



VALDOCCO – THE LAND OF SANCTITY

*The Path to Holiness
in the company of the Saints*

Going through some places of our origins,
we want to welcome the call to holiness of Pope Francis
which resounds loudly for us today
through his witness of life and the Word.

The Family of Don Bosco, developing a characteristic spirituality of charismatic origin, enriches the whole Body of the Church with a very particular model of Christian life. This is borne out by the numerous groups of spiritual sons and daughters of Don Bosco who have already been declared Venerable or saints, or set out on the path of beatification and canonization.... (From the Charismatic Identity Card of the Salesian Family, 6).

The spirituality inherited from Don Bosco is eminently ecclesial: it manifests and nourishes the communion of the Church by building, within the Christian communities, a network of fraternal relationships and effective collaborations; it is an educational spirituality that aims to help the young and the poor to feel at ease in the Church, to be builders of the Church and participants in her mission; it is a spirituality that enriches the whole Church with the gift of the holiness of so many of her sons and daughters. (From the Charismatic Identity Card of the Salesian Family, 26).

1

BATTISTERO DELLA BASILICA DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE



LIVE THE GRACE OF BAPTISM

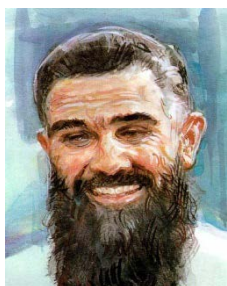
At the Baptismal Font, we are born to the life of grace: immersed in the death on the cross of Jesus, we have been subtracted from the power of original sin and we have risen to the new life that Jesus

inaugurated. Day by day, therefore, we are called to renew and make this gift fruitful, living baptismal promises: I renounce sin, the evil one and believe in God. God as the only good, as Lord of my own life. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to live with fidelity and coherence, believing that the path of holiness is the fruit of his presence in our life (cf. Gal 5,22-23). In the hour of trial and temptation, he lifts his eyes to "the One who pierced", believing that "from his wounds we have been healed".



Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit on a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God and for that purpose choose Him, choose God always again. Do not be discouraged, because you have the power of the Holy Spirit to be possible, and holiness, after all, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5,22-23). When you feel the temptation to cling to your weakness, look up at the Crucifix and say: "Lord, I am a poor man, but you can perform the miracle of making me a little better". In the Church, holy and composed of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has filled her with gifts with the Word, the Sacraments, the sanctuaries, the life of the communities, the witness of the saints, and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from the love of the Lord, "like a bride adorns herself with jewels" (Is 61.10). (Rejoice and Be Glad No. 15).

WITNESSES



I The Venerable Francesco Convertini (1898-1976), a missionary in Bengal, a man of God who brings "the water of Jesus that saves". Father Francesco is good, that's why everyone wants him as a friend. The houses of the Hindus are strictly closed to strangers. But the children grab him by the robe and pull him into their homes. And he speaks to all, Hindus and Muslims, of Jesus, of his love for all. He is revered by all as a great sadhu, a monk who brings God's peace. He

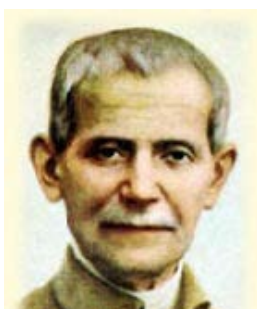
fasted for days and days even when walking, because "those people have so little to feed themselves". Since they know that he has "the water of Jesus who saves", many old men who wait for death in silence, ask him with a thousand subterfuge, not to offend the official religion of their family. And Don Francesco ends up baptizing thousands of people, after talking to them about Jesus.



The Servant of God Andrea Majcen (1904-1999), Slovenian, a missionary in China and in Vietnam. "I am grateful to God for calling me and for giving me courage to follow his call. The adventure of life, in which God sends us, is very meaningful ". A sentence that sums up a long history of days, of adventures, of an original desire-prophecy: to live 95 years! And this is accomplished in a timely manner on his birthday: September 30, 1999. A story, that of Don Andrea Majcen, as patriarch, with different calls, departures,

abandonments and above all with the joy and grace of having a great descent of spiritual children, fruit of the labors and apostolic trials. A continuous exodus towards new promised lands, where God leads to wonderful turns, humanly incomprehensible, but which then show themselves as the right way.

He lived a daily pledge to the sanctity recorded in the spiritual diaries, meditations and notes. There are 6,500 pages of manuscripts: every day he designs and precisely controls his spiritual commitment. Many are the four recurrences of his life: the day of his baptism when he became a child of God; the day of religious profession when he became a Salesian; the day of priestly ordination when he became a priest of Christ; the day of the delivery of the missionary crucifix, when he became the messenger and apostle of Christ.



The Venerable Simone Srugi (1877-1943), Salesian Coadjutor and fellow citizen of Jesus, good Samaritan for Christians and Muslims. Among the acts of charity and faith he accomplished there was one that brought him special inner joy. When he spoke of it he was visibly moved, except for the usual confidentiality: it is the Baptism administered to children, when these were surely destined to die. Well 360 "little angels" - as he called them - were the children he baptized.

RITE FOR THE SPRINKLING OF HOLY WATER

C - Dear brothers, let us invoke the blessing of God our Father, because this rite of sprinkling revives in us the grace of baptism through which we have been immersed in the redeeming death of the Lord to resurrect with him in new life.

Brief Pause for Silence

G - For each invocation we answer:

Purify and bless your Church.

C - O Creator God, who in the water and the Spirit have given form and face to man and to the universe.

T - Purify and bless your Church.

C - O Christ, who from the breast pierced on the cross you made the sacraments of our salvation spring forth.

T - Purify and bless your Church.

C - O Holy Spirit, who made us born again as new creatures from the baptismal womb of the Church.

T - Purify and bless your Church.

C - O God, bless + your people and revive in us through this water the joyful memory and grace of the first Easter in Baptism. For Christ our Lord.

T - Amen.



2

RELIC CHAPEL



MEMORY OF SANCTITY

A single ship with a Latin cross recalls the Christian catacombs in ornamental motifs and symbols. Here are preserved many relics of martyrs and saints. The true jewel of this Chapel is the relic of the Wood of the Holy Cross, preserved in a case,

against the background of alabaster. Another important place is the chapel dedicated to the Virgin, commonly called "Chapel of the Apparition" for the dream of 1845 recalled by Don Bosco: "It seemed to me that I was in a great plain of a vast number of young people. I saw myself next to a Lady who told me: "In this place, where the glorious martyrs of Turin, Avventor, Solutor and Octavius suffered their martyrdom, on these clods that were bathed and sanctified by their blood, I want God to be honored so very special. " In saying this, he advanced a foot, placing it on the place where martyrdom occurred, and he pointed it out to me ". That place is indicated on the floor by a golden metal cross. The mortal remains of Blessed Michael Rua, first successor of Don Bosco, and of Blessed Filippo Rinaldi, third successor of Don Bosco, are kept in two altars. In addition, there are the relics of all Saints and Blessed of our Salesian Family.

FLOWERS OF HOLINESS

In the dream made by Don Bosco in Lanzo in 1876, among other things he sees Dominic Savio showing him a magnificent bouquet of flowers that he held in his hands. There were roses, violets, sunflowers, gentians, lilies, houseleeks and among the flowers, ears of wheat. The young man tells him: - This bouquet present it to your children, so that they can offer it to the Lord when the time has come; let everyone have it, that there is no one without it and that no one should take it away from it. With this he is sure that they will have enough to be happy.

The rose is charity; the violet humility;
sunflower obedience; the lily chastity;
the evergreen perseverance;
the ear of corn the holy communion;
ivy mortification; gentian penitence.

Each of these things
both properly and for a long time explained
and you will give your children a finished treasure
which will lead them to an infinite prize.

Holiness plant that has grown at the source of God's gift
Salesian holiness raised by the just and blessed man, Don Bosco
Salesian holiness, an evident sign of the strength of the Lord's Easter
Salesian holiness that challenges our way of educating
Holiness who calls us to the total gift of ourselves here and now
to be a living temple from which His glory comes forth,
as it was for the Mother of God.

INVOKe THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS AND BLESSES OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY. From the Exhortation *GE*, n.154.



The supplication is an expression of the heart that trusts in God, who knows that he cannot do it alone. In the life of the faithful people of God we find many supplications full of believing tenderness and profound trust. We do not take away the prayer of question, which so often reassures our heart and helps us to go on struggling with hope. The plea of intercession has a particular value, because it is an act of trust in God and at the same time an expression of love for one's neighbor. Some, for spiritualist prejudices, think that prayer should be a pure contemplation of God, without distractions, as if the names and faces of the brothers were a disorder to be avoided. On the contrary, the reality is that prayer will be more pleasing to God and more sanctifying if in it, through intercession, we try to live the double commandment that Jesus left us. The intercession expresses fraternal commitment with others when in it we can include the lives of others, their most disturbing anguish and their most beautiful dreams. Of those who generously dedicate themselves to intercede, one can say with biblical words: "This is the friend of his brothers, who prays much for the people" (2 Mac 15:14).

S. St. John Bosco, All Father and teacher of the young
St. Joseph Cafasso, All pearl of the Italian clergy
S. Maria Domenica Mazzarello, All wise woman and caring mother
S. Domenico Savio, All master of friendship with Jesus and Mary
S. Luigi Versiglia, All good shepherd who gives life
S. Callisto Caravario, All defender of human dignity
B. Michele Rua, All son, disciple, imitator of Don Bosco
B. Laura Vicuña, All girl strong in faith and heroic in charity
B. Filippo Rinaldi, All model and master of interior life
B. Maddalena Morano, All models of life and educational knowledge
B. Giuseppe Kowalski, All faithful in the ministry and glorious in martyrdom
B. Kesy Francesco and four fellow martyrs,
All young strong of the Salesian oratory
B. Pio IX, All intrepid pontiff of the Church
B. Giuseppe Calasanz Marqués, Enrico Saiz Aparicio and ninety-three
fellow martyrs, All imitators of the passion of Christ
B. Luigi Variara, All donated to the brothers wounded in body and spirit
B. Artemide Zatti, All good Samaritan bent over the needs of the needy,
B. Maria Romero Meneses, All contemplative at the service of the last
B. Augusto Czartoryski, All a rich young man who followed Jesus
B. Eusebia Palomino Yenes, All increasingly joyful in the total offer
B. Alexandrina Maria Da Costa, All daughter of pain and mother of love
B. Alberto Marvelli, All builder of the city of God
B. Bronislao Markiewicz, All witness to temperance and work
B. Zeffirino Namuncurá, All prince of the Argentine Pampa
B. Maria Troncatti, All missionaries of the gospel with a mother's heart
B. Stefano Sándor, All martyrs for young people
B. Tito Zeman, All martyrs for vocations
(A brief moment of recollection and it comes out in silence)



3

PULPIT OF THE BASILICA OF MARIA AUSILIATRICE

A WONDERFUL STORY

On November 11, 1875, the first Salesian missionary expedition was launched with destination: the Patagonia in Argentina. Head of the expedition was the Salesian Don Giovanni Cagliero, who later became bishop and cardinal.

At the end of the vespers, Don Bosco climbed into the pulpit, and traced the program of their action to the departed. At the end Don Bosco gave his parents a paternal embrace.

The commotion was great when the ten missionaries crossed the church, passing among young people and friends. Don Bosco arrived last on the threshold of the door. A grandiose spectacle: a crowded square.



Don Lemoyne was close to Don Bosco and said to him:

—"Don Bosco, therefore, begins *the Inde exhibit gloria mea* come true (From here my glory will go forth?)."

—"It is true" answered Don Bosco deeply moved. These are the moments in which the sense of limit can be lost.

Only a few months ago he had said:

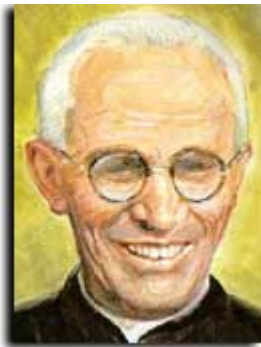
—"What is our Valdocco oratory in the world? An atom. Yet it gives us so much to do, and from this corner we think of sending people here and there. Oh, goodness of God ".

MEMORIES TO THE MISSIONARIES,
DELIVERED TO EACH PARTY BY DON BOSCO

1. Look for souls, but not money or honor, or dignity.
2. Use charity and supreme courtesy with everyone, but escape the conversation and familiarity with people of other sex or of suspected conduct.
3. Do not make visits except for reasons of charity and necessity.
4. Never accept lunch invitations except for very serious reasons. In these cases, get two.
5. Take special care of the sick, the children, the old and the poor, and you will earn the blessing of God and the benevolence of men.
6. Respect all civil, religious, municipal and governmental authorities.
7. Meeting with an authoritative person on the way, be careful to greet her obsequiously.
8. Do the same towards ecclesiastical persons or aggregated to religious institutes.
9. Escape idleness and questions. Great sobriety in food, drink and rest.
10. Love, fear, respect other religious orders and always talk about them well. This is the means of making everyone esteem and promoting the good of the congregation.
11. Take care of health. Work, but only as far as their own forces entail.
12. Let the world know that you are poor in clothes, in food, in dwellings, and you will be rich in the face of God and become masters of the hearts of men.
13. Between you love, counsel, correct yourself, but never bring either envy or rancor, even the good of one, be the good of all; the pains and sufferings of one are considered as pains and sufferings of all, and each one of them studies to remove them or at least mitigate them.
14. Observe your Rules, and never forget the monthly exercise of good death.
15. Every morning you recommend to God the occupations of the day, namely confessions, schools, catechisms, and sermons.
16. Constantly recommend the devotion to Mary Help of Christians and to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.
17. Frequent confession and communion to the recommended youths.
18. To cultivate the ecclesiastical vocation insinuated: love of chastity; horror at the opposite vice; separation from the worldly distractions; frequent communion; charity with signs of kindness and special benevolence.
19. In litigation matters before listening, one hears both parts.
20. In the labors and sufferings do not forget that we have a grand prize prepared in heaven. Amen.

WITNESSES

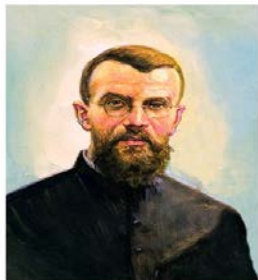
HERE TO RECEIVE THE CRUCIFIX BETWEEN THE OTHERS



The Servant of God Carlo Braga, a missionary in China and the Philippines, took part in the second missionary expedition in China on November 29, 1918 and received the crucifix from the Rector Major, Fr. Paolo Albera.

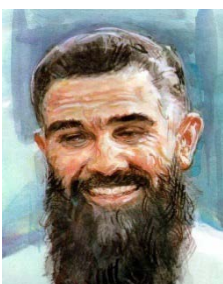


The Servant of God Mons. Oreste Marengo, great missionary bishop in North East India and founder of three dioceses, was consecrated bishop in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians on December 27, 1951. In 1923 he began the novitiate year at Foglizzo; following the death of a cleric destined for the missions of India, he obtained the possibility of substituting it. "This was the greatest desire of my life. I had asked to be Salesian on condition that I could consecrate the life of the apostolate in mission lands. I did not care where in the world they sent me. "He was the youngest of the starters: only 17 years!



Saint Callistus Caravario, protomartyred, in receiving the crucifix in 1924, prayed: "Lord, my cross I do not wish it to be light or heavy, but as you wish ... I only ask you that I can take it willingly".

On 5 October 1924, the Servant of God **Constantine Vendrame** received the crucifix. He followed the moment of detachment which was very painful for him: "A violent tear that broke the last thread, but consoled by a radiant vision of exterminated lands, and of countless peoples to be redeemed and souls, so many souls to be saved".



The Venerable Francesco Convertini, a missionary in India, in 1927 received the Crucifix from the hands of Blessed Filippo Rinaldi, third successor of Don Bosco, as well as the Venerable **Rodolfo Komorek**, a Polish Salesian, a missionary in Brazil.



From the exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate (Nos. 138-139)

It sets in motion the example of many priests, religious, religious and lay people who are dedicated to announcing and serving with great fidelity, many times risking their lives and certainly at the price of their comfort. Their testimony reminds us that the Church does not need so many bureaucrats and officials, but passionate missionaries, devoured by the enthusiasm of communicating true life. The saints surprise, displace, because their life calls us to come out of quiet and anesthetizing mediocrity.

Let us ask the Lord for the grace not to hesitate when the Spirit demands of us that we take a step forward; we ask the apostolic courage to communicate the Gospel to others and to renounce making a museum of memories of our life. In every situation, let the Holy Spirit let us contemplate history in the perspective of the risen Jesus. In this way, the Church, instead of getting tired, can go on accepting the surprises of the Lord.

(Song of our Father to ask together for Advent of the Kingdom of God).

4

THE SALESIAN COURTYARD



GYM OF HOLINESS, FRIENDSHIP AND HAPPINESS

Don Alberto Caviglia unveils with an intuition an educational secret of Don Bosco, when he writes: "The playground is Don Bosco among the young: an idea and an image that do not need comment ... For him it was another workbench, where he bound hearts and wills ". Don Bosco par excellence is in fact Don Bosco out

of school and out of church, is Don Bosco in the courtyard. "He was always among the young. He wandered here and there, he now approached the one and now the other, questioned them to know their nature and needs. He spoke confidently to this and that; he stopped to console or keep cheerful with jokes. He was always happy and smiling, "was the friend and the confidant, the father and the educator.

Friendship is born in the courtyard, even if it continues beyond time, to reveal itself totally in its effectiveness. Domenico becomes the model in this too. "I will always be a friend," he confesses to Gavio, and Massaglia says, "I want us to be true friends, true friends for the things of the soul." The courtyard is thus transformed into a gymnasium of apostolate, in a field of action and commitment. It always remains the place of the most jovial manifestations, the point of reference for free aggregations, the precious space of the youth initiative, but at the same time it becomes a laboratory of educational experiences, in which the word in the ear, the family spirit, friendly condescension, the search for the discolour to help become natural expressions of pedagogical solicitude and apostolic commitment.

PROPOSED OF YOUTH SANCTITY



Gavio Camillo was watching the others play around, but deep in thought. He saw Savio, and soon approached to comfort him, and gave him this precise speech. Savio began:

—Well, my dear, you do not know anyone yet, do not you?

— It's true, but I recreate myself, reminding others to play around.

— What's your name?

— Gavio Camillo of Tortona.

— How old are you?

— I'm fifteen.

— From which derives that melancholy that transpires in your face, have you been sick?

— Yes, I was sick: I had a palpitation disease, which brought me to the brink of the grave, and now I have not yet recovered well.

— You wish to heal, is not it?

— Not so much; I wish to do God's will.

It was these last words that made Gavio known to be a young man of no ordinary piety, and brought true consolation into the heart of Savio; so with all confidence he continued: whoever wishes to do God's will, desires to sanctify himself; So do you have the will to make you a saint?

— This will is great in me.

—Well: we will increase the number of our friends, and you will be one of those who will take part in what we do to make ourselves saints. But know that we here consist of holiness in the very happy star. We will only try to avoid sin, like a great enemy who steals God's grace and peace of heart, to carry out our duties exactly, and to go to pious things. Begin today to write to you as a reminder: *serve Domino in laetitia*, let us serve the Lord in holy joy.



A MEETING THAT GIVES LIFE: LUIGI VARIARA AND THE LOOK OF DON BOSCO

A foggy winter evening in the Oratory of Turin-Valdocco. Eight hundred boys cry out, chasing each other in the frenetic game that creates a festive hubbub. One of those boys, Luigi Variara, wrote: "Suddenly on one side and on the other one heard shouting: Don Bosco! Don Bosco! Instinctively we threw ourselves all towards him. We surrounded him like a swarm of bees. Don Bosco seemed

exhausted. (It was December 20, 1887, he had remaining just forty days more of life). At that moment, I could put myself in a position to see it in my taste. I approached as

much as possible and saw that raising his sweet gaze stared at him for a long time. That day was one of the happiest of my life. I was sure I had met a saint, and that Don Bosco had also discovered in my soul something that only God and he could know. " That boy, Luigi Variara, had come to the Oratory reluctantly. His father, a primary school teacher and admirer of Don Bosco, had explained to him that in the Oratory many boys had been able to realize their vocation and become priests. He had reacted with abrupt words: "Daddy, I have no vocation!" His dad had just smiled saying, "Meanwhile, go, study and stay good. If you do not have a vocation, Mary Help of Christians will give it to you".



FROM BOYS TO SUCCESSORS

Michael Rua a disciple who followed the teacher from the early childhood doing half-way through, assimilating in a vital way the spirit of the charismatic origins; a son who felt generated by a unique love, like many of the first boys of the oratory of Valdocco, who decided to "remain with Don Bosco" and among whom par excellence paradigmatically the first three successors of the father and teacher of young people: Don Michael Rua, Don Paul Albera, Don Philip Rinaldi.



San Luigi Orione: from October 1886 to August 1889 he was a student of the Valdocco oratory in Turin. St. John Bosco noticed its qualities and counted it among his beloved ones, assuring him: "We will always be friends".



FROM THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE SYNOD ON YOUTH *Awaken the world with holiness (n. 166)*

We must be holy to be able to invite young people to become them. Young people have clamored for an authentic, luminous, transparent, joyful Church: only a Church of the saints can live up to these requests! Many of them have left it because they have not found sanctity, but mediocrity, presumption, division and corruption. Unfortunately, the world is outraged by the abuses of some people of the Church rather than revived by the holiness of its members: therefore, the Church as a whole must make a decisive, immediate and radical change of perspective! Young people need saints who form other saints, thus showing that "holiness is the most beautiful face of the Church" (FRANCESCO, Gaudete et Exsultate, n.9). There is a language that all men and women of all times, places and cultures can understand, because it is immediate and luminous: it is the language of sanctity.

Drawn by the sanctity of young people (n. 167)

It has been clear from the beginning of the Synodal journey that young people are an integral part of the Church. So, it is also their holiness, which in recent decades has produced a multifaceted flowering in all parts of the world: contemplating and meditating during the Synod the courage of so many young people who have renounced their lives to remain faithful to the Gospel has been for us moving; listening to the testimonies of the young people present at the Synod who in the middle of persecutions have chosen to share the passion of the Lord Jesus has been regenerating. Through the holiness of the young the Church can renew her spiritual ardor and her apostolic vigor. The balm of holiness generated by the good life of many young people can heal the wounds of the Church and the world, bringing us back to that fullness of love to which we have always been called: the young saints urge us to return to our first love (cf. Ap 2,4).

Prayer for young people (inspired by a text by Pope Francis)

*Lord Jesus, from this courtyard of Valdocco
the Salesian Family turns its gaze to all the young people of the world.
We pray you why with courage they take their life in their hands,
aim at the most beautiful and deepest things
and always keep a free heart.*

*Accompanied by wise and generous guides,
help them to respond to the call you address to each of them,
to realize your life project and achieve happiness.*

*Keep their hearts open to great dreams
and make them attentive to the good of their brothers.
Like the beloved Disciple, they too are under the Cross
to welcome your Mother, receiving it as a gift from you.*

*Be witnesses of your Resurrection
and know how to recognize you alive next
to them announcing with joy that You are the Lord.
Amen.*

SAINTS AND BLESSED YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY UNDER 29 YEARS

There are **46 young people in this age group**: adolescents, Salesian co-operators, young Salesians in formation, priests, women and consecrated men!

1. B. Laura VICUÑA (1891-1904) - 13 years
2. S. Domenico SAVIO (1842-1857) - 15 years
3. B. Federico COBO SANZ, asp. (1919-1936) - 17 years, Martyr
4. B. Zeffirino NAMUNCURA, asp. (1886-1905) - 19 years
5. B. Jarogniew WOJCIECHOWSKI, orat. (1922-1942) - 20 years, Martyr
6. B. Franciszek KĘSY, orat. (1920-1942) - 22 years, Martyr
7. B. Czesław JÓŹWIAK, orat. (1919-1942) - 23 years, Martyr
8. B. Edward KAZIMIERSKI, orat. (1919-1942) - 23 years, Martyr
9. B. Edward KLINIK, orat. (1919-1942) - 23 years, Martyr
10. B. Luis MARTÍNEZ ALVARELLOS, ch. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
11. B. Juan LARRAGUETA GARAY, ch. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
12. B. Florencio RODRÍGUEZ GÜEMES, sac. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
13. B. Pascual DE CASTRO HERRERA, sac. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
14. B. Esteban VÁZQUEZ Alonso, coad. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
15. B. Heliodoro RAMOS GARCÍA, sac. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
16. B. Emanuele BORRAJO MIGEZ, ch. (1915-1936) - 21 years, Martyr
17. B. Bartolomé BLANCO MÁRQUEZ, coop. (1914-1936) - 22 years, Martyr
18. B. Francesco Edreira Mosquera ch. (1914-1936) - 22 years, Martyr
19. B. Javier BORDAS PIFERER, ch. (1914-1936) - 22 years, Martyr
20. B. Zacarias ABADIA BUESA, ch. (1914-1936) - 22 years, Martyr
21. B. Felipe HERNÁNDEZ MARTÍNEZ, ch. (1913-1936) - 23 years, Martyr
22. B. Victoriano FERNÁNDEZ REINOSO, sac. (1913-1936) - 23 years, Martyr
23. B. Jaime ORTIZ ALZUETA, coad. (1913-1936) - 23 years, Martyr
24. B. Rafale RODRÍGUEZ MESA, sac. (1913-1936) - 23 years, Martyr
25. B. Pedro ARTOLOZAGA MELLIQUE, sac. (1913-1936) - 23 years, Martyr
26. B. Juan Luis HERNÁNDEZ MEDINA, sac. (1912-1936) - 24 years, Martyr
27. B. Justo Juanes SANTOS, sac. (1912-1936) - 24 years, Martyr
28. B. Pietro MESONERO RODRIGUEZ, ch. (1912-1936) - 24 years, Martyr
29. B. Félix VIVET TRABAL, ch. (1911-1936) - 25 years, Martyr
30. B. Teódulo GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ, ch. (1911-1936) - 25 years, Martyr
31. B. Ramón EIRÍN MAYO, coad. (1911-1936) - 25 years, Martyr
32. B. Francisco J. M. LOPEZ DE ARROYAVE coad. (1910-1936) - 26 years, Martyr
33. Ven. Andrea BELTRAMI, sac. (1870-1897) - 27 years
34. B. Virgilio EDREIRA MOSQUERA ch. (1909-1939) - 27 years, Martyr
35. B. Miquel Domingo CENDRA, ch. (1909-1936) - 27 years, Martyr
36. B. Higinio DE MATA DIEZ, asp. (1909-1936) - 27 years, Martyr

37. S. Callisto CARAVARIO, sac. (1903-1930) - 27 years, Martyr
38. B. Alberto MARVELLI, exall. dell'orat. (1918-1946) - 28 years
39. B. Emilio ARCE DIEZ, sac. (1908-1936) - 28 years, Martyr
40. B. Carmelo Juan PEREZ RODRIGUEZ, sub. (1908-1936) - 28 years, Martyr
41. B. Sanjuan CANET ALVARO, sac. (1908-1936) - 28 years, Martyr
42. B. Anastasio GARZON GONZALEZ, sac. (1908-1936) - 28 years, Martyr
43. Servant of God Karol Golda, sac. (1914-1941) - 28 years, Martyr
44. B. JosèCASELLES MONCHO, sac. (1907-1936) - 29 years, Martyr
45. B. Eliseo GARCIA GARCIA, coad. (1907-1936) - 29 years, Martyr
46. Ven. Teresa VALSÉ PANTELLINI, FMA (1878-1907) - 29 years old, Virgin

5

CHURCH OF SAN FRANCESCO DI SALES



VIVID OF HOLINESS

This place offers ideas for a reflection on the essential elements of spirituality lived and proposed by Don Bosco to his youth: in the small choir behind the altar he confessed for hours every day, implementing a form of essential and substantial spiritual direction;

the Eucharist celebrated, received and adored constituted the driving force of the whole formative proposal; the Virgin Mary was venerated and loved as a mother, invoked as help, imitated as a model of perfection; Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Louis Gonzaga, Saint Joseph constituted as many examples of virtues to be internalized and reactivated.

Then there were the numerous festivals well distributed throughout the year, the personal and community practices of piety proposed on the Young provided, the song always well cared for and suitable for young people, the daily example of Don Bosco, of mother Margherita, of the first Salesians and many exceptional children who nurtured their inner life here.

* **On December 8, 1854, Dominic Savio** entered this church, knelt before the altar of the Immaculate Conception and consecrated himself to her with this very brief prayer: "Mary, I give you my heart, let it be yours forever. Jesus and Mary, may you always be my friends, but out of pity, let me die rather than the misfortune of committing even one sin. "

* Two years later, Dominic Savio returned to kneel at this altar, no longer alone, but in the company of the best boys in the Oratory. He founded **the "Company of the Immaculate"**. He had asked himself: "Why must we try to do good to others alone? Why not unite, all the most willing young people, in a "secret society", to become a group of little apostles among others? ". Don Bosco approved the project. Dominic did not know that he

had only 9 months left to live, but he had created his masterpiece: those "first founders" would become Salesians.

A PREACHING THAT CHANGES THE LIFE

On the pillar that stands between the chapel of the Madonna and the presbytery was the pulpit, paid for by Fr. Cafasso, which was accessed with a ladder from the presbytery itself. Today it is preserved in the Museum annexed to Don Bosco's bedrooms. On that pulpit, Don Bosco gave the sermon which determined a new and more decisive spiritual commitment of the very young Dominic:

For six months, Savio lived at the Oratory when once there was a lecture on the easy way to become a saint. The preacher especially stopped to develop three thoughts that made profound impression on the soul of Dominic: it is God's will that we become all saints; it is very easy to succeed; it is a great reward prepared in heaven for those who become holy. That sermon for Dominic was like a spark that inflamed his whole heart with the love of God. For a few days, he said nothing, but he was less cheerful than usual, so that his companions noticed it and I realized it too. Judging that this came from a newcomer to health care, I asked him if he suffered any harm. In fact, he replied, I suffer some good. - What would you say? I want to say that I feel a desire and a need to become a saint; I did not think I could be a saint so easily; but now that I have understood that I can do this even if I am happy, I want absolutely, and I absolutely need to become a saint. Tell me, therefore, how I must regulate myself to begin such an undertaking. I praised the purpose, but I exhorted him not to worry, because the voice of the Lord is not known in the emotions of the soul; that I wanted first and foremost a constant and moderate cheerfulness, and advising him to persevere in the fulfillment of his duties of piety and study, I recommended that he should always take part in the recreation with his companions.

Saint Dominic Savio was not only a model and an example for his companions at the Valdocco Oratory, but he also knew how to embody the role of head-model, a sort of teacher in the ways of God (just as Don Bosco also saw him in his dream of Lanzo of 1876). The confirmation of this comes from the life of several Blesseds, Venerables and Servants of God who made Dominic's own resolutions their own: Laura Vicuña Zefirino Namuncurà, Giuseppe Kowlaski, Alberto Marvelli, Giuseppe Quadrio, Ottavio Ortiz Arrieta, Teresa Bracco, Anna Kolesarova ...



Saints together (Gaudete et exsultate (141-146)

Sanctification is a community journey, to be done two by two. Thus, some holy communities reflect it. On various occasions the Church has canonized entire communities who have lived the Gospel heroically or who have offered to God the life of all their members ... Living and working with others is undoubtedly a way of spiritual growth.

The community is called to create that "theological space in which one can experience the mystical presence of the Risen Lord".

Community life, in the family, in the parish, in the religious community or in any other, is made up of many small daily details. This happened in the holy community that formed Jesus, Mary and Joseph, where the beauty of Trinitarian communion was mirrored in a paradigmatic way. And it is also what happened in community life that Jesus led with his disciples and with the simple people of the people.

The community that guards the small details of love, where the members take care of each other and constitute an open and evangelizing space, is the place of the presence of the Risen Christ who sanctifies it according to the Father's plan.

Against the trend towards consumerist individualism that ends up isolating us in the search for well-being that is separate from others, our journey of sanctification can not cease to identify us with that desire of Jesus: that "all may be one; as you, Father, are in me and I in you" (Jn 17.21).

Prayer for Unity

I do not pray only for these, but also for those who believe in me for their word; because everyone is one thing.

Like you, Father, you are in me and I in you, they too are one in us, because the world believes you sent me.

And the glory you gave to me, I gave it to them, because they are one thing like us.

I in them and you in me, so that they may be perfect in unity and the world knows that you sent me and loved them as you loved me.

Father, I want even those you gave me to be with me where I am, that they may contemplate my glory, that which you have given me; for you loved me before the creation of the world.

Just Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you; they know you sent me.

And I made them know your name and I will let you know, because the love with which you loved me both in them and I in them.

6

CHAPEL OF DAUGHTERS OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIAN



*From the exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate
- Holiness for you too (item 14.18)*


Many times, we have the temptation to think that holiness is reserved for those who have the possibility to keep their distance from ordinary occupations, to devote much time to prayer. It is not so. We are all called to be saints living with love and offering each one their own testimony in the occupations of every day, where he is. Are you a consecrated person or a consecrated person? Be a saint by living your gift with joy. You are married? Be holy by loving and taking care of your husband or wife, as Christ did with the

Church. Are you a worker? Be holy, fulfilling your work in the service of your brothers with honesty and competence. Are you a parent or grandmother or grandfather? Be a saint by patiently teaching children to follow Jesus. Do you have authority? Be a saint fighting for the common good and renouncing your personal interests.

Thus, under the impulse of divine grace, with so many gestures we are building that figure of holiness that God wanted for us, but not as self-sufficient beings but "as good stewards of the multiform grace of God" (1 Pet 4:10). We'll have taught the Bishops of New Zealand that it is possible to love with the unconditional love of the Lord because the Risen Lord shares his powerful life with our fragile lives: "His love has no limits and once he has never given back. He was unconditional and remained faithful. Loving like this is not easy because many times we are so weak. However, just so that we can love as He has loved us, Christ shares his own resurrected life with us. In this way, our life shows its power in action, even in the midst of human weakness.

A collage of images related to the Catholic Church. It features several nuns in different habits, a woman in a red and blue dress, and a group of children. The images are arranged in a way that suggests a connection between the different figures and the overall theme of the church.

speaking to God through prayer. Mother Mazzarello was a woman of great faith who knew how to recognize the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and in the face of the poor, of the sisters, of the sisters, exhorting to love everyone not only with words, but with example and with works. In the community animated by Sister Maria Domenica, the welcoming atmosphere and open humanity of relationships harmonized with a simple and profound faith in the presence of God and all this gave an unmistakable tone to the environment. Don Bosco in his letter written by Mornese alludes with incisiveness of expressions to this spiritual atmosphere: "Here you can enjoy very fresh, although there is very warm love of God".



During a summer she finds herself with her childhood friend Caridad for a few days and so she writes to the mother of that meeting: "We left with a big hug, mutually animating ourselves to walk on the path of holiness which is the purpose for which we have embraced the religious state: to make us holy and to save many souls, as our Father Don Bosco says [...] In all our houses, both Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the most sincere joy always prevails with games, music, theaters, walks [...] If you see on Sundays our courtyards and swings seem to be hives: they jump the rope, others sing in the circle, others play hide-and-seek, others go on the swing, others play the harpsichord, others dance the "*sevillana*" ». [...] This is the spirit of our Congregation that Don Bosco left to his Salesian sons, and to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: joy, bread, work and paradise. And even if our Congregation is so active, we already have several saints, whose Cause of beatification is in Rome "(L 61).



In this place, we wish to remember the testimony of the Salesian spirit of Don Bosco's third successor, **Blessed Philip Rinaldi (1856-1931)**, recalling his constant reference to Don Bosco's living heritage and his significant impact on the development of the Salesian Family.

Don Rinaldi is recalled with a high level admiration in the history of the Salesian Family and with particular incisiveness. During the years of his leadership, step by step, he passed on to new generations who had not known the Founder and who, therefore, had not received Salesian formation from Don Bosco through a direct contact. Yet they had to assimilate, preserve and develop the legacy of Don Bosco. He won the trust of the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, working with continuous, paternal and profound spiritual action to preserve the common charismatic heritage of the founder.

The privileged field of action of Don Rinaldi, in collaboration with the FMA, was the Women's Oratory of Valdocco since he began working there in 1907 as the Director. Here for years, he truly breathed the passion of his priestly zeal and the originality of his educational and apostolic initiatives. Don Rinaldi, in fact, was the inspirer and organizer of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, wanting also to bring the Past Pupils of the FMA into a worldwide Union. Another group of women, which has been the object of his care and focus, was that of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, which flourished into the current Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco, who recognize and venerate him as a founder. He reinvigorated and promoted the association of Cooperators. With the Pupils, Don Rinaldi's action was even more original and richer in results, with an international and world perspective.

Don Rinaldi stands in our Family as the most genuine and authoritative interpreter of the apostolic interiority proper to the spirit of Don Bosco. It is enough to say that the "grace of unity" that ensures the vital synthesis of our spirit remains enlightened by Don Rinaldi with the marvellous insights into three aspects: the mystical dimension of the "da mihi animas", the ascetic commitment of daily "work", and the life-giving personal and communitarian aspect of "prayer".

Let us spend a few minutes of silent prayer before Jesus in the Eucharist and conclude with a hymn to Mary, renewing our trust and the desire of holiness for all of us.