

NAME: Timothy Gerard Wrenn

POSITION: Rector/Animator

POSTING; Manzini

ORGANIZATION: Salesian Manzini Youth Care

NATIOANALITY: Irish



Don Bosco, founder of the Salesians in Turin, was passionate about Education especially in giving Young People, especially the poorest, an opportunity to excel. The Salesian Congregation was anxious to spread it's wings to other parts of the World.

In 1919 the Salesians arrived from Italy to Ireland, to a little place called (Copsewood), Pallaskenry in County Limerick.

The College started off as an Agricultural Centre with the idea of training Young Farmers in the Region and beyond taking in the entire Munster Region. This grew in popularity and continued to expand to a Secondary /High School College. Alongside that it became a studentate for grooming potential Vocations to the Salesian Congregation of which Fr. Pat Ahern, Fr. Larry McDonald had there early Formation.

In 2019, Celebrates One Hundred Years(100) of Presence. Today it consists of 900 Students in the High/Secondary and Agricultural College.

I was privileged in a way to be born only three miles from there in a town called Castletown. It was on the Feast of Dominic Savio, my friend Gerry and I went for a blessing to the College and was presented with a badge of Dominic. What caught our interest was the number of Priests and Brothers we saw actively playing Football, Basketball, Hurling etc. with the Students/Learners. My friend and I said to each other; this is where we'll finish our Secondary schooling. We enjoyed every moment.

I'm Forty Five Years a Salesian. and in 1982 I was Ordained. After two years in Ireland I was given my first Mission to Africa and ended up in Swaziland, Manzini. Guess what!! it was there that I first encountered Fr. Pat Ahern, a Kerryman, He was a great Teacher of Maths as well as Animator of the Community for many years. I joined in with six(6) other Irish Salesians who all came out of the same Alma Mater In Limerick.

I could not have wished for a better start, it was home away from home and with so much experience about me I grew in confidence.

Already the Salesians had a great name in Educating the Local Swazi. Today we have many outstanding Past Pupils who have done extremely well thanks to the wonderful dedication and commitment of the likes of Fr. Pat Ahern and fellow confreres.

I spent seven(7) happy years there before moving on to another Salesian School in Johannesburg. Unfortunately it closed three years later and I landed up in Cape Town getting my first experience in a Salesian Parish as Parish Priest. I found the Pastoral work a lot more challenging than the Classroom scene. I missed the school environment big time.

Like all new experiences we continued to bring the Salesian Ethos and Charism to all Ministries in empowering the Laity.

After my six (6) years I took a Sabbatical and did further studies in Jerusalem and New Mexico only to be landed back as Animator in Lesotho, Maputsoe. This consisted of St Luke's Parish, Primary and High School, Seven Outstations and a Project called the "Twinning of the Kingdoms". This was another Kerry connection of which today has proved to be very successful in empowering young people to generate income from their Arts and Crafts. After my six(6) years I returned to the Cape before my exit back to Ireland for three

years to help out our Salesians working in the Inner City Of Dublin as Parish Priest and Administrator. This was probably the most challenging Pastoral Ministry I had experienced. I was recalled then to Johannesburg to continue our Salesian Youth Ministry(SYM) to strengthen our various Youth Ministries in Southern Africa. Our presences in the Cape Town, Lesotho, Swaziland and Johannesburg. This however only lasted a year before I was appointed as Rector/Animator of Manzini, Swaziland, back to where I started in 1984. This is my second year here and while only one of the Old Guard, Fr. Larry McDonnell, is still alive I treasure the fact that I was privileged to have met Frs. Pat Ahern, Peter Doherty, Pat Flemming, Louis O Dea, Frank Flynn, Charles Schollard. My role here is to oversee the Salesian operations here in Manzini and one of our biggest Project is Manzini Youth Care. This being the month of November we remember them as our Salesian Band plays "When The Saints Go Marching In"

Thanks to what these great Salesians have established we are grateful today to continue the Dream of Don Bosco in Educating and empowering especially Young people who are vulnerable. We are also Blessed to have wonderful Benefactors like Swazi Legacy who continue to be a Tour De Force in keeping the Flag Flying.

It's amazing how God calls each of us and we never know what's going to come next.