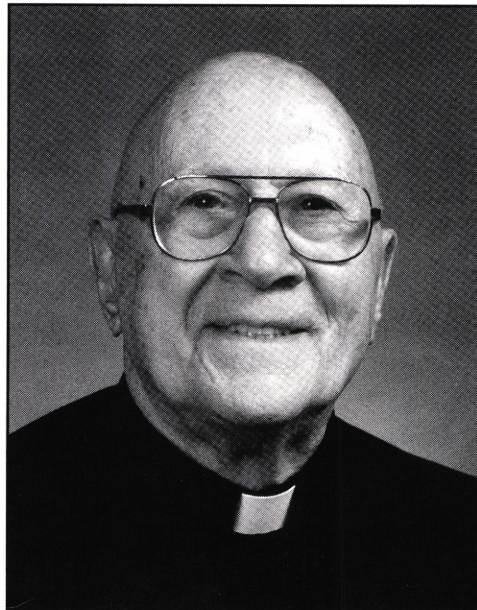


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Father Anthony Di Falco, S.D.B.
(1914-2003)



FATHER ANTHONY DI FALCO, S.D.B.

Anthony Francis Di Falco was born May 20, 1914 in San Francisco, California of proud Sicilian parents, Joseph and Carmela Di Falco. He was baptized June 14 in his home parish of SS. Peter and Paul Church located in the heart of historic North Beach.

At the turn of the century North Beach, also known as "Little Italy," was predominately populated by Italian émigrés. The Di Falco family was well-known in the district and formed part of a beautiful collage of colorful Italian personalities.

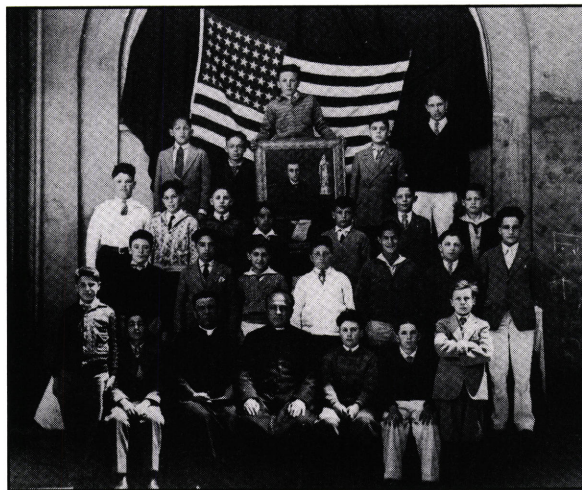
EARLY YEARS

Anthony was an active member of the parish Salesian Boys Club and the Club's founder, Father Oreste Trinchieri, was his mentor. The influence of this saintly and zealous Salesian, together with the famous pastor of the parish Father Rafael Piperni, played a dominant role in Anthony's decision to eventually enter the seminary.

Anthony received both his first Holy Communion and Confirmation at his home parish. He took the name of Dominic at his Confirmation. He attended SS. Peter and Paul's Elementary School from 1928 to 1930.

The thought of becoming a Salesian priest often crossed his mind and so, after

much prayer and counsel, he decided to enter the Salesian House of Studies in Richmond, California as a seminarian. Salesian High School, formerly the Salesian House of Studies, is currently a successful co-ed high school in West Contra Costa County in the East Bay.



Salesian School, San Francisco. L to R, front row: Vincent De Martini, Anthony Di Falco, Fr. Eusebio Battezzati and Fr. Oreste Trinchieri. 1928.

Anthony was a good student in high school receiving above-average grades in difficult subjects including Latin, Greek, chemistry and physics. He was also a good basketball player and endowed with many talents, especially in the fields of music and drama.

At the conclusion of his senior year in the junior seminary, he applied to enter the Salesian novitiate located in Newton, New Jersey. The decision to travel and live three thousand miles from his home was not an easy one for either Anthony or his parents. In those days in North Beach it was most unusual for a young man of eighteen years of age to be allowed to travel across the country to attend college. But

Anthony's deep desire to become a Salesian and the obvious love for his vocation motivated him to make this considerable sacrifice.

FIRST VOWS

He began his year as a Salesian novice on September 20, 1932 with good recommendations from Fathers Oreste Trinchieri, Patrick Diamond, and Joseph Galli, all pioneers of the young San Francisco Salesian Province. He received his clerical habit on the feast of Mary Immaculate, December 8, 1932 from the Salesian Provincial, Father Richard Pittini. Father Pittini would later become the Archbishop of Santo Domingo.

At the conclusion of his novitiate year, September 21, 1933, Anthony made his religious profession. Thus he began a long and active career as a professed Salesian. He entered Don Bosco College in Newton immediately following his religious profession.

COLLEGE LIFE

Anthony's college years were truly happy ones. He was a good student and well liked by his community for his engaging manner, sensitive and enthusiastic spirit, hard work and especially for sharing his many talents with the college community. Anthony had exceptional ability in the arts. He loved to direct musical performances for his Salesian confreres and friends. Anthony graduated from Don Bosco College with a Bach-

elor of Arts degree in Philosophy in June 1937. After graduation from college, he was very happy to return to California to be reunited with his family, friends and Salesian confreres in California, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Anthony's first assignment as a Salesian cleric was to return to Richmond, California as a high school teacher and assistant at the Salesian Junior Seminary, formerly known as the Salesian House of Studies.



Richmond. L to R. Brs. Anthony Di Falco, David Zunino, Caesar Montali, Raymond Bowler and James Collins. 1934.

He proved an excellent teacher and directed many musicals, concerts and plays for the school and local communities. He taught at the seminary for three years.

FINAL RELIGIOUS VOWS

Anthony made his final vows as a Salesian religious on August 16, 1939. The month, day and year were significant for various reasons. August 16 was Don Bosco's birthday and Anthony was very proud to take his final vows on the

Founder's birthday. The year 1939 was also significant. The Second World War was to begin a month later with the invasion of Poland.

Anthony made his final vows in the presence of the Salesian Provincial, Father Ambrose Rossi, another significant figure in Anthony's life. Father Rossi also was a man of many talents. He had great organizational abilities. He was a very thoughtful and pious Salesian and a good role model of Salesian life for Anthony. Among the written comments by the Salesian Council that admitted Anthony to final vows were "a man of great zeal and enthusiasm...as a student endowed with a good mind and musical ability...very attached to his vocation and the Salesian Society."

Anthony loved to travel. He was very desirous to visit and study in Italy, the native country of his beloved parents. He was interested in pursuing his study of theology in Turin, Italy. Don Bosco began his ministry on behalf of youth in Turin. The location of the first Salesian work started by Don Bosco is in Valdocco, a district in Turin. Valdocco, as it is familiarly known by the Salesians, is today a vibrant Salesian Youth Center, the Motherhouse of the Salesian Community, and the location of the Basilica of Mary, Help of Christians, built by Don Bosco himself. Turin also had an Salesian International Theologate called the Crocetta for graduate students from all over the Salesian world interested in pursuing final studies before ordination to the priesthood.

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The year was 1940 and Europe was in the throes of the Second World War. Unfortunately, the war prevented Anthony from traveling to Italy. He, therefore, returned to Don Bosco College in Newton, New Jersey to begin his study of theology, his final years of study and formation before ordination to the priesthood. During these years studying theology, Anthony received good grades, enjoyed playing basketball, and shared his musical talents with both his religious and local communities. He made himself available for ministry as a preparation for his future life as a Salesian priest.

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD



San Francisco. First Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Church. Fr. Anthony in the center flanked by his parents. To left of Mrs. Carmela Fi Falco is Fr. Joseph Simeoni. To the right of Joseph Di Falco is Fr. Alvin Fedrigotti, provincial of the Western USA province. **July, 1944.**

Maryknoll Bishop W.F. O'Shea ordained Father Anthony a priest in the Don Bosco College Chapel on July 2, 1944. The day was truly a happy one for Father Anthony, the culmination of his dream to become a priest.

Father Anthony was ordained with a contemporary, a close boyhood friend and Salesian confrere, Father Paul Maniscalco, who also grew up and lived in North Beach. Father Paul is currently in residence at his home parish, SS. Peter and Paul Church in San Francisco.

FIRST ASSIGNMENTS AS A PRIEST

Father Anthony's first assignment as a Salesian priest was Dean of Studies of the Salesian Junior Seminary in Richmond, California. Besides being Dean, he also directed the music and drama departments. He loved his ministry among the seminarians and remained at the seminary for five years. He was then asked to serve as Associate Pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in San Francisco. During this brief period as Associate Pastor, he was also able to take some graduate courses in music at San Francisco State College.

From Corpus Christi Parish Father Anthony moved on to St. Francis High School in Watsonville, California as Catechist. As Catechist he directed the liturgical services and gave spiritual direction to the students. At that time St. Francis was a boarding school for boys. He served also as choir director and director of the Drama Department. He also organized a Bicycle Club for the students. The Club had approximately forty members and took weekly jaunts around the country-side. St. Francis Cen-

tral Coast High School today is a growing co-ed school attended by youngsters from the local community.

In January 1951, Father Anthony was again assigned to a parish as Associate Pastor. The parish of Mary Help of Christians in Oakland, California had many minority children as members of the parish family. Father Anthony decided to organize the first Salesian Boys Club in the area. The children thus had a place to gather and participate in athletic events, music, drama and religious programs. Father Anthony became a well-known and popular figure among the youth of the Portuguese parish and community.

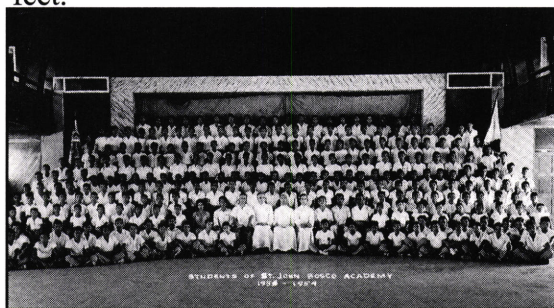


A debonair Fr. Anthony as he left for the Missions in the Philippines. 1951.

MISSIONARY VOCATION

Father Anthony was truly a missionary at heart. As a young religious, he had ap-

plied to serve in the foreign missions. His dream became a reality in September 1951. He was sent as a missionary to the Philippines at Tarlac. Tarlac is a city located about eighty-five miles north of Manila. Father Anthony became part of a team of early Salesian missionaries who developed Don Bosco's work in the Philippines. He was assigned as Director of the large Don Bosco Technical School in Tarlac. During those years he was very zealous in his Salesian and priestly ministry. Besides being Director of this big school, he also served as chaplain of twenty nuns who taught at a nearby Catholic high school. He was chaplain of the Knights of Columbus in Tarlac, chaplain of the young Ladies Association of Charity in the local community, and chaplain of a military post located near the technical school. Father Anthony was a busy Salesian who never allowed any grass to grow under his feet.



Tarlac, Philippines. Fr. Anthony in the center of the front row at this group picture of the students of St. John Bosco Academy, 1954.

Unfortunately, a heart attack in March 1955 put a sudden and rapid end to his hectic pace of religious activities. He was only forty-one years of age. He recuperated in the local hospital. While in the hospital as a pa-

tient he visited other patients and offered them his ministry as a priest. Finally, he was able to recuperate sufficiently enough to take strolls and enjoy the mountain air. His superiors, however, decided he should continue his period of convalescence back home in the States.

He departed for the United States via Europe and had the good fortune of visiting several European countries on his way home. The journey was quite a feat and he enjoyed every minute of it, especially given the opportunity to meet so many people of different nationalities and cultures.

RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA

Upon his return home, he had fully recuperated and in September 1955 was assigned as vice principal of Don Bosco Technical Institute in South San Gabriel, California located in Los Angeles County. South San Gabriel is now the city of Rosemead.



Rosemead. Fr. Anthony helps a young student select the courses he will pursue at Bosco Tech. 1955.

Don Bosco Tech opened its doors for the first time that very year and Father Anthony helped to establish and organize the school.

The school was founded by Cardinal James McIntyre, the Archbishop of Los Angeles, and by Father Felix Penna who served as first Principal. Together with Father Anthony and his fellow Salesians Father Penna organized the academic and technical programs. Bosco Tech is still a unique school in Los Angeles County and in the entire country. The school today has approximately 1200 students with numerous alumni living and working throughout the world.

Father Anthony's assignment at Bosco Tech was a brief one because the following year, October 1956, he was assigned as Associate Pastor of his home parish, SS. Peter and Paul's Church in San Francisco.

He served as organist for weddings and funerals, directed the parish choir, moderated the Altar Boys Society and served as chaplain of both the elementary school and the Mothers Club.

ASSIGNED TO WESTERN CANADA

His next assignments took him back to Watsonville, California and Edmonton, Canada. He first served as Director of St. Francis High School in Watsonville and then as Director of St. Mary's Junior High School in Edmonton. He enjoyed his work among the students of both schools and was a true priest-friend to them.

His longest tenure in an assignment to date began in August 1961. He was asked

to serve as Associate Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Father Joseph DellaTorre was Pastor. He served in the parish for six years as Chaplain of the Legion of Mary, befriended the youth on skid row, and helped organize the athletic and fine arts programs for the youngsters of the parish.

In September 1967, Father Anthony became Director of the newly established Salesian Boys Club of East Los Angeles. The area had many Latino youngsters as members and the Club became a "home away from home" for many of them. As Director of the Club, Father Anthony organized raffles and festivals to help raise funds to operate the Club and thus kept the doors open. He also organized various youth activities that made the Club a vibrant Center of East Los Angeles. The Salesian Youth Center, as it is currently known, has expanded now into two modern coed-centers which continue to serve the youth of the area.



Los Angeles. The dedication of the swimming pool at the Boys Club. L to R. Br. Phil Mandile, guest, Fr. Anthony, guest and Fr. Ralph Luna. 1968.

After serving as Director of the Salesian Boys Club, Father Anthony returned to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada to serve again as Associate Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

SILVER JUBILEE

On the occasion of his Silver Jubilee as a priest, Father Anthony wrote a letter to family members and his many friends. In the letter he wrote:

"On July 2, 1969, I will have completed twenty five years of my priesthood—thus making me a Silver Jubiliarian, with over 9,000 days in the Service of God as a priest, and not one of those days a dull or unfruitful one!

How grateful and indebted I am to God for allowing me to work in His Vineyard, saying so many Masses; bringing consolation, peace, and life to so many souls. My only regret is that I did not always give God my very best; that I did not spend myself more sacrificially in bringing more souls back to the Fold. For the future and for as long as God grants me life, I promise earnestly and sincerely to give myself wholeheartedly to His service in the priestly apostolate.

...the last 25 years have been eventful and meaningful for me. How many occasions of intense emotion: seeing souls deeply moved and actually weeping for joy on their return to God, after

years away from the Sacraments; how many encounters with people despairing and literally going out of their minds because of their great problems and crosses, looking to the priest for light, guidance, and salvation — especially in the seven years spent in Vancouver, in a parish bordering skid row...my life was varied covering club, school, parish, and missionary work; how it brought me into contact with all ages and all classes of people—the young and the old, the good and the bad."

ASSIGNMENTS AS PASTOR

Father Anthony's first assignment as Pastor was St. Dominic Savio Parish in Bellflower, California in Los Angeles County. He served as Pastor of St. Dominic Savio Parish from 1970 to 1980. He was a tireless worker and was zealous in developing many parish organizations which are still active today. He directed the adult choir and promoted music and arts programs in the parish community. He enjoyed visiting the school community and proved very popular with the school children. Their thoughtful Pastor would always offer them some "goodies" during his vis-



Los Angeles Airport. R to L. Fr. Anthony, pastor St. Dominic Savio, greets Fr. Aloysius Ricceri, superior general. Fr. Alphonse Straub, Fr. Ricceri, Fr. Gabriel Zavattaro, Fr. Bernard Justen, provincial, and Fr. Ralph Murphy. 1968.

After a long and successful ministry at St. Dominic Savio Parish in Bellflower, he was assigned as Pastor of St. John Bosco Parish in Edmonton, Canada in September, 1980. The parish had been recently assigned to the Salesian Community and Father Anthony was the second Salesian Pastor. He was well acquainted with the city of Edmonton and knew many people because he had served on the faculty of St. Mary's Salesian School in the city in past years. He again used his talents to promote an active parish community.

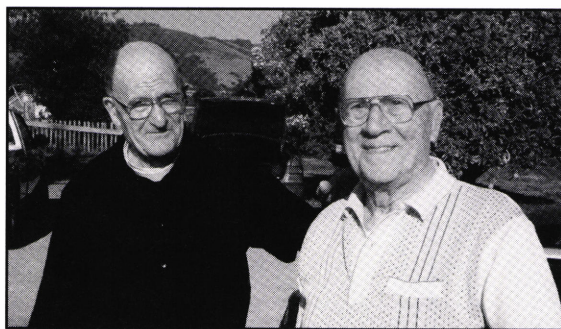
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

In September 1983, he was assigned as Associate Pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. He served in that capacity for five years. Our Lady of Good Counsel had been recently accepted by the Salesians and was a vibrant parish. The Salesian Cooperator Movement began in British Columbia at this parish. The Cooperators of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish are today very active and have increased in numbers. Father Anthony loved the people of the parish and they loved him. They admired his optimistic spirit and his deep sense of compassion and sensitivity.

RETIREMENT

His last assignment as a Salesian priest was Associate Pastor of his beloved SS. Peter and Paul Parish in San Francisco. SS.

Peter and Paul Church, also known as the *Italian Cathedral of the West*, was the parish in which he was baptized, received his First Holy Communion, confirmed and celebrated his first Solemn Mass as a newly-ordained priest. This was to be his final assignment before the good Lord would call him to eternity.



Aptos. Fr. Paul Maniscalco and Fr. Anthony visit Camp St. Francis for a barbecue. 1999.

MERCY CENTER

In the year 2000, willingly and cheerfully, Father Anthony joined the Mercy Retirement Center Community in Oakland, California operated by the Sisters of Mercy. As much as his energies allowed at Mercy Center, he visited the sick, counseled patients, and took an active part in all the activities offered at the Center. He enjoyed playing bingo, the game he organized in many of the parishes to which he had been assigned. But he especially loved to be a priest at Mercy Center.

FINAL DAYS

In early March 2003 Father Anthony fell and broke his hip. He underwent surgery and seemed on his way back to health. But the good Lord asked Father Anthony for a final

sacrifice. He died peacefully March 23 at 5:00 PM at eighty-eight years of age.



Oakland. Fr. Anthony enjoyed all activities offered at Mercy Center. Here he demonstrates "putting his best foot forward." 2002.

On the occasion of his Golden Jubilee as a Salesian priest, Father Anthony shared the following reflection:

"My vocation to the priesthood started when my grandfather, Antonio Di Falco, introduced me, at SS. Peter and Paul Church, to Father Trinchieri to become an altar boy. I was eight years old.

Many good Salesian priests came along as I went through my adolescent and teenage years: Fathers Piperni, Battezzati and Ryan were all instrumental in fostering my vocation. Then, at eighteen, I met my master of novices, Father Joseph Costanzo, a great inspirational force in my life.

When ordination came on July 2, 1944, I felt like a knight of old, ready to conquer the world for Christ in various fields of the

apostolate—the missions, schools, youth clubs, hospitals and parishes. God's plan for me included twenty-three years outside of the USA, namely in the Philippines and Canada.

Leading choirs and bands for years, putting on operettas, musicals and concerts, made my life happy and interesting: fifty years of priesthood under the guidance of our Sovereign Lord, of Mary Help of Christians and of my founder, Don Bosco. May they continue to bless my apostolate!"

The Mass of the Resurrection for Father Anthony was concelebrated at SS. Peter and Paul Parish on March 27, 2003 by many Salesian and diocesan priests and attended by his family, Salesian confreres, Salesian Sisters, and numerous friends.

Father Anthony was laid to rest in the Salesian Cemetery located on the grounds of Salesian High School in Richmond, California. He concluded his life on earth as a Salesian religious for seventy years and a priest for fifty-nine years.

With deceased family and friends, we are confident that this kind and loving Salesian now shares the glory of Christ's Resurrection in heaven.

Fr. Bernard Dabbene
Provincial Residence
San Francisco
June 24, 2005



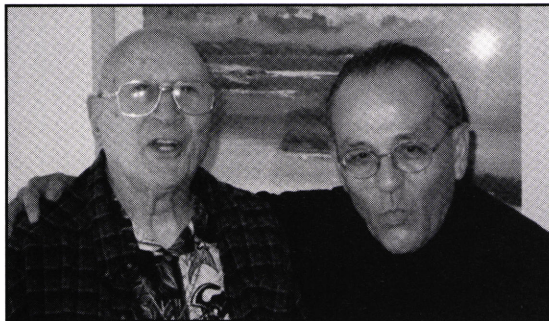
Always at the center of the music scene.



Edmonton. Rehearsing with the band. Wherever he was called to minister he livened up the school, parish or youth center with instrumental and vocal music. **1961.**



Fr. Di Falco greets Fr. Renato Ziggiotti, superior general of the Salesians, on his visit to the province. **1955.**



Oakland. With Fr. Roger Luna at Mercy Center. **2003.**



Berkeley. (L to R) seated: Frs. Arthur Brainard, Anthony Di Falco, David Purdy, Br. Ernest Martinez. Standing: Br. Larry King and Fr. Phuoc Nguyen. **2002.**



Corpus Christi Church, San Francisco. Anthony Di Falco is third from left in top row. First row (L to R) Paul Maniscalco, Frs. Ernest Giovannini, Joseph Villani, Robert Wieczorek, Oreste Trinchieri (Provincial), Tiburcio Perez, Thomas Deehan, Aloysius Kovacich, Francis Parolin. **1932.**

Father Anthony Di Falco, SDB

Born: San Francisco, California
May 20, 1914

First Profession: Newton, New Jersey
September 21, 1933

Ordained: Newton, New Jersey
July 2, 1944

Died: Oakland, California
March 23, 2003



Salesians of St. John Bosco

SAN FRANCISCO PROVINCE
1100 Franklin Street
San Francisco, California, 94109