind of lie or deception, we will also be more responsible and even more charitable as a result. Lies cloud everything; truth makes manifest what dwells in our hearts. [...] we always tell the truth about and from our position. I assure you that the change will be visible: something new will be born within our community.

An educational process cannot disregard education for justice and truth. But these two dimensions are to be realized in practice.

The Christian proclamation is made up of gestures, wonders and signs, and even when Jesus uses parables, they are narrative devices to make the listener take a position: with Jesus one cannot remain indifferent. But to arrive at the wisdom of Jesus, one must first live His message in depth. It is no coincidence that immediately after affirming **“let love be without hypocrisy”**, Paul exhorts us saying: **Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.** Let us try to apply this



passage to our everyday activities, including social media. How do we abhor evil and practice good every day?

The challenge is to become an image of God incarnate in today's world. The starting point is to look at Jesus, not to mimic Him, but to grasp those aspects that characterize him as the son of God and try to make them our own.

Pope Francis in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* in n. 48 underlines the importance of listening as a paradigm of welcome.

The ability to sit down and listen to others, typical of interpersonal encounters, is paradigmatic of the welcoming attitude shown by those who transcend narcissism and accept others, caring for them and welcoming them into their lives. Yet today's world is largely a deaf world [...] At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying. Halfway through, we interrupt him and want to contradict what he has not even finished saying. We must not lose our ability to listen.

Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Love of the enemy goes against all our instincts. Those who harm us we cannot love, let alone bless. Paul demands not only love for the enemy, but also blessings for those who persecute us. Isn't that a bit too much? NO!!! If you want to proclaim Christ it is not too much, it is the foundation of love.

Practical exercise: verse by verse, translate Paul's passage into behaviour to be adopted in your life. Try practising it every day: you will see that your communication will not need so many words, nor so many images, because you will be the incarnate Word and the image of Christ today. Leave the narratives on social networks to others... be Good News for those you meet every day.



**God wants to be there with you ...
INVITE HIM!**

ALIVE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Reflections on effective Salesian communication



Br. Angelo Mereghetti SDB

Salesians T. Gerini - Rome

“We work in the field of social communication. It is a significant field of action that falls within the apostolic priorities of the Salesian mission. Our Founder sensed the value of this mass school, which creates culture and spreads models of life. He committed himself to original apostolic undertakings to defend and sustain the faith of the people. Following his example, let us value as gifts from God the great possibilities that social communication offers us for education and evangelisation”.

With these words, the Salesian Constitutions remind us of the essentiality of Social Communication for our charism. So, for this brief reflection I do not need

look too far. I start from here to find some Salesian elements to pay attention to when dealing with communication and Social Networks.

1. Apostolic priority:

If communication is a priority of our mission, we cannot continue to think of it as an appendix to our activities or as one of the 'forms' of pastoral care; we need to give it its rightful space. The problem lies precisely here: how do we restore to it its importance in our educational work? There is only one solution, and it is a difficult one: we must make the choice to dedicate **time and people** to this sector of our mission. Today it is increasingly necessary to create teams that follow the entire dimension of communication. All this because communication on social media requires an immediate and ongoing relationship, which cannot be relegated to a few hours a week or, even worse, to 'when you have time'.

2. Mass school:

Don Bosco teaches us that communication tools reach numerous people in very diverse places and contexts. We need to pay attention to this in our reflections even today. Before starting to share any content we must keep these two parameters very clear: the **target** people we want to reach and, consequently, the most suitable **place** to do it. Through this discernment we will understand that not all social networks are the same. Each of them needs to be used with astuteness and we should network all of them together.

3. Creating culture:

The first purpose of communication is to create culture. We cannot use social networks only as digital "noticeboards", where we post information on activities, events and their progress. That does not serve our mission. Today young people build the foundation of their person on social networks. Through them they get information, often becoming 'followers' of people from whom they get the **answers** to their **questions**. They are on a search, as they have always been. Today they have changed the place where they look for answers. We cannot fail to get into this network by becoming promoters of the culture that comes from the Gospel. We need to put into practice this principle of Don Bosco: "*love what young people love, so that they love what you love*". We can speak to the world about God through what young people love, we have the necessary skills for that. Today there is an ever-greater need for a cultural pastoral ministry within

the Social, because if we do not offer answers to the questions of the young, there will be others who will, but this will not give us the joy of seeing them *“happy in time and in eternity”*.

4. Spreading models:

This is the point on which our ‘digital pastoral care’ is often based: sharing people, stories, facts. Much of our **credibility** and our beautiful testimony on social networks depend on it. Social networks are created to put people and their stories online. There is no need for great technical skills or a lot of funds for a good pastoral ministry on social networks. Instead, there is a need for people who put themselves behind and inside these digital realities, who share their emotions and their experiences. Young people want to meet real people, not ‘scenes’ or fiction. It is necessary that our presence is made by (young) people for other (young) people.

Practical Suggestions

- **People:** Create a team who decide to be on this media of communication. Social networks are by now a real pastoral field. As in any other area of pastoral work, it requires reflection, time, commitment and much more. It is necessary to find the right balance between adults and young people to do this ministry.
- **Time:** Social networks, by their very nature, require an almost ‘instantaneous’ exchange. This requires us to spend time on it and a good redistribution of tasks within the team. These are necessary in order not to lose the criterion of ‘immediacy’.
- **Constancy:** Social networks have great capacity to build communities. Just like in our communities, there has to be people to live in them and these people need to be ‘alive’, to do things. A social page needs constant involvement of its community through constant fresh content.
- **Target audience:** “Who is this message for?” Answer this question before each publication. It makes us think seriously where to post our content and the best way to do it.
- **Location:** Immediately after deciding on our target audience, we need to ask, “What is the best social network to post this on?” It

is necessary to select the place where our content will make the greatest impact.

- **Content:** As the Synod of Young People reminded us, it is necessary today to start from the questions of young people; we try to understand from them what content they want to see and discuss.
- **Quality:** Make a significant contribution. Do not say things you think are untrue or for which you do not have adequate proof. Each post must also respect the rules of the social network on which it is posted (format, graphics, language).
- **Manner:** Be clear. Avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression. Be concise and neat. Your message needs to be easily understandable. Showing it to someone before sharing it could be a very wise thing to do.
- **Network:** Social networks work well when they work as a network. Interconnect your presences on various networks. Structure your entry into this network well, otherwise you run the risk of getting trapped in it. It would be wise to think carefully about which social networks to enter, calculating the resources you need to do so.

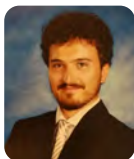
PROPOSAL

Try to put these suggestions into practice in a work coordinated by the delegates of Missionary Animation and Social Communication.

- Help young people grow in their awareness of the evangelising potential of social media using the Salesian style.
- Check if at local and provincial levels the simple points listed for effective communication are being followed and what elements need to grow and improve.
- Challenge young people to express themselves creatively on TikTok in a dance video or on Instagram with a photo/image related to the theme 'Communicating Christ Today' or whatever other theme you choose.
- Each Salesian house in the Province could participate by involving teams of young people in a competition promoted on social media.
- The ideas are endless...get involved, as an individual and as a community, and you will see that the digital world can be fruitful ground for witness and evangelisation!



ANS: COMMUNICATION THAT SERVES EDUCATION AND EVANGELIZATION



Gian Francesco Romano

Sector for Social Communication/ANS

On many occasions, in various parts of the world, the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, has stressed a fundamental principle of the whole Congregation and the Salesian Family: for the good of young people it is important to make known the good things that are being done in the name of Don Bosco. It is precisely for this reason that the ANS (**A**genzia **i**Nfo **S**alesiana) exists, a multi-weekly telematic periodical, the communication organ of the Salesian Congregation.

The 'ANS' - with the name 'Agenzia Notizie Salesiane' - was born in 1956 but, in truth, it is the offspring of another, earlier initiative, the 'AMS' - Agenzia Missionaria Salesiana - initiated in 1950 at the behest of the then Rector Major, Fr. Renato Zaggiotti. The aim of that agency was 'missionary' as evident from its name itself. It sent "interesting Salesian missionary news to various information agencies, newspapers and magazines of various nations", to "complete the missionary news of the Salesian Bulletin" and to supply "abundant material for study, to the missionary groups and the various associations in our Houses" (from the Acts of the Superior Chapter of December 1952).

Over the decades that followed, the ANS has changed completely, because everything around it has changed: the acronyms that gave it its name, the location (from Turin to Rome-Pisana and today at the 'Sacro Cuore', in the centre of the Eternal City) and, obviously, the modes of communication have all changed several times. The ANS landed on the web in the year 2000, while its presence on the social networks began in 2009 and has progressively expanded, arriving today at embracing the digital platforms YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, Facebook and Instagram.

Since it is the expression and information tool of the Congregation, which has a worldwide presence, the ANS publishes on its own website (www.infoans.org) in six languages. It collaborates in the production of videos in many more national languages (for columns such as 'Dear Brothers'). It relies on the work not only of the central editorial office, but also of a network of translators, correspondents and collaborators on all continents.

Today, the ANS pursues a style of communication that respects the professional parameters of modern journalism and can dialogue with everyone. However, it adopts a "**Salesian outlook on the world**", aimed at narrating and supporting the education and evangelisation of young people. It represents those realities that are not always seen in the mainstream media, and transmits messages of hope and commitment to help build a society more in line with Gospel teachings.

From this point of view, the communication of the ANS takes place, first of all, in the transmission from the centre to the peripheries, of the words, orientations, guidelines and models that come from the Rector Major, the Successor of Don Bosco, and from his first collaborators, the members of the General Council.

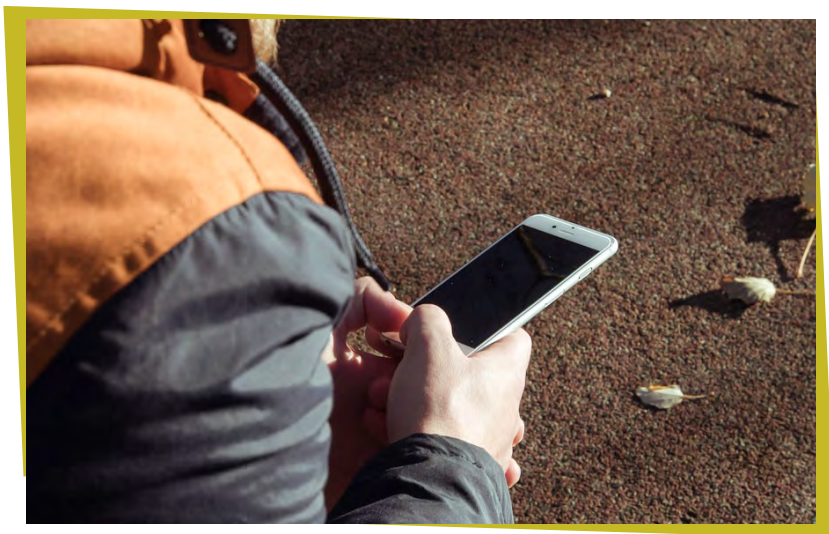
At the same time, aware that today's communication is never uni-directional, the ANS also casts '**a glance at the Salesian world**'. This goes much wider than the reality of the Congregation, because Don Bosco is a part of human heritage. It gathers and disseminates the voices that are raised at the peripheries, geographical and existential, of the world. The initiatives for the education of minors, countless forms of apostolate, testimonies of missionaries, the commitment in favour of all those in need, the attention to the care of Creation, the good examples that come from so many young people... are transmitted in the digital universe so that they can be known by all and can become a model for others.

With its work of information for and about the Congregation and the Salesian Family, **the ANS collects and updates Don Bosco's guidelines on the 'good press'**, to collaborate in the mission of the Sons of Don Bosco in favour of the salvation of the young.

To those who ask if we need a Salesian 'Reuters', José Luis Muñoz SDB, former director of ANS (2014-2021), says yes; think of ANS as a window on the Congregation. It is about making the Congregation visible, especially in its evangelising mission in the world. The publication of Salesian information is founded on the diversity and co-responsibility of the mission among the professed Salesians, the laity and the young people. The combination of these three groups creates a dynamic that is always new and original.

Certainly, Pope Francis arouses a lot of interest: every time the pope refers to the Salesians or to Don Bosco the number of people who share the articles of ANS rises. He speaks to the Salesians with enthusiasm and always encourages us to go further. This enthusiasm helps us to experience the strength of our communion with a unique movement of the universal Church. Missionary news is also of great interest to ANS readers – first of all, the first-person accounts of so many different and very difficult realities, where the Gospel is made alive. Even in places where we are in a minority as Christians, our pupils and Oratorians, though belonging to other religions, love Don Bosco and the Salesians. This is a wonderful sign of the great power of the Salesian charism.





MILLENNIALS AND GENERATION Z TODAY



Fr. Alfred Maravilla SDB
Councillor for the Missions

Any attempt to communicate Christ today starts from understanding the mindset of today's generation of young people. Communication involves several components that we need to seriously consider: the *sender* who encodes the *message* and chooses the *medium* through which the message is relayed from the sender to the receiver. The *receiver*, in turn, analyses the message in his context and interprets it in ways both intended and unintended by the sender. Finally, the *feedback* indicates how accurately the message was received.

The *senders* are the Salesian pastor-educators and youth ministers. The *receivers* are the youth and young adults today who are mainly millennials and Generation Z.

Millennials are 42-21 years old today. They learnt using technology and became dependent on it at an earlier age than the previous generations: the younger ones could not even imagine life without smartphones and internet. Millennials desire to be involved by getting the opportunity to share their thoughts because they like to share ideas and choose the best among them. They want their faith to be holistically integrated into their life, including technology. Millennials are the *app* generation. Apps have become a means for them to communicate, process information, purchase goods or even read Scriptures and pray. They are focused on the 'now' but tend to be idealistic.

Those of the **Generation Z** are 22 years old and younger. They are digital natives because they have been exposed to the internet, social networks and mobile systems from earliest age. They use social sites to socialize without distinguishing friends they meet on-line and friends in the physical world. They are always connected; for them there is no offline anymore. They are creative, realistic and focused on the future. They have a broad awareness about important issues and events and have a great desire to search for the truth. But they want to choose and discover the truth for themselves. In fact, the search for truth is at the centre of their characteristic behaviour and consumption patterns.

Those of the Generation Z use the social media networks like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, or Tumblr to obtain information about social concerns, health and nutrition, spirituality, etc. But they are also heavy users of anonymous social media platforms like Snapchat, Secret, Whisper, where any incriminating images disappear almost instantly. With vast amount of information at their disposal, they are more pragmatic and less idealistic than the millennials. A great majority of them in all continents declare themselves to be religious but do not necessarily identify themselves with a religion: they believe without belonging, others belong without believing. Those who claim not to belong to any specific religion normally come from families with no religious faith or who are lukewarm Christians.

Faith needs to be presented to millennials and to Generation Z in new and engaging ways. This, in turn, will open possibilities for them to share their faith with their peers. We should resist the temptation to bombard the social media with religious messages and images. This will actually drive away a big number of young people. *Initial proclamation* is not about teaching Christian doctrines. It is about fostering an overwhelming and exhilarating experience which is capable of stirring up the desire to search for the truth and an interest in the person of Jesus. Without initial proclamation that brings about a personal option for Christ, any effort to evangelise will be sterile. Initial proclamation is the cornerstone of the new evangelization. Thus, the challenge for every Salesian pastor-educator, for every youth minister, is to help millennials and the Generation Z create for themselves faith-based contents for the social media that could stir up in their peers an interest to know the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, today the social media is a privileged forum to communicate Christ to young people. It is up to each of us to use it with missionary creativity!

#SETTOREPERLEMISSIONISALESIANE



FACEBOOK

Settore per le Missioni Salesiane

<https://www.facebook.com/missionisalesiane>



INSTAGRAM

@missionisalesiane

<https://www.instagram.com/missionisalesiane/>



YOUTUBE

Settore per le Missioni Salesiane

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5lIt_a5OBC-pzDYj-ARhgA



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SYM: EVANGELIZATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



Janine Nicole Quinto

Salesian Youth Movement team – Philippines North

The pandemic has taken a toll in every aspect of our lives. It compels all of us to make the transition from being simply comfortable with things as they were to adapting to the so-called *new normal*. The Salesian Youth Movement also took a major turn on how the animation of youth groups is done beginning at the province level down to the local settings. Previously, the Salesian youth, through their dances, loud and cheerful music, and songs, easily bonded among themselves though they were from different settings and communities. Those activities are just a few of the things that everyone in the SYM can only long for ever since the pandemic began. It even felt like we had come far from the Church, or even worse for some, it felt like they were far from the Lord. Suddenly we were restricted and unable even to pay a quick visit to the church or chapel. Attending online Masses is another kind of agony because they are never an inch like the face-to-face Mass that we used to attend. Evidently, these have

challenged all of us. What kind of youth ministry do we give them if we can't be with them physically? How are we going to guide our young people amidst these trying times? How are we going to make them feel that the Lord is still with them despite all these happenings around us?

In the previous school year, SYM had the main goal of 'evangelizing' – as part of its 3-year plan – in all possible ways. More importantly we intended taking the highway where most young people were, namely the different social media platforms. I get the feeling that things are aligned now: the pandemic and the goal to evangelize. Now we have the opportunity, finally, to do ministry in the virtual world. In fact, we do not really have any other choice. SYM thrived. Just as every single one of you thrived, we did too, and we are still thriving. Various activities arose and most of them were initiatives of our very own Salesian youth in response to the needs of their fellow youth. Some were fruits of the embodiment of Salesian spirituality. It started in May 2020, a month-long online Pentecost retreat entitled *LIT Retreat* that catered to the Filipino youth, and another online retreat entitled *AKAP: Ako Kalakbay ang Panginoon*, followed by the *G2YG (G! To Youth Groups): SYM Huddle* aimed to bring together the leaders and animators of various Salesian-affiliated settings and share the values and applications of Don Bosco's vision in a difficult time like this. More events followed, such as the *GOTCHU: An Online Kamustahan Series*, and another online catchup event entitled *SYM Fri-yay Catch up*. Both of them aimed at reaching out to the youth even if in this little way, making sure they were reminded that they were not alone in their battles. They realized that there was hope no matter what happens, even if this was the closest we could get to each other during this pandemic. Then came more and more online events and activities across various Salesian settings, initiated by schools, parishes, and youth centres: online programmes and events such as the *KKK Lenten Retreat Series* organized by the youth councils from the FIN Salesian Parishes, *Koyang TV* by Don Bosco Tarlac, *D Word* by the Salesian students of theology and the FMA, *VocTok* by the Vocation Team of the FIN province, and many others which made the Salesian spirit come alive and felt in the virtual world.

All these programmes inspired others and encouraged them to continue doing their ministry even if it seemed hopeless in the beginning because of the circumstances. Most importantly, these became an avenue for evangelization, that is, a means to share the Good News of God's love to all but especially to the youth who needed it the most.



SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES AN OUTSTANDING COMMUNICATOR OF THE GOSPEL



Fr. Wim Collin SDB

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Almost four hundred years have passed since Saint Francis de Sales died in Lyon on 28 December 1622. In his relatively short life, only 55 years, the Bishop of Geneva changed the landscape of spiritual theology forever. He was born on 21 August 1567 in Savoy into a noble family, went to the Jesuit College in Paris and completed his studies at the University of Padua when he was 25. He chose the ecclesiastical state instead of a career in the judiciary. As a missionary he 're-conquered' the Chablais, a region in the north of Savoy, which had switched to Protestantism a few decades earlier. Once bishop, he reformed the diocese of Annecy-Geneva, and founded, together with Jeanne de Chantal, the Order of the Visitation of Mary Most Holy. Francis de Sales is above all known as a spiritual director. He sometimes wrote up to 40 letters of spiritual direction a day. It was from his collection of letters to Louise de Charmoisy that his most

famous work came about: *'Introduction to the Devout Life'*. A few years later he wrote the *'Treatise on the Love of God'*. In this masterpiece, he explains the relationship between man, creation and God himself. The significance of his life and his teaching for today, four hundred years after his death, is indisputable.

As a young priest, he was not afraid to volunteer to become a missionary in Chablais where the harsh teachings of Calvinist Protestantism had become the law. There, preaching the Gospel and teaching the doctrine of the Catholic Church was by no means an easy matter. When it was not possible for him to speak publicly, when it was made difficult for him to carry out his mission, he quickly changed his tactics. He looked for ways to reach people: **he started writing pamphlets and leaflets, which were secretly slipped under the doors of houses.** The tenacious always win.

A characteristic of Francis is that, not only in his work with Protestants, but also as a bishop and spiritual director, he uses **very simple language**. He does not lecture, he does not narrate in harsh and difficult words, he is careful not to preach using pompous theological speculation. He speaks and writes in a language that everyone could understand, a simple language, often with images of nature or simple comparisons. Who does not understand: "You catch more flies with a spoon full of honey than with a barrel of vinegar"?

Pastoral work for him is active pastoral work. He does not wait for someone to ask him for an appointment or to be given the opportunity to do something. This approach is visible in the very name that he and Jeanne de Chantal chose for their foundation: 'the visitation'. The name itself expresses the desire of the sisters and of Francis to bring Christ to the people. Just as Mary in her visitation to Elizabeth carries Jesus in her womb, and makes Jesus known to her cousin, so too must the pastoral attitude be: **to bring, in all simplicity, the joy of salvation to others.**

The basic attitude to be able to do this is pure, lived and deep love: to love the other as he is for what he is. By love, not by force, is the way God himself treats man. This is the profound meaning of the quotation from Francis that the Rector Major has chosen as the Strenna for the Jubilee year. For God himself, after having spoken to man through signs and prophets, sent his Son Jesus. No one has a greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. For love He gave His life because only Love makes us believe in Him. God Himself becomes visible in Love. Giving one's life for others – this is making Christ present and alive in this world.



BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS A YOUNG MODERN MISSIONARY



Antonio Cini SDB

Cagliari Don Bosco Salesian Institute - Italy

All People are born as originals but many die as photocopies.

Can a young person of the 21st century find a true model of Christian life among his peers? There is a young man, still alive in Paradise, who can teach us that “our Goal must be the Infinite, our Home, not the finite”. He claimed heaven to be his home and explained how to get there without too much difficulty.

He is Blessed Carlo Acutis, born in London on 3 May 1991, but who then lived in Milan. In this city he grew up like a normal boy of his generation, in a family that taught him Christian values. He attended Catholic schools. Already as a

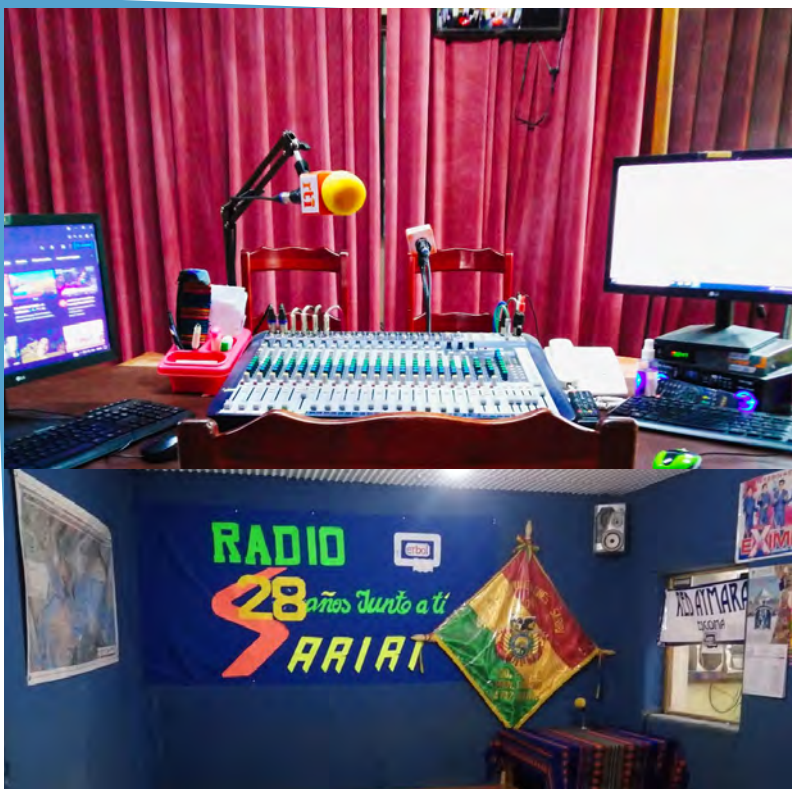
child one could see that there was something special about him: at the age of 7 he was admitted to First Communion and at the age of 12 he made commitments to attend daily Mass, to pray the rosary every day – which he described as *‘the shortest ladder to heaven’* – to go to confession frequently and to do Eucharistic Adoration.

However, his prayer commitments did not alienate him from the world, but rather made him an active young man, involved in the little things that a boy of his age normally does (and perhaps even more). He studied and helped his friends, played football and videogames, played the saxophone and went out with friends. Despite all these activities, he found time to help the poor and needy, giving them clothes, food and his company. A caring and thoughtful boy in many ways.

Carlo was a great lover of technology, the internet... and at the same time of Eucharistic miracles. When he was only 14 years old, he created a website showing the many miracles in the world. This website still exists and is maintained just as his other projects are (www.miracolieucaristici.org). In fact, he **firmly believed in the use of these modern means of communication to evangelise** and his love for the Eucharist spurred him on to work seriously to make Jesus known to everyone. Another famous phrase of his is: *“the Eucharist is my highway to heaven”*. His obsession was to become a saint and he spoke to everyone about holiness.

He died on 12th October 2006 in a hospital in Monza, at the age of just 15, from fulminant leukaemia, accepting the illness as a sacrifice offered for the Church and the Pope. He was beatified on 10 September 2020 in Assisi, the city he loved and visited so often, where he wanted to be buried and where he still rests, in the Spoliation Sanctuary in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

Carlo, carrying forward the slogan of **personal originality**, wanted to show us that every life can communicate Christ to others and that each person is called to do so in his or her own distinctive way. He understood that a great missionary effort is indispensable to proclaim the Gospel to all. His goal, in fact, was that of true missionaries: to reach as many people as possible to make them know the beauty and joy of friendship with the Lord, taking advantage of what the world can also offer.



SMD 2022 PROJECT ARTESBOL: SALESIAN RADIO COMMUNICATION NETWORK IN BOLIVIA

In Bolivia, Salesians have a radio communication network called ARTESBOL (Association of Salesian Educational Radio-Television Stations in Bolivia). This service to society currently has seven centres located in areas prioritized by our mission. In fact, the stations broadcast their signal from the peripheries of large

cities, thus showing their purely social and pastoral nature. This geographical location makes it possible for Audio Bosco to offer its radio waves to connect the most disadvantaged peoples to the rest of the country, and to provide them its microphones so that the voices of the voiceless can be heard.

ARTESBOL radio stations were created in response to the communication needs and urgencies of the remote areas of Bolivia. Their founders were Salesians who, with the example of Don Bosco in their minds and hearts, immediately understood that it would be difficult for an isolated people to feel part of society and the Church. So, with practically no coordination and no guaranteed funds, these radios were set up with simple instruments and in ad-hoc locations, even on the dining room table of a Salesian community, or on the desk of the Rector.

Today, ARTESBOL's mission is **"To be a group of radio institutions working in a Salesian style, evangelising youth and popular culture, educating, guiding, informing and involving people"**.

Today, our radio stations face the challenge of updating themselves to ensure a meaningful presence. External factors, such as the overwhelming irruption of online broadcasting, pose a great challenge to conventional media. On the other hand, the constant economic fragility of our radio stations has prevented us from significant renewal, both in terms of equipment and personnel, which also threatens our survival. In any case, we remain in high spirits and hope that Don Bosco will continue to be present in the homes of Bolivian families.

The proposal for SMD 2022 is to strengthen the seven Salesian radio stations in Bolivia by equipping them with devices that meet current needs and technological advances. Voltage stabilisers are needed to protect the operation of the computers on which the programmes are edited. Microphones, consoles and acoustic panels also need to be replaced to provide a quality service to the local audience.

With your small contribution you can be part of this great work of evangelisation!

DATE	
Name	<i>Oficina de Proyectos para Bolivia P. Reinaldo Villazón; Ecónomo Inspectorial y Director de la OPD</i>
Address	<i>C. Eduardo Calderón N° 2563 y Av. América final oeste, Cochabamba - Bolivia</i>
Country	<i>Bolivia</i>
BANK	
Name	<i>Banco de Crédito de Bolivia S.A.</i>
Address	<i>Calle Colón esq. Mercado La Paz - Bolivia</i>
BIC Code, Swift	<i>SCBLDEFX</i>
Account number	<i>301-5023174-3-64</i>
Currency	<i>Bolivianos</i>

Voltage Stabilizers (1500 Watt)	500 \$us.
Microphone	600 \$us.
12-channel console	1.600 \$us.
Soundproofing panel	800 \$us.
Total for 1 radio station	3.500 \$us.
Total for 7 radio stations	24.500 \$us.



salesian
missions
sector

● SMD 2022 PRAYER ●

O God, creative Father,
awaken in us the fire of love
that burns but is not consumed.
May that fire be for each of us the universal call
to holiness that could be realised everywhere.

Remind us that everywhere is a mission land
and that in every person there is already a desire for You.
Make us courageous disciples incarnated in our time,
capable of proclaiming You also in the social media
so that the web may also become a place of encounter with You.

Send your Spirit upon us, your children,
so that, as agents of the new evangelisation,
we may trigger the initial proclamation of Jesus
among young people today.

Amen