Don Bosco’s Keepsakes to the First Missionaries—Six Priests and Four Brothers Departing for Buenos Aires

Text delivered individually to the first Salesian missionaries on 11 November 1875 and subsequently printed.

DB’s autograph: ASC B32000 (A2270304), FDBM 747 C2-5; J. Borrego, “Recuerdos de San Juan Bosco a los primeros misioneros,” in Ricerche Storiche Salesiane 3 (1984) 167-208; Motto, Epistolario IV, 547-548; Salesian Constitutions (1984), 265-266; EBM XI, 364-365; Aubry-Caselli, Spiritual Writings, 288-290.

###### TEXT

At the close of the departure ceremony held in the Church of Mary Help of Christians on November 11, 1875, each of the departing missionaries received from Don Bosco a small leaflet with twenty keepsakes or souvenirs.

1. Seek souls and not money, honours, or dignities.

2. Be kind and most courteous toward all, but shun conversations and familiarity with persons of the other sex or with persons of questionable conduct.

3. Do not go visiting except for motives of charity or necessity.

4. Never accept invitations to dinner except for very serious reasons. In these cases arrange to go with another confrere.

5. Take special care of the sick, the children, the aged, and the poor, and you will gain the blessing of God and the goodwill of people.

6. Show respect toward all in authority, whether civic, religious, municipal, or state.

7. On meeting a person in authority, take care to greet him with respect.

8. Do the same toward priests and religious.

9. Shun idleness and disputes. Practice great moderation in eating and drinking and sleeping.

10. Love, reverence and respect other religious orders, and always speak well of them. This is the way of winning the esteem of all and of promoting the good of the Congregation.

11. Take care of your health. Work, but only as much as your strength allows.

12. Let the world know that you are poor in clothing, food, and dwelling, and you will be rich in the sight of God and will conquer people’s hearts.

13. Love one another, advise one another, correct one another, and never be carried away by envy or rancour. Rather, let the good of one be the good of all, and let the pains and sufferings of one be regarded as the pains and sufferings of all, and let each one strive to remove or at least to mitigate them.

14. Observe your rules and never neglect the monthly Exercise for a Happy Death.

15. Every morning commend to God the occupations of the day, especially confessions, classes, catechism, and sermons.

16. Constantly recommend devotion to Mary Help of Christians and to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

17. Recommend to the boys frequent confession and Communion.

18. In order to foster vocations to the priesthood, you should recommend: (1) Love of chastity; (2) horror of the opposite vice; (3) avoidance of bad companions; (4) frequent Communion; (5) and treat the boys with special charity, affability, and kindness.

19. Hear both sides before judging on reports and matters in dispute.

20. In your labours and sufferings do not forget that a great reward is prepared for us in Heaven. Amen.