

Family Garden

Report on activities
January – December
2020



Katarína
Baginová



Editorial

This year, let me preface my editorial by citing my own words from the last year's report:

"It's 23 March 2020 – the first day of our new Slovak government being actively at work and the second week since several activities of our centre needed to become limited. The COVID-19 pandemic is raging all around us. We suspended our popular lectures in the basement of the church on Miletičova Street, there is no marriage preparation going on, educational programmes have been discontinued, and we even stopped seeing clients for individual counselling. Our premises in the Trnávka quarter went quiet. These days, we're not meeting up. With a mask on my face, I leave my house in the morning, get in the car, and then I do what I need to in the office and drive back home. So many things which we considered ordinary and commonplace until very recently are simply not possible right now and as a result, I can often feel various emotions getting ahold of me."

It's 24 March 2021. A year later almost to the day and I find myself pondering what has changed since the time of writing that editorial piece. Last things first: Emotions. The emotions I'm feeling now are vastly different from those I felt a year ago. Even though the working conditions in our Family Garden centre have remained virtually unchanged (it is still quiet on our premises, there are no in-person educational programmes, in-person meetings with clients as well as lectures in basement of the church on Miletičova Street remain suspended, and my commute to and from work looks pretty much the same), I no longer have those feelings of unrest, worry, helplessness or fear which so often used to plague me.

Above all else in these last couple of months, I've been experiencing gratitude, peace, hope, as well as anticipation. It's only now, with the benefit of hindsight that I'm beginning to realize what new and useful things this year has brought:

the number of new, interesting educational courses we've created, the many helpful topics we've developed and offered in our online workshops intended not only for married couples, but also for those still dating. We also had workshops for teachers, sports coaches, and nuns. I'm incredibly grateful for all the new faces who have joined our team – we are delighted and open to welcome more. I really appreciate all your feedback to our efforts; it motivates all of us in Family Garden to improve and do what we do even better, focusing first and foremost on families, because as one of our flyers says, healthy relationships are the basis for happy families.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

And why have we chosen this particular design for our annual report this year? The idea comes from our graphic designer Janka. Not long ago, she wrote to me:

"Many of us have veered off a straight and level path... but this uncertainty pushes us upwards... We're not in the doldrums, we're climbing up. That which is not trembling, cannot be strong..."

And I fully agree with her words.

Who is FG



The Association of Salesian Cooperators (ASC) was founded by St. John Bosco on 9 May 1876 in Turin. Apart from Salesian brothers SDB and Salesian Sisters FMA, the Salesian cooperators represent the third branch of the Salesian family. It is a public association of Catholic believers, both lay people and diocesan priests, dedicated to work with youth and apostolate among the faithful.

The Salesian efforts and activities in Slovakia started to unfold in the year of 1924 following the arrival of the first Slovak Salesians. Today in our country, there are more than 1,000 Salesian cooperators actively working in 29 centres.

Their core mission is the apostolate in their home parishes. Their main focus lies in the human and Christian upbringing of children and youth; however, they also work with the engaged, married couples, and families. Their wish is to serve to all those that need them – each according to their own abilities.

For more information about the ASC centre on the Miletičova street, please see www.miletička.sk/asc



Marián Valábek
spiritual guarantor



Eva Rušinová
coach and lecturer



Monika Skalová
course consultant



Ján Mihálik
consultant



Renáta Mikušová
NFP education coach



Barbora Okružľanská
social network manager



Jana Gavaldá
graphic designer



Martin Ondruš
camera & photography

Our team



Cyriľ Slíž, kňaz,
priest, course consultant



Žofia Baginová
photographer



Patrik Goboňa
sound technician



Marián Kubeš
lecturer, Christian coach



Margita Kubešová
coach & mentor



Miriam Němcová
lecturer & mentor



Peter Ňaňo, priest,
teacher & lecturer



Marek Dráb, obstetrician
& gynaecologist



Radovan Rumanovič
course consultant



Barbora Hudák
social networking editor



Pavol Hudák
social networking editor



Katarína Baginová



Kamil Bagin



Elena Štofírová



She has background in teaching; however, on the initiative of Salesian brothers who came to her in 2012 with an idea to establish a centre for families, she decided to leave the education field behind and to devote herself fully to this endeavour. As the Family Garden director, she works on and coordinates various activities of the centre. In the area of prevention, her job is to develop and teach various educational trainings for youth and married couples, but especially for individuals in helping professions wishing to improve their expert skills. As an ICF-accredited coach, she counsels clients of the centre as well as anybody else who wishes to experience the power of the life-changing dialogue technique. For the past 29 years, she's been living in a sacramental marriage with her husband Kamil, and they are the parents of three adult children and one teenage son, and grandparents to two grandchildren. For more than 30 years, they have also been leading a Bratislava-based children's folklore group named Kremienok. The ensemble, in which she's been playing the role of a choreographer, has been home to more than 800 children mostly from Christian families over the years. Side by side with her husband, she's also been involved in marriage preparation courses and helping married couples that found themselves facing a crisis.



Thanks to his wife Katarína, Kamil has been involved with Family Garden from the very first impulse to establish our centre. At first, he used to participate just as a volunteer, but in March 2019, after quitting his job working for 25 years as a telecommunication company manager, he started working for Family Garden full-time.

His work for Family Garden allows him to use his management skills. At the same time, he also draws on his experience from various educational courses and workshops whose organisation he's been involved in with his wife.

He is an electrotechnical engineer with 25 years of managerial experience. Since 2009, he's been active as a Salesian cooperator. He's been living in a sacramental marriage with his wife Katarína for the past 29 years, and they have four children together and are the proud grandparents to two grandchildren. For 31 years, they've also been leading the Kremienok children's folklore group, him in the role of a manager and her as an artistic director. In addition, for the last 15 years, they've been involved in mentoring married couples, and for more than 10 years, they've been actively helping with marriage preparation courses.



She has been working in Family Garden since 2014. Her role is mainly administrative and organisational, i.e. preparation and distribution of lecture-related flyers, managing orders, invoices, and other financial matters, as well as preparing bookkeeping records for our accountant office and helping out during our training courses.

Together with her husband, they are involved in the life of their four children and grandchildren, while also lending a helping hand in their home parish from time to time.

This way, as a retired person and a Salesian co-operator, she tries to stay active and continue to be of service also in the area of assistance to families.

“Everything that we talked about were real-life experiences which were very helpful to me.”

“I realized the power of influence that we have over our pupils.”

Educational

“I gained deeper knowledge of myself; it was a great start to my consecrated life, a new impulse for my journey.”

“What I appreciate the most was the establishment of a safe and intimate environment, as well as the fact that all of you as teachers are warm people with a kind heart.”

Programmes

“I am a consecrated person, but I’m still also an individual with emotions, afflicted by weaknesses and sins... I’m leaving with the desire to see through all of that, to not separate myself from it, but to try to understand how it all may be interconnected.”

How to take a first step toward a happier consecrated life

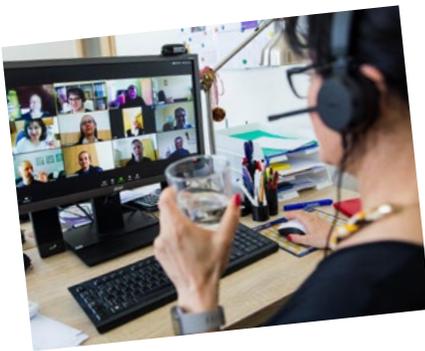
workshop

“The workshop was practical and fitting and addressed the very crux of the problem.”

A pilot workshop titled “How to take a first step towards a happier consecrated life” held on 6 and 7 March 2020 was attended by 21 nuns from various religious congregations (School Sisters, Salesian Sisters, Sisters Consolers, English Ladies (CJ), Sisters Maidservants of Mary of the Immaculate Conception (AM), Sisters of our Lady of Consolation). The participants came from various regions of Slovakia, some even from the Czech republic. Based on their feedback, the workshop and its content met the needs of this target group exceptionally well. Due to the pandemic situation, the re-run of the workshop was conducted between 12 and 16 June online, allowing even sisters from the cities of Kolín, Uzhhorod, and Znojmo to participate. It was an exceptionally blessed time. Our greatest thanks go to our co-author and co-lecturer, a Salesian sister Eva Rušinová, as well as all the other sisters, for the open and genuine community they helped to create.

“I’m glad that even here in Slovakia, we’re starting to broach these topics in down-to-earth conversations with the religious. Doing so is extremely important.”

“I’d recommend the workshop to others – it opened topics which are not often talked about in our communities, and managed to do so in a comprehensible, clear way.”



Christian coach

training course



“Now, I focus more on the person sitting in front of me, wishing to be helpful to them.”

The first three modules of the spring run of the Christian coach training programme worked out differently than we originally planned. We missed the warm handshakes as well as the conversations accompanied by strudel tasting which used to take place during breaks. Despite that, using only our computer screens, we quickly and naturally managed to create a community of people who were getting to know each other and as time passed, were willing to open themselves up more and more, while learning to listen and ask questions differently than they used to. In the last two days, during which the final exams took place, we were able to get to know each other in person as well. 17 new coaches obtained their Christian coaching certificate and set out to accompany those that need them with the help of the coaching dialogue.



“Coaching lifted a burden off my shoulders urging me to always have an answer for everything and everybody. It taught me to listen more and ask questions. The method helps me to place the responsibility for the problem solving on the person bringing the issue up, because now I know that they are able to come up with the best solution how to tackle it.”

Due to anti-pandemic measures, the entire fall run of the Christian coach training programme took place in an online environment. The feedback coming from the 18 participants indicates that despite that, the four months they spent learning how to lead a dialogue in a completely different, new way brought them not only many new skills and experiences but helped them to gain new friendships as well. Among the recent graduates, there are 14 lay people, 2 nuns, a Salesian brother, and a Capuchin – all coming from different corners of Slovakia.



“I was surprised when I realized that a lot of my advice and suggestions to others ended up being misunderstood and were in fact unnecessary. This course helped me in my own spiritual life as well, reminding me of God’s immediate presence...”

educational courses

“The course was top notch, in terms of both content and form. It was interesting, inspirational, and provided interconnection with real life and day-to-day work with children and parents.”

My role of a homeroom teacher

“It’s something one can draw upon for a very long time, information that can be revisited and used in real-life situations.”



A pilot course for educators titled “Me as a homeroom teacher” held on 14 and 15 May was attended by 18 homeroom teachers from church schools in various Slovak cities (Bratislava, Žilina, Trnava, Turzovka, Skalité, Banská Bystrica, and Snina). Its rerun took place on 19 and 20 November 2020 with the participation of six teachers from Považská Bystrica, two teachers from Snina, and one teacher each from Banská Bystrica and Bratislava. Due to anti-pandemic measures, both courses were conducted online. The goal of the course was to enhance and strengthen the role of

the homeroom teacher – to help participants to fulfil their mission as a homeroom teacher and to realize who stands in front of them. To be aware of the importance of developmental stages in children and youth, to get to know their own emotions as well as the emotions of their pupils and learn to work with them, as well as to develop key competences necessary for working with students and their parents. In addition to Kamil and Katarína Bagin, the course was led by Eva Rušinová, FMA and Fr. Peter Naňo, SDB.

Sports coach as an educator and formator of youth

“I was extremely satisfied with the course content. It gave me more than I expected, making me realize the power of influence that we have over our pupils.”



“The course allowed me to brush up on old knowledge and gain new insights on the coaching profession and its mission, which should consist of so much more than just sport performance. In this regard, the course validated my efforts and confirmed that I’m going in the right direction.”

For the leadership of the Domino children and youth community centre in the Bratislava-Trnávka district, the area of pedagogical formation of their coaches is very important. They consider it an essential part of working with children on reaching their sporting goals. Because of that, they approached the Family Garden centre with a request for help which resulted in a series of workshops on interesting topics, such as how to handle a difficult conversation, how to practice self-control as a coach, how to communicate effectively with children and their parents, or how to get ready emotionally for a practice or meeting with parents.

Different ways to strengthen a marriage

“I’m thrilled with what you prepared for us. I longed for something like this – a short, one-day, informative workshop. Now it’s time to keep learning and practicing communication skills at home.”



“Investing in a relationship is a great decision – sacrificing time, money, and your own comfort will definitely pay off...”



workshop

“It motivated us to work on ourselves and especially communicate more often. Thank you for focusing on this particular topic – it’s extremely important and desperately needed.”

In the Family Garden centre, three Saturdays in October and one in December were dedicated to a pilot workshop series titled “Different ways to strengthen a marriage”. More than 30 participants decided to invest their time into learning how to improve their communication skills, better understand each other, and solve their conflicts more effectively. In addition, they learned how to understand and accept the gift of differences between men and women and how to find out what their partner needs in a relationship, including in the area of intimacy and sexuality. Content-wise, the series also addressed the importance of unity in raising children, the skills necessary for appropriate communication with preschool age children as well as teenagers, and conditions needed for enhancing relationships within the extended family.



"I feel that the Family Garden project is a very blessed endeavour. Some time ago, I started to attend your lectures with my fiancé, and each one of them proved to be helpful to us in some way – whether it was a testimony of a married couple, or a talk given by an expert. We attend marriage preparation classes with a priest, but naturally, hearing about these topics from lay persons actually living this vocation is different. The mentoring couple points out important values to live by, as well as things to avoid in a relationship. Thanks to their willingness to share, we are able to grow, and steer clear of mistakes. Keep up the good work – it's awesome what you do for families!"

Lectures



Mr. and Mrs. Klinko



“It’s not about finding someone to blame, but rather, about being able to fulfil our role in a situation we found ourselves in. Jesus doesn’t ask us to do what we’re not able to, but if there is something we can do, we will.”

Excerpt from the testimony
of Mr. and Mrs. Klinko:

“We’ve been married for 19 years. At the beginning, everything seemed rosy. We dreamed of a marriage where there would be no place for quarrels and hurt. After a romantic time of dating, we tied the knot, and it didn’t even cross our minds that there might potentially be harder times waiting for us around the corner. It didn’t take long, and we started facing our first problems. Hand in hand with getting to know each other better, it was becoming increasingly difficult to accept each other just the way

we were. The sad thing was that the more we thought we loved each other, the more we were able to hurt each other. Something was starting to harm our love, but we couldn’t quite put our finger on what it was. Thankfully, God didn’t abandon us and put some amazing people in our path. They brought us to the Marriage Encounter community courses in Banská Bystrica and God started opening our eyes and helping us to fix things that needed to be fixed between us. A crisis doesn’t need to be a catastrophe for a marriage. The difference between marriages which are happy and those which are not isn’t in the number of problems, conflicts, and crises they face, but rather in the way the couples are able to deal with them.”

Coaching dialogue ministry

“I was surprised myself that the solutions I assumed were right were not those that reflected my inner feelings. The ability to understand the way I looked at my issues helped me to approach the solution-seeking process differently, in a way I haven’t originally planned.”

During the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, we conducted a pilot project titled “The ministry of a coaching dialogue”. Its aim was to provide the opportunity for online dialogues with a Christian coach in the time of the coronavirus crisis.

In the first two months of the project duration, spanning from the beginning of June to the end of July, 35 clients approached 30 coaches with a request for help, and subsequently, the coaches completed 47 coaching dialogues in total. Those interested in a coaching dialogue could choose a coach using a reservation portal through which our coaches offered appointments free of charge. Thanks to the online environment,

each client had the opportunity to choose a coach regardless of their geographic location. In terms of the form in which the conversations were conducted, almost half of them were completed over the phone and the rest were done via a video call.

The project offered a little taste of this type of helping ministry. At the same time, it affirmed that this kind of ministry is helpful and needed – and not only in the time of a pandemic. It also confirmed that despite initial apprehensions, people are gaining more courage and trust to give this service a try, finding new hope, determination, and impulse necessary for improving their situation or solving their problem.

“I cleared my mind and organised my thoughts regarding the difficulties I was trying to solve.”



“The conversation brought peace into my heart and soul. It showed me a new direction in my decision-making process, while also giving me the courage I needed.”

Currently, we continue to offer our coaching dialogue ministry but do so in a different manner. On our webpage www.familygarden.sk, a client interested in a coaching dialogue will be redirected to the register of Christian coaches where they will be able to choose a coach based on their preferences. Using the contact information listed in each coach's profile, they then can arrange everything directly with the coach they've chosen.

For the most part in 2020, our marriage preparation courses took place online. Surprisingly, although we were able to see each other only through our computer monitors, it was always a very nice (and most importantly, open) discussion. We hope that for the participating young people, it was a time well spent and would love to see some of them at our other educational programmes intended for newly married couples.

Katarína and Kamil
marriage preparation instructors

In 2020, we managed to offer eight 2-hour long lectures with the opportunity for engaged couples to ask questions. The lectures took place in several parishes: in our home parish on Miletičova street, the one on Mamateyova street, but also in the cities of Dubnica and Poprad, with one lecture prepared for those interested in the Quo Vadis house community. All the lectures were conducted online.

Renáta and Jaroslav
marriage preparation instructors

Engaged couples

The marriage preparation led by Mr. and Mrs. Kotula along with Fr. Jozef Kupka was an awesome time. There were lectures, discussion questions, great conversation starters, and a sense of community (even though it was an online one). For us, all of that was a fulfilling experience pushing us forward.

What spoke to us the most, though, was the testimony of married life, conveyed to us by our instructor couples. Their love which is still vibrant after many years together, their cheerfulness of heart, openness toward others, faith lived out in everyday life and not just based on some kind of a tradition...

They are our role models we'd like to emulate in our own life and relationship. We have faith and pray that we will be able to embark on our marital journey together the best we can.

Dominika a Michal



For us, our marital preparation was an unknown, adventurous, and very fulfilling journey. Through the little windows on our computer screen, we were meeting with the Father, a nice group of young people, as well as our awesome instructors and great people, the Bagins. At each meeting, we addressed important topics together. However, we've done so not in a form of some tiring lecture, but rather through their personal testimony and experience. Thanks to this approach, our talks were original, interesting, and even humorous sometimes.



The talk given as part of our marriage preparation was inspirational and easy to understand. It offered an overview of the issue at hand, explaining the basics of natural family planning.

The life testimony offered by our teaching couple, Mr. and Mrs. Mikuš, was a great encouragement in itself. They have given us not only technical information, but also shared the emotional aspect, explaining how these things might be experienced from both the man's and the woman's perspective. For us as an engaged couple, it was a very inspiring time. And regarding the symptothermal method (STM) – your willingness to accompany us on this journey is something I'm

When talking about each topic, we've been given opportunities to say how we personally see the issue and what we expect. We could share our views and feelings with people who were about to take the same important step in life as us and were able to offer encouragement and be of inspiration to each other.

Since our time was limited and the topics to cover were numerous, sometimes it felt like we were just quickly glancing over the basics of relationship issues. Despite that, while listening to the talks, we were able to take away thoughts and ideas which we considered helpful words of wisdom and guidance for our lives. We were even able to write some of them down – maybe they will make things a bit easier for us when the life gets tough. As the Bagins themselves said, "it's not about how a marriage relationship starts, but about how it ends."

Thank you again for everything; may you enjoy good health and may God bless you abundantly.

Betka and Šimon

wholeheartedly grateful for. You are not only helping me with getting to know my body better and evaluating my cycle but offering a moral support as well. I know I can turn to you if I need to, and you'll understand and help me to deal with whatever difficulties I might have.

Thanks again from the bottom of my heart.
marriage preparation course participants

"I'm 24 and on the recommendation of a friend of mine, I asked Mrs. Mikušová for help on my journey with the STM. I'd like to thank her for her quick response and willingness to explain the rules and lead me during the first few months. Even though we didn't know each other before, I feel very relaxed in her presence and I'm able to openly ask her questions that arise in the process of recording my STM observations."

Fertility clinic



MUDr. Renáta Mikušová

Over the course of 2020, not only have I lectured medical students on the topics of human fertility and natural family planning methods but have also provided a number of individual consultations to engaged and married couples, either in person or via Zoom. I have also evaluated several cycle records recorded using the German (Bonn) variant of the STM, sending them back to the clients via e-mail. I have met with almost 40 clients in total.

Barbora
Okruhľanská



Volunteers

"I believed that lay people could offer a quality proposition in this area and come up with a unique project which, until then, had been missing in Slovakia."

Barbora Okruhľanská has been working with the Family Garden centre since the get-go. It was her who registered the familygarden.sk domain in 2012 and created our Facebook page. She was intensely involved in getting our project off the ground, and used to write the content for our webpage, edit our annual reports, and lead our volunteer team. Today,

she is the mother of two and lives on the other side of Slovakia in the city of Košice, where she runs the PS:Sunrise marketing agency. Over the years, we've stayed in touch and from time to time, she's been helping us with anything we've needed. However, in 2020, our cooperation increased and that's why we decided to ask her a few questions.

What was the reason why you decided to get involved in the Family Garden project right from the start, almost 10 years ago?

I remember the beginnings of the Family Garden project very clearly. I was part of the local council of the Bratislava-Miletičova centre at the time, so there was really no way I could've missed an endeavour like that. I was immediately thrilled with the proposal of Fr. Gabo Maník, the then Salesian provincial. To me, it encompassed everything what I considered important in our mission: the involvement of lay people, cooperation within the Salesian family, focus on families, the preventive system, education, training, professional competence guarantee, tangible help, serving in ministry within the region of Slovakia...

If you recall, what did you expect from such a centre within the Salesian family? Which of these expectations have been met?

I believed that lay people could offer a quality proposition in this area and come up with a unique project which, until then, had been missing in Slovakia, whether we're talking about regular lectures, educational courses, or counselling. I liked the initial idea of bringing various Christian experts on family matters under one roof. How much of that has been met? Definitely more than I expected. Whether I was living in Bratislava or later in Košice, I could see how the centre kept growing, expanding in terms of expertise, and offering more and more services. Each year, while reading the annual report, I felt a sense of pride and gratitude. Over the years, Family Garden has helped many families and individuals, as evidenced by the extensive positive feedback.

What led you to agree to a much more intense cooperation in recent months?

I saw the potential to push the area of communication forward, utilising social networking sites. And since the Family Garden centre

was looking for someone to replace Lucika Mrázková, after giving it some thought, I agreed to take her place, because it was important to me that the communication would continue. Another thing that's equally important to me is to train others in this creative process, which is why I share my knowledge and experience with Pali and Beba, another two members of our team. I basically went back to what I was doing during the first couple of years of the Family Garden's existence, which is creating the content for Facebook and Instagram.

Since I was part of the Family Garden centre in its beginnings, I had no problem to understand what Family Garden was about and what it wanted to communicate to the outside world.

It makes me very happy that our social networking sites are buzzing and some of our posted statuses are reaching more than 40,000 people. I also appreciate the opportunity to work with Katka and Kamil – we always get to mutual understanding and agreement quickly and working with them is a very enriching experience.

What would you like to say to those who will be reading this article?

As a proper marketer, I'd like to ask them to please like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram – that way, they won't miss anything important and interesting. And if anyone would like to join our communication team, we'd welcome them with open arms. Oh, wait, was I supposed to relay some deeply spiritual message? Oh well – maybe next time... :-)



Jana and Ondrej
Gavalda

Janka Gavalda joined the Family Garden media team very soon after its establishment.

She regularly takes care of the graphic design of our printed materials; however, her main job is to create the layout for our annual reports.

And she's pretty good at it, as evidenced by the sheer amount of positive feedback to her graphic work not only here in Slovakia, but also abroad at various conferences, where our graphically appealing annual reports have always been the first informational brochures to disappear off the table. She's been spending truly a lot of time working for our centre, so we decided to ask her a few questions.

Jani, as a successful graphic designer, you're extremely busy. Yet, in the last couple of years, you've always found the time to work on projects for our centre. How come?

Let me ask you a counter question: Why wouldn't I? I consider my work for Family Garden a standard part of my job. I work on designs for Family Garden just as I do on my other projects. In the last few years, the functioning of the centre has become much more professional, which means that we are now able to time the projects well, allowing me to fit them into my work schedule. I think we should start treating our work for the Church, lay church communities, and other civic initiatives as regular "commercial"

projects. It shouldn't be something that's done late at night because, well, I don't get paid for it, so let's just get it over with. Life is about setting priorities...

If I want to do it, I will, and will do it properly how the project requires me to.

What is the message you'd like people to receive when they're looking at the design of our materials? What are the pillars you build on when creating for Family Garden?

Lately, working on the layout for the FG annual report has been a challenge for me, because I've been doing it regularly since 2015. It's not easy to come up with something new and surprising, because the format is always the same and the content has basically the same structure as well. This year, the design is greatly simplified, with focus on just one detail: a 6% incline/decline. You can read more about the reasons behind it in the editorial penned by Katka Baginová, who decided to include the part of my e-mail detailing the concept in her editorial.

Your husband works in the field of graphic design as well. You are both members of the ASC helping the Salesians and their cooperators. Does each of you work independently, or do you work on projects together? Do you always agree on how the end result should look like? Are you able to not stick your noses into each other's business?

Prácu si delíme podľa toho, komu príde požiaWe divide our workload based on who receives the particular e-mail request. Sometimes, the Salesians will contact me, other times, they might write to Ondro, so there is no reason to be envious of each other. Of course, there are times when one might have the availability while the other is busy, so we divide up our projects for the Salesians and ASC depending on deadlines as well as the character of the project (printed materi-

als, web-related content, books, etc.) Sometimes, we consult the results with each other, but we never push our own ideas onto each other. I might point something out if necessary, but the final say on how the end result will look like always lies with the person responsible for that project. I think neither of us feels the need to be pushy.

In the recent years, which of the activities carried out by the FG centre captured your attention the most?

I highly appreciate the project in which FG makes it possible for the boys from the Ukrainian orphanage to come and visit Slovakia. That one is simply awesome.

What would you like to say to all of us in FG (perhaps suggesting what we could be doing better), and what message would you like to give those reading this article?

I think Dominik Savio said it best: "You should know that holiness consists of always being cheerful. We just try to avoid sin, which is the great enemy that robs us of the grace of God and peace of heart, and we try to fulfil our duties exactly."

View from the outside

Peter Timko, SDB Provincial Superior



In today's complex times, marked by the gradual disappearance of previously common values, it's becoming more and more difficult to find people enthusiastic about truly caring for families and marital relationships. Family Garden is an awesome project, not just because it involves such enthusiasts, but also because it responds, in a tangible and professional way, to difficulties families and marriages face nowadays. Personally, it makes me very happy that this beautiful endeavor is firmly rooted in Christian faith and carries the creative stamp of the Salesian charisma.

Monika Skalová, FMA Provincial Superior



Each of us needs someone who will take our hand and lead us through a certain period in life, or accompany us on the journey of personal, relational, or professional growth. And that's precisely what Family Garden is all about. It offers helping hand, standing side by side with people, and being able to cope with everything it entails. It focuses not on the problem, but rather on the opportunities, on the beauty of life, and ways to make things happen. The people working at the centre rely on the top-quality resources – those coming from God – while also offering their own, human, creative, and inspirational competences. And on top of that, they also enjoy and love what they do, which is something intrinsically Salesian and extremely beautiful.

Andrej Havlík, member of the ASC provincial council for family pastoral care



When thinking about FG, the first words that come to mind are professionalism, objectivity, currentness, and practical experience... as well as sensitivity to its clients' needs. And if all of these qualities zero in on helping married couples and families, which is the primary goal of the FG centre, FG becomes an obvious choice for those longing for a healthy marriage and family.

I wish you to be able to keep offering new programmes as dynamically as you've been doing so far. May all of us working in ASC succeed in bringing intensive, understanding, and life-giving help to engaged couples and young families.

2020

January

We're very grateful that the Salesian brothers from the Trnávka community are willing to come to bless our premises every year. This year, we welcomed Fr. Cyril Slíž. Having our workplace blessed sure makes our work easier!



February

On 11 February, a moderated conference titled Solutions for families facing a crisis took place in the Benedict XVI.'s lecture hall on Kapitulska street in Bratislava. The conference, organised by the Conference of Slovak Bishops, was a continuation of the successful events of 2017 and 2018 focused on the best interests of children, as well as on forgiveness and reconciliation as the preventive measures against family breakdowns. The event aimed to present successful projects which bring solutions to various difficult family situations.

Our Family Garden centre was represented at the conference as well. Kamil Bagin, the project manager of Family Garden, received an invitation to participate in the afternoon panel discussion together with Róbert Slamka of the Misia možná (Mission possible) project, Fr. Peter Jakub of the Sigord family centre, and Sr. Silvia Zábavová, CJ who presented her missionary work in the village of Jarovnice.





At the end of February, our outside consultant and co-lecturer of various educational courses, Salesian sister Eva Rušinová, gave a talk during a two-day meeting of bishops, diocesan delegates, lay people, and representatives of various religious communities and monastic orders, which took place in the city of Nimnica. The topic of the lecture was Youth pastoral ministry and Christian coaching.

March

In March, we welcomed dear visitors to our centre – the boys from the orphanage in the Ukrainian city of Pokrov.



April

In April, FG offered three webinars, bringing together more than 40 Christian coaches who wished to gain new knowledge, share their experiences and reflect on how we could be most helpful at the time of emerging pandemic.



May

At the beginning of May, Katka and Kamil Bagin accepted an invitation to participate in a Facebook livestream event titled Čajovňa live (Tea Shop Live). They presented the Family Garden centre and talked about its goals, detailing what it has to offer to young people and families and touching on how the centre has been functioning during the coronavirus pandemic.

During the first days of May, another one of our annual reports came into being. Here, the first grandchild of the Bagins, Jurko, now a whole year older, flips through its pages sitting in the exact same armchair as the year before.



June

In June, a TV editor of the Lux Television Network visited our centre to record a piece about the Coaching Dialogue Ministry project we launched at that time. Almost 40 Christian coaches, alumni of our Christian coaching training programme, joined forces and decided to offer their skills and time with the goal to be closer to their fellow humans. They wanted to lend them a helping hand at the time when many of them felt stressed, anxious, lonely, and worried about losing their job or their relationship. Quite a few couldn't handle the home office challenges anymore or faced the need to make a decision on what to do next but didn't know how. The project was open to all interested individuals regardless of their faith affiliation.



September



Thanks to a grant received from the Ružinov city district, we were able to buy and install a new sound system in the lecturing premises of our centre in September. The purchase included an amplifier, a mixing console, wireless microphones, a speaker, and a mobile audio rack, all of which will help us to enhance the quality of our educational events.

Many thanks go to Fr. Cyril Slíž and Pavol Gostič for helping us with the installation.

October



At the beginning of October, the Bagins were invited to talk on the Postoj TV show where they answered the host's questions about a marital relationship between spouses. As part of their conversation, we could hear the following sentence which has later become the title of a show with almost 3,000 views: "A marital crisis is not an impulse for a divorce; it simply shows us what we need to work on."

Find out more here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f40_ofllroc



November

On Monday, 23.11.2020, the Bagins appeared on a regular TV show of the LUX TV titled *V Samárii pri studni* (At the well in Samaria). Together with the host Ľuba Oravcová, they discussed the topic of Christian solutions to a crisis. During the 80-minute-long show, they presented several options, how Family Garden can be of assistance in this area (sessions with a Christian coach – Coaching dialogue ministry, preventive measures in the form of educational courses for married people, teachers, the religious, or sports coaches). Last but not least, the centre also offers lectures and testimonies of married couples which take place in the basement of the church on Miletičova street.



On one early evening in November, the Salesian provincial superior, Fr. Peter Timko came to visit us in Family Garden. He was keenly interested in our endeavours and wanted to know in detail all about our activities. It was a great joy to be able to spend this time with him and we look forward to continuing our cooperation.

December



On 4 December, the Bagins were invited to participate in an evening youth mass in the church of the Trnávka city district. Their appearance as part of the holy mass was aimed to be an impulse for joint reflection on our relationships: how much time we invest in them, how to foster them, and which of our relationships are truly important.

Ako v rodine dobre prežiť dni voľna?

Tipy od Baginvcov z FAMILY GARDEN
Katica a Kamil sú rodičia štyroch detí a starí rodičia dvoch vnúčat.

- Čítajte deťom z knihy, aj keď už čítať dokážu - vtedy vedia, že im už čítať nemusíte, ale chcete. U nás bolo najviac obľúbené veľerné ockovo čítanie príbehov z obrázkovej Biblie.
- Vedome sa rozhodnite „strácať“ čas hraním spoločne ako celá rodina. V našej rodine za posledné roky najviac „fúcia“ spoločenské hry Thébey, Qwirkle, Mexický vlak či Azul... kto nás pozná, vie, koľko turnajov máme v rodine rozohraných.
- Pozrite si s deťmi filmy, ktoré sú hodnotné a môžu ich niečomu naučiť. V istom veku sme deťom ponúkli s našim dospeláckym dovysvetovaním Peľišky, alebo napr. Le Concert.
- Uchovávajte si svoje vlastné rodinné tradície. My sme folkloristi, preto nás z nášho bytu počul počas Vianoc hrať a spievať koledy – najradšej máme tie z Terchovej.
- „Oprášte“ si svoje spomienky. U nás si počas Vianoc zvykneme spoločne pozrieť staré rodinné fotky či pustiť staré videá (naša svadba spreď takmer tridsiatich rokov bývala často zdrojom poriadnej zábery).
- Navštívte virtuálne svojich príbuzných. Uvedomujeme si, že sa to v tieto dni nedá zrealizovať osobne, ale nič nám nebráni navštíviť ich virtuálne – pripíť si, dať si koláčiky a porozprávať sa cez videovor.
- Nenechajte vaše deti „zavrieť“ sa vo svojich izbách. Naše deti boli vždy súčasťou diania v domácnosti. Nakupovali, spoločne s nami varili, piekli či upratovali. Nebolo možné len tak prísť „na hotové“ – pri tomto všetkom sa dá veľmi dobre pokecať.
- Skúste aj napätejšie situácie „osládať“ na humor. V našej rodine je humor takmer každodenným „vitaminom“ do našich vzťahov. Aj don Bosco hovoril: „Diabol má strach z radostného človeka.“
- Zaujímajte sa o to, čo prežíva váš manžel, vaša manželka – naplánujte si rozhovor, v ktorom sa viac pýtajte, viac počúvajte, menej hovorte. V dňoch, keď trávime spolu ako rodina dlhší čas spolu, vedome podnecujeme témy aj u dospievajúcich detí, o ktorých sa s nimi môžeme ako rodičia pinohodnotne a s rešpektom zhovárať.

Podme sa denne aspoň za jednu vec spoločne modliť, aspoň na jednu vec sa denne vedome tešiť, aspoň za jednu vec denne byť vďační a aspoň na jednu vec denne prestať šomrať.

In December, we usually spend much more time with our families. This year, things looked different. That's why we decided to share some tips on our Facebook page on how to spend this special time at home with our loved ones. The idea was met with a huge response and the post had the most shares we've ever had on Facebook page.



Our plans

- To create and deliver new educational courses for dating couples and individuals (boys/girls) to help them on their personal growth journey while they are building a relationship, getting ready for marriage, or during the first few years of married life
- To organise projects in the area of education within the Salesian family (SDB, FMA, ASC)
- To create and implement new educational courses for those mentoring youth (married/engaged couples and individuals) aimed at acquiring new skills and enhancing this type of ministry
- To gather new funding sources in order to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the centre
- To expand our team by recruiting new outside collaborators, volunteers, or interns

How we've managed our resources

Expenses

Other services	86 768,21 €
Total purchases of goods	6 492,06 €
Wages	2 774,30 €
Presentation costs	40,52 €
Statutory social and health Insurance	909,89 €
Energy costs	2 298,48 €
Other expenses	60,00 €
Other taxes and charges	212,50 €
TOTAL EXPENSES	99 555,96 €

Revenue

Grants	46 346,54 €
Contributions from natural persons	42 593,00 €
Gifts	6 392,10 €
Voluntary contribution of tax paid	450,97 €
TOTAL REVENUE	95 782,61 €

OVERALL ECONOMIC RESULT - 3 773,35 €



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