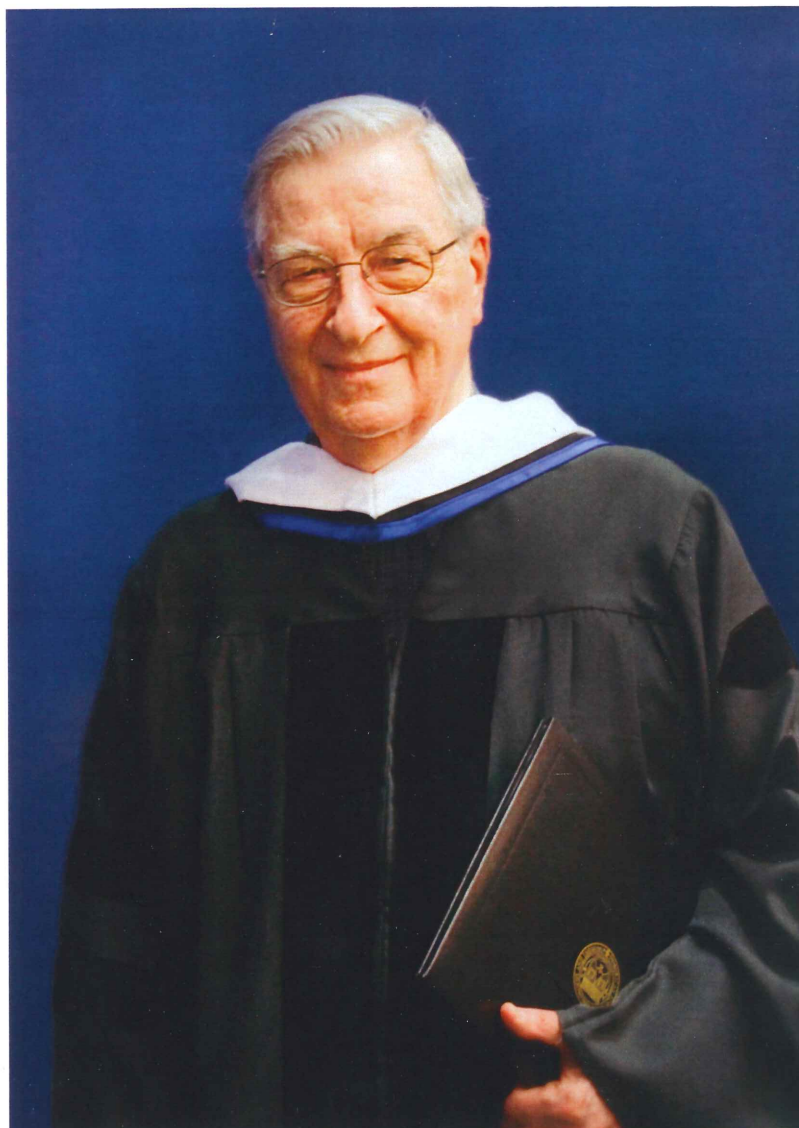


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Fr. Arthur John Lenti, SDB



FATHER ARTHUR J. LENTI, S.D.B.

**BORN ON JANUARY 31, 1923
IN MUGARONE DI BASSIGNANA, ALLESANDRIA, PIEMONTE, ITALY**

**PROFESSED A SALESIAN OF DON BOSCO
ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1941 IN NEWTON, NEW JERSEY**

**ORDAINED ON JULY 2, 1950
TURIN, ITALY**

**BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE ON JANUARY 6, 2022
PIH HOSPITAL
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA**

Fr. Arthur John Lenti, SDB January 31, 1923 – January 6, 2022

As soon as word of the death of Arthur J. Lenti was received in various parts of the Salesian world tributes began to pour into the provincial office in San Francisco. From scholars at various Salesian universities to students who continue to learn about Don Bosco from Lenti's critical work on Don Bosco's life, condolences and accolades arrived. Fr. Arthur's legacy as a Salesian scholar and as a loving person dedicated to the mission of serving the young will continue to influence the Salesian family for years to come. His compassion extended to all in need as well as his genuine love for all whom he met on his journey of life reflected the heart of one who loved and was loved for the person and Salesian he was. Don Bosco noted that education was a matter of the heart; certainly God endowed Arthur Lenti with a heart open to life and love. Not only teaching in the classroom but also ministering at the altar, cooking in the kitchen, enjoying a good glass of scotch, engaging in an animated conversation, or relaxing while watching sports on television, Arthur was a renaissance man who valued God's loving presence in every moment of life.



The beautiful meadows and valley of Allesandria, Piemonte, Italia.

deacon year at Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley, and while taking courses in the Institute of Salesian Spirituality, he chose Fr. Lenti as his mentor and guide. He wrote a book entitled Arthur Lenti: Memory, Presence and Hope. It is due to Fr. Marcelo's persistence in delving deeper into Fr. Lenti's background that we have the following reflections from Fr. Arthur:

Arthur John Lenti was born on January 31, 1923 in Mugarone di Bassignana, Alessandria, in the Italian region of Piedmont. He was the only son of Maria Carolina and Pietro Lenti. Arthur Lenti was not one to talk about himself, much less his early years of life. Information about his young life comes to us from the masterful and self-sacrificing work of Fr. Macelo Escalante Mendoza a Salesian from Bolivia. Fr. Marcelo spent part of his

"I remember my parents very well with so much affection. We were separated during the war. My father and mother did not want me to experience the horrors of war, so they sent me far away, they were Piedmonts, ordinary people, religious and intelligent. My mother's name was Maria Carolina Lenti. Where I was born everyone bore the same family name, it resembled a clan. I recall that when Fascism became the order of the day and all the schools became its puppets, my mother told me: 'You shall not attend those schools; you are going to a Catholic school.' They were difficult time She and other women wanted their children to be physically unharmed but also to understand that the times in which they were living and whilst remaining strong in their faith. Finally, and for this reason, they sent me to the United States. My father was essentially a soldier who took part in the war and was left



Arthur at Confirmation

with a deep wound which never healed. His name was Pietro Giovanni. When the war began my father and others were drafted by the Fascists and assigned to the trenches. Many people died at a young age. My father experienced many difficulties in his life. He too was a dedicated Christian, intelligent, who loved to read. Since I was his only son, he wanted me to be a man of deep convictions."

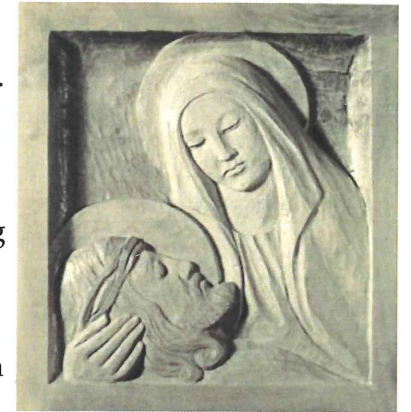


Fr. Marcelo Escalante Mendoza poses with Fr. Arthur at the presentation of his work: Arthur Lenti: Memory, Presence and Hope.

Fr. Arthur considered his childhood as "rather privileged" and went onto discuss his local pastor with great affection, Fr. Remigio Pastore, who was a former pupil of Don Bosco. Though the pastor's experience with Don Bosco was brief, the Saint gave him a program for life: "Remember that we are Christians." Fr. Remigio would become gravely aware of these words with the coming of Fascism. Fr. Arthur added that Fascism would claim the

life of his favorite teacher by poisoning, Roseta Moreta. Such sadness would continue with the outbreak of the flu, which took the life of his aunt Victoria leaving Arthur's mother to care for her five children. Some of his cousins would be drafted into the army and die far from home.

God gifted Arthur with many talents and interests. He had a love for learning and would spend time reading as many of the classics as he could. He also enjoyed playing soccer and learning about the world around him. Both music and especially art captivated him. As a young teenager he carved this image of Madonna and Son from Linden wood. (see image right)



The carving of Madonna and Son.

Fr. Arthur, then, went to the United States to begin his formation for Salesian life. He was deeply impressed by the Salesian community at Newton and the stories of the Salesians living there. Having learned English, he felt welcomed and had warm memories of his first experiences in America. Entering a Salesian community was the suggestion of a cousin and, coincidentally, it was the novitiate. Beginning the novitiate, almost by accident, he considered this formative experience as "beautiful" even while being very aware that the world was at war. In fact, believing this was their call to assist society and the Church, he and his classmates took their formation very seriously. He fell in love with Don Bosco as his inspiration and model. In his studies, he discovered "my passion for sacred music, liturgy, and Sacred Scripture". Strangely, though discovering he had a gift for study, he was not admitted to his first religious profession. He credited Don Romani, his novice Master and his "mediator" for his later admission to his profession on September 14, 1941. This man understood his pain and supported him in building upon his Salesian dream. Don Romani did not allow Arthur to leave but to persevere in his studies and his Salesian formation. Arthur joined his class of young Salesians of eighteen to twenty young men from both USA provinces.

Since it was the practice at the time that the novices took some college courses, Br. Arthur graduated from Don Bosco College in June 1943 with a B.A. in philosophy, magna cum laude. He went to California for practical training (1943-1946). He was an assistant and teacher for two years at St. John Bosco School in Bellflower, and then he taught for a year at St. Francis School in Watsonville. With World War II ended, American Salesians were able to resume theological studies in Italy. Br. Arthur was part of a large class of Americans who began their studies at the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum (aka "the Crocetta") in Turin in 1946.

Br. Arthur enjoyed being with young people. Little is known about the various ministries in which he engaged during his theology years. During his diaconate year he sponsored a soccer team for poor young boys in the area. On the back of the team photo he writes: *"I was in theology. I spend weekends in this poor neighborhood. I got up a soccer team which I financed all by myself by begging."*



Fr. Arthur stands with the team he financed.



Deacon Arthur with his mother before his ordination in Turin.

Having earned a licentiate in theology, magna cum laude, in June 1950 Arthur Lenti was ordained on July 2, 1950, in the basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. A few months before his ordination a picture was taken with his mother. He writes this tribute to her:

"Mom was really in bad shape at the time. She was very ill and dejected over loss of dad the year before. She lost all her teeth and half her hair. Because of poor bone and cartilage she can't wear plates or support. Her hands and joints are all full of calcifications which are very painful. She could support herself and walk only by means of corset. I love her like my very soul."

After his ordination, Fr. Arthur was sent then to the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome for three years of studies in Scripture. He received his licentiate degree in Sacred Scripture in June, 1953, again magna cum laude. Upon his return to California, he was assigned to the Salesian theology school in Aptos, California. He was professor of Scripture, and his particular field was Old Testament. He was a master of it and an outstanding teacher. He also held positions of Prefect of Studies and Catechist during his six years of service there.



Fr. Arthur in Rome in 1953.

With the closing of the theology school in Aptos, Fr. Arthur Lenti was assigned as teacher at Salesian High School in Richmond, California. A graduate from the high school recalls how Fr. Arthur began an art club for interested students. He shared his expertise and artistic abilities in helping those interested hone and develop their artistic skills.



Fr. Arthur, front row third from right, with staff at St. Francis High School Seminary

In September, 1962, Fr. Arthur was asked to join the faculty and staff at St. Francis Seminary in Watsonville. He taught Latin as well as religious studies. He also enjoyed the opportunity afforded him of teaching Gregorian chant to the seminarians. Perhaps one of the most telling aspects of his ministry at St. Francis was his openness to various expressions of the Christian faith. He frequently took the seminarians to other Christian religious services and became very friendly with the local Episcopal community, especially the pastor, Fr. Reg Rawson, and his wife. Fr. Arthur's compassionate and welcoming personality formed long and lasting friendships with all those whom he met.

When both Salesian provinces in the United States decided to send theology students to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Worthington, Ohio (a suburb of Columbus), Fr. Arthur was assigned to the faculty there. From 1967 to 1975 he taught three courses in Hebrew Scripture (Pentateuch and history, prophets and wisdom literature) as well as other elective courses. He was in high demand not only among the Catholic seminarians but also among the students of the Lutheran and Methodist schools that formed the theological consortium there.

From the early 1970's the San Francisco province began sending its theology students to the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. The province established a community in Berkeley in 1974. Fr. Arthur Lenti was asked to join the community in 1975 as a member of the formation team along with Frs. Tom Prendiville and Frank Vranjos. Students enrolled in one of the three Catholic schools there: the Dominican, the Franciscan or Jesuit schools.

It was during his second year at Berkeley that faculty members of the Biblical studies department at the Graduate Theological Union approached Fr. Arthur about teaching sacred scripture. Fr. Thomas Prendiville, then Director at Berkeley, narrates the story that

a group of professors visited Fr. Arthur. They questioned him about his Biblical studies in Rome. Fr. Arthur noted that he had not finished a doctorate, but had a licentiate in Biblical Poetry. Unfortunately those doing the interview did not fully comprehend the depth of Fr. Arthur's studies, even though, according to Fr. Prendiville, Fr. Arthur was well read on all the past and current Biblical authors. The committee decided not to invite him to join the faculty. It was at this point, notes Fr. Prendiville, that Fr. Arthur began his in-depth studies on Don Bosco. He applied the various techniques and processes in Biblical scholarship to begin a critical analysis of Don Bosco's life and times.

After the extraordinary visitation of the English-speaking regional, Fr. George Williams, in the Spring of 1981, the theology program at Berkeley was suspended. The theology students were sent to the Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, to continue their theological studies. Fr. Arthur was asked to go to Rome and attend special courses at the Salesian Pontifical University. Without hesitation he willingly moved to Rome for the next two years. He, along with Thomas Juarez and John Itzaina, were sent to study Salesian spirituality with the hope that a staff versed in current Salesian formation might be a way of reopening the Berkeley community.

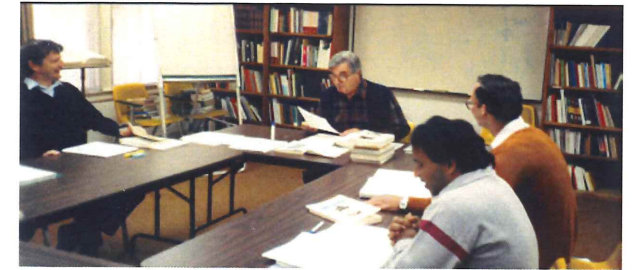


The Institute of Salesian Spirituality (Studies) ISS, founded in Berkeley in the Graduate Theological Union near the Cal State Campus.

Completing two years of study in Rome, Fr. Arthur returned to California and was assigned as Associate Pastor at Corpus Christi Church in San Francisco. He continued to press for the reopening of the Berkeley community. Due to his imagination and understanding of the importance of a Salesian community present in the consortium at Berkeley, he worked on formulating programs for Salesian studies and spirituality there. In September, 1984, the Institute of Salesian Studies was opened at Berkeley with Fr. Arthur Leni as one of the main professors. The program offered advanced studies in Don Bosco, Salesian history and spirituality, and related courses, open to confreres from all over the English-speaking world for a one-year program. He and Fr. Mike Ribotta were the heart of the program, joined by a varying team of confreres and Salesian Sisters from California

and beyond.

In 1989 following the recommendations of Fr. Thomas Prendiville, provincial at that time, the community at Berkeley began sponsoring the Salesian Educators' Seminar (SES). This program was open to Salesians and laity ministering in Salesian schools throughout the province. The week long seminar provided insights into the history of Salesian educational praxis along with a more realistic presentation of Don Bosco's life and work. Fr. Arthur Lenti's expertise in both Don Bosco's life and work as well as his understanding of Salesian spirituality helped to carry the program forward for over 25 years. As he advanced in age his contribution shifted from more formal classroom-type presentations to a relaxing "fire-side" chat with the participants. In both venues not only his knowledge but also his compassionate and caring disposition became more and more apparent.



Fr. Arthur lectures on Don Bosco at the ISS.

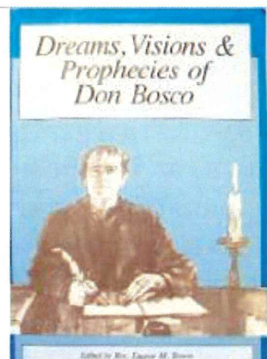
Certainly Fr. Arthur Lenti excelled in scholarship and educational methodology. Especially in his later years he enjoyed teaching his research and reflections on Don Bosco's life. However, his true depth can only be discovered through the various relational experiences and friendships formed throughout his life. No matter what his talents, whether in scholarship or art, in astronomy or in culinary pursuits, he always sought to welcome others with an open and sincere heart. Whenever Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley opened its doors for Christmas dinners or other significant gatherings Fr. Arthur could be found in the kitchen preparing a sumptuous meal. He cared about others' needs and sought to be of help and assistance. On a weekly basis he collected left-over bread from a local bakery to be distributed to the poor of the area. He relished the experiences of life and many times one could find him eating a simple lunch in the community room while following a soccer game or the Oakland Athletics baseball team on television. He was a man of justice and principle whose heart was open to everyone in need.

During his years at Berkeley Fr. Arthur developed his course on Don Bosco. He demonstrated a depth of knowledge and understanding of Don Bosco that ranks him with such scholars as Fr. Alberto Caviglia, Fr. Pietro Stella, Fr. Francis Desramaut, and Fr. Aldo Giraudo. He and Fr. Ribotta worked to make the (normaly) twice-yearly "*Journal of Salesian Studies*" "must reading" throughout the Congregation, publishing learned articles and reviews in every issue. Fr. Arthur contributed 26 articles in the Journal's first 15 years. Those JSS articles were based on his class lectures as well as his further research. They gave

birth first to Don Bosco, His Pope and His Bishop: The Trials of a Founder (Rome: LAS, 2006), which studies the saint's relationships with Pope Pius IX, who was very supportive, and Abp. Lawrence Gastaldi, who was not; and eventually to the monumental 7 volumes of Don Bosco: History and Spirit (Rome: LAS, 2007-2010), which has been translated into Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian, and other languages. Fr. Arthur explained:

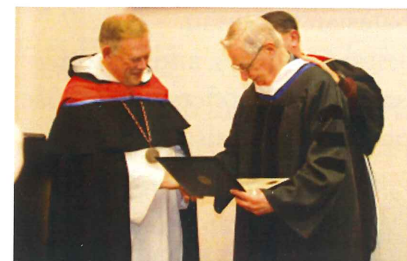
"I call this survey Don Bosco: History and Spirit because Don Bosco's life and work were played in the context of the fateful events that created a new religious and political world, and thereby also shaped his thinking and action; 'Spirit' because through discernment, interpretation and acceptance he discovered the meaning of this new world and courageously responded to its challenges: his vocation."

The Spanish Jesuit review "Miscelánea Comillas" of Comillas Pontifical University spoke highly of the first volume of the Spanish edition of Don Bosco: History and Spirit (eventually completed in 3 volumes). William Rodriguez Campos, author of the review, recommends Fr. Lenti as a historian who is able to identify the main thread uniting human events, and record them objectively. Fr. Lenti does this in masterly fashion as he presents the life and work of St. John Bosco. "The first two chapters dedicated to a study of the sources and the biographical tradition concerning Don Bosco are *The Journal of Salesian Studies* began in Berkeley as the work of the ISS and continues with an international team today. 7 jewels of in-



estimable value for historians, social scientists, and researchers," Prof. Rodriguez declares. Using a hermeneutic approach, Fr. Lenti identifies, evaluates, compares, and often corrects documents and interpretations regarding Don Bosco that formerly were considered indisputable. He forcefully and in a definitive manner combats myths and superficial views. The reviewer concludes: "This is an extraordinary work, full of topics and themes, an excellent and successful effort uniting harmoniously a realistic view of the life and work of Don Bosco and his genuine religious motivation." (ANS 7/11/2012) Fr. Arthur also lent his learning to an introduction to the first edition of Dreams, Visions and Prophecies of Don Bosco (1986), edited by Fr. Eugene Brown. Not happy about how Don Bosco's dreams, especially the one called "the two columns," were being misinterpreted and misused in certain circles, he withdrew that introduction from the second printing (2000).

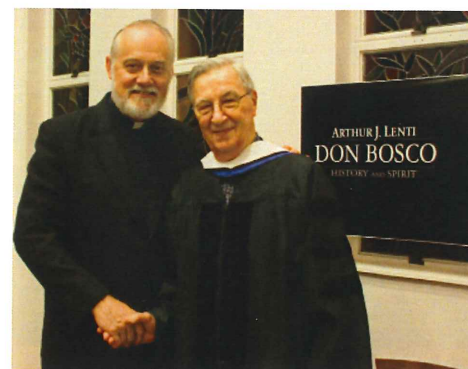
On January 25, 2008, the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, a member of the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, conferred an honorary doctorate on



Fr. Michael Sweeney, OP, President of DSPT awards the Doctoral Degree.

an informal question and answer period. He mesmerized those present with his insights and anecdotes on Don Bosco and the situations confronting the early Salesians. He also shared his love and insight in the Scriptures by his frequent homilies.

His personal data sheet at the provincial office lists his "retirement" at the beginning of January, 2017. His health had been gradually deteriorating, and he found it difficult to move around the community. As his health deteriorated it was decided to have him move to Mercy Center in Oakland, California, where he might get the care he needed. From September, 2017 to January, 2018, he received the medical care he needed. He regained his strength, and he was then assigned to St. John Bosco High School in Bellflower, where the community had the ability to provide additional care and assistance.



Fr. David Purdy, Provincial, congratulates Fr. Arthur, doctor of Theology.

Fr. Arthur J. Lenti in recognition of the outstanding contribution of his scholarly work in the study of the life of Don Bosco, as well as in recognition of Fr. Lenti's many years of service to the Church and the Salesian Society as an educator and writer. Fr. Arthur continued his work at Berkeley. He remained ready and available to help in whatever way his services or expertise was needed with the program. During various seminars held at Don Bosco Hall he would be asked to meet with the participants in



With Fr. Aldo Giraudo at the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology (DSPT) in January 2008.

Fr. Arthur celebrated his 95th birthday on January 31, 2018. Shortly after moving to Bellflower, Fr. Arthur was feted with a grand party in Los Angeles. The festivities included the presentation of "a very special surprise," what in academia is often called a "festschrift," entitled Arthur Lenti: Memory, Presence and Hope. The work, by Fr. Marcelo Escalante Mendoza, contained a biographical interview with him. He reminisces on his vocation and formation as a



Fr. Tom Prendiville and many friends celebrate Marcelo's tribute.

student of the Bible and as a Salesian historian. He offers his perspective on Salesian studies, and he concludes with a number of messages that he offers to all those who share the Salesian mission. The work also included a number of testimonies from various Salesians from around the world.

Throughout most of his life, Fr. Arthur had trouble with his back. In his final years while at Berkeley he had problems with sleeping in his bed at night. He would doze off and sleep in his recliner. When he moved to Bellflower in February, 2018, he continued to sleep in a recliner. As time went on he began developing problems with his memory. His memory loss was a slow progression. However, he always kept faithful to his prayer. The members of

the community would find him spending time in the chapel praying or reading at various times of the day. He made it a point not to miss the community practices of piety.

Sometime during 2019 his legs began to be a more critical problem. He continued to have problems sleeping. He was hospitalized, and it was noted that the ability to elevate his lower legs and feet while in a hospital bed somewhat alleviated his painful situation. He returned to the community after a week, and a hospital bed was provided for him. He began to spend more and more time in his room. Eventually even various sports which he enjoyed watching on television were forgotten.

In December, 2021 Fr. Arthur suffered complications from the flu. He went to the hospital before Christmas. The community members had every hope and confidence that he would return to the community. However he developed complications with his breathing. His doctor told the Salesians that he was fighting tenaciously



Fr. John Itzaina delivers a powerful homily at the funeral held in Richmond before Fr. Arthur is laid to rest.

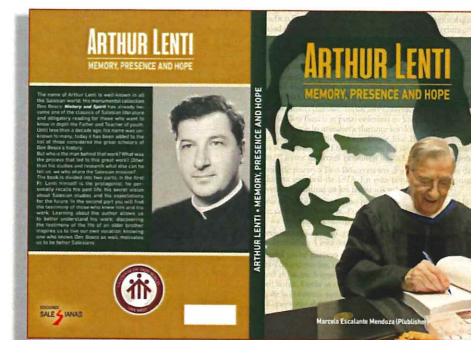
for his life. The community was hopeful for his return. He died on January 6, 2022 at PIH Hospital in Downey, California.

Due to the omicron strain of the COVID virus as well as some logistical and calendar problems, the Mass of the Resurrection for Fr. Arthur Lenti was held on February 16, 2022, at St. Dominic Savio Church in Bellflower, California. Following the services in Southern California, the body was sent to Richmond, California. On Friday, February 18, a second Mass of Resurrection was held at Salesian High School in Richmond. Fr. Arthur was then laid to rest in the Salesian cemetery.

The following contributions consist of excerpts from the text Arthur Lenti: Memory, Presence and Hope edited by Fr. Marcelo Escalante Mendoza, SDB of Bolivia. (Used by permission of the author/editor.)

Fr. Marcelo Escalante Mendoza is a young priest who is now a principal of a large Salesian High School and Oratory in Bolivia. Fr. Marcelo met Fr. Arthur during his diaconate year which he spent in Berkeley in Fr. Arthur's community and Fr. Arthur became a close friend and mentor. From that experience, Fr. Marcelo produced a book which celebrates the figure of Fr. Arthur Lenti as ranked with the scholars of Don Bosco such as Fr. Pietro Stella, Fr. Pietro Braido, and Fr. Francois Desramaut.

Through personal interviews and with contributions from Salesian scholars worldwide, Fr. Marcelo gives us more than a snap shot of a man and a true Salesian scholar; he shares with the world the close friend who accompanied this young scholar from Bolivia.



Fr. Marcelo's "festschrift" on Fr. Arthur.

Arthur Lenti, the Master

Since the beginning of 2014 I had the grace to meet Fr. Arthur Lenti, at the Don Bosco Hall community in Berkeley, California. As an unmerited privilege granted by my Province, with the desire to motivate me to go ahead with the study of Salesianity, I was able to take the courses offered by the Institute of Salesian Studies (ISS). Thus, I was able to spend practically an entire year "at the feet of the Master".

When I arrived in Berkeley, I was a newly ordained deacon. Although it was obvious that this experience should culminate my preparation for the priesthood in an integral way, the academic emphasis was evident. The ISS is a serious and rigorous study house; and I, personally, knew that "I was going to study." However, the greatest and most significant experience was not the academic but the fraternal and existential one.

The day after my arrival in Berkeley I met Fr. Arthur Lenti. When I met him face to face in the chapel at morning prayer, I greeted him with reverential respect. Before arriving, I had read his collection Don Bosco: History and Charism a couple of times and I knew that I was dealing with one of the great scholars of the congregation. For his part, he just smiled and replied, "Hello. Welcome. I am Arthur." There, thus, the real learning began.

As we advanced the courses on the history of Don Bosco, our friendship also grew. Moreover, the years began to take their toll more and more strongly on his worn-out body, nothing else could be expected at 90 years of age. During that year, Fr. Lenti's physical limitations increased. As the youngest Salesian in the community, I understood that it was my task to take care of him and be closer to him. For his part, Fr. Arthur warmly received the insignificant services that I could render him.

I discovered in Fr. Lenti a good, generous and simple man. Our privileged moments were after dinner, when I went to visit him and see that he was well. There we took the opportunity to talk, sometimes for hours, about different topics... Lenti was an encyclopedia! There, eventually, I dared to ask him about his family, his childhood, his vocational experience... and, with candid simplicity, he simply opened the door of his heart to me.

Among the memories that move me the most is the time when he showed me his childhood and youth photos for the first time. I remember the light in his eyes when he told me about what his mother was like, his beginnings in the Salesian vocation, his priestly ordination... I am also moved to remember his generosity and detachment from the most valuable thing he had: his own writings and studies. What Lenti shared, he gave away on a USB (the "thing" he called it) or on printed sheets, were serious and critical academic work that he did even until dawn without anyone asking him! What he gave was his life dedicated to the service of the Salesian mission, consumed in his study, until his last breath.

Enjoying friendship and being by the side of a man of the stature of Fr. Arthur Lenti, could not but leave me endless teachings, which I dare to point just a few. First of all, I always admired his rigor and seriousness in everything he did and said; he was a man who prepared his homilies based on sources and citations. Likewise, I was surprised by his versatility and breadth to learn a little (quite a lot) about various subjects, from astronomy, to poetry, from Scripture, to classical culture, and not to mention everything that had to do with Salesianity! From the human point of view, he was always a man of good treatment, simple, helpful, smiling and kind to everyone and a true gentleman with the ladies. A man of God, a lover of everything that had to do with divine worship, a wise connoisseur of the history of the Church and a simple man who prayed a

devotional book before going to sleep. A world-class historian, who enjoyed preparing breakfast for others and enjoying all kinds of sports.

In short, Lenti was not only a famous teacher, he was a mentor, a true master. I believe that he did discover the meaning of life and learned to enjoy it, from the service as a scholar, often hidden and silent, he followed and taught us to follow Jesus in the footsteps of Don Bosco. From heaven he will continue to accompany us, guide us and take care of us.

May he rest in peace.

Marcelo Escalante, SDB

March 20, 2022



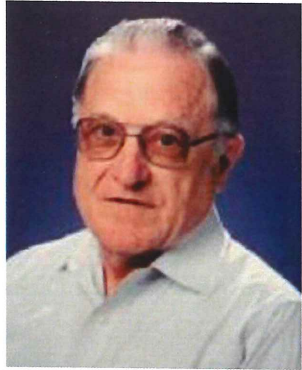
Fr. Marcelo Escalante poses beside his mentor and friend, Fr. Arthur Lenti on the day that Marcelo presented him the book he wrote and edited describing many details of his rich life, his vast education, and his myriad interests.



At the right, Deacon Marcelo celebrates the feast of Don Bosco in the Bay Area in 2017 during his year with Fr. Arthur in Berkeley.



Fr. Thomas Prendiville, SDB, Former Director of the ISS, Former Provincial of SUO, longtime friend and colleague of Fr. Arthur Lenti



Fr. Thomas Prendiville as director of the Institute of Salesian Studies, Berkeley.

Fr. Thomas Prendiville provided the Introduction to Fr. Marcelo's book honoring Fr. Arthur Lenti. Here are some excerpts from that introduction: Fr. Tom noted that Fr. Arthur's work moved the focus on Don Bosco from a collection of anecdotes to real scholarship.

It all began in 1946 when the young Salesian, Br. Arthur Lenti, began his theological studies at the Ateneo Pontificio Salesiano in Turin, Italy, the homeland of St. John Bosco. Following his theological studies, Fr. Arthur Lenti studied at the Biblical Institute, in Rome, 1950-1954.

After 20 years of teaching Scripture in theological schools in California and Ohio, Arthur Lenti, transferred to Don Bosco Hall, Berkeley, began what would be his life's greatest work, devoting himself to a critical study of the life of St. John Bosco. The methodologies that Arthur learned at the Biblical Institute became his guide to determine the historical truth of Don Bosco's life, spirituality, and ministry to youth.

The consummate teacher. From 1980 to 2016 Arthur Lenti taught a scholastic year course on St. John Bosco to students of theology and American Salesians in on-going formation. The course developed over the years in his continual research into all the available written records of Don Bosco and the early Salesians. Every year the course improved based on his continual research. Living with Arthur for many of these years, one can only be impressed with his need to seek out the historical truth in every phase of Don Bosco's life. The studies on Don Bosco, with Arthur especially, led to Don Bosco Hall forming the Institute of Salesian Studies for English-speaking Salesians throughout the world. The courses are now divided by separate semesters and summer programs. The Institute continues with the leadership of Fr. Joseph Boenzi, a former professor of the Salesian Pontifical University, Rome.

This book is a tribute to Fr. Arthur Lenti who has greatly contributed to our understanding of Don Bosco and our dedication to Don Bosco's legacy.

*Fr. Thomas Prendiville, SDB
March 20, 2023*

Fr. Francis Moloney remembers another Biblical Scholar: Arthur Lenti and Sacred Scripture (2018):

Fr. Moloney took quite a bit of his contribution to describe Fr. Arthur's journey of training in Scripture and underlined how that training translated beautifully into his major life work on the historical, critical study of St. John Bosco. What follows are some excerpts of Fr. Moloney's contribution.



Fr. Francis Moloney, SDB

My contribution is partially biographical, but limited to one aspect of his life-story, his journey with Sacred Scripture. Over a long and fruitful life, Arthur Lenti's generosity and skills have been required in many places. Anyone who knows Arthur, and especially anyone who has shared Salesian life with him, is sharply aware that he is motivated, and always inspired, by his intense love for the Word of God and the Church's Liturgy.

Perhaps no one in the Society of Saint Francis de Sales has committed himself more seriously, intensely, and wholeheartedly to a rediscovery of the person of Jesus revealed across the promises of the Old Testament and the confessions of faith in the New. Perhaps no one has incorporated that into the careful and painstaking work of shedding the sometimes-hagiographic portraits of our founder, in order to authoritatively uncover the authentic and lasting Christian traditions passed on to us in heritage of the charism of Don Bosco.

Biblical Education

Arthur Lenti was ordained a Priest for the Western Province of the United States of America on 2 July, 1950. Aware of the future needs of the growing presence of the Congregation in the USA, this talented young Priest was asked to immediately begin specialized studies in Sacred Scripture. This was a wise choice. Arthur had a facility for languages, both ancient and modern, and an ability to interpret texts of many kinds. He had received the traditional biblical formation then available in the Seminaries, but no doubt that left many unanswered questions.

This call for a renewed interest in the Bible was not widely heard and practiced, as the early decades of the twentieth century moved Europe toward the massive slaughter known as World War I (1914-1918). In that confused and confusing intellectual world where everything "new" was enthusiastically embraced, Pius X (1903-1914), especially in his edict *Lamentabili* (1907) and his Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), warned against the

worldly impact of rationalist critical scholarship that he saw as a threat to the Catholic Tradition...

Historical-critical biblical scholarship was seen as one of the so-called "heresies" of the time. Among the vague condemnations of the many intellectual initiatives that had to be curtailed was so called "Americanism." Biblical teaching in America in the first half of the twentieth century was marked by careful avoidance of historical criticism, and fear of potential heresy.

Most seminary professors did not enter into discussions of problematic biblical theological questions or potential historical non-sequiturs. They limited themselves to the historicity of the books, the dates, and the personalities, and even the names of the flowers and the animals! However, important biblical centers of learning emerged at that time that would make a lasting impact. Leo XIII was responsible for the foundation of an important Catholic biblical center of learning in Jerusalem, L'Ecole Biblique et Archéologique de Jérusalem (1890) and the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1900).

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Providentissimus Deus, Pius XII published an *Encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu* that recaptured Leo XIII's desire for biblical renewal in the Catholic Church. Catholic scholars and teachers were to become part of international and ecumenical biblical scholarship, using all the means available to recover the original meaning of the biblical text, and to give energy to Catholic life and practice. Modern and contemporary Catholic biblical learning, so much a part of today's biblical teaching, research, and writing, has just been born as Arthur Lenti began his studies in Rome!

Biblical Career

In the Fall of 1950, the newly ordained Arthur Lenti stepped into the new world of critical biblical scholarship at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. The impact of *Divino Afflante Spiritu* was being felt at the Institute, directly dependent upon the Holy Father, Pius XII. The challenging atmosphere of a critical, yet faith-filled, center of Catholic biblical studies must have been as exciting for the vivacious mind and spirit of Arthur Lenti, as it was for me when I began my studies there in 1970, some 20 years later. The Jesuits who directed the Institute and did most of the teaching have always focused upon matters of fundamental importance for the degree of the License of Sacred Scripture (LSS).

It was always the practice of the Dominicans and the Jesuits that the students developed a broadly based familiarity with the Word of God. The Bible is a collection of books that written in many different forms, and at different historical periods in Israel and beyond, across more than one thousand years. In 1953 Arthur began what was then known as the *Annus ad Lauream*: a year of special study, leading to formal entry into the doctoral

program. The student took another year of advanced coursework, focusing upon a future specialization, and further study of ancient languages. Once that was completed, as a candidate for a Doctorate in Sacred Scripture (DSS), Arthur would have been expected to assume some teaching, coupled with ongoing research, under the guidance of a specialist supervisor, until his doctoral dissertation was ready to publicly defend in Rome. The curriculum of the Biblical Institute did not focus entirely upon academic issues. Doctoral candidates were asked to develop an involvement with students and pastoral ministry. In this way, the future biblical leader within the Catholic community received a rounded intellectual, Catholic, and human formation. It was a time-honored system, and it produced some of the great Catholic scholars.

Arthur had already decided that he wished to work in the Old Testament. But in 1954 he was called home to California to teach Scripture to the students from the USA (and from Australia) at the newly-founded Salesian house of Theology at Aptos, California. The activities of teaching, pastoral ministry, and the formation of young Salesians took over. The long and silent hours of biblical study, reflection, and writing, under specialized direction, faded from Arthur's life. Asked to teach all biblical courses, Old and New Testament, as well as playing an active role in the leadership and the formation of the young Salesians in a newly founded center, time for serious and uninterrupted study, essential to the progress of a student towards the doctorate, was not available. The work of the Congregation and the Province absorbed Arthur at Aptos from 1954-1960.

The closure of Aptos led to a rich period of Arthur's biblical work. After a brief period at the Salesian High School in Richmond, in 1961-62 he was assigned to the Junior Seminary at St Francis, Watsonville. As well as teaching, he planned the liturgical life of the community, in that exciting period just prior to the Second Vatican Council...

The intimate link between the Word of God and the liturgical life of the Church quickly emerged as a matter of crucial interest for Arthur. From 1966-1968 he began an active role teaching Biblical Studies at "Alma," the Jesuit School of Theology, located nearby. That task became his fulltime occupation. In 1968 the Jesuits closed "Alma," establishing what was to become the Jesuit School of Theology within the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) at Berkeley. These rich years for Arthur came to an end, but many of his students continued his tradition. Several eventually became biblical professors at Berkeley.

In 1968 he joined the Salesian Faculty the Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio, where all young Salesians from the USA, and a small group from Australia, were preparing for Priesthood. Arthur's skills were becoming widely recognized. Throughout 1968-1975 he was called to teach in various summer institutes that were springing up all over the USA, in the exciting

period after the Second Vatican Council. This was a rich time for Arthur's biblical teaching, now coupled with deep interest in the more active involvement of the celebrating Christian community in the liturgical life of the Church.

My own contemporaries were with him in Columbus in the 1960's and 70's. He had become a key figure among the Salesians as teacher, a confrere, formator, and a creative liturgical animator. His love of music and appreciation of ritual took the richness of the Word of God into liturgical celebrations. His well-prepared and stimulating biblical teaching and his carefully prepared biblical homilies provided a solid intellectual and liturgical formation for all students. In those days the Faculty at the Josephinum were sometimes singled out to offer "special lectures" on given biblical and theological topics. Arthur delivered these special lectures on a number of occasions. There he showed that he was not only biblically informed, but that he had a deep appreciation of the theological and liturgical importance of issues that necessarily emerge from a critical study of the Word of God. His delivery was always clear, to the point, and challenging. There was always a challenging edge to Arthur's presence. Whatever he did, in the classroom or in community, he demonstrated and asked for excellence.

From a Critical Study of the Bible to a Study of Don Bosco A new era began for Arthur Lenti when the Californian Province took the bold step of purchasing a property on the doorstep of the University of California, Berkeley. It housed Californian Salesians who were studying Theology at the GTU. Arthur joined them in 1975, only to find that many of his former Jesuit students from his days at "Alma" were now professors. They wanted their former professor to complete his own doctoral studies with them, but this was not to eventuate. International Salesian leadership discouraged the presence of young Salesians at Berkeley, and thus the academic focus of the Salesian presence in Berkeley changed.

With the collaboration of Frs. Carmine Vairo and Thomas Prendiville, Arthur developed a program of Salesian Studies that could be offered internationally at Don Bosco Hall, Berkeley. Thus, as times changed the nature of Don Bosco House changed, and another era opened up for the versatile Arthur Lenti. The call for experts in Salesian studies necessarily arrived at his doorstep. Along with the younger Frs. Joe Boenzi and John Itzaina, Arthur returned to Rome to undertake research into the history and spirituality of Don Bosco and his Salesians. The rest of that story, including the development of the Institute of Salesian studies as a major program at GTU, through association with the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, is told elsewhere in this collection. The jewel in the crown of Don Bosco House, Berkeley, was the mature Arthur Lenti, master in Biblical Studies, Salesian Studies, and liturgical animator!

My rich association with Arthur Lenti, especially in the long discussions we have had after dinner during my times at Berkeley, have made it clear to me that he has always remained the historical biblical critic that he was trained to be in the 1950's, and as he has taught biblical studies through the decades. The very title of his magnum opus: Don Bosco: History and Spirit indicates that agenda. The renewal that marked the rebirth of biblical studies in the 1950's, of which Arthur is an important representative, has marked the rebirth of Salesian Studies since the Second Vatican Council. Arthur is not simply an important representative of that rebirth; he is the single most significant figure writing in English who has brought that rebirth to us.

Arthur Lenti, the trained and skillful biblical scholar, transported his well-honed literary, theological and historical skills in to another of his passions. He thus delivered what has proved to be a unique contribution to a "contextualized," and thus richer, understanding of the charism of our Founder. Only a clear understanding, for example, of who the Marchesa di Barolo and Archbishop Gastaldi were, and what they actually did, can help us properly to understand Don Bosco's contribution to the world and society of his time, and the lasting value of that contribution to the "oratorian" context of his time. Arthur has provided that for us all, armed with the historical critical skills so well-honed over his years studying and teaching Sacred Scripture.

Word and Liturgy

Arthur's biblical scholarship always enriched his loving attention to the proclamation of the Word of God in the Liturgy. The shelves in Arthur's room did not contain many books about nineteenth century Savoy and Piedmont, or other works on Don Bosco, with the exception of the works of his much-esteemed friend and colleague, Francis Desramaut, SDB. They contain biblical commentaries and key texts that represent the best scholarship from the days of Arthur's life as a biblical scholar and teacher. These books are essential to his preaching. He is not interested in a practical point that might emerge from a biblical reading; he devotes his attention entirely to the meaning of the text itself to enlighten the Liturgy being celebrated. I never ceased to be fascinated with Arthur's skillful marriage of biblical texts with liturgical actions. He made them speak to all who had the privilege to celebrate with him.

Thank you, Fr. Arthur Lenti, SDB, for your responsible and life long commitment to the interpretation of God's Word in the life and prayer of the Church, and for your lasting impact upon our love for, and imitation of, Don Bosco. §

Francis J. Moloney, SDB

Don Bosco House
Clifton Hill, Victoria, Australia



Fr. Juan José Bartolomé, SDB and the Spanish Edition of Arthur's work (2018):

Fr. Juan José Bartolomé is a Scripture Scholar, professor emeritus of the UPS and the Theologate of Tlaquepaque, Mexico. He has the distinction of being on the team that first translated the work of Fr. Arthur into Spanish and in the process, restructured some of the work for an easier treading and study for the Spanish-speaking world. His contribution detailed this effort. Some salient excerpts follow:

1. A need deeply felt in initial formation

After nearly thirty years of involvement in the formation of students of theology I noticed that all the material on hand dealing with the life and work of Don Bosco, and that was available to the students, reflected that same admiration and hagiographic excitement that characterize the Biographical Memoirs. I still believe it indispensable that whoever wishes to understand the genius of Don Bosco and appreciate particularly the incredible impact that his person and charisma had on his first followers, must carefully reread the Memoirs. His three biographers (Giovanni B. Lemoyne, vols. I-IX; Angelo Amadei vol. X; Eugenio Ceria, vols. XI-XIX) are obvious proof. Although they differ in the use of their sources and in the image which they created of Don Bosco they possessed a wealth of first-hand documents and testimonies from eyewitnesses.



It was necessary that the Congregation and the Salesian Family have available biographies of our Founder that were less heroic, more involved in the historical reality. Don Pascual Chavez, without any hesitation, saw the need in 2011 when he called for the three-year preparation leading up to the celebration of the Bicentenary of Don Bosco: "we need to set ourselves a systematic plan for the study and assimilation of Don Bosco. The generations of those who knew Don Bosco or had come in contact with his first witnesses have now come to an end. It is necessary therefore to draw on the sources and on the studies about Don Bosco, in order to deepen our knowledge first of all about him as a person. The study of Don Bosco is an essential condition in order to be able to communicate his charism and propose his current relevance".

2. Rewriting the history of Don Bosco

Fortunately, following the conciliar exhortation requesting religious institutes to return to the "primitive inspiration" and to see to it that "the spirit and aims of each Founder should be faithfully accepted and retained

" (2), beginning in the 1970's there arose centers of historical investigation in the Congregation (Roma-Pisana: Istituto Historico Salesiano; Roma-UPS: Centro Don Bosco; Lyon: Groupe Lyonnais de Recherches Salesiennes; Berkeley, California: Institute of Salesian Studies; Quito: Centro Regional de Formación Permanente) which encouraged the critical study of the Salesian sources, a more objective knowledge of Don Bosco and his times and, what was no less important, contributed in circulating the results (Roma: "*Richerche Storiche Salesiane*"; Lyon: "*Cahiers du groupe Lyonnais de recherches salesiennes*"; Berkeley: "*Journal of Salesian Studies*").

There began a new way to study the figure of Don Bosco and the beginnings of the Congregation, characterized by the use of the methodology proper to the new scientific approach to historiography. The fruit of all this investigation and its publication is three magnificent biographies of Don Bosco, of undeniable historiographical value; if not the only, they are the best-known publications. They have presented us with reconstructed images of the figure and work of Don Bosco. While they differ from each other I believe that they will remain unequalled for many years. They are the work of Salesians who consecrated their lives to the investigation of the life of Don Bosco and his charism.

Fr. Juan Jose summarized the amazing contributions to the works of Fr. Pietro Stella, Fr. Francis Desramaut, and Fr. Pietro Braido describing their revolutionary work in understanding Don Bosco. This carved out the path for his decision to translate the work of Fr. Arthur.

3. The decision to translate 'Lenti'

The objective remained the same: make a biography of Don Bosco available for the younger confreres and the public in general, one which would present his person and his accomplishments making use of the riches found in earlier investigations. In the meantime, I received the first two of seven volumes which comprise the work of Arthur J. Lenti, Don Bosco: History and Spirit. I-VII, Roma, LAS, 2007-2009. Fr. Aldo Giraudo had seen to its publication. I had the impression after reading them that I had finally found the well-documented biography of Don Bosco and his work that I had been searching for.

Fr. Lenti had succeeded not only in weaving together with excellent clarity the well-documented results of present day historiographical investigation of the life of Don Bosco; above all, he had placed the person and his work within the context of Turin in the throes of the Risorgimento and the unification of Italy. And to make it even more realistic and ensure a more rigorous originality, he wished to include biographical information regarding the persons with whom he rubbed elbows and the events in which he was involved. This

placing of Don Bosco in the wider context which his Italian biographers take for granted is of great value, even indispensable, for those who have little knowledge of the history of Italy in the nineteenth century. This includes the majority of Salesians throughout the world, and not only those in formation.

Our first intention, from the very beginning of the project, was to reduce the size of the work. We must admit that at the end the final product turned out to be larger than we had programmed. We decided to divide the edition into three volumes which we believe would respect the decisive moments in the life of Don Bosco. The first is the chronicle of the years 1815-1849, from Don Bosco's birth at the Becchi to the birth of the Oratory in Valdocco. The second covers 1850-1875, the mature years of Don Bosco the educator and formator, writer and editor, founder and driving force. The third volume covers the years 1876-1934, including the last ten years of his life, his death and the path towards canonization, a path often turbulent. It is in this third volume where the intervention of the editors is more evident; Lenti's original description of the circumstances surrounding the death of Don Bosco was amplified as was the process of his canonization. In addition to two indices, one of names, the other of themes, special mention must be given of the inclusion of what we believe is the first and most extensive bibliography together with the writings of Don Bosco published in Spanish as well as all that has been written about him or translated into Spanish. All of this is the work of Fr. Jesus Graciliano Gonzalez. The Editorial CCS in Madrid, which took upon itself the publication with great enthusiasm, completed the task. Spanish-speaking Salesians owe a great debt of gratitude to them.

We were and remain convinced that Lenti's work is the best biography for our times, perhaps not for scholars but most certainly for his sons and followers. We have opened the door to translations into other languages. In no way does this imply that we expect others to include the changes we had opted for. This is what we proposed in a meeting of the Conference of Italian Provincials several years ago. We had been invited to present our reasons and at what stage was the translation of the first edition of Lenti's work.

4. What Arthur J. Lenti's edition of "Don Bosco: Historia and Charism" has meant to me:

First of all, and with complete sincerity, it has been for me a great service to my brother Salesians in formation. The further we distance ourselves from Don Bosco and his times the greater our necessity to know and love him, to love to the point of imitating him. "Without knowledge there cannot be love, imitation or intercession; then only love can lead to greater knowledge. It is a question therefore of a knowledge which is born from love and leads to love: an affective knowledge". One of the more obvious values of Lenti's work is his insistence on a knowledge of the heart. The better the son the more he knows

his father.

The constant and meticulous reading of Lenti's volumes, demanded by the arduous task of translating and editing, compelled me to focus more on the historical figure of our Father, by which I mean, more on the Don Bosco of history than on the stories of his life, which is what Tradition and my father Master preferred. Don Bosco is now closer to me, more human, engaged in his times and with his limitations. For me Don Bosco has gained in stature and originality; the more life-like or credible he is, the more wonder is caused by his exceptional humanity and unaffected holiness. To conclude, the work of the team, which was not always a simple and light task, blessed me throughout the entire process with good health and a love, detected by others and ever growing, for Don Bosco and for the brothers and sisters who have shared it. §

Juan J. Bartolomé
Tlaquepaque, 10,19th, 2017

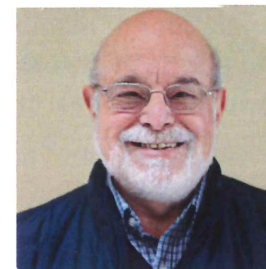
Father Arthur Lenti seen from the CSFPA (Salesian Center of Ongoing Formation for America)

Fr. Manolo Pérez is the current director of CSFPA and the Vicar, Fr. Luis Timossi, SDB, offered these words to honor the contribution of Fr. Arthur to the work of formation at the CSFPA. Excerpts of his contribution follows (2018):

Our perspective is different from that of others since Fr. Salvador Delgadillo is the only member of the current staff of the Salesian Center of Ongoing Formation for America (CSFPA) in Quito, Ecuador, who had the pleasure of meeting him. The rest never met this Salesian brother of ours personally, so gifted in his studies and information about Don Bosco and the Salesian charism.

Therefore, our contribution will be our evaluation of his works and writings, in particular his "Don Bosco: History and Charism", as we find it in the three volumes published by the CCS press in Madrid, Spain, under the direction of Juan Jose Bartolome and Graciliano Gonzalez. These books have become bedside texts that are required reading in each of the courses of the program "Introduction to the Study of Salesianity" offered in our Center.

We appreciate and are grateful for the commendable work. The translation was difficult, but it has proven itself valuable because



Fr. Luis Timossi, SDB

of the synthesis and the coherence of the material chosen in the Spanish translation. We applaud all the work that went into this project along with the organizers who have made possible the Spanish edition. Fr. Fernando Peraza were both masters of Salesian history; but there was also a brotherly bond and collaboration between them. In Fr. Lenti's work there are numerous quotations that are taken from Fr. Peraza's books and articles. Conversely, Fr. Lenti has contributed much to the methodology that is applied in the CSFPA in Quito.

The accuracy with which he presents his sources, bibliography and the logic that characterizes his analyses exhibits scientific rigor. This guarantees a solid foundation to his writings. This is precisely what we propose in the CSFPA: knowledge of historical-critical methodology must be the foundation for the study of Don Bosco. So, in Fr. Lenti we find an ally who supports and complements our methodology.

The arrangement and organization of the contents, the sources and the already existing studies in Salesianity provide a model for all who undertake a serious and critical study of the life of Don Bosco. His Anglo-Saxon approach with its direct, concise and incisive style complements the traditional style of Italian or Latin studies which is more narrative, descriptive, passionate and florid. His gift of organization facilitates the locating of information scattered throughout his books. This certainly makes study easier; research will quickly lead to publication.

It must be noted that in reading and compiling the treasure-trove of historical material Fr. Lenti has always valued and respected the work of other authors when making corrections. He has the art of bringing other authors face to face with him, entering into dialogue, confronting their perspectives and the analysis of their sources.

We are extremely grateful to Fr. Arthur Lenti for his dedication to the study, research and publishing of vast material on Salesianity. He reminds us of our beloved Father Fernando Peraza; both have presented us with precious material. Fr. Lenti is a Salesian who not only honors his father, Don Bosco, he also makes him known and loved. Without a doubt many generations of members of the Salesian Family, young people and lay persons, will benefit and enrich themselves with the precious gift left by both of them. Much seed has been sown and will bear fruit; the charism of love for the poorest and most abandoned youth bequeathed to us by Don Bosco will continue to be genuine, life-giving and adapted to the times. §

Fr. Luis Timossi, SDB

Fr. Pascual Chavez Villanueva, SDB [9th Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, who promoted the printing of Fr. Arthur's work, *Don Bosco History and Spirit* (vol 1-7)]

Fr. Pascual Chavez Villanueva served as the ninth Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco and knew Fr. Arthur personally. He visited him often when serving as the Regional Councilor of the InterAmerica Region. He also promoted the work of collaboration between Fr. Aldo Giraudo, emeritus professor at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, and Fr. Arthur's voluminous notes from his classes at the Institute of Salesian Spirituality (Studies).



Fr. Pascual Chavez Villanueva, SDB

Thankyou for the obituary of Fr Arthur Lenti, a great son and disciple of Don Bosco. As soon I received the news on his death, I emailed Fr Mel Trinidad to express my sorrow and prayerful condolences.

As Regional Councilor I had the privilege of knowing and appreciating him. No doubt that his work on Don Bosco's history and spirit was a milestone to know much better our Beloved Father and Founder Don Bosco.

I am sure Don Bosco will be proud and grateful to him. Now Fr Arthur enjoys the full vision and communion with God together with Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco and all the sanctified members of the Salesian Family.

God bless.

Fr. Pascual, sdb

Fr. Aldo Giraudo, SDB Professor Emeritus of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome (UPS), who led the task to have Fr. Arthur's work brought to print at LAS in Rome.

Fr. Giraudo is famous for his own extensive research into the historical roots of Don Bosco and many other Salesian figures. His most recent work is a study of Fr. Paolo Albera, Don Bosco's second successor. Fr. Giraudo is also well known for his tours of Don Bosco's beginnings and his work. Much of this work is contained in his volume: Don Bosco Lived Here.

In this photo, Fr. Giraudo came all the way to Berkeley to congratulate Fr. Arthur on his reception of an honorary doctorate from the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

In Memory of Arthur J. Lenti SDB

I first met Arthur Lenti during my studies at UPS in the years 1980-1982. I used to attend with him the classes of Pietro Stella, Don Braidó, Don Brocardo, Don Aubry and other outstanding Salesian scholars. Arthur, along with John Itzaina and Thomas Juárez, had come to Rome to prepare to start the Institute of Salesian Spirituality in Berkeley.

We were in the same community (the Don Rua community). I was immediately positively impressed by Arthur's beautiful personality, his commitment to scientific work and his method of study.

I appreciated his amiability and friendliness in dealing with people. Above all, I admired his intelligence and broad culture. I was very impressed by his willingness to start over as a young student to obey the decision of his superiors and visitor George Williams. Later, during the years of my stay in Turin-Crocetta (1981-2002), I was able to appreciate the essays published by Arthur in the *"Journal of Salesian Studies"*.

Finally, in August 2003, I had the opportunity to visit Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley. I had been asked by the Rector Major Don Pascual Chávez to verify the formative approach and the cultural proposal of the Salesian Spiritual Formation Centers, in order to take stock of the situation.

On that occasion, I participated in a meeting with the entire team of Don Bosco Hall, during which I was able to realize the great work that had been done in previous years and the excellent organization of the teachings.

On that occasion Arthur showed me the extensive notes he had prepared in previous years for his two fundamental courses: "Don Bosco Fonder" and "Don Bosco Builder". I immediately realized the importance and value of his work for the entire Salesian Family and made myself available to edit the publication. Arthur with great generosity gave me all his material.

The undertaking was not easy, since it was necessary to find the way and the financial means to realize the project. Finally in 2006, after several attempts, with the approval of



Fr. Aldo Giraudo, SDB

Rector Major Pasqual Chávez - who understood the importance of Arthur's work - and with the generous financial support of the Procura delle Missioni Don Bosco of Turin (Father Pier Luigi Zuffetti), I was able to carry out the project.

Between 2007 and 2010, the 7 volumes of *Don Bosco: History and Spirit* were published by the LAS publisher of the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome. Since the appearance of the first volume, the work was a great success. Everyone recognized the scientific and didactic value of Arthur's work: a great legacy for the Salesian Family and a treasure for the whole Church.

During those years I had the good fortune to stop in Berkeley on several occasions and work with Arthur to prepare the individual volumes. In this way, I was able to get to know Arthur in greater depth and better appreciate his passion for Don Bosco, his culture and his open-mindedness. He approached the task with youthful enthusiasm, but also with great humility, ready to take on board suggestions and to correct and integrate his work. When the proofs for the individual volumes were ready in Rome, I would send them to Arthur and he would review and correct them with the help of Tom Prendiville.

A great friendship developed between us: I felt fortunate to cooperate in the diffusion of his valuable work and he showed me gratitude and fraternal affection.

Arthur's specific contribution consists in the application of his method as a biblical scholar to the study of Salesian sources, a new and very fruitful approach to the knowledge of Don Bosco. This explains his care in translating important documents and sources. In addition, he gave great importance to the presentation of the historical context, which is decisive for understanding the personality of Don Bosco, the novelty of his charism and the fortunate development of his work.

Above all, Arthur has studied and critically evaluated the vast Salesian bibliography of the past, the writings of the original Salesians, the works of Don Lemoyne and Don Ceria, and the scientific contributions offered by Salesian scholars of the last 70 years. To get a sense of the great work he did, one need only scroll through the footnotes, which document the breadth of his readings and studies.

One of Arthur's main concerns was to make the Don Bosco of history better known to readers of English culture, to make them appreciate his genius and greatness, to show his characteristic traits and also his historical and cultural conditioning.

However, his work has a universal value: it was soon translated into Spanish and Portuguese. The Salesian Major Superiors also wanted an edition in Italian. Therefore, with

Arthur's approval and collaboration, we edited the Italian edition in three large volumes, which are not a simple translation, but a radically revised and updated edition, with extensive historical introductions to the individual volumes.

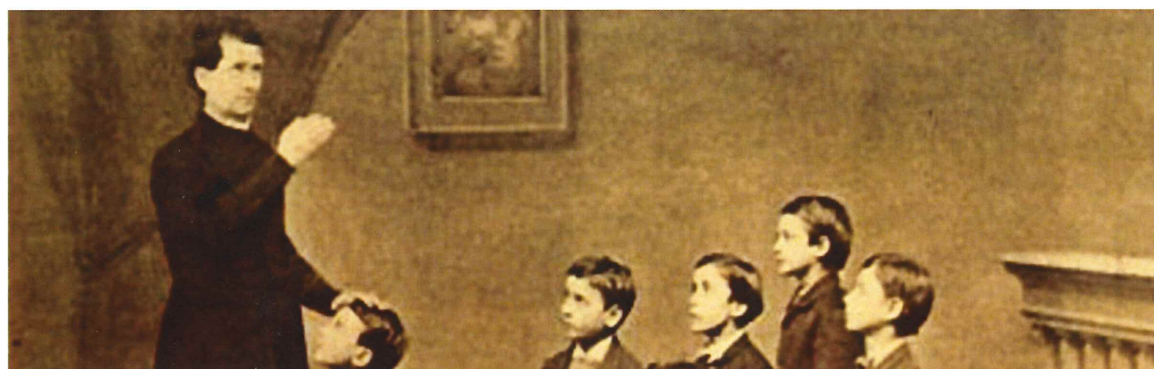
I am very grateful to Arthur for accepting and encouraging this new Italian edition, which highlights the novelty and accuracy of his work.

Working with him has allowed me to know him more deeply, to appreciate his qualities and virtues, and to enjoy his friendship. Arthur showed me his gratitude with great cordiality and Salesian humility, until the last months of his life.

Aldo Giraudo SDB



Fr. Aldo Giraudo, SDB, lectures at the Salesian Pontifical University and leads many pilgrimages to Torino, Italy, the historical center of Don Bosco's life and ministry.

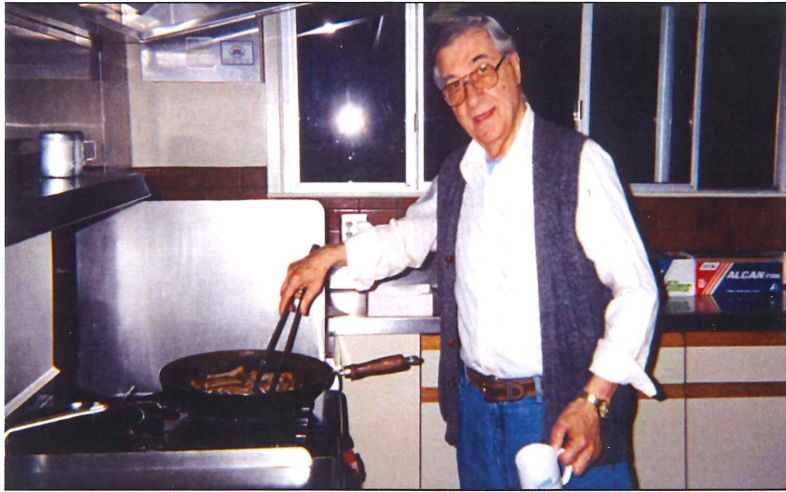


Fr. Arthur with the Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, S.J., bishop of the Oakland Diocese of California.



Fr. Ivo Coehlo, SDB, General Councilor for Salesian Formation met with Fr. Arthur and the Berkeley Salesians to support the ISS.





A very familiar scene at the kitchen in Berkeley, were mornings, Fr. Arthur would go around and ask all those in the dining room, "How would you like your eggs?"

Fr. Arthur was quite the gourmet chef and would prepare elaborate dishes and entrees for various occasions. He was famous for his Duck a l'Orange, his Christmas pudding, and his elaborate quiche masterpieces, to name just a few!



Fr. Jay Horan, SDB of the New Rochelle Province came to California for a personal break and made sure to visit Fr. Armand Oliveri at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in San Francisco along with Fr. Arthur from Berkeley, where Fr. Jay took up residence for a few days. Many memories were shared!

Fr. Armand, at the time of this writing, is going on 102 years of age and still resides at Saints Peter and Paul. Until Fr. Arthur's call to heaven, he was heading for his 99th birthday which would fall on the Feast of St. John Bosco, January 31.



To celebrate Fr. Arthur's 90th birthday, some thirty people gathered at an Italian restaurant in Berkeley. He had friends and relatives from Tennessee, Mississippi, Arizona, and dignitaries from Cal Berkeley as well. On the left side of the adjacent photo, Jenella Mathis came to remember Arthur and the role he played in the healing of her husband. And at the right of the photo, a retired professor of the University of Cal Berkeley, Dorothy Portner came to wish Arthur well and remember their days as colleagues.

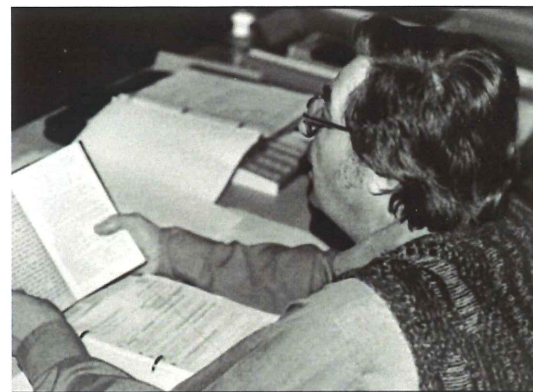
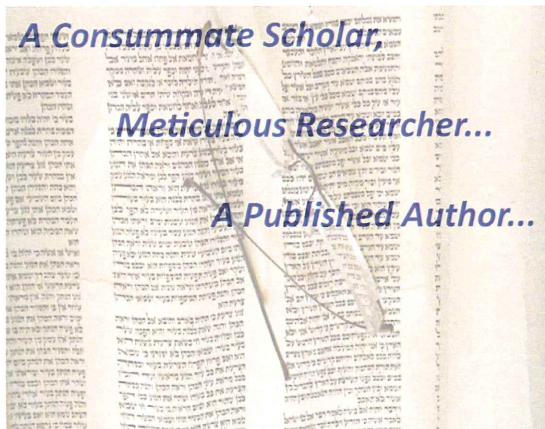
Friends, Family, Colleagues, Confreres...

Good memories, life-long friendships...



Fr. Arthur is welcomed to his new residence at St. John Bosco High School Community in 2018.

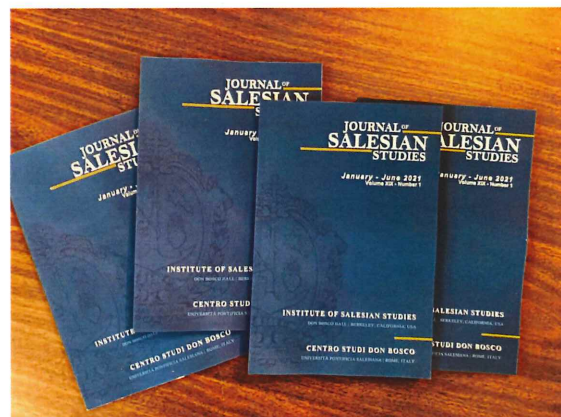
In January of 2018 on the occasion of Fr. Arthur's 95th birthday. Fr. Arthur was visited by Fr. Emmanuel Camilleri, SDB, (left) a visiting professor at the ISS. Next to Fr. Emmanuel is the young, newly ordained Fr. Marcelo Escalante Mendosa, SDB, who had been mentored in Berkeley during Marcelo's diaconate year. From that experience of mentoring the the depth of their friendship, Marcelo wrote and edited a tribute to Fr. Arthur entitle: Arthur Lenti: Memory, Presence and Hope. Fr. Nicholas Reina was the director of the St. John Bosco High School Community at that time.



Fr. Arthur researched tirelessly in Sacred Scriptures, the History and Spirit of St. John Bosco, and was in the middle of some deep research into the life of Blessed Michael Rua, Don Bosco's first successor. He responded to the call to elaborate on work already begun by the late Fr. Francis Desramaut. Research and study were his passion and his gift to the Salesian world.

The Journal of Salesian Studies...
"The Journal of Salesian Studies" began publishing out of the ISS. This peer-review resource is now an international collaboration and continues the tradition of careful research for resourcing Salesian studies and examination of Salesian Spirituality world wide.

At the left is Fr. Arthur in his third story office surrounded by his resources.



The peer-review Journal of Salesian Studies



Fr. Arthur Lenti in a faculty portrait for the ISS

The Community supports with greater love and prayer the confrere who is gravely ill. When the hour comes for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfillment, his brothers help him to enter fully into Christ's paschal mystery.

Death for a Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of the Lord and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph.

The memory of departed confreres unites, "in a love that will not pass away", those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ.

*Constitutions of the Society of St. Francis de Sales,
#54*

