

A SALESIAN FAMILY THAT WITNESSES TO HOPE

As we have had occasion to experience, the circumstances tied to the pandemic over these months have revealed some signs of a blurring of hope. But I want to insist on and point to some of the fully understood signs of the beauty of evangelical hope we have experienced, signs that place us on a path where we can express the power of the Salesian charism when it is lived in hope. I feel that as Don Bosco's Family in the Church and the world this is the testimony expected of us: the ability to live in hope. Some proposals for continuing this path:

1. Let us rediscover that "faith and hope go forward together".¹

Commitment: let us imitate Don Bosco and his great capacity for enthusing his youngsters to live life as a celebration and "faith as happiness"².

2. Let us learn that prayer is the school of hope³

Commitment: let us journey with the young and their families by praying, learning to pray better and exercising hope by praying better and better.

3. Let us grow by living with a sense of the fatigue of daily life.

Commitment: let us help the young and their families, and the People of God, to discover the gifts that God gives us, without complaint, proposing objectives that enthuse them and take away monotony and mediocrity.

4. Let us live hope especially in times of difficulty and loss.

Commitment: Let us allow ourselves to be educated by God. Let us trust him especially in times of darkness. (St Teresa of Avila, a great mystic, recognises that dryness is God's invitation to "move forward").

5. Hope as a decisive return to the poor and excluded.

Commitment: in our family, fidelity to the Lord with Don Bosco passes above all through the preferential option for the poorest, the most abandoned and the excluded.

6. Recognising ourselves in the other's pain.

Commitment: to be faithful to Don Bosco today, the Father of our Salesian Family, means being actively on the side of those who suffer any kind of injustice.

7. Converting to hope is believing in the plan of the Gospel.

Commitment: for this reason, as the Salesian Family of Don Bosco, we cannot fail to show who is the reason for our Hope, the God of Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

8. Building a world that gives hope to the future generations

Commitment: to read (personal, in a family, in groups), to reflect and to spread the latest Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* of Pope Francis. The Encyclical places the fraternity at the center of all relationship in order to heal the world and to protect the creation.

"We, Christians, live by hope: death is only the penultimate word, but the last word is God, the word of the Resurrection, of the fullness of life and eternal life. When we abandon ourselves to trust in God and trust in Him we have a certainty that gives us serenity, which, as human being, *we do not have everything in our hands, but are in God's hands*. Christians shape their life not with their own strength, but with the strength of the Holy Spirit. In the moment of uncertainty, we must abandon ourselves trustfully into His guidance."⁴

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother,
teach us to believe,
to hope and to love together with you.
Show us the way to The Kingdom!
Star of the Sea, shine upon us
and guide us on our way."⁵ Amen.

¹ FRANCIS. *General audience Wednesday, 20 September 2017.*

² *20th Special General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco*, no. 328.

³ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*: title of the first part of the Encyclical, no. 32.

⁴ W. KASPER – G. AUGUSTIN, *Comunione e Speranza. Testimoniare la fede al tempo del coronavirus*, [Communion and Hope: Witnessing to faith at the time of the coronavirus] LEV, Vatican City 2020, p. 121.

⁵ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 50.