

WHY WE HAVE LIFE IN ABUNDANCE

My thought goes to the Salesian presences around the world because our dream is that they might be true *dispensers* of life to so many young people, and a life in abundance, an authentic, true life which gives them dignity and helps them also experience the great gift that God is in their lives.

The celebration of Easter is very near, dear Salesian Family and friends, readers of the *Salesian Bulletin*.

We know very well what celebrating Easter means. In fact, we are so familiar with it that every year we need to deepen ever more our understanding of the great wealth that this reality holds.

Jesus, the Lord, the Risen One, returns to LIFE, with capital letters, the Other Life. In this way, God the Father manifests to the world that neither death nor all that causes it has the final word—not violence, not egoism, not wars—and not other deaths like the exhaustion and the agony of people who suffer in their human relationships because they are exploited, cast out, subjugated, or excluded. No—these do not have the final word because God wants us human beings to ***have life and have it in abundance***.

From the easternmost point to the farthest west, following the path the sun takes as it makes its way over the earth

Inevitably, my thought goes to the Salesian presences around the world because our dream is that they might be true *dispensers* of life to so many young people, and a life in abundance, an authentic, true life which gives them dignity and helps them also experience the great gift that God is in their lives. My thoughts fly from east to west. They start in the place in the Salesian world that is the first to see the light each day: the Samoan island of Savaii, where I got to know beautiful young people and a community that accompanies them in their daily life. Then, too, my thoughts go to the westernmost presences of the Salesian world: on the west coast of the United States.

Almost as when Don Bosco dreamt of the expansion of his Congregation, it makes me happy to know that in so many places the simple houses of our Salesian world are houses which offer life to boys and girls. It is so in Samoa, the Solomon Islands, or Papua New Guinea, with a wonderful preparation for the world of work that prepares them for life. It is also so in Calcutta, or in Delhi, or Chennai—and many other places—with homes in which boys and girls have left behind their life on the streets and are opening up to true life for they have found a house that is a home.

So it is in the Salesian house in Istanbul or wounded Aleppo: the street kids come together and find life in hundreds of houses of our Salesian Family in Africa: street children in Addis Ababa and girls rescued from sexual abuse in Sierra Leone, as well as “os meninhos da rua” (the street kids) in Mozambique and Angola.

Immigrant young people welcomed into the homes of the Salesian Family in Catania, Naples, and so many other Salesian presences in Europe are also looking for life.

In addition, the adolescents and young adults who have left behind guerilla warfare in Colombia and now live in Ciudad Don Bosco (Don Bosco City) in Medellin find life. So do the thousands of displaced people on the US Mexican border in Tijuana, where our brothers and sisters share life with them in a very simple way.

The celebration of the Passover of the Lord inspires all of this, and much more, in me. There can be no celebration without God, without His Mystery, without the strength of the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus—lest it be an “empty spiritualist” celebration in which life and the suffering of the children of God seem not to matter. They matter to Jesus; day by day, He intends to accompany the life of His people, especially the poor and the most fragile.

My friends, let us not be ignorant of these simple but very important things lest they escape our attention. May the Easter celebrations fill us with joy, hope, and profound faith, and may we set our sights permanently on offering life—abundant life; life that is worthy, that is authentically human—to those whose lives are wounded and in shambles on account of those things which are not right in our world. I invite you, with the power of the Resurrection, *never to allow yourselves to get used to seeing others who truly do not have a good life.*

Blessed Easter!