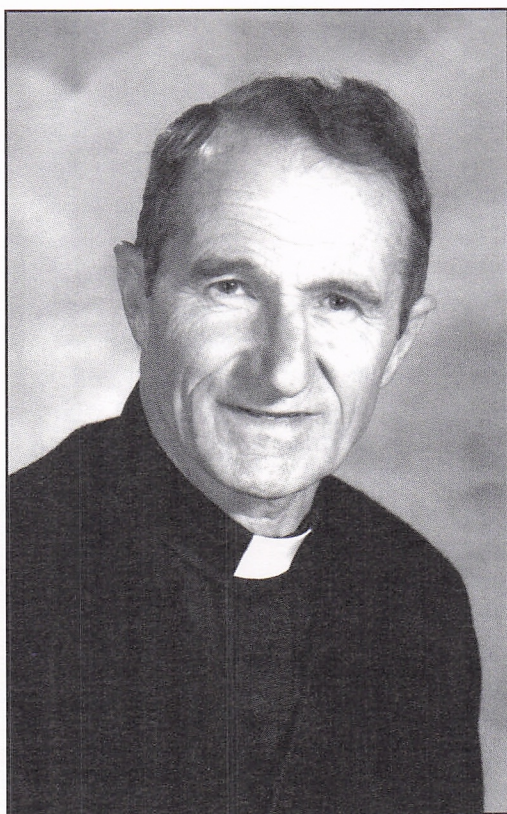




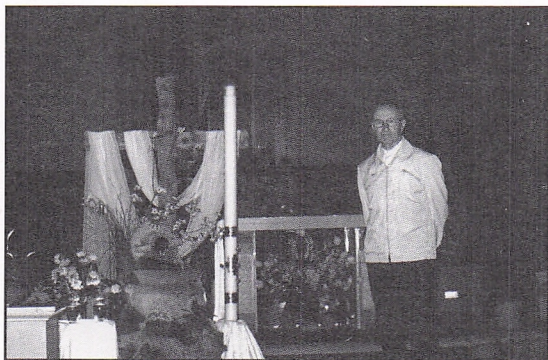
Father Joseph Scanagatta, S.D.B.  
(1919-2005)





## Father Joseph Scanagatta, SDB

*"Follow me, and I promise you bread, work and paradise." (Don Bosco)*

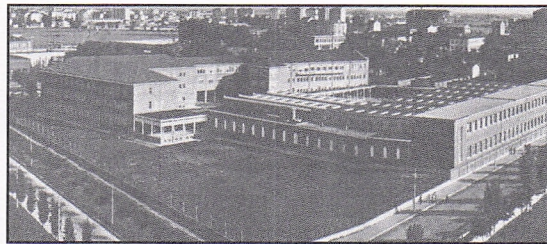


**San Rafael.** Fr. Joseph celebrates the Jubilee Pilgrimage at St. Raphael Church where he served 1984 to 1986. May 15, 2000.

### His life on earth

Father Joseph Scanagatta was born on December 7, 1919 at Schiavon, Province of Vicenza, Italy. His parents were Silvio Scanagatta and Lucia Squarzon. He was baptized and confirmed in the parish of Schiavon. After his early years of schooling in his home town, he attended high school in the diocesan college of Bassano del Grappa. Passing with success, he was admitted to the Manfredini Salesian School in Este. Here he expressed the desire to enter the Salesian Novitiate, also in Este, in 1936. This period of training ended with his first profession, August 21, 1937. He then spent two years (1937-39) doing college studies, majoring in philosophy at Cowley-Oxford, England, while also learning the English language. Returning to Italy, he began his teaching internship at the Salesian Center Rebaudengo, Turin and the Cardinal Cagliero Salesian Institute in Ivrea, 1939-42. Due to the outbreak of World War II the studentate of theology was moved to

Bollengo, Turin, where Joseph pursued his theological studies, 1942-1947. He was ordained a priest at Casale Monferrato on June 29, 1947 by Bishop Joseph Angrisani.



**Torino, Italy.** Fr. Joseph taught from 1947 to 1949 at the Edoardo Agnelli School.

After his ordination, Fr. Joseph taught at the Pius V Missionary Institute, Penango and the Salesian School Edoardo Agnelli, Turin, 1947-1949. While at Agnelli he met Fr. Eneas Tozzi, Provincial of the San Francisco Province, who was in Italy seeking Salesian personnel for the San Francisco, California, Province. Fr. Joseph accepted his invitation to join the San Francisco Province. Fr. Joseph's first teaching assignment in California was at St. John Bosco School, Bellflower 1949-1950. He moved to SS. Peter and Paul Parish 1950-1951 before joining the staff of the school of theology at Salesian College, Aptos for 1951-1952. His teaching career continued with two years at Boys' Town, Engadine, Australia, 1952-54. The Australian Salesians at this time were members of the San Francisco Province.

### His Parish Work

Returning to North America in 1954, he began what would turn out to be thirty-five years of parochial apostolate at Sacred Heart parish, Vancouver, BC, (2 years), St. Dominic Savio and St. John Bosco Parish, Edmonton, Canada;



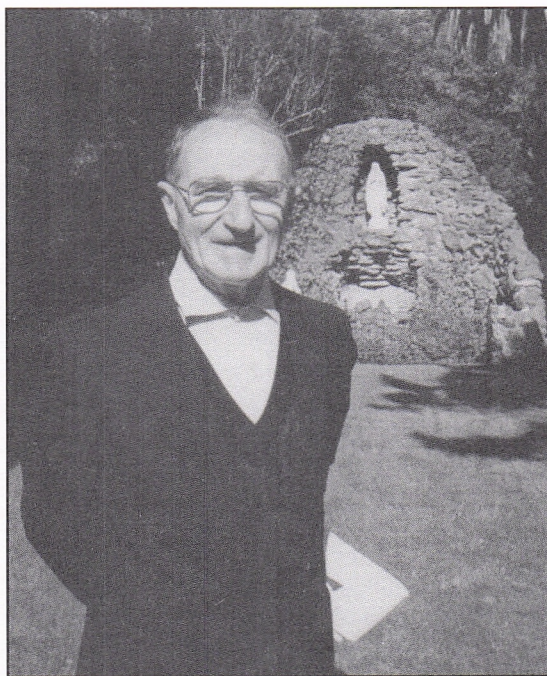
(2) SS. Peter and Paul, San Francisco, (15); Corpus Christi, San Francisco, (5); St. Dominic Savio, Bellflower, (4); St. Patrick's, Los Angeles (2) St. Raphael, San Rafael, (3) and St. Bartholomew, San Mateo (2).

He was readily available for ministry in these various parochial assignments. As he was periodically changed from one parish to another he was recognized by the people who he was leaving as an interesting preacher: (These two comments in letters from St. Dominic Savio Church Edmonton, on his being transferred.) "For the first time in my life I enjoyed sermons. They were always interesting, even the children listen, which is almost nil in a lot of churches." "He was always at the rectory if we needed him for something (spiritual advice). If we were in the dumps he cheered us up."



**Edmonton.** St. Dominic Savio where Fr. Joseph worked in the mid 70s.

"We are among the many friends of Fr. Joseph who are deeply saddened by his transfer to Canada from SS. Peter and Paul Church, San Francisco. This priest has done more for SS. Peter and Paul Church than you will ever know. He was a priest that was always there when we needed him. His presence was especially beneficial for those of us younger Italians who sometimes feel a little forgotten at SS. Peter and Paul."



**Richmond.** Fr. Joseph visits the Lourdes grotto at the Salesian Cemetery at Salesian High School.

In his later years when he moved around the City Fr. Joseph often met former parishioners who greeted him with joy, recalling that he had blessed their marriage, baptized their children and was a great spiritual force in their lives. He touched many souls during his thirty five years of parochial ministry.

### The Declining Years

In March, 1990, Fr. Joseph retired to the Provincial Residence in San Francisco. During the first years his health was strong. He moved around with vigor, played tennis almost daily at Lafayette Park, eight hilly blocks from the Residence. He walked to and from the court. For several years he said Saturday morning Mass for the Missionaries of Charity (Mother



Theresa's group) at St. Paul's Convent on 29<sup>th</sup> Street here in San Francisco. He drove himself back and forth to the convent.

Fr. Mario Mich recalls these days: "In the early '90s when I was the Director of the Salesian Provincial Residence, we used to play tennis. The battles that we had on the tennis court (he always won) are still vivid in my mind. Pity, I too had to give up tennis a few years later on account of my Parkinson's. Already then I could detect that his memory was declining. I remember that at table he could not follow the conversation that was going on. Often out of the blue he would come up with a topic completely out of context. I never saw him react to a joke or at a funny story. He would often browse in the library, but would never have the patience needed to read a book. I think his mind was too tired to absorb anything. If anybody engaged him in an argument, one had to give up because he held on to his point of view. I think that he felt he had enough knowledge and there was nothing that would interest him or change him.



**San Francisco.** Fr. Joe at work in the Residence parking lot. **October 20, 2003.**

"Another thing of note: since we lived right below the Cathedral of San Francisco, I would see him go up to the church for an extra mass and listen to the homily and then talk about it in praise or criticism.

"He was very meticulous. We would find him forever picking up specks or tiny pieces of something from the floor which caught his eagle eyes and he would spend hours sweeping the parking lot of the residence.

"He gave us all an example of poverty: always neatly dressed, he would proudly point out that 'this sweater was a throw-away...this pair of shoes I found in the garbage. I just cleaned them up and now they look like new.' He lived simply. How many times we would find him in the kitchen munching on cold food found in the refrigerator to satisfy his hunger. He did not know how to warm it up. All of us remember how in his little homilies he always would end with: 'we must try to go to heaven.' "

As time passed by his energy began diminishing. He was not able to say Mass for the Sisters on Saturday. His memory began fading. He became more forgetful, until it was felt that he would leave the residence for a walk and would get lost and not know how to get back home. So in April 2003 he entered the assisted living facility at Salem House in Oakland.

During his two years at Salem House and Mercy Center he was lovingly looked after by the Sisters of Mercy and their staff. Frs. Larry Lorenzoni and Tom Prendiville were his most frequent visitors as they came to visit Frs. Roger Luna and Gabriel Zavattaro who were also at Mercy Center. Fr. Joseph went to his heavenly reward in the early hours of the morning on May 9, 2005.

The Mass of the Resurrection for Fr. Joseph was celebrated Friday at 12:00 noon, May 13, 2005 at SS. Peter and Paul Church, San Francisco. Christian Burial followed at the Salesian Cemetery, Richmond, California. There he





**San Francisco.** Fr. David Purdy blesses Fr. Joseph's body at end of funeral Mass at SS. Peter and Paul church. **May 13, 2005.**

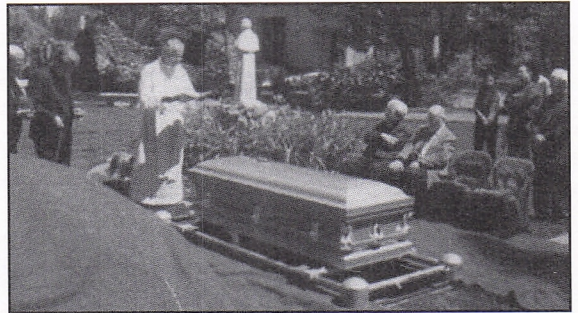
lies with so many of his confreres waiting for the final resurrection.

Fr. Larry Lorenzoni happened to be traveling in Italy when Fr. Scanagatta died. We received the following communication from Fr. Larry a few days after Father Joseph's funeral:

"The family of Fr. Joseph Scanagatta, unable to come to California for his funeral, scheduled a special Memorial Mass for him in the parish church of his baptism in Schiavon, Vicenza, for Monday, May 16, 2005.

"His sister Giuditta Scanagatta asked if I could come to the memorial Mass, with Don Bruno, the pastor, as main celebrant. The entire Scanagatta family was there, with many friends who came to honor Fr. Joseph. While we were vesting in the sacristy, our little altar server, 9 year old Lucia, daughter of Silvio Scanagatta, Fr. Joseph's nephew, came over to ask if she could go to the microphone during the prayer of the faithful and say a little prayer she had scribbled on a piece of paper. Fr. Bruno said 'Yes. Of course.' When the time came, this is what she said in Italian:

*" 'Dear Jesus, my uncle Don Pino is coming to your home now. I did not know him very well because he lived in America, but mom and dad told me that he always wore a smile, that he loved everyone, and that simple little things made him happy. Dear Jesus, take into your arms my uncle Don Pino, who loved you so much, and tell him that we will continue to love him very much.' "*



**Richmond.** Fr. Purdy recites the ritual prayers at the burial service at the Salesian Cemetery, **May 13, 2005.**

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### **Homily by Fr. David Purdy, Provincial at the May 13th Mass of the Resurrection.**

In the Word of God today we heard two bits of advice, two commands, two exhortations. From the Gospel, "Do this and you shall live!" From Paul to the Corinthians, "Let him, who would boast, boast in the Lord!"

We are still in Eastertime, the 7th Week of Easter, in the novena to the Holy Spirit as we realize, commemorate and celebrate the coming of the Spirit this Sunday, Pentecost. Today, in the Salesian World, the Salesian Family celebrates the Feast of Mary Domenica Mazzarello



and the readings of the Word of God in today's Mass of the Resurrection, come from the liturgy that the Church chose for her. The Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 10, finds us journeying with Jesus to Jerusalem, with Jesus instructing his disciples along the way how his Father does not choose just adults or the clever or the learned...but mere children, those not so swift, those who may be unschooled. God calls all, not just the Chosen, but the Gentile, and all of these people, as most of us have, sooner or later will ask what the lawyer stood up and asked, "What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" Jesus finds out that he has the knowledge, like the disciples and others eventually will attain, and tells him, "Do this and you shall live!" Did he follow the Lord's advice? We really are not told by Luke.



**San Francisco.** Fr. Joseph always had a good word to share, here with Card. Oscar Rodriguez, SDB at the Salesian Residence. 2002.

Paul writing to the community gathered at Corinth knows of divisions taking place and dividing the community, divisions based upon those who think they are the origin of wisdom or who have influence and are well-born, divisions based upon pride. Paul reminds one and all that their standards are not God's standards, since God has given them life in Christ Jesus and any boasting has to be done in the risen Christ whether you are learned or clever and fat or thin, learned or ignorant, healthy or sick, God would have us realize

his call to each and every one of us is to eternal life. "Boast in the Lord and carry out the love of God and love of neighbor."

It seems Mary Dominica Mazzarello followed the Lord's advice "Do this and you shall live!" It seems she was not afraid to boast in the Lord Jesus.

We gather here to take our brother Joseph to his resting place hoping and praying that Joseph's life has the Lord saying to him, "You have answered correctly!" and that the boasting Joseph did during his lifetime somehow followed Paul's encouragement, "If you are going to boast, boast in the Lord Jesus!"

*[Fr. David then gave a brief biographical sketch of Fr. Joseph's life, which touched the points already contained in this letter, and so are omitted here.]*

I heard from Fr. Jack O'Connor, Pastor of the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, San Francisco: "What I remember most fondly about Joe, was the community at the Provincial House, that surrounded him. He was "skipping a few beats" in his later years there and would repeat over and over about his shoes, wallet and his strength, whatever. The community was so patient and kind. Be in peace, now, Joe."

In Fr. Joe's own way he carried out the Lord's exhortation of not only knowing the Law and Love of the Lord, but doing it, boasting not in himself but in the Lord who calls all, loves all and saves all.

It seems Fr. Joseph got his wish in a poem he wrote and entitled "I would Like To Die At Night." A moving section reads. "*Death will be oblation, not victory of sin, as I give to Christ who will shape in me what I failed to be for my Father and his.*"



We are grateful to the Lord for Fr. Joseph in his journey toward Jerusalem, for his discipleship in the Lord leading him to his place in the Garden John Bosco promised us all. As Fr. Jack O'Connor stated, "Be at peace, now, Joe!"

*This poem was found among Fr. Joseph's papers when he moved to Salem House.*

Sincerely in Don Bosco,

*Fr. Mario Mich, SDB and  
Fr. Ralph Murphy, SDB*  
The Provincial Residence Community  
October 4, 2005



**San Rafael.** Fr. Joseph joins Bay Area Salesians for Jubilee Pilgrimage. (from left) Austin Conterno, Tom Prendiville, Joe Scanagatta, Ralph Murphy, Tom Juarez, Joe Lockwood, Frank Moloney, Nick Reina and David Purdy, **May 15, 2000.**



**Oakland.** 85th birthday party at Salem House. (from left back row) Bill Dito (Santa hat), Irene Noreci, Lola Simi, Lawrence Phillips, Peter Aiello. Front row on Fr. Joseph's left, Fr. Tom Prendiville. **Dec. 7, 2004.**

## I WOULD LIKE TO DIE AT NIGHT

I would like to die at night,  
when all things are still,  
as when Christ was born,  
to be reborn with him.  
Moment most sacred.  
When my life ends,  
eternity begins,  
on the truth I wrought.  
No time for tears  
or for any body near  
with empty words.  
I need silence  
to hear his voice,  
to see if I have  
all that I need  
to please my Lord.  
*Death will be oblation,  
not victory of sin,  
as I give to Christ,  
who will shape in me  
what I failed to be  
for my Father and his.*  
No sheep is rejected;  
the lost most welcome  
for the priceless grace  
to pass from darkness  
to see his face.

**Joseph Scanagatta**



## **Father Joseph Scanagatta, SDB**

Born: Schiavon, Italy  
December 7, 1919

First Profession: Este, Italy  
August 21, 1937

Ordained: Casale Monferrato, Italy  
June 29, 1947

Died: Oakland, California  
May 9, 2005



*Salesians of St. John Bosco*

SAN FRANCISCO PROVINCE  
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San Francisco, California, 94109