



**YMI ST. JOHN BOSCO COUNCIL # 613  
JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER**

**Next Meeting: July 14<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 p.m. Key Business Matter: Elections**

***Please Note: Our next Meeting will be by Teleconference only. We are not permitted to meet in person at St. Cecilia's yet due to Covid-19.***

**To access meeting, please call: 1-888-808-6929 & type in Access Code: 1951709#**  
***(once you report your name as being present on the teleconference, please keep the background noise down or put your phone on mute if not speaking)***

**President's Message**

Brothers & Friends of YMI #613.....As I prepare this final newsletter as the #613 President, I have just been informed by our **Business Manager Tom Fourie** that I am now the **YMI Grand President** (the 3<sup>rd</sup> time that a YMI #613 Brother has assumed this post). I am extremely excited and looking forward to my new role at the helm of the YMI, after spending the prior twelve years serving as both a Grand Council Officer and as Council #613's President. At the same time, I am feeling some angst that the Covid pandemic is hindering my efforts to respond aggressively to the challenges of the organization's declining membership. Like our Council, many YMI Councils have suspended meetings and frankly that is not a good recipe to spark/maintain interest in the YMI organization.

As the incoming YMI Grand President, I intend to continue utilizing leadership skills demonstrated as Council #613's President emphasizing two-way communications, open transparency, and mutual respect, while encouraging the YMI to be actively engaged in programs and activities. As has been the tradition of past Grand Presidents, I have prepared a Grand President's Program that relies on the valuable teachings of our patron saint, **St. John Bosco**. It is entitled "**Following St. John Bosco's Way**" and it covers principles (pillars) that he successfully used to build the Salesian Order. I have attached it to the end of this newsletter and I encourage **ALL** of you to read it so to better understand how I would like to see the YMI move forward in the coming year.

Pro Deo, Pro Patria!

**Council News & Activities:**

**Convention News:** All candidates and all voting matters were approved by the YMI delegates. As it pertains to Council #613, the following voting results are the most significant:

- We now have **(four #613 Brothers as Grand Council Officers** *(each of the following candidates received only Yes votes)*:
  - **Mike Amato – Grand President**
  - **Mike Dimech – Grand Secretary**
  - **Bob Fiorito – Grand Marshall**
  - **Cosmo Amato – Grand Outside Sentinel**

- The State of the Institute Proposal raising the Death Benefit of Benefit Members has passed. The Death Benefit increases from \$1500 to \$2500 for Benefit Members only.
- **Fr. Armand Oliveri** (our former Chaplain) has been issued a YMI Resolution recognizing his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday in March and his long-time relationship with the YMI.
- **Br. Mike Dimech** has been approved for a three-year term on the **Seminarian Education Foundation**.

**YMI #613 Elections:** In response to my prior requests for volunteers in earlier newsletters, we have successfully managed to get candidates to fill each position. Here is the candidate slate for the upcoming YMI #613 elections to be addressed at our next business meeting in July.

<u>Offices</u>	<u>Brothers Who Have Committed to Run for An Office as of 6/25/20</u>
• <b>President:</b>	<b>Bob Fiorito</b>
• <b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:</b>	<b>Joe Sorocco</b>
• <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:</b>	<b>Rod Ordon</b>
• <b>Past President</b>	<b>Mike Amato</b>
• <b>Financial Secretary:</b>	<b>Cosmo Amato</b>
• <b>Recording Secretary:</b>	<b>Mike Dimech</b>
• <b>Marshall:</b>	<b>John Kavanagh</b>
• <b>Sentinel:</b>	<b>Mario Balistreri</b>
• <b>Investment Committee (3 Brothers):</b>	1. <b>John Cleary</b> 2. <b>John Kavanagh</b> 3. <b>Paul Wuerstle</b>
• <b>Executive Committee (5 Brothers):</b>	1. <b>Art Jimenez</b> 2. <b>Bill Pallas</b> 3. <b>John Smith</b> 4. <b>Kevin Roche</b> 5. <b>Steven Goulding</b>

We thank you for volunteering and we wish you the best!

**Grand President Installation:** Please Save the Date: **Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**. We will have a reception for **Br. Michael Amato, our new YMI Grand President**. The reception will be held in the lower Church at St. Cecilia's Parish beginning at 4:00 p.m. Prior to the reception Mass will be held at 3:00 p.m. All YMI Brothers, their wives, girlfriends and YMI widows are invited to this event. It will be great to have many of our YMI brothers in attendance to show our support for Br. Amato. **See the attached flyer for details.**

**Picnic:** Please save the date of **August 16<sup>th</sup>** for the **YMI #613 Picnic**. We are hoping that the Stay-in-Place Covid restrictions can be safely lifted by then, so we are gearing up for our annual summer picnic. As we have in recent years, we have again reserved the **Bayview Shelter in San Bruno's Junipero Serra Park** that day. **See the attached flyer for event info.** Let us all participate in this event and celebrate being together again!

**Birthdays:** Happy Birthday to the following YMI #613 Brothers celebrating birthdays in July:

**Joseph Werblun, Ryan Casey, Rev. Mark Teheny,  
Gus Farrell, Jonathan Cleary, Gerald Kelly**

## YMI #613 Calendar: Upcoming Meetings & Events

*July 14<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Teleconference*

please call: 1-888-808-6929 & type in access code: 1951709#

*Aug 11<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Green Rm (Dinner???: M Delaurenti)*

*Aug 16<sup>th</sup> – YMI Summer Picnic @ Junipero Serra Park*

*Sept 8<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Green Room (Dinner???: K. Roche?)*

*Sept 12<sup>th</sup> – Grand President Reception – St. Cecilia Lower Church*

*Sept 26- YMI Bocce Ball Tourney @ Orange Park*

*Oct 11 – Italian Heritage Parade @ SF's North Beach*

*Oct 13<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Green Room (Dinner???: J. Madrid)*

*Nov 8<sup>th</sup> – Hour of Memory @ SF Italian Athletic Club*

*Nov 10<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Green Room (Dinner: M Amato)*

*Nov ?? – YMI Pasta Bingo*

*Dec 13<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Party @ Dominic's Oyster Point*

*Dec 15<sup>th</sup> – #613 Business Meeting @ Green Room (Dinner: P. Wuerstle)*

## Grand President's Program 2020-2021

### Following St. John Bosco's Way

My YMI Council's patron saint is St. John Bosco. As some of you may be aware, St. John Bosco was an Italian priest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who began his priesthood tending to the many poor families living in the slums of Turin, Italy. Early on as a young priest, St. John Bosco was distressed observing that traditional methods of parish ministry were largely ineffective with young people, as many felt disconnected from the benefits of being a Catholic and had abandoned their faith. As a result, many young men at the time were spending much of their time in jail or living in poverty on the streets. From that point on, St. John Bosco vowed to dedicate his life to the betterment and education of children. To assist his mission, he developed a revolutionary teaching method of his era focused on three basic pillars: Reason, Religion, and Loving Kindness. By applying these three pillars, now known as the "Salesian Preventive System", St. John Bosco successfully built the Salesian order that not only flourished in Turin, Italy, but has grown immensely to serve millions of Catholics in countries all over the world!

Today, we face similar challenges, as experienced by St. John Bosco in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Fewer people today are self-identifying themselves as Catholics and for those that do, many are sadly not attending Mass nor taking the Sacraments. Similarly, the YMI has experienced a steady decline in its membership ranks, as long-term, beloved YMI Brothers have died and we have struggled to persuade Catholic men to join or stay in our fraternal order. As we seek new members to build up the YMI, we are experiencing a similar problem as St. John Bosco encountered and overcame over 150 years ago! Accordingly, we should consider borrowing from the wisdom of St. John Bosco and his "Salesian Preventive System" to help us rebuild the YMI.

#### Reason

For the pillar "reason", the term is defined as a statement offered in explanation or justification. For the YMI, it can refer to the fundamental grounds for the Order's purpose, which is three-fold and consisting of: Faith, Patriotism and Fraternalism.

- Faith – We pledge ourselves to be practicing Catholics and we are active participants supporting our parishes.
- Patriotism – We love our country, respect its laws, and show our public support for America by voting, flying our flags and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at each meeting.
- Fraternalism – As members of the YMI, we extend our hand (*or possibly an elbow or wave during these difficult Covid-19 times*) to each other in Brotherly love and call each other "Brother". Family and family values are important to us, so our families are included in many of our functions.

Moreover, "reason" refers to our Mission, which provides for the mutual aid and good will, the moral, intellectual and social improvement of its members, devotion to the Catholic Church, and loyalty to our country in accordance with its motto: "Pro Deo, Pro Patria – For God, For Country."

St. John Bosco understood that he could not build his ministry if he just preached "reasons" to only those that came through the church doors. As such, he went into the community to meet with people, particularly young men, and offered them a rationale to come to Mass and re-kindle their faith. Similarly, the YMI needs to follow St. John Bosco's example and get out into their respective communities and reach out to wayward Catholic men offering "reasons" (i.e. our purpose and mission) to explain why they would benefit from joining our Order.

A few years back, the YMI Grand Council developed an excellent brochure giving various “reasons” to join the YMI. The brochure is available on our YMI website and all YMI Councils should be printing and distributing these brochures to reach the men in their communities. YMI Brothers can share these brochures: 1) during informal friendly chats with neighbors; 2) to larger groups of men connected to local business or community organizations (e.g., Lions, Elks), or by utilizing modern internet applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. To follow St. John Bosco’s Way, I respectfully ask each YMI Council this year to consider ways to improve their outreach methods to attract new members and the “reasons” utilized as part of this effort.

To support the “reason” pillar further, I would request the YMI Grand Council work on developing and broadcasting a more comprehensive record of our YMI History. At present, our YMI website has only a brief anecdote covering the origin of the YMI Order by the six YMI founders meeting next to a lamp post. There is basically nothing else covering our ensuing 137 years of operation! Consequently, many existing YMI members know way too little about our YMI history and are unable to articulate our organizational roots to non-members.

After discussing this shortcoming with our Business Manager, Br. Tom Fourie looked in the YMI archives and found a Grand Council document entitled in *“Under the Lamp-Post: A History of the Young’s Men’s Institute”*. It was originally published in 1948 and updated 20 years ago when Br. Fourie was Grand President. I have recently reviewed this document and it looks to be a reasonably good effort to chronicle our history, however we need to update it past 1999 and we need to share it with all YMI Brothers. Accordingly, I would request the YMI Grand Council’s Organization Committee to 1) update our History to cover events post-2000 as appropriate and 2) to make it available to all YMI Brothers by posting it on the YMI website.

### **Religion**

Religion refers to our Catholic faith. To St. John Bosco, emphasizing the pillar of “religion” meant encouraging people he met to come to God, which in turn would allow them to find a fullness of meaning, a commitment to serve others, happiness and other benefits from gaining spiritual faith.

Like St. John Bosco, the YMI needs to continue emphasizing religion as a key part of its normal activities. If they are not already, each YMI Council should be working with their local pastor and priests to be prominent as supportive organizations within their parishes. This can be accomplished by becoming active in Sunday Mass celebrations (e.g. handling the readings, presenting the offertory, joining the choir, etc.), by serving as church ushers or on parish committees, or by hosting parish events (breakfasts, dinners, picnics, festivals).

By following St. John Bosco’s way, the YMI also needs to emphasize the “religion” pillar outside our parish church walls in the way it conducts itself in their communities. For instance, YMI Brothers can provide positive examples of our religious faith by helping at local food kitchens, collecting canned goods and used clothes for those in need, and volunteering at our local schools (e.g., traffic guards, recess monitors etc.).

Although I have seen evidence that some YMI Councils already actively support the “religion” pillar, I encourage all YMI Councils to review the ways they are supporting religion in their communities and consider new ways they can build onto this pillar.

### **Loving Kindness**

The pillar of “Loving Kindness” refers to the quality of friendliness. St. John Bosco determined that by using loving kindness as part of his teaching method, it would inspire cooperation and confidence to assist young men get educated. For St. John Bosco, loving kindness required the development of interpersonal relationships, and he often sought to meet young men personally, relate to them empathetically, and maintain ongoing relationships.

Like St. John Bosco, the YMI should apply the pillar of “loving kindness” in its normal operations. We need to be approachable and willing to become mentors to those younger than us, as well as engaging with those men in our communities that are not so young! Some ways we can apply this pillar are as follows:

- We have a terrific outreach program for the young: our YMI Pro Patria Essay Contest. This past year, we awarded \$8,750 in contest prizes to thirty students from three states. While several YMI Councils promoted the contest within their communities, we need to have all YMI Councils promoting this contest by going to their local schools and informing educators of its existence.
- A few YMI Councils, including my own, offer scholarships programs to local schools. Perhaps other YMI Councils might consider setting aside funds to similarly provide YMI scholarships to get our name out there in your communities and among the young people. The YMI Education Foundation “Matching Fund Program” can be a good source of funds for this endeavor.
- Young people often enjoy sports so perhaps we can consider sponsoring youth baseball, soccer, or basketball teams in our respective communities. Additionally, we might consider inviting and sponsoring some young people to participate in our YMI bowling, golf, or bocce ball tournaments.
- Some organizations rely on membership coordinators to bring in new recruits. If they do not already, each YMI Council should designate a person or committee focused on membership outreach, who is tasked with reaching out to men (both young and not so young) in their respective communities to encourage them to come to a YMI meeting or event.

Through the application of all or some of these approaches, we can increase YMI membership in at least two important ways:

1. By welcoming young men over 13 who are attending school into our **Junior YMI Program**, we can build a foundation for the future. Although the Junior YMI program was launched several years ago, I am aware that only YMI #613 is using this program. As several Junior YMI members have subsequently opted to become Benefit Members of YMI #613 after completing school, each YMI Council should work this coming year on programs to recruit Junior YMI and build a base for their Council’s future.
2. By targeting young men, we may also concurrently draw-in their fathers and male relatives to join us. As YMI #613 offers an essay contest and provides scholarships to local schools each year, we have successfully gained new members from these programs, as several of the children’s dads have opted to join my Council!

### **Embracing Change from the Status Quo**

Besides utilizing the above three pillars, it is important to note in conclusion that St. John Bosco was a man, who was not afraid to make changes to the status quo for the betterment of his Salesian Order and the Catholic Church. St. John Bosco realized that when old, traditional ways were failing, it was time to pursue new ways to minister to the people. While there is a comfort in staying with the status quo, the YMI needs to follow St. John Bosco’s way and consider changes where traditional approaches are not working well any longer. With YMI Councils folding and membership levels dropping each year, we need to have the courage to make changes like St. John Bosco did so that our YMI Order can thrive again. Change can lead to positive results as shown by some YMI endeavors below:

- Several years ago, the YMI made several changes to respond to newer technology by relying more on telecommunications and the internet. As a result, we are now handling Grand Council business more efficiently by teleconferencing our Grand Director and Foundation meetings and we are now making YMI information (e.g. newsletters, event info and photos) available more promptly to our members on the YMI website and Facebook page.
- Last year, we significantly changed the Pro Patria Raffle Process and we successfully earned a record high amount of revenues (over \$17,000), easily surpassing prior year sales receipts. From this change, we have the financial means to increase our Pro Patria Essay Contest prize fund next year.
- This past month our Order has had to make a significant change in how it will conduct its Grand Council Sessions, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first time ever, we will conduct the Grand Council Sessions not at a specific location but relying on advanced technology while we shelter in-place. Hopefully, we

can return to normal soon enough, but in the meantime, we may need to consider using Zoom, FaceTime, and other internet-based applications to conduct meetings or communicate with each other.

What other changes can we make together in the coming year to improve our YMI Order? As your Grand President, I look forward to discussing this question with you during my official visits and hearing your ideas. Moreover, I look forward to hearing how you have successfully implemented St John Bosco's three pillars into your operations!

In closing, I leave you with the wise words of President John F. Kennedy, who once said "*Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.*" Brothers let us work together to make appropriate changes and build a strong future for our YMI!

*Yours for God and Country,*

*Mike Amato*

*Mike Amato #613*

*2020-2021 Grand President*

