



DIREZIONE GENERALE OPERE DON BOSCO

Via della Pisana 1111 - 00163 Roma

*Il Rettor Maggiore*

Rome, October 15, 2013

Dear Salesian Cooperators,

As you know, on October 9, 2013, Pope Francis authorized the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints to promulgate the Decree of Heroic Virtues for the Servant of God *Attilio Luciano Giordani, Layman and Father of a Family, Cooperator of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco*. He was born in Milan, Italy, on February 3, 1913, and died in Campo Grande, Brazil, on December 18, 1972. Attilio Giordani, exemplary husband and father, oratory animator and catechist, missionary and evangelizer, a most timely figure of a Salesian Cooperator *is now Venerable*.

I would like this message to be an invitation extended to the entire Salesian Family, and, in particular, to your Association and to the Salesian Provinces of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna, who promoted his Cause for Beatification and Canonization, to make his life, his message for the family, and for education according to Don Bosco's spirit known, and to offer up a chorus of prayer to ask for the grace of a miracle by invoking his intercession.

*Attilio Giordani, model of family life*. He was a husband and father who was present to his family, a man rich in great faith and serenity, living austerity and Gospel poverty by choice for the sake of those most in need. For Attilio, his marriage to Noemi in May of 1944 was not just a word "given", but it was, above all, a "sacrament" of Christ. He strove to express the sanctity and indissolubility of this bond in his daily life and through the education of his children. The family remained united because Attilio and Noemi sustained each other with prayer and the practice of charity.

Now that we have become even more aware that *there can be no Youth Pastoral without a Family Pastoral*, I am convinced that the witness of Christian life that Attilio gave in his family constitutes a significant, experiential contribution inspired by Don Bosco. His was a family that was not closed in on itself, but was open to the life of the parish and the oratory, to the practice of charity, and to missionary witness.

*Attilio Giordani, model of the practice of the Preventive System lived at the oratory*. At age nine, he began to attend the Salesians' Oratory of St. Augustine in Milan. There, as "a youth for the young", he committed himself with constancy to the task of animating various groups with joy: for decades he was an assiduous catechist and an artful, simple, and serene Salesian animator. He knew and used all the educational tools of the Preventive System in animating the children: he looked after the liturgy, formation, Salesian presence and games on the playground, recognizing the value of free time, and the theater; he organized outings with the Oratory youth, composed songs and skits, invented fund-raising lotteries, parish

treasure hunts, and Olympics for the children, without ever forgetting what is at the heart of Christian joy: love of God and of neighbor. He revealed the art of the educator, placing the proclamation of the Gospel and catechetical service at the center of his mission, which he lived with creativity and credibility. One of Attilio Giordani's particular merits is having expressed, in a simple and convincing way, Don Bosco's desired and specific method of evangelization: evangelizing by educating - just as Don Bosco himself had done.

*"Salesian Charity" is pastoral charity* because it seeks the salvation of souls, *and is educative charity* because in education it finds the resources which permit us to help the young develop all of their energies for good; in this way, the young can grow as honest citizens, good Christians, and future inhabitants of Heaven. The typical elements of pastoral charity are the proclamation of the Gospel, education to the Faith, the formation of the Christian community, and the spreading of Gospel leaven in one's own area. Today, our commitment as evangelizers and educators of the young can find in Attilio Giordani an original model of the incarnation of the Oratorian spirit, the enduring criterion of every one of our works and of our pastoral and educative action.

*Attilio Giordani, model of lay Salesian sanctity, lived in joy.* Having become a Salesian Cooperator, he lived his faith within his own lay reality, taking his inspiration from Don Bosco's project of apostolic life. He built his personality as both man and Christian on joy. His sense of humor was a direct expression of a conscience ruled by faith in Christ. Moreover, he gave witness to his Christian Faith with courage and with joyous goodness, even in difficult places or situations - as during the period of his military service and war, or in his work as an employee - by living in the world without being of the world, swimming against the current. He concluded his earthly life by sharing with his family in choosing to be a missionary, leaving behind as a testament his enthusiasm for a life given for others: "We must live our Faith" and "The measure of our belief is manifested in our way of being." Venerable Attilio Giordani is a crystal clear incarnation of lay Salesian spirituality. This aspect of his always evoked particular admiration, above all in the consecrated Salesians, who perceived the Providential presence of such a model, and who did not fail to have recourse themselves to his advice.

The groups of the Salesian Family involve numerous lay people in their missions. We are aware that there cannot be any full involvement if there is no sharing of the same spirit. To live Salesian spirituality as lay persons who are co-responsible in educative pastoral action becomes a fundamental task. Thus, this likeable figure of Attilio Giordani is a font of inspiration for the formulation of a *lay Salesian spirituality*. During this Year of Faith and in the final year of preparation for the bicentennial of Don Bosco's birth, the witness given by Attilio Giordani is truly a precious gift which urges us to form lay Salesians who strongly identify and decisively commit themselves to bring the message of the Gospel into the family, into education, and into social and political life. I conclude this message by renewing my invitation to create a prayer movement so that we may soon venerate Attilio among the glorified members of our Salesian Family and invoke him as a special intercessor for families and for our oratories.

With great affection and esteem, in Don Bosco,

*Don Pascual Chávez V., sdb*

Rector Major