



# acts

of the general council

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year CV

january-june 2023

**N. 439**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Sede Centrale  
Salesiana  
Roma

# acts

## of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St John Bosco

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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STRENNA 2023  
of the Rector Major  
Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime

**AS YEAST  
IN TODAY'S HUMAN FAMILY**

The lay dimension  
of the Family of Don Bosco

Turin, 20 December 2022

**Introduction**

On the occasion of the Salesian Family World Advisory Council meeting held in May 2022 in Valdocco, Turin, I was asked to explore the theme of the lay dimension of the Salesian Family through the Strenna for 2023: a family that seeks to be always faithful to the Lord in Don Bosco's "footsteps". This comment is intended to respond to this request.

First of all, I would like to remind you that the Strenna 2023 is aimed at **two target groups**.

The first are teenagers and other young people in all the presences of Don Bosco's Family around the world – as the first "beneficiaries" of the Salesian mission. In fact, from the outset they have been in Salesian houses and at the centre of the attention of any group in our family and they must be able to know – as Christians or even as believers of other religions – the strength of this message of the Lord: "be salt of the earth and light of the world", *be the yeast in today's human family*. It is a very beautiful commitment, a beautiful way of living one's vocation; and, at the same time it is a valuable challenge addressed

to us educators who have the task of accompanying young people on their journey of life, so that it may be lived in the name of commitment and responsibility, in the search for fraternity and justice for each and every one.

At the same time, the Strenna is addressed to all the groups of the Salesian Family, invited to rediscover (or to discover) the *lay dimension* proper to our family and the vocational complementarity that exists and that must always exist among us.

In the light of what most characterises our pedagogy and our spirituality, we intend to help adolescents and other young people especially to discover that each of them can be like the leaven that Jesus speaks of, like that good yeast that helps the "bread" of the *human family* to grow and become bigger and tastier. And each of them can be a true pro-active agent, because, in their own way, they are "a mission on this earth."<sup>1</sup>

For *Don Bosco's Family*, this is a message that strongly urges it to rediscover its lay dimension. In fact, it is a family where the majority of the members are lay people: men and women of many nations and distributed across all continents. This variety that distinguishes us is already a gift in itself and is a responsibility that we cannot shirk. Being so rich in cultures and so widely connected and present in the world is the fruit of the history of the mission and charism in which we were generated and which are a gift of the Spirit.

Being *together* as a people of God (*laós* = people, hence the Italian word 'laico' and the English 'lay', that is, a member of the people) for the good of young people from the East to the West of the globe, from the South to the North, is in full harmony with what the Church has been insistently demanding for a long time, and it is what our fragmented world needs more and more.

<sup>1</sup> *EG*, 273; *ChV*, 25.

As *consecrated men and women in the Salesian Family*, we are likewise invited to be “leaven in the dough of the bread of humanity” and to live with one another, allowing ourselves to be enriched by the evangelical secularity of so many brothers and sisters. Indeed, we share most of our days with them. Therefore, secularity is already in our DNA as consecrated Salesian men and women, because we were generated in the family which Don Bosco gave life to in the first Oratory and which, from its origins, was made up of consecrated and lay people. We were born with this intense closeness and sharing between states of life and vocations. In short and to put it succinctly: *we are called as a Family to give of ourselves and to complete each other.*

## 1. The yeast of the Kingdom

*And again [Jesus] said:  
“To what should I compare the kingdom of God?  
It is like yeast that a woman took  
and mixed in with three measures of flour  
until all of it was leavened.” (Lk 13:20-21)*

Yeast goes to work silently. Leavening takes place in silence, just like the work of God’s kingdom; it works “from within”.

And indeed, who has been able to hear the yeast as it goes to work on the flour and dough it has been mixed in with while it is leavening it all? This image makes it possible to understand how God’s Kingdom acts. The Apostle Paul presents the kingdom by recalling the essentials: “For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (*Rom 14:17*). This is the inner and invisible action of the Spirit; it is yeast placed in the heart. And just like yeast, whose activity takes place through contact, so does the Gospel.

The parable of the yeast, chosen as the theme of the Strenna 2023, is a parable of great evangelical wisdom and pedagogical and educational relevance, expressing the nature of the kingdom of God that Jesus lived and taught.

There are various possible interpretations and emphases. My choice of interpretation for this year's Strenna is precisely to present yeast as an image and symbol of the fruitfulness and growth of the kingdom of God. It is a kingdom in the hearts of people, which fertilises the richness of the gift of the call to life, the vocation where God has planted us, directing the mission of the laity and of the entire Family of Don Bosco throughout the world.

“A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough” (*Gal 5: 9*). It is surprising how a small quantity of flour doubles or triples in size once a small amount of yeast is added. The Lord tells us that *the Kingdom of God is like the yeast* with which flour (dough) is leavened when making bread. Yeast, as Jesus emphasises, is not the largest element in terms of quantity. To the contrary, very little of it is used. but what distinguishes it is that it is ***the only living ingredient*** and because it is alive it has the *ability to influence, condition and transform the whole batch of dough*.

We can say, therefore, that the Kingdom of God is

“A humanly small and seemingly irrelevant reality. To become a part of it, one must be poor of heart; not trusting in their own abilities, but in the power of the love of God; not acting to be important in the eyes of the world, but precious in the eyes of God who prefers the simple and the humble. Certainly God's kingdom requires our cooperation, but it is above all the initiative and gift of the Lord. Our weak effort, seemingly small before the complexity of the problems of the world, when integrated with God's effort, fears no difficulty. The victory of the Lord is certain: his love will make every seed of goodness present on the ground sprout and grow. This opens us up to trust and hope, despite the tragedies, the injustices, the sufferings that we encounter. The seed of goodness and peace sprouts and develops, because the merciful love of God makes it ripen.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> FRANCIS, *Angelus*, Rome 14 June 2015.

## 2. The Kingdom of God continues to grow in our world, amidst light and shadow

In the Gospel, the Kingdom comes with Jesus himself: it is his presence, his word – he, the Word made flesh. It is his way of living with people, mingling with people of all social backgrounds, among whom he prefers those whom others exclude. There is a passage from the Gospel according to Matthew that opens a window on the way of being the Kingdom of God as lived by Jesus.

*But the Pharisees went out and conspired  
against him, how to destroy him.  
When Jesus became aware of this, he departed.  
Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and  
he ordered them not to make him known.  
This was to fulfil what had been spoken  
through the prophet Isaiah:  
“Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,  
my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.  
I will put my spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.  
He will not wrangle or cry aloud,  
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.  
He will not break a bruised reed  
or quench a smouldering wick  
until he brings justice to victory.  
And in his name the Gentiles will hope” (Mt 12: 14-21).*

Here, it is Jesus himself who works as leaven among the most ordinary people, among the poor and the sick in need of healing.

“And he cured all of them”: this is the ‘lay’ face of Jesus amid the *laos*, the people, where no distinction is made between social class or origins. They all seem to be united by poverty and the need for help – a vulnerability that is not foreign to him as the first verses show where the open hostility of the Pharisees is spoken of: a warning sign of the cross that is approaching and where his becoming poor to enrich us will reach full completion (cf. 2 Cor 8: 9).

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (*Mk 1: 15*). This is found 122 times in the Gospel and 90 times on Jesus’ lips. As the great theologian Karl Rahner has expressed so many times, it is clear that the centre of Jesus’ preaching is the kingdom of God. Jesus lived the Kingdom fully, demonstrating God’s unconditional love for the least by deeds, and his lifestyle was adopted by the Twelve through osmosis and continued in the early Church: “the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these.” (*Jn 14: 12*)

Even today we recognise that so much good is done and that it grows at all latitudes in this Kingdom under construction. And we likewise recognise that there is so much sorrow and pain: sorrow and pain that is the direct consequence of our way of being and acting as a *human family*.

We are called to open our eyes and hearts to God’s way of acting that establishes his Kingdom in his way. It is by attuning ourselves to his way of being and acting that we collaborate with him, as workers in his vineyard. Otherwise it ceases to be “of God” and becomes only our work.

The universal openness that characterises us as a Salesian Family is in full harmony with the Gospel of the Kingdom. The proximity to so many and diverse human communities in about 75% of the countries of the world is already in itself a formidable potential for unity and mission. More than 99% of the Church is made up of lay people. Let us imagine how the proportion increases if we consider and embrace the entire *human family*: the laity are the dough as well as the yeast of the Kingdom. As St John Paul II wrote more than 30 years ago, in this vast world “the mission is only at the beginning.”<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes our human contribution or our little effort may seem insignificant, but they are always precious before God. We

<sup>3</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio*, Rome, 7 December 1990, no. 40.

must not and cannot measure the effectiveness or results of our efforts by placing the value on how much we invest in them, the effort required of us, because the ultimate reason and motive for everything is God. Let us not lose ourselves in excuses that paralyse the mission and construction of the Kingdom. Even for Don Bosco the best could be the enemy of the good: it is not necessary to wait for ideal circumstances to take the first step. Being aware of our limitations, free from sterile triumphalism and self-reference, and at the same time full of trust, confident that “even the most callous [boys] have a soft spot” (*BM* V, 237): this is the style of the Kingdom lived according to the Salesian charism.

Looking at reality with God’s “eyes” and “heart”, we will understand that smallness and humility do not mean weakness and inertia. There is little we can do in the face of much that is required of us. However, it is never “not enough” or irrelevant, because it is God who gives it growth. It is God’s strength that comes to our aid. And it is God who ultimately accompanies our commitment, our efforts, our being poor yeast in the dough. Provided we do all we can and always in his name.

### **3. The *human family* needs responsible sons and daughters**

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus begins *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council. In three years’ time we will remember the 60th anniversary of its promulgation.<sup>5</sup> It has marked and continues to mark the horizon within which the Church is called to move: a panorama so familiar to those in the Church and in the world who carry out a mission like that of Don Bosco, where

<sup>4</sup> *GS*, 1.

youthful vitality and compassion for those who are poor and suffering are always present.

It is an invitation to feel solidarity and enter without fear in this time that we are given to live, with challenges that seem to grow more and more in intensity, that are increasingly global and where the first to be touched, often tragically, are the youngest cohorts of the population.

*It is an encouragement to discover the meaning of our existence* in the awareness that my life is never isolated from everyone else's. The "I" and the "we" can only exist and live well together. The parable of the yeast and the proposal of this Strenna help us to attune ourselves to the evolution, over time, of the processes that shape human history. The yeast added to the dough needs its own time to ferment; and we too have a responsibility and a commitment in building this human family so that the world may be more livable, more just, more fraternal.

We know how much good we are surrounded by, but also how much suffering, injustice and pain still grips the world in which we live, as I have already said. Pope Francis reminds us of this, when he says:

"Each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realised each day. It is not possible to settle for what was achieved in the past and complacently enjoy it, as if we could somehow disregard the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations that cry out for our attention."<sup>6</sup>

The cry of the poor is growing, the majority of whom are children, teenagers and young adults: we face challenges that are as widespread as they are close to those we find at the beginning of

<sup>5</sup> The Constitution was promulgated on the occasion of the celebration of Vespers for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on 7 December 1965.

<sup>6</sup> FRANCIS, *Meeting with the authorities, civil society and the Diplomatic Corps*. Santiago de Chile (16 January 2018), quoted in *Fratelli tutti*, 11.

our mission. We are made for this time no less than Don Bosco was for his. We strongly feel the appeal that comes from the *human family* of which we are a part as individuals and as a community; a family marked and wounded by the pressing need for justice and dignity for the least and those cast aside:<sup>7</sup> in need of peace and fraternity<sup>8</sup>; in need of care for our common home.<sup>9</sup>

No less strong and radical, in other words at the root of every other yearning, are the need for truth<sup>10</sup> and the need for God.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with this reality, we must be very conscious of the fact that we cannot postpone until tomorrow the good we can and must do today. We are called to be yeast that transforms the *human family* from within. It is a fundamental mandate and coincides with our own life, with our being human: no one can escape it or consider themselves excluded from it.

Therefore, as members of Don Bosco's Family and inspired by the Gospel dynamic of the yeast, we intend to deepen and recognise *the richness of being part of this human and Salesian Family where so many in this Family are laymen and laywomen, and* where as consecrated persons we must enrich ourselves with this complementarity.<sup>12</sup> Being *lay* is a state of life, a vocation that so overwhelmingly characterises all the presences in the world that identify in various ways with, or are attuned to, Don Bosco's Family. Grateful for this, and as an authentic and united family, we seek to make the most, in our various cultures and societies, of the gift of their lives, the strength of their faith, the beauty of their family, their life and work experience, and their talents in interpreting and living the charism and mission of Don Bosco for the youth and the world of today.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *FT*, 15-17; 18-21; 29-31; 69-71; 80-83; 124-127; 234.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *FT* 88-111; 216-221; *ChV* 163-167.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. all of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *LF* 23-25; *FT* 226-227.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *LF* 1-7; 35; 50-51; 58-60.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J.E. VECCHI, *The Salesian Family turns twenty-five*, in M. BAY (EDITED BY), *Passionate educators experienced and consecrated for young people. Lettere circolari ai Salesiani di don Juan E. Vecchi*, LAS, Rome 2013, 137.

#### **4. The layperson: a Christian who “sanctifies the world from within”**

This is how things are: the lay person in the Church and in the Salesian Family is and will increasingly be a committed Christian who “sanctifies the world from within.”

A correct and attentive look at the ecclesiology proposed by the Second Vatican Council allows us to declare that today, especially as Christians, we cannot accept (much less encourage) a dualism between the sacred and the profane in the reality of a world that was created by God. Surely this dualistic drift occurred at a time when the legitimate autonomy of “secular things”, as opposed to “sacred” or religious things, was not adequately understood.

Since the origins of Christianity and especially since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has clearly recognised the relationship of Christians with the world in which they live; even in a society where being a Christian was and is something marginal.

A splendid description of the Christian in the world is offered in the “Letter to Diognetus” (2nd century AD) – in my opinion a beautiful work of ancient Christian literature:

“For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines.

“But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. they dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. [...]

To sum up all in one word – what the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world [...].”<sup>13</sup>

It is a magnificent and very useful text to understand the Christian secularism that we intend to present and that we have indicated in the title of the Strenna with the “lay dimension” of Christian life and of our Salesian Family.

Today, the Salesian Family of Don Bosco is called to live in the world as leaven, co-operating, starting from its condition as believers, in the construction of a better world wherever we are, regardless of nation, culture and religion. The Church has given a name to this broad field of action: the secular nature of the vocation of the laity.

“What specifically characterises the laity is their secular nature [...] The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Letter to Diognetus* (Chap. 5-6; Funk 1, 317-321).

<sup>14</sup> *LG*, 31. The Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (1988), sums up very well that it is the task of all the baptised, albeit in different ways, to be yeast in the world: “The images taken from the gospel of salt, light and leaven, although indiscriminately applicable to all Jesus’ disciples, are specifically

And it is no less true that the condition of the lay faithful is common to all, and that we all share responsibility for the Kingdom.

“Theologically, the secular nature of the whole Church is understood from the meaning of the church-world relationship, and from the common priesthood, prophecy and kingly dimension; every baptised person is a member of a Church that must serve the world to make God’s salvific will and his kingdom present, even if each baptised person exercises or develops this secularity in a particular way, so that there is a diversity of ministries and functions and, to a certain extent, of ‘presence and situation’ in the world, history and society.”<sup>15</sup>

It is important to understand what this “Christian style” consists of as a way of being present in society, in line with the Second Vatican Council:<sup>16</sup> the way forward for evangelisation and the missionary activity of the Church in a society in which religion can no longer be taken for granted as if it were something obvious and always present.

Recognising the “autonomy of the profane” as a legitimate aspect of secularity, theology is concerned with distinguishing between the autonomy of profane tasks and the kingdom of the religious, with the legitimate right to the coexistence of both realities. In other words, it highlights the legitimate aspect of secularity, which is very different from “secularism” linked to a radical secularisation that is the enemy of all that is religious. Religion in its various “creeds” has every right to exist and to have a “citizenship card”. The Second Vatican Council is decisive in this regard:

applied to the lay faithful. They are particularly meaningful images because they speak not only of the deep involvement and the full participation of the lay faithful in the affairs of the earth, the world and the human community, but also and above all, they tell of the radical newness and unique character of an involvement and participation which has as its purpose the spreading of the Gospel that brings salvation.” (Cf. *ChL* 15).

<sup>15</sup> R. BERZOSA, «¿Una teología y espiritualidad laical?», *Revista Misión Abierta*, ([mercaba.org/fichas/laico](http://mercaba.org/fichas/laico)).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. C. THEOBALD, *La fede nell’attuale contesto europeo. Cristianesimo come stile*, Queriniana, Brescia 2021, 96-146.

“Now many of our contemporaries seem to fear that a closer bond between human activity and religion will work against the independence of men, of societies, or of the sciences.

“If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy. Such is not merely required by modern man, but harmonizes also with the will of the Creator (...)

“Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are sometimes found too among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science (...) But if the expression, the independence of temporal affairs, is taken to mean that created things do not depend on God, and that man can use them without any reference to their Creator, anyone who acknowledges God will see how false such a meaning is. For without the Creator the creature would disappear.”<sup>17</sup>

Christian anthropology must seek today, as in the past, to translate the values and the message of salvation transmitted by the Gospel into the language of the different societies and cultures of the world. It is a question of harmonising the legitimate autonomy of man with the validity, authenticity and coherence of the Christian faith. This is the challenge for the believer, for the Christian faithful and for us in our mission as the Family of Don Bosco: respect for everyone, but fear and shame because of our condition as believers – never and with no one!

The Church, through the voice of the Second Vatican Council, reminds us that it is a grave error to separate daily life from the life of faith.

“They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation.

“Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge them-

<sup>17</sup> *GS*, 36.

selves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life.

“This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.”<sup>18</sup>

It is about living as Christians in a world that will not be better without the little leaven that Christianity brings to the world created by God. It is from humility, but also from the conviction of the value of our faith, in dialogue with different societies and cultures, that we can contribute to improving the lives of the people around us, renouncing any logic of proselytism or imposition. To put it in the words of a magnificent pastor, and a man of reflection capable of dialogue with culture, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini: “Wielding a belief, whether scientific, philosophical or theological, to make ends meet by imposing a solution, is a painful premise for an ideology and a source of violence.”<sup>19</sup> But it is also not acceptable for the Christian of all times – and especially today – to practise a comfortable kind of irenics or “do-goodism” that reduces coherence, witness and personal and community authenticity.

And, just as yeast in the dough goes almost completely unnoticed, so does our collaboration in building the Church and a more human, more just society and one that is more in accordance with the will of God, ask us to consider that it is more important to do good than it is to have the good that is done attributed to us. The most important thing will always be to contribute to the good of society and the world, even “without copyright”, without confusing effective action with being at the centre of attention, also recognising that the good done by others is at least as good as ours. If we are not convinced, let us once more read the passage of the Gospel in which the Lord corrects his disciples for having tried to stop the good that others did, even if they were not from “their group”.

<sup>18</sup> GS, 43.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. C. M. MARTINI, *Los movimientos en la Iglesia*, LEV, 1999, p. 156 (our translation in English).

We must practise interpreting reality as believers who include others, promote dialogue with others, with culture, the media, with intellectuals and with those who think differently and also in opposition to us. These are the virtuous habits that our way of being in the world requires, the “Christian and Salesian style” that we can bring to an understanding of the world and things.

This style will allow us to weave relationships with other consecrated persons, other ordained ministers, other lay faithful, other Christians and with other men and women of other religions. It seems that this is a good way to “work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.”<sup>20</sup> A way of doing things that puts us in harmony with “the universal call to holiness in the Church.”<sup>21</sup> And since the Church is involved in the world in the twofold transcendent and immanent dimension, every Christian must be a sign of the Kingdom of God already present in human history. If piety and devotion, the life of prayer and the sacramental life underline the transcendent profile of this holiness, the social commitment to justice and human brotherhood underlines, for us, the immanent Christian dimension. Like Don Bosco, we live with our feet on the ground and our eyes fixed on heaven. In this regard, a qualified member of our Salesian Family offered us his own vital reflection as a lay person in the world and in the Family of Don Bosco, defining lay believers in the Church and in the Family of Don Bosco as those men and women who have a threefold belonging: to Christ, to the Church and to the world.<sup>22</sup>

Pope Francis, in the beautiful meeting we had with him on the occasion of the canonisation of Artemides Zatti, presenting him as “kinsman of all the poor”, reminded us that it is part of our Salesian vocation to be educators of the heart, preparing people, especially young people, for the world of today:

<sup>20</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Title of Chap. V of *Lumen Gentium*.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. A. BOCCIA, *Credenti Laici nella Chiesa e nella Famiglia di Don Bosco. Uomini e donne delle tre appartenenze*, Private edition.

“Thus a hospital became the ‘Father’s Inn’, a sign of a Church that seeks to be rich in gifts of humanity and grace, home of the commandment of love of God and our brothers and sisters, a place of health as a pledge of salvation. It is also true that this is part of the Salesian vocation: the Salesians are the great educators of the heart, of love, of affection, of social life; great educators of the heart.”<sup>23</sup>

Bringing to the Church and the world the gift of the lay charism lived in the Salesian Family is a vocational response that leads us to be present as signs and witnesses, in dialogue, and by offering the humble service of who we are for the common good.

It is from and in lay life itself, which in many cases passes through the specific vocation in the family and a professional role in the world, that the laity, and in particular the Christian laity, the laity of the Family of Don Bosco, are called to establish, promote and support the Gospel values in society and in history, contributing to the *consecratio mundi*, the consecration of the world, to the establishment of the Kingdom of God here and now.

Saint Francis de Sales, whose celebrations we have just finished on the occasion of the fourth centenary of his death, is one of the most unique and fruitful prophets in the history of the Church capable of shedding light on the greatness of each one’s vocation. That is how it was for many lay people of every social background whom he personally accompanied, helping them to flourish in the garden in which they were placed by the Lord, to the point of being fully holy. Saint Francis de Sales remains an ever new and irreplaceable source of inspiration for those who recognise themselves as “Salesians”, whatever their state of life.

In the recent *Apostolic Letter* that Pope Francis offered to all religious families who refer to the charism of Saint Francis de Sales, the importance of the spirituality that the Saint of Geneva proposed in his time and that today is extremely topical in the theology of the laity is highlighted.

<sup>23</sup> FRANCIS, *Address at the audience with the Salesian Family for the canonisation of Blessed Artemides Zatti*, Paul VI Hall, Rome, 8 October 2022.

“Almost everyone who has dealt with devotion has taken an interest in teaching people separated from the world or, at least, has taught a type of devotion that leads to this isolation. I intend to offer my teachings to those who live in cities, in the family, at court, and who, by virtue of their status, are forced, by social conveniences, to live among others.”<sup>24</sup>

This is why those who think they are relegating devotion to some protected and reserved sphere are very wrong. Rather does it belong to everyone and for everyone, wherever we are, and everyone can practise it according to their own vocation. As Saint Paul VI wrote on the fourth centenary of the birth of Francis de Sales:

“Holiness is not the prerogative of one group or of another or of any one person, but an invitation and a command addressed to all those who bear the name of Christian. ‘Friend, go up higher.’ All are bound to ascend the mountain of the Lord, although not by one and the same path. “The practice of devotion must differ for the gentleman and the artisan, the servant and the prince, for the widow, young girl or wife. further, it must be accommodated to their particular strength, circumstances, and duties,”<sup>25</sup>

Crossing the secular city, looking after our inner self, combining the desire for perfection with every state of life, finding a centre that does not separate itself from the world, but teaches how to inhabit it, appreciate it, also learning to take the right distance from it: this was his intention and continues to be a valuable lesson for every woman and man of our time.

This is the Council’s theme of the universal call to holiness:

“Fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect’ (LG 11). ‘Each in his or her own way’ the Council says ‘We should not grow discouraged before examples of holiness that appear unattainable.’”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> St FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction à la vie dévote*, I,1: ed. Ravier – Devos, Paris 1969, 23 (*our translation in English*).

<sup>25</sup> PAUL VI, Epist. Ap. *Sabaudiae gemma*, on the fourth centenary of the birth of St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church (29 January 1967), in AAS 59 (1967), 119.

<sup>26</sup> *Gaudete et exsultate*, 10-11.

“Mother Church offers them to us not so that we may try to copy them, but so that they may spur us to walk on the unique and specific path the Lord has designed for us. ‘What matters is that each believer discerns his own way and brings out the best in himself, what is so personal God has placed in him.’ (Cf. *1 Cor 12:7*)<sup>27</sup>

The Church is alive, “together with those who are called” according to the original meaning of the term, thanks to the richness of every vocation that defines her. *Every call is at the service of all the others and only in giving oneself can one express and regain one’s full identity.* Gifts are not the private and exclusive property of a group. As baptised individuals we all share in the priesthood of Christ, in the prophecy and kingship of Him who came to serve and give life. Ordained ministry is understood only as a service to the common priesthood of all the faithful. Likewise, what is typical of the lay state is a gift for all who enter into the life and call of every other member of the one body of Christ. The “secular dimension” is therefore also shared by those who belong to consecrated life or to the ordained ministry: the story of Don Bosco offers us splendid evidence of this. Don Bosco was a priest of the diocese of Turin who founded two congregations of consecrated men and women, and two other lay associations; and with all of them, and with many others he knew how to involve people, he immersed himself very intensely in the “world” in which he lived, in the life and problems of hundreds of thousands of young people, fearlessly overcoming great difficulties and borders, with a fruitfulness that inspires millions of people today – beyond national, cultural and religious differences.

Being a Christian and being a lay person opens the way to make the most of the intensity of secular, lay talent, committing it to the infinite wealth of possibilities that are open to those who live in the world animated by faith, hope and charity. The Second Vatican Council proclaimed this clearly:

<sup>27</sup> FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter *Totum Amoris Est, on the Fourth Centenary of the Death of Saint Francis de Sales*, LEV, Vatican City 2022, 32-34.

“The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world *from within as a leaven*.<sup>28</sup> In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.”<sup>29</sup>

It is not the task of the commentary on the Strenna to define all the areas and realities of life in which the presence of the laity is transforming and can become that leaven of the Kingdom of God that no one else could “knead” as effectively and extensively. In any case, in the Church the laity have a broad and complex spectrum of potential and challenges, of situations to face that are at the same time like many appeals for those who wish to be “salt of the earth and light of the world.” It is a journey that this year’s Strenna invites and urges us to resume, intensify and make our own courageously and generously, making the message of the Church herself timely when she says:

“The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world’s great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring labourers who work in the Lord’s vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God’s grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> I point out that parts in italics and in bold are my choice, precisely to highlight the theme that this commentary on Strenna 2023 intends to highlight in a specific way.

<sup>29</sup> *LG*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> *ChL*, 17.

There is no doubt that for all the laity of the Salesian Family today – and for consecrated men and women who live day by day enriched by their vocation and complementarity – the world, society, economy and politics, social action at the service of others, Christian life in daily life are and must always be a *theological place of encounter with God*:

“Their [the laity’s] own field of evangelising activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelisation, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering. The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often buried and suffocated, the more these realities will be at the service of the kingdom of God and therefore of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension which is often disregarded, will find themselves at the service of the building up of the Kingdom of God, and therefore of salvation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

## **5. Don Bosco’s Family called to be yeast**

Don Bosco was able to involve so many people, making them active and enterprising agents of the same dream of salvation for young people. Fr Giulio Barberis carefully noted what Don Bosco said addressing the young people of the Oratory on the evening of the feast of St Joseph, 19 March 1876, just over five months after the departure of the first missionaries for Patagonia. Referring to the field and vineyard of the Gospel parables and the strength of his personal experience of peasant life, he helps young people in Valdocco to understand how everyone can play their part, always precious and important, in the growth of the King-

<sup>31</sup> *EN*, 70.

dom of God. It is a secular, evangelical and ecclesial example of how we are called to bring our talents to fruition together, each according to his or her life story, ability and calling. Thus, Fr Barberis takes up Don Bosco's words which will undoubtedly seem of the utmost theological importance to us:

“Our Divine Saviour, and you understand it well enough, meant by the field or vineyards around him, to speak of the Church and everyone in the world; the harvest is the salvation of souls, since all souls must be gathered up and brought to the Lord's granary; oh how abundant is this harvest; how many millions of people there are on this earth! How much work there is to be done to see that everyone is saved; but *operarii autem pauci*, the labourers are few.

“By the labourers working in the vineyard of the Lord is meant all those who in some way work for the salvation of souls. And note well that labourers here does not only mean priests, preachers and confessors, as some believe, who certainly are put there to work and are directly involved in gathering the harvest, but they are not alone, they are not enough. The labourers are those who in some way work for the salvation of souls; like those who work in the fields are not just the ones gathering the grain but all the others as well.

“Look around a field and see the variety of labourers. One is ploughing, another turning over the soil; others are using a hoe; someone has a rake or is breaking open the clods and flattening them; others are sowing seed, others still covering it over; somebody is weeding, pulling out dandelion, grass, vetches; one is hoeing, another uprooting, another one cutting; others are watering just at the right moment and pressing the seeds *in*; others instead are reaping, making *bundles* of sheaves, there are others loading the cart and pulling it; one is spreading out the wheat while another is beating it; one is separating wheat from chaff; others are cleaning, using a sieve, putting it into sacks, carrying it *to the mill to make flour*; one is *sifting*, another kneading, another baking.

“So you can see, my friends, what a range of labourers are needed before the harvest can fulfil its purpose of giving us bread from Heaven. As it is in the field, so it is with the Church; all kinds of labourers are needed, all kinds. No one can say: “Although my behaviour is irreproachable, I would be no good working for the greater glory of God.” No, nobody can say that; everyone can do something.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> ISS, *Salesian Sources, 1. Don Bosco and his work*, Kristu Jyoti, Bangalore 2014, 812-813.

We were born charismatically as a community and as a communion of people of different social backgrounds, states of life, professional profiles... all united by the same mission and motivated by the same charismatic drive that Don Bosco knew how to pass on.<sup>33</sup> This is the nature of the Oratory in the years of its foundation, from 1841 to 1859: (18 years!), which still strongly reflects this synergy of the People of God who in various ways cooperate to make young people more at risk “good Christians and upright citizens.” It is undeniable that we were immediately born as a group of God’s people: it is the nature of our charism and our mission.

I am well aware – and I try to pass on this awareness to the whole of our Salesian Family – of a particularly obvious fact: only together, only by living in communion can we do something meaningful today.

I launched a strong appeal to the entire Salesian Congregation regarding our shared mission with the laity – an appeal that serves the whole Family of Don Bosco – and not listening to it would lead, in the not too distant future, to a point of dangerous non-return.

I said:

“Our GC24 was certainly a charismatic response to Vatican II’s ecclesiology of communion. We know well that Don Bosco, from the outset of his mission at Valdocco, involved many lay people, friends and collaborators in such a way that they could be part of his mission among young people. He immediately ‘fostered participation and the sharing of responsibility by ecclesiastics and laity, men and women.’<sup>34</sup> It is therefore, in spite of our resistance, **a point of no return**, because, in addition to corresponding to Don Bosco’s actions, the model of the mission shared with the laity proposed by GC24 is in fact ‘the only practicable model in present conditions.’<sup>35</sup>”

<sup>33</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *La famiglia salesiana compie venticinque anni*, 140-142.

<sup>34</sup> GC24, no. 71.

<sup>35</sup> GC28, *Action Programme 6*, p. 59.

Thus we have *a point of no return* for the good of those who decide and have decided to enter into this style of mission, formation, shared life that opens new horizons in the future for the charism of Don Bosco in full harmony with the path that the Church is taking with the guidance of Pope Francis, which is surely prophetic and exemplary.

At the same time there is also another dangerous and risky *non-return* for those who instead fail to or do not want to cross this threshold and remain locked into forms of self-referential isolation: no longer in step with the times in the way of living and interpreting the Salesian presence, and destined to become irrelevant and to become extinct as the years proceed.

The ultimate goal of Don Bosco's mission is, together with the salvation of his young people, the transformation of society. Don Bosco's broad and courageous vision, his tireless diligence, his resilience in the face of obstacles... are explained only with this horizon of social transformation and evangelisation of young people on a world scale.

Don Bosco does not engage in politics but can talk to all representatives of the various levels of government because his commitment is transparently oriented toward the good of young people. No one who cares about human society and service to others – as public service is and should also be for the good of all – can display a lack of interest in this.

Therefore, our common voice can find access and be given an ear far beyond confessional boundaries if together today we embody the same zeal of predilection for young people that was given to us as a charism and that we can only achieve *together as a Family of Don Bosco*.

**The complementarity of vocations in Don Bosco's Family, being united as a Salesian Family, and united with the great number of lay people involved in our presences around the world, together in mission and formation, becomes an unavoid-**

*able demand today and even more so in the future, if we do not want to remain irrelevant.*

And communion in the family spirit and within the vast Salesian movement is the great gift we possess as a precious legacy.

## **6. In the shade of a large tree with beautiful fruit**

In my letter at the end of the Second Seminar for the promotion of the Causes of Beatification and Canonisation of the Salesian Family, I wrote:

“From Don Bosco down to our own times we recognise a tradition of holiness to which we need to pay attention, since the incarnation of the charism that had its origin in him found its expression in a variety of states of life and in different forms, it is a question of men and women, young people and adults, consecrated persons and lay people, bishops and missionaries who in certain historical, cultural and social contexts, different in time and place, made the special light of the Salesian charism shine out, representing a heritage that continues to play an effective role in the life and in the communities of believers and of men and women of good will.”<sup>36</sup>

With humility and a deep sense of gratitude, we recognise in the Salesian Family a great tree with many fruits of holiness. These are men and women, young people and adults who have filled their lives with the leaven of love, a love that is given to the end, faithful to Jesus Christ and to his Gospel.

Ecclesiology shows, as we know, that the different vocations have a common baptismal root and are destined to contribute to the growth of God’s people:

“In Church Communion the states of life by being ordered one to the other are thus bound together among themselves They all share in a

<sup>36</sup> A. FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *Letter of the Rector Major at the conclusion of the 2nd Seminar for the promotion of the Causes of Beatification and Canonisation of the Salesian Family*, Rome 20 May 2018. [https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Santita/Seminario\\_2018/Santi\\_2\\_Seminario\\_2018\\_RMlettera\\_en.pdf&gt](https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Santita/Seminario_2018/Santi_2_Seminario_2018_RMlettera_en.pdf&gt)

deeply basic meaning: that of being the manner of living out the commonly shared Christian dignity and the universal call to holiness in the perfection of love. They are different yet complementary, in the sense that each of them has a basic and unmistakable character which sets each apart, while at the same time each of them is seen in relation to the other and placed at each other's service."<sup>37</sup>

This perspective indicates that the Salesian charism is complete when vocation and mission are lived in the reciprocity and complementarity of the different calls. Precisely this should be the profound meaning of the Salesian Family: a vast apostolic movement for the salvation of young people.

It is interesting to note that, among the 173 Saints, Blessed, Venerables, Servants of God of our Family, 25 are lay people who have embodied the Salesian charism in the family, in the Salesian house, in secular life, in their profession, a privileged space of Christian witness, and in different social, historical and cultural contexts. I think it is very appropriate to recall them as testimony within the commentary on this Strenna:

- **Saint Dominic Savio**, a teenager and expression of youthful holiness, fruit of preventive grace and leader of a long line of young saints.
- Blessed **Laura Vicuña**, a teenager, testifies to the strength of love that gives life and reminds us of the reality of the wounded family.
- Blessed **Ceferino Namuncurá**, a young Mapuche, recalls the value and respect of indigenous cultures and the work of inculturation of faith and the charism.
- Blessed **Francesco Kęsy, Czesław Józwiak, Edward Kaźmierski, Edward Klinik, Jarogniew Wojciechowski**, martyrs of the oratory at Poznan, witnesses of the faith to the point of martyrdom.
- Among the blessed martyrs of the Spanish persecution we meet: **Alessandro Planas Saurí e Giovanni de Mata**

<sup>37</sup> *ChL*, 55.

**Díez**, lay collaborators; **Tommaso Gil de la Cal**, **Federico Cobo Sanz**, **Igino de Mata Díez**, three aspirants to Salesian life; **Bartolomeo Blanco Márquez**, layman and engaged to be married; **Teresa Cejudo Redondo**, wife and mother, Salesian Cooperators engaged in the ecclesial, social and associative reality of their environment.

- Blessed **Alexandrina Maria Da Costa**, Salesian Cooperator, who recalls the highest form of cooperation, that of union with the redemptive passion of Jesus.
- Blessed **Alberto Marvelli**, a former student of the oratory at Rimini, engaged in the social and political world.
- Venerable **Mamma Margherita Occhiena**, a motherly and female presence at the origins of the charism.
- Venerable **Dorotea Chopitea**, wife and mother, who “welcomed” and gave growth to the Salesian charism, manifesting the choice of a poor life and the ability to be evangelised by the poor.
- Venerable **Attilio Giordani**, husband and father, who embodies Salesian joy in the family, in work, in the oratory, in his mission land.
- Servant of God **Simão**, an Indian Bororo, who shared the Salesian mission with Father Rodolfo Lunkenbein and recalls the need to recognise and welcome the seeds of truth present in every culture and tradition.
- Servant of God **Matilde Salem**, wife and benefactor, who gave of her goods and life for the fruitfulness of the charism in Syria, and testifies to the strength of communion between Christians, and the capacity for coexistence with the faithful of other religions.
- Servant of God **Antonino Baglieri**, Volunteer With Don Bosco, who in sickness knew how to be the leaven of the Gospel.
- Servant of God **Vera Grita**, Salesian Cooperator and teacher, instrument of a mystical work that commits every Christian to make the grace of the Eucharist bear fruit.
- Servant of God **Akash Bashir**, a young former pupil from Pakistan who gave his life for his brothers and sisters.

Among these numerous and varied figures of holiness I would like to point out ones that offer us a significant and original witness of lay holiness and that, in my opinion, show the multi-faceted aspect, that is, rich in aspects, sides, shapes and colours, of lay life lived in different contexts, in different centuries, with different vocations, but full of simple holiness in everyday life. That “next door” secular holiness that will always do us so much good to discover. Let’s pause to contemplate them:

MARGARET OCCHIENA,  
“MAMMA”

We know how at the beginning of the oratory, after thinking and rethinking how to get out of difficulties, Don Bosco went to talk about it with his parish priest in Castelnuovo, exposing his need and his fears. “You have your mother!” replied the parish priest without a moment’s hesitation, “let her come with you to Turin.” Mamma Margaret arrived in Valdocco on 3 November 1846, and for ten years she was the mother of hundreds of boys. In 1846 only the oratory was open, and the boys came there especially on Sundays. The *Biographical Memories* speak of at least 800 who came. Throughout the week, every night, after work in the city, young people came for evening classes. One can just imagine the noise and shouting. The classes took up Don Bosco’s kitchen and bedroom, the sacristy, the choir, the chapel. Voices, songs, comings and goings, but it could not be done otherwise. Mamma Margaret was there with them. Certainly priests and even lay people came to help Don Bosco and some women came later to help. But only Mamma Margaret was there, full time, always. This availability made her dear to everyone, and she was therefore venerated by those who knew her. Right from the outset, when she came to Turin, as soon as she became known by people in surrounding suburbs, she was called by no other name than “Mamma”.

Here, for ten years, her life fused with her son’s life and with the beginnings of the Salesian work: she was Don Bosco’s first and main Cooperator; her active kindness was the maternal ele-

ment of the preventive system. Illiterate – but full of that wisdom that comes from above – she was also a help to many poor street children, children of no one; she put God in first place, consuming herself for him in a life of poverty, prayer and sacrifice.

**BARTOLOMÉ BLANCO MÁRQUEZ,**  
A YOUNG ALL-ROUND CHRISTIAN

“I am a worker, I was born of parents who were also workers. I have lived and do live in a narrow setting, one where the lowly class work. Running in my veins, sometimes exacerbated by the fire of youthful enthusiasm, I sense a protest, an energetic protest against those who believe that we are not like them because we have had the misfortune – or perhaps the fate – of being born into poverty, wearing worker’s gear and having rough and calloused hands. But let us clarify our ideas: I am a worker and I am a Catholic.” The person speaking this way is a young man of 19, by profession a chair manufacturer, a chairmaker, at the People’s Action rally on 5 November 1933 in Pozoblanco (Spain); an upright and courageous young man with uncommon intelligence, of humble origins, a worker, defender of the rights of the people and of the Church.

Born in Pozoblanco (Cordoba, Spain) on 25 December 1914, he lost his mother in the so-called “Spanish” flu epidemic. Having lost his father at the age of twelve, he had to leave school and start working as a chair maker. When the Salesians arrived in Pozoblanco in September 1930, Bartolomé attended the oratory and helped as a catechist and leader. He found in Fr Antonio do Muiño a director who urged him to continue his intellectual, cultural and spiritual formation by being involved in study groups. Until Bartolomé’s untimely death, this Salesian would be his confessor and spiritual guide. Bartolomé was appreciated by relatives, friends, companions for his ingenuity, apostolic commitment, and his attitude as a leader. Later he entered Catholic Action, of which he was secretary and where he gave of his best. He moved to Madrid to specialise in the apostolate among the

workers at the Instituto Sociale Operaio or Social Workers Institute, and distinguished himself as an eloquent speaker and scholar of social issues. Having obtained a scholarship, he learned about Catholic workers' organisations in France, Belgium and the Netherlands through a trip organised by the Social Workers' Institute. Appointed delegate of Catholic trade unions in the province of Cordoba he founded eight groups.

When the revolution broke out on 30 June 1936, Bartolomé returned to Pozoblanco and made himself available to the "Civil Guard" for the defence of the city, which surrendered to the other warring faction after a month. Accused of rebellion, he was sent to prison, where he continued to behave in exemplary manner: "o deserve martyrdom, one must offer oneself to God as a martyr!" He was tried and sentenced to death in Jaén on 29 September. After the sentence, while remaining calm and defending himself with dignity, he said: "You believed that you were hurting me while instead you are doing me good because you have chiselled out a crown for me."

The letters he wrote to his family and fiancée on the eve of his death are clear proof of this: "Let this be my last will: forgiveness, forgiveness and forgiveness; but indulgence, which I want to be accompanied by doing everything possible. So I ask you to avenge me with the revenge of the Christian: reciprocating those who have tried to hurt me with good", he wrote to his aunts and cousins.

And to his fiancée, Maruja: "When I have a few hours left for my final rest, I just want to ask you one thing: that in memory of the love we had for each other which grows at this moment, you take care of the salvation of your soul as the main objective, so that we can meet in heaven for all eternity where no one will separate us."

His fellow prisoners kept the moving details of his departure for death: barefoot, to resemble Christ more closely. When they put the cuffs on his wrists, he kissed the hands of the militia member who put them on him. He did not accept, as they proposed, to be shot in the back. "Those who die for Christ," he said, "must do so facing forward and with bared chest." Long live Christ the

King!” and he fell with open arms in the shape of a cross, riddled with bullets next to an oak tree. It was 2 October 1936. He was not yet 22. He was beatified in Rome on 28 October 2007.

**ATTILIO GIORDANI,**  
**A LAYMAN “À LA DON BOSCO”**

Born in Milan on 3 February 1913, he distinguished himself since his early years for his great passion for the Salesian Oratory of Saint Augustine and, already at the age of eighteen, for his dedication to the young people who went there. For decades he was a diligent catechist and a constant and brilliant leader, with so much simplicity and joy. He looked after the liturgy, formation, games free time, theatre. He loved God with all his heart and found the resources for the life of grace in sacramental life, prayer and spiritual direction.

During his military service, which began in 1934 and ended, in stages, in 1945, he demonstrated an apostolic approach among his comrades in arms. He was employed with the Pirelli Firm in Milan where he also spread joy and good humour, and a profound sense of duty.

On 6 May 1944, he married a catechist, Noemi D’Avanzo. They would have three children: Piergiorgio, Mariagrazia, Paola. In his family he was a husband and father, rich in great faith and serenity, chosen austerity and evangelical poverty for the benefit of the most needy. Without taking anything away from the family, he made the oratory his second family, putting his wealth of inventiveness and extraordinary educational skill at the youngsters’ service. In agreement with his wife Noemi, he left for Mato Grosso (Brazil) to share his own children’s choice of missionary commitment. On 18 December 1972, during a meeting, after speaking enthusiastically and ardently of the duty to lay down one’s life for others, he suddenly felt himself failing. He was just in time to tell his son, “Pier, you carry on” and then died of a heart attack. He has been Venerable since 9 October 2013.

His life as an apostolically committed Christian took on such

a determined and personal orientation to discover (these are all his words): “The joy of serving Christ”; “not being good just for those who are good”; “Living in the world without being of the world”; “Go against the current”; “Not seeking but giving”; “It is necessary to live what you want to make live.” This was something that matured over the different stages of his life: as a teenager, as a young soldier then as a soldier on the Greek-Albanian military front, as shown in his “War Diary”. The choice of his fiancée Noemi Davanzo was also motivated by reasons of faith, as she wrote in a letter: “When the Lord brought you to me, he placed before me your love and spirit of dedication to those who are especially beloved of the Saviour. This was the main trigger that prompted me to ask you to be my companion.”

Attilio’s faith was so great that it is truly a “sign” of God’s presence: in the family, in the oratory, in the parish community and for those who meet him: a faith that is more than proclaimed – it shines through his actions and his way of being: “The extent of our belief is manifested in our being.”

**VERA GRITA,  
“THE LITTLE TEACHER FROM SAVONA”**

Born in Rome on 28 January 1923, she lived and studied in Savona where she obtained her teacher’s certificate. At the age of 21, during a sudden air raid on the city (1944), she was overwhelmed and trampled underfoot by the fleeing crowd, with serious consequences for her physically, and from then on she remained forever marked by suffering.

She went unnoticed in her short earthly life, teaching in the schools of the Ligurian hinterland, where she earned the esteem and affection of everyone for her kind and meek character.

She attended Mass in Savona at the Salesian parish of Mary Help of Christians, and was regular in her use of the Sacrament of Penance. A Salesian Cooperator since 1967, she carried out her call in the total gift of herself to the Lord, who in an extraordinary way gave himself to her in the depths of her heart with

the “Voice”, the “Word” with which he communicated the Work of the Living Tabernacles to her.

Under the impulse of divine grace and accepting the mediation of her spiritual guides, Vera Grita responded to the gift of God by witnessing in her life, marked by the constant fatigue of illness, to the encounter with the Risen One and dedicating herself with heroic generosity to the teaching and education of her students, attending to the needs of her family and witnessing to a life of evangelical poverty. She died on 22 December 1969, at the age of 46, in a room the hospital in Pietra Ligure.

Vera Grita attests first of all to an all-embracing Eucharistic orientation, which became explicit especially in her final years of life. She did not think in terms of programmes, apostolic initiatives, projects: she accepted the fundamental “project” that is Jesus himself, until he made her life his own. Today’s world attests to a great need for the Eucharist.

Her journey through the strenuous labour of her days also offers a new lay perspective on holiness: becoming an example of conversion, acceptance and sanctification for the “poor”, the “frail” and the “sick” who can recognise themselves and find hope in her.

As a Salesian Cooperator, Vera Grita lived and worked, taught and encountered people with her strong Salesian sensitivity: from the loving-kindness of her discreet but effective presence, to her ability to be loved by children and families; from the pedagogy of kindness that she carried out with her constant smile, to her generous readiness with which, regardless of the inconvenience, she turned in preference to the least, to the little ones, to the distant, the forgotten; from her generous passion for God and His Glory to the way of the cross, letting everything be taken from her in her illness.

**AKASH BASHIR,**  
WITNESS TO FORTITUDE AND PEACE

A Past Pupil of Don Bosco, he is the first Pakistani whose Cause of Beatification and Canonisation is in process. On 15

March 2015, he sacrificed himself to prevent a suicide bomber from causing a massacre in St John's Church in Youhannabad, a Christian neighbourhood in Lahore, Pakistan. Akash Bashir was 20 years old, had studied at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Lahore and had become a security volunteer.

What is most striking is how this simple young man was so strong in dealing with evil and fighting murderous violence. The words he said to the bomber before he died – “I will die, but I will not let you enter the church” – express strong faith and heroic courage in witnessing to love without measure.

The Gospel of that Fourth Sunday of Lent (15 March 2015) proclaimed Jesus' words to Nicodemus: “For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God” (Jn 3:20-21).

Akash sealed these words with his young Christian blood. He fought cheek by jowl with the power of death, hatred and violence and made light and truth triumph. He washed his white garment with the blood of the Lamb, making it resplendent (cf. Rev 7:14).

Contact with the world and the Salesian charism reinforced the goodness and generosity in Akash that he had learned in his family and in the Christian community. Akash Bashir is an example of holiness for every Christian, an example for all the young Christians of the world. And he is undoubtedly a clear charismatic sign of the Salesian educational system. Akash is the voice of so many brave young people who manage to give their lives for faith despite difficulties, poverty, religious extremism, indifference, social inequality, discrimination. The life and martyrdom of this young Pakistani makes us recognise the power of the Holy Spirit of God, alive, found in the least expected places – in the humble, the persecuted, the young; in the little ones of God.

And let us not forget

ARTEMIDES ZATTI,  
IN THE YEAR OF HIS CANONISATION

He was certainly a consecrated religious, *but one cannot fail to be struck by the lay dimension of his holiness* spent in the daily exercise of charity in the simplicity of a small hospital and a small village. He is an example and a model of consecration to his people in sacrificial and patient work, having God as its source, its motivation for faith and as the sole and ultimate goal of his life.

Their lives, the lives of all of them and their example are like “leaven in the dough” that continues to grow, and the Kingdom within us and around us.

*The lay faithful offer the humus for the growth of the faith.*<sup>38</sup> This expression of Benedict XVI reminds us that Christianity is rooted and develops in the world thanks to the faith and commitment to evangelisation of so many lay people, married people, families and Christian communities. By the grace of Baptism, faith grows and spreads.

Similarly, the above-mentioned lay witnesses of Salesian holiness and many others “*next door*” have also given and continue to offer *the humus for the growth of the Salesian charism*. This company of saints reminds us that before works and roles, the quality of human relationships is the privileged place for the proclamation of the Gospel and the flourishing of the charism.

These testimonies remind us of the universal call to holiness, so dear both to St Francis de Sales – as we have already said – and to our Father of the Salesian Family, Don Bosco, when he proposed the goal of holiness to the young people of the oratory and to ordinary folk as a goal open to all, easy to follow and oriented to endless happiness.

All this by having Mary Help of Christians, the one who welcomed Jesus into her virginal womb and for this reason Mother,

<sup>38</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Catechesis*, 7 February 2007.

Teacher and Guide of the faith, especially in the accompaniment of the young generations on their journey towards holiness. The lives of all of them and their example are like “yeast for the bread.”

## 7. Our *young people as yeast* in today’s world

I would like to conclude this year’s Strenna message with a final word that addresses our young people and the path we want to take together, because they too want to accompany us as we want to accompany them:

“We want to tell you loudly, with all our heart. Being here for us was a dream come true: in this special place that is Valdocco, where the Salesian mission began, together with Salesians and young people for the Salesian mission, with our common will to be saints together. You have our hearts in your hands. Take care of this precious treasure of yours. Please never forget us and keep listening to us. Turin, 7 March 2020.”<sup>39</sup>

In fact, young people prepare for life, we accompany them on this journey, and I have no doubt that a very great service that we would render to them, to society and to the Church is to help them become aware of the social role they must play and for which they must prepare. That is why they are also the first to learn that they are called to be *yeast in in the human family*.

In preparing to write this commentary, I decided to look for and read, precisely for this final section of the Strenna, some of what the last three pontiffs – St John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis – have told the young people, because I was sure that their messages would be abundant and very powerful. And that is how they seem to me: so current, so timely and, dare I say it, so “Salesian”. And at the same time I want to strongly affirm how vast, extensive and demanding is the task that young

<sup>39</sup> GC28, *What kind of Salesians for the Youth of Today?* Letter of the young people to Chapter members, Annex 3, p. 146.

people have before them in the Church and in the world. If they accept the challenge of being truly today's young people, active in their Christian and social commitment and true "yeast" in the human family.

**Pope John Paul II**, three years before his death, in one of his speeches proposed,<sup>40</sup> eight great challenges that are genuine proposals of Christian, social and political life and commitment for young people who want to meet significant challenges. In reality, these are eight challenges that some scholars reduce to just one that could be expressed in this way: *putting the human being at the centre of economics and politics*. The task is this: the defence of human life in all situations; the promotion of the family and the eradication of poverty (through debt reduction, promoting development and opening up fair international trade); the defence of human rights and work to ensure disarmament (reduction of arms sales and consolidation of peace after conflicts); the fight against major diseases and access for all to the most necessary medicines; the protection of nature and prevention of natural disasters; and finally, the strict application of international law and conventions.

In turn, in the Encyclical Letter on integral human development, *Caritas in Veritate*,<sup>41</sup> **Pope Benedict XVI** lists the current challenges that are urgent and essential for the life of the world and in which today's young people can engage, such as: the use of the earth's resources, respect for ecology, the just distribution of goods and the control of financial mechanisms, the fight against hunger in the world, promotion of the dignity of work, human solidarity with the poorest countries, service to the culture of life, inter-religious dialogue and the construction of peace among peoples and nations.

Finally, **Pope Francis** proposes a series of demanding tasks

<sup>40</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Ambassadors of Countries Accredited to the Holy See*, Rome, 10 January 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Rome 29 June 2009.

that we have as Christians and that await young people who want to take them on and engage in them with their faith and commitment, since many other young people suffer from such violence and extortion.

Among his various writings (Encyclicals, Apostolic Exhortations and Messages to young people),<sup>42</sup> I would like to recall the following: there are terrible and painful contexts of war (and I cannot fail to mention the unjust war against the Ukrainian people, which we all know because it has lasted for eleven months now); there are many people and young people who suffer from violence that manifests itself in many different ways: kidnappings, extortion, organised crime, trafficking of human beings, slavery and sexual exploitation, war crimes, etc. Some children are forced to become soldiers, to be part of armed gangs and criminals, to be involved in drug trafficking. Not a few children and teenagers are enslaved in the sex trade and trafficking. And there is no shortage of people and young people who are marginalised and even martyred because of their ethnicity or their beliefs. The pain of migration (in inhuman situations) and the scourge of xenophobia cannot be forgotten.<sup>43</sup> The discarding of people around the world, racism and the violation of universal human rights are other realities of a world in which there is also so much pain.<sup>44</sup>

Are we aware that all this and much more affects this human family in which we seek to be yeast, salt and light?<sup>45</sup> Could we say that this is a pessimistic view? No, not at all. Pope Francis himself cites many advances that exist today, but that go hand in hand with a “deterioration of ethics”:

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ChV*, 72-74; Cf. *FT*, 25.

<sup>43</sup> *FT*, 38-40.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 18-24.

<sup>45</sup> I would like to emphasise in a very significant way what the Rector Major Fr Pascual Chávez wrote about the commitment of the Salesian Family to the defence of life, in all its senses and in all its dimensions. This is a very rich list of our current commitments (which also involves young people): Cf. CHÁVEZ, P., *You love everything that exists, and nothing that you have made disgusts you... Lord Lover of Life. (Wis 11:24.12,1)*, in Id., *Circular Letters to the Salesians* (ACG 396 (2006) Letter 019), LAS, Rome 2021, 604-605, 609-617.

“With the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, we do not ignore the positive advances made in the areas of science, technology, medicine, industry and welfare, above all in developed countries. Nonetheless, “we wish to emphasise that, together with these historical advances, great and valued as they are, there exists a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility. his contributes to a general feeling of frustration, isolation and desperation [...]. We see “outbreaks of tension and a buildup of arms and ammunition in a global context dominated by uncertainty, disillusionment, fear of the future, and controlled by narrow economic interests”. We can also point to “major political crises, situations of injustice and the lack of an equitable distribution of natural resources... [...] In the face of such crises that result in the deaths of millions of children – emaciated from poverty and hunger – there is an unacceptable silence on the international level.”<sup>46</sup>

This reality is an opportunity for all of us, but especially for young people, to feel the Lord’s call to live their Christian and also Salesian life (within the family of Don Bosco) as a great task.

This task and challenge had already been recalled by Pope Paul VI at the end of the Second Vatican Council with a message addressed to young people in which he said:

“Lastly, it is to you, young men and women of the world, that the council wishes to address its final message. For it is you who are to receive the torch from the hands of your elders and to live in the world at the period of the most gigantic transformations ever realized in its history. It is you who, receiving the best of the example of the teaching of your parents and your teachers, are to form the society of tomorrow. You will either save yourselves or you will perish with it. [...] ...and build in enthusiasm a better world than your elders had!”<sup>47</sup>

Today, with deep conviction, I address this request that comes to all of us to be truly yeast in the human family to all of you, dear young people. These challenges demand that you say

<sup>46</sup> *FT*, 29 which also cites the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L’Osservatore Romano* 4-5 February 2019, p.6.

<sup>47</sup> PAUL VI, *Message to young people* Rome 8 December 1968.

yes or no to your commitment to building a more just and fraternal world with your life, your formation, your studies, your work and your vocation. These challenges place you at the crossroads of accepting or rejecting a challenging and exciting life in which to put all your strength and energies according to God's dream for each of you.

And certainly you are not asked for any particular, extraordinary heroism, but only – yet this is already a lot – to make your own gifts and God-given to each of you fruitful, committing yourselves to grow in faith, in true Love, in fraternity and in service to all, especially to the least, to those who are most affected by life, to those who have least opportunity.

It seems to me to be a precious proposal for every young Christian and Salesian who wants to be a missionary disciple of the Lord today, and also a challenge and a proposal of such dignity and scope that, without any shame, it can be offered to any young person who wants to live their human condition to the full, whether they are Christians or professes other religious beliefs or seek to an essential and authentic humanism. At the same time it leads you to live outside your “comfort zones” which, like sirens with their songs, can lull you to sleep.

I just referred to humanism and I would like to conclude explicitly with a reference to this “Salesian humanism” with which we can educate all the young people of all nations of the world who are involved in Salesian presences because

“For Don Bosco [it] meant giving due weight to all that is positive in the life of individuals, in creation, in the events of history. This led him to accept the genuine values present in the world, especially if pleasing to the young; to place himself in the flow of culture and of human development in his own times, encouraging the good and refusing to lament about the evil; wisely seeking the cooperation of many people, convinced that each one has gifts that need to be discovered, recognised and put to good use; believing in the power of education which provides support for the young person's development, and encouraging him to become an upright citizen and a good Christian;

and always and everywhere entrusting himself to the providence of God, perceived and loved as a Father.”<sup>48</sup>

I conclude by thanking the Lord for a beautiful and full life in our Salesian Family at the service of the Gospel, asking the Lord for the whole Church and for us as part of the same Church to accept the joyful task of *evangelising*, because “she was sent by Christ to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations.”<sup>49</sup>

May our Mother Help of Christians help all of us to be missionary disciples, little stars that reflect her light. And let us pray that hearts may open to joyfully receive the proclamation of salvation which is God himself in Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ángel Fernández Artime". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, S.D.B.  
*Rector Major*

<sup>48</sup> P. CHAVEZ, *Like Don Bosco the educator we offer young people the Gospel of joy through a pedagogy of kindness. Strenna 2013* (AGC 415 (2013) Letter 038, op. cit., 1240-1241..

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Gentes*, 10.

# “I BELIEVED, I PROMISED, I RECOVERED!”

## Artemides Zatti: Gospel of Vocation and a Church that Cares

Letter of the Rector Major a few days  
from the canonisation of Artemides Zatti

Turin, 11 September 2022 - prot. 2022/0329

“The mosaic of our saints and blessed, though rich enough in the categories represented – Founder, Co-founder, Rector Majors, missionaries, martyrs, priests and young people, still lacked the figure of a coadjutor brother. Now, even this gap is being filled.”<sup>1</sup>

The above is how Juan Edmundo Vecchi, eighth Successor of Don Bosco, began his letter for the occasion of the Beatification of Artemides Zatti.

If the “mosaic of our saints” was missing a tile, today this mosaic has a very special glow to it because, in a few weeks, we will experience a great gift from the Lord: to see one of Don Bosco’s sons, a Salesian coadjutor brother, Italian emigrant to Argentina and nurse, canonised by Pope Francis on 9 October 2022.

This means that Artemides Zatti will be the *first Salesian saint not a martyr to be canonised*. Undoubtedly, the canonisation of the first Salesian saint and Salesian coadjutor brother offers and will continue to offer a note of completeness to the range of models of Salesian spirituality which the Church officially declares as such.

Let me quote the beautiful personal testimony, filled with spiritual depth and faith, given by Artemides Zatti in 1915 in

<sup>1</sup> J.E. Vecchi, *Beatification of Bro. Artemides Zatti: A sensational precedent*, in AGC 376 (2001), 3.

Viedma, at the inauguration of a funerary monument placed over the tomb of Father Evasio Garrone (1861–1911), a well-deserving Salesian missionary and considered by Artemides to be his distinguished benefactor:

“If I am now well, in good health and in a position to do some good to my sick neighbour, I owe it to Father Garrone, a doctor. Seeing my health deteriorate day by day, since I was suffering from tuberculosis and frequently spitting blood, he told me point blank that if I did not want to finish up like many others I should make a promise to Mary Help of Christians to always remain at his side, helping him in the care of the sick, and that if I trusted in Mary, she would cure me. **I BELIEVED**, because I knew by reputation that Mary Help of Christians helped him in visible ways. **I PROMISED**, because it was always my desire to help my neighbour in some way. And, since God listened to his servant, **I RECOVERED**. [Signed] Artemides Zatti.””

We see that the generous and confident soundness of Artemides Zatti’s Salesian life was based on three verbs. To appreciate the gift of holiness of this great Salesian Brother, we would like to meditate on these three verbs and their extraordinarily good fruits, so that they may deeply touch the desires, dreams and commitments of our Congregation and of each of us, and foster a renewed and fruitful fidelity to Don Bosco’s charism in us all.

### a. Profile of Artemides Zatti

Artemides Zatti<sup>2</sup> was born in Boretto (Reggio Emilia) on 12 December 1880 to Albina Vecchi and Luigi Zatti. This peasant family raised him to a life that was poor and hard-working, enlightened by a simple, straightforward and robust faith which guided and nourished his life.

<sup>2</sup> I have decided to draw up a brief and concise profile. Those who would like to know more about the life of Artemides Zatti can find several biographies on the forthcoming saint and also read the biographical profile in Fr Vecchi’s letter to which I referred earlier.

At the age of nine, Artemides began work as a labourer with a nearby well-to-do family in order to contribute to the family economy.

The Zattis emigrated to Argentina in 1879 and settled in Bahia Blanca. Artemides was seventeen when he arrived there, and he soon learned to cope with the hardships and responsibilities of work while still within the bosom of the family. He found work in a brick factory, and at the same time he nurtured and grew in a profound relationship with God under the guidance of a Salesian, Fr Carlo Cavalli, his parish priest and spiritual director. Artemides found Fr Carlo to be a sincere friend, a wise confessor and a genuine and skilled spiritual director who formed him to a daily rhythm of prayer and weekly reception of the sacraments. He established a spiritual rapport with Fr Cavalli and one of collaboration.<sup>3</sup> He had the opportunity to read Don Bosco's life in the parish priest's library and was fascinated by it. *This was the real beginning of his Salesian vocation.*

In 1900, by now a twenty-year-old, at Fr Cavalli's invitation Artemides asked to enter the Salesian aspirantate at Bernal, near Buenos Aires.

But in 1902, when it was time to enter the novitiate, Artemides contracted tuberculosis. Fr Vecchi, in his letter, tells us: "Because of his reliability, the superiors entrusted him with the task of assisting a young priest suffering from tuberculosis. Zatti carried out the work with generosity, but soon afterwards caught the same disease himself."<sup>4</sup>

Seriously ill, he returned to Bahia Blanca and Fr Cavalli sent him to Viedma, entrusting him to the care of Salesian Fr Evasio Garrone, who was a competent physician thanks to his long experience, and director of the San José hospital founded by Bishop Cagliero.

I find it very significant to recall that Artemides met Ceferino Namuncurá – today Blessed – in Viedma. He had come from

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Positio*, p.35

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 15 and cf. *Positio*, p. 47.

Buenos Aires and had also been affected by tuberculosis. Despite their difference in age, the two had a warm relationship until Ceferino left for Italy in 1904 with Bishop John Cagliero.

After two years of care in Viedma, though with unsatisfactory results, Fr Garrone sent Artemides to ask to be cured through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin by making a vow to dedicate his life to caring for the sick. Having made the vow with keen faith, Artemides was cured, and in 1906 he began the novitiate.

Due to the risks associated with his prior health circumstances, Artemides had to renounce his resolve to become a priest and he professed as a coadjutor brother among the Salesians of Don Bosco on 11 January 1908. This meant a huge growth in faith for Artemides. Indeed, he did not abandon his idea of being a Salesian priest and he continued to think about a priestly vocation in the Salesian Congregation, especially when it seemed his health had improved. Therefore “it is touching to note his unswerving attachment to his vocation, even when it seemed that sickness had removed any possibility of achieving it. He wrote, for example, to his relatives on 7 August 1902: ‘I want you to know that it was not only my wish, but also that of my Superiors, that I should receive the cassock; but there is an article of the Holy Rule that says that no one can receive it who has even the slightest problem about his health. And so it means that God has not yet found me worthy to wear the cassock, and so I trust in your prayers that I may soon get well and see my desire fulfilled.’”<sup>5</sup>

But in the end, given the circumstances of his illness and also his age (23-24) the Superiors had to suggest to Zatti that he make his profession as a Salesian brother. It was certain that “it was the total donation of himself to God in Salesian life to which Artemides aspired in the first place.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 17 and *Positio*, p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Even on this decisive point for his life, Zatti was growing in maturity. Again, we read in Fr Vecchi's letter: "Priest? Brother? He himself once said to a confrere: 'you can serve God as a priest or as a brother: before God one is as good as the other provided you live it as a vocation and with love.'"<sup>7</sup>

On 11 February 1911 he professed perpetual vows and the same year, following Fr Garrone's death, he took his place, first as the one responsible for the pharmacy attached to the San José hospital in Viedma and then – from 1915 – as the one in charge of the hospital itself. Hospital and pharmacy would become Artemide's field of work.

So, with enormous energy, sacrifice and professionalism, Zatti was the soul of the hospital from 1915, for 25 years. But in 1941 it had to be demolished: the Salesian superiors had decided to use the land occupied till then by the health facility for the construction of the bishop's residence. Artemides suffered intensely at the thought of the demolition, but in a spirit of obedience he accepted the decision and moved the patients to the premises of the Sant'Isidro Agricultural School where he established a new set of arrangements for the care and assistance of the sick and poor.

After further years of intense service, and by then relieved of the responsibilities of health administration, following a fall during some repair work in 1950 clinical examinations revealed a tumour on the liver for which treatment was in vain. He accepted it and knowingly followed the development of the illness. In fact, he prepared his own death certificate for the doctor! His suffering was constant, but he spent his last months in expectation of the final moment he had prepared for when he would meet the Lord. He himself said: "Fifty years ago I came here to die and now the moment has arrived, so what more could I wish for? I have spent all my life preparing for this moment..."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 20 and *Summarium*, p. 310, no. 1224.

<sup>8</sup> *Positio*, p. 198.

His death occurred on 15 March 1951 and the spread of the news mobilised the population of the whole of Viedma to pay a tribute of gratitude to this Salesian who had dedicated his entire life to the sick, especially the poorest of them. “The whole of Viedma did honour to the “*kinsman of the poor*”, as he had been known for some time; the one who had always been ready to welcome those with particular maladies and people who came from the distant countryside; the one who had been able to enter the poorest of houses at any hour of the day or night without causing raised eyebrows; the one who, though he was always ‘in the red’, had maintained a unique relationship with the city banks, which were always open to friendship and generous collaboration with those engaged in the medical care of the citizens.”<sup>9</sup>

People came from everywhere for the funeral, confirming the reputation for holiness that surrounded Artemides Zatti and that prompted the opening of the Diocesan Process in Viedma (22 March 1980). Zatti was declared Venerable on 7 July 1997 and St John Paul II proclaimed him Blessed on 14 April 2002.

## **b. God’s pedagogy in his saints**

To better understand the figure of Artemides Zatti we have the valuable guidance of a richly significant theological principle which comes from the pen of Hans Urs von Balthasar:

“Only the picture [of Jesus] the Spirit keeps before the Church has been able, down the centuries, to change sinful men into saints. Any presentation of Jesus which claims to mediate knowledge of him must be subjected to the same criterion: its power to change lives.”<sup>10</sup>

Balthasar, in these words, points out the evidence that has always accompanied the history of the Church: the action of the Spirit manifests itself as a transforming power in human life,

<sup>9</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Does Jesus Know Us? Do We Know Him?*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1983, 93-94.

testifying to the perennial relevance and vitality of the Gospel. In this way, the good news of Jesus continues to live and spread according to the rule of the Incarnation and, especially in the flesh and lives of the saints because of their profound consent to the Spirit, Easter bursts forth in the historical present of the ever new *here* and *now* where wonders that confirm the faith of the Church grow.

The saints, then, are the achievement of the Spirit. In the simplicity of their transfigured lives they offer precise features of the Son that are given by the Father to this world of toil, in the relevance of a time and proximity of places in need of salvation and hope.

If God guides his Church through the obedient life of his most docile and daring children, reflections of the Gospel must first of all shine through each of their stories that transform a *day-to-day biography into a hagiography*. And then, it is we who must recognise the seeds of Easter that are capable of triggering renewed ecclesial journeys among the people of God.

Artemides Zatti confirms this rule of holiness: hagiography is the light of the Spirit emanating from the simplicity of his biography, so convincing because it is lived in the fullness of humanity, and so surprising as to make visible “a *new* heaven and a new earth” (*Rev* 21:1). Thus, the seeds of Easter, the gift of the life of this Salesian coadjutor brother to the world, transformed places of suffering – the San José and Sant’Isidro hospitals – into extraordinarily radiant seedbeds of Christian hope. “His was an active presence in society, completely animated by the charity of Christ which drove him on!”<sup>11</sup>

It is then possible to meditate on the gift that the Spirit gives to the world, the Church, the Salesian Family with Zatti’s holiness, pausing first on the brilliance of his biography, his life story – a fully embodied Gospel of vocation, trust and dedication – to then go on to consider the paschal power of his apostolate,

<sup>11</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

building up in his hospitals the Church that cares for people, is close to them, saving them, sharing in the redemption and nourishing the faith of the people of God.

If we want a concise expression of the secret that inspired and guided Artemides Zatti's life, the steps he took, his work, commitments, joy, tears..., then Fr Vecchi's words sum it up nicely: "*following Jesus, with Don Bosco and in Don Bosco's manner, always and everywhere.*"<sup>12</sup>

## 1. A MAN OF THE GOSPEL

### 1.1. The Gospel of vocation: "I believed"

The story of Artemides Zatti strikes one for its vocational distinctiveness above all. A luminous vocation because it is purified by a mysterious pedagogy of God that unfolds in his life through different and demanding mediations and situations. Christian life is the shared inspiration of Artemide's family, who interpreted everything in the light of the mystery of God; It would be Argentina, their second homeland reached through emigration, that would demonstrate the Zatti family's rootedness in an uncommon faith. Cardinal Cagliero wrote:

"Our compatriots, even those who belong to the most religious populations of Italy, seem to change their nature when they arrive here. Immoderate love of work, the religious indifference prevailing in these countries, very frequent bad example... brings about an incredible transformation in the spirit and heart of our good peasants and artisans. In exchange for the handful of *scudi* they earn, lose their faith, morality and religion."<sup>13</sup>

The Zatti family would not succumb to the influence of their environment. On the contrary, they stood out for their fervent, forthright, courageous religious practice, free of human respect;

<sup>12</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> *Positio*, 31.

and Artemides would continue to nurture an intense relationship with God within the family, substantiated by prayer, hard work, uprightness, so, “everything leads us to believe... that the religious formation that the Servant of God received as a child and in his early youth... must have been privileged and in such a way as to explain the spiritual attitudes that he maintained throughout his life.”<sup>14</sup>

Artemides’ experience reflects the luminous discretion of the “high standard of ordinary Christian living” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31) the fruit of an exclusive rootedness in God, of a faith lived as courageous and radiant obedience because it was free, joyful and fruitful.

When Salesian Fr Cavalli, Artemide’s parish priest and guide on the ways chosen by the Spirit, needed to support him in his choice of life’s ultimate direction, his discernment would be simple and clear: he would see that the call to give himself totally to God as a priest resonated in the heart of this young man in an integral and pure way, untainted by self-seeking and self-interest, but ignited by the desire to serve the Gospel of the Kingdom.

And because of Artemides’ characteristic readiness to give of himself, God did not limit himself to calling him, but was able to pour into him the incontrovertible sign of his presence: the cross his Son bore. Thus, at the very heart of the vocational discernment of this young man eager to become a priest, the seal of God’s predilection becomes recognisable: Artemides, accepted in Bernal as an aspirant, is asked to carry out a risky service, the care of a priest suffering from tuberculosis – as mentioned earlier. This unstinting service led Artemides subsequently to contract the disease that would demand the sacrifice of his vocational dream: Zatti would be a Salesian, but not a priest.

Here we recognise the power of the Gospel unconditionally accepted in the lives of the saints; a power that provokes a pure vocational response because it is guarded by a heart not only de-

<sup>14</sup> *Positio*, 21.

tached from evil – an essential condition for listening to the voice of God – but also capable of freedom with respect to good, an essential condition of a rock-solid faith in the Absolute that is God.

Walking in the luminous darkness of faith, Artemides sacrificed the desire to serve the Church in the ministerial form of the priesthood, while embracing its essence, according to Christ “who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God.”<sup>15</sup>

The characteristics of the gospel of vocation are thus recognised, indelibly, in the fullness of self-sacrifice that sealed the beginning of Zatti’s Salesian life well before crowning its fullness.

And fidelity to the lay form of Salesian life, embraced out of pure love for God, would be full and convinced, far from any regret, and would unfold in a convincing and contented existence.

This is the gospel of vocation, the good news of God’s call individually reserved for each of his children, a call of which God alone knows the purpose, the reasons, the destination, the concrete unfolding. A call that becomes perceptible only in the pure correspondence of love which, in turn, wants “to rid itself of its most dangerous enemy, its own freedom of choice. Hence, every true love has the inner form of a vow: it binds itself to the beloved – and does so out of motives and in the spirit of love.”<sup>16</sup>

*The gospel of vocation*, in Zatti’s holiness, is the gospel of pure faith: the good news of the healthy breath of the heart that savours freedom in obedience to God’s plan, guardian of the mystery of every life called to be a fruitful branch of the true Vine, entrusted to the wisdom of the “Vine-grower” (*Jn* 15:1).

Read with the “categories” of our time, Artemides Zatti’s holiness provokes “vocational fear”, fear that clutches the heart in mistrust before the mystery of God. The gospel of vocation announced by the life of this Salesian coadjutor brother saint shows that only by corresponding to God’s dream is it possible,

<sup>15</sup> *Heb* 9:14

<sup>16</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *The Christian State of Life*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1977, 39.

at any age and in any situation, to overcome the paralysis of the ego, with the poverty of its gaze and its measures, and the narrowness of its uncertainty and its fear.

When Fr Garrone – a Salesian of outstanding virtue in his own right, in addition to the great medical competence he had gained through his generous service to the sick – encouraged the tuberculosis-stricken Artemides to ask for the grace of being cured through the intercession of the Virgin and with a vow to dedicate himself to the sick for the rest of his life, Zatti’s faith gave proof of itself: simple, selfless, unreserved and encapsulated in the phrase: “I believed!”

“I believed”. That is, when a word or two is enough to speak one’s faith, because faith is pure; and only this faith is vocationally generous because of the lightness of its purity that “gives wings to the heart and not chains to the feet.”

Artemides Zatti’s holiness reaches out to our own vocational journeys, as tired and dreary as they sometimes are, with the disruptive force of an “I believed” that never failed: faith’s present moment that continues throughout life and makes it credible. His was a faith of *continuous union with God*. In the collection of testimonies, Archbishop M. Pérez said: “The impression I received was that of a man united with the Lord. Prayer was like the breath of his soul, all his behaviour showed that he lived God’s first commandment to the full: he loved him with all his heart, with all his mind and with all his soul.”<sup>17</sup>

We are called to see the value of Zatti’s testimony for renewing the ardour of our vocation ministry and to offer young people the example of a life that the solidity of faith makes complete, simple, courageous by the power of the Spirit and the docility of the one who is called.

### 1.2. The Gospel of trust: “I promised”

*The gospel of vocation* which Zatti is testimony to, enlivens the second verb of fundamental importance: promise.

<sup>17</sup> *Summarium*, p. 43, no. 160.

We often experience the weakness of human promises today; we fear their unreliability, their inability to be definitive: hence the vocational ‘winters’ that are affecting the family, Congregations in many parts of the world, the Church – and that make it urgent to proclaim the Gospel of God’s call and the believer’s response.

Reflecting on the essence of vocation, which is the result of genuine belief, Von Balthasar writes: “There is no progress in love without at least a modicum of this *attitude of self-surrender*... [Love] wants to abandon itself, to surrender itself, to entrust itself, to commit itself to love. As a pledge of love, it wants to lay its freedom once and for all at the feet of love. As soon as love is truly awakened, the moment of time *is transformed for it into a form of eternity*... timed love, interrupted love is never true love.”<sup>18</sup>

Even at a young age and precisely at a moment of great trial, Artemides Zatti felt the call to the fullness of self-commitment through a radical and irrevocable promise. When he was much older, testifying to the gratitude he felt towards Fr Evasio Garone, his benefactor, and recalling the beginnings of his own journey of consecration, Zatti was able to be succinct and to the point in presenting what was at the heart of his youthful compliance with the Lord’s call: “I believed, I promised.”

Zatti’s “*I promised*” followed his “*I believed*” but it also shaped its radical nature and human and Christian quality. Artemides believed because he promised and not only promised because he believed: in him we see realised the rule of faith which, if it cannot count on the readiness to promise, to surrender oneself, descends into spiritual interest, mere social service and religious contract.

Zatti did not wait for guarantees before risking his life. He did not ask for the right to “a hundredfold here below” as the prior condition before casting his nets; rather did he “readily offer to assist a priest suffering from consumption and contracted the disease: he never uttered a word of complaint, accepted the

<sup>18</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *The State of Christian Life*, 34.

illness as a gift from God and bore its consequences with fortitude and serenity.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus Artemides’ generosity was something he paid for even before his religious profession, and it was a high price: a debilitating illness, a shattered vocational dream, acute suffering, and – above all – total uncertainty. But at the crossroads of faith and promise, the gospel of vocation brought about the wonders of holiness in this life, right from his youth.

Zatti’s promise was pure, disinterested, like his faith, and it meant that the integrity of his abandonment to God’s plan and the generosity of his self-giving and self-commitment shone forth, showing his genuine theological depth: Artemides made his own the life of the obedient Son who allows himself to be totally dictated to and destined by the Father’s love for the salvation of the world.

Zatti’s vocational alphabet was as profound as it was simple and clear:

“I believed, I promised”. Zatti believed and promised as radically as the Gospel because he had already practised the Lord’s Passion as the rule for his faith and dedication, as he never tired of saying in his letters to family members: “Our joys are our crosses, our comfort is in suffering, our life is our tears, but with the ever dear and inseparable companion by our side, the hope of reaching beautiful paradise when our pilgrimage on earth is completed.”<sup>20</sup>

The cross is the rule of faith, and teaches how Christian belief is not a mere knowing something but entrusting oneself to Someone by promising Him not something, but oneself. Formed by the cross, even before undertaking the journey of religious life, Artemides did not *promise* but *promised himself*, did not *make a vow*, but *vowed himself*, and thus reflected the features of the Son who “came into the world... he said: ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no plea-

<sup>19</sup> *Positio*, 206 (Spiritual profile of the Servant of God).

<sup>20</sup> *Positio super scriptis* 12.

sure. Then I said: “See, God, I have come to do your will, O God” (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)” (*Heb 10: 5-7*).

And, still in the school of the Lord Jesus, Zatti learned that the radical nature of promising oneself is matched by the growing boldness of faith. Those who give themselves completely to God can abandon themselves to the certainty of receiving everything from Him, and Artemides never tired of reminding us of this in his letters: “I recommend that you should not be afraid or ashamed to ask for graces. Ask, and you shall obtain; and the more you ask, the more you shall obtain; for the one who asks much, receives much; the who asks little, receives little; and the one who asks nothing, receives nothing. [...] I will not stand here listing the graces that you must ask for; you know them well. I only place one before your eyes: that we may all love and serve God in this world and then enjoy Him in the next.”<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3. The Gospel of dedication: “I recovered”

“*I recovered*” is the verb with which Zatti sealed the event that introduced him to Salesian life.

What does “*I recovered*” mean? Certainly, the tuberculosis that had undermined his health was overcome by Zatti and in a way that surprised the doctors:

“In the Viedma Process, the court asked whether the recovery was miraculous. As far as we know, it was not instantaneous but, according to the doctors... who knew Zatti well until his death, it was extraordinary due to the scarcity and ineffectiveness of the cures of the time, the continuity of his recovery and the more than normal physical robustness that the Servant of God always enjoyed, despite his life of hardship. Our Lady’s intervention seems undeniable, whether it was a miracle or an extraordinary grace.”<sup>22</sup>

The finger of God, however, acted in its own unmistakable style: God did not eradicate the illness by restoring Artemides’ life

<sup>21</sup> *Letter to his father*, Viedma 15 June 1908.

<sup>22</sup> *Positio*, 75-76.

to its pre-disease condition, nor did he unravel the mystery typical of every divine design and human existence. Thus, as we know,

“while noting the improvements in the Servant of God’s health, the Superiors were not fully persuaded about his future chances. Tuberculosis, in those days, never gave certainty of recovery and definitive cure; the *curriculum* of studies that the Servant of God would have to tackle at his age (23-24), was still long and certainly not suitable for someone who had had tuberculosis; on the other hand, he had already begun to work in the Pharmacy, in an occupation suitable for a layman, and everything leads one to believe he did so with success and mutual satisfaction; perhaps Fr Garrone was exerting some pressure to keep him with him in his work. Given all these circumstances, the Superiors, then, had to put it to the Servant of God – who certainly, from all that appears in his writings, had decided to leave the world and consecrate himself to God – to become a Salesian religious, but as a coadjutor (brother): the solution seemed the most prudent in view of his still uncertain health: material work required less effort than a long period of strict studies.”<sup>23</sup>

God’s mystery deepened with his cure, and Artemide’s faith was asked for a purification that was perhaps more severe than the one imposed by his loss of health: to sacrifice the direction his vocation was to take. Thus Artemides was led to deepen the path of purification that God required of him: deliverance from illness was not a regaining of the strength which allows an enterprising young man to “take hold of life again”. In its own way his recovery became the desert of a new poverty, so that Zatti’s life would be a free space for God in the radical call to a new abandonment.

God cured Artemides of tuberculosis in order to renew in him the miracle of salvation from self-attachment, of detachment even from his own good plans:

“It is to be assumed that abandoning the aspiration to the priesthood was a great spiritual suffering for the Servant of God, such was the impetus and spirit of sacrifice with which he had undertaken the journey towards this goal. However, it is marvellous and indicative of extraordinary spiritual strength that there was never a word of complaint or even a word of regret or nostalgia... for this reversal in the perspective of his life.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Positio*, 80.

<sup>24</sup> *Positio*, 81.

“I recovered”, then, is the voice of coherence in Zatti’s vocational alphabet. When God calls and his creature responds, the Spirit does not merely repair human precariousness but fulfils God’s dream “See, I am making all things new” (*Rev* 21:5). Thus, while sickness inclines the human heart to withdraw into itself, Zatti’s believing and promising, nourished by love for the Lord Jesus and the Cross, produced true health: greater self-forgetfulness and unconditional submission to God, which led him to be the humble apostle of the poorest, the sick and, among them, to become the apostle of the strangest cases; in short, apostle of the abandoned and discarded of this world.

The Artemides reborn to greater poverty had surrendered himself even further, in full and active trust, to the Father’s plan: “*Ex auditu* I can say that [in the life of the Servant of God] there was a general desire for God to be glorified. As I knew him, I can assure you that he lived for the glory of God.”<sup>25</sup>

The subordination of everything to the glory of God and the sacrifice of one’s own views – including one’s plans for the good – in order to comply with God’s wisdom, which alone realises the fullness of Love, would be essential not only to the spiritual experience of this extraordinary Salesian but also to the *pedagogy of pain* that he would practice due to the specific nature of his mission.

In Zatti’s “I recovered” not only a grace but a school was fulfilled, and both were moulded by the finger of God for the good of his brothers and sisters: free from illness, Artemides would serve the sick for a lifetime, after passing through the *true recovery* that would make him a *true doctor* for the creatures he would bend over.

“He often made the sign of the Cross and had the sick make it; he loved to teach it to children. Faith and medicine formed a symbiosis in him; without faith he did not cure, nor did he cure without medicine. Nor did he see any dichotomy between the soul and the body; the human being was one, and he cured this human being: body and soul.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Summarium* 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Summarium* 80.

Only because he was led by the hand of God to experience healing as dying to self could Zatti be close to the sick with the medicine of Incarnate and Crucified Love, dispensing comfort, light and hope.

## 2. AN EASTER WITNESS

If – because of the way he was reached by God’s call – the *Gospel of vocation* shines out in an original and very relevant way in Zatti’s life, his apostolic sowing is fulfilled as the skill of caring in the light of Easter.

Being consistent with Easter is the rule of fidelity of every Christian apostolate: the practice of this rule reaches splendour in the saints, bringing the life of God into the labours of human beings, history, the world, thus building up the Church.

Zatti practised the fatigue of human suffering with paschal passion and thus built up the Church as a true field hospital (as Pope Francis continues to say today), precisely by transforming two hospitals built “at the end of the world” into living cells of the Church.

The hospitals, first of all the San José and then the Sant’Isidro, were a valuable and unique health resource for the care of the poor in Viedma and the Rio Negro region in particular at the turn of the century (19th, heading into the 20th): Zatti’s heroism made them places that radiated God’s love and where health care became an experience of salvation.

Zatti consigned his life to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan is Christ, God who is close to us (in his Beloved Son) and who knows of no indifference or contempt but offers himself, in advance, to healing even the least of his sons and daughters through the closeness of love, so that the evils of history will not condemn any of these little ones to perish outside Jerusalem.

Here is God’s miracle: in that pocket handkerchief piece of Patagonian territory where Zatti’s life flowed, a page of the

Gospel came to life. The Good Samaritan found a face, hands and passion, above all for the little ones, the poor, sinners, the least. Thus a hospital became the Father's Inn, became a sign of a Church that sought to be rich in gifts of humanity and Grace, through self-giving, service and living the commandment of love of God and neighbour.

There are numerous witnesses who allow us to contemplate the experience of the Church accessible in that field hospital brought to life by Zatti's heart on fire: by letting them speak, the charm of Artemides concerned with curing those who entrusted themselves to him emerges once again, both with the remedies of his medical skill, his presence, sympathy, prayer for all and with all, and with the everyday expression of faith of this humble Salesian. All this certainly proved more effective than many medicines.

### **2.1. Easter care and service (*diakonia*) of wounded lives**

Where there is holiness the Church spreads, and where the Church is built up there is holiness. Those who met Zatti, those who were welcomed into his hospital, experienced fraternity and experienced the Church in this fraternity.

In the radical style of the Gospel, Zatti lived the certainty that service, the characteristic feature of his vocation – *diakonia* – makes the face of the Church credible, recognisable, lovable. The door that is service attracts the human heart, especially when it is tried by life and suffering, and opens to the experience of meeting Jesus the true Good Samaritan, and Zatti did his best to live as a Good Samaritan. “The hospital and the houses of the poor, which he visited night and day using a bicycle now considered a historical relic in the city of Viedma, were the front line of his mission. He lived the total donation of himself to God and the dedication of all his strength to the good of his neighbour.”<sup>27</sup>

Zatti was a witness of service, and just as Jesus gave himself

<sup>27</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.* p. 21.

up to the end, Zatti carried out, to the point of heroism, in the footsteps of his Lord, a fully Christian gift of self and *diakonia*. It is worth emphasising, in the unanimous words of witnesses, the extraordinary characteristics of Zatti's evangelical *diakonia*: the universality of his dedication, the totality of his self-giving, the generosity born of God being at his side, in obedience to Him, accomplished in Him and for Him.

That Zatti's service knew of no favouritism, made no preference of individuals was visible to all who knew him:

"I know that he visited the prison to look after the sick. He was helpful and friendly with unbelievers and enemies of the Church. I remember a doctor commenting on the title of Father Entraigas' book 'The Kinsman of All the Poor' saying that it should be corrected to 'Kinsman of everyone' because of the fairness with which he [Zatti] did not distinguish between all those who sought him out."<sup>28</sup>

If there was a preference for someone in Zatti's service and self-giving, it was the preference taught by the Good Shepherd, sensitive above all to the fate of the most injured and lost sheep: "It was one of [Zatti's] predilections that he gave himself totally to God in these humble, defenceless people or those with infirmities that were so repulsive that when someone wanted to send them to a hospice because they had been in the San José Hospital for many years, he replied that these true *lightning rods* of the Hospital should not be abandoned."<sup>29</sup>

Zatti, then, served with his whole self, consuming himself in generosity without measure in the most disparate forms of feverish activity aimed only at meeting the demands of all:

"Since his kindness and good will in serving others was known to all, everyone turned to him for the most disparate things... Rectors of houses in the Province wrote to him for medical advice, sent confreres to him for assistance, and entrusted service people who had become incapacitated to his hospital. The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians were no different from the Salesians in asking for favours. Italian mi-

<sup>28</sup> Testimony of Carlo Tassara, *Summ.* 126-127.

<sup>29</sup> Testimony of Archbishop Carlo Mariano Peréz, *Summ.* 52.

grants asked for help; those who had been well cared for at the Hospital had people write to Italy, asked for files, as if it were an expression of gratitude, and sent relatives and friends to be cared for because of the respect they had for his care. Civil authorities often had incapacitated people to care for and resorted to Zatti. Seeing he was on good terms with the authorities, prisoners and others recommended that he ask for clemency for them or get their problems solved.”<sup>30</sup>

Zatti’s service was continuous and selfless and precisely because of this, unrestrained by touchiness, ingratitude, lack of correspondence or nagging demands: “Concern for his neighbour in the servant of God was extraordinary in his daily work; from morning to night he lived for his beloved sick. These circumstances increased at night, when no matter what time they called him, he would rush to them... I know that he often had to suffer the excessive demands of some patients, their inordinate needs, whims as in the case... of patients with mental illness. The Servant of God never lost his patience. I remember seeing him on more than one occasion go out in bad weather, cold and rain on his bicycle (not the latest model) to care for the sick among the population, riding along quite impassable roads.”<sup>31</sup>

What deeply marked Zatti’s *diakonia*, his service to all, was his being in the company of the Lord. No one missed how competent this generous nurse was, but equally evident was his being on a mission with Jesus:

“One very concrete personal item: I was a novice and then a newly-ordained priest, and I came to Viedma because of some pustules especially on my neck and face and the Servant of God always welcomed me with a smile, cured me by cauterising me with a hot tip, humming the *Magnificat* while he worked and then encouraging me to offer these sufferings up for holy perseverance in my vocation.”<sup>32</sup>

Again, obedience to God and his plan shone out in Zatti as the soul of humble and trusting service meant to inspire feelings

<sup>30</sup> Luigi Fiora, *Biografia, Positio* 132.

<sup>31</sup> Testimony of Archbishop Carlo Mariano Pérez, *Summ.* 43-47.

<sup>32</sup> Testimony of Archbishop Carlo Mariano Pérez, *Summ.* 43.

of abandonment to God in the poor and the sick. Everything found inspiration in God, and Zatti carried out everything in accordance with God's command, so that the service of this great Salesian was a continuous and fascinating practice of the precept of love:

he "loved God above all things. For him all things of this earth were passing and secondary. For me, Zatti was constant, unwavering in his love for God and in his piety. Not only in acts of piety but in all service to his neighbour he always kept the name of God on his lips. He urged all those close to him to live prayerfully. Zatti was always an example, his piety was above the ordinary."<sup>33</sup>

Zatti's service, however, as is always the case with saints, was a *diakonia*, a service performed certainly in obedience to God, but above all in the name of God, lending God his face, his heart, his hands in the certainty – a source of great boldness – of being but a small instrument of his great Power and Providence. Thus Zatti worked with extraordinary generosity but with total abandon because he knew that it was his Lord who acted in him: "He always hoped and trusted in God. The serenity with which he overcame difficulties was a demonstration of his hope in God. He always said: 'God will provide', but he said it with full confidence and hope."<sup>34</sup>

Zatti, believer and true man, was "moved by love for his neighbour, because he saw the suffering Christ in every sick person. Such was the kindness he showed the sick that he did not deny them anything";<sup>35</sup> "For the Servant of God, love was manifested in the charity with which he assisted the 'other Christs'. With his Gospel notion that whatever his disciples would do for their neighbour they would be doing to Christ himself, the Servant of God habitually behaved charitable towards all, even when dealing with the unbelieving or indifferent."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Testimony of García Oscar Giovanni, *Summ.* 113.

<sup>34</sup> Testimony of Ferdinando Enrique Molinari, *Summ.* 151.

<sup>35</sup> Testimony of Noelia de Tofoni Morero, *Summ.* 259.

<sup>36</sup> Testimony of Fr De Roia Luigi, *Summ.* 271.

Either by outwardly living a Church of service capable of reaching out to its poor, or by serving those who knocked at the doors of his hospital – first at San José and then at Sant’Isidro – so that they might encounter God’s love there, Zatti gave his whole self to God, becoming a servant of the Lord, an authentic missionary of the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus.

## **2.2. Easter fraternity and communion (*koinonia*) in shared life**

Zatti’s holiness brings us to the heart of the Church not only because of the uniqueness of his *diakonia*, but also because of the quality of communion that flourished through his giving of himself to others. What communion was for Zatti is attested as much by the testimonies of those who witnessed its action, as by the way in which he went through the most trying moments that marked his life.

A particularly painful event for him occurred when his superiors opted for the demolition of the San José Hospital to which Artemis had dedicated all his energy; Viedma lacked the premises for the episcopacy, and in order to build a suitable bishop’s residence, it was decided to demolish the old hospital, with the burden of transferring all health services to the premises of the Agricultural School of Sant’Isidro, the site of another Salesian work in Viedma.

For Zatti, the demolition was not a simple building operation, it was a raw and crucifying trial: not only did the rubble of an old hospital lie before his eyes, but the doubt that his life might have collapsed with those walls, and that his renunciations and privations, misunderstandings and vigils, headaches and sweat, dedication to others and self-sacrifice had also ended there. Zatti was not spared this chalice, but remained upright with Christian fortitude and gentleness: “at the time of the demolition of the San José hospital, he had first proposed that the bishop’s palace be built elsewhere and the land be exchanged; then, given the inexorability of the demolition, which... he felt

enormously because of his extreme human sensitivity, he did not rebel or protest; on the contrary, he calmed those who tried to make him rebel.”<sup>37</sup>

As is always the case in the lives of saints, the trial was both a dark crucible and a luminous demonstration: with his serenity of spirit and alacrity in setting up the new health services building, Zatti showed what the foundation of his dedication was: the real hospital he had built could not be reduced to rubble because it was an invention of charity, the charity that “never ends” (1 Cor 13:8), and that expresses the miracle of communion, a reflection of the eternal life of God. Zatti’s true hospital was not an earthly building dedicated to San José or San’Isidro; in those rooms, his professionalism welcomed everyone, through the door of service, so that they might experience the true and full tenderness of God.

Zatti did not preach the catechism of communion, but by his holiness he embodied it; and his hospital was not an imposing building, but an evident, daily miracle of service and communion. There “The Servant of God directed the staff, which was made up of various people who lived in the hospital, like a superior of a religious community... The staff loved him, revered him and followed his rules to the letter. Nobody ever lacked what was necessary: moral, spiritual or technical for the fulfilment of their duties, and this because of the personal concern of the Servant of God.”<sup>38</sup>

That it was Zatti’s spiritual stature that made him the architect of communion is everyone’s belief:

“During the years I was at school in the College of St Francis de Sales, the Hospital was a dependency of the College and one knew everything that went on here as well as there. I never heard of any quarrels or misunderstandings between Zatti’s co-workers that could have any relevance and be the cause of gossip in the village or in the school.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Testimony of Enrico Mario Kossman, *Summ.* 10.

<sup>38</sup> Testimony of Fr Antonio F. Fernández Prieto, *Summ.* 61

<sup>39</sup> Testimony of Fr Mario Brizzola, *Summ.* 75

Christian communion, when it is brought about, does not go unnoticed for its beauty that surprises a world laid low by rancour and division; it is only the saints, however, who know the price of communion at its fullest, how it is quite foreign to on-the-spot reaction, artificial sympathy or ease without sacrifice. The saints know how much communion costs because they know what its source is: the Lord's wounded side, which performs the work of reconciliation among and with human beings.

Zatti knew that only the Blood of the Lord creates communion, and he chose the path of faithful and daily participation in the sacrifice of the Son with a smile on his face, fortitude in his soul, peace in his heart, his hands pierced by work and fatigue. Making the commitment required by his sacrifice almost imperceptible, Zatti

“was a man who radiated peace, [a man] of action, dynamic, who showed no nervousness, was cheerful. It was common for him to joke... to cheer up a sick person... He was a man who did not waver in his religious practices... a sign of his effort to improve himself. Personally, what I noticed most about him was his charity and humility.”<sup>40</sup>

Zatti's humility built up the Church and made the communion of which he himself was the creator a Christian communion; those who do not die to themselves every day, carry with them the heaviness of selfishness that wounds communion. Only humility heals relationships and overcomes the lure of power, control, seduction, prevarication. Without many words or speeches, Zatti knew that only with humility can one be the builder of *koinonia* which is the result of and condition for effective and unobtrusive *diakonia* that does not create dependence but restores dignity; only humility serves in a generative way, fostering a communion that nurtures bonds and promotes autonomy. Humility is God's virtue because it is the secret of every father, the hope of every son, the spirit of every true life.

Zatti was able to be a servant and creator of communion be-

<sup>40</sup> Testimony of Oscar Giovanni, García *Summ.* 113

cause of the humility that made him a simple child of God, alive with the life of the Spirit, and father of all:

“I believe that in Zatti’s relationship with his co-workers there were never any problems because he was like a father to everyone. I remember that everyone missed him a lot when he was away in Rome for the Canonisation of Don Bosco”;<sup>41</sup> “Zatti’s relationship with the hospital was like that of a father. I know of no misunderstandings or difficulties: if there were any, I believe they were not on his part. From the nurses with whom I dealt..., I heard nothing but praise and no complaints.”<sup>42</sup>

### 2.3. Easter closeness and the *martyria* of life without end

Our confrere Artemide Zatti truly testified by his life (*martyria*) that the Lord is risen. “I am the light of the world” (*Jn* 8:12) the Lord said of himself. The Gospel is Light that seeks to penetrate people’s lives, and Light for the world is the Church, God’s living sacrament. Zatti’s holiness, nourished by the Jesus’s Passover, is also light, and the poor and sick of Viedma in particular experienced this. Zatti welcomed them through the door of service, kept them within the walls of communion, but so as to offer them, through his testimony of life, the light of the Gospel, the splendour of Easter that illuminates the Church.

Believers and non-believers alike were thunderstruck by Zatti’s words and gestures; his testimony was shadowless, extraordinarily Salesian, reached everyone and proclaimed two decisive features of the God of Jesus through two words: Providence and Paradise.

There is no Church where there is no explicit proclamation of the name of God, a proclamation paid for with the martyrdom of life, in the sign of blood or charity; where Zatti’s service and communion went, the proclamation of the name of God, of these two names that are so Christian and so Salesian, resounded: Providence and Paradise.

Zatti proclaimed with his life that everything in God is love,

<sup>41</sup> Testimony of Giuseppe Nicola Costanzo, *Summ.* 103.

<sup>42</sup> Testimony of Amalia Teresa Giraudini, *Summ.* 117.

but concrete, attentive, boundless and detailed love for each creature: God's love is Providence. God's Providence, however, is not timeless but eternal, and then comes the second name: Paradise; Paradise is the proper name for God's desire in history to provide for his creatures in order to have them with him forever, for eternity.

Zatti was a teacher of this Christian alphabet:

"It was his constant desire that the Lord be known and loved. He testified to this by the joy he expressed when a new patient, who knew nothing of God, became a devout Christian. His first concern was to look after them in a caring manner and inspire confidence in divine Providence."<sup>43</sup>

His sense of Providence was not the obligatory response to precarious conditions, a sort of last resort offered to shipwrecked people so they didn't founder in difficult times. Witnessing to Providence for Zatti meant teaching them to talk to God, call him by name with Christian trust, because

"he was very much convinced of the Gospel principles and one that was firmly engraved on his heart and mind was 'strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (*Mt* 6:33). He had learnt in Don Bosco's school – having read much about his life – never to mistrust God's help, especially when he is honoured, as he wishes, in each of our neighbours."<sup>44</sup>

But a Providence without Paradise would not allow the proclamation of God's name to withstand the impact of history with its burden of fatigue, suffering and death. Inside and beyond the hospital, Zatti inspired a Church that was always visited by pain and death, and this demanded a fullness of faith and witness, demanded that he proclaim the name of God's only wish for humankind: Paradise. When he bore witness to Paradise, Zatti showed his certainty "regarding eternal life and its acquisition by grace and good works; this he manifested espe-

<sup>43</sup> Testimony of Manuel Linares, *Summ.* 92.

<sup>44</sup> Testimony of Archbishop Carlo Mariano Pérez, *Summ.* 36.

cially in the face of death... I personally heard him rejoice at being able to give religious assistance to the sick and exclaim... 'Today we have sent two or three to heaven'"<sup>45</sup>

With these two names of God, Zatti evangelised life and death, joy and pain, health and illness as true Christian witness, as a martyr in the daily martyrdom of charity. Zatti's proclamation and *martyria* did not divulge a Gospel of circumstance or opportunity but spread Salt, Light, Yeast, lent face, heart and hands to a Gospel that asks for life and pervades it throughout, dissolves conundrums and conquers anguish with the warmth of Truth: "From the time I knew him, he always gave more importance to religious practices than to his work, although he did this with perseverance. He often quoted the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, to console the sick or encourage virtue... It was very difficult for him not to put a spiritual thought into his conversations. Once, while talking to him, I mentioned the discovery of some new medicines such as penicillin and sulphonamides; the Servant of God listened to me and, when I finished speaking, he said: 'It is true, it is true, but people will still continue to die.'"<sup>46</sup>

The truth of the Gospel in its entirety enlightened Zatti's hospital, as it had enlightened the Oratory in Don Bosco's time: that is why in the hospital at Viedma, as within the walls at Valdocco, death was not feared, nor were expedients multiplied to soften the scandal of death or hide its evidence, deceptions that are dangerous to the human heart. Zatti faced death with the testimony of the Gospel of life: life with its feet on the ground, and therefore industrious and practical, but with its heart in heaven, and therefore confident and serene: "the only motive of his life was the expectation of a heavenly reward. He never acted to gain money or reputation, but did everything in the hope of future happiness."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Testimony of Enrico Mario Kossman, *Summ.* 14.

<sup>46</sup> Testimony of Fr Mario Brizzola, *Summ.* 79-80.

<sup>47</sup> Testimony of Fr Mario Brizzola, *Summ.* 80.

Albeit in all simplicity, his commitment to live the Gospel with his heart rooted in the ultimate prize was to bring the God of Providence and Paradise into every human wound and death, so that Life and Resurrection might flourish there. This made Zatti's testimony blessed and he invoked its presence when the precious and rare medicines of hope and consolation were indispensable. The whole town of Viedma knew this, as witnesses have confirmed with astonishing unanimity: they all called on Zatti, and he would rush to hearten and console, giving this Christian medicine that he drew upon for his own life in the Grace of God, from the Spirit himself, the Consoler. Thus it became "extraordinary in the Servant of God that he was able to instil hope in the sick, a fact that contributed almost miraculously to healing by uplifting the soul of the suffering individual."<sup>48</sup> Zatti bears witness, including to the martyrdom of charity, that the Lord is God of heaven and earth. Zatti bears witness to this with the passion of the saints which knows no measure: "I remember one patient telling Zatti that he was always preparing him for heaven but that he needed to prepare him a little for earth.

Another fact shows the atmosphere of the hospital: a nurse once insisted on preparing a patient who was not so sick for death and who is actually still alive."<sup>49</sup>

#### **2.4. Easter joy and the liturgy of life redeemed**

With his extraordinary fidelity to the central occasions of Christian life, Artemides Zatti was nourished by the Bread of the Word, the Bread of Forgiveness, the Bread of Heaven, and his life was transfigured, ever more intensely, for the benefit of a mission rich in fruits that grew. Thus, the life of Grace, intensely lived by this son of Don Bosco, reached out to all those who met him, without distinction: the sick and co-workers, confreres and authorities, the poor and benefactors, in Zatti they

<sup>48</sup> Testimony of Juan Cadorna Guidi, *Summ.* 218

<sup>49</sup> Testimony of Dr. Pasquale Attilio Guidi, *Summ.* 100.

touched the life of the Lord through the power of the sacramental mystery that is shared among people in the communion of the people of God. And so the whole Church, in the sacraments, by the power of the Holy Spirit, celebrates the Paschal Mystery and ensures nourishment for people through the sacraments for the journey and for remedies that heal humanity wounded by evil and death.

This is the Church: It flourishes and grows where service and fellowship proclaim the name of God, bear witness to the Word of Jesus, are nourished by His Body, healed by His Forgiveness. Zatti did not simply do all this, but was all this. Because of his correspondence to Grace which made his life holy, we recognise not only the Lord's gestures and words in him, but experience his very life: Zatti was a "living tabernacle", and his radiant testimony aroused questions, intentions, conversion, even in those who were far from close participation in the mystery of the Lord.

Zatti's dedication, revealing more than human roots, becomes a universally convincing proof of the supernatural power of the sacraments; his, in fact, was

"a supernatural and extraordinary love of neighbour... He was willing to make any sacrifice and that is why the difficult seemed easy for him. I think the difficult circumstances of his charitable work were the shortage of personnel, the demand for his assistance at all times, not being affected by bad weather, serving all kinds of people. I remember a relative of mine who was ill coming to visit on a day when the weather was very bad, and when someone asked him, 'Are you going out in this weather, Bro. Zatti?' he replied: 'I don't have any other kind of weather!'"<sup>50</sup>

It is a rule of the Christian liturgy to be able to give good proof of itself in the life of the believer through order, harmony, effective and supernatural energy. Zatti was a Christian, a consecrated Salesian layman of Don Bosco. He was a living stone of the Church, a witness to Easter, because the commandment of Love

<sup>50</sup> Testimony of Oscar Giovanni García, *Summ.* 114.

became visible in his works, and that made people recognise God in their neighbour and their neighbour in God. But through his life Zatti also taught that the strength needed to practise that commandment is supernatural and can only come from God, from his sacraments and from prayer and union with Him.

“Zatti practised charity in difficult circumstances due to a lack of financial resources. Also because his activity went beyond the ordinary, due to the amount of hours he dedicated to his commitments without omitting his religious obligations. Knowing him as we did, we wondered how he could sustain such great effort without the rest that is usually considered necessary.”<sup>51</sup>

Two episodes are worthy of recall as an example of the liturgy of life which made Zatti was first a disciple and then an apostle of the Crucified and Risen Lord; firstly, the demolition of the old San José hospital, with the need to transfer the sick to Sant’Isidro:

“I have no information that Zatti was notified of an eviction date, and he certainly had not received anything from his provincial, otherwise I would have known... The emotional state into which Zatti fell when the sick had to be removed in case the rubble fell on them, could have been psychologically fatal. He wept bitterly, but after praying before the Blessed Sacrament, he set to work with calm energy”;<sup>52</sup>

and then there was his service to the dying:

“A young man was about to die, and Zatti was conversing with him after giving him communion; at a certain point the young man began shouting ‘Zatti, I’m going to die!’ and at the same moment got out of bed; looking him in the eyes, Zatti smiled and said: ‘How wonderful, you are going to heaven!’ and the young man fell back with a smile that copied Zatti’s, and which remained etched on his face.”<sup>53</sup>

This is what happens when the Eucharist becomes life and the Paschal Mystery becomes daily practice: human greatness is transformed, by the power of the Spirit, and every action of a be-

<sup>51</sup> Testimony of Luigi De Palma, *Summ.* 135.

<sup>52</sup> Testimony of Fr Feliciano López, *Summ.* 178.

<sup>53</sup> Testimony of Fr Feliciano López, *Summ.* 174.

liever is performed in Christ, for Christ and with Christ, making life a liturgy and transfusing the holy gifts of the liturgy into life.

Our dear Artemides Zatti, indebted in everything to the Mysteries of the Lord, knew that everything could only be achieved thanks to Him; hence his humility:

“I remember that, as my brother Salvador was very ill with typhoid fever, the Servant of God went to treat him several times a day. On one occasion, meeting up with him on his way to Salvador’s house, I was distressed and said to him: ‘Bro. Zatti, please save my brother!’ He turned and looked me in the eyes, and said sternly: ‘Don’t be blasphemous, only God saves!’”<sup>54</sup>

Artemides Zatti’s was a life of self-gift, communion, and witness to the risen Lord. A life full of graces that led him to a fully Christian death: “Asked if his pain was constant, strong or otherwise, without answering directly he said to me: ‘It is a means of purification and I am happy because I realise that I am completing the Passion of Christ, something I have inculcated so much in the sick.’”<sup>55</sup>

And Zatti’s offering as the seal of his liturgy was complete, unobtrusive, serene and joyful. It deserves to be summed up in a little story in which, behind the veil of sympathy, Zatti gave those who were looking after him the meaning of his life, which God was able to squeeze out to the full because it was mature and complete. A few months before his death, smiling about his illness – liver cancer that turned his face yellow – Zatti told a nurse that he (Zatti) would soon be coloured, too, with make-up! His, however, would be like it is in lemons, the colour of maturity which means the fruit is ready to be completely squeezed: “You wear make-up? So do I! Within six months I will demonstrate it. The lemon is of no use if it is not yellow.”<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Testimony of Pietro Echay, *Summ.* 211-212.

<sup>55</sup> Testimony of Francesco Erasmo Geronazzo, *Summ.* 274.

<sup>56</sup> Testimony of Fr Feliciano López, *Summ.* 193.

### 3. INVITATION TO A SPECIAL COMMITMENT

This was the title of the last part of Fr Vecchi's letter to which I have referred several times, and which I would like to keep and share now. In the previous pages I have attempted to outline the extraordinary figure of our Salesian coadjutor brother Artemides Zatti in a simple but incisive manner. His life's journey, imbued and filled with God, is more than evident. As is his holiness. Faced with this great figure, we see the need and importance in our Congregation of a special commitment to promote this beautiful vocation today. I make Fr Vecchi's words my own in asking of every province, every community, and every brother in the coming years, as of now, "*a renewed, extraordinary and specific commitment for the vocation of the Salesian Brother within our vocational pastoral work: in praying for this, in suggesting and proclaiming it, in welcoming it and following it up, in living it personally and together in the community.*"<sup>57</sup> There is no shortage of valuable publications on the figure of the Salesian coadjutor brother;<sup>58</sup> Perhaps what we need at this time is to make our commitment more convincing. I have often said in my visits to the provinces and also in my letters that we must first of all be men of faith, more than ever abandoned to the Lord today. Many other strategies and plans can help us, but they will not get us out of a profound difficulty. Only *trust in the Lord and recourse to him* will. The following testimony of a brother confrere has, in my opinion, a particular force to it:

"Today too resounds the call 'Come and follow me'. And I find it always a source of wonder that even today there are young men who seem to lack nothing they would need for heading towards the priesthood, and instead they choose to become consecrated laymen in the Salesian Congregation. And so in our pastoral work for vocations we

<sup>57</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> The ones offered by Fr Vecchi are available in AGC 373 (2000) and in *The vocation of the Salesian Brother in Salesian pastoral work for vocations*, in *The Salesian Brother. History, Identity, Vocational Apostolate and Formation*, Editrice SDB, Rome 1989, 133-161.

must have faith in this vocation which is complete in itself, and pass on to others esteem for it as by osmosis, without any forced comparisons or distortions in respect of the clerical figure. We must be convinced that there are young men who do not identify with the priestly model, but are attracted by that of the consecrated layman. What are the reasons for this choice? All reasons are insufficient: fundamentally it is a mystery of Grace and freedom.”<sup>59</sup>

At this point, I would like to invite you to take a closer look at forthcoming publications on both Saint Artemides Zatti and the vocation of the Salesian coadjutor brother in our Congregation in the various regions, and in the proposals of both the Youth Ministry and Formation Sectors that will undoubtedly reach us from now on as a help to the intercession that the new Salesian saint will provide for everyone and, undoubtedly in a very special way for his Salesian coadjutor brothers in the world, those who are already here and those to come by the Grace of God.

### **The power and beauty of an invitation**

I believe we should not end our discussion of the life of Artemides Zatti without evoking, once again, a letter from 1986 from Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, today Pope Francis, written to a Salesian, testifying to a grace received through Zatti’s intercession.

The story is well known: when he was Provincial of the Jesuits in Argentina, Father Bergoglio entrusted to Zatti the request to the Lord for holy vocations to the lay consecrated life for the Society of Jesus, and his Province had the grace, within a decade, of twenty-three new religious brother vocations.

The episode is relevant not only for the main characters in that story – the Master of the Harvest, a Salesian coadjutor brother saint, the current Successor of Peter – but for its content: the vocational power of Zatti’s testimony.

It is astonishing that the first Salesian to be canonised, and

<sup>59</sup> J.E. VECCHI, *op. cit.* pp. 49-50.

not because of blood martyrdom, should be a brother, and a brother who, in radical obedience to God, renounced the very form of vocation by which he had been fascinated, that of the priesthood, to be with Don Bosco, and then carried out a sacrificial service in the world of sickness and suffering.

However, the strong beauty of this testimony cannot escape us; in him shine the fundamental loves that must enkindle the Salesian's heart: love for God and his will, love for our neighbour in whose suffering limbs we see the Face of Jesus Crucified, love for the Mother of the Lord, Mediatrix of all grace, love for Don Bosco who promises bread, work and Paradise to every Salesian.

These loves shine forth in the luminous grandeur of Artemides' religious life, embraced joyfully and radically and with generous resourcefulness.

Our confrere Artemides Zatti shows us how sensitive the world is to the witness of religious life, provided that this witness is true, credible, authentic: the triumph of his funeral, his reputation for holiness, the veneration of his tomb are clear signs of how much everyone recognised the finger of God in action in this generous and faithful Salesian:

“In proportion to the inhabitants of Viedma, the number of people who flocked to the funeral was impressive. From everywhere came humble people with small bouquets of flowers. In addition to the authorities, there were many other people. In the days [following the death] people were convinced that a saint had died; some went to the grave hoping for miracles: they prayed, brought flowers.”<sup>60</sup>

Artemides Zatti's life woke up a city, and today it touches the whole world because it spoke of God: he brought the perfume of God's virginal and fruitful love among the poor and the sick, with an exemplary practice of chastity; he gave everyone the richness of faith, paying for it with a beloved poverty to the point of giving up his own room to a sick person or bringing a

<sup>60</sup> Testimony of Amalia Teresa Giraudini, *Summ.* 115-116.

deceased person there to remove them from the sight of other patients in a final gesture of tenderness and pity; he taught true freedom, obeying the will of the superiors at the cost of bitter tears, recognising them as mediators of God's plan.

An exemplary religious, by this testimony he teaches everyone that the health to be guarded above every other good is that of the soul, our soul that is so precious because it comes from God and aspires to him, often unconsciously, in the desire to find eternal Love in his arms.

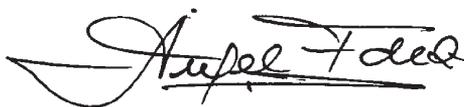
May Zatti's loves kindle our loves; may his witness to the Absolute that is God, the greatness of the soul and our true homeland inspire our gestures and our pastoral passion for a new apostolic fidelity and renewed vocational fruitfulness. May we never lack, as Artemides Zatti always sought, the maternal protection of Mary Help of Christians, and may the devotion to our Mother in every Salesian house in the world, and in every corner where the Family of Don Bosco is found, be a sure road that helps us to live a holiness like that of our confrere.

I conclude these words by proposing a prayer to the Father through the intercession of the new Salesian coadjutor brother saint, Saint Artemides Zatti.

**Prayer of intercession  
to ask for vocations of lay Salesians**

*O God, who in St Artemides Zatti  
have given us a model Salesian coadjutor brother  
who, docile to your call  
and with the compassion of the Good Samaritan  
made himself a neighbour to every human being,  
help us to recognise the gift of this vocation  
which testifies the beauty of consecrated life to the world.  
Give us the courage to propose to young people  
this form of evangelical life  
at the service of the little ones and the poor,  
and make those whom you call to this path  
respond generously to your invitation.  
We ask this through the intercession of Saint Artemides Zatti  
and through the mediation of Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

With true affection and united in the Lord with mutual prayer,  
I am yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ángel Fernández Artime". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ángel Fernández Artime, sdb  
Rector Major

## 2. GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIVES

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### 2.1 LAY-MANAGED SALESIAN WORKS UNDER PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Fr Miguel Angel GARCÍA MORCUENDE  
*General Councillor for Youth Ministry*

Turin 27 January 2023

#### 1. Background: meaning and motivations

Vatican II outlined an “ecclesiology of communion” as a suitable framework for reawakening a sense of shared responsibility. This was a new understanding of the Church as a people whose unity derives from Trinitarian communion. This ecclesiology of communion, directly linked to the doctrine of the Church and the guidelines of the Congregation, has helped us to grasp the right response that the expectations of the laity in the Church deserve and, therefore, also our provinces: expectations that concern the “universal vocation to holiness” as the real call of all the faithful to develop the fundamental “consecration” wrought in them by the Spirit, and a more ecclesial view of “consecrated life”. This is open to the complementarity of distinct vocations, promotes them in mutual spiritual and apostolic enrichment and highlights the EPC, the proper and effective place for the shared responsibility of the laity to be exercised in the one mission that refers to Don Bosco.

Over the past 30<sup>1</sup> years the Congregation has already expressed the need, in this regard, to rethink the shared responsibility of the laity, a qualifying component of our apostolic mis-

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales (C&R); General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco (GC); Salesian Youth Ministry. Frame of Reference, 2014 (FoR); Animating and Governing the Community, 2019 (AnGC).*

sion, in a new and effective way. As is known, the SDB/Lay relationship had reached a significant degree of maturity in GC23 (1990). GC24 in 1996 then delved into some aspects concerning<sup>2</sup> the *gradual shared responsibility and formation of the laity*, who are active players in our charism on the basis of the common Salesian vocation.

To give continuity to our educative and pastoral mission and out of charismatic fidelity to Don Bosco in their way of involving the laity, some Provinces have been careful to implement different experiences of lay shared responsibility in the management and educative and pastoral animation of the works. It is clear that such a solution (works entrusted to lay people as part of the province's planning) is feasible only if there are *certain criteria and specific guidelines to guarantee Salesian charismatic quality and give continuity to the mission*.

In the letter of convocation of the GC28<sup>3</sup> the Rector Major referred to "Works under shared management or entrusted to the laity", stressing that "for our part this requires *vision*, capacity for *reflection* and *decision*, because otherwise the urgent demands of life will lead us down unthinkable paths."

In fact, some provinces have articulated this mode of works managed by lay people in the distribution of human resources and activities, making "a great effort of reflection and creativity to face the challenge of accompaniment."<sup>4</sup> It is not a subsistence solution, nor something reducible to pragmatic management, but *a response of charismatic hope, apostolic commitment to the local area and institutional realism*.

The practice in some Provinces is that well-formed lay people, who have already carried out *project and management coordination tasks in various capacities and at various levels* within the

<sup>2</sup> GC24 (1996), 39, 44-47, 180-182.

<sup>3</sup> Turin, 24 May 2018.

<sup>4</sup> GC28 (2020), 34.

structured organisation of Salesian work, are gradually called upon *to take over the entire management of some works*, under the ultimate responsibility of the Provincial and his Council.

From what has been said, it is clear that only great trust in the skills, value and close attachment of adequately formed lay people can enable a natural transfer of functions and competencies. Over recent decades we have gained experience that makes us aware that the real pathways for sharing by lay people require not only time, but also investment in their formation, and that they are the result of pathways shared with confreres who have been able to enable lay people to acquire the ability to internalise values and approaches. Today we can say that there are many *mature, well-formed and reliable lay figures* in many of our Centres.

## **2. The practice of charismatic management: ongoing experiences**

There are different kinds of relationship between the SDB religious community and the Salesian work in the Congregation. There are:

a) works or sectors of works entrusted jointly to the SDB religious community and the laity.

b) works where pastoral animation, but not management, is entrusted to an SDB religious community that resides nearby, outside the work;

c) other works where there is an SDB confrere who accompanies the work carried out by the lay people responsible for the work.

d) works entrusted only to lay people without SDBs, and who are part of the provincial plan. In the latter case, there are works without an SDB religious community, or with a religious community but where the number of SDBs does not allow them to have ultimate responsibility for pastoral animation.

In this regard, and listening to this explicit need, the General

Council is invited to develop an arrangement that provides for the transition of some works to lay management. It should be emphasised from the outset that these guidelines *are not intended to encourage or promote this organisational* approach, diminishing the essential role of the religious community within the educative and pastoral community. It is intended, however, to offer an approach that gives indications on how to organise and proceed in the event that a province deems it the case that it needs to begin to further explore and broaden a shared reflection in order to arrive at this model of shared mission where the laity manage the Salesian presence.

In any case, for those Provinces that take the first steps in this situation, initially it is advisable to start one or more of these works *ad experimentum*, where the opportunity arises, also to help reflection and certainly create a new provincial mindset.

This is why we have kindly asked the provincials to send us, if they are in possession of such, the *reflections initiated and/or the processes in place* in their reference documents: resolutions of Provincial Chapters, Provincial Directories, the Overall Province Plan (OPP), processes for reorganising or reshaping the provinces, and the Salesian Province's Educative and Pastoral Plan (SEPP) where there are relevant aspects regarding this matter.

A look at our works allows us to see the different operating models in place today. *The way things are currently reflects the variety of situations*, forms and approaches that differ considerably between regions and provinces.

Reference is made in this document to assigning a work entirely to the laity, while remaining part of the Province's planning and responsibility. We are not talking here about situations where the Province entrusts an activity, a work or sectors of it and the use of properties owned by it to some legal entity (foundation, association, cooperative, company). In this latter case, the link with the Province and the Congregation must be established with regard to their project, their objectives and their statutory framework.

### 3. Guidelines and criteria for organisational models involving lay management

#### 3.1. Definition

Lay-managed works are those *in which the mission and responsibility are entrusted directly to a group of lay people with the accompaniment of the Province*, which continues to be the owner of the activity from a civil point of view. It is therefore the responsibility of the Provincial with his Council, to draw up the model of animation and governance of these works in order to guarantee their inclusion in the Overall Province Plan, the Salesian Province's Educative and Pastoral Plan and in the Provincial Directory:

- Works under lay management have a lay *director*, appointed by the Provincial with the consent of his Council, who exercises the functions assigned to him. He is the local person in charge of the Work, accountable to the Provincial.

- The Provincial ensures accompaniment *for these works through his Delegate*, normally a member of the Provincial Council.

- Where possible, there is also *a Salesian with an appropriate background* from a nearby Salesian house who is integrated into the pastoral animation and other leadership bodies of the Work.

#### 3.2. Principles for ensuring adequate charismatic quality

To initiate a process of discernment in the lay management of the Salesian Work, we are guided by the following three essential principles, based on our reflections as a Congregation:<sup>5</sup>

- Ensure the *creation and maintenance of an educational environment* inspired by the Salesian Preventive System, where “the criteria of identity, communion and Salesian significance must be ascertained.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. GC24 (1996), 180-182; GC26 (2008), 120;FoR, 118. 271; AnGC, 126.

<sup>6</sup> GC28 (2020), 41.

– Formulate *a provincial project* to give a charismatic and legal structure that specifies the responsibilities and functions of the various people responsible and bodies designated to manage and animate these works.

– Ensure *the “constant and competent accompaniment of the Provincial and his Council”*<sup>7</sup> for the lay people who manage and animate these Province works.

### *3.2.1. Ensuring an educational environment inspired by the Salesian Preventive System*

We believe that an activity or Work directed by lay people can be considered as belonging to the Provincial Project if it can ensure some fundamental conditions for the charismatic sustainability of such works, that is, if it meets the criteria of *charismatic identity, communion and significance of Salesian activity*.

In this regard, the success of lay-managed works requires that the criteria just stated be spelt out in practice in three areas: 1. evangelisation and education is central, 2. an Educative and Pastoral Community is established and 3. a local Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan is drawn up and implemented.

#### 1. The centrality of evangelisation and education

– *Evangelising intentionality and educational sensitivity* are our *raison d'être* and what we are called to pursue wherever we are present.

– *Evangelisation implies a multiplicity of aspects in all Salesian works*: presence, witness, explicit proclamation of the faith, call to personal conversion, formation of the Church, catechesis; and also inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, education, preferential option for the poor, social promotion and transformation of society.<sup>8</sup>

– *The Salesian understanding of evangelisation* is characterised by attention to the integrity of the interventions and by

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. FoR, 57-58.

an educational concern for the growth of the whole person. Education is the human place where we present the Gospel and where it acquires a typical set of features.<sup>9</sup>

– A Salesian Work is significant when it explicitly demonstrates sensitivity and commitment to the *situations of poverty of young people in the neighbourhood in which it operates*.

## 2. The establishment and functioning of the Educative and Pastoral Community

– A Salesian Work is called to become *a welcoming home for young people*. By seeing to the shared responsibility of the people in the Educative and Pastoral Community (EPC),<sup>10</sup> we seek to form, wherever we are present, a community oriented to the education of young people, which can be an experience of the Church for them and open them to personal encounter with Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

– The EPC ensures *the style of communion and participation* typical of a Salesian house, “loyalty and trust being the basis of our mutual relations.”<sup>12</sup>

– A Salesian Work is relevant when it is willing to create *spaces for youth ministry and vocational animation*, and where the whole EPC is ready to welcome those young people who wish to see and experience Salesian life, inspired by the charism of Don Bosco.

– The *Salesian Family* and the *Salesian Youth Movement* are essential charismatic elements to guarantee the existence and life of the Salesian charism wherever there is a Work with one or more settings.

## 3. The development and implementation of the local SEPP

– Salesians and lay people together experience communion and sharing by developing, implementing and verifying the local

<sup>9</sup> Cf. FoR, 59

<sup>10</sup> Cf. C. 47.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. FoR, 109.

<sup>12</sup> C. 39

SEPP *at the service of Salesian unity and identity* and, in particular, to respond to the needs of young people and ordinary folk.

– A planning mentality guarantees the educative and pastoral criteria in the mission field, in order to achieve *unified and comprehensive activity*.

– The project or plan is *the concrete instrument that makes our Salesian action prophetic*, involving all the people of the EPC in a shared style of responsibility and in an attitude of discussion and discernment.

### 3.2.2. *Those responsible, and management and animation bodies*

#### The Provincial and his Council

The Provincial with his Council are entrusted with responsibility for seeing that the provincial community is involved in discernment regarding fulfilment of the apostolic mission in the area.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it is up to the government of *the provinces to undertake future-oriented processes, accepting the challenge of being significant* within this time that the Lord has given us.

As a consequence, the Province has the responsibility of accompanying and guaranteeing the Salesian identity of all the works, even those managed by lay people, as part of its overall plan. In particular, the Province is ultimately responsible for:

– the identity, direction, animation and management of the work. It is accountable to the Congregation, the local Church and the Civil Authority;

– the appointment of the lay director of the Salesian Work and its Council (Provincial with his Council), accompanied by a formal letter of appointment;

– the appointment of the heads of the main sectors of activity of the house (Provincial with his Council);<sup>14</sup>

– the definition of the duties of the lay Director with particular reference to: proper financial remuneration; duration of

<sup>13</sup> C. 161; cf. C. 44.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. R. 183.

positions; the powers, delegations and operational limits and decision-making bodies.<sup>15</sup>

– all activity involving the responsibility of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

These works remain part of the Province and refer to it for ordinary and extraordinary management like any other work. Hence the Province takes initiatives of animation and government similar to what happens in the EPCs with a Salesian community, such as: 1. the provincial visitation; 2. evaluation of the local plan; 3. the connection of the lay director of the Work with the Provincial; 4. regular involvement of the Provincial's Delegate in the Director's council and EPC council; 5. the organisation, together with the lay people, of a carefully planned formation curriculum regarding Salesian charismatic identity;<sup>16</sup> 6. a stable and defined link with a nearby Salesian community or with the Province Centre in accordance with the decision of the Provincial and his Council, especially regarding charismatic and ministerial aspects.<sup>17</sup>

### The Director (male or female) of the Work

The term of office of the Director of the Work is normally three years, and renewable. In extraordinary situations where it is intended to extend a six-year period of service by one or more years, the approval of the Rector Major and his Council is required. In the event that the position is not renewed, legal regulations in force will be respected. To this end, it is important for the Province to provide a way for lay people to change and alternate in leadership roles.

The Director may also have other responsibilities in one of the areas of the Work.

The following characteristics must be verified for the appointment of the Director of a lay-managed Work:

– personal: it is essential that the individual has the capacity

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GC28 (2020), 45.

<sup>16</sup> GC24 (1996), 164.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. GC24 (1996), 181.b.

for relationship and leadership; that they are prepared in terms of formation for personal and group accompaniment; that they professionally master the working environment they are leading (school, associations...); that they are in a personal and family situation that allows them to carry out the service requested with quality and continuity; that they have a professional curriculum of experiences and tasks appropriate to the circumstances of the Work they will lead and direct;

– charismatic: it is preferable to have someone who demonstrates that they have adopted a personal choice of life according to gospel values from a Salesian perspective; who attests to believing and actively participating in the educative and pastoral life of the Work; who identifies with the Salesian educational style; who is informed of, knows and is attuned to the guidelines of the Congregation and the Province.

As Director of the Work, their role consists of the following *functions and responsibilities*:

a. Concerning the Salesian work:

- sees to the charismatic identity of the Work, in dialogue with the Provincial and in harmony with the Provincial guidelines: Overall Provincial Plan (OPP), the Province’s Salesian Educative and Pastoral Plan, the Provincial Directory and others;
- follows up and accompanies the general running of the Work, ensuring that the unity and integrity of Salesian pastoral care is maintained in all its activities;
- convenes and leads the Director’s Council and the Council of the EPC/Work;
- part of the parish council if the main activity is the parish;
- chairs the Institute’s Council (if the main activity of the Work is a school or a VTC [Voc. Training Centre]); hires employees and accepts/expels students in collaboration with the Province Delegate and the person who coordinates studies; participates in teachers’ meetings and class representative councils, offering guidance.

- b. With regard to animation of individuals in the EPC:
- animates the Educative and Pastoral Community: this means they not only manage (assets, facilities and structures) or make decisions, but also see to the spiritual life of its members, deal with pastoral choices and ensure that the oratory criterion runs through the life of the whole Work, promoting fraternal bonds and giving attention to the most needy young people;
  - promotes the development, implementation and review of the local SEPP and proposes common objectives for the entire Work;
  - coordinates the different settings of the Work, guaranteeing cohesion and unity;
  - supports the accompaniment of those responsible for the different settings and facilitates the flow of information and understanding between them;
  - promotes the formation processes, implementing the criteria for convocation and formation of the laity and ensuring the formation of Salesian identity, as in any Salesian Work;
  - involves the Salesian who pastorally accompanies the work and the existing pastoral team;
  - appoints the members of the Council of the Work/EPC.
- c. With regard to other particular matters regarding management, assets and external relations.

The Director of the lay-managed Work must:

- respect and ensure respect for rules in force both in civil and canonical matters relating to the entire Work, taking into account the rules of universal law, our own law and the criteria in force in the Province;
- ensure compliance with the staff selection criteria established by the Provincial and his council or by Province rules;
- submit budget and final balance to the Province for due approval<sup>18</sup> in the time and manner established by the Province,

<sup>18</sup> R. 196.

and reporting to the Provincial and the Provincial Economist whenever required;

- participate in province meetings in areas of competence;
- see to relations with other ecclesiastical and civil institutions;
- establish agreements or conventions concerning the entire

Work with external natural or legal persons, according to the guidelines in force in the Province regarding the administration of temporal assets (accounts, budgets and final balance, acts of ordinary and extraordinary administration, authorisations);

– maintain direct communication with the Provincial and his Council through the Provincial’s Delegate for Works under lay management and the various provincial delegations.

The Director of the lay-managed Work is also responsible for:

– the custody and supervision of assets (movable and immovable property), the administration of assets, the management, distribution and use of areas usable by the different groups of the Work according to the criteria established by the Provincial and his Council<sup>19</sup> or by the Provincial Directory;

– the Work, and relations with third parties (defining the criteria) and for collateral activities (such as involvement in calls for tenders, hospitality, occasional leases, etc.);

– aspects related to security and privacy. Likewise, the Director must know and make known the guidelines for the protection of minors and vulnerable individuals (Code of Ethics).

## Collegiate Bodies

### a. Council of the Director of the Work

In lay-managed works under the responsibility of the Provincial and his Council, a management and governance team is created called *the Council of the Director of the Work*. This body assists the Director of the Work in that person’s decisions, so it is ordinarily a consultative body with the task of examining, analysing, studying the main issues, informing and dialoguing,

<sup>19</sup> C. 161.

discerning, leading as far as possible to a convergence of views, operational guidelines, planning and evaluation. Its role is indispensable for joint responsibility and also for effective involvement in the governance of the Work.

The Director needs the consent of this Council to:

- Approve the annual programming of the Work and the sectors of the Work in accordance with provincial guidelines.
- Approve the local SEPP and its revision at the proposal of the Council of the Work/EPC.
- Present the Provincial with new experiences, projects or substantial changes in the structure of the Work.
- Approve the budget and final balance of the Work and the budgets of its individual sectors (if any) to be sent subsequently to the Provincial and the Council for confirmation.
- Create/propose a new role with subordinate role/function within the organisation chart of the Work.
- Appoint and/or dismiss personnel of the Work.

The Constitutions<sup>20</sup> explain what the general task of the *local Council of the religious community* is, that is, to collaborate with the Rector in the animation and governance of the religious community, a commitment that concerns the entire field of religious life and apostolic mission.

In this case, in the absence of the religious community, the commitment of the Council of the Director of the Work under lay management clearly concerns only *the essentially educational and pastoral value of the Council*: more than an administrative body, the Council is a team that shares responsibility with the Director for the fulfilment of the mission.

To this end, the composition of the Council of the Director of the Work is very flexible and adaptable to different concrete needs. In principle, however, it comprises the Director of the Work, the administrator, the coordinator of pastoral care and the directors and/or those responsible for different settings.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. C. 178.

The functions of the Council of the Director of the Work include, in addition to the above:

- supervising the Salesian identity of all areas of the Salesian Work and establishing the appropriate procedures to ensure its proper functioning, more concretely, with regard to formation and direct participation;
- identifying and examining the most important problems, collaborating in the processes of reflection and decision-making;
- informing and reflecting on financial sustainability and making viable proposals;
- bringing important questions to the attention of the Provincial Council: those relating to property, financial support, personal situations and pastoral guidelines;
- ensuring transparency in the selection and management of personnel in accordance with the criteria established by the Provincial and his Council or by Province rulings.

In ordinary operational terms the Council is convened to participate:

- at ordinary meetings, at least once a month;
- province review and planning meetings, together with other local councils;
- the visit by the Provincial or Provincial Councillors;<sup>21</sup>
- any further meetings if necessary at other times, at the discretion of the one responsible and also meetings of the Provincial and his Council if the matter so requires.

The contents and decisions of the meetings must be included (with documentation) in a minutes book to be kept locally, available to the Provincial, his delegates and canonical visitors.

The Provincial and his Council ratify the composition of this Council and the appointment of its members.

b. The Council of the Work/EPC.

It is necessary to put the Council of the Work/EPC in place when a Salesian Work consists of various settings and sectors of

<sup>21</sup> Cf. R. 146.

activity. This body animates and coordinates the Salesian Work through reflection, dialogue, programming and revision of educative and pastoral activity,<sup>22</sup> without prejudice to the competences established for the various councils, teams and bodies of the various settings, sectors and groups.<sup>23</sup>

The purpose of the Council of the Work/EPC is the *coordination, at the service of unity, of the Salesian project in the area where the Salesian Work is located*. It is “the engine and heart of the entire educative pastoral community, because the smooth running of the work depends on its quality and proper functioning.”<sup>24</sup>

The Council of the Work/EPC is made up of the main individuals who are together responsible for the settings or sectors of activity, and who share jointly in the various responsibilities arising from the management of all the settings of a work. Among others, young people, Salesians (if present), parents and lay people who are responsible in various capacities, and colleagues who work within the Salesian work should be part of it, including members of the Salesian Family (if present) in the first instance. All these individuals are identified with the mission, the Salesian educative system and spirituality, and jointly take on the task of calling on, motivating, involving those who are interested in a Work to form the EPC and carry out a project of evangelisation and education of young people.<sup>25</sup>

The number of members depends on the circumstances of each Work and the settings it involves. The number shall be proportionate to ensure the involvement of all members and the proper functioning of the Council.

At specific times other members may be invited to attend meetings as the Director of the Work deems appropriate.

The Council of the Work/EPC, among other things has the *following functions*:

<sup>22</sup> GC24 (1996), 160-161, 171; QdR, 268-269.

<sup>23</sup> GC24 (1996), 17.

<sup>24</sup> GC28 (2020), 39

<sup>25</sup> Cf. FoR, 118; AnGC, 121-122.

- fostering communion and collaboration in order to respond to the common needs of the Work;
- being attentive to the needs and requirements of the youth context in general;
- seeing to the process of drawing up and revising the Educative and Pastoral Plan, in agreement with the provincial SEPP, and guaranteeing the application of the SEPP in all settings;
- promoting information and communication among the various circles, groups, activities and initiatives;
- establishing joint activities within the framework of the annual programming, to build a sense of unity.

To carry out all this, the Council of the Work/EPC can make use of a permanent committee or *ad hoc* working committees. In addition, for its *operation*, the Council of the Work/EPC:

- meets at least three times a year: at the beginning for the annual planning; halfway through to define interventions and review the process; and at the end of the year for the evaluation (the timing of meetings of the EPC council is not defined; this is left to the initiative of the Director).
- may be convened by the Director of the Work on an ordinary or extraordinary basis at the request of at least one third of its members.
- meets to approve the SEPP of the Work, which needs the positive vote of the Director and the Council of the Work. The approved draft will be sent to the Provincial and his Council for ratification.
- requires the Director of the Work to keep the members of the Council of the Work/EPC informed of any changes that the Council of the Director intends to make to the management and operation of the Work.

The Council of the Work/EPC is chaired by the Director of the Work. The members of the Council are appointed on the basis of their responsibility in the setting in which they work. They always ensure regular presence. The Council shall appoint a secretary who shall draw up the minutes of the meetings.

At the beginning of the year, the names of the members of the Council of the Work/EPC are communicated to the Provincial and his Council.

### 3.2.3. *Provincial accompaniment of lay-managed works*

In the light of the above, there are two complementary methods of accompaniment which are necessary and not mutually exclusive: one, by the Provincial and Provincial Council, and the other, a local accompaniment.

#### Provincial delegate for lay-managed works

When the number of lay-managed works so requires, *the Provincial appoints a Salesian (normally a member of the Provincial Council) to perform this service on behalf of the Provincial in the lay-managed house(s) for which the Province is responsible. He shall maintain contact with the Provincial and the other members of the Provincial Council and shall act in accordance with the criteria and guidelines laid down by the Council.*

The Provincial, together with the Delegate for the Salesian Family and the Delegate for works under lay management, will study, on a case-by-case basis, the specific way of looking after the Salesian Family involved in the Work.

Each Provincial Community draws up or revises its own *Lay Project* (or any other name you want to give it) required by GC23<sup>26</sup> to define and guarantee procedures for cooperation, participation, integration and formation of lay people in the works.

The criteria and methods of entrusting Salesian works to the laity are indicated in it, drawing *attention to the drafting of the Statutes or Regulations*: “Since contexts and civil legislation vary so much, every Province must define the models of management for different kinds of works entrusted to the laity within a provincial project, with particular reference to tasks of responsibility, nominations, duration in office, decision-making organs and the competence of the Provincial. For this purpose the

<sup>26</sup> GC23 (1990), 238; cf. GC24 (1996), 145.

Province will propose regulations or statutes for the activity or works concerned.”<sup>27</sup>

### Local accompaniment

Where possible, the Provincial will appoint a Salesian (SDB) to be present in these works managed by lay people, but resident in a Salesian community.

In general, when possible the SDB will actively participate as a member of the Council of the Work/EPC and in the various animation teams, always respecting the authority of the lay Director. At the same time, he will provide direct pastoral accompaniment in areas that – in agreement with the lay leaders – are established as priorities.

The charismatic presence of the SDB, who will be close to and fatherly with regard to the young people and educators, must contribute to the reflection and pastoral processes of the place. It becomes essential for him to be available for accompaniment, listening and sacraments for both young people and lay people (in the case of a priest), without reducing the Salesian’s service to a purely ministerial or sacramental role. The service that is requested from the SDB is much more: to be present, to accompany, encourage, promote teamwork, build community, generate communion.

## 4. Conclusion

Concluding these reflections. We are even more aware that Salesian life is a gift and a commitment, a grace and a responsibility which has its source in God’s call and its explicit fruitfulness in the mission among young people.

Today the animation and governance of provinces involves a demanding effort and requires a far-sighted look at the path to be followed. These guidelines on the entrusting of the work to lay management under provincial responsibility and accompaniment, are intended to enlighten us in reshaping provinces and in revitalising our identity and charismatic apostolate.

<sup>27</sup> GC24 (1996), 182.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

*The main events of the Rector Major's chronicle from August to December 2022 are recorded here.*

After a busy month in July 2022, featuring especially the commitment to General Council sessions in Valdocco, Turin, which met in the premises of the former headquarters of the SEI Publishing House in Corso Regina Margherita, the main feature in August was the wonderful *Campobosco Nacional de Espana* event that began in Barcelona and ended in Turin.

This was a new edition of “Campobosco”, an SYM (Salesian Youth Spirituality) event that brings together 774 participants aged 19 and over who belong to the SDB and FMA SYM groups in Spain and Portugal.

Led by the national Salesian Youth Ministry Team, the participants, mostly leaders in Salesian Youth Centres, visited some of the important Salesian places in Spain and Piedmont from 30 July to 8 August.

Fr Artime met them on 5 August.

Then from 24 to 29 August he

went to Brazil to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of the Belo Horizonte Province with its Provincial, Fr Natale Vitali, including a stop in the capital Brasilia.

On the afternoon of 25 August, the Rector Major celebrated the Eucharist for the closing of the 22nd Provincial Chapter and presided at the Holy Mass at the Don Bosco Shrine in Brasilia, for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Province. 26 August was the day dedicated to the Province feast day. On 27 August, the RM met young people in the theatre at the Salesian school in Brasilia for an opportunity to discuss and dialogue with them. Later, in the early afternoon, the Canção Nova Catholic network television program *Além da Notícia* was recorded inside the Don Bosco Shrine. In the evening, the RM presided at a Perpetual Profession, blessed the statues of St M. Mazzarello and St D. Savio in the Shrine and concluded with a Good Night.

We then saw Fr Artime in Chennai, India, from 2 September 2022, taking part in the first cen-

tenary of the FMA presence in this country.

The celebration took place on 3 September and the following two days, 4 and 5 September, were dedicated to visiting the SDBs in Chennai.

He went to Goa on 7 September to preach the Retreat from 8-13 September to 98 Confreres (Provincials and Councillors) from the South Asia Region (India and Sri Lanka).

Returning to Rome, Italy, on 23 September, he was involved in the SDB Change Congress held between 19 and 23 September at the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) around the question of social and economic changes in today's society.

On the evening of Saturday, 24 September, the RM met the new SDB and FMA missionaries at Valdocco. The following day, Sunday 25 September, the RM presided at the Mass in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, for the sending of 19 SDBs and 9 FMAs who received the missionary cross. Six Salesian missionaries did not receive their visa in time. This was the 153rd missionary expedition for the SDBs, while for the FMAs it was the 145th.

On Tuesday 27 September, after ten intense days of work, the RM

concluded the meeting held at Valdocco, Turin, with the group of Superiors of Salesian Provinces and Vice-Provinces who had reached the halfway mark of their six-year service.

He was then present at Valdocco for the opening of the International Congress on Salesian Works and Social Services on 28 September and continued to be involved with it until it concluded on 2 October 2022. This was an important moment of reflection and sharing of experiences gained by the Salesian Congregation in this area, the goal being to strengthen the charismatic identity of pastoral activity in this field.

While still taking part in the Congress, October 2022 began in the Salesian House dedicated to Fr Rua (Monterosa) in Turin, with a Eucharist to celebrate the Centenary of the Work.

On 8 and 9 October Fr Arttime was in Rome for the great event of the Canonisation of Artemides Zatti. The homage ceremony took place on Saturday morning, 8 October, on the eve of the Canonisation of Artemides Zatti, in the Paul VI Auditorium at the Vatican, filled with thousands of Salesians, members of the Salesian Family and devotees of the future Saint. Once the accommodation

area had been filled with more than 3,000 members of the Salesian Family, the solemn Eucharist at which the RM presided began. It was concelebrated by dozens of other Salesians: members of the General Council, the RM Emeritus, Fr Pascual Chávez, and several cardinals and bishops.

The Holy Father Pope Francis was welcomed with the general enthusiasm of all the faithful present, while the choir led by Fr Francesco de Ruvo, SDB, sang the famous Salesian hymn *Giù da' Colli*. The Pope was then greeted by the RM who thanked him for granting this special audience to the pilgrims and devotees of A. Zatti.

In the St Peter's Square in Rome on 9 October, the RM took part in the Eucharistic Celebration with the Rite of Canonisation of Artemides Zatti and Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, bishop and founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Charles and the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St Charles Borromeo. Pope Francis presided at the canonisation.

On 10 October, at Valdocco in Turin, the Rector Major received over three hundred Salesian Brothers who had come to visit the Salesian sites after having

participated in the ceremonies in Rome

Fr Artime was in Sicily from 11-14 October.

The University of Palermo conferred an honorary degree in Pedagogical Sciences on the RM on the afternoon of Thursday 13 October. Fr Artime delivered his *Lectio Magistralis* on "Salesian pedagogy today and in the future" at Palazzo Steri, the headquarters of the University's Rector and of the Academic Senate. An attentive and qualified audience was present for this.

On the same day he received honorary citizenship of the city of Palermo from Mayor Lagalla. Fr Artime also met the Archbishop of Palermo, and met the Salesian Family at a large celebration in the Church of San Domenico. He visited Salesian works in the city with particular attention to the school at Ranchibile where he spoke at length with young students and teachers.

The RM left for Zagreb on 14 October 2022 to visit the Croatian Province. On 15-16 October he celebrated 100 years of Salesian presence in Zagreb and the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the St John Bosco Province of Croatia (CRO) with Salesians, the Salesian Family and Salesian youth.

On Wednesday 19 October, as Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS), Fr Arttime officially began the new 2022-23 academic year, the eighty-third such occasion since the University's foundation. The opening ceremony began in the parish of Santa Maria della Speranza with the customary Eucharistic Celebration, and continued with the Academic Act and Report by the Rector of the UPS, Prof. Fr Andrea Bozzolo. After the Opening Speech the Grand Chancellor presented the University Medals to students who graduated with the highest marks and to a distinguished teacher and employee for faithful and lasting service to the UPS.

On 20 October the Rector Major departed Rome for India to visit the INB and INS Provinces.

Fr Ángel visited the India-Mumbai (INB) St Francis Xavier Province from 21 to 23 October 2022.

From 21-22 October he joined the SYMBIOS 2022 event with hundreds of young people.

The afternoon of 22 October was memorable for the Don Bosco Senior Secondary School in Nerul: the Rector Major visited the school for the first time to open a new building.

On 23 October he took part in celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Don Bosco Lonvala Formation House.

On 24 October, accompanied by the Councillor for the South Asia Region, Fr Biju Michael, he arrived at Loknath Bordoloi airport in Guwahati. He was received by Salesian Provincials Januarius S. Sangma of Guwahati (ING), Jose Kuruvachira of Dimapur (IND) and Paul Olphindro of Shillong (INS).

Then followed the visit to the North-East Indian Provinces of Guwahati and Shillong from 24 to 30 October, to participate in the celebrations of the Centenary of the arrival of the Salesian Missionaries in the State of Assam (1922-2022).

After the first stage in the most populous Indian city, the journey reached its climax with stages in the Provinces of Guwahati (ING) and Shillong (INS), where the RM celebrated the centenary of the arrival of the first Sons of Don Bosco in North-East India together with Salesians, the Salesian Family and young people.

On the morning of Thursday, 27 October, he arrived in the St John Paul II Province, Shillong (INS), to participate in the celebration of the centenary. 28 October 2022

was marked by many appointments. It began with a stop at the Salesian novitiate, Sunnyside.

Next, the RM went to Nongkseh, Shillong, to visit the new General House of the Sisters of the Visitation of Don Bosco (VS-DB) – the 30th group of the Salesian Family – in what was the first ever visit of a Rector Major to this Centre. It was there that he opened the museum dedicated to their founder, Archbishop Hubert D’Rosario, SDB (1919-1994), an event that was followed by a lively debate.

The RM then reached the H. Elias high school in Nongthymmai, Shillong. Friday 28 October, a long day for Fr Artime, came to an end with a meeting with the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC) and, in the evening, a large gathering with the entire local Salesian Family.

On Saturday, 29 October, the several hundred young people involved in the Centenary Youth Expo had the opportunity to experience the celebration of the Eucharist with the RM. At the end of the Mass he engaged in a sincere and fatherly exchange with them. The Eucharistic celebration was attended by five Salesian Provincials from the

South Asia Region, together with the Councillor for the Region, Fr Biju Michael, and many other priests from the three Provinces of Northeast India – Guwahati, Dimapur and Shillong.

On Saturday afternoon, 29 October, Fr Ángel visited the Auxilium Convent which houses the local FMA community.

On Sunday morning, 30 October, he took part in the solemn Eucharistic concelebration held in the grounds facing the Cathedral of Mary Help of Christians in Shillong.

Returning from India with a stopover in Rome on 3 November 2022, Fr Artime went on to Alasio in Liguria to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Salesian presence in this house.

The next day, 4 November, it was the turn of Sampierdarena, Genoa, also celebrating 150 years, and then Varazze on 5 November.

From 6 to 12 November the RM was back in Valdocco to preach the Retreat for Provincials and Councillors from Central and Northern Europe. About 120 Salesians took part, led by the Rector Major and coordinated by the Regional Councillor, Fr Roman Jachimowicz and close associates. Much attention was paid to translations, given the great cul-

tural and linguistic diversity of the Region.

The Rector Major went to the United States from 15 to 26 November for the 125th anniversary of Salesian presence in the country.

He landed in Los Angeles on the 15th, beginning a visit to the St Andrew Province Province of the Western United States (SUO). This lasted until Monday, 21 November, after which he went on to visit Salesian houses in the St Philip Province of the Eastern United States and Canada (SUE) and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Salesian Missions, the Salesian Missions Office in New Rochelle.

On 17 November he continued his acquaintance with Salesian presences in the Los Angeles area: visits to Saint John Bosco High School and Don Bosco Tech in Rosemead, and, again, to Bellflower.

On Friday, 18 November, he travelled to the FMA community at Bellflower, then went on to Northern California with stops at Berkeley and Richmond.

On 19 November 2022, the RM was in the San Francisco Bay area and on the 20th he spent the last leg of his journey at Corpus Christi in San Francisco, a parish community presented as a “Salesian parish of immigrant families.”

On 22 November Fr Ángel crossed the US and arrived at the Province Centre for St Philip’s Province in the Eastern United States and Canada (SUE), New Rochelle, New York. During this very busy trip to the United States, he completed a visit to the Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park, Maryland, and arrived accompanied by Fr Hugo Orozco, Councillor for the Interamerica Region, and Fr Timothy Zak, SUE Provincial, along with other Salesians.

Then, after a meeting with the SUE Provincial and his Council in New Rochelle, Fr Arttime wound up Wednesday, 23 November, by visiting the Salesian St John Bosco Parish at Port Chester, New York, to celebrate Mass in honour of St John Bosco for Salesian Family Groups.

On 25 November the RM celebrated Mass with Salesians in initial formation, Salesian brothers and priests in their quinquennium, and formators at the Don Bosco Residence in Orange, New Jersey. After Mass and breakfast he met Salesians in initial formation, Salesians brothers and priests in their Quinquennium. Subsequently he met with the formators, the Provincial Delegate for Formation, and Fr Timothy Zak.

In the afternoon the Rector Major concluded his visit to the SUE Province and set out on his return flight to Europe.

Back in Italy after a brief stopover in Spain and Turin, on 30 November 2022 we find him in Rome presiding at the Academic Senate of the Pontifical Salesian University.

The RM dedicated privileged time to the General Council with morning and afternoon sessions from 1 to 23 December.

On 8 December, he solemnly celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, while on 10 December he met in Turin with staff involved in the UPS.

On 16 December he welcomed 35 journalists from Rome who were on a Press Tour following in Don Bosco's footsteps. The RM held a press conference, the contents of which, over the following days, were translated into articles and television and radio services (for *L'Avvenire*, *Famiglia Cristiana*, *AcStampa*, *AgenSir*, *Radio*

*Cope*, *Tg2 Rai*). The several-day event, organised by Fr Giuseppe Costa, involved a large group of accredited journalists from the Vatican Press Office.

On 17 December the RM was in Rome for the audience that Pope Francis had reserved for artists and producers of the Peace Concert. In the afternoon he was involved in the recording of the Concert to be broadcast on TV on 1 January 2023 by *Canale 5* in support of Don Bosco Missions.

On the 19th he celebrated the Eucharist with the staff and Confreres at Sacred Heart in Rome, followed by a pre-Christmas luncheon. In the evening, he wished the UPS communities the traditional Good Night given each year.

The meeting between the SDB and FMA General Councils took place in Turin on 22 December. After Christmas celebrations in Valdocco on 27 December at the FMA General House in Rome, Fr Artime presented *Strenna 2023*: "As the yeast in today's human family. The lay dimension of the Family of Don Bosco."

## **4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors**

### **The Vicar of the Rector Major**

After the summer session of the Council held in Valdocco, Turin, the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Stefano Martoglio, went to Rome for discussions with the confreres in RMG houses and then interrupted his activities for a week of rest.

On 5 August 2022, in a family and fraternal atmosphere he presided over the FMA professions in Mornese on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Institute.

On 8 August he left for London where he stayed with the Battersea community for some time to study and further his knowledge of English. It was a very beautiful experience of study and fraternity – warmly received by the provincial and confreres from the GBR province – and an opportunity to get to know the beautiful presence of Salesians in the United Kingdom.

Fr Martoglio returned to Valdocco on 5 September. Over the following days he presided at the first religious professions of novices at Colle Don Bosco and following that he went to Rome

for several meetings and interviews.

Starting from 16 September, the Vicar of the RM was in Valdocco, alongside the Rector Major, accompanying the formation period for provincials at the halfway mark of their six-year service (Josè Angel Prado CAM, Justo Ernesto Piccinini BSP, Joy Sebastian Thekumcherikunnel AFM, Alfonso Bauer URU, William Matthews AUL, Jefferson Luis Santos BMA, Marko Košnik SLO, Tihomir Šutalo CRO, Joseph NG Chi-Yuen CIN, Jacob Hamaguchi GIA, Fernando Luis Valencia COM, Andrew Wong INA, Mario Villalba PAR, Igino Biffi INE, Stefano Aspettati ICC, Alejandro José León MOR, Paul Formosa MLT, Filiberto González P. MEG). Once again this was a very rich experience, much appreciated by the provincials who took part in it.

From 29 September to 2 October, Fr Martoglio participated in the Congress on Social Works and Services of the Congregation, held in Valdocco.

Starting from 3 October, together with the Rector Major and Sector Councillors, the Vicar was at work with the meetings of the Intermediate Council held in Valdocco. From 7 October 2022 he went to Rome to celebrate the

canonisation of Artemides Zatti: a magnificent, well-prepared and well-executed Church and Congregational event.

In the second half of October 2022, the Vicar remained at Valdocco, alternating his time there with several trips and engagements across Salesian locations in Italy for various meetings and celebrations.

In the first days of November, Fr Martoglio was involved with meetings of post-novitiate Curatoriums for the Mediterranean Region (Nave, San Tarcisio in Rome) – the exception being Granada, to be held in December. The discernment for Formation Houses in Europe continued, a process convened in December 2021 and currently underway.

From 9 November 2022 the Vicar went to India, visiting the province of Bangalore (INK) and Madras (INM). It was a very good experience of getting to know the great Salesian world that is India, a small first step into that important Salesian reality. The visit was a busy and intense one, an authentic experience of congregation.

On 25 November, the Vicar returned to Turin, Italy, for some days of preparation for the upcoming winter General Council session running approximately

from 1 December to 27 January 2023.

### **The General Councillor for Formation**

On 10 July, during the General Council's summer session, Fr Ivo Coelho, General Councillor for Formation, visited the pre-novices from CRO and SSM who were taking the Italian course at Colle Don Bosco, accompanied by Sector Team member Fr Francisco Santos Montero, and other confreres.

On 23 July Fr Ivo took part in a meeting in Warsaw (Poland) chaired by Fr Stefano Martoglio, Vicar of the RM, together with the Regional for Central and Northern Europe, Fr Roman Jachimowicz, and some provincials and rectors of the novitiates in the Region to discuss some potential reshaping.

From 2 to 5 August 2022, together with Fr Silvio Roggia and Fr Jose Kuttianimattathil, Fr Coelho was in Gauhati (India), taking part in the South Asia Region's Regional Formation Commission meeting. The meeting was combined with the Provincial Delegates for Social Communication from the Region, involving Fr Gildasio Santos, General Council-

lor for Social Communication. After the meeting, Fr Ivo visited the missionary aspirantate in Sirajuli in ING province. After a few days spent with his family in Goa (India), he visited the inter-provincial novitiate and post-novitiate at Nashik in INB province. On 22 August he returned to Valdocco, Turin.

From 22-23 August Fr Coelho was in Domodossola where participants in the Salesian School of Accompaniment (Italian-Spanish edition) were on Retreat. The School began on 17 August in Valdocco, with 23 participants, coordinated by Bro. Raymond Callo from the Formation Sector Team, and ended on 19 September at Colle Don Bosco. The Formation Councillor was present again from 16 to 19 September.

On 8 September, Fr Coelho presided at the celebration for receiving the first religious professions of the Salesian novices from Genzano, Rome. This was the last group of novices from this house. Given the recent decision of the RM, from now on there will be only one Salesian community with a novitiate in Italy, located at the Colle Don Bosco.

In order to devote considerable time to the revision of the Ratio, Fr Coelho was only involved with

a few of the online sessions of the joint meeting of Formation Commissions for the two Regions of America held in Sao Paulo, Brazil from 7-11 September, together with the Provincial Delegates for Social Communication from the Provinces of these Regions.

From 3 to 7 October 2022 Fr Coelho participated in the Intermediate Council. On 7 October he then went to Rome to participate in the canonisation of Artemides Zatti on 9 October. He did not attend the Formation Commission meeting of the Africa – Madagascar Region in Lusaka, Zambia, also held jointly with the Provincial Delegates for Social Communication from the same region.

Returning to Valdocco, on 15 October the Councillor went to Jerusalem to visit the theological students community there.

From 26 to 29 October, together with Fr Francisco Santos, Fr Ivo was at the Martí Codolar Salesian house in Barcelona to take part in the joint meeting of Formation and Social Communication Delegates from the Salesian Provinces of the Mediterranean and Central and Northern Europe Regions

On 3 November, Fr Coelho went to Bangkok (Thailand), where he visited the THA novitiate and post-novitiate in Sampran. From

7 to 10 November he then took part together with Fr Jose Kut-tianimattathil and Bro. Raymond Callo, in the Formation Commission meeting for the East Asia - Oceania Region in Hua Hin (Thailand). This too was held jointly with the Provincial Delegates for Social Communication from the Region. Over those days Fr Ivo also visited the aspirantate in Hua Hin.

Returning to Valdocco on 13 November, he went to Rome on 17 November to participate in the International Conference on Saint Francis de Sales on the 4th centenary of his death. This was held at the UPS from 18-20 November 2022. The Conference was a historic moment because it brought together the various religious orders, congregations and associations inspired by our patron saint for the first time in any Salesian house.

On 3 December 2022, the General Councillor for Formation presided at the Curatorium for the Z. Namuncurá community in its new headquarters in Rome in Via della Bufalotta 550.

On 10 December, Fr Coelho participated in the meeting of the UPS Staff Group held in Valdocco, Turin, attended by the Rector Magnificus of the UPS, Fr

A. Bozzolo and the UPS Visitor, Fr M. Arokiam Kanaga.

### **The General Councillor for Youth Ministry**

Over June-December 2022, the Councillor for Youth Ministry, Fr Miguel Angel García Morcuende, continued organisational and planning meetings with the Executive Secretary of Don Bosco International (DBI) and with Fr Thomas Pallithanam (Salesian Representative to the United Nations). At the same time, fifteen coordination meetings were arranged with the Youth Ministry Team.

In June, Fr Miguel Angel took part in programming occasions with the Salesian Mission Volunteering (SMV) Advisory Board, which has the task of coordinating Volunteering in the Congregation (8 June). With respect to DB Tech's activities, he chaired the coordination meetings between DB Tech India, DB Tech Africa, the CFP America Network and DB Tech Europe (11 June, 10 and 16 December).

In July, as scheduled, he held a brief meeting with the CFP America Network (July 6) and met with the Secretariat of the

Salesian Family to coordinate next year's meetings (14 July and 10 September).

At the end of September, the Congress of Social Works and Services of the Congregation was organised by the Youth Ministry Sector (29 September - 2 October) in Valdocco, Turin. The Councillor took part in some online preparatory meetings and directed the event, offering contributions and drafting the final conclusions. Also in Valdocco, some preparatory sessions were scheduled in September/October for the appointment with Project Europe planners that was then held in Valdocco from 16 to 19 November.

As part of institutional meetings, the Councillor planned an appointment with André Féteis, Superior General of the Marianists (8 June) and with Bro. Luc from Taizé (9 December); later also with the president of VIS (19 September). He then conducted various talks and discussions with some of the collaborators of the document "*A youth ministry that educates to love*".

As part of formation, Fr Miguel Angel with his team accompanied a session addressed to new provincials' meeting in Valdocco (10 June). Subsequently, he offered an online formation session

for the PAR province assembly (18 July) and met with lay leaders and pastoral coordinators of Salesian works in the German province (GER) (25 July and 7 October). He then gave a conference to Salesians from the ICC province in Loreto (24 August) and in October led three days of formation for the team in the missionary course at the UPS Rome (12-14 October).

Formation activity was also carried out in Sicily (28 and 29 August) with different groups of Salesians and lay people. Similarly, the Councillor offered 4 formation sessions to various groups in INE province (from 2 to 5 September) and a day of formation for Rectors and the Provincial Council in the ICP province (12 December). Several formation sessions were then conducted in Croatia with the Salesians and lay staff in schools, with principals, parish priests, those in charge of the Oratory and with the Provincial Council (22-25 November).

The Councillor was invited to lead the Monthly Recollection Days for the Valdocco (26 September) and Agnelli (24 December) communities, and to preside at the Eucharist at the Mediterranean Region's Seminar on Vocational Animation (4 October).

Several programming meetings with the SM Group for the development of the "*Salesian personal accompaniment and vocational discernment*" online course also involved Fr Miguel Angel, who convened three meetings for the implementation of DB Tech Europe with CNOS-FAP.

In November, Fr Miguel Angel organised a meeting with Provincial Vocational Training Coordinators in Europe (15th) and a coordination and formation meeting for the Youth Ministry Sector Team with the Spanish National Centre (16th and 17th). Several sessions were planned with the Salesian School, Europe working group in order to develop the conclusions of the *Educobarometer*.

Regarding initiatives *with* and *for* young people: the Councillor participated in Campobosco in Spain, then presided at two penitential celebrations at Colle Don Bosco (2 and 4 August); he gave the Good Night to young Salesian Youth Movement Leaders from SUO (11 June); he met the small group animating the Salesian Youth Movement Europe (25 August) and was at the SYM Europe Assembly in Croatia (24-26 November).

Fr Garcia made animation visits to several provinces, including

AFM (7-11 September), INM Chennai (26-31 October) and VIE Vietnam (5-8 November).

He presented the document on "*The parish and shrine entrusted to the Salesians*" to the America South Cone Region (30 August).

He then gave a short online address during the formation course for new IUS leaders held at the Dom Bosco Catholic University (UCDB) (18 September); another at the Sixth National Educational Conference of Don Bosco Schools (NECDBS) in INDIA (16 November) and a brief address at the Don Bosco Higher Education India Network (28 November).

In December 2022 he started the process of updating the Oratory-Youth Centre with a letter of invitation addressed to all the Provinces.

With regard to written production, the Councillor participated in the drafting of "*The Salesian Vocational Guidance Experience: formation pathways*", the text published in AGC 438. In October, he wrote an article for the *Salesian Bulletin* Uruguay and a further one for the *Salesian Bulletin* Mexico. Finally, his main contribution was published in "*Desafíos educativos contemporáneo*", a book published by the IUS Education Group's academic network.

## **The General Councillor for the Missions**

After the General Council summer session, the General Councillor for the Missions, Fr Alfred Maravilla, went to Mozambique from 30 July to 23 August to preach the Retreat to two groups of confreres and members of the Salesian Family. During his stay he was able to visit all the presences of the Visitation (MOZ) and also meet the novices and post-novices for some time for missionary animation.

Between 28 and 31 August and from 8 to 12 September 2022, Fr Alfred made an exploratory visit to Greece to the three dioceses of Syros, Santorini and Crete, combined 'in persona episcopi', led by Bishop Petrous Stefanou. This was on behalf of the General Council, to evaluate the bishop's invitation to look after youth ministry.

From 1 to 25 September the Councillor animated the 'Orientation Course for New Missionaries' conducted for the 25 members of the 153rd missionary expedition at Colle Don Bosco and in Valdocco. He did this together with all the members of the Missions Sector Team. The Course ended with the missionary sending at which the RM presided in the Basilica of

Mary Help of Christians in Valdocco, Turin.

From 28 September to 3 October, Fr Alfred visited the Salesian presences in Egypt. During the visit he had several opportunities to meet with confreres, young people and, above all, with Sudanese refugees who attend the Salesian Oratory in Zeitun (Cairo), experiencing the vitality of their faith.

From 3 to 6 October, on return to Valdocco, Fr Maravilla participated in the General Council's intermediate session.

From 7 to 10 October he was in Rome to be part of the celebrations for the canonisation of Artemides Zatti.

Subsequently, from 12 to 17 October the Councillor was in Amatitán, Mexico, with Fr Reginaldo Cordeiro, a member of the Missions Sector, for the regional meeting of the Provincial Delegates for Missionary Animation (DIAM) of the two American Regions of Interamerica and South Cone. At that time he had the opportunity to visit the Regional Centre for Brother Formation (Cresco) in Tlaquepaque, and the Theologate, stopping for supper and giving the Good Night to the students of Theology.

From 18 to 21 October he was

at the UPS in Rome with Salesians taking part in the Course for Missionaries.

From 26 to 31 October he went to Guwahati, India, and then on to Shillong to join the RM in the commemoration of the centenary of the Salesian presence in North-eastern India. Over these days, the regional meeting of Provincial Delegates for Missionary Animation, South Asia was also organised in Shillong, which allowed the Delegates to attend some important centenary commemorations and meetings with the RM.

For the liturgical memorial of Blessed Michael Rua he presided at the Eucharist in the novitiate at Sunnyside. On 31 October he visited the aspirantate in Sirajuli, meeting both the formators and the aspirants for a period of animation.

After the celebrations in North-east India, Fr Alfred Maravilla went to Nepal from 1 to 5 November 2022, accompanied by Fr George Menampampil, a member of the Missions Sector. His visit coincided with the 30th anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesians in the country. The Councillor visited all 8 presences and 2 FMA communities. The Provincial, Fr Joseph Pauria, and the Provincial Economer were al-

so present during his visit. He had two meetings with the confreres in Biratnagar and Kathmandu to discuss challenges, opportunities and the way forward to further develop our Salesian presence in Nepal.

From Nepal, Fr Alfred Maravilla went to Cebu, Philippines. On 8 November, together with Bro. Jean Paul Muller, Economer General, and a member from both Sectors, he had a meeting with the two Provincials and Provincial Economers of the Philippines Provinces (FIN and FIS) to examine the possibilities of creating a common Mission Office in the Philippines. He was also able to meet the pre-novices from 4 provinces for a time of missionary animation.

From 9 to 12 November, the General Councillor for the Missions was in Batulao in the Philippines for the regional meeting of the East Asia-Oceania Region Mission Animation Delegates (DIAM).

From 16 to 21 November, Fr Alfred visited the new missionary presence in Kuching, Malaysia. The first group of 3 Salesian missionaries arrived on 15 August 2017 at the invitation of the Archbishop of Kuching, Archbishop Simon Peter Poh Hoon Seng. Dur-

ing his visit Fr Maravilla discussed the possibilities with the confreres and the archbishop of strengthening our initial presence and fostering its growth. There are ongoing discussions about the possibility of entrusting the Salesians with a parish in Kuching. The presence in Malaysia is currently entrusted to the North Philippines Province (FIN).

From Malaysia, the General Councillor for Missions then continued on to Jakarta, Indonesia from 21 to 23 November 2022. During his brief visit Fr Maravilla had the opportunity to discuss with the INA Provincial and some members of his Council some potential opportunities to support the new Salesian presence in Malaysia. He studied the possibility with the Provincial Economer of starting a small mission office in Indonesia. Fr Alfred also managed to meet the novices and post-novices with their formators for an opportunity for missionary animation.

From 24 to 26 November the Councillor was in Lisbon (POR) with Fr Pavel Zenisek, a member of the Sector, to participate in the meeting of Mission Animation Delegates (DIAM) from the Mediterranean Region. From 27 to 30 November he visited the is-

lands of Cape Verde. During his visit, he met with the students of the school and the local bishop. Accompanied by the Rector of the community, Fr Luis Peralta, Fr Maravilla also visited the island of Santo Antão, where the Salesians were invited by the local parish priest to collaborate in the management of a festive oratory for the rural youth of the island. He visited some remote rural communities that helped him better understand the island's missionary challenges.

On 1 December, Fr Maravilla returned to Valdocco to take part in the General Council's winter session.

During this semester the Councillor was also involved in several online meetings of the Don Bosco Network and *Misiones Salesianas* in Madrid.

On 8 December he took part in the conclusion of the Missionary Course at the UPS.

### **The General Councillor for Social Communication**

After the Plenary Session of the General Council (June-July 2022), the Councillor for Social Communication, Fr Gildásio Dos Santos Mendes, went to Guwa-

hati in India to take part, from 1 to 6 August 2022, in the meeting of the Delegates of Communication and Formation from the South Asia Region.

After this meeting, Fr Gildásio began the visit to 6 Provinces of India, with the aim of meeting each Provincial Delegate for Social Communication and his team, and seeing the Communication Centre and getting to know the Sector's projects. In particular the visits were: from 7 to 10 August to Shillong Province (INS); from 11 to 13, Dimapur (IND); from 14 to 17, Kolkata (INC); from 18 to 21, New Delhi (INN); from 22 to 25, Mumbai (INB); and from 26 to 29, Chennai (INM).

In this meeting, as with others with Provincial Delegates for Social Communication, the dynamics involved three main planks: getting to know each other, sharing, and having a fraternal experience of formation and deeper understanding. The days were divided into two distinct parts: formation sessions in the morning and visits to Salesian sites in the afternoon. One day was dedicated to reflection and sharing among the Provincial Delegates for Communication and Formation from each province in the Region with the aim of drawing up a Salesian

proposal for formation in a digital world based on educational ethics and pastoral aesthetics in the digital universe.

The topics on which the Communication Delegates worked specifically were the revision and updating of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the program of the Communication Sector for 2020-2026, proposals for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the “Dream at 9 years of age”, the International Communication Congress in 2024 and presentation of the Global Education Pact. At the same time, the issues specific to each Province were also addressed, such as: the vision of communication in various situations, the communication plan and fundamentals, the opportunities to improve communication coordination at the European level, with ANS and with the central structures of the Congregation.

On 6 September, Fr Gildásio Santos Mendes moved to Brazil-São Paulo-SP, where he participated in the meeting of the Provincial Delegates for Communication and Formation. He met similarly and specifically with the Directors of Radio in the America South Cone and Interamerica Regions.

On 1 October 2022 he arrived back in Rome, leaving immediate-

ly for Valdocco, Turin, where he took part in the meetings of the General Council's intermediate session.

On 17 October he went to Lusaka, Zambia, for the meeting of Delegates of Communication and Formation from the Salesian Africa-Madagascar Region.

On 25 October he went to Barcelona (Spain), where he took part there in a similar joint meeting of Delegates for Communication and Formation of the Central and Northern Europe and Mediterranean Regions.

He then went on to Lisbon for the World Advisory Council for Social Communication meeting, along with his team and guests from the five regions invited to the meeting.

On 5 November 2022 he left for Bangkok (Thailand) for the meeting of the Provincial Delegates for Communication and Formation from the East Asia-Oceania Region (EAO). On the 11th he returned to Rome to meet with the Social Communications Sector Team and plan for 2023.

## **The Economer General**

During June 2022, the Economer General attended the various General Council sessions held at the Mother House at Valdocco in Turin. He took part in several meetings with the other Sectors of the Congregation and had talks with the new Provincials who took part in the course organised in Valdocco from 5 to 18 June.

In the last week of June and the first days of July, together with the other members of the General Council, he joined the Retreat that took place in Annecy, France.

During July, together with the other members of the General Council, he was involved with the General Council summer session meetings and had several meetings with Boards of Directors of different foundations.

In August he went to Jerusalem for meetings and consultations and was able to see the latest renovation work in the Ratisbonne house.

In the period between July and September, together with his Team, he coordinated final preparations for the SDB Change Congress in Rome.

In September, the Economer General had meetings with those

in charge of the Mission Office in Bonn. In Rome he met representatives of various institutions and took part in a formation course to learn about new developments in today's large administrations.

In the second part of the month, the entire General Economist's office coordinated and directed the work of the important SDB Change Congress, held between 19 and 23 September 2022 at the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) in Rome, a relevant event that brought together 250 people including Provincial Economists, Heads of Planning and Development Offices (PDO), Mission Offices, Salesian NGOs and international organisations. The SDB Change Congress sought to give a strong and regenerative impulse to all Salesians around the world, all who work closely with them and to all those who work for the integral good of young people. The aim was to provide decisive words and clear guidelines on some issues that increasingly mark the lives of young people and will continue to do so in the coming years.

The topics covered were based on five themes: sustainable economy, Salesian spirituality and leadership, artificial intelligence,

communication of the future and prevention of corruption.

On 29 September, the Economist General then took part in the Congress for Social Works organised by the Youth Ministry Sector, held in Turin.

In the first week of October 2022, the Economist General, together with the other Councillors, took part in the General Council's intermediate session and then in the celebrations for the canonisation of Artemides Zatti that took place on Sunday, 9 October, in Rome.

On 19 October he was at the opening of the academic year at the Pontifical Salesian University. Later, until 21 October, he was invited to the UNIAPAC World Congress in the Vatican, led by Catholic families and others, where he met business/corporate personalities.

In the second half of the month he met with the leaders of some European NGOs. As a member of the Board of Directors of the *Don Bosco nel Mondo* Foundation, he was involved in formation on new regulations and legal changes for the Third Sector in Italy and the needs of the Social Budget.

In November 2022, Bro. J. P. Muller's attention was focused on the visit to the two Philippines

Provinces FIS and FIN. The purpose of the visit was to meet with provincial economers and others to analyse the financial and human resources situation and to take stock of reconstruction following the devastating floods and natural storms that have hit the country. During the meetings, the needs of the mission in Pakistan and Malaysia were also discussed.

The meetings of the Ecomer General with confreres in formation and with those who work in the slums with people in need demonstrated the great need for further help: there is a lack of personnel and material. The many committed confreres and lay people show that Don Bosco is still very much needed and that much good and sustainable work is being done in his name.

Both during the summer months and at other times, the Ecomer General was able to directly thank many friends and benefactors for their support for the Congregation. He expressed his deep gratitude.

### ***The Councillor for the Africa and Madagascar Region***

Fr Alphonse Owoudou, Regional of Africa and Madagascar, went on a mission in recent months to

visit and meet the Salesians of the African continent.

After his annual meeting with the DBTA Board of Directors (Don Bosco Tech Africa, the coordinating body for Salesian Vocational Training in the Africa-Madagascar Region) held as usual in August in Nairobi, his pastoral and consultation trips began on 3 September when he arrived in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, to participate in the consultation with the Salesians of ACC for their new provincial.

On Tuesday, 6 September, he conducted the second consultation for the area of the Province located in the Republic of Congo (RC), and visited the novices and young people at Foyer Don Bosco, Massengo. The next day he left for the AGL Vice-Province, where he was received by the Superior, Fr Pierre Célestin Ngoboka, and by the Rector of Namugongo, Fr Nyandwi Elie.

On 9 September he went to the Sudanese refugees settlement at Palabek in Uganda, visiting the camp, the technical centre and the agricultural projects, presiding at the Eucharistic Celebration with refugees before returning to Kampala, then greeting parishioners at Bombo Namaliga before the flight to Maputo (Mozambique).

On 10 September, in Mozambique, he visited the young Salesian post-novices at the St Dominic Savio community and their formators in Matola, and later the novitiate in Namaacha.

Fr Alphonse then moved to Malawi, arriving at Lilongwe Airport on 12 September. On 15 September he met with all the Malawian confreres of the Lilongwe community.

On 16 September he flew from Lilongwe to Lusaka Airport in Zambia. There at 9 a.m. on 17 September, he met all the confreres of the Lusaka area in the Makeni community in Lusaka. On the same afternoon he also met all the other ZMB confreres connected through video chat (Zoom).

On 18 September he went to the novitiate in Kabwe, stopping at the children's home in Makululu.

On 19 September he met the Kabwe (and Chingola) confreres in the ZMB Novitiate. Then the next day, Fr Alphonse went to Mansa, where he met the confreres from Mansa, Lufubu and Kazembe belonging to the Mansa community.

On 23 September he travelled to Lusaka and then took a flight from Lusaka to Livingstone via Hwange.

On 26 September he met with the Hwange, Harare and Rundu confreres in Hwange.

Finally, on the 28th, he left Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe for Rome, where he coordinated the Group of Provincials from the African Region, staying at the *Collegio San Lorenzo da Brindisi*.

On 8 October 2022, the Africa Madagascar Regional concelebrated a Holy Mass at which the RM presided, in the Paul VI Auditorium at the Vatican, followed by the Extraordinary Audience with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on the occasion of the Roman Celebrations for the canonisation of Artemides Zatti. On 9 October he concelebrated the canonisation Mass in St Peter's Square in Rome.

Over the following days, from 10 to 13 October, he chaired the 21st General Assembly of CIVAM, held at the *Collegio San Lorenzo*. Then, from 14 October to 12 November he was busy in Rome with procedures to obtain the necessary visas to visit the AFM Vice-Province.

On 26 October he went to Brussels for the funeral of Fr Francis Gatterre accompanied by a representative of African Salesian students, Fr Christophe Amoussouvi (UPS). Fr Francis had worked

and taught in Africa for many years. The concelebration and funeral took place at Don Bosco Lille on 28 October at 10 a.m.

On 4 November Fr Alphonse took part in the Curatorium meeting at Messina while waiting for his visa for South Africa.

On 13 November he travelled from Rome to Johannesburg, where he joined participants in the AFM 12th Provincial Chapter, among Salesians, members of the Salesian Family and young people.

From 14 to 18 October he took part in some of the Chapter sessions, met the young people and lay participants and began some personal conversations with some confreres.

On 19 October he met the Superior, Fr Sebastian Joy, and then his Council to evaluate the work of the Chapter and officially begin the Extraordinary Visitation to AFM.

That evening the Regional left for Cape Town.

On 22 November, Fr Alphonse celebrated Mass at OLHC Lansdowne, and then went to meet Archbishop Brislin at the Chancellery.

He also visited the Ottery chapel, the parish, the cemetery and had impromptu meetings with the confreres. He then ad-

ressed the Cooperators and the Parish Pastoral Councils of the two parishes in Sala Savio.

On 23 November, Fr Alphonse celebrated Mass in Hannover Park, followed by a visit to the Schoenstatt Sisters with Fr Tumelo, and a concluding meeting with the community, where he gave his final address.

On 24 November he presided at the Eucharist and visited the various projects with the Rector Fr Robert Gore, of Cape Town, and delegate administrator Fr François Dufour. He also had a brief moment with SIYP's MANCOM in the Boardroom and interviews with SDBs, colleagues and former SIYP board members.

On Friday, 25 November, he concelebrated Mass at 7 a.m., then addressed the school assembly with teachers and students for the Good Morning Address, followed by a ceremony to launch a 16-day series of activities against gender-based violence. Subsequently, he visited the various classes and workshops and took part in the graduation ceremony for young women of the Stitch Ahead project. In the afternoon he met with the local council, after a brief visit to the Muslim quarter, the 'Bo-Kaap'.

In the evening the Regional

joined in Vespers in the Library, followed by the final report to the community.

On Saturday 25 November Fr Alphonse left for Johannesburg. On Sunday the 26th he presided at Sunday Mass at the Provincial House in Booyens with the local Christian community, and then began talks with the confreres.

On 27 November he celebrated Mass and visited the Salesian Sisters community in Booyens, also meeting Fr Tlaile Lingoane, Youth Ministry Delegate and Moderator of the Provincial Chapter. On 28 November he met with the local community. On the morning of 29 November, Fr Alphonse had a meeting with the Provincial Economist, with the SPDO, followed by the closing assembly.

In the afternoon he was busy with the visit to the Salesian Sisters Provincial House and then the Regional departed for the airport, thus returning to Valdocco to be able to start the General Council Plenary Session at the beginning of December 2022.

### ***The General Councillor for the East Asia-Oceania Region***

From the end of July to the end of November 2022, Fr Joseph Nguyen Thinh Phuoc, the Councillor for East Asia-Oceania, travelled to several countries in the region to carry out his commitments.

First came the Extraordinary Visitation to the Australia-Pacific Province (AUL) which covers 4 countries: Australia, Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand. Unfortunately, he was unable to obtain a visa to enter New Zealand as the country was not yet open for visitors due to Covid restrictions.

The meetings with each confrere of the Province, with the Provincial and his Council helped him to understand more deeply the real situation of the province with its achievements and great potential. Father Joseph Nguyen Thinh Phuoc also listened to their current challenges and indicated some guidelines for the continuity and consolidation of the Salesian charism as the Province is preparing for the Centenary of Salesian presence and service to the young (1923-2023).

From Australia, the Regional EAO made an 8-day visit to Japan to meet GIA's confreres and their

works before the upcoming Extraordinary Visitation in spring 2023. He personally witnessed the efforts of the Japanese confreres in particular, and the Church in Japan at large to extend their educative and pastoral ministries to migrant workers who come from many countries. In fact, the number of Catholics has doubled within the last 10 years with the presence of 540,000 Catholics not born in Japan. It is a challenge but also an opportunity because the Catholic Church in Japan is still a minority.

The trip continued with the 2-day Curatorium Meeting of the Provincials and those in charge of formation houses in Canlubang (FIN) and Paranaque (FIN). A number of confreres from EAO provinces have been sent to the Philippines for their initial formation (Pre-novitiate, Novitiate, Post-Novitiate and Specific Formation). The Curatorium discussed and updated their Statutes to consolidate the formation programs with the commitment to make these communities more intercultural with formators from EAO region.

As the Superior of Myanmar took part in the Curatorium meeting, he accompanied Fr Joseph Nguyen to visit the presences in

MYM. Myanmar is going through a critical period in its history and the Regional had the opportunity to witness that the Salesians are doing their best to continue their presence, the formation of the young people and young confreres. His sharing of similar experiences in other provinces helped the confreres to trust more in God's Providence and the Lord's plan for the future of the Salesians in this beautiful country.

The Month of November was the time for various EAO regional seminars and meetings of Sectors (like formation, Youth Ministry, Missions).

The Thai Province (THA) generously hosted the meetings of the Delegates for Formation with the participation of Fr Ivo, Councillor for Formation and some members of his team, continuing with a course of Formation of Formators with 45 participants. And at the same time, Vietnam Province (VIE) hosted the Youth Ministry Delegates Meeting animated by Fr Miguel García, Councillor for Youth Ministry, and the Regional Coordinator for YM in EAO.

Fr Joseph Nguyen participated in only two of these meetings to get to know the Delegates for future collaboration. He could not attend the Meeting of Missions

Delegates animated by Fr Alfred Maraviglia, Councillor for the Missions.

The second half of November (12-28) was busy for Fr Joseph Nguyen due to the consultation for the new Superior of Thailand, the numerous travels to different communities in three countries (Thailand, Cambodia and Laos) as well as the personal meetings with a number of confreres. But it all helped him to grasp the potential of the province and the confreres' expectations of the new superior.

Fr Joseph returned to Valdocco for the winter Session with heartfelt gratitude to God and the confreres as he witnessed numerous confreres and members of the Salesian Family dedicating their prayers, works and sacrifices to carry on the Salesian missions assigned to them by God and the Church.

### ***The Councillor for the South Asia Region***

After the General Council's summer session, Fr Biju Michael, General Councillor for South Asia, travelled to India. The planned visit to Sri Lanka could not be carried out due to the political uncertainty that reigned in that country, and was therefore

postponed to 27 December 2022 until 2 January 2023.

On 5 August 2022, the Regional spoke at the joint meeting of Delegates for Social Communication and Formation from the South Asia Region, meeting in Guwahati from 1 to 6 August.

After obtaining the renewal of his passport in Guwahati, the extraordinary visitation of the Mumbai Province (INB) began on 11 August with meetings with the Provincial Council and the meeting of Rectors and Priests in Charge.

The visit to the houses began with Don Bosco Nerul (12-13 August) and continued with the parish in Antophill (13-14 August), Don Bosco Shelter (15-16 August), Don Bosco Andheri (16-17 August) Don Bosco College Kurla (18-19 August), Bosco Boys' Home Borivali (19-20 August), Don Bosco School and Parish Borivali (21-22 August), Don Bosco School Matunga (22-24 August), Don Bosco Dakor in Gujarat (25-26 August), Don Bosco Kapadvanj (26-27 August), Baroda Parish (28-29 August), Banswara, Rajasthan (30 August) and Don Bosco Narukot (31 August - 1 September).

On 2 September, the Regional Councillor went to Chennai to join in the celebrations of the

FMA Centenary with the Rector Major and to visit the houses of Katpadi, Beatitudes and Chennai Provincial House. On 5 September, the Regional went with the Rector Major to Goa (INP) to participate in the celebrations for the Jubilee of Panjim on 6 September, and on 7 September for the installation of the new Provincial, Fr Clive Telles.

The Retreat for all Provincials and their Councils of the South Asia Region, preached by the Rector Major, began on the evening of 7 September. It ended on 13 September.

On 14 September the Regional presided at the meeting of Major Superiors of the Salesian Family gathered in Goa. The Conference of Salesian Provincials of the South Asia Region was held in Goa on 15-16 September.

On 17 September, Fr Biju returned to Mumbai and continued the extraordinary visitation to the parish and school in Wadala West (18-19 September), Don Bosco Walvanda (20-21 September), the post-novitiate at Nashik (22-24 September), the school and parish of Nashik Don Bosco (25-26 September), the Novitiate at Nashik (26-27 September) and then went to Gujarat to complete the visit to the houses.

He then visited Baroda Vishwamitri (29-30 September) and Don Bosco Chhotaudepur (30 September-1 October), Don Bosco Alirajpur in Madhya Pradesh (2-3 October) and Don Bosco Kawant (3-4 October).

He returned to Mumbai on 5 October. On 6 October 2022 he went to Rome to participate in the canonisation celebrations of Salesian Brother Artemides Zatti.

The Regional Councillor returned to Chennai on 10 October to begin the consultation process for the new Provincial of Chennai (INM). Six regional meetings were held in the Province: in Kavarapettai, Katpadi, Thirupathur, Puducherry and Chennai (two meetings).

On 18 October, Fr Biju animated a meeting of the Provincial Council and on 19 October another meeting of Rectors and Leaders of communities.

On 20 October, the Regional returned to Mumbai to welcome the Rector Major for his visit to the Mumbai Province (INB) from 21 to 24 October. On 21 October the Rector Major joined the SYM-BIOS youth meeting of the Salesian Youth Movement of the Province. On 22 October the Rector Major opened the new building and services of Don Bosco

Nerul and on 23 October he presided at the Eucharist and the celebration of thanksgiving on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Lonavla House.

On 24 October, the Regional accompanied the Rector Major to Guwahati to begin the celebrations of the Centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in the missions of Northeast India. In Guwahati the Rector Major had a meeting with the Bishops of Northeast India and with veteran missionaries from the region. After visiting various houses, having several meetings and presiding over a great celebration in Guwahati on 26 October, the Rector Major moved to Shillong Province for the conclusion of the centenary celebrations. During these visits, the Regional accompanied the Rector Major on all his visits and other visits to the Generalate and mother house of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC), the Generalate of the Sisters of the Visitation of Don Bosco (VSDB) and the Provincial Houses of the Salesian Sisters (FMA) and the Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMI). The Rector Major addressed the Delegates for Missionary Animation from the Provinces of South Asia in Shillong.

After several visits to the houses and confreres of Shillong Province, the Rector Major joined the Salesian Youth Movement gathered from all over Northeast India with over 2,500 young people for a day of celebration and concluded the Centenary celebrations with a large gathering of over 30,000 people for a Mass of thanksgiving held in the area in front of Shillong Cathedral, where the Nuncio presided at the Eucharist. He congratulated the Rector Major in the presence of the faithful and the assembled Bishops. After the celebrations, on the evening of 30 October the Regional accompanied the Rector Major to Delhi and continued on to Mumbai to continue the Extraordinary Visitation.

On 31 October the Regional visited Don Bosco Karjat (31 October-1 November) and continued on to the Provincial House in Mumbai, as it was not possible to make the planned visit to the community in Kuwait. On 5 October he went to Ahmednagar and led the visit to the community of Sant'Anna (6-7 November); he was then in Aurangabad for the visit to Don Bosco Aurangabad (7-8 November), and Ahmednagar Savedi (8-9 November).

On 10 November the Regional

went to Pune and from there to Kochi to welcome the Vicar of the Rector Major for his first visit to India. On 12 November the Regional visited the DBSM in Bangalore and returned to Pune to begin the visit to Don Bosco Yerwada (13-14 November), Don Bosco Chinchwad (14-15 November), Don Bosco Youth Centre and residence for theologians, Koregaon (16-17 November), Don Bosco Chakan (18 November), Don Bosco Virar (19-20 November), Don Bosco Naigaon (20-21 November) and Provincial House Matunga (22-24).

Fr Biju also attended the funerals of confreres Fr Salvador D'Souza and Bro. Edward Pereira. He then continued his visit to Lonavla (25-26 November) and returned to Mumbai on 27 November.

On 28 November the visit to the house at Naigaon ended. (The conclusion of the extraordinary visitation was set for 3-4 January 2023.)

After this busy journey with its meetings, on 30 November the South Asia Regional left for Valdocco, Turin, where he arrived early in the morning on 1 December to take part in General Council winter session, which began in the evening.

### ***The General Councillor for the America South Cone Region***

After the work of the General Council's summer session, the Regional Councillor for the America South Cone Region, Fr Gabriel Héctor Romero, left for Brazil. And on 28 July 2022 he began the Extraordinary Visitation to the St Pius X Province of Porto Alegre Brazil (BPA) on behalf of the Rector Major. This concluded on 26 September.

During this time Fr Gabriel spoke with all the Salesians of the Province (67); he visited the 10 canonical houses and the four works under lay management as well as the *Dom Bosco* Faculty in Porto Alegre. In addition, he was able to learn about the situation of 9 colleges, 8 parishes, some of which have rural areas with pastoral work, the 5 social works, youth centres, festive oratories and vocational training courses.

Fr Romero met twice with the BPA Provincial Council and once with all the Salesian Rectors. He participated in the Congress on the Preventive System in the city of Curitiba. He also spoke with the FMA Provincial. In the communities he also met with the groups of the Salesian Family and spoke with the provincial coordinators

and leaders of all the groups.

During this visit, the Regional took part in the Celebration of the 75th anniversary of St John Bosco Province (BBH) together with the Rector Major in Brasilia (25-29 August). He also took part in the Curatorium for the Novitiate at Barbacena (BBH, BCG, BMA) and the Post-Novitiate in Campo Grande (BCG, BBH, BMA), the Curatorium for the Theologate in Buenos Aires (ARN, ARS, PAR, URU) and the Novitiate in Montevideo (ARN, ARS, PAR, CIL, URU).

From 27 September to 21 November 2022 he made the Extraordinary Visitation to the St Joseph Province of Uruguay (URU) on behalf of the Rector Major. During this period he spoke with all Salesians of the Province (70); he visited the 11 canonical houses and the 6 works under lay management. He got to know the situation of 11 colleges, 7 parishes, some in rural areas, 8 social works, festive oratories and vocational training courses.

He met twice with the URU Provincial Council and once with all Salesian Rectors. He participated in the Pre-Chapter Assembly in the city of Montevideo. He spoke with four bishops, including two Salesians, one of whom was Cardinal Daniel Sturla; and also

with the FMA Provincial. In the communities he also met with groups of the Salesian Family and spoke with provincial coordinators and leaders of all groups. Fr Gabriel also met with the Salesian Family Advisory Council.

From 2 to 8 October 2022, returning to Turin, he was involved with the General Council's intermediate session and then in Rome at the Canonisation of Artemides Zatti.

On 19 October Fr Gabriel took part in the Curatorium for the Lapa-Sao Paulo Theologate in Brazil and in the Curatorium for the Lorena Sao Paulo Post-novitiate (BSP, BRE, BPA).

On 21 November the Extraordinary Visitation on behalf of the RM to the Salesian Province of Uruguay (URU) concluded.

On 25 and 26 November he also busy with meetings of the Expanded Team for the Ongoing Formation Centre in Quito. In the final days of November Fr Gabriel returned to the Province of Porto Alegre (BPA) to conduct the Consultation for the new Provincial.

On 29 November, the Regional for America South Cone returned to Valdocco for the General Council's winter session.

***The Councillor for the Central and Northern Europe Region***

After the conclusion of the General Council's summer session (June-July 2022), Fr Roman Jachimowicz, Regional for the Central and Northern Europe Region, interrupted his activities for two weeks of vacation.

Then from 15 August 2022 he visited various Salesian communities in the Provinces of Poland, including the communities in Krakow, Warsaw, Wrocław, Aleksandrów Kujawski, and others.

On 1 September he went to the Salesian community in Tbilisi, Georgia (PLN) for questions concerning the Salesian presence there.

On 6 September, after his return from Georgia, he went to the Post-novitiate in L d (PLN) for a meeting.

On 10-24 September he made the Extraordinary Visitation to the Ukraine Vice-Province of the Greek-Catholic Rite (UKR) where there is currently a situation of war. Over this period of time the presence of the Regional Fr Roman was very significant and much appreciated by the confreres in these very painful times for Ukraine.

On 26-29 September he carried out the Consultation for the ap-

pointment of the Provincial of the North Belgium and Holland Province (BEN).

From 29 September to 2 October he carried out the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial of the German Province (GER).

On 3-8 October, Fr Roman was at Valdocco, Turin, to take part in the General Council's intermediate session during which he presented his report on the Central and North Europe Region. He then went to Salesian Headquarters in Rome to be part of the events surrounding the Canonisation of Blessed Artemides Zatti.

On 14-16 October he went to Ireland for the consultation for the Provincial of Ireland (IRL).

From 17 October to 4 November he carried out the Extraordinary Visitation to the Province of Hungary (UNG).

On 5-13 November he was in Valdocco for the Retreat for the Provincial Councils of the Provinces of the Central and North Europe Region with the RM, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime.

On 17-19 November he was in Ljubljana as part of the celebrations for the Centenary of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Province of Slovenia (SLO).

Subsequently, he chaired the

meeting of the Conference of Polish Salesian Provinces (KSIP) and met with Fr Martin Hobza, the Provincial of the Czech Republic Province (CEP) and then with Fr Peter Timko, the Provincial of Slovakia Province (SLK). During this period he also visited various Salesian communities in the Central and North Europe Region, among them the formation communities in Poland: the Post-Novitiate in Łąd (PLN) and the Theologate in Krakow (PLS).

On 30 November, Fr Roman arrived back in Valdocco to take part in the General Council's winter session which began on 1 December 2022.

### *The General Councillor for the Interamerica Region*

Fr Hugo Orozco, Regional Councillor for the Interamerica Region had the opportunity to spend a few days of rest in Guadalajara, Mexico, with his father, in the first weeks of August 2022.

From 9 to 11 August he participated virtually in the Curatorium for the Post-Novitiate and Theologate in Guatemala.

During his stay in Guadalajara, on 15 August Fr Hugo visited the community of the Regional Formation Centre for Brothers (CRESCO)

at its new headquarters, where he spoke personally with the Rector, Fr Juan Suriel and his confreres. He celebrated the Eucharist with the whole community and shared dinner. Fr Hugo experienced the good atmosphere and formative climate for studies, community life and pastoral work. The first year confreres arrived and integrated well with their companions. They were waiting for Fr Fernando Ramirez from ECU, the new formator who would soon join the community.

On 21 August the Regional left Mexico to carry out the consultation for the new Provincial of CAM. He met the confreres in all the communities. During that week he travelled from one country to another almost every day; they were intense days but very rich in fraternity. The meetings he had involved everyone, with a beautiful family atmosphere and a sense of a community of believers.

On August 30, 2022, with Fr Jairo Gómez and his council, Fr Hugo officially opened the Extraordinary Visitation of the Bogotá Province of Colombia (COB).

On 8 and 9 October he was then in Rome with the whole Congregation at the event of the canonisation of Artemides Zatti.

On 14 and 15 October, the Re-

gional for Interamerica visited the post-novitiate community in Copacabana and Medellin, met with the confreres from the CEJA novitiate formation community, and shared the annual Provincial Feast day with the COM confreres.

As expected, from 16 to 21 October Fr Hugo held the meeting of Provincials in Peru, where they shared some themes in view of the next Team Visit. Some days of rest, reflection, study and fraternal sharing were very positive. It was possible to be involved with the popular religiosity of the Peruvian people around the Lord of Miracles.

From 22 to 26 October the Fr Hugo held the consultation with the confreres of PER for the choice of the next Provincial. He met with almost all the confreres of the different communities in Cusco and Lima, in a climate of fraternal participation.

From 26 to 30 October, Fr Orozco held the consultation in ECU for discernment of the next Provincial. He held three meetings involving all the communities: in Cuenca, Guayaquil and finally Quito. Participation was good, responsible and with a good fraternal atmosphere.

After the presentation and de-

livery in person to the Rectors of the dossier with the report of the visit to the Province of San Pedro Claver in Bogotá, Colombia (COB), which was then passed on to the rest of the confreres, the Extraordinary Visitation to COB in 2022 came to an end.

In mid-November 2022, at the end of the visit to Bogotá Colombia, Fr Hugo went to Los Angeles to accompany the RM on the days scheduled for Fr Ángel Fernández Artime's visit to the United States to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians. Fr Hugo was with the RM in Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Francisco, Washington and New Rochelle, where they celebrated the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the activities of Don Bosco Missions. These were very beautiful days in which the joy of the confreres, the young people, the laity and of the Salesian family for the presence of Don Bosco in the person of the RM, Fr Ángel, was shared. The Salesian Congregation in SUO and SUE, as in the rest of the Region, is very significant for the children and young people with whom the Salesians work, both in schools and in parishes and youth centres: a beautiful charismatic vitality that is recognised and appreciated.

On Wednesday 23 November 2022, the Regional left New York for Ecuador to take part in the post-novitiate Curatorium in Quito and in the meeting of the “expanded” team for the Ongoing Formation Centre. The post-novitiate community which the confreres from Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru belong to, has a new Rector in the person of Fr Marcelo Farfán. Life there is going very well, the atmosphere is positive and the arrival of a new Rector has allowed people to renew their intentions. There is a good study atmosphere, a renewal of pastoral organisation, and it is possible to consider and discern the missionary option. There is also a good system of accompaniment.

Equally positive was Fr Hugo’s meeting with the Salesian Centre for Ongoing Formation in America, to which two days of attention were dedicated, involving the in person presence of the Regional Councillor for America South Cone, Fr Gabriel Romero, Fr Francisco Santos of the Formation Sector and the community at the Centre; present online were the coordinators of the Regional Formation Commissions of the two American Regions. The purpose of the meeting was to examine the renewal of the statutes,

the annual activity reports and financial reports, as well as the planning and budgeting for the following year. Some proposals were then discussed in view of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the centre.

### *The General Councillor for the Mediterranean Region*

After the General Council Sessions in June-July 2022, the Councillor for the Mediterranean Region, Fr Juan Carlos Pérez Godoy had the opportunity to visit places associated with Fr Rinaldi and Fr Ricaldone, accompanied by Fr Egidio Deiana on 30 July. He then went to Colle Don Bosco to accompany the group of pre-novices from Europe, course preparing them for formation and life together in Colle that ran from 1-16 August.

From 2 to 5 August he accompanied the young people involved in Campobosco, days organised by the Youth Ministry Sector in Spain and Portugal (SDB-FMA). About 800 young over-19s came together in an attentive pastoral environment of Salesian and vocational accompaniment around the figures of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

On 15 August he presided at the

Solemn Eucharist in the Church of Our Lady of the Castle, in Castelnuevo, and on 16 August, in the name of the Rector Major, at the Eucharist commemorating Don Bosco's birth, at the Don Bosco Basilica at Colle. Over those days, on various occasions he accompanied a group of Salesian Cooperator Families from the Province of Mary Help of Christians, Seville, as part of the Family Campobosco.

After these intense days Fr Juan Carlos seized the opportunity to visit his family in his hometown of Burguillos, Seville in Spain.

At the beginning of September he returned to Sacred Heart, Rome, for some personal matters and took part in the celebration of the first profession of novices at Genzano, on 8 September 2022.

During September, he remained at headquarters, given the possibility of presiding at the perpetual profession of a group of Salesians and some Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Milan on 11 September.

On the 23rd he visited the Community and the Italian National Centre for Youth Ministry in Rome. Then on the 24th he went to Barcelona for a meeting with the person in charge of the specif-

ic formation experience for Salesian Brothers, Fr Jordi la Torr, at Martí Codolar. On that occasion he was also able greet elderly confreres at the Rest Home, celebrate the Eucharist with them and share some encouraging news of the Congregation.

From 29 September to 2 October he joined the Congress on Salesian Works and Social Services at Valdocco, which was very well organised by the Youth Ministry Sector. After which it was the turn of the First Mediterranean Region Vocational Seminar, also at Valdocco. This too was much appreciated and very well prepared, involving all the Provinces of the Region, aimed at helping one another with the Region's primary challenge.

After this seminar, he went down to Rome for 6 and 7 October for the ordinary meeting of the Mediterranean Region, followed by all the events around the canonisation of our confrere Artemides Zatti on 8 and 9 October.

On 10 October he went to Mestre (Venice) to begin the Extraordinary Visitation to the INE Province on behalf of the Rector Major. This will continue through to May 2023. The Visitation began with a personal meeting between the Regional and the

Provincial, and then with the Provincial Council. Before starting the visit to each of the Houses, he accompanied the Rector Major on his visit to Palermo (ISI) and then took part in a session of the INE Provincial Chapter.

From 17 October to 13 November he visited the following Houses: Este, the live-in Community (for potential vocations) at Mogliano, then Santa Maria la Longa, Tolmezzo, Gorizia, Trieste, Padua, Monteortone, Castello di Godego (Institute) and Astori Mogliano.

By the afternoon of 13 November he was in Madrid, Spain, where the Iberian Conference was underway at the Provincial House. It studied all the reports of the various National Delegations, the CCS Publisher, and other personnel issues, followed by approval of the new Statutes of the National Salesian Youth Ministry Centre.

Fr Juan Carlos took the opportunity to stay in Madrid to visit the works of the new Don Bosco House in Ensanche de Vallecas. On 3, 4, 5 and 21 November he took part in the Curatorium meeting for Formation Houses in Italy.

From 17 to 29 November he began the discernment process for the appointment of the new Provincials of the Lombardo-

Emiliana Province (ILE), the Southern Province (IME) and Portugal (POR).

On 30 November he resolved some formalities in Rome and on the same day returned to Turin to take part in the scheduled sessions of the General Council from 1-23 December.

Added commitments during this period were several group meetings on the Houses of Formation in Europe. For example, on 3 December, together with the Vicar of the Rector Major, he spoke in Granda at the meeting of the Post-novitiate Curatorium.

On 17 December 2022, he participated in Board of Directors meeting of the Madrid Mission Office, then went from there to Seville to present and initiate the discernment for the appointment of the new Provincial (from 18-21 December). He was back in Turin on the 22nd to be with the whole Council at the combined meeting with the FMA General Council.

On the morning of 25 December, he presided at the Christmas Mass at the Colle Don Bosco Novitiate, with the novices and the novitiate team. After the Lord's Nativity celebrated in community, on 28 December he flew to Spain to spend a few days with his family.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS

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### 5.1 New Salesian Provincials

*Some data regarding Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council in July-December 2022 are reported here (in alphabetical order).*

1. **ALCAS MICHILOT** *Juan Pablo, Provincial of the Sr Rose Province of Peru (PER). He succeeds Manuel Eduardo Cayo.*

On 12.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Juan Pablo Alcas Michilot as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Rose Province of Peru based in Lima (PER).

He was born on 17 August 1975 in Piura (Peru), diocese of Piura. He is the son of Pablo Alcas and Bertha Michilot.

He made his pre-novitiate in Magdalena del Mar in 2000, and was a novice in Chosica in 2001. He professed his first profession on 31 January 2002. He perpetual vows on 31 January 2008 and was ordained priest in Callao on 5 June 2010.

After ordination, he was sent to the Formation House in Magdalena. He was Provincial Vocational Animator until 2012. He then went to the UPS, Rome, to obtain a Licentiate in Formation of Formators

and Vocation Animators with a thesis on “Accompanying Formation to Salesian Life. Contributions from Fr Pascual Chavez Villanueva’s time as Rector Major (2002-2014). On his return to Lima in 2014, he was sent to the St Francis de Sales community in Breña as the local pastoral animator and to carry out the task of Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation.

In 2016 he was appointed Rector of St Dominic Savio Salesian Aspirantate and Pre-novitiate in Magdalena del Mar and later (October 2017) he was elected Provincial Councillor and once more took up the role of Vocational Animator at Provincial level. In 2018 he began his position as Rector of the St John Bosco Community, Rimac, where the formation house was transferred in the meantime.

From December 2021 he was Novice Director at the Sacred Heart inter-provincial Novitiate in La Ceja (Colombia).

Fr Alcas Michilot will begin his role as Provincial of PER on 14 February 2023 in Lima.

2. **BOONLERT** *Paneetathayasai Anthony, Provincial of the St Paul Province Thailand (THA). He succeeds Dheparat Pitisant.*

On 15.12.2022 the Rector Ma-

major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Anthony Boonlert Paneetattayasai as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Paul Province Thailand (THA) with headquarters in Bangkok.

He was born on 13 November 1975 in Bangkok (Thailand), diocese of Bangkok. He is the son of Vincen Chusakt and Theresa Atchana.

He entered the Congregation after having made his novitiate in Sampran (1995-96) and first profession on 1 May 1996. He has been in Sampran, Banpong – Ban Nazareth and Hat Yai. He made his perpetual profession in Banpong in 2002. He studied in Italy, first at St Thomas in Messina and then at the UPS in Rome until 2007 and gained his license in theology in Spirituality and Salesian Studies.

He has been a formator at the aspirantate (2007-2012), councillor in Banpong – Ban Nazareth, Novice Director (2012-16; 2016-19; 2019-22) in Sampran and then Rector and Economist at Sampran.

At the provincial level, he has been Councillor and Delegate for Youth Ministry (2008-12).

*3. CWENDRYCH Ademir Ricardo, Provincial of the St Pius X Province Brazil (BPA). He succeeds Gilson Marcos Da Silva.*

On 07.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Ademir Ricardo Cwendrych as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Pius X Province Brazil with headquarters in São Paulo (BPA).

He was born on 4 June 1981 in Guarapuava, Paraná (Brazil), diocese of Guarapuava. He is the son of Apollonius Cwendrych and Veronica Zielinski.

He made his novitiate in São Carlos where he professed his first vows in 2003. Then in 2008 he professed perpetual vows in Porto Alegre. Two years later in 2010 he was ordained priest in Guarapuava.

He has been in the houses at Curitiba Lindóia, São José Porto Alegre and in the provincial house in Porto Alegre. Since 2011 he has been Councillor, Economist, Vice-rector, responsible for past pupils; Rector at São José Porto Alegre and school principal.

At the provincial level, he has held the position of SYM (Salesian Youth Movement) Delegate (2011-14), Provincial Councillor (2016-20), Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry for the Schools sector (2019-21), Vice-provincial (2020) and Provincial Delegate for Formation (2021).

He has been a member of the community of Provincial House at Porto Alegre since 2019.

4. *Roberto MOLIN, Provincial of the “San Carlo Borromeo” Lombardo Emiliana Province, Italy (ILE). He succeeds Giuliano Giacomazzi.*

On 13.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Roberto Dal Molin as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Charles Borromeo Lombardo-Emiliana Province based in Milan (ILE).

Roberto Dal Molin was born on 21 October 1967 in Verona (Italy) and has been a Salesian since 8 September 1988, the date of his first profession at Colle Don Bosco at the end of his novitiate in Pinerolo. The date of his perpetual profession is 18 September 1994, and he was ordained priest in Verona on 22 June 1996 after theological studies which he pursued at the Crocetta in Turin. In 1997 he obtained a Licentiate in Theology at the Teresianum.

After priestly ordination, from September 1995 to September 1997 he was in the post-novitiate community at St Tarcisius, Rome. He then moved to the provincial house of the West Veneto Province in Verona, involved in provincial

animation. He remained in Verona until 2003, when he was assigned to Mogliano Veneto, in the “live-in community” there, combining this with his role as Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry. In September 2006 he moved to Nave (Brescia), as the Rector of the post-novitiate until 2012, when he began his role as Provincial of the North-East Province (INE) Italy, for a six-year period until 2018.

Since 2018, he has been Rector and Economer at CNOS, as well as President of the National Centre for Salesian Works (CNOS), National Coordinator of Youth Ministry and recently of President of Salesians for Social APS.

5. *DECANCQ Bart, Provincial of the St John Berchmans Province of Northern Belgium and the Netherlands (BEN). He succeeds Wilfried Wambeke.*

On 12.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Bart Decancq as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St John Berchmans Province of Northern Belgium and the Netherlands with headquarters in Brussels (BEN).

He was born on 15 November 1959 in Roeselare, West-Vlaanderen (Belgium), diocese of Brugge. He is the son of Johan Decancq

and Magdalena Wullaert. After his novitiate in 1979-80, he made his first profession on 7 September 1980, and professed perpetual vows on 1 August 1987. He was ordained priest on 21 April 21 1990 in Oud-Heverlee.

After ordination he was in the house at Groot-Bijgaarden where he was Vice-rector (1994-97); he was then a Councillor at the work at Kortrijk from 1997 to 2008, and Headmaster from 2003 to 2008. He has also been Councillor in the communities at Hectel (2008-15) and Oud-Heverlee from 2015 until now. A graduate in Religious Sociology, he speaks Dutch (Flemish Vlaams), English and Italian.

He has been Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry in the Salesian Schools sector since 2015; since 2019 he has also been Provincial Delegate for Social Communication, and in 2020 he was made Vice-provincial.

6. *FARFÁN Pacheco Marcelo Alfonso, Provincial of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, Ecuador (ECU). He succeeds Francisco Maria Sánchez Carrión.*

On 20.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Marcelo Alfonso Farfán Pacheco as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-

2029 of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, based in Quito (ECU).

Born on 2 December 1963 in Cuenca, Azuay (Ecuador), diocese of Cuenca, he is the son of Miguel and Rebeca Pacheco.

After his novitiate in 1982 he made his first religious profession in Cumbayá on 31 January 1983, and then pursued formation in Quito until his perpetual profession in 1989 in Quito.

After his priestly ordination in Cuenca, in 1992 he went to the mission in Zumbahua as Vice-rector until 1996. This experience was followed by the role of Economist in the post-novitiate in Quito until 1998.

He attended the Formation course in Rome, and was appointed Rector of the Post-novitiate, until 2003. Then from 1997 to 2008 he was Provincial Councillor and continued as a formator in the post-novitiate until assuming the responsibility of Vice-rector of the Salesian Polytechnic University, Quito. Over the years, in addition to his preparation in philosophy, he obtained a degree in educational sciences and a doctorate in theology.

For the two-year period from 2006-08 he was still the Rector of the post-novitiate and in 2008 began his first term as Provincial of the Province of Ecuador (ECU) until 2014. He returned to the post-

novitiate in Quito as Rector until 2016. Then the Rector Major called him to the General House to be part of the Youth Ministry Sector with the special task of coordinating Salesian Institutes for Higher Education (IUS) at the international level, until 2021. After GC28, on behalf of the RM he undertook the Extraordinary Visitation to the Mary Help of Christians Spain Province (SMX), between 2021 and 2022.

After the visitation he returned to lead the International Post-Novitiate in Quito.

*7. GESING Reinhard, Provincial of the St Boniface Province of Germany (GER). Reconfirmed.*

On 13.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Reinhard Gesing as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Boniface Province of Germany with headquarters in Munich (GER).

Born on 13 August 1962 in Südlohn NRW (Germany), after his novitiate in Jünkerath (1982-1983), Reinhard Gesing made his first religious profession on 15 August 1983 in the then North German Province (GEK) and his perpetual profession on 15 August 1989.

Ordained priest on June 28, 1992 at Benediktbeuern, he carried out an educative and pastoral

ministry in the communities of Velbert (1992-1995); Jünkerath (1995-2005) as Novice Director. From 2005 he was at Benediktbeuern as Councillor (2006-2015) and later Rector (2015-2017).

At the provincial level, he has held the position of Councillor, Vice-provincial and Delegate for the Salesian Family. He has held the position of Provincial of GER for a six-year period from 2016 to 2022 and is now reconfirmed.

*8. KLEMENT Václav, Superior of the Blessed Michael Rua Vice-province of Southern Africa (AFM). He succeeds Joy Sebastian.*

On 21.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Václav Klement as Superior for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Blessed Michael Rua Vice-Province of Southern Africa (AFM) based in Booyens, Johannesburg in the Republic of South Africa.

Born on 7 October 1958 in Brno, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), he has been a Salesian since 4 September 1982, when he made his first religious profession during the difficult clandestine period. Later he was able to come to Italy, to Rome, where he completed his philosophical and pedagogical studies and, later, theology.

He was ordained priest in Rome on 25 May 1986.

Immediately after priestly ordination, accepting the missionary call he left for Korea, where he learned the language and became fully involved in Salesian life and mission. In 1994 he was appointed Rector of the Daerim Dong house, Seoul.

From 1986 to 2002 he was engaged in pastoral care for young people at risk, in secondary school as a catechist and then as Rector.

In 1996 he was appointed Superior of the Holy Korean Martyrs Province and from 1999 the Provincial.

From 2002 to 2008 he was General Councillor for the East Asia-Oceania Region, and subsequently the General Councillor for Missions (2008-14) to resume the position of General Councillor for the East Asia-Oceania Region between 2014 and 2020.

After GC28, from 2020 to today the RM has appointed him an Extraordinary Visitor “ad nutum et pro tempore”, to carry out the Extraordinary Visitation to the Zambia (ZMB) Vice-province and to the Provinces of Poland-Pila (PLN) and East Africa (AFE).

Among his qualities he speaks Czech, Korean, Italian, English, Spanish, Slovak, Polish and German.

9. *LOURDUSAMY Don Bosco, Provincial of the Province of St Thomas the Apostle (INM). He succeeds Jose Kocham Kunnel.*

On 14.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Don Bosco Lourdusamy as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Thomas the Apostle Province based in Chennai (INM).

He was born on 17 February 1971 in Kandikuppam, Tamil Nadu (India).

He made his novitiate in 1989-90 at Coimbatore and then his first profession in 1990. He made his perpetual profession in 1997 at Don Bosco Tirupattur and in 2000 he was ordained priest in Kandikuppam-Dharmapuri.

He is a former Assistant Parish Priest, Director of the Youth Centre, and Economist at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Perambur from 2001 to 2002. Then from 2002 to 2010 he was the Rector of the Don Bosco Vazhikaati Centre, the provincial centre for professional guidance and placement. He established numerous initiatives and labour fairs for young people throughout the State of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with the state government.

From 2002 to 2007, he was also Rector of the Youth Centre of the productive Rinaldi Juniorate at

the Salesian Institute of Graphic Arts (SIGA) in Chennai.

He has been in the houses at Yercaud, Pannur, Tiruchy and St Bede's Madras where he was Rector from 2011 to 2017, then from 2019 was Rector of the provincial community at the Citadel, Madras (Chennai).

He was a Provincial Councillor (2012-17) then INM Vice-provincial from 2017, Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry and then prepared himself academically for Formation. In fact, over the years he obtained a baccalaureate in various disciplines (philosophy, theology ...) a Masters in Human Resource Development, Commerce and Business Administration, finally obtaining a Doctorate (PhD) in Management Studies.

10. *MBANDAMA Michael Kazembe, Superior of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-province of Zambia Malawi Zimbabwe Namibia (ZMB). He succeeds Krzysztof Rychcik.*

On 21.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Michael Kazembe Mbandama as Superior for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-province of Zambia Malawi Zimbabwe Namibia (ZMB) based in Lusaka (Zambia).

He was born on 07/09/1972 in

Solwezi (Zambia), diocese of Solwezi and began his novitiate in Moshi (Tanzania) from 14 August 1997 to 15 August 1998.

He obtained a degree in Philosophy and Educational Sciences in Lubumbashi in 2003-2005 and a degree in Theology from the St Francis de Sales Institute in Lubumbashi in 2006-2008. From 2008 to 2021 he worked in Lilongwe, Malawi, as Rector of the community and as Director of the Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute.

In 2014 he participated in the 27th General Chapter in Rome as Delegate for the ZMB Vice-province. From 2015 to 2021 he was a member of the Provincial Council.

Fr Mbandama holds a Masters of Science (MSc) in Leadership and Change Management from Leeds Beckett University in the UK, formerly known as Leeds Metropolitan University.

11. *MCDONNELL Eunan, Provincial of the St Patrick's Province of Ireland (IRL). Reconfirmed.*

On 14.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Eunan McDonnell as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Patrick Province of Ireland (IRL), based in Dublin.

Eunan McDonnell was born on

28 September 1961 in Strabane, Co. Tyrone (Ireland) and has been a Salesian since 8 September 1982, the date of his first profession in Warrenstown following the Salesian novitiate year in Dublin (1981-1982).

Professed perpetually on 9 July 1988, he was ordained priest on 16 June 1990.

After ordination he has held the positions of Novice Director and Vice-rector of the Provincial House in Dublin (1995-99).

At the provincial level, for the previous Province of Ireland and Malta, he was Councillor from 1996 to 1998 and Provincial Delegate for Vocations from 2009 to 2012.

However, from 2000 to 2004 he took up the role of Vice-rector of the community in Adigrat, Ethiopia and then added those of Headmaster and Director of the Oratory.

He returned to the communities in Celbridge, of which he was also Rector from 2016 to 2017, and Maynooth, where he spent 11 years between 2005 and 2016. He has held the position of Provincial of IRL from 2017 to 2022 for a six-year period and is now reconfirmed.

12. *MIRANDA Ustero Fernando, Provincial of the Mary Help of Christians Province, Spain (SMX). He succeeds Angel Asurmendi.*

On 19.01.2023 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Fernando Ustero Miranda as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Mary Help of Christians Province of Spain with headquarters in Seville (SMX).

Fernando Miranda Ustero was born in Zaragoza on 28 July 1969. He was a student of the Salesians in the Aragonese capital. After his novitiate in Alicante he made his novitiate in Sanlúcar la Mayor and on 16 August 1991 made his first religious profession. He was in Valencia for his post novitiate, which he completed in 1993, then did his practical training in Burriana (1993-96), and his theological studies in Madrid-Carabanchel (1996-2000). He made his perpetual profession in Valencia on 31 May 1997.

He was ordained priest on 13 May 2000 in Elche, and then began coordination of pastoral care. He then directed the “Gentjove” Youth Association. He studied Pastoral Theology in Atocha Madrid, at the “Instituto de Pastoral”, and helped out on weekends at the “Fiesta del Árbol” Youth Center in Albacete, ending up with a degree in Pastoral Theology. He also attended numerous formation courses.

He was the Youth Ministry Delegate for the Province of Valencia,

and Rector of the Don Bosco School in Valencia (2005-2014). After the unification of the Provinces of Barcelona, Seville and Valencia to form the current SMX Province, which took place in 2014, he was Rector and Principal of the school at Burriana (2014-2017). He then went to Zaragoza (2017-2018). Meanwhile, he was a member of the Provincial Council, carrying out the functions of Vice-provincial and Formation Delegate.

Currently the Vice-provincial, Fr Fernando succeeds Fr Ángel Asurmendi in a Province that involves the Salesian works of Andalusia, Aragon, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Catalonia, the Valencian Community, Extremadura and the Region of Murcia.

13. *MORAIS De Castro Tarcizio António, Provincial of the St Anthony Province of Portugal (POR). He succeeds José Anibal M. Mendonça Pinto.*

On 10.01.2023 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Tarcizio António Morais De Castro as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the St Anthony Province of Portugal with headquarters in Lisbon (POR).

Tarcizio Morais was born on 30

May 1972 in Winnipeg, Canada. He is the son of João Alberto Morais and Maria de Fátima Castro Morais who emigrated to Canada.

He made his first religious profession on 8 September 1990, in Vilarinho, near Vila do Conde. His initial formation was in Manique; he attended Philosophy at the Catholic University of Lisbon. He then did his practical training at Évora. He studied theology in Madrid.

On 27 July 1996 he made his perpetual profession in Porto.

He was ordained priest on 17 April 1999 in Mirandela, in his family's diocese of origin (Bragança-Miranda).

In 2005 he obtained a Licentiate in Educational Sciences at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome (UPS) with specialisation in Pedagogy for Schools and Vocational Training. He then gained his Masters in School Administration at the ISCTE University Institute in Lisbon.

He has worked in particular in pastoral animation for the Portuguese Province, as Director and Coordinator of Youth Ministry in Évora; Formator and Vice-rector at the Pre-novitiate in Porto; Pedagogical Director, Vice-rector and then Rector at Estoril; Rector and parish priest in Setúbal.

He has been Coordinator of the

Schools sector and head of the Salesian Formation Centre, as well as Provincial Councillor and Provincial Delegate to the 27th General Chapter.

From 2017 to 2021 he was a member of the Youth Ministry Sector Team at the General House in Rome. He was responsible at world level for Salesian Schools and coordinator of the Youth Ministry Delegates of Europe.

At present he is the Rector of the Salesian work in Setúbal.

14. *MUKANGWA MWANA NGOY Aurélien, Superior of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-province, Africa Congo Congo (ACC). He succeeds Jiménez Castro Manuel.*

On 15.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Mukangwa Mwana Ngoy Aurélien as Superior for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-province of Africa Congo Congo with headquarters in Kinshasa (ACC).

Fr Aurélien was born on 9 November 1975 in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo. The son of Donatien Symba Mukangwa and Judith Munyampala Mwanze, he made his novitiate in Kansebula (1999-2000), and his first profession on 24 August 2000. After his

period of studies and activities in initial formation he made his perpetual profession in Lubumbashi on 8 July 2006 and then two years later was ordained priest on 12 July 2008. Over the years he obtained a diploma in pedagogy.

He has been the Economer in Uvira (2008-10), Rector in Lukunga Kinshasa (2010-13), priest in charge at La Gombe Kinshasa and school principal in La Gombe and Masina (2013-15). He has been responsible for Cooperators and the Rector at Cité des Jeunes in Lubumbashi (2017-21). He was appointed Superior of the DRC-West Delegation (2013-17) and then in recent years the Delegate of the Provincial in the new AFC East Delegation, based in Goma.

He begins his animation and governance of the Vice-province on 24 May 2023.

15. *NAVARRO MORA Julio Andrés, Provincial of the Divine Saviour Province of Central America (CAM). He succeeds José Angel Prado Mendoza.*

On 07.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Julio Andrés Navarro Mora as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Divine Saviour Province of Central America

based in Las Charcas, Guatemala (CAM).

Fr Navarro Mora was born on 7 September 1980 in San José, Costa Rica, diocese of San José. He is the son of Francisco Gerardo Navarro and Ana Esabel Mora.

He made his novitiate in Cartago (Costa Rica) in 1998-99, his first profession on 1 November 1999, and perpetual vows on 8 October 2005, and was ordained priest in San José, the city of his birth, on 15 December 2007.

From 2008 to 2018 he worked in the Salesian communities of Don Bosco College (2008-2011) and the San José Technical Institute (2011-2018), as Vice-rector at the College and also as Councillor and then Vice-rector at the Technical Institute. Since 2018 he has been the Economer of the CAM Provincial House, based in Guatemala City and since 2017 the Provincial Economer of CAM, coordinating activities in the six countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

He replaces his predecessor Fr José Angel Prado Mendoza and will take up his role as Provincial on the Feast of the Epiphany 6 January 2023.

16. *ROME Gianpaolo, Provincial of the Blessed Michael Rua Province of Southern Italy (EMI). He succeeds Angelo Santorsola.*

On 15.12.2022 the Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council, appointed Fr Gianpaolo Roma as Provincial for the six-year period from 2023-2029 of the Blessed Michael Rua Province of Southern Italy based in Naples (IME).

He was born in Salerno on 25 November 1979 and after his novitiate in Pinerolo (1999-2000) he made his first religious profession on 8 September 2000. He professed perpetual vows in Andria on 9 September 2007. He was ordained on 16 May 2009 in his hometown. He then went to the Santeramo community in Colle Consiglio (2010-2011), was Director of the Oratory (2010-2014) and then Vice-rector (2011-2014); he was then appointed Economer in Torre Annunziata (2014-2016) and in Andria (2016-2017).

Rector and parish priest in Brindisi (2017-2019), for the last three years he has been a Councillor at the Provincial Centre in Naples.

His assignments in the Province led him to missionary animation as Delegate for Missions (2013-2017), Vocations (2018-2019) and Youth Ministry (2019-ongoing).

## 5.2 Decreto di erezione canonica della Ispettorica “Beato Artemide Zatti” denominata Africa Nigeria e Niger (ANN)

Prot. 2021/SG/0112

### DECRETO DI EREZIONE CANONICA DELLA ISPETTORICA SALESIANA “B. ARTEMIDE ZATTI” DI AFRICA NIGERIA E NIGER

Il sottoscritto,

sac. **Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME**,

*Rettor Maggiore della Società Salesiana di San Giovanni Bosco,*

- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l’estensione territoriale dell’Ispettorica Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (Costa d’Avorio);
- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l’estensione territoriale della Ispettorica Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (Ghana);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, l’8 giugno 2011 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettorica della Nigeria, con sede a Lagos-Iju (Nigeria);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, il 19 luglio 2013 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettorica di Senegal, Mali, Guinea Conakry e Gambia, con sede a Bamako (Mali);
- visti gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nell’Ispettorica Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (AFO) e gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nella Ispettorica Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (AFW);
- visto il parere favorevole dell’Ispettore AFO col suo Consiglio e il parere favorevole dell’Ispettore AFW col suo Consiglio;
- ottenuto il consenso del Consiglio Generale nella riunione del **19 gennaio 2021**, a norma degli articoli 132 §1,1 e 156 delle Costituzioni:

**DISTACCA dall'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Beato Artemide Zatti" di Ashaiman (Ghana) le seguenti Case:**

1. Abuja (Nigeria), "Santa Giuseppina Bakhita"
2. Akure (Nigeria), "Maria Ausiliatrice"
3. Ibadan (Nigeria), "Ss. Versiglia e Caravario"
4. Ijebu-Ode (Nigeria), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
5. Kontagora - Koko (Nigeria), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
6. Lagos - Iju (Nigeria), "Maria Ausiliatrice"
7. Lagos (Nigeria), "San Giuseppe"
8. Ondo (Nigeria), "San Giovanni Bosco"
9. Onitsha (Nigeria), "San Giovanni Bosco"

e mediante il presente Decreto,

**ERIGE CANONICAMENTE**

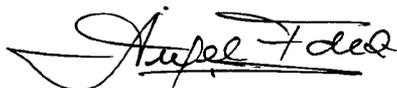
la nuova **ISPETTORIA SALESIANA di AFRICA NIGERIA E NIGER (ANN)**, intitolata al "BEATO ARTEMIDE ZATTI", con sede in **LAGOS-IJU (Nigeria)**, casa "Maria Ausiliatrice", con le suddette Case.

Si stabilisce quanto segue:

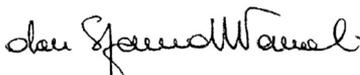
1. Appartengono alla Ispettorìa i confratelli che appaiono nell'elenco approvato dal Rettor Maggiore con il consenso del Consiglio generale il 31 luglio 2021 e avrà indicata la posizione giuridica dei confratelli con trasferimento definitivo o temporaneo alla nuova Ispettorìa ANN.
2. L'Ispettorìa dovrà sviluppare la sua missione in Niger.

L'Ispettorìa avrà inizio con la presa di possesso del nuovo Ispettore il 31 gennaio 2022.

*Roma, 2 marzo 2021*



Sac. Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME  
Rettor Maggiore



Sac. Stefano VANOLI  
Segretario generale

### 5.3 Decreto di erezione canonica della Ispettorica “Nostra Signora della pace” denominata Africa Occidentale Nord (AON)

Prot. 2021/SG/0114

#### DECRETO DI EREZIONE CANONICA DELLA ISPETTORIA SALESIANA “NOSTRA SIGNORA DELLA PACE” DI AFRICA OCCIDENTALE NORD

Il sottoscritto,

sac. **Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME**,

*Rettor Maggiore della Società Salesiana di San Giovanni Bosco,*

- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l’estensione territoriale dell’Ispettorica Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (Costa d’Avorio);
- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l’estensione territoriale della Ispettorica Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (Ghana);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, l’8 giugno 2011 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettorica della Nigeria, con sede a Lagos-Iju (Nigeria);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, il 19 luglio 2013 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettorica di Senegal, Mali, Guinea Conakry e Gambia, con sede a Bamako (Mali);
- visti gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nell’Ispettorica Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (AFO) e gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nella Ispettorica Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (AFW);
- visto il parere favorevole dell’Ispettore AFO col suo Consiglio e il parere favorevole dell’Ispettore AFW col suo Consiglio;
- ottenuto il consenso del Consiglio Generale nella riunione del **19 gennaio 2021**, a norma degli articoli 132 §1,1 e 156 delle Costituzioni:

**DISTACCA dall'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Nostra Signora della Pace" di Abidjan (Costa d'Avorio) le seguenti Case:**

1. Cotonou - Djidjè (Benin), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
2. Cotonou - Zogbo (Benin), *"Sant'Antonio di Padova"*
3. Kandi (Benin), *"Nostra Signora del Carmelo"*
4. Parakou (Benin), *"Maria Ausiliatrice"*
5. Porto-Novo - Foun-Foun (Benin), *"San Francesco Saverio"*
6. Porto-Novo - Tokpota (Benin), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
7. Bobo - Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
8. Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), *"Beato Artemide Zatti"*
9. Kunkujang (Gambia), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
10. Conakry (Guinea), *"San Giuseppe"*
11. Kankan (Guinea), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
12. Siguirì (Guinea), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
13. Bamako (Mali), *"San Giuseppe"*
14. Sikasso (Mali), *"Maria Ausiliatrice"*
15. Touba (Mali), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
16. Dakar (Senegal), *"San Giovanni Bosco"*
17. Tambacounda (Senegal), *"Maria Regina dell'Universo"*
18. Thiès (Senegal), *"Maria Ausiliatrice"*

e mediante il presente Decreto,

**ERIGE CANONICAMENTE**

la nuova ispettorìa Salesiana di **AFRICA OCCIDENTALE NORD (AON)**, intitolata a **"NOSTRA SIGNORA DELLA PACE"**, con sede in **COTONOU-ZOGBO (Benin)**, casa **"Sant'Antonio di Padova"**, con le suddette Case.

Si stabilisce quanto segue:

1. Appartengono alla Ispettorìa i confratelli che appaiono nell'elenco approvato dal Rettor Maggiore con il consenso del Consiglio generale il 31 luglio 2021 e avrà indicata la posizione giuridica dei confratelli con trasferimento definitivo o temporaneo alla nuova Ispettorìa AON.
2. La Delegazione ispettoriale, costituita con decreto del Rettor Maggiore

del 19 luglio 2013 (Prot. 267/2013), comprenderà i seguenti paesi: Senegal, Guinea Conakry e Gambia. Essa avrà sede a Dakar (Senegal). Le case del Mali non faranno parte della Delegazione.

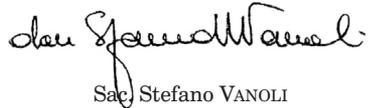
3. L'Ispettorìa dovrà sviluppare la sua missione in Guinea Bissau.

L'Ispettorìa avrà inizio con la presa di possesso del nuovo Ispettore il 31 gennaio 2022.

*Roma, 3 marzo 2021*



Sac. Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME  
*Rettor Maggiore*



Sac. Stefano VANOLI  
*Segretario generale*

#### 5.4 Decreto di erezione canonica della Ispettorìa “San Giuseppe” denominata Africa Occidentale Sud (AOS)

Prot. 2021/SG/0115

### DECRETO DI EREZIONE CANONICA DELLA ISPETTORIA SALESIANA “SAN GIUSEPPE” DI AFRICA OCCIDENTALE SUD

Il sottoscritto,

sac. **Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME**,

*Rettor Maggiore della Società Salesiana di San Giovanni Bosco,*

- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l'estensione territoriale dell'Ispettorìa Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (Costa d'Avorio);
- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l'estensione territoriale della Ispettorìa Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (Ghana);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, l'8 giugno 2011 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettoriale della Nigeria, con sede a Lagos-Iju (Nigeria);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, il 19 luglio 2013 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettoriale di Senegal, Mali, Guinea Conakry e Gambia, con sede a Bamako (Mali);
- visti gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nell'Ispettorìa Salesiana “Nostra Signora della Pace” di Abidjan (AFO) e gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nella Ispettorìa Salesiana “Beato Artemide Zatti” di Ashaiman (AFW);
- visto il parere favorevole dell'Ispettore AFO col suo Consiglio e il parere favorevole dell'Ispettore AFW col suo Consiglio;
- ottenuto il consenso del Consiglio Generale nella riunione del **19 gennaio 2021**, a norma degli articoli 132 §1,1 e 156 delle Costituzioni:

**DISTACCA dall'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Nostra Signora della Pace" di Abidjan (Costa d'Avorio) le seguenti Case:**

1. Abidjan (Costa d'Avorio), "*San Francesco d'Assisi*"
2. Duékoué (Costa d'Avorio), "*S. Teresa di Gesù Bambino*"
3. Korhogo (Costa d'Avorio), "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
4. Cinkassé (Togo), "*Maria Ausiliatrice*"
5. Gbodjomé - Noviziato (Togo), "*Beato Filippo Rinaldi*"
6. Kara (Togo), "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
7. Lomé - Akodessewa - Postnoviziato (Togo), "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
8. Lomé - Akodessewa (Togo), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
9. Lomé - Gbényedzi (Togo), "*Maria Ausiliatrice*"

**DISTACCA dall'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Beato Artemide Zatti" di Ashaiman (Ghana) le seguenti Case:**

1. Ashaiman (Ghana), "*Beato Artemide Zatti*"
2. Ashaiman (Ghana), "*San Francesco di Sales*"
3. Sunyani - Noviziato (Ghana), "*Ven. Simone Srugi*"
4. Sunyani (Ghana), "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
5. Tatalé (Ghana), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
6. Monrovia - Matadi (Liberia), "*Beato Stefano Sándor*"
7. Monrovia (Liberia), "*San Giuseppe*"
8. Tappita (Liberia), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
9. Bo - Tikonko (Sierra Leone), *casa non canonicamente eretta*
10. Freetown (Sierra Leone), "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
11. Lungi (Sierra Leone), "*Maria Ausiliatrice*"

e mediante il presente Decreto,

**ERIGE CANONICAMENTE**

la nuova Ispettorìa Salesiana di AFRICA OCCIDENTALE SUD (AOS), intitolata a "SAN GIUSEPPE", con sede in ASHAIMAN (Ghana), casa "Beato Artemide Zatti", con le suddette Case.

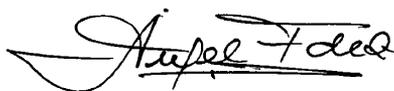
Si stabilisce quanto segue:

1. Appartengono alla Ispettorìa i confratelli che appaiono nell'elenco approvato dal Rettor Maggiore con il consenso del Consiglio generale

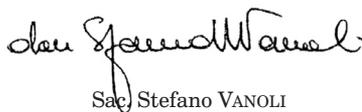
il 31 luglio 2021 e avrà indicata la posizione giuridica dei confratelli con trasferimento definitivo o temporaneo alla nuova Ispettorìa AOS.

L'Ispettorìa avrà inizio con la presa di possesso del nuovo Ispettore il 31 gennaio 2022.

*Roma, 3 marzo 2021*



Sac. Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME  
*Rettor Maggiore*



Sac. Stefano VANOLI  
*Segretario generale*

## 5.5 Decreto di erezione canonica della Ispettorica “Sant’Artemide Zatti” denominata Ispettorica di Tanzania (TZA)

Prot. 2023/SG/0073

### DECRETO DI EREZIONE CANONICA DELLA ISPETTORIA SALESIANA “SANT’ARTEMIDE ZATTI” DELLA TANZANIA

Il sottoscritto,

sac. **Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME**,

*Rettor Maggiore della Società Salesiana di San Giovanni Bosco,*

- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l’estensione territoriale dell’Ispettorica Salesiana “San Giovanni Bosco” di Nairobi (Kenya);
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, il 14 giugno 2006 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettoriale “sui iuris” in Sudan (SDN), dedicata a Maria Ausiliatrice, giuridicamente dipendente dall’Ispettorica Africa Est (AFE), ma sotto l’egida del Rettor Maggiore e del suo Consiglio, con funzionamento secondo uno Statuto “ad hoc”;
- visti gli esiti del sondaggio effettuato nell’Ispettorica Salesiana “San Giovanni Bosco” di Nairobi (Kenya) in preparazione al Capitolo ispettoriale di giugno 2022, e gli esiti della consultazione effettuata nella stessa Ispettorica Salesiana in novembre 2022 dal Consigliere Regionale in vista della nuova distribuzione dei soci dell’AFE nella nuova configurazione;
- visto il parere favorevole dell’Ispettore AFE col suo Consiglio;
- ottenuto il consenso del Consiglio Generale nella riunione del **25 gennaio 2023**, a norma degli articoli 132 §1,1 e 156 delle Costituzioni:

**DISTACCA** dall’Ispettorica Salesiana “San Giovanni Bosco” di Nairobi (Kenya) le seguenti Case:

1. Arusha (Tanzania), *San Giovanni Bosco*
2. Dar Es Salaam - Oyster Bay (Tanzania), *San Giuseppe*
3. Dar Es Salaam - Upanga (Tanzania), *San Giovanni Bosco*
4. Dodoma - Don Bosco (Tanzania), *San Giovanni Bosco*
5. Dodoma - Seminary (Tanzania), *San Domenico Savio*
6. Iringa (Tanzania), *San Giovanni Bosco*
7. Mafinga - Makalala (Tanzania), *Santa Maria Assunta*
8. Mafinga - Parrocchia (Tanzania), *Santa Maria Assunta*
9. Mafinga - Seminario (Tanzania), *Sacro Cuore di Gesù*
10. Morogoro (Tanzania), *Beato Zeffirino Namuncurà*
11. Moshi (Tanzania), *Sacro Cuore di Gesù*.
12. Shinyanga (Tanzania), *San Giovanni Bosco*.

e mediante il presente Decreto,

### ERIGE CANONICAMENTE

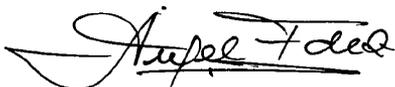
la nuova **Ispettorìa Salesiana di TANZANIA (TZA)**, intitolata a “**SANT’ARTEMIDE ZATTI**”, con sede in **DAR ES SALAAM - OYSTER BAY (Tanzania)**, casa “**San Giuseppe**”, con le suddette Case.

Si stabilisce quanto segue:

Appartengono alla Ispettorìa i confratelli che appaiono nell’elenco approvato dal Rettor Maggiore con il consenso del Consiglio generale il 25 gennaio 2023 e avrà indicata la posizione giuridica dei confratelli con trasferimento definitivo o temporaneo alla nuova Ispettorìa TZA.

L’Ispettorìa avrà inizio con la presa di possesso del nuovo Ispettore l’8 settembre 2023.

*Torino, 1 febbraio 2023*



Sac. Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME  
*Rettor Maggiore*



Sac. Guido GARINO  
*Segretario generale*

## 5.6 Deceased confreres (2<sup>nd</sup> list July-December 2022)

“Faith in the risen Christ sustains our hope and keeps alive our communion with our brothers who rest in Christ’s peace. They have spent their lives in the Congregation, and not a few have suffered even to the point of martyrdom for the love of the Lord... Their remembrance is an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission” (C. 94).

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P AIDALA Sergio	Messina (Italia)	24.11.2022	79	ISI
P ALBA LEONARDO Anastasio	Logroño (Spagna)	18.07.2022	89	SSM
P ALBERICH SOTOMAYOR Emilio	Sevilla (Spagna)	09.09.2022	89	SMX
P ALTRICHTER Václav	Kroměříž (Repubblica Ceca)	31.12.2022	85	CEP
P ÁLVAREZ RODRÍGUEZ Luis (Senior)	León (Spagna)	20.11.2022	90	SSM
P ARANA MARTINEZ Juan Antonio	Barcelona (Spagna)	24.08.2022	82	SMX
P ARESTIVO Mario	Catania (Italia)	15.12.2022	83	ISI
P BACA PAUNERO Enrique	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	02.08.2022	79	ARS
P BAEK Augustine Woon Taek	New Rochelle (Stati Uniti)	30.12.2022	64	SUE
P BALDONADO Angel	Texas (Stati Uniti)	22.07.2022	73	FIN
P BARBIER Lucien	Issenheim (Francia)	14.12.2022	101	FRB
L BARRERA HURTADO Jorge	Irapuato, Guanajuato (Messico)	12.10.2022	85	MEG
P BELNIAK Józef	Łódź (Polonia)	21.10.2022	83	PLE
L BILLEKENS Santiago (Jakob)	Guatemala (Guatemala)	04.07.2022	93	CAM
P BOGATAJ Peter	Ljubljana (Slovenia)	06.07.2022	87	SLO
P BOSQUE PIÑEIRO José Manuel del	Ávila (Spagna)	27.07.2022	99	SSM
P CÁRDENAS COLMENARES Vicente El.	San Cristóbal – E. T. (Venezuela)	31.12.2022	84	VEN
L CASTELLANOS CARREÑO Primitivo	Arévalo (Spagna)	01.08.2022	91	SSM
P CENCI Piermarino	Roma (Italia)	28.09.2022	84	ICC
P CHECCHI Sergio	Guatemala (Guatemala)	07.11.2022	87	CAM
P CHITTATTUKALAM Joseph	New Delhi (India)	27.11.2022	82	INN
P CIMAN Cesare	Cazzano di Tramigna (VR) (Italia)	07.10.2022	86	MOR
P CIPRIANI Giuseppe	Roma (Italia)	06.09.2022	101	ICC
P COLEMAN John William	Walkerville (Sud Africa)	28.07.2022	92	AFM
P CONTRERAS ALONSO Fabio Enrique	Bucaramanga (Colombia)	01.10.2022	78	COB
P COSTA SOBRINHO DA Raimundo Ric.	Natal-RN (Brasile)	14.08.2022	89	BRE
P CUADRA TUSTCH Pedro Francisco	Santiago de Chile (Cile)	16.07.2022	71	CIL
L CUESTA BÁEZ Leonel Antonio	Santo Domingo (R. Dominicana)	02.09.2022	87	ANT
P DE LEÓN VALDEZ Luis Zenón	Ciudad de Guat. (Guatemala)	22.12.2022	94	CAM
P DE PORTU Claudio	Latina (Italia)	26.10.2022	88	ICC
P DERETTI Antônio	Jaraguá do Sul (Brasile)	30.08.2022	92	BPA
P DONDERS Jan	Lambertart, Lille (Francia)	19.08.2022	89	BEN
P DONOHOE Daniel	Frimley (Gran Bretagna)	22.08.2022	87	GBR
P D'SOUZA Salvador	Mumbai (India)	20.11.2022	95	INB
D ECCLI Arcangelo	Torino (Italia)	05.12.2022	91	ICP
P FAGAN John	Limerick (Irlanda)	29.11.2022	96	IRL
P FERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ Fidel	Arévalo (Spagna)	20.07.2022	78	SSM

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P FILIPPONI Angelo	Caidate (VA) (Italia)	27.11.2022	88	ILE
P FLORES CHÁVEZ José Luis	Ciudad de México (Messico)	27.09.2022	72	MEM
L GALLO Giulio	Il Cairo (Egitto)	02.10.2022	84	MOR
P GARCÍA VICENTE Jesús	Avila (Spagna)	21.10.2022	93	SSM
P GATTERRE Francis	Lille (Francia)	24.10.2022	76	FRB
P GIACOMUZZI Carlo	Castello di Godego (TV) (Italia)	26.08.2022	92	INE
P GIANNI Alfio Amilcar	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	27.07.2022	98	ARS
P GIROTTI Natale	Torino (Italia)	19.07.2022	91	ICP
P GONZÁLEZ SÁNCHEZ Alfredo	Vigo (Spagna)	29.11.2022	79	SSM
P GRBEŠ Božo	Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina)	08.09.2022	75	CRO
P GRZEGORZEWSKI Tomasz	Port Chester, NY (Stati Uniti)	13.10.2022	64	SUE
P GUTIÉRREZ Horacio Ramón	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	30.12.2022	96	ARS
S HAHSHAH Pynshngain	Shillong (India)	18.12.2022	19	INS
P HEMBROM Francis	Guwahati (India)	30.07.2022	55	ING
P HILA Eduardo	Mandaluyong City (Filippine)	23.12.2022	55	FIN
P IDDAU Leonardo	Torino (Italia)	07.10.2022	93	ICP
P IZZO Ciro	Salerno (Italia)	12.11.2022	78	IME
P JOCHEM Josef	Ursberg (Germania)	06.07.2022	93	GER
P KALINSKI Ludwik	Łódź (Polonia)	26.07.2022	86	PLE
P KANAFA Stanisław	Licheń, Kawnice (Polonia)	18.10.2022	87	PLN
P KRAAN Gerrit Christiaan	Heathcote, N.S. Wales (Australia)	03.08.2022	92	AUL
P LACERDA PEREIRA José	Araxá (Brasile)	03.11.2022	90	BBH
L LADISA Giacinto	Salerno (Italia)	26.07.2022	78	IME
P LARRETA IRISARRI Gabriel	Logroño (Spagna)	16.08.2022	95	AET
L LARUMBE URDANGARI Primitivo	Barcelona (Spagna)	03.11.2022	90	SMX
L LASSER Franz	Amstetten (Austria)	01.08.2022	89	AUS
P LEONARDI Ennio	Lima (Perù)	07.10.2022	90	PER
P MAAT Adri	Amersfoort (Paesi Bassi)	06.09.2022	86	BEN
P MAGGI Dalmazio	Roma (Italia)	05.10.2022	87	ICC
L MAGGIOTTO Antonio	Castello di Godego (Italia)	19.07.2022	86	UPS
P MALINOWSKI Zbigniew	Lutomiersk (Polonia)	02.08.2022	87	PLE
P MANDIA Carmelo	Perugia (Italia)	15.11.2022	80	ICC
P MANGIARRATTI Santi	Catania (Italia)	04.09.2022	83	ISI
S MANUEL Emilio Cauandimba	Dondo (Angola)	26.09.2022	24	ANG
P MARTENS Piet	Hasselt (Belgio)	27.08.2022	91	BEN
P MARTÍNEZ JIMÉNEZ Hugo	Bogotá (Colombia)	11.11.2022	87	COB
P MASSA Giovanni Bautista	Meguro, Tokyo (Giappone)	13.12.2022	94	GIA
P MASTRILLI Lucio	Salerno (Italia)	29.11.2022	90	IME
P MIKEŠ Jaroslav	Praga (Repubblica Ceca)	26.07.2022	69	CEP
P MIRARCHI Giovanni	Salerno (Italia)	02.11.2022	93	IME
P MOATE Lawrence	Malvern, Victoria (Australia)	21.09.2022	79	AUL
P MURAKAMI KÔSUKE Yohane Vianney	Chofu (Giappone)	23.09.2022	89	GIA
L MURILLO HUERTAS Fernando	San José (Costa Rica)	19.07.2022	96	CAM
P MURILLO LORIA Gabelo	San José (Costa Rica)	28.10.2022	88	CAM
P NAGASAWA Dominico Savio Yukio	Nagasaki (Giappone)	24.07.2022	81	GIA
D OLIVARES FERNÁNDEZ Añbad Noel	Cochabamba (Bolivia)	20.12.2022	38	BOL

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P PALACKAPILLIL George	Chennai (India)	13.08.2022	87	INM
L PEREIRA Edward Anthony	Mumbai (India)	23.11.2022	86	INB
P PERROTTA Mario	Frascati (RM) (Italia)	08.08.2022	81	ICC
P PESTUN Aloysius	San Francisco (Stati Uniti)	01.09.2022	93	SUO
P PIŁAT Mieczysław	Kopiec (Polonia)	28.10.2022	87	PLO
P PROL DÍAZ Santiago	Caracas (Venezuela)	20.08.2022	82	VEN
P PUNNAKUNNEL Devasia	Aluva (India)	10.09.2022	89	INK
P PUNNOLIKUNNEL Thomas	Guwahati (India)	26.07.2022	87	ING
P PUTHENKALAM Joseph	Dindigul (India)	26.11.2022	94	INT
P PUTHUMANA Matthew	Iringa (Tanzania)	08.10.2022	67	AFE
P RADZISZEWSKI Grzegorz	Breznički Hum (Croazia)	06.08.2022	53	PLE
P RANT Antoni	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	05.09.2022	87	ARS
L RASOR John	Rosemead (Stati Uniti)	01.09.2022	77	SUO
P REIS PEREIRA José	São João del-Rei (Brasile)	17.10.2022	83	BBH
P RINALDINI Alberto	Genova (Italia)	24.09.2022	89	ICC
L RODRIGUES Isaac	Manique (Portogallo)	15.09.2022	89	POR
P RODRÍGUEZ MANCEBO Aurelio	Badajoz (Spagna)	20.10.2022	88	SMX
P RODRÍGUEZ TALLÓN Antonio	Úbeda (Spagna)	26.12.2022	82	SMX
P ROMPF Günter Mathias	Bratislava (Slovacchia)	17.10.2022	79	SLK
P ROSAMILIA Giuseppe	Torino (TO) (Italia)	18.11.2022	77	ICP
P SANNINO Giorgio	Caserta (Italia)	03.11.2022	96	IME
P SATLER Lino	Viamão (Brasile)	15.12.2022	97	BPA
L SCHIEDER Georg	Benediktbeuern (Germania)	24.11.2022	86	GER
P SCHNAIDER Valentín	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	16.12.2022	89	ARS
P SELVAGGIO Giorgio	Modica (Italia)	03.07.2022	86	ISI
P SGANZERLA Franco	Ferrara (Italia)	01.09.2022	72	ILE
P SOBONIAK Henryk	Wrocław (Polonia)	25.07.2022	86	PLO
P SOMERS James	Maynooth (Irlanda)	12.10.2022	96	IRL
P STOCCHETTI Benjamín	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	17.08.2022	85	ARS
P STYRNA Stanislaw	Szczecin (Polonia)	05.08.2022	88	PLN
P SZANIAWSKI Franciszek	Wrocław (Polonia)	03.10.2022	80	PLO
P SZUMNY Piotr	Piła (Polonia)	17.08.2022	54	PLN
P THOMAS Amalraj	Chennai (India)	10.12.2022	78	INM
P THÖRNER Paul	Horumersiel (Friesland) (Germania)	10.09.2022	80	GER
P TIBERI Antonio	Córdoba (Argentina)	17.09.2022	91	ARN
P URAS Pietro Franco	Davao (Filippine)	31.08.2022	78	FIS
L VAN AKEN Jan	Wijchen (Paesi Bassi)	31.08.2022	89	BEN
P VANZIN Gian Sandro	Castello di Godego (TV) (Italia)	30.11.2022	88	INE
P VENEGAS GONZÁLEZ Francisco	Colima (Messico)	30.07.2022	69	MEG
P VIEIRA João	Funchal (Portogallo)	24.10.2022	95	POR
P VILCHES CASTILLO Carlos Humberto	Santiago de Chile (Cile)	28.08.2022	85	CIL
P VILLALONGA ROVIRA José	Burriana (Spagna)	03.10.2022	83	SMX
P WITKOWSKI Kazimierz	Poznań (Polonia)	19.11.2022	86	PLO
P YE MAUNG Joachim	Anisakan (Myanmar)	31.10.2022	75	MYM
P ŻOWNOWSKI Józef (Yosyp)	Korostyshiv (Ucraina)	16.11.2022	58	PLS

