

Pastoral Theme for the 2023-2024 School Year:

‘Come to the Feast’



The Salesian Family Strenna for this 2023 year, *“As the Yeast in Today’s Human Family”* emphasizes that now more than ever, the lay dimension of the Church has a special call to carry forth the Great Commission that Jesus left in Matthew’s Gospel-

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”- Matthew 28:19-20

Often times, the idea that is widely held by many Catholics around the world is that it is up to those in religious life, or those working in the field of ministry to be the sole creators and initiators for the evangelization of those around them. They leave the responsibility to others, when the reality of the virtue of their Baptism calls them to spread the Good News to be everyday missionary disciples. We all have a duty to be the initiators and the raisers of faith in our Salesian family- we owe it to those who have not had the same encounter we have experienced with Jesus Christ.

As a Salesian family, we are being called deeper into our duty as Christians to spread the Gospel to our human family. The lay dimension of our church are those that walk hand in hand with society and are therefore called to sanctify the culture from within. What does that look like at our Immaculata-La Salle family? We are called to be the leaven in our school community- to call others higher to a life of faith and holiness.

Overall Objectives:

- Incorporate quarterly themes that emphasize prayer, sacraments and service which the laity can partake in with and for the young as a Salesian family in the Church.
- Demonstrate that holiness and sanctity is not reserved for a few- but for all.
- Build upon the previous quarter so students can be enriched throughout the year, deepening their relationship with Jesus in Scripture and in the Eucharist, and sustaining them in their service to others.

Q1: Invitation to the Feast

Reflection:

God invites everyone to the Feast through His Inspirations in Prayer and in His Word...

It is through prayer that we best dispose ourselves for the work of Gods in our lives. The dialogue of prayer begins in the heart of God who communicates to us through His inspirations. These inspirations, the gift of the Holy Spirit, enlightening our mind and move our will to respond to God's goodness...it is precisely through these inspirations that we can lift our mind and heart to God in prayer...It is God who takes the initiative. We are invited to respond in love to God who first loved us into being...In the Salesian tradition, Scripture is a privileged means through which we encounter the person of Jesus.

Action Steps:

- Provide students in class or in small groups with a meaningful bi-weekly/monthly opportunities to dive deeper into Scripture through Lectio
- Open Faculty meetings with a Lectio experience
- Invite parents for opportunities in school for Scripture study and sharing
- Recognizing the life of prayer and service of the elderly Sisters in the Salesian Sisters Province Community

Q2: Everyone is Invited to the Feast

Reflection:

Compassion has its roots in the depths of the heart. From a soul that is open to what is essential in life are born genuine Gospel experiences, missionary hearts, and actions with a social outreach and generous solidarity benefitting the poor...We are called to give life, to build up hope in this world where death (of the human being and of the ecosystem) leaves behind with much pain...Our mission as apostles is to give life, protect it and defend it from so many threats, struggle to secure the quality of life for everyone...We must ensure that all can 'sit at the table of the Lord'...A radical approach to the Gospels.

Action Steps:

- Provide service opportunities for students to work hand in hand on campus with local organizations to find inspiration and meaning to serve off campus, sustaining their engagement in the community.
- To re-cultivate Service Learning across the curriculum, supporting our teachers in educating our students to active, global citizenship, becoming leaven in society.
- To engage our parents in informal and formal gatherings to better understand the relationship between faith and service.

Q3: Response & Preparation for the Feast

Reflection:

In May of 1862 Don Bosco had a prophetic dream about the Church in these times: the battle and the victory. Don Bosco had a great affection for Our Lady. His whole life was spent working for the glory of God and the salvation of souls with the aid of the Blessed Mother, whom he addressed as Mary Help of Christians. For Don Bosco a Marian devotion leads to the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the great motivating force behind one's spiritual life and service...Christ is God's incarnate invitation to the Feast...Christ is God's outpouring love among us...Christ is God's gift of Bread to us. Christ is God's gift of Mercy poured out to sinners.

Action Steps:

- Emphasize the importance of the daily exam of conscience with our students and teachers.
- Provide reconciliation opportunities and bi-weekly/monthly moments for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for students, teachers and parents.
- Host a school-wide Rosary, helping students deepen their understanding that Mary leads us to Jesus.
- Provide "Wellness F-Blocks" where students have the opportunity to partake in activities they enjoy and can find rest from stress and worry, experiencing God's peaceful presence among themselves.
- Invite parents for a day of retreat.

Q4: Celebrating the Feast

Reflection:

With humility and a deep sense of gratitude, we recognize and celebrate in the Salesian Family a great tree with many fruits of holiness. These are men and women, young people and adults who have filled their lives with the leaven of love, a love that is given to the end, faithful to Jesus Christ and to his Gospel.

Among these numerous and varied figures of holiness, we are offered a significant and original witness of lay holiness and that show the multifaceted aspect, that is, rich in aspects, sides, shapes and colors, of lay life lived in different contexts, in different centuries, with different vocations, but full of simple holiness in everyday life. It is that "next door" secular holiness that will always do us so much good to discover and celebrate!

Action Steps:

- Provide an opportunity to bring the Salesian Family together to celebrate our Salesian heritage and call to holiness!
- Celebrate our Salesian Saints!
- Use the Salesian Matrix as 'a tool to ensure the Salesian mission of educating with the heart and challenge ourselves to rethink and reincarnate the gift of an educational mission which is lived wholeheartedly and lovingly both with and for the young and together with others as a community.'

Resources used:

- FMA Pastoral Plan
- Salesian Matrix
- 2023 Salesian Strenna
- 'Come the Feast' by Fr. Richard N. Fragomeni
- 'Spiritual Accompaniment: An Educational and Spiritual Journey with Young People in the Way of Don Bosco' by Fabio Attard, SDB and Miguel Angel Garcia, SDB