



acts

of the general council

year CVIII

july-december 2025

N. 447

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

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

Year CVIII
july-december 2025 **No. 447**

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Fabio ATTARD STRENNA "DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU"	3
2. THE VICAR OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	2.1 Fr Silvio ROGGIA ENTERING INTO THE NEW EDITION OF THE RATIO: Getting to know it, live it	39
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	(none in this issue)	
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major 4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors	78 84
5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS	5.1 New Salesian Provincials 5.2 Decree of canonical erection of the Salesian St Joseph Vice-Province of Central East Africa 5.3 Decree of martyrdom of Jan Świerc and 8 companions 5.4 Decree of martyrdom of Elia Comini 5.5 Our deceased confreres	115 124 126 133 137

Editrice S.D.B.
Edizione extra commerciale
Sede Centrale Salesiana
Via Marsala, 42
00185 Roma

Tipografia Salesiana Roma - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma
Tel. 06.78.27.819 - Fax 06.78.48.333 - E-mail: tipolto@donbosco.it
Finito di stampare: Gennaio 2026

Strenna 2026

“Do whatever he tells you”

Believers, free to serve

My dear confreres,
Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
All members of the Salesian Family,
Young people,

Every year the appointment with the STRENNA offers the opportunity for all the Groups of the Salesian Family to come together around a particular theme, to share and experience powerful moments of prayer and reflection, of listening and fraternity. It is my wish and hope that each Group – and the individuals within it – may find nourishment for their journey and support for their educational, pastoral and personal experiences.

Introduction

The STRENNA that accompanied us last year, built around the Jubilee theme of *hope*, offered all of us the opportunity to look at the mystery of Christ as a source of light that helps us contemplate the wonders of God in the present moment. We experienced moments that strengthened our faith in what the Lord still has to reveal to us, and we have perceived hope as the strength of the ‘**already**’ and the courage of the ‘**not yet**’. We also contemplated how the power of hope, for Don Bosco, helped and sustained him on his journey of discovery and implementation of God’s plan.

150 years ago, hope was the driving force of Don Bosco’s pastoral heart, a heart capable of reading the signs of the times

and looking at the world sustained by faith in God. The commemoration of the **150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition** is not intended to be a celebration limited to a chronological moment. In recalling this historical moment we have contemplated how the spirit of God found an open and available heart in Don Bosco. Don Bosco's response was capable of surpassing a narrow and self-referential perspective on life.

Don Bosco lived in Turin, but his heart and mind inhabited the entire world. His was a hope founded on the certainty – once he discovered God's plan – that there is no other way but to follow his will to the end. Contemplating the theological virtue of hope that animated his life, we can glimpse what his first disciples already heard and later commented on: Don Bosco a man of faith, Don Bosco a believer, 'Don Bosco with God'.

This year I would like to propose, as the Strenna, the theme of *faith*. It emerged gradually but clearly at the beginning of June 2025 when the various Groups of the Salesian Family met for the World Advisory Council meeting. The shared reflections indicated the theme of *faith*: not only as a natural continuation of hope but as the 'foundation' of it. If the power of hope is based on faith, a life truly filled with hope leads to a deeper and more authentic relationship of faith with Jesus, the Son of the Father, who became man for us and continues to be present among us through the power of the Spirit. It will therefore be like a pilgrimage in the faith of the entire Salesian Family: renewing ourselves together, living in the world as Christians (and Salesians) together.

In his first Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis offered some very pertinent insights in this regard.¹ First, as a general introduction to the theme of faith, Pope Francis invited us to change our perspective: faith is not something theologi-

¹ Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*. (2013).

cally distant, but rather **‘a light to be discovered.’** Believing, living by faith means wanting to walk in the light. Faith, then, is the foundation we have and the path we take because we really want to live life in a beautiful and healthy way. Embracing faith expresses that deep desire to live in the light, refusing to live in darkness, emptiness, and meaninglessness. Pope Francis writes that this call **‘to see once again that faith is a light’** is something we want to pursue, ‘for once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim. The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating *every* aspect of human existence.’ (no. 4)

This first invitation challenges us directly when we recognise that our mission is to educate to faith and in faith. The challenge that immediately arises is very clear: how can we do this if this source of light within me is growing dim? How can we remain calm when we realise that extinguishing the light in our hearts means, in the long run, leaving young people and all those we accompany in the deepest darkness?

In addition, this light has **certain characteristics** that should be mentioned. These are characteristics that serve as necessary anchors in hard and difficult moments in the journey of faith.

First of all, for it to be powerful, the light of faith **‘cannot come from ourselves** but from a more primordial source: in a word, it must come from God.’ (no. 4). It is not just a matter of offering human, intelligent and professional services, but much more than that. And so this light is not ours, but is granted to us.

There is a second aspect, the result of this extraordinary divine generosity, and Pope Francis describes it in terms that are both profound and tender: **‘Faith is born of an encounter with the living God** who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives.’ Faith is not a product. It is born not so much **‘from** the encounter with God’, but **‘in** the encounter

with God.' An encounter that should be experienced as an expression of complete freedom and as a continuous source that nourishes us with its light.

This brief introduction already lays the necessary foundations for placing the theme of faith within a **relational dynamic**. A dynamic that is typical of our Salesian charism. The experience of faith in the encounter with Jesus, Son of God, emerges as the backbone of our actions through the power of his Spirit. Through this Trinitarian energy, we are the first beneficiaries of that gift which gives form and meaning to all that we are, and consequently to all that we do and propose for the salvation of young people.

'DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU'

Believers, free to serve

Let us allow this year to be guided by words from the Gospel of John spoken by Mary at the very beginning of the Gospel itself. What was supposed to be a wonderful wedding reception is marred by a problem: there is a shortage of wine. Faced with the possibility that a celebration might turn into a failure, we find the reaction that comes from Mary's heart: someone must intervene. And what Mary does is simply present the real situation to Jesus. But his hour, Jesus' hour, has not yet come. Mary, the caring mother, with great serenity invites the servants just to listen to what Jesus will say to them when 'his hour' comes.

This year I propose that we accept Mary's invitation with the same attitude of openness and freedom that we see in the servants. We too, members of the various Groups of the Salesian Family, must remember the truth of our choice and identity: we are servants, mere servants. And Mary says to us today: 'Do whatever he tells you.' Whatever Jesus tells us, we must simply accept it, take it on board and live it, without ifs or buts.

I invite all of you, dear sisters and brothers, after having experienced the power of hope, that 'hope that does not disappoint', to allow Mary's words to reach our hearts, and to turn our gaze and our listening to Jesus, to what he will say to us, in the awareness and joy of being servants.

We want to be sustained by the same faith in filling the jars to the brim, in bringing the water turned into wine to the daily realities we live in and share with everyone. As many of us find ourselves on the front line in difficult situations and critical places, we recognise the risk of weak faith, sometimes even absent faith, with the dramatic consequences that we then see, of a failure to share the 'wine' of kindness, empathy and love.

Gospel of John, 2:1-11

¹*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine'. ⁴And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'*

⁶*Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'*

¹¹*Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

Let us enter into the heart of the passage that inspired the title of this STRENNA, with a meditation on the first 'sign' that Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee, as recounted by John (2:1-11).

Three brief introductory reflections offer us the 'hermeneutic' key that makes the piece significant for our personal and community experience.

a. Jesus' first sign is a 'gateway'

In one of his audiences Pope Francis commented on this passage with a very concrete image. He says that Jesus' first sign is 'a sort of "gateway", on which are engraved the words and expressions that illuminate the entire mystery of Christ and open the hearts of the disciples to the faith.'² Jesus' first sign is not a spectacle to be admired, but rather an invitation addressed to the heart of every believer. In it, we find a reference to those attitudes that ensure the acceptance of the proposal of faith in him, as evoked at the end of the passage: 'his disciples believed in him.' (v. 11) This first sign at Cana goes straight to the heart of Jesus' message: the invitation to stake our lives on his word. Today, 'Cana' is the house where we live, the work where we carry out our mission, the group of young people, teachers and parents whom we accompany. We are the servants and disciples of various actual and everyday experiences.

And as at Cana, Mary continues to have a fundamental and founding mission in this process today. It is she who, by walking with us, invites us to take the step of faith, a faith freely assumed in order to be authentic servants. And this same process consisting of *faith, freedom* and *service*, is the same one that Don Bosco experienced throughout his life. Ever since his dream at the age of nine, Don Bosco recognised Mary as the Mother and Teacher who supported him in his faith and gave him the courage to be a free servant to young people in the field she had indicated.

b. God's final breaking into history

A second point for reflection is offered by Pope Benedict XVI starting from the words that introduce this first sign: 'On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.' (v. 1)

² Pope Francis, General Audience, 8 June 2016: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160608_udienza-generale.html

In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict says that here we find ourselves at the heart of the mystery of God revealing himself. The temporal indication is a symbol of all God's action in history. The 'third day' communicates the anticipation of the fulfilment of the history of salvation that takes place in Christ's resurrection on the third day. At this precise moment, says the Pope, we have 'the definitive irruption of God upon earth.' Cana is a place that, in a humble and hidden way, contains the fulfilment of the project of God's love for humanity.³ Cana is every place where we are sent, as a space where God continues to make himself present through those who hear his word, believe it and live it.

This reflection has truly significant implications for us. If 'Cana' is every place we live, then we are the ones whom the Lord calls to be signs and bearers of his love for young people, for humanity. Certainly, 'the irruption of God upon earth', his breaking into history, does not depend on us, but we are given the opportunity to facilitate it as a gift freely received and freely accepted. Every generous action we take contributes to God's plan... but every act of resistance or refusal we make risks denying others that 'good wine'.

c. Jesus inaugurates a relationship of love, a covenant of kindness and abundance

A third introductory point, also drawn from Pope Benedict XVI: the setting of the 'wedding' feast is the most appropriate dimension that characterises God's relationship with all humanity, the wedding covenant par excellence.⁴

In truth, we realise that Jesus does not simply come to leave us a message. Through this first sign, what *Jesus is about to inaugurate is a relationship of love, a covenant of kindness and*

³ Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI, *Gesù di Nazaret [Jesus of Nazareth]*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 2007, p. 292.

⁴ *Idem.*

abundance. Jesus invites us to enter into a living, life-giving relationship. With him, we inhabit a sacred space where, first and foremost, we discover that we are loved. In this loving relationship we are positively challenged and encouraged to follow him.

Recognising that we are always searching for that ‘good wine’ that never fails, there is only one path to follow, the one indicated by Mary: ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ The wedding feast on the one hand inaugurates a new reality and, on the other, confers a seal on the new and eternal covenant.

We can say that *the experience of Cana is a true ‘womb’ in which God’s faithfulness comes to meet us, completing and bringing to fulfilment man’s search for love*. This means that when the time comes, Jesus responds to the suggestion by obeying (*ob-audire*), by listening to the faith, lived faithfully.

The banquet thus becomes the altar that generously distributes the new wine of the Word. A generous distribution, the fruit of faith lived with freedom. Following Mary’s invitation, this life illuminated by the Word of Jesus is lived in the form of service for the good of all, with complete openness of heart.

In light of the passage about the wedding at Cana, STRENNA 2026 presents us with various challenges. I am convinced that the call for every group of the Salesian Family to live its charism more fully finds further inspiration in this passage from the Gospel to be lived for the benefit of young people and all those who share in the Salesian mission. Not only that, but also to serve many people in various parts of the world to whom the Lord asks us to bring the wine of hope, the joy of communion.

1. LOOK - Welcoming the signs of the times

The first call I invite you to accept and reflect on concerns Mary’s attitude: *the woman who was attentive to what was happening around her*. The Gospel simply tells us that ‘on

the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there' (v. 1). The Gospel gives no further information. But when we listen to these few words and connect them with her reaction, we begin to glimpse some significant elements of Mary's heart.

a. Mary was not a 'neutral' guest.

She was attentive and alert to everything that was happening around her. In figurative but meaningful terms, we can say that *Mary embraced the time and history* of those who wanted her as a guest at their wedding feast. Mary could easily feel that she should not interfere, even though she sensed the sad consequences of running out of wine. Yet she chose not to remain indifferent.

Here is a first aspect that we, as followers of Jesus, are called to ask ourselves: to what extent do we feel challenged by the events of history that we are experiencing and in the places where we live? What position do we take when we could also choose to remain distant because, on certain matters, 'it's not up to me' or 'it's not my responsibility'? In the light of what Mary did, faced with the challenges that surround us, we feel deeply and personally challenged. In a culture of anonymity and indifference, we recognise that we too risk making choices based on 'political correctness'!

Embracing time and history as an existential attitude implies certain requirements that we can only grasp and assume in the light of faith in Christ.

In the field of pastoral education, Mary's choice is a strong yet gentle reminder for us not to fall into indifference which not only justifies things but also passively and indirectly encourages them. How often do we find even so-called 'church-goers' who, when faced with the plight of refugees, the poor and the vulnerable, retreat into their comfortable lives, considering them only a nuisance and a burden?

b. Challenges and difficulties must be recognised and addressed, not set aside

This is what Mary did at Cana. How often does it happen, when faced with unexpected situations of hardship, that instead of tackling them with serenity and apostolic passion we distance ourselves from them, justifying ourselves all too easily! The danger is that this pastoral inertia may gradually become part of our 'culture' too. We wait – and insistently demand – for others to do their part, perhaps blaming them, and in this way we believe we can numb our consciences, pretending to believe that we have nothing to offer, or that we are not involved.

When the poor knock on our door, we cannot pretend not to notice. For our father and teacher Don Bosco, his response did not stem from calculating the means, but from the openness of his heart, which was in tune with the young people of his time. Right from the start he was moved by the desire to get in touch with them, poor and needy as they were. Let us be careful not to get caught up in the prospect of a consecrated and pastoral life that is strongly influenced by a bourgeois and selective mentality. We do not choose the poor, but they are sent to us by Providence. Welcoming poor young people and doing everything possible for them is a calling that we must take seriously.

c. History is the treasure chest that reveals God's action

A third insight we gain from Mary's action is the awareness that in small and humble moments, when lived with generosity, history becomes a treasure chest that reveals God's action. A simple motherly gesture, a solicitous invitation to the servants, prepare the ground for Jesus' hour, for his first sign. How much the Lord surprises us when we pay attention to the details of human existence, especially when we are with the poor and needy! How many lives have experienced the balm of God's mercy through gestures of care from educators who, with motherly kindness, have offered

a smile or a word of encouragement instead of looks of condemnation or humiliating words!

Don Bosco's entire experience tells us that 'the courtyard, the playground', both physical and metaphorical, is the place where God's goodness is revealed. We communicate loving-kindness by living it serenely when we are present among and for young people, who thus feel recognised, appreciated and loved. Sharing is built into our relationships with those who work with us when they ask us for those 'five minutes' of listening. Pastoral and educational wisdom is conveyed through everyday gestures, experienced with an open, receptive, attentive and affectionate heart.

It is worth recalling here a reflection that is more relevant than ever, offered by Salesian Dominic Veliath on the context of South Asia⁵. He writes:

The Salesian charism is still on a pilgrimage. Every pilgrimage involves a certain amount of risk; at times one is challenged to venture along what may seem as yet an uncharted course. It is in this setting that every Salesian, including the Salesian in the South Asian context, confident in the abiding presence of the Spirit of God, rooted in the Salesian charism and in fraternal communion with the Salesian congregation at large, is called to continue his journey with a little of that trust which has so insightfully been described by the poet Antonio Machado in his poem *Caminante no hay Camino*: 'Wayfarer, there is no way, the way is made by walking'.⁶

Mary, *the woman attentive to what was happening around her*, invites us not to remain distant and indifferent to the needs of those whom the Lord asks us to accompany.

⁵ Dominic VELIATH, "Encounter of the Salesian Charism. South Asian Context", in, *Journal of Salesian Studies*, July–December 2015, Vol.16, n.2, pp.189-207; cf. https://www.salesian.online/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/JSS_16_N_2_Encounter_of_the_Salesian_Charism_with_the_Southern_Asian_Context-Dominic_Veliath1.pdf

⁶ *Idem*, p. 207.

d. Invitation to reflection

- As communities and groups, let us ask ourselves if we have spaces and times where we can reflect together on the poverty that surrounds us.
- Let us ask ourselves whether our lifestyle is truly an authentic witness to those who know us, to those we serve, who are sometimes truly poor in body and soul.
- Let us ask ourselves whether the poor are numbers and objects of ideology and pastoral strategy, or whether we are servants to them with the means we have. How generous are we with our ‘five loaves and two fish’?

2. LISTEN - With deep roots in faith in Christ

Mary, attentive to what was happening around her, said to the servants, ‘*Do whatever he tells you.*’ (v. 5) The invitation is clear and simple. But we know it’s also very challenging. It is not only a matter of recognising events with their urgent moments and necessities, but of interpreting them in the light of faith in Christ. Most of the time, we interpret events correctly, professionally and competently, with analyses that are generally well developed and accurate, at a ‘horizontal’ level, so to speak. But for those of us who follow Jesus, this level – which must never be lacking – must absolutely be accompanied by the ‘vertical’ one. How easy it is, in responding to various emergencies, to embark on a frenetic course of action in favour of the poor and needy, and in the long run, we often end up being sucked into a vortex of activism that leaves us no time to look at the faces of those we want to serve, nor even the face of the One who called us to serve them in his name!

a. Events must be read and experienced in the light of Christ

Mary invites us to respond in a way that certainly addresses

the unexpected difficulty, but with a very clear instruction: '*Do whatever he tells you.*' The primary emphasis is not on what must be done, but on the One who says what must be done! Events should be read and tackled in the light of Christ. This is an undeniable indication as well as a source of real energy for those who believe. There are different ways to respond to poverty. The believer opts for this: to act starting from the Word of Jesus. For those who believe in Christ, what many saints of charity have passed on through their lives and witness applies. Our father Don Bosco himself passed this on in a clear way: to act in the name of Jesus.

It is of great importance to us how much the first Salesians preserved the figure of Don Bosco in their memory, especially in his most profound spiritual and mystical aspects. In an article of the Salesian Constitutions, Article 10, which opens the section on the Salesian spirit, we find a summary of this calling that Don Bosco lived in an authentic way:

Article 10:

Under the inspiration of God, Don Bosco lived and handed on to us an original style of life and action: the Salesian spirit.

It is summed up in and focused on pastoral charity, characterized by the youthful dynamism which was revealed so strongly in our Founder and at the beginnings of our Society. It is an apostolic zeal that drives us to seek souls and serve God alone.

b. God's will emerges from the events we experience

In this dynamic, which is deeply rooted in Christ, an experience unfolds that gradually reveals God's plan to us. God's will emerges from within our collaboration in the events we experience in him and because of him. And when we are sincere and act according to his gaze, the Lord of life always surprises us in the most unexpected ways. Believing, then, is not a choice that guarantees success and triumph; believing is placing oneself in his hands, growing in the sure certainty

that comes from a heart guided by divine providence. If this radical choice is replaced by the logic of calculation, then everything takes a different direction, the destination of which we do not know. Mary remains the guide of total and trusting faith. That is how she was, and that is how she continues to be.

In the Gospel passage we are meditating on, we find no words of doubt or mistrust, or even resignation on the part of the servants: only gestures of complete and total trust:

His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' And they brought them to him. (vv. 5-8)

These verses convey – in the total silence of the protagonists in the account – a willingness, readiness and generosity that may leave one somewhat perplexed. But no! It is the reaction of those who choose to stake their lives on the Word they have heard. It is the position of those who truly believe. It is the choice of those who do not stand there asking questions or, worse still, setting conditions. Here is the faithful servant!

c. A process nourished and enlightened by the Word

Finally, let us note something that we believers must not lose sight of: ***this is a process that endures because it is continually nourished and enlightened by the Word.*** Interpreting everything in the light of God and contemplating his will in the events that unfold before us is not something that happens automatically. It requires a heart attuned to the power of the Word. This is a need that in a culture like ours – where efficiency takes precedence over efficacy and where the result is considered more important than the process – we constantly risk underestimating, proceeding directly to action, even with the best of intentions. The consequence is that the point of reference – the Word meditated upon and contem-

plated – becomes increasingly weaker and, in the long run, is even considered a waste of time.

How often do we hear, even in our religious communities, that we do not have time for meditation because we are so busy with pastoral commitments? And the greater our commitments become, the more we abandon our friendship with the Word. Unfortunately, the result is a pastoral self-referentiality that is reinforced in the name of pastoral activity and commitments. In line with what Pope Francis once defined as ‘spiritual worldliness’, we run a very similar risk, the dead end of ‘pastoral worldliness’. That is, we do God’s work with great commitment, but in the long run we forget the God who initially called us to serve him. What a tragedy when, believing we are serving God in the poor, we end up justifying his own irrelevance. We end up idolising our own pastoral projects!

I would like to offer here a reflection on the power and centrality of the Word of a saint of charity whom many of us have encountered: Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She writes to her sisters words that are also valid for us today:

I worry some of you still have not really met Jesus – one-to-one – you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in chapel – but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? Do you really know the living Jesus – not from books, but from being with Him in your heart? Have you heard the living words He speaks to you? Ask for the grace, He is longing to give it. Never give up this daily intimate contact with Jesus as a real living person – not just an idea. How could we spend a single day without hearing Jesus say to us: I love you? It is impossible. Our soul needs it as much as our body needs to breathe. Otherwise, prayer dies and meditation degenerates into reflection. Jesus wants each of us to listen to him and speak to him in the silence of our hearts. Be vigilant about anything that could prevent this personal contact with the living Jesus.”

⁷ From the letter Mother Teresa wrote to the entire family of the Missionaries of Charity during Holy Week 1993 – 25 March, see: R. Cantalamessa, *La Terza predica d’Avvento*, 19 December 2003: “**Conoscete il Gesù vivo?**”

The warm invitation of Saint Teresa of Calcutta is addressed to anyone who wishes to make faith the source of their identity and actions. Being believers places us at the heart of history so that, as protagonists, we may welcome and live history and in history in the light of Christ. Only in this way – nourished and fed with the food of the Word – will we be able to observe with amazement how God’s will emerges more clearly before our eyes.

d. Invitation to reflection

- Do we recognise how easy it is to respond to the needs of the poor and offer educational and pastoral processes without first making a human and spiritual assessment of the situation?
- As communities and groups, do we recognise the urgent need to have the courage to ‘waste’ time reflecting and praying before acting? The value of the proposals lies in the roots that nourish the tree so that it bears good and lasting fruit.
- Have we internalised that serving the poor is a consequence of our encounter with Christ, because they themselves bring us back to him to serve them even more?
- Do we constantly realise that the danger of ‘pastoral worldliness’ ultimately feeds our ego, with the result that instead of serving the poor, we end up using the poor?

3. CHOOSE - Living the call with freedom

The story of the ‘sign’ at Cana offers further insights that shed more light on our lived experience of faith, as a guide and reminder for our educative and pastoral journeys. The servants listen, welcome and obey, as Mary had asked them to do. Their attitude and choices are like the fulfilment of another statement by Jesus, when – in Luke’s account of the

‘woman in the crowd [who] raised her voice and said to him: “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!” but he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Lk 11:27-28).

Here is the point on which everything turns. It is important and decisive to feel part of human history, welcoming and ‘reading’ the signs of the times; it is absolutely necessary to be deeply-rooted in faith in Christ. But the truth of these two attitudes is most evident when we accept and live by the Word. What emerges, then, is the path of authentic faith, marked by healthy and solid growth.

a. Listening freely with complete trust

The point on which everything turns is marked by free listening characterised by complete trust. The words in the Gospel have a very powerful impact and a meaning that is always relevant.

Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, ‘Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.’ So they took it (Jn 2:7-8)

When someone trusts in Jesus, there is no room for anything else. Indeed, human availability becomes even fuller and more joyful, more ready and generous. The author of the Gospel provides a detail that, as educators and pastors, we cannot fail to notice: ‘*they filled (the jars) up to the brim.*’ (v. 7) To the brim, beyond the already large quantity of litres in the jars. It is always worthwhile to be generous, with an ‘overflowing’ generosity. When Jesus calls, we go forward in this way, obeying – *ob-audire* – freely and without measure, again and again, as the Gospel continues: ‘*He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it*’ (v. 8)

I believe that many of us, in our lives, as children and young people but also as adults, have had the joy of meeting people who remind us of the generosity of these servants.

People we still carry in our hearts and minds, not so much for the things they did, but for the free and generous attitude they passed on to us. They certainly left their mark on us, because their hearts were filled with the presence of Jesus. They had hearts that were enlightened and guided by the Word and nourished by the Eucharist.

b. Every action makes sense – *logos* – only in and from the Word – *Logos*

We see in the servants what is asked of us today if we truly want to offer an experience of integral growth to those we are called to serve. We will only be authentic educators and pastors when every action we take draws meaning (reason, motive, *logos*) from and in the Word (*Logos*). Only by living a life interwoven with words and actions that are inspired by the Word can we overcome the wall of indifference and apathy that is so widespread today. When we see that the wine of hope and true joy is lacking, when we feel powerless in the face of so many real challenges we encounter every day, the temptation is to defend ourselves by distancing ourselves and doing the bare minimum.

But there is another option which is evangelical and Salesian: to ‘surrender’ and ‘trust’ in his word... As the servants testify to us, as Don Bosco and many well-known Salesians testify to us, with their concrete choices, always preceded by a precise and systematic attention to the sources of their lives. Everything emanates from this sacred and profound space. They were disciples and servants who, through their lives for and with others, had an experience that prolonged their relationship with Jesus, lived with the power of his Word. Theirs was not abstract devotion or emotional piety, but rather an expression and synthesis of human and spiritual maturity, intelligent and wise foresight, human empathy and mystical enthusiasm. In their *ob-audire* lived with a strong and determined personality, we see no signs of weakness or passive resignation.

We can say that they lived their prominent role within a relational framework marked by the grace of unity, an existential framework that was profoundly human and profoundly divine. By obeying, they did not give up their personality at all, but rather shaped it through such obedience. Their trust in Jesus' word, like that of the servants, continues to offer us new wine that inaugurates a new life, for us as well as for our young people.

c. The risk of a faith that adapts to the dominant culture

And here we recognise the invitation not to succumb to the risk of a faith that conforms to the dominant culture. The prophetic dimension of our mission must contend with a context such as the current one, which 'drags us down' towards the immediate, the useful and advantageous, that which gratifies us here and now, and even the most comfortable. Jesus' words to his servants could have been 'managed' and 'dealt with' in a purely human way, with a distrust that was entirely plausible and 'reasonable'. The result would have been very different, as we can easily imagine.

How often does it happen to us today that, when faced with urgent pastoral challenges, human reasoning takes over? A purely horizontal interpretation, however skilfully constructed, ultimately weakens and even excludes a faith-based interpretation of the challenges we are called upon to face. On the one hand, we are aware that studies and research on young people invite us to listen to their search for meaning, but on the other hand – despite this awareness that calls for a prophetic response – we limit ourselves to giving only a horizontal response, perhaps responding only to a need rather than to the implicit question of meaning.

It seems that we sometimes project our fears onto young people because it is uncomfortable to face and overcome them, as it forces us to step outside our comfort zones. Remaining on the purely human and rational side, or that of the dominant

culture, we feel superficially justified, while our young people continue to cry out in the wilderness.

Reading the story of the beginnings in Valdocco, in the Pinardi house from 1847 onwards, we see that Don Bosco offered young people powerful and solid experiences. He went looking for poor, homeless young people to give them at least the bare minimum: food, shelter, education. But right from the start, Don Bosco was aware that it was necessary to offer proposals that we now describe as 'integral'. Pietro Braido writes:

Humble in its origins, Don Bosco's first institution grew slowly but with increasing vigour and fame, like the Gospel mustard seed. This is owed to the fact that he was a man of such inner strength, such solid human and Christian faith, such outstanding ability that he was able to involve and enthuse people. But in the end he presented an image of himself that was more expansive than things really were. It would remain thus in the future.⁸

Of course he was not working only for the sake of publicity. In the activity of rehabilitating and empowering young people, especially young workers, in religious, moral and hence civil life, he knew how to have recourse to powerful means such as retreats. Already in 1847 he had tried a first experiment with the Oratory boys... More reliably attested by Don Bosco himself was the repetition of a similar experiment in 1848. Then he had around fifty participants and it meant them staying a whole day and overnight in premises at the Oratory, made possible by having all of the Pinardi house at his disposal.⁹

In order for our response to be filled with faith in Jesus' words, it is imperative that we accept this invitation with great openness, both towards the One who calls us and as a response to those who are waiting. Our hesitation, our indecision must not have the last word.

⁸ Pietro BRAIDO, *Don Bosco, prete dei giovani, nel secolo delle libertà*, (LAS – Roma 2009), Vol. I, Cap. VII: La rivelazione di don Bosco educatore (1846-1850), p.216.[Also available in English translation on the Salesian Digital Library SDL: <https://sdl.sdb.org:9343/greenstone3/library/collection/dbdonbos/browse/CL4#CL4.4,CL4.4.4>]

⁹ *Idem.*, p. 223.

d. Invitation to reflection

- Let us strive to ensure that our life of faith takes the form of a relationship marked by freedom and trusting abandonment.
- Let us examine our conscience regarding our motivations, whether they are rooted in and nourished by the Word (*Logos*), free from self-referential motivations.
- Let us develop our intellectual capacity always in the light of God's wisdom. May our intelligence not obscure or weaken the prophetic voice of the Good News.

4. ACT - Serving with total generosity

The wedding at Cana was an enriched 'feast' because of the servants' trusting and generous response to Mary's invitation to do whatever Jesus told them to do. When service is marked by generous self-sacrifice, a generosity rooted in faith, the results are a gift for everyone. We can see this in the various educational and pastoral processes carried out by people dedicated to the mission, by collaborators who feel themselves to be an active part of the Salesian charism and pastoral project. Their dedication and sense of belonging are a true and real acceptance of the call, its realisation, not a mere appendage. Ultimately, it is these fundamental choices that give soul to every path of integral growth for young people. These are options that positively influence the outcome.

a. Serving freely because we are deeply-rooted in Christ

There is no freedom more authentic and true than that which emanates from this relationship with him. The joy of the free servant emerges from a heart that has already found the centre of its identity. The servant who feeds on the source that is Christ has no alternative intentions or motivations. Such a servant serves well without needing to depend on seeking

personal gratification from outside sources. This servant's heart is already filled with the One who called and sent him or her, and that is more than enough.

The servant's gift of self, therefore, is clear, and for this reason it communicates that sense of inner freedom to the outside world. This is where the true joy that every authentic servant of young people carries with them comes from. We are bearers of good wine, we are 'signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially the poorest of them' (C. 2), not because we produced it ourselves, but because we believe it was given to us freely. We are only asked not to keep it as personal property, but to distribute it generously. The joy we communicate when we are rooted in Christ is a joy that is given to us in abundance, but with the promise that this joy will become complete when we share it. Jesus' promise at the Last Supper continues to sustain us in this service:

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. (Jn 15:9-11)

In recent months, during the Jubilee of the Holy Year 2025, many of us experienced or closely followed the Youth Jubilee between late July and early August. It is fitting here to recall the words that Saint John Paul II wrote in his *Apostolic Letter, Novo Millennio Ineunte*, at the end of the *Holy Year 2000*, where we find a comment on the Youth Jubilee of that year, 2000. These words truly convey joy. They seem to have been written for us today, as we deal with young people born around the turn of the millennium:

Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not

hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become “morning watchmen” (cf. *Is* 21:11-12) at the dawn of the new millennium. (*NMI* 9)¹⁰

Yes, young people are still searching for those who have the courage and conviction of faith in Christ. There is no lack of seeking by young people. We need people who are mature in their faith, ready to present the face of Jesus, as servants and pilgrims. We need educators and pastors who are ready to listen and live the good news.

b. Co-workers in God’s plan for the young

Through this committed and joyful service, we, as educators and pastors, become co-workers in God’s plan for young people. Like Mary, we too have made the choice not to distance ourselves from what is happening around us. We have chosen to be part of young people’s story. Because we are convinced that these young people, now more than ever, carry in their hearts the question, ‘Where are you staying, Lord?’ They may be looking for him without even knowing it. They do not have the vocabulary to express it, but they have that deep thirst that does not leave their hearts at peace. If the right language is lacking, the restless heart is certainly not.

How great is our responsibility, we who have encountered Jesus, who spend time with Jesus frequently, every day! However, only when we experience this encounter faithfully and consistently can we understand and comprehend the silent question of young people. In this logic of a ‘silence that speaks loudly,’ genuine educators and pastors communicate that spark which alone can ignite hearts through their witness and fidelity. We have been entrusted with the ‘talent’ of the good news. Woe betide us if we neglect it, or worse still, if we bury it.

In her short but intense life, Simone Weil (1909–1943),

¹⁰ St John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 6 January 2001.

French philosopher, political activist and mystic, a woman desperately searching, left a profound mark on 20th-century French philosophical thought. At a certain stage in her life, she was in contact with Father Joseph-Marie Perrin, a Dominican. She writes about this experience in her diary:

It is not by the way a man speaks of God, but by the way he speaks of earthly things that one can best discern whether his soul has dwelt in the fire of God's love.¹¹

These are succinct words that fit very well with our educative and pastoral contexts. Most of the time, our encounters with young people and with all those whom the Lord brings into our lives consist of simple human contact and generous availability regarding immediate needs and issues. Yet that space of pure humanity becomes a place where God's love is revealed: in those moments, we occupy 'sacred ground' that must not be trampled upon. In the courtyards and playgrounds of the world, our presence is not only physical, but carries with it what our hearts hold. Even when speaking of 'earthly things', without realising it, we are communicating 'who' or 'what' we have accented and welcomed into our hearts. In these simple moments, our presence, bearing a healthy heart, surprisingly facilitates the unveiling of God's plan for every young person we encounter. Blessed are we if we are constantly aware of this. Blessed are the young people who meet these faithful servants, generous and filled with true and genuine joy.

c. The boldness of faith

Finally, we should not be afraid or ashamed: let us encourage boldness in faith at a personal and community level. This is not about an attitude that challenges the world, nor is it senseless fundamentalism. Rather, it is an option that grounds us in Christ, and thus we go out to meet the world. It is not a ques-

¹¹ Simone Weil, *Quaderno IV*, pp. 182-183.

tion of opposing, but of fostering spaces of fraternity, promoting a culture of dialogue, and living relationships marked by compassion and empathy.

In one passage from the Encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis reflects on the potential of a faith that does not seek to conquer but to collaborate for the common good. As bearers of a charism that educates and evangelises, the Pope's reflection enlightens us and urges us to move forward.

Faith does not draw us away from the world or prove irrelevant to the concrete concerns of the men and women of our time. Without a love which is trustworthy, nothing could truly keep men and women united. Human unity would be conceivable only on the basis of utility, on a calculus of conflicting interests or on fear, but not on the goodness of living together, not on the joy which the mere presence of others can give. (no. 51)

The Pope then recalls that this stance becomes an invaluable gift because of its social consequences. This reminder is crucial for us, the Salesian Family Groups, because it warns us against the danger of considering 'faith' as 'private property' that we have in opposition to others. That is not the meaning of the call. Recalling the context of the feast at Cana, wine is for everyone, even for those who have not done their sums properly, even for those who have gatecrashed the party, and for passing beggars. Faith in Christ, like new wine, inaugurates the feast of the covenant. Here are the words of Pope Francis:

Faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God, in his love, and thus sheds light on the art of building; as such it becomes a service to the common good. Faith is truly a good for everyone; it is a common good. Its light does not simply brighten the interior of the Church, nor does it serve solely to build an eternal city in the hereafter; it helps us build our societies in such a way that they can journey towards a future of hope. (no. 51)

The boldness of faith is a confirmation that we want to take seriously the call to be co-workers in God's plan for young people. Don Bosco experienced this calling with extraordinary awareness

and turned it into a system, a project, a family experience. His boldness led him to say (and live by): ‘in those things which are for the benefit of young people in danger or which serve to win souls for God, I push ahead even to the extent of recklessness.’¹²

We live the boldness of faith to foster a future marked by hope. The boldness of faith that finds its roots in the heart of the educator, the shepherd, who never ceases to love, to hope, to care for his flock.

d. Invitation to reflection

- Let us not be afraid to ask ourselves, in an intimate and sincere way, whether we are truly serving young people or whether we are using them for our own agenda and personal reasons.
- Called as a community to educate with the heart of the good shepherd, let us strive to find moments that strengthen within us the awareness that our presence and our contribution are intended to foster the discovery of God’s plan for every young person.

Recalling Simone Weil’s words, is my soul dwelling in the fire of God’s love? If I do not dwell in this furnace of God’s love, it matters little where the alternative is, where I decide to live!

5. 150 years – Salesian Cooperators: Don Bosco’s prophetic dream continues

I invite you to view the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Cooperators as an experience that extends Mary’s words to the servants: ‘Do whatever he tells you.’

¹² Letter to Charles Vespignani, 11 April 1877, in Francesco MOTTO (ed.), Giovanni BOSCO, *Epistolario*, Vol. V (1876-1877), LAS-Roma 2012, p. 344.

The reflections made so far can be seen updated in the project that Don Bosco developed from the beginning of his mission in Valdocco.

- i. Don Bosco's heart was a heart *open to welcoming the signs of the times*, with their challenges and opportunities.
- ii. From the outset, it was a journey *rooted in faith in Christ*, and this personal experience had its starting point solely in Christ.
- iii. The proposal that was taking shape aimed to offer young people and his first collaborators a call to *discover and live their life project with freedom*.
- iv. In a healthy and holy environment, where reason (reasonableness) and faith (religion) nourished each other in a context of loving-kindness, this path had the sole purpose of *servicing young people with complete generosity* and loving them unconditionally.

In recent decades, we have had various opportunities and moments of reflection that are helping us to contemplate the experience of Salesian Cooperators in the light of the Salesian charism. I refer to three sources that can nourish moments of study and reflection during this year, as well as research into new and creative pastoral proposals.

Fr Pietro Braido dedicates several pages to the Salesian Cooperators.¹³ Here I would like to mention just a few ideas for an overview that offers us a memory projected beyond historical and temporal immediacy. If we truly remember Don Bosco's choices, we realise that the theme of STRENNA 2026 is fully in tune with his actions, as he was always attentive and obedient to the guidance of the Spirit of God.

¹³ P. Braido, *Don Bosco prete dei giovani nel secolo delle libertà*. Vol. 2, LAS 2009. [Also available in English translation in the Salesian Digital Library SDL, <https://sdl.sdb.org:9343/greenstone3/library/collection/dbdonbos/browse/CL4#CL4.4,CL4.4.4>] I recommend reading Chapter Twenty-Two. *A Catholic solidarity project in the mission to young people (1873-1877)*.

Don Bosco's idea was to create a truly organised missionary force, a 'potentially unlimited army of people, men and women.' The revolutionary feature was that these members would share in the Salesian mission while remaining in the world, without the obligation of religious vows (poverty, chastity, obedience) or the community life typical of religious orders. They were called to live an 'evangelising and civilising' faith in their daily lives.

Since the Oratory's inception, Don Bosco had always been able to count on the collaboration of priests and lay people. The real novelty was in giving this collaboration an official and structured form: an ecclesiastical *Association* or *Union*. This entity would be formally 'aggregated' to the Salesian Society, creating a recognised spiritual and legal bond.

The idea did not come about suddenly. Already in the drafts of the Salesian Constitutions of the 1860s, Don Bosco had included a chapter on 'Extern Members'. Although this proposal was initially rejected by the Vatican authorities, Don Bosco did not give up. He wanted to transform a network of spontaneous and informal helpers into a recognised spiritual family, with a clear identity and an active role in the Salesian mission.

In the Introduction of 1854 to the *Regulations for the Oratory of St Francis de Sales*, Don Bosco expressed his hope that the regulations would 'serve as a rule (...) for administering this part of the sacred ministry, and as a guide for clerics and lay people who, with charitable solicitude, devote their efforts there in large numbers.' Indeed, there had been a large group of clerics and lay collaborators whom he loved to recall. (Braido, 174)

Don Bosco's original vision still challenges us today, inviting us to renew that same apostolic spirit that he dreamed of as a basis and foundation. For Don Bosco, the figure of the Salesian Cooperator was like a multifaceted figure with a very specific identity and mission.

Their identity was that of a Salesian in the world: a Christian (lay person, priest, man or woman) who lives the Salesian spirit

in his or her own life situation, in the family and in society. They are not a religious, but they share the same heart and the same passion for the salvation of young people with the Salesian religious.

Their mission had a dual purpose: personal sanctification ('doing good for oneself': that is, being called to live an exemplary Christian life, with a simple and virtuous lifestyle, almost as if they were 'in the Congregation'). Then there is the salvation of others, apostolic action, with the aim of actively helping others, with a special focus on 'at-risk youth'.

Don Bosco, with great practicality, established that those who could not carry out these works directly ('of their very selves') could still contribute by supporting those who did them ('through others'). This principle made the experience accessible to everyone, regardless of age, health or financial resources.

Fr Egidio Viganò in his letter *The Association of Salesian Cooperators*,¹⁴ on the occasion of the solemn promulgation of the then new *Regulations for Apostolic Life* of the Association of Salesian Cooperators, 1986, wrote that these new *Regulations* were not a simple regulatory update, but an event of historic significance that completed the post-conciliar renewal of the entire Salesian Family. Fr Viganò writes that while 'Don Bosco did not consider his long and troubled mission as Founder was at an end before he had been able to give a valid structure to this Association and provide it with its own Identity Card', this process of renewal is in continuity with the experience up to that point, which 'had been present to some extent and in embryo from the very beginnings of his plans for the work of the Oratories.'

He adds that the Salesian charism has a 'flexible vitality' that allows it to adapt to the times without losing its essence.

¹⁴ E. Viganò, *The Association of Salesian Cooperators*, Letter published in AGC no. 318, 1986.

Don Bosco started from the fundamental intuition of the youth mission and the urgent need for ongoing collaborators. Only after more than thirty years of discernment, from 1841 to 1876, did he manage to give definitive shape to his project, moving from a diocesan dimension to a universal vocation.

Finally, **Fr Pascual Chávez**, in an article on *Don Bosco's idea of the Cooperator*,¹⁵ comments on 'The Project of Apostolic Life: a way of fidelity to Don Bosco's charism,' emphasising Don Bosco's original intuition and recalling the famous line: 'I always needed everyone!' This expression perfectly sums up his vision, which is not limited to seeing Cooperators as mere helpers, but as essential protagonists in a vast network of collaboration that has effectively made the worldwide spread of Salesian work possible.

Fr Chávez writes that according to Don Bosco, the identity of the Cooperator is articulated in three fundamental dimensions: first, he or she is a Catholic Christian; second, he or she has a secular vocation; third, he or she is a Salesian in the world, recalling Don Bosco's own conference in 1885. During that conference Don Bosco said:

What does it mean to be a Salesian Cooperator? Being a Salesian Cooperator means working together with others to support a work founded under the auspices of St Francis de Sales, which aims to help the Holy Church in its most urgent needs; it means working to promote a work so highly recommended by the Holy Father, because it educates young people in virtue, in the way of the Sanctuary, because its main purpose is to instruct young people who today have become the target of evil, because, I say, it promotes in the world, colleges, hospices, festive oratories, families, a love of religion, good morals, prayer, attendance at the sacraments, and so on.¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.donboscoland.it/it/page/il-cooperatore-nella-mente-di-don-bosco>

¹⁶ Bollettino Salesiano Luglio 1885, Anno IX. no. 7 see: <https://sdl.sdb.org:9343/greenstone3/library/collection/bolletn/document/HASHf4b23f9c8aeedeefebb44e;jsessionid=5747EC043839057DDDD329A721E7B8FAA>

In light of Don Bosco's vision, the Project of Apostolic Life (PAL) charts the path to becoming an authentic witness to God's plan for the integral growth of young people. This path becomes real when Salesian Cooperators commit themselves to:

- a. ensuring the identity of the Association through *dynamic fidelity to its original charism*. The study of and reflection on the charism is a source that continually nourishes the understanding and experience of the call;
- b. *strengthening the unity of members in their diversity*. The richness of each member's background and the variety of gifts they possess, together with their personal circumstances, should be seen as an opportunity to create spaces for convergence, sharing and inhabiting new areas of action.
- c. finally, *promoting the missionary vitality of each Cooperator*. The call to feel that we are like Don Bosco means being guided by a heart that is ready to 'go out', a heart that feels sent, a missionary heart. This conviction overcomes the danger of shutting oneself off, which ultimately causes one to lose sight of the call.

Along with these proposals from Fr Pascual Chávez, it is worth reiterating his invitation not to lose the freshness that Don Bosco communicated and that today it is up to us not to lose or weaken. His project still demonstrates its value today in the extent to which every Salesian Cooperator strives to be, first and foremost, a person dedicated to the common good in the political, social and humanitarian spheres. From this perspective, secondly, the privileged attention to the poor and the excluded becomes the driving force behind pastoral action. Thirdly, the commitment to a believing community is reaffirmed, in supporting the vitality of the Church through a spirit of authentic, genuine and selfless service. Finally, the invitation to continually educate oneself so that witness as a whole and everywhere is nourished by the lay spirituality that forms one for evangelical life, a life that brings good news, is a leaven in society.

6. Some pastoral proposals

In this last section, I offer some pastoral proposals that can be studied and discussed within the various Groups of the Salesian Family. These proposals emerge from the various considerations outlined above and are closely linked to the Word of God that has accompanied us in this STRENNA 2026. My wish, for myself and for every single member of the Salesian Family, is that we always keep the power and light of the Word before us. From this energy, we ask the Spirit of God to grant us courage and determination to live the message of Jesus with faith, and by living it, to bring the ‘wine of hope’ to young people.

1. ‘Do whatever he tells you’: towards a pedagogy of personal listening

Mary’s words to the servants at Cana offer a true educational method. Mary invites us to listen personally, leading us from indifferent individualism to responsible and supportive autonomy, from sterile external conformity to conversion of the heart.

- Let us educate young people to listen personally to the word of God, guiding them towards a mature and conscious faith.
- Let us promote discernment at the personal and community levels, in groups and assemblies.

2. Mary at Cana: educator of genuine freedom

Mary does not force the servants, but points them to the One who can transform their lives. He is the model of every genuine educator in the faith: not imposing, but proposing; not forcing, but accompanying; not substituting, but enabling.

- Let us grow as educators who help young people ask the right questions, avoiding the danger of giving ready-made answers.
- Let us become aware that authority stems from consistent and authentic testimony, not from suffocating authoritarianism.

- Let us accept that educating for freedom also means anticipating the risk of a ‘no’, a negative response, a rejection, and that in any case, we must always respect the choices of young people as they gradually grow up.

3. The art of reading the signs of the times with young people

An incarnate pastoral ministry knows how to interpret the reality of young people without prejudice or nostalgia for the past. Young people live in a complex world, facing unprecedented challenges: the digital revolution, uncertainty about the future, the crisis of traditional institutions, and new forms of existential poverty.

- Let us listen with empathy: before judging, let us try to understand the world of young people from within.
- Let us interpret things from a perspective of wisdom: let us see cultural changes not only as threats, but also as opportunities for proclamation.
- Let us promote conversation in the Spirit: let us experience ‘synodality’ in a tangible way when we involve young people themselves in listening to one another, analysing their reality and formulating new proposals.
- With a gaze of faith, let us recognise God’s action even in situations that seem far removed from the Gospel.

4. Choosing: Christian freedom as a vocational response

One of the most delicate issues in Salesian youth ministry today is the relationship between faith and freedom. Only ‘free listening’ allows us to experience the liberating power of the Gospel.

- Let us offer young people spaces and experiences characterised by courageous, fearless Christianity, a proposal for a simple and credible Christian life.

- Let us focus on action: every action and concrete proposal must be lived and guided by the Word so that they become signs of an integral spirituality. Service then emerges as a natural expression of mature faith and genuine freedom.

5. 150 years of the Salesian Cooperators: a model for today

The commemoration of 150 years of the Salesian Cooperators offers the Salesian mission a unique opportunity: Don Bosco's dream of a 'great movement of people' committed to the good of youth.

- *Active involvement of the young:* young people are not merely recipients of pastoral action, but active participants. Like the first Cooperators from the very beginning, young people shared Don Bosco's dream. The same must apply to today's young people: they are called play an active role in evangelisation, and more explicitly, of their peers.
- *Educational alliances:* the Salesian mission cannot be the work of individuals, but requires networks of collaboration between families, Christian communities, schools, associations and the world of work. The Salesian Cooperators of yesterday and today represent this spirit of pastoral alliance.
- *Missionary dimension: the Salesian charism is intrinsically missionary.* Every pastoral choice cannot be limited to preserving the status quo, but must be open to the peripheries, to new forms of poverty, to young people who are furthest away.
- *Fruitful secularity:* Salesian Cooperators bear witness to the beauty of the lay vocation in the Church. This means valuing and taking seriously the specific role of lay people in education to the faith, respecting and promoting their competence and autonomy.

Conclusion

STRENNA 2026 presents the Salesian Family with a programme that is both challenging and fascinating. At a time when young people are often described only in terms of problems or fragility, the Salesian proposal looks at them through the eyes of faith: when they encounter credible proposals and authoritative witnesses, young people show themselves to be sincere bearers of specific gifts, truly capable of authentic listening, ready to make generous choices.

Like Mary at Cana, we educators in the faith are called to bear witness to Christ to young people, not as an 'object' but as a liberating relationship, to propose Christian life not as rules to follow, but as the fullness of life freely offered. '*Do whatever he tells you*' is not an invitation to blind obedience, but to responsible freedom communicated by those who have already encountered and experienced Love, and wants to share it because true life is within them.

I conclude with a reflection by Romano Guardini.¹⁷ He states that our faith is a "contested faith" which must continually ascertain its foundation, and perhaps discard the varied and beautiful in order to adhere only to the essential.' This means that when doubt or discouragement arise, which often attack us in our mission, we realise that true faith is that which 'always rises again against doubt. [...] That characteristic form of faith that (St John Henry) Newman described so well when he said that "to believe" means "to be able to endure doubt".'

Let us bring the new wine of the wedding at Cana, which symbolises the newness promoted by those who believe, with joy and hope, even and especially in the midst of challenges and difficulties, doubts and uncertainties. Both in the Church

¹⁷ R. Guardini, *Sorge um dem Menschen*, Bd. I, Werkbund, Würzburg 1962, tr. it. by Albino Babolin, *Ansia per l'uomo*, vol. I, Morcelliana, Brescia 1970, p. 130. (English translation by the translator of this letter)

and in society, the young people we accompany are bearers of a thirst for authentic, genuine life. They seek to meet *believers*, who communicate a *credible* Christian proposal and are therefore *believed* by them. This is the challenge that STRENNA 2026 entrusts to all of us in the Salesian Family who care about the new generations.

Don Bosco's dream continues every time a young person discovers not a limitation on their freedom but the way to become fully themselves in the educators and pastors they encounter, believers who live their faith in the service of their brothers and sisters. This is the 'good news' that the Salesian mission is called to proclaim: the boldness of faith and the joy of sharing.

This is the STRENNA that I offer you with joy and emotion, and which I, first of all, commit myself to live by.

Fr Fabio ATTARD, sdb
Rector Major

2. GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIVES

2.1 ENTERING INTO THE NEW EDITION OF THE *RATIO*: getting to know it, live it

Fr Silvio ROGGIA, sdb
General Councillor for Formation

This article offers a concise but thorough overview of the fifth edition of ‘The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco – *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum*’, whose entirely revised text was approved by the General Council on 22 December 2025 and promulgated by the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard, on 26 January 2026, the day that commemorates the first formation project that Cagliero, Artiglia, Rocchietti and Rua undertook in the presence of Don Bosco. It is from that day onwards that we called ourselves Salesians.

We begin by presenting once again the very brief text written by sixteen-year-old Michael Rua as a propitiatory message for this document, which is in continuity with those beginnings, as simple as they were fruitful.

On the evening of 26 January 1854 we gathered in Don Bosco’s room: Don Bosco, Rocchietti, Artiglia, Cagliero and Rua; we were invited to engage, with the help of God and of St Francis de Sales, in an experiment in the practical exercise of charity toward neighbour, in order eventually to make a promise and later, if possible and appropriate, a vow of it to the Lord. From that evening the name Salesians was given to those who chose and would in the future choose to engage in such an exercise.

Here is the index of topics covered in the following pages.

1. Introduction
2. Why a new edition of the *Ratio*?
3. The revision process
4. The structure of the *Ratio*

5. Keys to understanding the *Ratio*
6. Delving deeper into the new edition of the *Ratio*: an introductory guide
7. What's new in the *Ratio*? New challenges, new perspectives, new emphases
8. A differentiated appropriation of the *Ratio*
9. Assimilation and transformation
10. Conclusion

1. Introduction

‘Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ... chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him’ (Eph 1:3-4). ‘The Lord daily gives us his grace’ (C 96): a grace that awakens the heart, sustains the journey and invites us to respond to his choice in the style of Don Bosco with generosity, gratitude and love, under the maternal guidance of our Mother the Help of Christians.

Formation is the continuous shaping of this response throughout our lives: it is allowing the Spirit to mould our hearts so that they may more and more resemble those of Christ. The *Ratio* accompanies us as a guide on this journey, offering principles and guidelines that help us to respond with increasing fidelity to the gift we have received. It is a sign of our common journey and a beacon that points to the fullness of our vocation.

2. Why a new edition of the *Ratio*?

The third edition of *the Ratio* was published in 2000. A fourth edition – incorporating revisions concerning the prenovitiate (2009) and the initial formation of the Salesian Brother (2012) – appeared online in 2016. However, this edition left the rest of *the Ratio* unchanged.

Taking into account the need to respond to the signs of the times and to reflect on the type of Salesians needed today, GC28 asked the Formation Sector to ‘review the parts of *the Ratio* that need to be adapted to current circumstances, strengthening the concrete indications of shared methods and instruments’(GC28, p. 96). In *the Rector Major’s Guidelines for the Salesian Congregation after General Chapter 28*, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, called for a ‘serious and demanding’ process of revision of *the Ratio*, capable of bridging the gap between formation and mission and guaranteeing ‘processes of true growth to maturity and personalisation, and accompaniment’ (GC28, p. 34).

During the initial discussions and consultations conducted by the Formation Sector in preparation for the revision, it became clear that since 2000, the ecclesial, social and congregational context had undergone far-reaching changes. At the social level these included the digital and artificial intelligence revolution and a global call for accountability and reform in the wake of the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. At the ecclesial level, we had gone through the final years of the pontificate of St John Paul II and then those of Benedict XVI and Francis, each characterised by a rich magisterium. At the congregational level, new directives had been issued by four General Chapters, three Rectors Major, and important documents from various Sectors.

In light of all this, it became clear that a complete – not just partial – revision of the *Ratio* was necessary.

3. The revision process

The revision process began in June 2020 with a discussion with the formation Delegates from the various regions. This was followed by a consultation at the Congregation level, conducted online through three questionnaires addressed respectively to

individual confreres, communities and members of the EPC. The topics that required further study were examined through focus groups, in which 39 Salesian and lay experts from the seven Regions participated – meetings and online work.

The large amount of data collected through these tools (3,648 contributions from communities, groups and individuals online) was examined and analysed by a group of 21 confreres – including seven in initial formation – representing all the regions of the Congregation. They met at the Sacred Heart in Rome from 15 to 28 November 2021. Based on their work, an editorial team of about seventy people, including confreres and lay people, organised into groups responsible for the different chapters, prepared the first draft of *the Ratio*, working mainly online, with a target date of 31 March 2022. About two-thirds of the groups managed to deliver their work by that deadline. The rest did so gradually in the following months.

This first draft then underwent a serious and lengthy review process by the members of the Formation Sector, with the assistance of other collaborators. The text matured through successive stages. When the evolution marked an important qualitative leap, the draft was given a new sequential number to facilitate the work and avoid confusion between the development stages. This led to draft number 22, which was presented to the Rector Major and his Council on 10 July 2023. The Council carefully studied it on four separate occasions during the 2023 and 2024 sessions, resulting in changes and updates to the document.

Meanwhile, the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, was called to serve the Church as Cardinal, making it necessary to bring forward the next General Chapter and intensifying the Council's work schedule, with fewer opportunities for in-depth study of the text that had been delivered, to which individual members and the Council could contribute. In this new situation, during the meeting on 2 July 2024, the

Council decided not to proceed with approval yet, but to set up a commission of 13 confreres from different regions of the Congregation to further study the text (then draft 35), refine it and present the revised draft to the new Rector Major who would be elected during GC29. They devoted themselves to this work at the Central Office from 18 October to 2 November 2024, examining the entire text line by line and giving a considerable qualitative boost to the whole process of revision and rewriting.

The draft revised by this inter-regional commission (number 38) was presented to Fr Fabio Attard, the new Rector Major, by the outgoing Councillor for Formation, Fr Ivo Coelho, on 31 March 2025. Fr Attard requested that two teams of four members each – one composed of members of the Formation Sector and the other of four confreres who had participated in all the work of GC29 and had already been part of the drafting of the text in the phases we have mentioned – integrate into the text whatever was necessary in light of GC29. This allowed the new Councillors, elected by GC29, to have time to study draft 38 in units distributed on a weekly basis and to offer their contributions, together with the other members of the Council. Fr Pascual Chavez also carefully reviewed the entire text, offering valuable suggestions and a positive and encouraging overall assessment.

The winter session of the 2025 General Council (24 November – 24 December) studied the *Ratio* in 14 sessions. Draft 39 was divided into 14 units, with a summary for each of them that accompanied the titles, numbering and captions of essential passages of the text, so as to offer a quick and accurate overview of the contents. During the Council sessions, personal reading time preceded the vote to approve each unit. On 22 December, the final vote was taken to approve the text in its entirety. Some observations, more of a formal than a substantive nature, were collected and incorporated during this Council process, resulting in the final draft number 40.

4. The structure of the *Ratio*

The *Ratio* consists of three parts and twelve appendices divided into 945 articles. It concludes with a glossary and an index.

Below is a schematic summary of the three parts with the titles of the chapters and appendices.

Part I: General aspects of our formation

6 chapters (1–6) – nos. 1–331

1. The *Ratio*
2. Our identity in the Church
3. The journey: fundamental choices
4. Dimensions of the journey
5. Walking together: accompaniment and discernment
6. Walking together in the Church and in the Congregation

Part II: The Formation Process

3 chapters (7–9) – nos. 332–673

7. Initial formation
8. Specialisation
9. The seasons of life

Part III: Criteria and norms for discernment and admissions

3 chapters (10–12) – nos. 674–852

10. Vocational discernment in initial formation
11. Criteria and signs for discernment
12. Admissions

Twelve appendices – nos. 853–945

1. The Provincial Directory – formation Section
2. The provincial formation plan
3. The community plan
4. The local formation project
5. The personal plan of life
6. Guidelines for a path of growth in the affective-sexual dimension

7. Pastoral accompaniment
8. Guidelines concerning the organisation of studies
9. Guidelines concerning Salesian studies
10. Guidelines for the formation of rectors, formators and spiritual guides
11. Protection of minors and vulnerable adults
12. Ecclesial and Salesian documents on formation

Glossary

Index

5. Keys to understanding the new edition of *the Ratio*

As the Congregation welcomes the new *Ratio*, it is essential to approach the text with a mindset shaped by our Salesian identity and mission. The following key elements underpin the entire document and permeate its approach and choices.

Vocation and formation

At the heart of *the Ratio* is the conviction that we have been called by God to be ‘living memorials of Jesus and sent to the young, especially the poorest’ (FSDB 7). Formation shapes our response to the call. For this reason there is a profound unity between vocation, mission and formation, which is reflected in the way we live the evangelical counsels, in community and in apostolic service (mystics in the Spirit, prophets of fraternity and servants of young people - GC27).

Formation is for life

Formation is by its nature permanent: a ‘formation process that lasts all [of our] life’ (C 98). Initial formation is only the beginning of this journey that makes us disciples in continuous formation. It benefits greatly from the emphasis placed on ‘learning from life’s experiences’, a disposition of discernment that listens to the Spirit in daily life, ready to make the ‘best formative use of any situation’ (C 119).

Formation in mission

Pope Francis, in his message to GC28, strongly invites us to live formation in mission. We have been called and sent to poor and at-risk young people. Following Don Bosco and the first Salesians, we welcome them, accompany them and form them – and, in turn, they form us. Without closeness to poor and marginalised young people, without their company, we cannot become the Salesians we are called to be.

Charismatic identity in a shared mission

God calls many to follow him along the Salesian path. We Salesians live this vocation as consecrated persons, but we share our charism and mission with many others. For this reason, the *Ratio* affirms our commitment to shared formation within the educative and pastoral community and with the groups of the Salesian Family with whom we have special bonds (C 5; R 37–42, 148).

Personalisation and participation

Since the goal of formation is conformity to Christ, it must reach the heart and cannot be reduced to changing behaviour or acquiring skills. It does not seek simple external conformity but interior transformation. The guiding principle that makes this possible is the Preventive System. It requires dialogue, accompaniment and active involvement, so that each confrere becomes a true protagonist of his own formation. It is a participatory and synodal process. As *Christus Vivit* reminds us: 'If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future ... to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom' (ChV 199).

Unity and diversity

Through the Salesian presence in the world, our Congregation embraces a remarkable diversity of life: cultures, religions, political contexts, numbers, ages and vocational

choices. The *Ratio* emphasises that we belong to the entire Congregation and that our hearts must beat for all young people, everywhere, without distinction of caste, race or religion. We support interculturalism and fraternity among peoples. From this perspective the *Ratio* aims to ensure unity in formation processes worldwide and to promote contextualisation at regional and provincial levels. It also calls for a strengthening of regional formation plans, prepared by regional commissions and approved by the Provincials concerned. We are one, but not uniform.

6. Delving deeper into the new Ratio: a guided overview

In this section we go through the *Ratio* with an introductory guide, offering an initial overview of its structure, themes and internal coherence. This summary is not intended to replace a careful study of the text, but to provide an initial orientation that helps us to enter into it with greater clarity and intentionality. Following the flow of its parts and chapters, we are gradually introduced to the vision of vocation, mission and formation that gives life to the entire document. In this way, in addition to understanding the *Ratio*, we are led to assimilate its spirit and begin the process of integrating it into our personal and community life.

Chapter 1: The Ratio

The *Ratio* is the Salesians' 'practical guide to formation' which guides the lifelong journey of becoming ever more deeply formed according to Don Bosco's vision. This fifth edition (2025) responds to the significant changes that have taken place since 2000: three popes, four General Chapters, and new challenges such as digital culture, migration, and issues related to the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.

The document is the result of **extensive consultation throughout the Congregation**, which also included the

contribution of young Salesians. It is divided into **three parts**: the general principles of Salesian formation (Chapters 1–6), the stages of formation (Chapters 7–9) and the criteria for vocational discernment (Chapters 10–12), with the aid of **twelve appendices** aimed at facilitating the implementation of what is expressed in the first three parts.

Several fundamental principles guide the approach of the *Ratio*: **formation is for life**, not only preparation but a daily response to God’s call; **formation takes place in the mission**, where Salesians are shaped by their encounter with young people; and **formation is increasingly shared** with lay people and the Salesian Family. The *Ratio* emphasises both **unity** (maintaining a common Salesian identity throughout the world) and **diversity** (adapting to local contexts through provincial directories and regional plans).

Chapter 2: Our Identity in the Church

This chapter clarifies the elements that define the **specific identity of the Salesians**. At the centre is **apostolic consecration** – a grace of unity in which religious life and apostolic mission are inseparable, according to the integration of contemplation and action lived by Don Bosco.

The **Salesian mission arises from God’s call** to be ‘signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially the poorest of them.’ This **mission is shared** with the laity through the Educative and Pastoral Communities (EPC), reflecting the synodal nature of the Church.

This chapter presents **Don Bosco as a lens through which to read the Gospel**, highlighting Christ’s predilection for the little ones, his zeal for the salvation of souls, and his ability to gather disciples into communion. The **Preventive System** – a pedagogy of grace characterised by gentleness and the ability to win hearts – remains fundamental.

A crucial element is the mutual enrichment between **brothers and priests: a single vocation in two forms**, each enriching the other. The coadjutor brother embodies the lay and fraternal dimension; the priest combines consecration with pastoral ministry – both are Salesian educators and pastors. Formation aims at a deep identification with this charismatic identity, learned through experience and always contextualised for oday's young people and their rapidly changing world.

Chapter 3: The journey – Basic options

This chapter presents the **Preventive System** as Don Bosco's pedagogical method and as the guiding principle of Salesian formation. **Formation is fundamentally relational** – rooted in the network of relationships that springs from the Trinity. The formator-formee relationship is reciprocal (albeit asymmetrical), always recognising that God is the first formator.

The Preventive System operates as a **pedagogy of grace and freedom**. Authentic formation cannot be imposed; it must respect the dynamic between divine grace and human freedom. Following the motto of Francis de Sales – 'All through love, nothing through constraint' – formators must attract hearts, not by controlling behaviour, moving from a vertical approach to synodal and dialogical listening.

Formation in mission (the 'Valdocco option') means that formation does not precede mission but takes place within it. One becomes a Salesian by living with poor young people, not just by preparing to serve them in the future. Pastoral accompaniment – reflecting on God's action in daily encounters – becomes essential for this learning from experience.

Formation as a permanent dimension emerges as an organising principle: initial formation teaches us 'how to learn', cultivating ongoing discernment – the ability to find God in everything. Mary, Mother and Teacher, models this attitude of continuous response.

Chapter 4: The dimensions of the journey

Formation develops along five integrated dimensions unified by the grace of unity (pastoral charity) that permeates everything.

The **human and fraternal dimension** emphasises psychological balance, affective-sexual maturity, and relational capacity. Salesians must be comfortable with themselves, capable of healthy relationships, and increasingly wise in navigating the digital world (including the opportunities and risks of AI).

The **spiritual dimension** is the ‘central core’ – living as mystics in the Spirit, prophets of fraternity and servants of young people. We follow Christ obedient, poor and chaste, cultivating union with God through personal and community prayer, the Eucharist and reconciliation.

The **intellectual dimension** requires both a solid basic culture and specialised skills. Studies must maintain their ‘Salesian quality’ – always oriented towards forming educators and pastors, integrating theory and practice, combining inculturation in different contexts with the necessary unity of the Salesian vision at a global level.

The **educative and pastoral dimension** involves learning the Preventive System through practice, integrating education and evangelisation, and developing a style of animation in the shared responsibility of the EPC.

The **charismatic dimension** unifies all the others – our whole being is oriented towards Salesian ‘apostolic consecration’ in which religious life and mission are inseparable, leading to holiness through education (*becoming holy by educating*).

Chapter 5: Walking together – Accompaniment and discernment

Salesian accompaniment is fundamentally relational and communal, balancing personal, group and community dimensions. Inspired by the experience of Don Bosco (accompa-

nied by figures such as Cafasso), it combines the Ignatian tradition with Salesian friendship, personal encounter with group dynamics and the community environment, maintaining a balance between formal structures and informal encounters.

Freedom is central: accompaniment respects the mystery of grace encountering human freedom. It is holistic – it integrates all dimensions of growth, avoiding any reduction to formalism or habits of religious practice without interior involvement. Its purpose is to help confreres to ‘put on the sentiments of Christ’ by reading experiences in the light of God, clarifying and deepening motivations.

Community accompaniment involves the entire EPC. The rector is the guardian of Salesian identity and spiritual guide of the community, responsible for the growth of each confrere. In formation communities, formation teams work together – their quality determines the effectiveness of the process. Group accompaniment (course groups, apostolic groups...) helps to give life and cohesion to large communities.

Personal accompaniment takes various forms:

a) The friendly talk (*rendiconto*) with the rector, monthly – an eminently Salesian practice centred on community life and mission, accompanied by profound and respectful confidentiality.

b) Personal spiritual accompaniment with a freely chosen guide (preferably Salesian, but with respect for freedom).

c) The sacrament of Reconciliation with a regular confessor.

It is essential to maintain clear distinctions between these roles, while ensuring a shared vision between the director, spiritual guide and confessor.

Chapter 6: Walking together in the Church and in the Congregation

Formation takes place within well-ordered networks of responsibility: personal, local (religious community and EPC),

provincial, regional/interprovincial and worldwide. At the personal level, each Salesian bears primary responsibility through his own plan of life, shared with those who accompany his growth and fidelity.

At **the local level**, the formation community (interprovincial when necessary to provide quality and resources) offers the appropriate environment. Communities offer periodic personal evaluations (scrutinies), which involve first and foremost the person in formation.

Formation teams require careful selection – balancing brothers and priests, drawing from multiple provinces, including qualified lay people (especially women). Formators need specific preparation in accompaniment, ongoing supervision, and growth in the Preventive System as a pedagogy of grace and freedom.

Study centres ensure the Salesian component while maintaining autonomy and academic quality.

At **the provincial level** the Provincial and the delegate for formation guide the process, assisted by the Provincial Formation Commission (PFC). Key documents that guide formation are the formation section of the provincial directory (normative, requires the approval of the Rector Major) and the provincial formation plan (operational, more flexible).

At **the interprovincial and regional level**, the curatorium governs the interprovincial structures under the guidance of the Regional Councillors, with authority delegated by the Rector Major (see point 7 below on the new features of this edition of the Ratio). The Regional Formation Commissions develop regional formation plans, promoting inculturation while ensuring unity.

At **the global level** the Rector Major, through the Formation Sector, retains ultimate responsibility. The Sector is assisted by the World Advisory Council for Formation. The Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) serves as the authoritative cultural voice of the Congregation.

Chapter 7: Initial Formation

This chapter outlines the path from vocational discernment to perpetual profession through distinct stages, each with its own objectives and characteristics.

Vocational Animation and Discernment (Aspirantate): provides an environment in which young people can learn about Salesian life in an experiential way. The forms vary according to context — the duration is flexible, with the aim of helping candidates discern whether God is calling them to Salesian consecration.

Prenovitiate (minimum 6 months, usually 1 year, but can be extended): this is the first formal stage, with a preparatory function. It deepens human and Christian maturity, verifies suitability for the novitiate and ensures an informed vocational choice. Medical and psychological assessments take place at this stage.

Novitiate (12 months): this is fundamental – it deepens the call to follow Christ according to the style of Don Bosco. The novice director offers adequate spiritual accompaniment. Formation purifies motivations, fosters a life of prayer and prepares for first (temporary) profession.

Postnovitiate (minimum 2 years): continues the formative experience of the novitiate, preparing for practical training. Characterised by philosophical, pedagogical and catechetical studies, it aims to integrate faith, culture and life – forming the ‘cultural and religious synthesis’ necessary for the Salesian educator-pastor.

Practical training (usually 2 years): this is an eminently Salesian phase – immersion in the mission within an EPC. The objectives include vocational growth, verification of suitability for perpetual profession and formation through accompanied pastoral experience. The role of the rector in accompaniment becomes crucial. Throughout this phase, formation takes place

through learning from experience, pastoral accompaniment, and monthly interviews with the director.

Specific Formation of the Salesian Brother (ordinarily 2 years in designated communities): completes initial formation after practical training. It offers theological preparation appropriate to the state of the consecrated lay person, deepens spiritual heritage, and prepares for educative and apostolic work. The brother studies theology in proportion to his cultural level, the Salesian heritage and social doctrine, becoming an expert in the lay dimension of the mission. This phase is distinct from professional qualification and specialisation.

Specific Formation of the Salesian Priest (minimum 4 years): prepares a priest to be a Salesian educator-pastor. Identity arises from religious-priestly consecration lived in the youth mission. The formation includes a solid theological preparation with Salesian sensitivity, the gradual experience of ministries (reader, acolyte) and the diaconate as pedagogical stages. The three *munera* (teaching, sanctifying, governing or shepherding) are shaped by apostolic consecration – always mediated by the community and charism.

Perpetual Profession: marks the definitive commitment after ordinarily 6 years (maximum 9) of temporary profession. The immediate preparation (at least 1 year) involves verifying one's vocation through experience, developing a new personal synthesis, and definitively accepting one's choice through God's grace. This vocational transition includes revising one's personal plan and deepening one's formation as a permanent dimension. The solemn liturgical celebration clearly distinguishes it from first profession.

Chapter 8: Specialisation

Specialisation is the process by which one becomes an expert in a specific field through higher academic degrees or professional qualifications, enhancing one's personal gifts for apostolic service.

Following the example of Don Bosco – who, despite the poverty of means in the early days, formed excellent professionals among the Salesians of the first generations, both among the brothers and among the clerics/young priests – the Congregation continues to prepare confreres with appropriate professional skills.

The **fundamental criterion remains the mission**: ‘For you, I study’. Specialisation is not an individual choice, but is mediated by the provincial community through the **provincial qualification plan** which identifies areas, priorities and time-lines. This plan must respond to the needs of the province, the region and the entire Congregation – in particular by preparing experts in Salesian studies (history, pedagogy, spirituality) and formators/teachers for interprovincial communities.

Salesian Brothers specialise in different fields: work, education, communication, human sciences, administration, catechesis, evangelisation, spiritual accompaniment, formation... Basic professional qualification ideally precedes the internship.

Salesian priests specialise in areas that express their educational and evangelising service: youth ministry, catechesis, liturgy, vocational pedagogy, Salesian studies, formation... – always guided by their apostolic consecration.

During their specialisation confreres maintain a stable spiritual rhythm capable of motivating them and drawing energy from the intensity of their studies. The risk of isolation (personal and communal) must be countered by healthy friendships, participation in community life, and constant spiritual accompaniment. A harmonious integration of specialist knowledge into their apostolic consecration is promoted, maintaining their Salesian identity even in the academic context and among other students.

Chapter 9: The Stages of Life

Ongoing formation, as the ordinary continuation of formation throughout life, is the path of fidelity lived above all in **daily community life** – discerning the voice of the Spirit

through mission with young people and lay people. Formation spans the different seasons of life: youth (searching for one's path, active service), adulthood (growth in responsibility, generativity), old age (peaceful ageing, sharing wisdom).

The **quinquennium** (the first five years after initial formation) requires special attention – consolidating vocational motivations through personal accompaniment, mentoring and group meetings. Provinces must ensure a gradual transfer of responsibilities and adequate support during moments of transition, which are always very challenging.

Three levels of renewal support ongoing formation:

1. **Ordinary moments:** liturgical year, retreat, days of recollection, community discernment.
2. **Specific updating:** charismatic, pastoral, spiritual, professional renewal – increasingly shared with the laity.
3. **Extraordinary moments:** extended periods on the occasion of jubilees, courses or as a therapeutic remedy in times of crisis; these become opportunities to re-read one's own history and give new energy to the motivations that sustain the journey.

The **personal plan of life** ensures continuity between the different stages, with particular reviews at times of transition.

The formation of rectors, formators and spiritual guides requires careful selection, specific courses and supervision – especially in the early years of service. Regional centres of formation offer programmes that accompany the different seasons of life.

Chapter 10: Vocational Discernment in Initial Formation

Vocational discernment is a spiritual process that involves the candidate, the Congregation and the Church in recognising whether God's call leads to consecrated Salesian

life. It is not a moral judgement or a psychological diagnosis, but a common listening to the signs of God's will, interpreted with wisdom and faith.

Essential conditions include: a gaze of faith (God calls, we mediate), a vocational perspective (life as a call), pedagogical sensitivity (freedom, family atmosphere), prudence and good discernment (a gift to be implored and matured through experience).

Those involved are: the candidate (primarily responsible, assuming an attitude of openness and transparency), the community (religious and EPC), the rector (decisive role through fraternal dialogue), the house council (periodic evaluations, secret ballot for admissions), spiritual guides/confessors (moral responsibility, confidentiality), and at the provincial level, the Provincial and his council (ultimate responsibility).

The **means** include: shared daily life which allows the signs of vocation to be recognised in the journey of the candidate and those who accompany him; understanding of the family context; periodic personal evaluations (quarterly, growth-oriented and distinct from the legal process of admission); physical health checks; psychological counselling and evaluation in the prenovitiate. Psychological experts support discernment by helping to identify any counter-indications and promoting greater self-awareness, but they do not determine vocational suitability.

Confidentiality is essential: the sacramental seal is absolute; spiritual accompaniment enjoys special confidentiality (with specific exceptions for abuse/danger); fraternal dialogue requires a high degree of confidentiality. Written consent is required for psychological tests; results are shared only with authorised persons.

Chapter 11: Criteria and Signs of Discernment

This chapter outlines the criteria and guidelines for discerning the suitability of candidates for Salesian life. It distinguishes between positive criteria (required qualities) and negative criteria (counter-indications), which can be absolute (excluding) or relative (surmountable with formation).

Discernment examines candidates along five interconnected dimensions:

Human and fraternal: assesses physical health, psychological balance, family background and relational skills. Absolute counter-indications include serious illnesses, HIV/AIDS, addictions and severe personality disorders.

Emotional and sexual maturity: assesses the ability to live chaste celibacy in the context of the Salesian mission. The chapter addresses sexuality broadly, including past experiences, masturbation (with pastoral sensitivity), pornography addiction, and homosexuality.

Spiritual: examines the relationship with Christ, community life as a concrete terrain where self-giving is expressed, the practice of the evangelical counsels, and the signs of a specific vocation to the priesthood or consecrated lay life.

Intellectual: considers the soundness of cognitive abilities, common sense, willingness to learn, and the capacity for reflection necessary for the educational mission.

Educative and pastoral: values as an indicator of the ability to embrace the Preventive System and a passion for youth ministry.

Charismatic: focuses on the depth of love for the Salesian vocation and the ability to live as educators and pastors, integrating contemplation and apostolate.

At the heart of every discernment is the recognition of 'right intention': an authentic desire of faith to serve God in the Salesian vocation, and not simply a natural attraction or social

motivations. The chapter emphasises that the absence of counter-indications is not enough: clear positive signs must be present before admission to each stage of formation.

Chapter 12: Admissions

This chapter presents the formal process of admission to each stage of Salesian formation, emphasising that admissions are **moments of ecclesial discernment**, not mere procedural steps. Decisions must be based on **positive indications of suitability** – the mere absence of problems is not sufficient.

The Request

Each admission requires a written request from the candidate, made freely and addressed to the Provincial. The request must express the candidate's purpose, motivation, awareness of the public commitment, and confirmation of dialogue with the rector, spiritual guide, and confessor. The rector cannot prevent the request from being submitted, but must offer honest advice on suitability.

Authority and admission procedures

Admissions are made by the Provincial with the consent of his council, after hearing the opinion of the rector and the local council. The Provincial has the final authority, but cannot admit without the consent of the council. All councillors must vote – abstention is not permitted. The vote is secret and confidentiality is absolute. An exploratory vote may be used. In the case of interprovincial communities the province of origin must be consulted and its discernment taken into account, especially in cases of uncertainty.

Specific admissions

Prenovitiate: the Provincial admits candidates to begin the experience after dialogue with the council. Basic documents are required (birth and parish certificates, educational qualifications, HIV test, criminal record). Medical and psychological assessments are necessary.

Novitiate: the candidate must be free from canonical impediments, show right intention and adequate motivation, and demonstrate sufficient health and maturity.

First profession: requires evidence that the objectives of the novitiate have been achieved, including the ability to live in community, emotional balance, deep faith and identification with the Salesian mission.

Renewal of temporary vows: assesses progressive growth in postnovitiate and practical training periods.

Ministries and orders: based on the candidate's ability to carry out priestly duties as a Salesian educator-pastor, in the service of the Word, liturgy and community animation.

Perpetual profession: the culmination of discernment, requiring 'Salesian spiritual maturity commensurate with the importance of such a step' (C 117). The definitive commitment normally takes place after six years of temporary vows.

Appendices

The twelve appendices are operational tools that translate the principles of *the Ratio* into practice. While the main text presents the theological, spiritual, charismatic and pedagogical foundations, the appendices offer the necessary framework for applying these guidelines in different formation contexts.

They bridge the gap between vision and practice. They guide the provinces in drawing up their own formation directories and plans (Appendices 1-4), offer guidelines for personal spiritual planning throughout life (Appendix 5), propose structured approaches to crucial formation topics such as affective-sexual development and pastoral accompaniment (Appendices 6-7), and present detailed curricula for Salesian and academic studies (Appendices 8-9).

Recognising that formation requires qualified guides, Appendix 10 outlines preparation programmes for rectors, formators and spiritual guides. Appendix 11 addresses the essential commit-

ment to the protection of minors and vulnerable adults. The final appendix (12) brings together the main ecclesial and congregational documents, offering an immediate reference to the authoritative sources that guide Salesian formation.

Together, these appendices ensure that the richness of *the Ratio* becomes an accessible and practicable reality in formation communities around the world. They respect local contexts while remaining faithful to the common Salesian charism, allowing each province to contextualise formation without losing its essential identity and quality.

Glossary

The Glossary clarifies the specialised terms used in *the Ratio* which may be unfamiliar or have a specifically Salesian meaning. It includes ecclesial terminology (such as ‘acolyte’ and ‘reader’), concepts specific to the Salesian tradition (such as ‘animating nucleus’ and ‘*Comunità proposta*’), and technical terms from various disciplines. Understanding these terms is essential to fully grasp the meaning of *the Ratio* and correctly apply its guidelines in formation contexts around the world.

Index

The index is a navigational tool that organises *the entire Ratio* thematically, rather than sequentially. References are to paragraph numbers, not pages, allowing topics to be located precisely, regardless of the translation or editorial format that will be adopted. The index is particularly valuable because the formation themes are interconnected and recur in several chapters. By grouping related concepts – such as all references to ‘accompaniment’, ‘discernment’ or the different stages of formation – it allows the entire development of a theme to be followed throughout the document.

For effective consultation, it is useful to start with broad entries such as ‘formation’, ‘accompaniment’, ‘discernment’ or ‘mission’, which offer an overview of the main themes and their

interrelationships, making the *Ratio* more accessible both as a study text and as a continuous reference for formators and those in formation.

7. What is new in the Ratio? New challenges, new perspectives, new emphases

At the outset, it is useful to clarify what is meant when asking ‘What is new?’ If the question is whether the new edition of *the Ratio* contains elements that were absent in the 2000 edition, the answer is yes: there are several new aspects. These include topics such as freedom in the choice of spiritual guides, the digital world and social media, the governance of interprovincial formation structures, and greater attention to the stages of life, particularly the more advanced stages of the formation journey. There are also dimensions of Salesian consecrated life that receive greater emphasis in this edition, such as the charismatic dimension and the understanding of the one consecrated vocation lived in two forms.

If, on the other hand, by asking ‘what is new’ one means to ask whether the *Ratio* has changed the fundamental principles or whether it says something different or ‘more’ than what the Church and the Congregation have taught in recent decades, the answer is no.

According to our Regulations, the purpose of *the Ratio* is to set out ‘in an integral and instructive way the coherent set of principles and norms concerning formation which are found in the Constitutions, General Regulations and other documents of the Church and of the Congregation’ (R 88). In other words, the *Ratio* expresses in practical and operational terms what the Constitutions provide for regarding formation for Salesian consecrated life. We do not have new Constitutions; consequently, in this sense we cannot have a ‘new’ *Ratio*. However, the Constitutions must be lived in changing times

and contexts. The *Ratio* offers guidelines on how to do this. Thus, while the basic principles remain unchanged, they are articulated and applied in new ways, taking into account the context and needs of our time.

With this clarification, we can consider some new elements present in the *Ratio*.

1) *The approach to formation*

Formation is understood as ‘our daily commitment to enter more deeply into God’s plan for us.’ As a daily commitment, it is permanent: it is not limited to what is experienced in the initial stages, nor to what precedes perpetual profession. There is no moment when formation is complete or when we are no longer in formation.

From this perspective, initial formation is an initiation into formation which continues in the subsequent stages, to which the *Ratio* devotes a chapter.

Each of us is primarily responsible for our own formation. Formators, during the period of ‘initiation into formation’, and the community in the subsequent stages, are facilitators and companions, not figures who impose. Where there is fear, there is no formation. The constant guiding principle is the Preventive System: not only an apostolic method with young people, but a guiding principle for the formation of Salesians.

2) *Community, fragility, reciprocity*

Underlying everything that the *Ratio* affirms are certain convictions:

- formation requires and is best achieved in a community – family, religious community, EPC – and not in an exclusive relationship between two individuals;
- both those in initial formation and their formators are fragile people, in need of welcome and support;
- formation is a reciprocal process in which the formator guides the formee, and the formee, in turn, influences the

formator and contributes in his own way to the ongoing formation of the person accompanying him.

3) *The charismatic dimension*

The *Ratio* of 2000, following *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (nos. 43-59), spoke of four dimensions of formation: human and fraternal, intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and apostolic.

The 2025 *Ratio*, inspired by *Vita Consecrata* (no. 71), adds a fifth: the charismatic dimension, that is, the dimension of the charism of the Salesian Congregation.

This dimension permeates all the others.

4) *Formation in mission*

At GC28, Pope Francis strongly emphasised: ‘It is important to say that we are not formed *for* the mission, but that we are formed *in* the mission’ (GC28 p. 60).

Ratio 2025 takes up this perspective and explores concrete ways of formation in mission. Pastoral accompaniment is considered essential for effective formation in mission. Formation in mission is a corollary of the more general principle of learning from experience which runs throughout the entire document.

5) *Collaboration with the laity*

The mission of the Church is entrusted not only to bishops, priests and religious, but to the entire People of God. Thus, the Salesian charism, of which the SDBs are the primary custodians, is not only for the Salesians, but must be shared for the good of young people. This implies learning to collaborate with the laity.

Ratio 2025 outlines formation paths that prepare Salesians capable of living the mission in shared responsibility with the laity.

6) *Attention to formators and teamwork*

Ratio 2025 devotes ample space to formators and their formation.

Some may have natural gifts, but the quality of the formators depends above all on a deliberate path of maturation, supported by study and serious work on oneself.

Formators must work as a team and therefore possess skills appropriate to teamwork.

7) *Spiritual accompaniment and discernment*

Formation is the daily response to God who calls us and guides us on our journey through life.

In order to grow in inner freedom and recognise His voice more clearly, it is essential to allow others to accompany us in discernment. This also helps us to avoid perspectives and choices conditioned by our own personal limitations, without forgetting that temptations and influences from the evil one are part of life. It is also increasingly evident in the documents of the Magisterium that the presence of a spiritual guide is important at every stage of life. Don Bosco is an undeniable witness to this, if we think of the figure of Don Cafasso and the other guides who accompanied him until the end of his earthly life.

One can only open up to someone one trusts.

To encourage this, those in formation are given freedom in the choice of spiritual guide: they can choose the director, but they are also totally free to choose another person.

Spiritual guides need supervision in order to do their job well: they need guides who are themselves guided.

8) *Attention to contemporary challenges*

In 2000 there was talk of mass media, but not of the digital universe, social media and artificial intelligence which today have a decisive impact on self-perception, relationships and the educational mission. These realities bring with them new questions and new possibilities. *Ratio 2025* considers them carefully and guides their integration into the formation process.

Issues such as sexual orientation, gender identity and child protection were not central in 2000.

Ratio 2025 addresses them, asking how to form Salesians capable of responding joyfully to God and working effectively with young people in this context.

Other issues of our time – multiculturalism and interculturalism, a return to the sources (the Bible, Don Bosco), eco-sensitivity, synodality, awareness that ‘change is the only constant’ – are recognised as defining issues of our time and carefully integrated into the formation process outlined by the Ratio.

9) Lay Salesian and Salesian priest: icons of the one Salesian vocation

The vocation of the priest and that of the Salesian brother are not presented on the basis of what one can do and the other cannot, nor on the basis of functional differences.

They start from what each one *is*.

There is only one Salesian consecrated life: a call to be pastors and educators. This unique vocation has two dimensions: clerical and lay, like two sides of the same coin. One does not exist without the other.

The brother is an icon for the priest of the lay dimension of the Salesian vocation; the priest is an icon for the brother of the pastoral and ministerial dimension.

An icon makes present the reality it represents. Someone has observed with insight: ‘The Salesian priest brings Jesus to young people; the Salesian brother brings young people to Jesus.’

Rather than saying that they are ‘complementary’, as if one were incomplete without the other, it is better to recognise the lay Salesian and the priest as two personal forms of the one Salesian vocation, made to enrich each other and to make the mission to which we are called and sent together more alive and more true.

10) Developments in theology

Documents such as *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia*, *Laudato Si’*, *Fratelli Tutti*, *Vos estis lux mundi*, *The Gift of the*

Priestly Vocation, New Wine in New Wineskins have introduced important new developments in theology in general and in the theology of consecrated life in particular.

These new perspectives are reflected in *the Ratio* when it speaks of vocational discernment, mission, the influence of the family, personal responsibility, community life, care for creation, etc.

11) *Revision of Canon Law*

Book VI of the Code of Canon Law was revised in 2021, with clearer norms on various crimes, including those of a sexual nature, and with greater emphasis on the responsibility of ecclesial authorities in applying the laws. The new *Ratio* incorporates these changes.

In addition, the canonical references that support many of *the Ratio's* guidelines are presented explicitly and clearly.

12) *Evolution of the Congregation's thinking*

In recent years, through its General Chapters, Rectors Major and various departments, the Congregation has called us to pay greater attention to the person of Christ, the Bible, the participation of the laity, the missionary dimension of the Salesian vocation, the various forms of poverty, integral ecology, protection, AI, the Salesian Family, etc.

Ratio 2025 takes up these exhortations and develops them as essential dimensions of today's formation journey.

13) *Developments in the human sciences*

Advances in medical and psychological sciences are reflected in the sections dedicated to discernment, accompaniment, and admission criteria: the impact of abuse, media addiction, supervision of formators, and greater tolerance towards illnesses once considered disabling.

14) *Formation structures*

In many parts of the Congregation, formation houses have

become interprovincial or even interregional. This requires adequate mechanisms of governance, interprovincial collaboration and great intercultural sensitivity. The *Ratio* addresses these issues with attention and care.

Particular emphasis is given to the *curatorium*, today one of the most important forms of animation and governance, since most formation communities are interprovincial.

15) Appendices

The *Ratio* 2025 includes twelve appendices: a veritable ‘toolbox’ for formation. They offer guidelines and concrete tools for preparing or implementing what makes formation more effective: how to develop a personal plan of life, how to carry out pastoral accompaniment, what subjects to teach in the different stages of formation, etc.

16) Structure of the text

Ratio 2025 unifies what were previously two separate books:

- a) *The formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco*
- b) *Criteria and Norms*

This makes consultation much easier.

17) Layout

The layout of *Ratio* 2025 is designed to be easily readable, both in digital and paper format.

18) Style, tone, approach

The *Ratio* adopts an inviting, evocative style that appeals to people’s freedom, goodwill and generosity.

19) Vitality and deep roots

The guiding image of *the Ratio* is that of a journey: a process in motion. Formation is not presented as a static ideal but as a continuous journey in which both the Salesian and the community are realities in the making, *in fieri*.

A journey is always oriented towards a goal and therefore projected into the future, but it is lived in the present, attentive to the concrete realities along the way. This intertwining of movement and presence gives the *Ratio* its characteristic tone of vitality and deep roots.

Conclusion

To conclude this section on 'What is new?', it is useful to recall the words of T. S. Eliot: 'We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time' (*Little Gidding, Four Quartets*).

Eliot suggests that reality does not change, but our continual engagement with it allows us to see it from new perspectives, to grasp previously unexplored dimensions, to draw fresh insights, and to recognise challenges that emerge from that same reality. When this happens, it is not reality that becomes new, but our understanding of it.

In the same way we hope that *Ratio*, as a whole, will allow us to know and appreciate formation more deeply than before – so that our understanding may be renewed and mature, rooted in a reality that remains stable but is always capable of generating new life.

8. Differentiated appropriation of the Ratio

All members of the Congregation are called to have an adequate knowledge of *the entire Ratio*. At the same time, the level of depth required varies according to one's role, responsibilities, and stage of formation.

All confreres are invited to acquire a solid knowledge of the first part of the *Ratio* (chapters 1-5), which presents our charismatic identity and the fundamental principles of formation that accompany the Salesian throughout his life.

Those in initial formation must be familiar with the first part of the *Ratio* and, in addition, the section that specifically concerns the stage of formation they are undergoing (e.g., practical training or specific formation for Salesian brothers).

Provincials, members of the Provincial Council, Delegates for formation, formation workers, Rectors and Spiritual Guides must have a thorough knowledge of all parts of the *Ratio*, in view of their responsibilities in animation, government, discernment and admissions.

9. Assimilation and transformation

The *Ratio* is a companion on our vocational journey. It is a text to be read, meditated upon, prayed over, assimilated and lived, so that we may be transformed into the image of Christ in the footsteps of Don Bosco.

At the Congregation level, tools and resources will be offered to encourage knowledge and appropriation of the text, with the aim of initiating and accompanying a process of renewed fidelity ‘to Don Bosco and to the times’, making the *Ratio* a unifying and propulsive energy, and not simply another book on the shelf.

The following guidelines are intended to stimulate personal and community initiatives once the *Ratio* is available. Translations are already underway and, once completed in the five main languages, the digital edition will be published and distributed, followed by the paper version.

1. Personal level

Objective: to allow the *Ratio* to shape the heart, mind and apostolic identity of each Salesian.

A. Spiritual assimilation

1. *Lectio divina with the Ratio*

Choose some key passages (e.g. pastoral charity, Salesian identity, formation in mission) and use them for personal *lectio divina*: read, meditate, pray, contemplate. Go through the chapters of Part I monthly, allowing each one to shape the attitudes of the heart and mind.

The biblical quotations at the beginning of each chapter will be accompanied by a page of reflection in the style of a *lectio*, which helps to enter into the authentic spirit of formation as a deepening of the following of Christ.

2. *Examination of conscience*

Use the dimensions of formation (human and fraternal, spiritual, intellectual, educative and pastoral, charismatic) as a framework for daily examination. Ask yourself: *Where did I experience or neglect the grace of unity today? Where did I allow the mission to form me?*

4. *Personal plan of life and incorporating the Ratio into journaling*

Use Appendix 5 (Personal Plan of Life) to update your plan annually or monthly, in light of the principles of *the Ratio*. Keep a personal journal: after reading a section, write down a conviction and a concrete action.

B. Intellectual assimilation

1. *Slow and systematic reading*

Read the *Ratio* in three cycles:

- Cycle 1: Part I (fundamental identity)
- Cycle 2: Part II (stages of formation)
- Cycle 3: Part III (discernment and appendices)

Recommended pace: 10-15 minutes per day.

2. *Concept maps and diagrams*

Visualise the integrated themes: vocation-mission-formation; the Preventive System as an inspiring principle; accompaniment as a formative dynamic.

In *the Ratio*, vocation, mission and formation are not separate parts of life but realities that interpret each other. A concept map can help to grasp the unity of the whole.

3. *Personal study objectives*

Identify two or three areas for growth (e.g. shared formation, affective maturity, pastoral accompaniment) and prepare an action plan.

Use the appendices (e.g. affective-sexual maturity, Salesian studies) as a guide for targeted improvement.

C. Apostolic/ministerial assimilation

1. *Teaching and sharing what you learn*

Use themes and insights from *the Ratio* for homilies, youth meetings, bedtime stories, blogs/podcasts, catechesis, and CEP activities. Teaching reinforces personal assimilation.

2. *Highlight topics and parts of the Ratio in pastoral meetings*

Bring the topics of the *Ratio* into spiritual accompaniment, counselling, meetings with young people, with the EPC and with the Salesian Family.

2. Community level

Objective: to make the *Ratio* part of the shared mentality of the community, guiding prayer, dialogue, planning and mission.

A. For community prayer and spirituality

1. *Spiritual reading*

Use a section of Part I for daily spiritual reading. In turn, a

confreere can propose a short concluding prayer inspired by the text.

2. Celebrations and moments of prayer

On occasions such as 'community day' or monthly renewal, prepare liturgies and moments of prayer on themes such as: pastoral charity, the Preventive System, evangelical counsels, formation in mission, Don Bosco as a model, Mary as Teacher.

Once a week or every fortnight, spiritual reading can be replaced by a moment of prayer on a theme from the *Ratio*.

3. Goodnight

Occasionally use a short passage from the *Ratio* for the Goodnight.

4. Monthly retreat

Choose topics from the *Ratio* for the monthly recollection.

B. For discernment and community dialogue

1. Conversations in the spirit (synodal style)

Choose short texts and use them for conversations in the spirit on the 'community day'. Particularly suitable: identity, fundamental options, accompaniment, human and spiritual maturity.

2. Community assembly

Dedicate an item on the agenda to a topic from *the Ratio*, linking it to the community plan (Appendix 3).

3. Community formation moments

Invite qualified people, lay and religious, to animate the community on specific themes (shared mission, affective maturity, protection, the art of ageing well).

C. Integration of the Ratio into planning

1. Community plan (Appendix 3)

Use the *Ratio* as an authoritative reference in drafting or revising the community plan.

2. Pastoral evaluation

Reinterpret pastoral activities in light of 'formation in mission'. Ask yourself: *How is our work forming our confreres?*

3. Accompaniment

Encourage the use of spiritual guides and community accompaniment structures (community assembly, EPC, renewals), as indicated in chapter 5.

3. Provincial level

Objective: to ensure that the *Ratio* shapes the culture, decisions, processes and structures of the Province.

A. Provincial animation and government

1. Animation meetings

Use topics from the *Ratio* in animation meetings with rectors, bursars/economers, principals and other leaders.

2. Provincial annual theme

Choose a section of the *Ratio* as the annual formation theme (e.g., grace of unity, formation in mission, accompaniment). The Provincial and the Vice-Provincial can highlight this theme during visits to communities.

3. Provincial days and assemblies

Organise panels, testimonies from young confreres, workshops on themes from the *Ratio*.

B. Integration of the Ratio into structures

1. Updating the Provincial Formation Plan

Use Appendix 2 to harmonise the Provincial Formation Plan with what the *Ratio* proposes.

Ensure that each stage of formation includes accompaniment, shared mission, processes to foster affective maturity, and Salesian studies.

2. Revision of the Provincial Directory

Update the section on formation, ensuring contextualisation, harmonising new emerging needs with a sense of belonging to and unity with the Congregation.

3. Support for interprovincial houses

Strengthen the functioning of the curatorium, in line with what will be proposed at the Congregational and Regional levels. Ensure that formation teams are familiar with the new *Ratio*.

C. Ongoing and shared formation

1. Ongoing formation

Organise retreats with themes inspired by Part I of the *Ratio*.

Promote workshops on topics such as human formation, protection (Appendix 11), affective-sexual maturity (Appendix 6), pastoral accompaniment (Appendix 7).

2. Salesian studies

Enrich or update the provincial library on Salesianity.

Appoint confreres to study Salesianity, promoting qualified courses of academic specialisation up to higher degrees (Appendix 9).

3. Formation shared with lay people and the Salesian Family

Integrate some elements of *the Ratio* into Salesian Family meetings.

Offer accompaniment courses inspired by the most significant sections of *the Ratio* for lay collaborators.

Accepting the *Ratio* does not only mean reading a document, but allowing oneself to be transformed in one's identity, mission and community life. Integrating it at the personal, community and provincial levels creates a coherent formative environment that fosters growth and renewal.

10. Conclusion

This fifth edition of the *Ratio* is the fruit of the generous and competent collaboration of many people – Salesians and lay collaborators, members of the Salesian Family, young and old – over a period of six years. We express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to this demanding process of discernment. In particular, **we wish to thank** Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB, Rector Major Emeritus, whose decisive impetus initiated the revision process; Fr Ivo Coelho, SDB, former Councillor for Formation, who with patience, dedication and competence accompanied the work during his term of office, devoting much time and energy to it; Fr Pascual Chávez, who supported the journey from the beginning, offering valuable encouragement at decisive moments.

Special thanks go to Fr Fabio Attard, eleventh successor of Don Bosco, who wisely guided the last stretch of the journey from GC29 to today, offering significant contributions both to the methodology to be followed and to some particularly relevant points in the text. Fr Fabio has made this process – which, in its most important part, that of becoming life, has just begun with the approval of the document – one of the main paths of the six-year term ahead of us. I am sure that as Salesians, we are ready to follow the direction he points out to us and to do so together.

In his dream at the age of nine, when young John cried and said that what was asked of him – to help those unruly boys become better – seemed impossible, he was told: ‘Precisely because it seems impossible to you, you must make it possible through obedience and the acquisition of knowledge.’ ‘Where, by what means, can I acquire knowledge?’ young John asked again. ‘I will give you a teacher. Under her guidance you can become wise. Without her, all wisdom is foolishness’ (*Salesian Sources I*, 1330). Young John thus understood that he would

have to educate himself, and that Mary would be his guide. Don Bosco remained faithful to this insight throughout his life: 'For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life' (C 14). We too can respond to God's call only by allowing ourselves to be continually formed.

May this *Ratio* be an effective tool for our ongoing transformation into the image of Christ, following the path traced by Don Bosco, in the power of the Holy Spirit and under the maternal guidance of Mary Help of Christians.

It seems fitting to conclude – almost in the spirit of a 'Salesian goodnight' that illuminates the process just begun with the approval of the fifth edition of *the Ratio* – with an image taken from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*Citadelle*, published posthumously, Paris Gallimard, 1948 – free translation)

*If I communicate to my men the love of desire for the sea,
and each of them is so inclined by a weight in the heart,
then you will soon see them diversify
according to their thousand special qualities.
One will weave the canvas, another will fell a tree
by the light of his axe.
Yet another will forge nails,
and there will be others who observe the stars to learn how to navigate.*

*And yet, all will be as one.
Building a ship isn't about weaving canvas,
forging nails or reading the sky.
It's about giving a shared taste for the sea.*

*By the light of which you will see nothing contradictory,
but rather a community of love.*

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

– July 2025

In the first months after his election the Rector Major had several meetings with his closest collaborators and members of the General Council to plan for the 2025-2031 six-year term.

On 8 July 2025 he gave an online address to the SPCSA assembly (Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia) on the theme of GC29. On 14 July Fr Fabio addressed the Conference of Salesian Provinces of Italy (CISI), which discussed the theme ‘Reshaping Salesian Italy: a path of reform and shared responsibility’. On 21 July, the Rector Major addressed the members of the IUS Council on the question of Salesian identity in the professional and academic field. On 27 July he presided at the Concluding Mass of the 9th VDB General Assembly in Rome. From 28 July to 3 August, the Rector Major took part in the Youth Jubilee in Rome at different spiritual, cultural and socio-educational moments. Together with Mother Chiara, they symbolically ‘sent’ the young people

from the SYM to take part in the jubilee celebrations organised by the Vatican in Tor Vergata at which Pope Leo presided.

– August 2025

On 15 August the Rector Major concelebrated the Eucharist presided over by Pope Leo at Castel Gandolfo for the solemnity of the Assumption. After Mass, Pope Leo had a fraternal lunch with the Salesian community together with the Rector Major. On 16 August, on the occasion of the 210th anniversary of Don Bosco’s birth, the Rector Major celebrated the Eucharist at Colle Don Bosco and received honorary citizenship, recognising the deep bond between Castelnuovo and Don Bosco’s successors. He then inaugurated a photovoltaic system installed at Colle Don Bosco, in response to the ecological commitment inspired by *Laudato si’*. In the evening he presided over the installation of the new rector of Colle Don Bosco, Fr José Miguel Nuñez.

On 17 August he visited Casa Beltrami in Turin, expressing his closeness to his sick and elderly

confreres. In the evening, in Valdocco, he welcomed the participants in the School of Accompaniment and celebrated the Eucharist. On 29 August he gave a conference on *First Announcement* at the FMA in via Marghera, Rome.

– September 2025

September began with a joint meeting between the Rector Major and the Provincial Councils of Germany and Austria, with the aim of discussing the reorganisation of the Salesian mission in the two countries. On 2 September he visited Bufalotta to address a message to the missionaries already in mission lands who were beginning the missionary course (*Sorgente*). On 6 September, Fr Fabio presided over the Eucharistic celebration and procession in honour of Saint Sebastian, patron saint of Castel Gandolfo.

From 11-15 September he travelled to Quito, Ecuador, for the 50th anniversary of the Regional Centre for Ongoing Formation for America (CSFPA). The Rector Major accompanied the CSFPA community in discerning the future prospects of the Centre. There were also meetings with

Salesians, young people, university staff and the Salesian Family.

From 17 to 26 September, the Rector Major and his Vicar, Fr Stefano Martoglio, accompanied the Provincials who are *halfway through their mandate*. On 19 September he visited the Colle Don Bosco to hand over certificates to the participants in the Accompaniment School.

On 27 and 28 September Fr Fabio visited Catania to be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the SYM. He gave a *Lectio Magistralis* at the city where together with Mother Chiara they received honorary citizenship. On 28 September more than 1,000 young people gathered at the Metropolitan Theatre to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SYM on the theme 'Witnesses of Joy, Heirs of a History'. The celebrations ended with a solemn Eucharist of thanksgiving in the Cathedral of Saint Agatha.

– October 2025

The Rector Major's visit to Malta, from 2 to 6 October, was a return home full of emotions, gratitude and celebrations. Visits to civil and religious authorities, with the President of the Repub-

lic and Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna and the Apostolic Nuncio, the Salesian Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, were followed by meetings with the Salesian Family and young people. There was also a visit to Gozo, his birthplace, visiting the Don Bosco Oratory and the National Shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu.

On 11 October, the Rector Major met with the deans of the various faculties of the Salesian University in San Tarcisio, Rome. On the evening of the same day he also met the 12 doctoral students destined to teach at UPS, to whom he provided valuable guidance for their preparation. On 14 October Fr Fabio held a conference for the academic body of the Auxilium (FMA).

The Rector Major took part in a rich celebratory process for the canonisation of Blessed Maria Troncatti, a great gift for the Salesian Family. The programme opened on Friday, 17 October 2025, with the opening event at the FMA General House in Rome, and participation in the canonisation Mass in St Peter's Basilica presided over by Pope Leo. On Monday, he concelebrated the final Mass of thanksgiving presided over by Cardinal Ángel

Fernández in St Paul's Basilica.

On 22 October, the Rector Major, also as Grand Chancellor, celebrated the Eucharist by inaugurating the academic year of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS) in the parish of Santa Maria della Speranza, followed by the official Academic Act in the Egidio Viganò Theatre. In the afternoon of the same day the Rector Major participated in the ACSSA Europe seminar at the UPS, reflecting on the Salesian legacy and mission in the new emerging peripheries.

On 25 and 26 October the Rector Major, Fr Fabio Attard, visited the Salesian presence in Menorca, Spain, on the occasion of the closing of the celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the Salesian presence in Ciutadella. Meetings, celebrations and moments of dialogue with the Salesian community and the various members of the Salesian Family followed. On 28 October the Rector Major was involved in the conference organised by the IUS on the theme 'Participatory models in Salesian Higher Education: Synodal & Salesian Facilitation' at the UPS, giving the main address on the mission of Salesian institutions in promoting

participation, discernment and accompaniment.

– November 2025

November was marked by historical commemorations and missionary commitments. From 8-11 November the Rector Major participated in the 150th anniversary of the First Missionary Expedition in Valdocco, along with the usual annual meeting of the PDMA.

On 8 November he opened the Missionary Animation Exhibition in the presence of Mother Chiara, on the theme, 'Shine like stars in the world'. On 9 November he celebrated the Eucharist for over 180 young missionary volunteers from different provinces of Italy. The following day he participated in the Missionary Conference, particularly historic because, for the first time, almost all the PDMA (Provincial Delegates for Mission Animation) were present: 82 delegates and various collaborators. On 11 November, the Rector Major and Mother Chiara met in a family dialogue with the new missionaries, offering guidance, encouragement and blessings. During the solemn Eucharistic celebration, the Rector Major officially sent the missionaries of the 156th Expedition,

recalling the first missionary expedition organised by Don Bosco. On 12 November he visited Sampierdarena, Genoa, to commemorate Don Bosco's farewell to the first missionaries, opening a plaque at the port. He presided at the thanksgiving Mass, after which he opened the Missionary Museum in Sampierdarena. The following day he took part in the opening of the Cultural and Migration Museum established by the Genoa Municipality.

From 14 to 17 November, the Rector Major was at the Don Bosco College in Nice for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Salesian presence. The first group of Salesians arrived in Nice on 9 November 1875. The Rector Major met with Salesians, the Salesian Family, young people from the schools and students from the vocational training centre. On 17 November the Monument to Don Bosco, created by the students of the institute, was inaugurated to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Salesian presence in Nice, in the presence of the mayor, some civil authorities and the bishop of Nice.

On 19 November, Fr Fabio met with the rectors of the three historical places of the Salesian

charism (Colle Don Bosco, Chieri and Valdocco) to strengthen collaboration and plan itineraries and charismatic proposals for Salesians, young people and the Salesian Family.

The winter session of the General Council began on 24 November. The course for new provincials began on 25 November, involving five provincials.

December 2025

On 3 December the Rector Major, as Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS), participated in the Academic Senate offering a reflection as part of the 2025-2031 Six-Year Plan for the Congregation.

On 5 December Fr Fabio met with a group of journalists and professors of Social Communication from Santa Croce University. On that occasion, he shared the story of his own vocation and illustrated the mission of Don Bosco, now present in 137 countries around the world.

In keeping with tradition, on 9 December the Rector Major gave a Good Night to the UPS Vice-Province. He reflected on the Salesian identity in today's world, a 'post-' time marked by profound

changes. Referring to GC29, he stressed the centrality of Christ, the identity of the Salesian, the need for generativity and fidelity to the charism. Quoting Pope Leo, he reiterated the urgency of humanising technology and algorithms, keeping the person and young people at the centre.

Accompanied by Fr Stefano Martoglio, Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Jorge Crisafulli, General Councillor for the Missions, and Fr Gabriel Romero, General Councillor for the South Cone Region, from 11 to 15 December the Rector Major visited Argentina to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first Salesian missionary expedition to the Americas. On this occasion there was a meeting with the two Provincial Councils of Argentina as well as a meeting with all the Provincials of the South Cone Region. Other meetings included meetings with the directors of the Salesian colleges in the two provinces as well as dialogue meetings with the young people of the various houses in the country. On 14 December, the anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesian missionaries in Argentina, a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated at the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Almagro,

Buenos Aires. The Rector Major reflected on the pioneering spirit of the missionaries and their deep love for young people. He also met with the rectors of the Province and the Provincials of the South Cone Region to discuss the current situation and the challenges of the Salesian mission in the Americas.

On 19 December the Rector Major, together with members of the General Council, had an audience with the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. The Pope welcomed them warmly and cordially. Fr Fabio expressed his gratitude and Salesian devotion to the Holy Father, a legacy received from Don Bosco. Pope Leo recognised the importance of the contribution of the Salesians, in particular for their youth ministry and presence in difficult contexts. After a conversation and exchange which he himself had wanted, the Holy Father gave his blessing in particular by recalling the Salesians and lay people engaged in countries of war and conflict.

On 20 December, the Rector Major addressed the Presidency of the Past Pupils of Italy. The eleventh Successor of Don Bosco invited them to live according to

the values of the Gospel, recalling global challenges, especially in contexts marked by war, and reaffirming the vitality of the Salesian charism. He called the Past Pupils to shared responsibility, faith, accompaniment and concrete solidarity towards young people.

On 21 December Fr Fabio presided at the Advent novena at La Bufalotta and gave the Good Night to the student community. He shared updates on the work of the General Council and on the visit to the Holy Father, stressing the need for a deeper Salesian identity capable of resisting superficiality and artificiality.

With the conclusion of the Jubilee Year approaching, on 22 December the Salesian community at the Generalate celebrated a Mass at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in the chapel of the *Salus Populi Romani*, presided over by the Rector Major. In the homily he reflected on Mary's Magnificat, pointing to humility as the key to understanding God's greatness and holiness.

At the end of the General Council's winter session, a joint meeting of the SDB-FMA Councils was held on 23 December at the

FMA Generalate to foster fraternity and a sense of shared mission. Fr Fabio offered a reflection on authority as service, charismatic clarity, responsibility and passion for God and for young people.

On 24 December, Fr Fabio met with Frs Sunil Kerketta and Doss Kennedy, two new Provincials appointed to the Provinces of Kolkata and Tiruchy, to offer guidance and pointers for the government and the animation of their respective Provinces.

On 27 December the Rector Major addressed the Salesians in Haiti online. He expressed his closeness to the Salesians and young Haitians, praising the courage and determination of those who continue Don Bosco's educational and pastoral mission with audacity, hope and love, despite the difficulties. He said that the Salesian presence in Haiti is a 'prophetic sign' for the entire Congregation.

On the same day, in the evening, the Rector Major presented his first Strenna as the eleventh Successor of Don Bosco, at the FMA Generalate, entitled '*Do whatever he tells you*'. Fr Fabio responded to several questions, stating that young people are in search of transcen-

dence, often beyond institutional paths, guided by credible witnesses and significant experiences. In a distracted and fragmented world, the response must be empathy and a contemplative gaze, following the example of Mary at Cana and Don Bosco, who allowed themselves to be deeply touched by reality before acting.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar of the Rector Major

After the Council session ended in July 2025, the Vicar continued his service with a series of coordination meetings in Rome, for the preparation and implementation of the new 2025 - 2031 six-year term.

In the latter part of July 2025, the Vicar collaborated, like all the confreres at headquarters, in welcoming many young pilgrims participating in the youth jubilee. It was a very beautiful experience of welcoming and accompanying these young pilgrims in the General House at Sacred Heart, within the great ecclesial event of the Jubilee.

In early August 2025, the Vicar

went to Santiago de Compostela for a few days of formation for the rectors of the provinces of Spain. A formation event for new and 'renewed' rectors that is repeated every two years.

After the meeting in Spain, the Vicar went to his family for a period of rest, until the eve of Don Bosco's birthday. On 16 August, together with the Rector Major, he participated in this family event that is repeated every year in memory of the birth of the Saint.

In the second half of August he returned to headquarters, Rome, for various meetings to plan and prepare for the new pastoral year. He then spent a few days in Valdocco, in the community of Mary Help of Christians, for community meetings and on 8 September 2025 at Colle don Bosco for the first religious professions of Salesian novices.

In the following days he returned to Sacred Heart in Rome, from which he left again for Valdocco around mid-September for the course of accompaniment of provincials halfway through their six-year term, together with the Rector Major. This highly appreciated formation course occupied the Vicar for about two weeks.

At the end of September he

went to the Salesian house in Cuneo for the 90th anniversary of the work, and returned to Rome.

In the period between 1 and 8 October, the Vicar, together with the Economer General, went to the Holy Land to accompany the MOR Province in the construction of a renewed vision of the presence of the Congregation in this blessed land, ever tormented by new suffering. It was the right time to let the confreres know of the closeness of the Rector Major and of all the confreres to our confreres and Christian Arabs.

Returning to Rome, a few days later he left for Ethiopia, for the Golden Jubilee of the province. A very beautiful occasion important moment of closeness to the confreres and the Salesian Family for this important event. Celebrating a Jubilee is always a propitious and blessed occasion to thank God for his faithfulness and draw strength and charismatic fidelity for the years to come. On 22 October, the Vicar returned to Sacred Heart in Rome.

On 26 October, again together with Fr Patrick, the Vicar left to animate the consultation for the new INC Provincial. A beautiful animation experience that lasted two weeks. The Vicar was able to

visit, and meet in several assemblies, the confreres belonging to INC in Bangladesh, Nepal and the entire Indian region of Bengal with the capital Kolkata.

The animation of the consultation for the new INC Provincial ended on 7 November with a prayer at the tomb of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and a meeting with the INC Provincial Council.

On returning to Italy, the Vicar left for Turin for celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the first missionary expedition, first in Turin and on 12 November in Genoa. A beautiful experience of the Congregation in the ever-living memory, renewed by the new missionaries departing, of the missionary heart of the Congregation.

On 16 November 2025 the Vicar went to Colle Val D'Elsa for the 75th anniversary of the house; a very successful celebration to renew our presence and pastoral energy.

Finally, from 18 November to 21 November the Vicar carried out the provincial visitation to the RMG San Callisto community, thanking the confreres for the splendid work of animation of the Catacombs of San Callisto, visited by countless pilgrims in this jubilee year.

The General Councillor for Formation

August began with the meeting of the South Asia Region Regional Formation Commission in Goa (1-4 August), which was accompanied by a visit to the communities closest to the city of Goa in the INP host province. The visit to the prenovitiate in Loutulim coincided with the Curatorium. 5 August was dedicated to the visit to New Delhi, with an evening meeting of the various communities in the Indian Capital, at Alaknanda.

From 6 to 9 August there were intense days of viewing and animation of the various communities in the Shillong province that follow up initial formation, from the aspirantate to the theologate. It was also the time for inauguration of the new academic year in the specific formation centre, with student confreres from many of the region's provinces. There was a meeting with the INS Provincial Council. Several moments of sharing also with the postulants and novices of various congregations belonging to the Salesian Family.

From 9 to 14 August it was the turn of the different initial formation communities in the

Dimapur province: aspirantate, prenovitiate, novitiate and postnovitiate, as well as other neighbouring communities. The dynamic for these meetings is characterised by separate meetings for each course group, with the practical trainees and a final meeting with the formation team. There was also a visit to nearby FMA communities.

On 15 August, India's Independence Day, the trip from Guwahati to Mumbai, where the Lonavla aspirantate was reached in the afternoon. The next day arrival in Nashik: visit to the novitiate and postnovitiate communities. The return to Rome took place on 19 August.

From 24 to 31 August in Avigliana, the Salesian Accompaniment School experienced a week of personally guided retreat in which the Councillor took part as one of the available guides. On 2 September he took part in the beginning of planning for the postnovitiate Formation Team at San Tarcisio. On the 3rd he went to Messina where he spent a day with the young confreres from the provinces of Italy and many other regions – in Turin, Rome or Messina for theological studies – who had just begun the first phase of preparation for perpetual profession.

On 5 September in Valdocco, the Councillor met with the working group on the Theology Studentate Formation Project. On Saturday 6th, again in Valdocco, he animated a meeting of the Councils of the EPC and the ICP confreres on the theme of local vocational animation, which was followed at Colle by the session on 'Young Salesians and Accompaniment – Orientations and Guidelines' within the School of Accompaniment.

On 11 September he left for Quito, where he took part in meetings and celebrations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Salesian Centre for Ongoing Formation, America.

From 15-20 September he visited the initial formation houses of the provinces of Mexico Guadalajara and Mexico Mexico, starting with the theologate at Tlaquepaque and the CRESCO Centre for Specific Formation for Brothers, where the Provincial Formation Commission also met. He then went to the prenovitiate in Irapuato. Moving on to the other Province, a visit to the novitiate at Coacalco, with a meeting of the MEM Provincial Formation Commission. Entering the capital, a brief but intense moment of pilgrimage to Guadalupe, followed

by two days with the young people of the Mixes prelature gathered for their diocesan meeting in a parish in the coastal area.

From 21 to 26 September again in Quito for the joint meeting of the two Regional Formation Commissions of Interamerica and America South Cone. Return to Rome for a few days of family visits. The first days of October, a joint meeting between the Formation Sector team and the Councillor for Social Communication, to start planning the future dissemination of the New Ratio.

From 5-10 October, participation in Luanda, Angola, in the Regional Formation Commission and visit to the postnovitiate community in Palanca and the aspirantate in Viana.

On 13 October, an animation meeting with the Rectors of ILE Province at Sacred Heart. From 15 to 17 October, participation in the three days of discussion between the people in charge of the European prenovitiate and the novitiate formation team at Colle Don Bosco. 19-20 October, involved in the great events celebrating the canonisation of Saint Maria Troncatti in Rome. 21-25 October: in Addis Ababa for the meeting of Provincials of the two regions of Africa.

27-30 October at the San Tarcisio postnovitiate: meeting of the Regional Formation Commission for the Mediterranean Region. 3 November in Valdocco: participation in the Congress of Rectors of Sanctuaries in Italy.

4-8 November: Regional Formation Commission for North and Central Europe Region in Bled, Slovenia. 10-15 November: Regional Formation Commission for the East Asia-Oceania Region in Jakarta, Indonesia. 17 November: participation in the Curatorium at the Crocetta, Turin, which was followed on 18 November at Colle by the Curatorium of the novitiate and in the afternoon by the Curatorium of the postnovitiate, with the joint participation of the two teams. On 19 November in Chieri: meeting of the Commission for Salesian Places in which the Rector Major also participated. In the afternoon, animation meeting with the Colle Don Bosco community.

Return to Rome and preparation for the work of the General Council that began on Monday, 24 November.

The General Councillor for Youth Ministry

In July, the Councillor for Youth Ministry, **Fr Rafael Bejarano**, led an intense period of internal work with the Sector team. At the centre of the meetings was the process of reflection and planning that, according to the guidelines of the six-year term, aims at renewing the educative and pastoral approach of the Congregation. A significant meeting of the Youth Ministry Sector took place at Headquarters in this atmosphere of discernment: five days dedicated to strategic planning of projects for 2025-2030. The Councillor guided the work, defining priorities and responsibilities and relaunching the new challenges regarding the accompaniment of young people, the formation of educators, shared responsibility of lay people and the centrality of the mission in the existential and social peripheries.

During the Sector meetings **Fr Rafael** insisted on the need to strengthen the role of the laity, valuing their shared responsibility in the mission, and recalled the lack of systematic knowledge of **The Salesian Frame of Reference**, inviting people to develop initiatives for updating and understanding it.

At the same time, a process of in-depth study dedicated to catechesis, formal education and professional training was launched with the UPS, within the perspective of the **Rector Major's letter for 2028**, with a view to a worldwide renewal of the Salesian proposal. With the Centro Studi Don Bosco, in collaboration with Social Communication, work was done on the revision and updating of the Sector's websites to ensure a more coherent and accessible communication presence.

The Councillor also promoted the finalisation of translation of materials for **Note di Pastorale Giovanile (NPG)**, thus strengthening the dissemination of formation content in the different regions and proposing the establishing of an open access version on the NPG website, accessible to all.

August offered **Fr Rafael** several opportunities to meet and learn about European Salesian realities. The trip to **France**, initially planned as a moment of study, proved to be a fruitful opportunity to listen and appreciate the educative and pastoral initiatives in the country. The communities shared with the Councillor the contemporary challenges of the mission, including vocational decline, social commitment and

new forms of evangelisation.

In **Poland**, in the house at **Pila**, Fr Rafael met with those responsible for social works, delving into how these can represent a privileged path to revive the Salesian vocation in the confreres and to offer concrete responses to the most fragile young people. With the delegates of the four Polish provinces he initiated a process of common elaboration aimed at defining shared work proposals and convergent pastoral paths.

September was marked by an intense international animation activity. In Angola, the Councillor together with his team, in person and online, accompanied the educational work of the delegates of Youth Ministry in Africa through moments of encounter and discussion with confreres and lay people.

At the same time, the online accompaniment with **RASS** (Red América Social Salesiana) continued, collaborating in the definition of shared guidelines for the care of young people in vulnerable contexts.

Participation in the **MED Fest** offered the Councillor the opportunity to meet numerous pastoral leaders at the

Mediterranean level, exploring emerging issues and sensitivities in contemporary educational processes. **MED FEST 2025**, held in Olbia from 25 to 28 September, was an international event focused on sustainability, the economy and culture of the Mediterranean. The initiative functioned as a B2B platform for companies and institutions, addressing issues such as economic, social and environmental sustainability, de-carbonisation of transport and development opportunities for the region.

During the month a renewal of the materials for the study of the **Frame of Reference** was also launched, with the aim of updating formation courses and making them more effective for young people and educators.

October was one of the richest months of activity and travel for the entire period. In **Guatemala**, Fr Rafael coordinated a visit dedicated to the reinterpretation of the migrant situation, meeting communities, young people and pastoral workers committed to accompanying the most vulnerable. The visit allowed a deeper understanding of the social dynamics and emerging needs in a context particularly marked by poverty and youth mobility.

In the **Dominican Republic**, the Councillor met with the entire team, the heads of the VTC, and Youth Ministry delegates, supporting their commitment to vocational training and strengthening the educative and pastoral project.

During this period he also had an intense moment of discussion with Sister Runita Galve Borja, FMA, delegate for the YM Sector and her team, consolidating the collaboration between SDB and FMA in the mission with young people.

During the trip to India, in the **Kolkata** area, Fr Rafael met the Youth Ministry Delegates of South Asia together with his team and, at the same time, visited social works and schools, meeting young people and educators. In **Siliguri**, together with the members of the regional centre and the Provincial who is contact person for Youth Ministry, he led a reflection session on the emerging needs of the works and the priorities of the six-year term. During the month he also accompanied the development of the **Educational Village** project, participating in meetings with schools and universities, and continued the accompaniment of the ESA (Escuelas Salesianas de América) path.

In November Fr Rafael visited Hong Kong, where he met the Youth Ministry Delegates of East Asia-Oceania together with his team and learned about the social work in Macau, appreciating its commitment to young people in situations of vulnerability. The Councillor led moments of prayer, presided over celebrations and indicated guidelines of animation with attention to vulnerable young people, cooperation between provinces and the pastoral reinterpretation of the challenges of the continent.

In the middle of the month, **Slovakia** hosted an important continental meeting of Youth Ministry delegates from North-East Europe and the Mediterranean Region. From 17 to 22 November, in Bratislava and Žilina, delegates from the two European regions gathered, together with lay collaborators, to reflect on fundamental issues: youth ministry in the light of GC29, support networks for vulnerable young people, leadership and project management, digital culture, mental health and lay shared responsibility. Fr Rafael led the work together with regional leaders, promoting a participatory method oriented towards shared planning.

During the month the Councillor also followed several **interna-**

tional advocacy paths, supporting initiatives and discussions in venues such as Nairobi, Geneva (UPR) and UNESCO, with particular attention to the rights of young people, the protection of minors and the dignity of the person.

He also participated in the preparation of the Salesian delegation for COP 30 in Belém, an event of global importance in which the Salesian presence contributed to international reflection on social justice, integral ecology and environmental education.

Among the topics addressed in this period with the central team of Youth Ministry were catechesis and new forms of evangelisation, mental health, safeguarding, integral ecology, digital culture and artificial intelligence, areas that the Councillor continues to consider to be central to the Salesian educative and pastoral mission.

The General Councillor for Social Communication

– AUGUST 2025

Staff Formation & Development

The Councillor continued to better his Italian language skills in order to improve internal and institutional communication.

Fr Ricardo Campoli, a member of the Sector, worked on his knowledge of English to strengthen the team's language skills.

Administrative issues were handled, including the renewal of the residence permit for staff members.

A brief dialogue with members of the ANS department.

Inter-sectoral Collaboration

Collaboration with the Missions Sector continued through support in the drafting of slogans and communication materials.

The Sector collaborated with the Youth Ministry Sector for the Youth Jubilee through a comprehensive and multi-layered communicative engagement.

- Creation of various posts for Social Media that accompanied the event on a daily basis, reaching a large youth audience.
- Professional photographic coverage of the main events of the Jubilee, documenting the significant moments and participation of young people.
- Drafting and publication of daily news on the main events of the Jubilee, ensuring timely and detailed updates.
- Production of a *video compilation* of the entire week of the Youth Jubilee, offering an

exciting and engaging visual synthesis of the Jubilee experience.

Gatherings and Meetings.

From 18 to 22 August, the Councillor participated online in the meeting of the Delegates for Social Communication of South Asia (BOSCOM). Logistical difficulties made it necessary to participate virtually instead of in person.

Restructuring of the Sector

Preliminary discussions on the restructuring of the Sector took place throughout the month.

Discussions on the formation of new departments and the planning of future staffing needs.

The Sector finalised the reduction and reorganisation of the priority areas and commitments from eight to four:

- Evangelisation and Formation
- Animation and Synergy
- Strategic Communication
- Creative Production

Definition of the organisational structure

The basic structure of the Sector's personnel has been defined:

- The Councillor as the main guide
- The Salesian Supervisors who coordinate two Regions each:

Fr Ricardo Campoli and Fr Paul Sathish

- Department Managers for ANS, Technical and Production, and Social Media

– SEPTEMBER 2025

New Beginnings and Team Strengthening

Fr John Paul Sathish from India joined the Sector staff on 4 September.

In mid-September the Italian language course began, further strengthening the multilingual capacity of the Sector.

Ongoing Collaboration

Work continued with Youth Ministry for the preparation of the Vatican Exhibition on the occasion of the Jubilee of the World of Education.

Collaboration with the Rector Major and the Salesian Family for Strenna 2026 has progressed.

Strategic Technical Projects

The Technical and Production Department has completed the update of the MAP of the Congregation.

This tool ensures a complete and up-to-date vision of the global communication landscape of the Congregation.

Regional Online Meetings

26 September: Meeting with the

Provincial Delegates for Communication of the two African Regions

29 September: Meeting with *DBIMA* (France)

29 September: Meeting with the *Caetera Tolle* Multimedia Centre (Chile)

These meetings have strengthened international networking and deepened the understanding of regional communication realities.

OCTOBER 2025

Intensive Inter-sectoral Collaboration

The Communication Sector continued to contribute to the final drafting of the *Ratio* and to the planning of its future dissemination, in collaboration with the Formation Sector.

Collaboration with Youth Ministry on the occasion of the IUS International Conference at the UPS.

Productions for Jubilee Events

The Technical and Production Department created the videos and printed material for the Vatican Exhibition on the occasion of the Jubilee of the World of Education.

Work began on the *Strenna* video.

ANS coordinated the preparation of the poster for the *Strenna*.

Participation in the production

of a Vatican video for the Jubilee of Consecrated Life.

Online Coordination Meeting Series

9 October: East Asia-Oceania Provincial Delegates for Social Communication

10 October: UPS Faculty of Social Communication

13-14 October: Formation for missionary candidates at Colle Don Bosco on Culture and Communication

15 October: Spanish-speaking Provincial Delegates for Social Communication of the two American Regions.

21 October: Provincial Delegates for Social Communication of the Mediterranean Region.

Attendance of the Councillor at Significant Events

Participation in the opening of the UPS academic year.

Sending an online greeting message to the Santo Domingo Educational Congress.

Participation in the World Education Jubilee (27 October - 1 November) with news coverage on ANS

Consolidation of Departments

The internal restructuring continued through the consolidation of the three departments:

- Fr Harris Pakkam (ANS)

- Fr Pierluigi Lanotte (Technical and Production)
- Fr Andrei Munteanu (Social Media)

Renewal of Digital Platforms

The website of the Bollettino Salesiano Online (www.donbosco.press) has been completely renewed with:

- Simplified management
- Increased access speed
- Updated graphic and functional design

The Salesian research portal (www.donbosco.info) has been completely reorganised and rebuilt with:

- Significant improvement in functionality
- Introduction of translation into five languages
- Inclusion of over 10,000 new documents

– NOVEMBER 2025

Support for Cinema and Salesian Art

The Councillor reviewed the nominations from Cambodia for the Namuncurá Film Festival.

Support for Salesian artistic and cultural work in the missionary context.

Animation and Coordination Meetings

3 November: Meeting with

Salesian students of theology in Via della Bufalotta for a moment of animation and dialogue.

6 November: Meeting with the Provincial Delegates for Communication of Central and North Europe.

Strengthening coordination and shared planning within the Region.

Collaboration for the 150th Anniversary of the First Missionary Expedition

From 9 to 13 November, intensive collaboration with the Missions Sector to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the First Salesian Missionary Expedition.

The members of the Sector were present during the missionary week in Valdocco, ensuring full media coverage of the events.

Daily photographic and video coverage of all the events of the missionary week, documenting the significant moments of the celebrations.

Live Streaming of the Holy Mass of the Missionary Mandate, allowing the participation of the worldwide Salesian Family.

Writing and publishing daily news on ANS regarding the main events of the missionary week.

Publication of interviews with all 21 participants in the Salesian Missionary Expedition of 2025.

Production of a complete video documentation of all the events of the week, offering an exciting video summary of the entire celebration.

11 November: Participation in the Missionary Sending Mass in Valdocco.

12 November: Participation in the opening of the Museum of Missionary Expeditions in Genoa.

Professional Formation

The Councillor participated online in the 14th Professional Seminar for the Church Communication Offices organised by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (PUSC).

Ongoing Productions

The Technical and Production Department continued to work with dedication on the completion of the video for the launch of the Rector Major's Strenna 2026, which is expected to be released by the end of the year.

Development of Digital Platforms

The Social Media and Online Department continued the preparation of thousands of additional Salesian documents, destined to be progressively uploaded to the search engine.

Conducted feasibility studies

for the development of advanced management and search features, to make the portal more customisable and interactive for users.

Strategic Planning (17-21 November)

The Sector has engaged in an important five-day strategic planning phase.

These days are dedicated to

- a clear definition of the roles of the departments.
- an accurate review of the financial statements parameters.
- alignment of internal workflows.
- identification of priorities for the next period.
- strengthening the organisational framework of the Sector for the six-year mandate.
- promotion of greater unity, clarity and operational coherence for the future.

Launch of ANS WhatsApp Channel

24 November: The ANS Department has launched its new WhatsApp channel, which will facilitate access to Salesian news from around the world directly on mobile devices in the main 6 languages.

It marks a significant step in ANS's mission to communicate the life and mission of the Salesian

Family with greater immediacy and accessibility.

Preparation for the Launch of the Strenna 2026

Preparations have been underway for the launch of the Rector Major's Strenna 2026 at the end of the year. The presentation of the Strenna by the Rector Major will take place at the FMA Generalate and will represent a moment of communion within the Salesian Family.

CONCLUSION

Structural Reorganisation

In the last four months the Sector has progressively reorganised itself by creating new functional departments, promoting systematic collaboration between Sectors, Regions, Provinces and academic institutions, to strengthen the communication network of the Congregation at a global level.

Alignment with Congregational Priorities

The efforts are in full harmony with the 29th General Chapter, aimed at giving a concrete response to the priorities of the Rector Major, and at providing a solid foundation for a renewed apostolic energy.

Integrated Strategic Plan

The strategic planning meeting produced an integrated and

realistic plan which responds to the needs of the Congregation expressed in the Chapter and by the Rector Major, consistently adapting to the current capacities and resources of the Social Communication Sector.

Current plans ensure sustainability and gradual growth over time.

The Economer General

– JULY 2025

30 June - 1 July: G4 meeting in Rome

The annual meeting of the G4 (the four main Salesian mission offices in the world) was held in Rome. The meeting was a special moment of communion and sharing between the heads of the main organisations that financially support the Salesian mission.

2-14 July: Ordinary administration

Two weeks dedicated to the ordinary administration of the Economer General's Office: management of correspondence with the provinces; review of financial requests; preparation of documentation for the General Council; meetings with office staff; supervision of current administrative activities.

July 15: Meeting in Turin - SEI Building

Meeting in Turin to discuss issues related to the SEI building. The meeting addressed issues relating to property management and the future prospects of the facility.

16 July: Meeting of the General Council

Participation in the ordinary meeting of the General Council.

29 July: Meeting with Edulife - Verona

Meeting in Verona with representatives of Edulife, an organisation active in the education field. The presentation of the organisation allowed for an exploration of potential collaboration and synergies with the Salesian educational work.

- AUGUST 2025**5 August: Meeting at Colle Don Bosco**

Visit to Colle Don Bosco, which included a detailed presentation of the existing structures; an illustration of the investment and development plans; an assessment of the financial needs for the maintenance and improvement of the structures; and a discussion on valuing the site as a place of spirituality and religious tourism.

August 12-15: Bangkok, Thailand

Start of a trip to Asia (with the Councillor for the Missions) that covered most of August. In Bangkok (Thailand), a meeting with the confreres to gain direct knowledge of the local Salesian reality and provide support and advice on administrative matters.

16-18 August: Myanmar

Visit to the MYM Vice-Province, a particularly delicate and challenging context. Meetings with the confreres made it possible to listen to a presentation on the current situation of Salesian works; assess the needs after the earthquake that hit the country; express solidarity and closeness to the confreres who work in difficult conditions; plan economic support, interventions for reconstruction and support for the affected communities. This moment was particularly moving, as a testimony to the courage and dedication of the confreres who continue the Salesian mission despite the enormous difficulties.

19-21 August: Cambodia

Continuation of the trip to Asia with a visit to the Salesian presences in Cambodia. The meetings included the presentation of Salesian works in the

country; the analysis of the current financial situation; the evaluation of prospects for development and sustainability.

22-23 August: Vietnam

Visit to the VIE Province, with particular attention to the works in Ho Chi Minh City. The meetings offered the opportunity to learn about the richness and vitality of Salesian works in Vietnam; examine the financial situation of the Province; appreciate the vocational and pastoral growth in this context.

24-28 August: Timor-Leste

Concluding the trip to Asia with a visit to Timor-Leste (TLS). This nation, where the Salesian presence is particularly significant, offered the opportunity to present in detail the educational and pastoral works; evaluate the financial situation; analyse the specific challenges related to the socio-economic context of the country; accompany the confreres in economic management.

This long journey (12-28 August) allowed us to experience first-hand the Salesian missionary reality in Asia, characterised by great vocational vitality, pastoral dedication, but also by significant economic challenges.

SEPTEMBER 2025

2 September: Meeting of the General Council

Resumption of activities after the summer period with participation in the ordinary meeting of the General Council during which the current administrative issues were discussed and decisions were taken regarding the governance of the Congregation.

September 10: UPS Board of Directors

Participation in the Board of Directors of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS).

12 September: 60th anniversary of Paul VI's visit to the Catacombs

Participation in the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Paul VI's visit to the Catacombs of San Callisto (September 1965). A significant event that recalls the link between the Church, the history of the first Christians and the Salesian presence caring for this heritage.

13 September: Canonical administrative visit - San Callisto

Canonical administrative visit to the Salesian community that manages the Catacombs of S. Callisto, which allowed for an examine the economic and

administrative situation of the community; evaluation of the management of the pilgrimage site; accompaniment of the confreres in their specific mission; discussion of the challenges and opportunities related to the management of this unique heritage.

20-26 September: Regional meeting - Economers from Africa

Trip to Angola for the regional meeting with the provincial economers of the two African Regions (East-South Africa and Central-West Africa). This meeting is particularly important in the context of the recent division of Africa-Madagascar into two Regions, as decided by GC29. Contents of the meeting: economic and financial management according to canonical and Salesian norms; implementation of GC29 decisions; administrative best practices; transparency and accountability; current administrative and financial issues. The meeting testified to the great vitality of the Salesian presence in Africa, but also the enormous economic challenges linked to the contexts of poverty, political instability and rapid vocational growth.

– OCTOBER 2025

October 1-8: Visit to Israel and Palestine (with the Vicar of the Rector Major)

Significant visit to Salesian works in the Holy Land, a territory of extraordinary spiritual and pastoral importance, but also of great political and social complexity. Places visited: Jerusalem; Cremisan; Beitgemal; Bethlehem and Nazareth. Purpose of the visit: to acquire direct knowledge of the current situation of the works in an extremely delicate context; to assess economic needs in a period of particular tension; to express closeness and solidarity to the confreres who work in difficult conditions; to verify the impact of the political and social situation on the sustainability of the works. The visit made it possible to experience first-hand the precious value of the Salesian presence in the Holy Land, a witness of hope and a bridge of peace in a territory marked by conflict.

9 October: Meeting in Turin - SEI Building

Second meeting in Turin this year to continue discussions on the management and future of the SEI building, addressing operational and strategic issues.

10 October: VIS meeting

Meeting with the heads of the VIS (International Volunteering for Development).

15-17 October: Advisory Council - Don Bosco Mission Bonn

Travel to Bonn, Germany, to attend the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bonn Mission Office. The meeting offered the opportunity to appreciate the generosity of the German benefactors and the professionalism in the management of missionary resources.

October 23: UPS Meeting - Security

Meeting at the Pontifical Salesian University dedicated specifically to security issues.

NOVEMBER 2025**1-6 November: Meeting of the Board of Directors - New Rochelle Mission Office**

Travel to the United States to attend the New Rochelle Board of Directors meeting. Meeting agenda: financial situation; projects supported in Latin America, Africa and Asia; fundraising strategies in the North American context; governance and accountability. The meeting offered an opportunity to appreciate the generosity of U.S. benefactors and

the professionalism in managing missionary resources.

16-20 November: Visit to Bangalore (INK)

Journey to India, to INK Province (Bangalore). Purpose of the visit: to examine the current financial situation; to learn about the richness and complexity of educational and pastoral works; to assess the challenges of sustainability; to accompany the provincial economist and his team; to appreciate the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit in the management of the works.

21-23 November: Regional Meeting of South Asian Provincial Economers in Nepal

Continuation of the trip to South Asia with the regional meeting of the provincial economists of the South Asia Region in Nepal. Participants: provincial economists from India and Sri Lanka, representing one of the most populous and vital Regions of the Congregation. Contents of the meeting: implementation of the decisions of GC29, in particular of art. 187 and its economic implications; financial management according to canonical and Salesian norms; transparency and accountability; administrative best practices; sustainability

of educational and pastoral works; current administrative and financial issues. The meeting highlighted the great vitality of the Congregation in South Asia, but also the challenges of sustainability in a context of rapid growth and preferential service to the poorest.

24 November - 23 December: General Council

Intense period of work with the General Council. This month of continuous work with the Council allowed for a significant deeper appreciation of the economic and administrative issues of the Congregation, in preparation for the challenges of the new year, including the budget for 2026.

Regional Councillor for Central and West Africa

After the session of the General Council in June 2025, the Regional Councillor for Central & West Africa continued his service with an intense programme of accompaniment of the Provinces and Vice-Provinces of the Region.

In early July 2025 Fr Owoudou left Rome for Cameroon. Arriving in Yaoundé, he took part in the young peoples' biblical week in

the St Augustine Theologate, an important formative moment for young confreres on their way to the priesthood. Subsequently, accompanied by two Italian benefactors, he visited land at Douala, Ebolowa, the work of the street children and the Mary Help of Christians Parish at Mimboman. These visits made it possible to verify ongoing projects on the ground and to strengthen ties with the benefactors who support Salesian works in the Region. In mid-July the Councillor travelled to Nairobi to take part in the annual meeting of the Don Bosco Tech Africa Committee, an important opportunity for coordination and programming for vocational training on the continent. On 28 July Fr Owoudou left for Libreville to preside at the funeral of Fr Arsène Edou, Novice Director for the ATE Vice-Province, who died on 30 June in the Central African Republic. He then remained with the confreres and faithful in Libreville, tried by this and other recent misfortunes.

In the first days of August, the Councillor returned to Yaoundé, where on 5 August he presided over the profession Mass of young Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a testimony to the vocational vitality in the Region.

The central part of August was marked by a mission of great importance for the future of the Congregation in the Congo region. At the request of the Rector Major, the Councillor went to the Our Lady of the Assumption Province of Central Africa (AFC) to conduct a consultation among the confreres on the subject of provincial restructuring. On 8 August Fr Owoudou left for Lubumbashi, where on 9 August he presided over the first consultative assembly at the Theologate, gathering the majority of the confreres of the Province to discern together on the future of the Salesian presence in the Congo and on the creation of a new Vice-Province based in Goma. On 10 August, given the impossibility of direct air connections between Lubumbashi and Goma, the Councillor continued to Kigali to reach Goma by land, i.e. the AFC East Delegation, where the second consultative assembly took place.

On 14 August, the Councillor arrived in Lagos, Nigeria. The following day, 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption, at 5 pm he presided over the installation ceremony for Fr Peter Morba as the new Provincial of the Nigeria and Niger Province (ANN). A very beautiful and

important moment for the life of the Province. On 16 August he held a working session with the ANN Provincial Council in Lagos, and on 17 August he visited the street boys and girls project in Onipetesi, chosen by the Provincials of Africa as the new Coordination Centre for Social Works on the continent. In the third week of August the Councillor preached the Retreat to the Salesian Cooperators from Port-Gentil in Gabon, a precious time of reflection and spiritual deepening with the lay members of the Salesian Family. From 26 to 31 August he then accompanied the Provincial Fr Roland Mintsa to the session with Rectors of the ATE Vice-Province in Riaba (Malabo), Equatorial Guinea, for planning for the pastoral year.

September 2025 marked the operational start of the Extraordinary Visitation to the ATE Vice-Province. From 2-6 September Fr Owoudou met the Provincial with the members of his Council to formally begin the Extraordinary Visitation and define the program me for the next stages. On 7 September he left for Bouar, in the Central African Republic, to visit the Salesian novitiate, a strategic point for initial formation in the Region. The

opening day was marked by two solemn Eucharistic celebrations, by Bishop Mirek's welcome for the official installation of the new Rector and Director of Novices, Fr Biyoghe Virgile Octave, and by talks with the Formation team. In the following days, the Councillor devoted valuable time to personal interviews with the novices, meetings to evaluate community life and conversations with those responsible for animation. It was a very fine experience of closeness to young people in formation and their formators. From 11 to 14 September the Councillor travelled to Galabadja, from 14 to 18 September to Damala, and from 19 to 23 September to Libreville. After a short break in Yaoundé from 22-24 September, from 25-28 September Fr Owoudou went to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea to visit the first of the three Spanish-speaking communities. From 28 September to 1 October, the Councillor went to Bata, followed by Micomesseng from 2 to 4 October. The visit to the Saint Augustine Theologate at Nkol-Afeme, on the outskirts of Yaoundé, took place from 6 to 14 October. In mid-October, the Extraordinary Visitation was interrupted to allow the Councillor to take part in the golden jubilee

of the Salesian presence in Ethiopia. This stage was also the occasion for the meeting between the superiors of the two new African Regions, an important moment of communion and coordination. After his mission to Ethiopia, the Councillor returned to Cameroon to continue his Extraordinary Visitation. From 24-28 October he went to Ebolowa, followed from 29 October to 3 November by the stage in Mimboman.

November 2025 was the most intense, with a close succession of stages in Chad and a significant conclusion in Yaoundé. From 4-8 November, the Councillor travelled to Ndjamena. On 8 November, after a visit to the work at Ndjamena and the agricultural sector at Mandalia, he left for Doba. From 11-14 November Fr Owoudou went to Sarh. On 16 November, when he returned to Yaoundé, the Councillor began his visit to Maison Don Bosco, the Provincial Centre. On 18 November the Extraordinary Visitation to the Tropical-Equatorial Africa Vice-Province officially ended with an assembly at the Saint Augustine Theological Studentate in Nkol-Afeme. The morning was marked first by an

evaluation session with the Provincial and his Council, then by a meeting with all the Salesians operating in Cameroon, also connected by streaming, by a Eucharistic celebration and a fraternal lunch with the theological community. It was a significant conclusion of an intense journey of accompaniment and closeness.

On 21 November 2025, the Councillor returned to Italy for the General Council Plenary Session.

The Councillor for the East and Southern Africa Region

2-12 August: visit to AGL – Uganda - Namugongo community: practice in English language skills.

16 August 2025: Participation in the first profession of 14 novices in AGL in Butare.

25 August 2025: Installation of Provincial, Fr Ignacio LAVENTURE of the AET Vice-Province (Ethiopia-Eritrea):

28 August - 17 September 2025: In Rome: application for documents: residence permit.

19 September: Start of the Extraordinary Visitation to AET (Ethiopia - Eritrea)

21 September - 18 October: Extraordinary Visitation to the communities of Debre Zeit, Shire,

Adwa, Adigrat, Mekalle, Gotera (Provincial House), Bosco Boys in Addis.

19 October: Celebration of the anniversary of 50 years of Salesian presence in Ethiopia-Eritrea (AET); Presence of the Vicar of the Rector Major Fr Stefano Martoglio and all Provincials of the two Regions. (East and Southern Africa and Central and West Africa)

20-24 October 2025: Meeting in Addis Ababa of all Provincials of the two Regions (East and Southern Africa and Central and West Africa)

25 October- 16 November 2025: continuation of the Extraordinary Visitation to AET in the Zway, Adami Tullu, Sodo Dilla and Gambella communities.

17- 22 November 2025: Consultations for the appointment of the new Superior of the Vice-Province of Mozambique (MOZ)

22 November 2025: Return to Rome

22 November - 19 December 2025: General Council Session

The Councillor for the East Asia-Oceania Region

From 4 to 15 August, the General Councillor for East Asia-Oceania,

Fr William Matthews SDB, made his first visit as Regional to the Province of Thailand. During the visit, Fr Will met with the Provincial and his Council, the Rectors and all the Salesians who work in Bangkok and the surrounding area. He also visited the formation houses in Sampran and Banpong, as well as meeting other Salesians in Sarasit and Hua Hin. During his stay in Thailand, Fr Will also spent a few days with some Salesian missionaries who were on annual retreat in Bangkok.

On 16 August, Father William Matthews SDB presided over the installation of Fr Amelito Racelis SDB as the new Provincial of FIS Province in Cebu, Philippines, and concelebrated at the priestly ordination of Father John Robert SDB. After these special events, he was accompanied on a short animation tour of the Province, during which he was able to visit some communities and meet numerous Salesians, staff and students until 21 August.

From 24 to 30 August, Fr Will visited the Salesians and their works in Pakistan. He spent three days in Quetta and four days in Lahore. It was a very impressive visit, where Salesians have worked hard for the good of

young people, especially young Catholics.

Fr Will arrived in the Solomon Islands in the Pacific on 1 September 2025 to begin the Extraordinary Visitation on behalf of the Rector Major to the Vice-Province of Blessed Philip Rinaldi [PGS]. He spent two weeks in the Solomon Islands and also participated in celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Henderson. On 15 September he travelled to Papua New Guinea to continue his visit. He remained in Papua New Guinea until 19 October 2025, visiting all the communities, meeting the confreres, members of the Salesian Family, students, staff and parishioners.

On 21 October, Fr Will chaired the regional curatorium meeting in Cebu, Philippines, together with the provincials of the EAO region and formators. He also chaired another curatorium meeting at the Don Bosco School of Theology in Paranaque on Thursday, 23 October, which was attended by numerous provincials, delegates, and formators.

After the curatorium meetings, Fr Will made a brief visit to many communities in and around Manila, in particular the houses of formation, meeting

with the Salesians and their lay collaborators.

On 31 October he travelled to his hometown of Perth, Western Australia, to be with his seriously ill father and family. Sadly, his father, Thomas Matthews, passed away on 3 November.

From 9 to 16 October, together with the Councillor for Formation, Fr Silvio Roggia, Fr Will was in Jakarta, Indonesia, to attend the meeting of the Regional Delegates for Formation. During his stay in Jakarta, he was also able to meet several Salesians. He visited and gave conferences to Salesian novices in Tigaraksa and the postnovitiate community at Wisma, Jakarta.

He returned to Perth, Western Australia, on 17 November to officiate at the Requiem Mass for his father, scheduled for 18 November. After the funeral he returned to Rome to attend the winter session of the General Council meetings. Fr William Matthews SDB expresses his gratitude to the Rector Major, the General Council, the superiors of the EAO Region and many Salesians for their prayers and their support at the death of his father.

The Councillor for the South Asia Region

Immediately after the June-July session of the General Council, the Regional, Fr Biju Michael, went to India and chaired the Assembly and Council of the Conference of Salesian Provincials of South Asia (SPCSA) from 8 to 11 July in Bangalore. The Region's six-year plan was finalised at this meeting. A good part of the Regional's time in the July-November period was dedicated to the animation of the Provincial Councils, Rectors and other leaders of Provinces on GC29 and on the six-year plan of the Rector Major and the Region. On 12 July he undertook the planning of the Regional Course for Deacons. On 15 July he travelled to South Sudan to meet missionaries from the South Asia Region working in the South Sudan Delegation in the AFE Province. He brought a gift on behalf of the South Asia Region and the SPCSA to the South Sudan Delegation in the context of the 150th anniversary of Salesian missionary expeditions. On his return from South Sudan, he met the students of the Salesian Theologate in Kavrapettai, Chennai. On 7 August he presided at the inaugural

Mass of the Formation of Formators course on psycho-sexual integration held in Chennai. On 8 August he held a meeting with the Chennai Provincial Council (INM) and animated them. He then went to Bangalore and held a meeting with the Rectors and Leaders of the Province, animating them on 10 August. On 11 August he held a meeting with the Bangalore Provincial Council (INK) and animated them. On 12 August the Regional attended the funeral of Fr Santhanaraj's father in Thanjavur. From 13 August, together with a group of confreres and lay people, he dedicated time to editing the first episode of the video on the Salesian Missions in Sudan, 'Legacy of Love', at the DBICA in Chennai. He then went to Delhi and on 19 August he animated the principals of the schools in the Delhi Province and participated in the opening ceremonies of the Don Bosco Technical Institute Okhla, Delhi. On 21 August he held a meeting with the Delhi Provincial Council (INN) and animated them. On 22 August he visited some of the new initiatives for the poor in Delhi's slums. On 23-24 August he took part in a community outing with South Asia Regional Network Managers residing in

the Delhi Regional House. He then went to Guwahati and on 27 August held a meeting with the Rectors and Leaders of the Guwahati Province, animating them. On 28 August he held a meeting with the Guwahati Provincial Council (ING) and animated them. He then went to Shillong and animated the Regional Missionary Course and presided over the Mass for them.

From Shillong, the Regional went to Bangalore. On 3 September he held a meeting with the Director-General of UNADAP and the International Diplomatic Alliance to explore possibilities for collaboration. On 5-6 September he took part in the first end of year evaluation meeting of the 'Mission Poverty Eradication' (MPE) initiative of the South Asia Region, held at the Don Bosco Skill Mission in Bangalore with representatives of all the Provinces of the Region. This is an initiative aimed at animating the Region on the core of the Salesian mission aimed at young people 'especially the poorest' with a path that follows the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He then went to Mumbai and presided over the installation of the new Provincial of Mumbai

Province (INB) on 8 September. The English translation of the book 'Don Bosco's most beautiful letters' was published as part of the 'Salesian Spirituality Series', an initiative of the Region. He then chaired the Council of the Conference of Salesian Provincials of South Asia on 9-10 September. On 11 September the video 'Legacy of Love' was published on the theme of love that motivates missionaries, as part of the animation of the South Asia Region on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Salesian missionary expeditions. The Regional then went to Madrid for three weeks of ongoing formation. On 18 September the Regional gave an online address at the course for the Provincial Secretaries of the South Asia Region gathered in Kolkata.

On 6 October, during the return trip from Madrid, the Regional visited the works of Don Bosco and the confreres in Fujairah, Saudi Arabia. From 7-12 October the Regional conducted the consultation for the new Trichy Provincial (INT) with two meetings in Trichy, one in Yercaud and one in Madurai, and another online meeting. On 13 October he went to Vijayawada to visit the works

for at-risk young people.

On 15 October he attended the meeting of Rectors and Leaders of the Hyderabad Province and animated the group. He also held an online meeting with the Councillor for Formation and the Dean of the UPS Faculty of Theology regarding issues related to the aggregation of Sacred Heart Theological College in Shillong. On 16 October he held a meeting with the Provincial Council of Hyderabad Province (INH) and animated it. On 16 October the second episode of the animation videos on Salesian missions entitled 'Legacy of Grace' was published, exploring the role of divine grace in the lives of missionaries. On 18 October the Regional went to Chennai to animate the Rectors and Leaders of the Chennai Province and continued to guide the editing of the video on the Salesian missions. On 20 October he went to Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, to visit the university institute in view of its upgrading to a full University and went to the Provincial House visiting different communities and confreres of the Dimapur Province. On 22 October in view of the liturgical

memorial of Don Rua, the English version of a book entitled 'Don Rua: a son called to be a father' was published, a historical novel written by Fr Edoardo Gnochini, which is part of the 'Salesian spirituality series'. On 23 October the Regional held a meeting with the Rectors and Leaders of the Dimapur Province and animated them. On 24 October he held a meeting with the Provincial Council of the Dimapur Province (IND) and animated them. On 25 October he participated in the jubilee celebrations for the confreres of Dimapur Province. He then went to Shillong via Guwahati and on 27 October held a meeting with the Shillong Provincial Council (INS) animating them. On 28 October he animated the Rectors and Leaders of the Shillong Province. On 29 October he went to Guwahati and participated in the blessing of a new facility on the campus of Don Bosco University in Azara. On 30-31 October the Regional took part in the strategic workshop of the South Asia Region's 'Mission for the Elimination of Poverty' held in Guwahati with Project Managers at the Provincial level from all the Provinces of the

Region and the Regional Coordination Team. During the meeting, the Annual Report (2024-2025) of the 'Mission for the Elimination of Poverty' was published. The MPE initiative in the Region received a providential confirmation in Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* - on love for the poor.

On 3 November, the Regional convened and chaired a meeting of a group of confreres led by the Provincial in Guwahati to discuss the possibilities of a Salesian presence in Bhutan in the context of new developments in the country. On 4 November he went to Shillong and attended the meeting of the Curatorium of the Sacred Heart Theological College in Shillong. On 6 November he participated in the inaugural ceremony of the National Conference on the Education of Don Bosco Schools (NECDBS), which brought together over 120 presidents of the Region, and in the afternoon he animated the group with a session. He then went to Mumbai and Kochi in preparation for the General Council and reached Rome for the November-December session of the General Council.

The General Councillor for the America South Cone Region

On the same day as the General Council ended its summer session in Italy, on 25 July, the Councillor left for Recife.

From 26 July to 18 November he made the **Extraordinary Visitation** to the St Aloysius Gonzaga Province of **Recife, Brazil** (BRE) in the name of the Rector Major. During this time he spoke with all the Salesians of the Province (112); he visited the 14 canonical houses and the missionary presence. He got to know the situation of the different houses, the 11 schools, the 10 parishes and public churches, the 7 social works and youth centres, the work with at-risk young people, the festive oratories and vocational training institutes, the 4 radio stations and the 3 initial formation houses in the province.

He met twice with the Provincial Council and twice with all the Salesian rectors, the first during the Provincial Feast Day and the second online. He also spoke with the Provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. In the communities, he also met with the Salesian Family Groups and spoke with the coordinators and provincial leaders of all the

groups. He met with the Salesian Family Advisory Council.

During these months he participated in the different Curatoriums of the houses of formation in the region: the novitiate in Barbacena (BBH) on 6 August, the postnovitiate in Campo Grande (BCG) on 8 August, the Theologate in Santiago (CIL) on 22 August, the novitiate in Montevideo on 1 September, the Theologate in Buenos Aires on 3 September, the novitiate in Jaboaão dos Guararapes (BRE) on 9 September, the postnovitiate in Lorraine (BSP) on 16 October, and the theologate in Lapa (BSP) on 17 October.

From 12-14 September he participated together with the Rector Major in the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Ongoing Formation Centre for America, in Quito.

He carried out two consultations for new provincials from 30 September to 2 October in the Province of Campo Grande, Brazil (BCG), and from 25-30 October in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina (ARS). On 18 October he presided over the installation celebration for the new Provincial of Belo Horizonte, Brazil (BBH) in Belo Horizonte.

On 18 November he met with

the Provincials of the Provinces of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Recife and closed the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Recife, Brazil, with a meeting with the Provincial Council.

From 20 to 22 November he participated in the meeting of all the Provincials (SDB and FMA) of Brazil, in Brasilia, and with the Salesian Schools Network, and then returned to Rome to take part in the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Central and Northern Europe Region

At the end of the first Session of the General Council, which took place from 15 May to 5 July, the Councillor for the Central and North Europe Region, Fr Roman Jachimowicz, spent some time with his family and later visited various Provinces of the Region.

From 22 - 24 August he was in the France - Belgium South Province (FRB) for the installation of the new Provincial Fr Xavier Ernst.

From 26 - 27 August he was in Warsaw at the Warsaw, Poland Provincial Office (PLE).

From 1-3 September he returned to Salesian Headquarters in Rome for a meeting between the Rector Major Fr Fabio Attard, the Provincial of Germany (GER) Fr Reinhard Gesing and the Provincial of Austria (AUS) Fr Siegfried Kettner.

On September 15, Fr Roman began the Extraordinary Visitation of the Saint Adalbert Province of Wrocław, Poland (PLO) that will end on 19 January 2026.

He had several meetings during this time.

From 1-5 October, to the Vice-Province of Malta (MLT), accompanying the Rector Major Fr Fabio Attard during his animation visit to his native country.

From 14 - 17 November Fr Roman was at Nice, France, in the Province of France - South Belgium (FRB), accompanying the Rector Major during the visit on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesians in France.

On 17 November he participated *online* in the *Curatorium* of the International Theological Studentate at the Crocetta, Turin (ICP).

In addition, during this period of the Visitation to the PLO Province, Fr Roman also had other commitments which

concerned the Consultations for the appointment of Provincials of the following Provinces: Piła, Poland (PLN) from 25 - 27 September; Austria (AUS) from 29 - 30 September; Ukraine of the Greek-Catholic rite (UKR) on 13 October; Slovakia (SLK) from 14 -15 October and the Czech Republic (CEP) from 16 - 18 October.

The Winter Session of the General Council ended on 24 December 2025 and then the Regional Fr Roman, during this Christmas period, went for a few days with his family and then continued the Extraordinary Visitation to the PLO Province, which will end on 19 January 2026.

The General Councillor for the Mediterranean Region

After the General Council sessions in June and July, the Councillor for the Mediterranean Region had the opportunity to spend a few days with his family. After a few days of rest he left for London (Battersea) to start learning English throughout the month of August.

On 2 September he left for Portugal to begin the Extraordinary

Visitation to the Province of Portugal and Cape Verde on behalf of the Rector Major. On the 3rd he had a meeting with the Provincial and on the 4th with the Provincial Council. After a few days learning Portuguese, on the 12th he began the visit to the Salesian Houses, starting from Mogofores, from the 12th to the 14th, and Lisbon from the 15th to the 18th and on 30 September and 1 October. From 20-21 September he went to Albania to preside over the perpetual profession of three confreres. Subsequently he went to Catania to celebrate the first meeting of this six-year term of the Mediterranean Region, the Iberian Conference and CISI, involving all the Provincials and other participating delegates. Continuing, after a few days of rest with the family, the Extraordinary Visitation to the POR Province: Porto, Mirandela and Évora, from 7-17 October. On the 18th he attended the funeral of Fr Miguel Ángel García Morcuende's father in Madrid, subsequently continuing with the presentation of the Consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial of the SSM Province, from 19 to 23 October. From 24-26 October he accompanied the

Rector Major on a visit to the Salesian House in Ciutadella on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the presence.

On 18 October he resumed the Extraordinary Visitation to the houses in Manique, Funchal (Madeiras), Setúbal and Estoril until 22 November. On 17 and 18 November he participated in the *'curatoria'* of the Crocetta and Novitiate/Postnovitiate Formation

Houses at Colle Don Bosco, in the Novitiate house.

On 23 November he returned to Rome to begin the sessions of the General Council in November-December 2025. During those days, he held a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Madrid Mission Office and the Board of Trustees of JyD (NGO) on 13 December. The meeting of the Iberia-Spain Conference was also held on 20 and 21 December.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS

5.1 New Salesian Provincials

Following (in alphabetical order) are some data regarding Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council during the december 2025 session.

1. *Adalberto Alves De Jesus, Provincial of the St Alphonsus Liguori Province of Campo Grande, Brazil (BCG). He succeeds Fr Ricardo Carlos.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 1 December 2025, appointed Fr Adalberto Alves De Jesus as Provincial of the St Alphonsus Liguori Province of Campo Grande, Brazil (BCG), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Fr Adalberto was born on 8 June 1978 in Cuiabá, Capital of the State of Mato Grosso, Brazil, in the Archdiocese of Cuiabá.

After completing his higher education, he entered the Salesian novitiate in Dourados, Indápolis on 8 February 1999, making his first religious profession a year later (31 January 2000). After completing his studies in philosophy (Campo Grande – São Vicente) and his practical training, he made his perpetual profession in Campo Grande on 31

January 2006. Subsequently, on 8 December 2007, he received priestly ordination in Cuiabá.

He carried out his pastoral work from 2009 to 2016 in Campo Grande, as Rector of Paulo VI and São Vicente works, first, and then as Vice-Rector of the São José Work; in Barbacena he was appointed Director of Novices (from 2018 to 2021) and from 2021 he was Rector at Dourados, Indápolis.

2. *Mychaylo Chaban, Superior of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-Province of Ukraine (UKR). He has been appointed for a second six-year term.*

The Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council on 1 December 2025, appointed Fr Mychaylo Chaban as Superior of the Mary Help of Christians Vice-Province of Ukraine (UKR), for a second six-year term from 2026-2032.

Fr Mychaylo was born on 20 December 1976 in Lviv, Ukraine. At the age of nineteen, he entered the novitiate in Kopiec, Poland, where he made his first profession on 22 August 1996. He made his perpetual profession on 14 September 2002 in Lviv, where he was then ordained a priest on 27 June 2004.

After his priestly ordination, Fr Mychaylo was appointed Economer of the Vice-Province in Lviv (2004-2006); later, again in Lviv, in the Blessed Philip Rinaldi Community he became Rector (2006-2015), then Vice-Rector (2015-2018) and finally Rector again (2018 – until now).

He would subsequently hold the positions of Economer of the East Circumscription (2005-2012); Vice-Superior of the Vice-Province of Ukraine (2012-2015); Delegate for the Salesian Family in the UKR Vice-Province (2014-2015); Economer of the UKR Vice-Province (since 2015) and Delegate of the Vice-Province for Social Communications – Publishing House (since 2018).

On 1 December 2020, he was appointed by the Rector Major and the General Council, for the first six-year term as Superior of the Vice-Province of Ukraine; this appointment will be renewed in December 2025.

3. *Sunil Kerketta, Provincial of the St John Bosco Province of Calcutta, India (INC). He succeeds Fr Joseph Pauria.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 2 December 2025, appointed Fr

Sunil Kerketta as Provincial of the St John Bosco Province of Calcutta, India (INC), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Fr Sunil Kerketta was born in the village of Birta Girjatoli, in the State of Jharkhand, India, on 8 August 1975. After completing his higher studies at Don Bosco Bandel and his degree in Literature and Philosophy, he entered the Salesian novitiate in Siliguri, making his first profession on 24 May 1994. He completed his Salesian formation by making his perpetual profession on 1 May 2000, in Liluah, and his priestly ordination on 14 December 2003.

After having held various positions in the youth animation of the province, and later as Rector of the Prenovitiate, then as Economer at Mirik, and member of the Provincial Council, Fr Sunil has held several senior positions for the Calcutta Province, such as Vice-Provincial, Delegate for Formation and Delegate for the Salesian Family.

4. *Francisco Cervantes Huitron, Provincial of the Christ the King and Mary Help of Christians Province of Guadalajara Mexico (MEG). He succeeds Fr Filiberto González Plasencia.*

The Rector Major, with the consent of the General Council on 2 December 2025, appointed Fr Francisco Cervantes Huitron as Provincial of the Christ the King and Mary Help of Christians Province of Guadalajara Mexico (MEG), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Francisco Cervantes Huitron was born in Tlaxcala, Mexico, on 12 April 1972, to Carlos, and Maria Luz.

He entered the Salesian novitiate in Vista, Chula in 1990 where a year later he made his first religious profession on 16 August 1991. After completing his philosophy studies and practical training, on 7 September 1997 in the work at Irapuato, Guadalajara he would be consecrated forever to the Lord. He would receive his priestly ordination in León on 24 June 2000.

Sent by obedience to Rome from 2003 to 2007, he obtained a licentiate in biblical studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. Returning to the Province, he was in charge of the Oratory in the community of the Theological Studentate at Taqueplaque (2007-10). Following his Master's studies in Education at the University of Guadalajara (2010-11), he was appointed as Rector and Economer of the work at

Chihuahua (2011-14) and later as Vice-Rector of the Provincial House community (2017-22). In his Province of Guadalajara, Mexico he was Provincial Delegate for Formation (2014-2020) and Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry from (2014-2023). For the same Province he was also Provincial Councillor until 2023, when he moved to Rome to the Sacred Heart community at Salesian Headquarters, where he has worked in the Youth Ministry Sector.

5. *Peter Rinderer, Provincial of the Guardian Angels Province of Austria (AUS). He succeeds Fr Siegfried Kettner.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 2 December 2025, appointed Fr Peter Rinderer as Provincial of the Guardian Angels Province of Austria (AUS), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

The new Provincial of Austria was born on 30 October 1986 in Feldkirch, near Vorarlberg, in the diocese of Vorarlberg.

After completing his higher education, he entered the Piedmontese novitiate at Monteoliveto, Pinerolo, making his first religious profession on 8 September

2009. He then made his perpetual profession on 22 August 2015 in Vienna and was ordained a priest in Benediktbeuern, Germany, on 1 July 2018.

Once the entire initial formation was completed, he was sent by obedience to the Fulpmes work, in which he held the roles of Economer, Vice-Rector and Rector until the moment of his appointment as Provincial.

6. *Manuel Eduardo Cayo, Provincial of the Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá Province of Argentina South (ARS). He succeeds Fr Darío Perera Ramón.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 3 December 2025, appointed Fr Manuel Eduardo Cayo as Provincial of the Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá Province of Argentina South (ARS).

Fr Manuel Eduardo was born on 31 May 1966 in General Roca, Province of Rio Negro (Argentina), Diocese of Viedma. He began his journey in the Salesian Congregation in the Novitiate at La Plata in 1985, which concluded with his first profession on 31 January 1986.

He made his Perpetual profession later on 16 November 1991.

He completed his theological

studies at the ISET, at the end of which he was ordained a priest in his hometown on 3 June 1995.

In the Province of Argentina South he served as Rector at Don Bosco Bahia Blanca from 2004 to 2007, and in the same period, until 2010 he was also appointed Vice-Provincial.

On 31 January 2007, he was chosen by the Rector Major and the General Council as Provincial for the Province of Argentina North for the 2010-2016 six-year term.

Returning to the Province, after his experience as Provincial, he was appointed Director of Novices on 6 February 2016 in Alta Gracia. This assignment was interrupted by a new appointment as Provincial of Peru for the 2017-2023 six-year term.

After the second period as Provincial, returning to the Province he was sent by obedience as Vice-Rector and then Rector of the Interprovincial Our Lady of Hope Theologate at San Justo, where he would be called back to the service of Provincial on 3 December 2025 for the ARS Province.

7. *Jegadoss Doss Kennedy, Provincial of the Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni*

*Province, Tiruchy India (INT).
He succeeds Fr Agilan Sarprasadam.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 3 December 2025, appointed Fr Jegadoss Doss Kennedy as Provincial of the Our Lady of Good Health of Velankanni Province, Tiruchy, India (INT).

Fr Jegadoss Doss Kennedy was born on 20 June 1965 in Kovilpatti. He made his first profession on 24 May 1984 in Mount Don Bosco, Kotagiri, and after initial formation he made his perpetual profession on 24 May 1992 in the parish of Mary Help of Christians in Tiruppattur.

After completing his theological studies at Kristu Jyoti College in Bangalore, he received priestly ordination on 29 December 1995 in the church of St Francis Xavier in Broadway, Chennai.

Before his appointment as Provincial, Fr Jegadoss Doss Kennedy held various positions within the Province, first as a parish priest at Therespuram (2003-2007) and then as Rector in the houses of Yercaud (2007-2011), Kallukuzhy, Tiruchy (2011-2017), Lourdes Shrine, Maduray (2017-2023) and Don Bosco Renewal Centre, Bangalore (2023-2026).

There were numerous Provincial positions he held: delegate for youth groups and movements, for Youth Ministry, for the Salesian Family and for two three years he served as Vice-Provincial.

8. Jorge Elías Ghazal Mora, Provincial of the St Luke Province of Venezuela (VEN). He succeeds Fr Montenegro Latouche Rafael Bernardo.

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 4 December 2025, appointed Fr Jorge Elías Ghazal Mora as Provincial of the St Luke Province of Venezuela (VEN), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Fr Ghazal Mora was born on 9 February 1968 in the city of Puerto La Cruz, in the Venezuelan state of Anzoátegui. After completing his high school studies at the Salesian Pius XII Institute he graduated as an Electronic Engineer in 1990.

After working for several years, on 10 August 2005 he entered the Salesian novitiate at San Antonio de Los Altos, making his first religious profession a year later, on 16 August 2006.

He made his Perpetual Profession at Caracas on 25 August

2012, and was ordained priest in the church of San Giorgio in his hometown on 3 August 2013.

After priestly ordination, he carried out various services for the Province of Venezuela, as administrator and teacher at the Salesian Agronomic Technical School in Barinas (2013-2017), Rector of the Salesian community at Caja de Agua-Punto Fijo and parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima (2017-2019), administrator and formator in the Theologate community in Caracas (2021-2022).

Before receiving his appointment as Provincial, he was engaged as Rector of the Philip Rinaldi Prenovitiate community in Caracas, a member of the Provincial Council and Provincial Delegate for Formation.

9. *José Carlos Sobejano García, Provincial of the St James the Greater Province, Spain (SSM). He succeeds Fr García Sánchez Manuel Fernando.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council, on 4 December 2025, appointed Fr José Carlos Sobejano García as Provincial of St James the Greater Province, Spain (SSM), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Fr José Carlos Sobejano García

was born in Madrid on 13 October 1972. He entered the Salesian novitiate at Mohernando, near Guadalajara in 1990, made his first religious profession the following year, on 16 August 1991, then was consecrated for life with perpetual profession in Madrid on 13 May 2000. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 2002.

Having graduated in Philosophy and Theology, he was professor and pastoral coordinator in several Salesian houses: on 3 June 2008 he was appointed Rector of the Puertollano work (2008-2014) and on 4 June 2014 Rector in Guadalajara (2014-2020).

Since 2020 he has been a member of the Provincial Council as Youth Ministry Delegate, in the area of Vocational and Mission Animation.

10. *Peter Jacko, Provincial of the Mary Help of Christians Province of Bratislava, Slovakia (SLK). He succeeds Fr Peter Timko.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 4 December 2025, appointed Fr Peter Jacko as Provincial of the Mary Help of Christians Province of Bratislava, Slovakia (SLK), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Peter Jacko was born on 18

November 1977 in Presov, in the diocese of Kosice, Slovakia. Entering the novitiate at Poprad in 1997, he made his first profession on 15 August 1998 and his perpetual profession on 10 July 2004 in Bratislava. After theological studies he was ordained a priest for the Salesian Congregation on 17 June 2006 in his hometown.

He has had several assignments in the communities: in charge of the Oratory and then Vice-Rector in Mamatyivá, Bratislava (2006-2009), Rector and Parish Priest in Kopánka, Trnava (2016-2020) and since 2020 Councillor in Miletičova, Bratislava.

He was Delegate for the missions in the SLK Province and for two three-year terms, the Vice-Provincial.

11. *Václav Jiráček, Provincial of the St John Bosco Province of Prague, Czech Republic (CEP). He succeeds Fr Martin Hobza.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 5 December 2025, appointed Fr Václav Jiráček as Provincial of the St John Bosco Province of Prague, Czech Republic (CEP), for the 2026-2032 six-year term.

Fr Václav Jiráček was born on

23 September 1980 in the village of Doubravice in East Bohemia, then part of the State of Czechoslovakia.

After completing his studies in electrical engineering in an integrated vocational high school, he entered the Salesian novitiate in Dolní Počernice, Prague, where a year later, on 14 August 2004, he made his first religious profession; followed by perpetual profession on 26 June 2010 in Prague, and priestly ordination on 15 September 2012 in Brno.

After his priestly ordination, he worked for several years in charge of the Kobylišy Oratory in Prague (2013-21). With solid experience in youth ministry, Fr Jiráček was appointed Rector in the same house on 2 September 2021.

Prior to his appointment as Provincial, he was Provincial Councillor from 2 June 2022.

12. *Américo Chaquisse, Provincial of the Mary Help of Christians Province of Mozambique (MOZ). He succeeds Fr Sarmento Adolfo De Jesus.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 5 December 2025, appointed Fr Américo Chaquisse as Provincial of the Mary Help of Christians

Province of Mozambique (MOZ).

Fr Chaquisse was born in Mozambique in Maputo on 23 February 1966. He entered the novitiate in his hometown, making his first profession on 31 January 1987 and his perpetual profession on 29 August 1993. After completing his theological studies in Lubumbashi, he was ordained a priest in Maputo on 11 August 1996.

From 2003 to 2012 he served as Vice-Rector, Rector, Economer and again Rector of the Casa Dom Bosco, Maputo.

He has held numerous positions in the Vice-Province: Councillor in the Delegation of Mozambique, which was part of the Province of Portugal (2004-06); later he was appointed Economer and Delegate for Mission Animation (2006-13).

In June 2012 he was chosen by the Rector Major and the General Council as Superior of the MOZ Vice-Province, a position that he would only hold until 2014, as he was elected by the 27th General Chapter as Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region.

After his service on the General Council he was sent by obedience as Economer of the Colle Don Bosco community at Castelnuovo Don Bosco (2020-21), then to the

Salesian Mission Office in Madrid (2021-22) before returning home and assuming the position of Economer and Rector of the house at Matundo (2023-25) and Economer of the MOZ Vice-Province (from 2024).

13. *Jarosław Pizoń, Provincial of the Saint Adalbert Province of Poland North (PLN). He succeeds Fr Tadeusz Itrych.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 9 December 2025 appointed Fr Jarosław Pizoń as Provincial of the Saint Adalbert Province of Poland North (PLN).

Fr Jarosław was born on 21 June 1968 in Walcz, near Piła in Poland.

After completing his year of novitiate in Swobnica, he made his temporary profession on 22 August 1988. He subsequently professed his perpetual vows on 30 July 1994 in Rumia.

He was ordained a priest for the Poland North Province on 30 May 1996 in Lad.

Obedience led him to various assignments: Parish priest at Swietojanska, Rumia (2007-10), Rector and Parish priest at Mary Help of Christians, Aleksandrów Kujawski (2005-10) and from

2010 to 2016 he was Rector of the Provincial House at Piła.

He carried out various assignments for his Province of origin: Provincial Councillor (2005-10), Delegate for Youth Ministry (2004-08), Delegate for Salesian Cooperators and Past Pupils (2010-2013), Delegate for Formation and Vice-Provincial (2010-16).

The Rector Major and the General Council appointed him as Provincial of the St John Bosc Province Wroclow, Poland (PLO) for the 2016-2022 six-year term. Since 2023, having completed his position as Provincial, he has lived in the Central Italy Circumscription with the position of Rector of the Postnovitiate at San Tarcisio, Rome.

14. *André Young Ela Enam, Superior of the Our Lady of Africa Vice-Province of Equatorial Tropical Africa (ATE). He succeeds Fr Roland Mintsa.*

The Rector Major with the consent of the General Council on 10 December 2025 appointed Fr André Young Ela Enam as Superior of the Our Lady of Africa Vice-Province of Equatorial Tropical Africa (ATE).

Fr André Young was born on 15 September 1980 in Mebang, Cameroon, Diocese of Ebolowa.

He completed his novitiate in Gbodjomé, Togo, at the end of which he made his temporary profession on 8 September 2000. He then made his Perpetual profession on 26 May 2007 in Yaoundé. After completing his theological studies at the Theologate in Yaoundé, he received priestly ordination in his native diocese of Ebolowa on 31 May 2009.

Between 2010 and 2012 he served as Councillor and Head of the oratory at the Novitiate in Gbodjomé, in Togo. Upon returning from his studies in Rome in 2014, after obtaining his Licentiate in Philosophy and, subsequently, his Licentiate in Spiritual Theology at the Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, he was appointed Rector of the Yaoundé Theologate until 1 September 2020.

He was appointed Councillor for the ATE Vice-Province from 2014 to 2020, and without interruption, Vice-Superior and Secretary until his appointment as Superior.



SOCIETÀ DI SAN FRANCESCO DI SALES
Via Marsala, 42 – 00185 Roma
SEDE CENTRALE SALESIANA
Il Segretario Generale

Prot. 2026/SG/0039

**DECRETO DI EREZIONE CANONICA
DELLA VISITATORIA SALESIANA "SAN GIUSEPPE" DI AFRICA CENTRALE EST**

Il sottoscritto,

Sac. Fabio ATTARD,

Rettor Maggiore della Società Salesiana di San Giovanni Bosco,

- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana e l'estensione territoriale dell'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Nostra Signora SS. Assunta" di Lubumbashi (Repubblica Democratica del Congo);
- considerando lo sviluppo della missione salesiana della Delegazione AFC-Est dalla sua creazione nel 2021;
- tenuto conto che, per una più efficace animazione, nel febbraio 2021 venne costituita la Delegazione Ispettoriale della AFC/Est, con sede a Goma (nel Congo Democratico);
- visto il parere favorevole dell'Ispettore AFC col suo Consiglio;
- ottenuto il consenso del Consiglio Generale nella riunione del **17 dicembre 2025**, a norma degli articoli 132 §1,1 e 156 delle Costituzioni;

DISTACCA dall'Ispettorìa Salesiana "Nostra Signora SS. Assunta" di Lubumbashi (Repubblica Democratica del Congo) le seguenti Case:

1. Bukavu [RD del Congo], "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
2. Goma - BoscoLac [RD del Congo], "*San Domenico Savio*"
3. Goma - I.T.I.G. [RD del Congo], "*San Giovanni Bosco*"
4. Goma - Les Volcans [RD del Congo], "*Mamma Margherita*"
5. Goma - Ngangi [RD del Congo], "*Beato Zeffirino Namuncurà*"
6. Bukavu - Nyakadaka [RD del Congo], "*San Giuseppe*"
7. Uvira [R.D. del Congo], "*San Domenico Savio*"

e mediante il presente Decreto,

ERIGE CANONICAMENTE

la nuova VISITATORIA SALESIANA di AFRICA CENTRALE EST (ACE), intitolata a "SAN GIUSEPPE", con sede in GOMA (Repubblica Democratica del Congo), casa "Mamma Margherita", con le suddette Case.

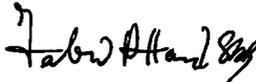
Si stabilisce quanto segue:

1. Appartengono alla Visitatoria i confratelli che saranno inseriti nell'elenco approvato dal Rettor Maggiore alla data dell'entrata in vigore della Visitatoria ACE.
2. La Visitatoria dovrà sviluppare la sua missione nelle Regioni/Province RDC seguenti: Nord-Kivu (Goma), Sud-Kivu (Bukavu, Uvira), Maniema, Ituri, Tshopo, Haut-Uele e Bas-Uele.

La Visitatoria avrà inizio con la presa di possesso del nuovo Superiore il 24 agosto 2026.

Roma, 12 gennaio 2026




sac. Fabio ATTARD
Rettor Maggiore


sac. Guido GARINO
Segretario generale

5.3 Decree of martyrdom of Jan Świerc and 8 companions

DICASTERIUM DE CAUSIS SANCTORUM

CRACOVIENSIS

BEATIFICATIONIS SEU DECLARATIONIS MARTYRII

SERVORUM DEI

IOANNIS ŚWIERC

ET VIII SOCIORUM

SOCIETATIS SANCTI FRANCISCI SALESII

IN ODIUM FIDEI, UTI FERTUR, INTERFECTORUM

(† 1941-1942)

DECRETUM SUPER MARTYRIO

‘Like gold in the furnace he tried them and like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones’ (*cf. Wis. 3:6-7,9*).

‘*In our own century the martyrs have returned, many of them nameless, “unknown soldiers” as it were of God’s great cause.*’ With these words, in the apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* promulgated on 10 November 1994, the then Pope John Paul II, now a saint, recalled the sacrifice of numerous Christians of the 20th century who were victims of Nazi and Communist ideology.

It is in this dramatic page of history that we find the example of life and martyrdom of the Servants of God, Father Jan Świerc and eight companions who, in the context of the Second World War, torn apart by hatred and injustice, gave proof of their total dedication to God and fidelity to their Salesian vocation, remaining faithful to their priestly commitment until the last moment of their lives.

On 27 June 1941, Fathers Jan Świerc, Ignacy Dobiasz, Franciszek Harazim and Kazimierz Wojciechowski died at the hands of the SS in the Auschwitz concentration camp. The latter two Servants of God, in particular, were killed side by side at the same time. The Servant of God Father Ignacy Antonowicz died three weeks later, on 21 July 1941, as a result of the mistreatment he suffered on 27 June 1941. On 5 January 1942, the Servant of God Father Ludwik Mroczek also died in the Auschwitz concentration camp as a result of the torture he suffered and the numerous surgical operations that followed. A few months later, on 14 May 1942, Father Karol Golda was shot in the same camp, accused of having administered the sacrament of confession to two German soldiers for the sole purpose of extorting important secrets from the Nazi regime by deception. On 7 September 1942, the Servant of God Włodzimierz Szembek also died in the Auschwitz camp: in his case too, it was mistreatment that caused his death. All the Servants of God mentioned belonged to the Salesian Province of St Hyacinth in Krakow.

The Servant of God Franciszek Miśka, belonging to the Salesian Province of St Adalbert of Piła, died in the Dachau concentration camp (Germany) on 30 May 1942 as a result of mistreatment and torture. Father Jan Świerc and his eight companions, embracing in their personal history the redemptive value of physical and spiritual suffering, speak to the people of yesterday and today with the language of the Cross of Christ, bearing witness that, precisely when death seems to have achieved its victory, the true victors are those who, suffering for the sake of their faith, were able to participate in an extraordinary way in the Cross of Christ and adhere to his plan of salvation.

The Servant of God Jan Świerc was born in Królewska Huta (now Chorzów, in Upper Silesia) on 29 April 1877. He completed his secondary education in Valsalice, Turin. Between 1897 and 1898, he

completed his novitiate in Ivrea. Here he took his perpetual vows on 3 October 1899. On 6 June 1903, he was ordained a priest in Turin. In 1911, he was appointed rector of the house in Krakow by the then Rector Major, Fr Paul Albera. From September 1911 to April 1918, he served as rector of the Lubomirski Institute in Krakow. In 1924, he spent seven months as a missionary in America. From November 1925 to October 1934, he was rector and parish priest in Przemyśl. On 15 August 1934, he was appointed rector of the house in Lviv.

In July 1938, he took on the role of rector and parish priest of the house in Krakow.

On 23 May 1941, he was arrested by the Gestapo along with other confreres and taken to prison in Montelupich.

The Servant of God Ignacy Antonowicz was born in 1890 in Więślawice, in the county of Włocławek, in north-central Poland. In 1901, he entered the Salesian high school in Oświęcim, where he remained until 1905. He made his perpetual profession in August 1909 in Lanzo Torinese, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 22 April 1916 in Rome.

Fr Ignacy taught dogmatic theology at the Theological College in Foglizzo (Turin) between 1916 and 1917. In 1919, during the Russian-Polish war, he was a military chaplain in the Polish army. Between 1919 and 1920, he was in Krakow as a professor at the Theological College. On 1 July 1934, he was appointed councillor of the Polish Province of St Hyacinth in Krakow until the end of 1936. In 1936, he took on the role of rector of the Salesian Theological College of the Immaculate Conception in Krakow, which he held until his arrest on 23 May 1941.

He was detained for a month in the Montelupich prison in Krakow, then taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was killed on 21 July 1941. He was 51 years old, had been a religious for 34 years and a priest for 25 years.

The Servant of God Ignacy Dobiasz was born in Ciechowice (Upper Silesia) on 14 January 1880. On 16 August 1898, he entered the Salesian novitiate in Ivrea. He took his perpetual vows in San Benigno Canavese on 21 September 1903. He completed his

philosophical and theological studies in San Benigno Canavese and Foglizzo between 1904 and 1908. On 28 June 1908, he was ordained a priest in Foglizzo. Returning to Poland, he carried out his pedagogical and pastoral activities in Oświęcim, Daszawa, Przemyśl, Warsaw and Krakow, where he remained as confessor and parish collaborator. Here he was arrested together with other Salesian confreres on 23 May 1941.

The Servant of God Karol Golda was born on 23 December 1914 in Tychy, Upper Silesia. In 1931, he spent his novitiate year at the Salesian House in Czerwińsk. On 15 January 1937, he made his perpetual religious profession in Rome. On 18 December 1938, he was ordained a priest in Rome, where he remained for another six months to obtain his licentiate in theology. In July 1939, he returned to Poland.

When World War II broke out, Fr Karol went to Silesia in October 1939 and then to Oświęcim, where he remained because he did not have the necessary permission from the occupation authorities to travel to Italy. Fr Karol Golda was entrusted with teaching theology at the Salesian Institute in Oświęcim and was appointed school councillor.

He was arrested by Gestapo officials on 31 December 1941 and killed on 14 May 1942 in Auschwitz, after only three and a half years of priesthood.

The Servant of God Franciszek Ludwik Harazim was born on 22 August 1885 in Osiny, in the district of Rybnik in Silesia. In 1901, he entered the Salesian institute in Oświęcim to attend secondary school. He completed his novitiate in Daszawa in 1905/1906. On 24 March 1910, he took his perpetual vows. He was ordained a priest in Ivrea on 29 May 1915.

Between 1915 and 1916, he taught at the secondary school in Oświęcim, where he was appointed headmaster between 1916 and 1918. From 1918 to 1920, he taught philosophy at the Salesian major seminary in Krakow (Łosiówka). From 1922 to 1927, the Servant of God served as director of the Salesian secondary school in Aleksandrów Kujawski. In 1927, he returned to the major seminary in Krakow as a councillor, teacher and educator of clerics. In 1938, he was appointed professor at the Łosiówka, Krakow house.

He was arrested by the Gestapo in Krakow on 23 May 1941. He was first taken to Konfederacka Street and then, together with his other confreres, to the Montelupich prison. A month later, on 26 June 1941, he was taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was killed on 27 June 1941 on the famous Ghiaione. He was not yet 56 years old: of these, 34 were spent in religious profession and 26 in the priesthood.

The Servant of God Ludwik Mroczek was born in Kęty (Krakow) on 11 August 1905. In 1917, after attending school in Kęty, he was admitted to the Salesian institute in Oświęcim, where he completed his secondary education. He did his novitiate in Klecza Dolna. He completed it on 7 August 1922. He took his perpetual vows on 14 July 1928 in Oświęcim. He was ordained a priest in Przemyśl on 25 June 1933.

After his ordination, he worked in Oświęcim, Lviv, Przemyśl, Skawa and Częstochowa.

On 22 May 1941, immediately after celebrating Mass, he was arrested and transferred with other confreres to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He died there on 5 January 1942: he was 36 years old, had been a religious for 18 years and a priest for 8 years.

The Servant of God Włodzimierz Szembek, son of Count Zygmunt and Countess Klementyna of the Dzieduszycki family, was born on 22 April 1883 in Poręba Żegoty, near Krakow. In 1907, he graduated in agricultural engineering from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. For about twenty years, he managed his mother's farms and was involved in lay apostolate. On 4 February 1928, he entered the Salesian aspirantate in Oświęcim. At the end of 1928, he began his novitiate in Czerwińsk. He made his religious profession on 10 August 1929. On 3 June 1934, he was ordained a priest in Krakow. He became provincial secretary and, in 1941, assistant parish priest in Skawa.

Arrested by the Gestapo on 9 July 1942 and imprisoned in Nowy Targ, on 19 August he was taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp, where, exhausted by suffering and inhuman labour, he died on 7 September 1942, aged 59, after 13 years of religious profession and 8 years of priesthood.

The Servant of God Kazimierz Wojciechowski was born in Jasło

(Galicia) on 16 August 1904. Upon his father's death when he was five, he was taken in by Prince Lubomirski's institute in Krakow. In 1920, he began his novitiate in Klecza Dolna. He took his perpetual vows on 2 May 1928 in Oświęcim. Between 1924 and 1925, he taught music and mathematics in Łąd. On 19 May 1935, he was ordained a priest in Krakow. In 1935-1936, he was in Daszawa and Krakow, where he taught religion and was appointed director of the oratory and the Catholic Youth Association.

The Servant of God was arrested in Krakow on 23 May 1941 with other Salesian confreres. On 26 June 1941, he was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp where, after just one day, he was killed. He was 37 years old, had been a Salesian for 19 years and a priest for 6 years.

The Servant of God Franciszek Miśka was born in Swierczyniec (Upper Silesia) on 5 December 1898. He entered the novitiate in Pleszów in 1916. He made his perpetual profession in Oświęcim on 25 July 1923. He completed his theological studies at the Crocetta, Turin. He was ordained a priest on 10 July 1927 in Turin. Upon his return to Poland, he was appointed councillor and catechist at the orphanage in Przemyśl in 1929. In 1931, he was appointed rector of the house in Jaciążek and, from 1936, he lived in Łąd, first as parish priest and then as rector of the house of the Sons of Mary.

On 6 January 1941, the Salesian institute in Łąd was transformed by the Gestapo into a prison for priests from the dioceses of Włocławek and Gniezno-Poznań. Don Franciszek was entrusted by the German authorities with the task of maintaining order and providing for the prisoners. For unspecified reasons, he was transferred several times to Inowrocław, where he was brutally tortured. On 30 October 1941, the Servant of God was transported to the Dachau concentration camp (Germany). There, subjected to forced labour and inhumane living conditions, he died on 30 May 1942, the feast of the Holy Trinity, in the camp hospital barrack. He was 43 years old, had been a religious for almost 25 years and a priest for almost 15 years.

On 17 September 2003, the diocesan inquiry into the life, martyrdom and reputation for martyrdom of the Servants of God Henryk Szuman and 121 companions who died during the Second World War

as victims of Nazism, began in Warsaw. Among them were the Servants of God Jan Świerc and eight companions. The Cause was conducted by the Diocese of Pelplin. The rogatory inquiries for each candidate were initiated in their respective dioceses. The rogatory inquiry of the Servants of God Jan Świerc and seven companions took place in the Archdiocese of Krakow from 17 September 2003 to 16 May 2011. The rogatory inquiry of the Servant of God Franciszek Miśka took place in Łąd from 28 February 2004 to 12 May 2011 in Aleksandrów Kujawski. On 24 May 2011, the diocesan inquiry into the Servant of God Fr Henryk Szuman and his 121 companions was concluded, and its legal validity was recognised by this Dicastery in a decree dated 28 June 2013. On 24 May 2019, the Holy See allowed the extrapolation of the nine martyrs from the group to which they belonged and gave authorisation to proceed. A new Cause was consequently instituted for the Servant of God, Father Jan Świerc, and eight companions.

Once the *Positio* was prepared, it was submitted for examination to the Session of Historical Consultors on 28 March 2023 and to the Special Congress of Theological Consultors on 3 December 2024, both of which expressed a favourable opinion.

On 7 October 2025, the Cardinal Fathers and Bishops, gathered in Ordinary Session, recognised that the Servants of God died for their faith in Christ and their charity towards their brothers in trial.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect then reported all these things to the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIV. His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the votes of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, today declared: *The martyrdom and its cause of the Servants of God Jan Świerc and eight companions, in the case and for the purpose in question, have been proven*

The Supreme Pontiff then ordered that this decree be published and included in the records of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome, 24 October 2025

MARCELLO Card. SEMERARO
Prefect

✠ FABIO FABENE
Tit. Archb. of Montefiascone
Secretary

5.4 Decree of martyrdom of Elia Comini

DICASTERIUM DE CAUSIS SANCTORUM

BONONIENSIS

BEATIFICATIONIS SEU DECLARATIONIS MARTYRII

SERVI DEI

ELIAE COMINI

SACERDOTIS PROFESSI SOCIETATIS SANCTI FRANCISCI SALESII

in odium fidei, uti fertur, interfecti

(† 1 Octobris 1944)

DECREE OF MARTYRDOM

'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (Jn 10:11). The deep source of the pastoral style of the Servant of God Elia Comini lies in his choice to give his life for his brothers and sisters as Jesus did. This is the essence of his pastoral charity, which presents him as a model shepherd who watches over his flock, ready to give his life for it in defence of the weak and innocent.

Fr Elia Comini was born in Calvenzano di Vergato (Bologna) on 7 May 1910. His parents, Claudio, a carpenter, and Emma Limoni, a seamstress, prepared him for life and educated him in the faith. He was baptised in Calvenzano. He made his First Communion and received Confirmation in Salvaro di Grizzana. The archpriest of Salvaro, Monsignor Fidenzio Mellini, who had known Don Bosco as a young

soldier in Turin, directed the young Elia to the Salesian minor seminary in Finale Emilia (Modena). In 1925, the Servant of God entered the Salesian novitiate in Castel De' Britti (Bologna), making his temporary religious profession on 3 October 1926. Until 1928, he attended the Salesian high school in Turin-Valsalice as a student cleric, where Don Bosco's tomb was then kept. It was here that Elia began a demanding spiritual journey, as evidenced by a diary he kept until his tragic death. On the eve of the renewal of his vows, he wrote: 'I am happier than ever on this day, on the eve of the sacrifice that I hope will be pleasing to You. Receive me as a sacrificial victim, even though I do not deserve it. If you believe, give me some reward: forgive my sins of my past life; help me to become a saint.'

He completed his practical training as an assistant educator in Finale Emilia, Sondrio and Chiari. He graduated in Literature from the State University of Milan. He made his perpetual profession on 8 May 1931 and was ordained a priest in Brescia on 16 March 1935. He first taught literature at the San Bernardino aspirantate in Chiari (Brescia) and, in 1941, was transferred to the Salesian institute in Treviglio (Bergamo), where he continued his teaching career. He embodied Don Bosco's pastoral charity and the traits of Salesian loving kindness, which he transmitted to young people through his friendly character, kindness and smile.

In June 1944, while the direct confrontation between German and Allied troops was taking place in the area between Monte Salvaro and Monte Sole in the Emilian Apennines, Fr Elia returned to his native land to assist his elderly and lonely mother. Until mid-September 1944, he helped the elderly parish priest Monsignor Mellini, devoting himself to catechesis, retreats, preaching and celebrating the Eucharist. Together with the Servant of God Martino Capelli, a Dehonian, he devoted himself continuously to helping, consoling, administering the sacraments and burying the dead.

The three days of suffering for Father Elia Comini and Father Martino Capelli began on Friday, 29 September. In the parish of Salvaro, full of refugees, news arrived that following a clash with the partisans, the terrible SS had captured 69 people, among whom were some dying people in need of comfort. Father Elia celebrated his last Mass very

early in the morning; then, with Father Martino, he went to help the wounded, the killed, and the arrested, carrying the tabernacle with the Eucharist and the Holy Oils. In Creda di Salvaro, the two priests were arrested, used 'like mules' and forced to carry ammunition. In the evening, they were locked up in the stables of Pioppe di Salvaro. On Saturday 30 September, Father Elia and Father Martino spent all their energy comforting the many men locked up with them. In the evening, they confessed to each other. The following day, at dusk, machine-gun fire inexorably mowed down the 46 victims of what would go down in history as the Massacre of Pioppe di Salvaro. Witnesses who were a short distance from the scene of the massacre could hear Father Comini's voice leading the Litany and then the sound of gunfire. Before collapsing, mortally wounded, Father Comini gave absolution to everyone and cried out, 'Mercy, mercy!' His body, along with those of the others who had been killed, was scattered in the River Reno.

By virtue of his reputation for holiness, a diocesan inquiry was held at the Archiepiscopal Curia of Bologna from 3 December 1995 to 25 November 2001, the validity of which was recognised by the then Congregation for the Causes of Saints by decree of 1 October 2004. Once the *Positio super virtutibus* had been prepared, it was discussed, according to the usual procedure, whether the Servant of God had exercised heroic virtues. The Special Congress of Theological Consultors was held on 4 April 2017, with a positive outcome. Subsequently, following a martyrdom re-examination of the Servant of God's story, at the request of the Postulation, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints granted the change of the Cause's wording from *super virtutibus* to *super martyrio*. Once the *Positio suppletiva super martyrio* had been prepared and the martyrdom of the Servant of God had been studied in depth, it was discussed, according to the usual procedure, whether the death of the Servant of God was a true martyrdom. On 25 February 2020, the Session of the Historical Consultors was held, and on 11 April 2024, the Special Congress of Theological Consultors was celebrated, both with favourable opinions. The Cardinal Fathers and Bishops, in the Ordinary Session of 10 December 2024, recognised that the aforementioned Servant of God was killed for his fidelity to Christ and to the Church.

The undersigned Cardinal Prefect then reported all this information to His Holiness Pope Francis. His Holiness, accepting and confirming the votes of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, today declared: *The martyrdom and the cause that led to the martyrdom of the Servant of God Elia Comini, professed priest of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, are hereby confirmed, in hatred of the faith.*

The Supreme Pontiff then ordered that this decree be published and included in the records of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome on 18 December 2024.

MARCELLO Card. SEMERARO
Prefect

✠ FABIO FABENE
Tit. Archb. of Montefiascone
Secretary

5.2 Deceased confreres (2nd list July-December 2025)

“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 DE COOMAN Adriaan	Leuven	01/07/2025	88	BEN
L PÉREZ RÚA Arturo	Seville	03/07/2025	78	SMX
P WAUTERS Jan	Heverlee	04/07/2025	101	BEN
P CASETTO Bruno	Castello di Godego (TV)	05/07/2025	83	INE
P KUJUR Fabianus	Siliguri	05/07/2025	65	INC
L EIJCK Pierre	Nijmegen	06/07/2025	99	BEN
P PUDUSSERY George	Aluva, Kerala	07/07/2025	91	INK
P BAXLA Zephyrinus	Bhagitoli, Jharkhand	07/07/2025	73	INS
P MAILLO SANCHEZ José María	Avila	10/07/2025	86	SSM
L PERSICO Valentino	Salerno (SA)	10/07/2025	87	IME
P LAMPARELLI Ferdinando	Salerno (SA)	12/07/2025	92	IME
P GRAMAGLIA Giorgio	Busca (CN)	15/07/2025	78	ICP
P MYLAPARAMPIL Thomas	Turin (TO)	19/07/2025	89	ICP
L GAVINELLI Sandro	Cumbayá	21/07/2025	79	ECU
P SUBERVIOLA GONZÁLEZ Luis Ángel	El Campello (Alicante)	22/07/2025	88	SMX
P POFFO Ivo	Porto Alegre - RS	24/07/2025	84	BPA
P BOURDON Emile	Toulon	26/07/2025	99	FRB
P KETCHEDJIAN LLEIZIAN Antonio	Montevideo	26/07/2025	86	URU
P TENNI Luciano	Willemstad, Curaçao	01/08/2025	84	VEN
L CORTÉS MARTÍNEZ Víctor	Cartagena, Murcia	01/08/2025	74	SMX
P RILEY Christopher Keith	Mittagong, New South Wales	01/08/2025	70	AUL
P ŻURAWSKI Tadeusz	Łódź	02/08/2025	88	PLE
P BANDINI Giuseppe	Rome	02/08/2025	96	ICC
L BRAGANZA Frank	Tuem, Goa	02/08/2025	85	INP
S ARAKAWA Massimiliano Maria Kolbe Joji	Chofu, Tokyo	03/08/2025	33	GIA
P PUJALSKI Alejandro	Córdoba	03/08/2025	89	ARN
P PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ Juan	Alicante	05/08/2025	88	SMX
P NIGRIS Herman	Santa Cruz - San Carlos	08/08/2025	93	BOL
P GIRALDO ZULUAGA José de Jesús	Medellín	10/08/2025	95	COM
P ANGULO RUIZ José Victoriano de Jesús	Caracas	11/08/2025	93	VEN
P BONGIORNO Felice	Catania	11/08/2025	79	ISI
P IANTORNO Mario	San Isidro (Buenos Aires)	12/08/2025	94	ARS
P RUIZ CABEZA Nicolás	León	13/08/2025	93	SSM
L FIHLO MOJELA Ntsane Colern	Ennerdale, Johannesburg	14/08/2025	44	AFM
P PINGITORE Valerio	Candiolo (TO)	16/08/2025	84	ICP
L VESPA Pietro	Rome	19/08/2025	97	ICC
P TSANG TSONG Lai Francis	Hong Kong	20/08/2025	93	CIN

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P TALIANI Palmerio	Vasto (CH)	22/08/2025	99	ICC
P SAENEN André	Saint-Genis Laval	27/08/2025	92	FRB
P VIRANO Giovanni Lorenzo	Turin (TO)	29/08/2025	89	ICP
P FURLAN Giovanni	Castello di Godego (TV)	31/08/2025	86	INE
L DALMONICO Genesio	Campinas - SP	31/08/2025	103	BSP
P ALBASINI Vittorio	Rome	02/09/2025	89	ICC
P LIEBEROM Herman	Wijchen	03/09/2025	93	BEN
P OSIKOVSKYN Ramón	San Justo (Buenos Aires)	04/09/2025	94	ARS
P CHIARI Gabriele	Ravenna	06/09/2025	79	ILE
L SARTORATO Ilario	Sanremo (IM)	10/09/2025	75	ICC
P QUIJANO UBAL Carlos	Montevideo	10/09/2025	70	URU
P TORRIGIANI Elio	Rome	11/09/2025	92	ICC
P MEDINA HUERTAS José	Sevilla	19/09/2025	85	SMX
P GONZÁLEZ Alberto	San Juan	20/09/2025	96	ARN
P PELLE Antonio	Naples	27/09/2025	86	IME
P SANZ PÉREZ Francisco	El Campello (Alicante)	30/09/2025	78	SMX
L PUTZU Cirillo	Rome	02/10/2025	97	ICC
L MARIOTTI Alessandro	Rome	05/10/2025	91	ICC
P MAÑAS Rafael	San Isidro, Buenos Aires	06/10/2025	92	ARS
P GORCZAKOWSKI Stanisław	Chocianów	06/10/2025	65	PLO
P GASCÓ MOLINA José	El Campello, Alicante	09/10/2025	93	SMX
L ROSANAS ABEL Juan	Barcelona	10/10/2025	83	SMX
P PREST John Lawrence	Northcote, Victoria	10/10/2025	84	AUL
P WEBER Aloys	Colonia	14/10/2025	89	GER
L XILLO Pietro	Turin (TO)	15/10/2025	95	ICP
P RUSINEK Waclaw	Kraszewo-Czubaki	15/10/2025	89	PLE
P HORVAT Anton	Trstenik	21/10/2025	89	SLO
P BRIFFA John Robert	Heathcote, New South Wales	22/10/2025	97	AUL
P BEGNI Giacomo	São Paulo	22/10/2025	73	BSP
P BERTAPELLE Angelo Giuseppe	Castello di Godego (TV)	24/10/2025	84	INE
P AYESA EZQUER José María	Barcelona	27/10/2025	82	SMX
P CORREAS MONTERO Carlos	Seville	30/10/2025	75	SMX
L D'SOUZA Frederick	Odxel, Goa	02/11/2025	88	INP
P BOZZETTO Antonio	Venice-Mestre	04/11/2025	98	INE
P DÍAZ DÍAZ Gumersindo	Jarabacoa	05/11/2025	88	ANT
P VIANA LIMA Aguinaldo	Recife - PE	07/11/2025	97	BRE
P PARACKATTE Mathew	Shillong, Meghalaya	07/11/2025	73	INS
P MOLONEY Francis James	Melbourne, Victoria	08/11/2025	85	AUL
P SAAVEDRA Moreno Patricio	Santiago	10/11/2025	95	CIL
P CAVAGGION Giovanni	Santiago	10/11/2025	90	CIL
P HEROVEN Ulrich	Soyen	12/11/2025	80	GER
P GIANOLIO Giuseppe	Turin (TO)	13/11/2025	98	ICP
P FUENTES SEGURA Francisco	Seville	14/11/2025	81	SMX
P PETITCLERC Jean-Marie	Langrune-sur-Mer, Normandia	17/11/2025	72	FRB
P PICHARDO SÁNCHEZ Juan	Zapopan, Jal.	20/11/2025	68	MEG
P THALANANY Mathew	Mumbai	22/11/2025	96	INB

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P MEDINA GONZÁLEZ Gilberto	Bogotá	23/11/2025	84	COB
P MARTÍN CILLERO Fidel	Seville	23/11/2025	83	SMX
P THIEMANN Johannes	Cologne	25/11/2025	85	GER
P DAVID Jayson	Manila	26/11/2025	50	FIN
P ISAKA Mathias Nchudi	Dar es Salaam	27/11/2025	48	TZA
L RIPPBERGER Dieter	Munich	28/11/2025	81	GER
P DELLA GASPERA Dante	Ciudad de Panamá	30/11/2025	81	CAM
P BAJAC MASSONE Carlos	Montevideo	02/12/2025	75	URU
P CAMPOS FILHO Didimo de	Araçatuba - SP	03/12/2025	71	BCG
L VALERI Nello	Shillong, Meghalaya	04/12/2025	87	INS
L BOTTO Franco	Turin (TO)	06/12/2025	88	ICP
P CINGERLE Vinko	Trstenik	08/12/2025	70	SLO
P VITTORI Cesare	Castello di Godego (TV)	09/12/2025	95	INE
P ALVAREZ ROMAN Adolfo	Guayaquil	10/12/2025	93	ECU
P VALENSISE Alessandro	Messina	11/12/2025	88	ISI
P RODRÍGUEZ Maldonado Manuel	Mexico City	11/12/2025	88	MEM
P KELLY Frank	Etobicoke, Ontario	11/12/2025	86	SUE
P ALAPPAT Joseph	Bandlaguda Jagir, Hyderabad	14/12/2025	85	INH
L REY VIDAL Manuel Francisco	La Coruña	16/12/2025	85	SSM
P PANTALEONE Rizziero	Brescia	16/12/2025	73	ILE
P ŽEMBERA Jozef	Topolčany	16/12/2025	64	SLK
P BOGUSKI Stanisław	Piła	17/12/2025	90	PLN
P TOSO Giorgio Guglielmo	Caracas	17/12/2025	86	VEN
P AUGUSTINE Arokiasamy	Jawadhi Hills	17/12/2025	56	INM
P MURRAY John Thomas	Chertsey, Surrey	19/12/2025	92	GBR
P SOTO CRUZ Ángel Rogelio	Santo Domingo	19/12/2025	83	ANT
P COLOMBO Gianluigi	Castano Primo (MI)	21/12/2025	80	ILE
L MAZZOCCHIN Giuseppe	Turin (TO)	22/12/2025	83	ICP
P DELLAGIACOMA Alberto	Cumbayá	23/12/2025	86	ECU
P CORTEZ Emilio	San Isidro, Buenos Aires	23/12/2025	74	ARS
P VYVODA Jan	Praga	26/12/2025	101	CEP
P FRANCIA HERNÁNDEZ Alfonso	Seville	28/12/2025	88	SMX

