



DIREZIONE GENERALE OPERE DON BOSCO
Via della Pisana 1111 – 00163 Roma

The Rector Major

To each and every Salesian in the Congregation

Dear confreres,

You cannot imagine the deep joy I felt when, on the evening of 30 January last, I was able to walk beside Archbishop Cesare Nosiglia, archbishop of Turin and many Salesians, young people from the SYM, as we accompanied Don Bosco's Casket through the streets of Turin on his return to Valdocco. Young people who had come to the Basilica were waiting for him there and singing "Don Bosco ritorna". Don Bosco has come back home, having visited his sons wherever they were, anywhere in the world, and it had me thinking of you and now I am writing you this personal letter. Back in Valdocco, Don Bosco wants to reach out to every young person, by preference the most needy of them, through each one of us, called as we are to represent him today.

I am about to leave the ministry as Rector Major that was entrusted to me for the first time on that distant 2 April 2002. On that day the Lord called me to represent Don Bosco for you and the Salesian Family. It was an undeserved grace, I believe, and I confess that it encouraged me to identify myself with our Father more each day, identify with his concern for the Congregation, his passion for the young. I know that however much I thank him in the remaining days of my life I could never repay this debt of God's love. May he be forever blessed!

My gratitude extends to each and every one of you, my dear confreres. I have felt accepted and very much loved, though I know that all the signs of respect and love I received were the expression of your affection and filial devotion to Don Bosco. Everyone's understanding and endorsement, the availability and the obedience I encountered in so many of you have been a real support in the exercising of my ministry. May God bless you as I, with all my heart, do!

I do not hide the fact that during these twelve years as Rector Major there has been no lack of pains and sorrows, some more sorrowful because inexplicable or unexpected. However, like Don Bosco in his dream of the pergola of roses, I have walked amidst thorns... However the pain felt and the loneliness experienced helped me to see with greater clarity the good that God, through each one of you, is achieving. I can tell you that today I feel very proud to be a Salesian, not only to have our holy Founder as a Father but also to have you as my confreres.



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I am sure that whoever will be elected after me will take care “of you and your salvation”. As Don Bosco did one day, I now urge you: “listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him as you did for me”. And may Mary Help of Christians, Mother and teacher of Don Bosco and each one of us, guide and accompany you in living out your consecration. Thank you, with all my heart.

Rome, 24 March 2014

Fr Pascual Chávez S., sdb
Rector Major