

“Don Bosco’s Coming!”

By Fr. Mike Mendl

“Don Bosco’s Coming” or “Don Bosco Visits Us!” was the general idea animating a long meeting in the conference room at Salesian Missions on Dec. 4. The topic was the pilgrimage of Don Bosco’s relic through the Eastern U.S. and Canada next September and October.

Eighteen SDBs and lay collaborators took part in the meeting. They listened to Fr. Tom’s outline of the importance of this pilgrimage of the relic around the Salesian world between 2009 and 2015 and to some of the details already decided upon for its visit to our province.

The pilgrimage is to be seen within two general contexts: (1) the general importance of relics in Christian devotion, ultimately a devotion to the Risen Christ, who promises resurrection to all the saints; (2) the complete program of Fr. Pascual Chavez and the general council, dating back to his first circular letter (“Salesians, Be Saints,” 2002) through the call to the Salesian Family to “start afresh from Christ and Don Bosco,” from the call to make of the Salesian Family a “vast movement of persons for the salvation of the young,” through the sesquicentennial of the Salesian Congregation (2009) and to the bicentennial of Don Bosco’s birth (2015).

The “visit of Don Bosco” to our province should offer us opportunities to evangelize, catechize, foster holiness, stir up zeal for the mission, reach out to immigrants, and extend the Salesian charism to the wider Church.

The relic’s pilgrimage through Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil has been receiving extensive coverage in both Salesian and other media. For example, see

<http://www.donbosconosvisita.org.py>

The Western Province already has a Web site up and running with information about the relic’s visit there, a week before it will arrive in the East: <http://www.donbosco2010.org>

The casket or reliquary with the relic (a piece of a forearm) and a composite image of our Founder in priestly vestments will travel by plane from Los Angeles to New Orleans, from Miami to Washington, from New York to Chicago, from Montreal to Vancouver, and from Vancouver to the Orient. It will arrive at other stops in our province by one of the two trucks designed for the purpose and accompanying the reliquary, with their drivers, around the world.

The relic of Don Bosco will be on New Orleans's West Bank on September 21, 2010 (at the Alario Center and St. John Bosco Parish), in St. Petersburg on September 23, at St. Philip Benizi in Belle Glade on September 25, in Miami (LaSalle HS and St. John Bosco Parish) on September 26, in Washington on September 28, in New York from September 30 to October 2, including a youth rally at the Marian Shrine on the 2d, at St. John Bosco Parish in Chicago on October 3, at St. Benedict Parish in Etobicoke (Toronto) on October 5, at Maria Ausiliatrice Parish in Montreal on October 7, and at the Vancouver cathedral on October 9.

Some of the precise venues are still being lined up.

The province committee is responsible for preparing various materials and suggestions for use at local level, such as a logo and slogan, printed and visual media, banners, prayer services, music, some publicity, etc. At each local venue a local committee of the Salesian Family will be responsible for organizing the details of publicity, preparation, reception, celebration, closing, and follow-up.