

Art. 13. Precious Heritage

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Don Bosco lived and passed down to the members of his Family an original style of life and action: the Salesian Spirit.¹

The Salesian Spirit is a quintessential Gospel experience, whose source is in the very heart of Christ, who urges those who live it to become gift and to give service. It is nourished by the carrying out of apostolic charity, the principal interior dynamic which unites passion for God and passion for neighbor. It is manifested in a Sacramental spirituality, which is made actual by living daily life with joy and optimism and in responsible service within the ecclesial community and civic society. It requires a demanding "ascetical method" expressed through a serene and joyous countenance, in keeping with Don Bosco's urging: "work and temperance."²

CONSIDERATIONS

Core themes

1. Salesian Spirit
2. Ascetical Methodology

Keys to Understanding

A. The first article of the *Project of Apostolic Life* states that the Holy Spirit formed in Don Bosco the heart of a Father and Teacher, capable of total dedication, and inspired in him an educational method permeated by the "charity of the Good Shepherd". Don Bosco was the first to "live" the Salesian Spirit, putting into action its inspirations and virtues and letting himself, above all, be guided by the Holy Spirit. The Salesian Spirit is the essential part of Don Bosco's spiritual patrimony; it is a heritage permeated by his sanctity because it leads to the Gospel and, therefore, to Christ himself.

B. The first paragraph of this article is an attempt at a description of the Salesian Spirit. This is a vast and profound reality because it pertains to life. The formula "Salesian Spirit," used by Don Bosco when exhorting his Salesians to keep the good spirit, expresses "the unity of spirit" and "the spirit of the Rule." The Special General Chapter of the Salesians describes it as:

our own style of thought and feeling, of life and activity, in putting into operation the specific vocation and the mission which the Holy Spirit does not cease to give us. More specifically, the salesian spirit is the complex of the elements and values of the world of men and of the Christian mystery... to which the sons of Don Bosco, gathering the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and by reason of their mission are particularly sensitive, as much in their interior disposition as in their outward behaviour.

¹*Salesian Family Charter*. 37.

²*The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco*. Vol. XII, 338.
Ibid. XIV, 89.
Ibid. XV, 148.

The summary formula *style of life and of action* means taking on as our own the ways the Lord sees, feels, and acts. It means taking on a way of working in society, of relating with others, and of standing before God which was characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth.

C. The Salesian Spirit involves the entire human person. It is a reality which is taken on in a vital way - in such a way as to become part of the person. Thus, the Salesian Cooperator "radiates" the Salesian Spirit in all the "little things" and gestures and actions of each day. It is lived within the Church by all the members of Don Bosco's apostolic Family and constitutes a factor which distinguishes them in relation to other Catholics: in the case of a Priest or a Deacon, Salesian Cooperators live as Ordained men in the exercise of their ministry or, in the case of the laity, as men and women according to the lay condition proper to them and in activities typical of the laity, as is the case with the majority of the Cooperators. "Being Salesian" thus assumes different concrete expressions.

D. The Salesian Spirit is a typical Gospel experience. The concrete reality that took place in Christian Revelation is Jesus Christ. He is the *Unicum* (the Only One) capable of giving ultimate satisfaction to anyone who examines reality in a critical way. Asceticism, i.e., the critical gaze on and interaction with reality, consists of an attitude of continuous identification with the Mystery of Jesus Christ. A confirmation of this comes from prayer and the liturgy: "gazing upon" Christ and the Crucifix. For Benedict XVI, dealing with God is already a necessity in and of itself – as much as breathing each day is for us... If God were not present, we would not be able to breathe in a proper way. Living the Salesian Spirit, therefore, means making the Lord Jesus' way of saying, feeling, and acting one's own. "It has its source in the very heart of Christ," says the text. It means taking on a way of working in the world, relating to others, and staying before God which was typical of Jesus of Nazareth. It characterizes and gives a concrete tone to the Cooperators' presence and action in the world as well as to their relationships with their brothers and sisters and their rapport with God.

The Salesian Spirit concerns the *entirety* of one's person and life. It is not a garment that one puts on and takes off according to the Seasons: it is a reality which must be assimilated vitally, in such a way as to *become part of* a person. One does not live it every now and then or only in one or another area of one's action, work, and life: it pervades one's whole life by conferring upon one's being and acting a concrete, characteristic tone.

In summary, the Salesian Cooperator not only *does* good and useful things which correspond to the Salesian ideal but he or she is a Salesian in the very depths of his or her being, from head to toe. And this is felt, seen, and radiated in the little things, in daily gestures, and in big decisions. It is perceived and felt most greatly when a group of Cooperators come together for an experience of a work in common or at gatherings: without any special effort, a climate, an atmosphere, is created immediately... And when each one returns home, it comes spontaneously to say: "I breathed Salesian air and I felt completely at ease. Beauty and worthiness also exist elsewhere but 'that something' is missing." "That something" is precisely the Salesian Spirit!

E. "Work and Temperance" are the fourth and fifth Diamonds placed on the mantle at the shoulders of the Personage in the "Dream of the Ten Diamonds," which is narrated in volume XV of the *Biographical Memoirs*. The Diamond of "Work" is placed on the right shoulder, as if to indicate the primacy of that "ecstasy of work" of which St. Francis de Sales speaks in his *Theotimus* and which is totally animated by the profound dynamics of Faith, of Hope, and, above all, of Charity. Work is the fundamental trait of the

Salesian: The Salesian is a worker. Don Cagliero used to say: "He who does not work is not Salesian." For Don Bosco, work is not just any kind of activity; rather, it is full-time dedication to the mission with all of one's abilities. This does not encompass only manual work but also intellectual and apostolic ones. Whoever writes, confesses, preaches, studies, or cleans the house – each one works for souls. Our work is characterized by pastoral charity and right intention.

The Diamond of "Temperance," placed on the left shoulder, indicates a general self-control in a lifestyle accompanied by a sense of measure and equilibrium. Temperance is that Cardinal Virtue which moderates passions, words, and actions according to reason and the demands of Christian life. Humility, moderation, simplicity, and austerity gravitate around temperance. Its manifestations in daily life are equilibrium (moderation in all things), the ability to collaborate, interior and exterior calm, and a serene and authoritative rapport with everyone, but especially with the young.

Summing up: It is in this way that one perceives the *depth* to which the Salesian Spirit *unites and keeps united*, forever, permanently, all the members of the Association and of the Family. The same blood, physically and biologically, unites all the members of the same human family. The same Salesian Spirit unites Salesian brothers and sisters. This is a sign and a criterion of holy parentage. Wherever it is missing, a "vital" belonging to the Association also lacks; in that case, official membership and the Promise made were of little significance or efficacy.

References

Benedetto XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*.

Benedetto XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*: Esortazione Apostolica Postsinodale sull'Eucaristia fonte e culmine della vita e della missione della Chiesa (22 febbraio 2007).

Chavez P., *Carta d'Identità*, art. 34.

Memorie Biografiche XII, 466.

Vecchi J., *Atti del Capitolo Superiore* 367.

Viganò E., *Atti del Capitolo Superiore* 300.

from the *Regulations to the Project of Apostolic Life*

Art. 6 Family Spirit

§1. To make the sense of belonging to the Association grow, Salesian Cooperators support each other through the sharing of spiritual goods.

§2. They show their human and Christian solidarity in a concrete way to those Salesian Cooperators who are ill and in difficulty, accompanying them also with their affection and their prayer.

§3. In communion with the deceased Salesian Cooperators and benefactors, and grateful for their witness, they continue their mission with fidelity. They pray for them, in particular, in the celebration of the Mass in memory of Mamma Margaret.

§4. In fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church, and to Her pastoral guidelines concerning family issues, the Association gives attention to those members who are undergoing the consequences of separation and/or divorce. The Association accompanies them along this difficult life and faith journey which they are traveling. Such an attitude will be met with a similar one on the part of the member, with the commitment to live one's present condition trusting in the infinite mercy of the Father, and maintaining a tenor of life which is coherent with the commitments assumed with the Promise.

§5. In keeping with the Family Spirit, the Association shows itself open to Religious of the Salesian Family who have legitimately left their Institute, and who feel themselves forever tied to the spirit of Don Bosco.

For these persons, official entrance into the Association requires accepting the Project of Apostolic Life. If the person requests it, he or she agrees with the Delegate on a formative itinerary. He/she will also decide as to the manner of the making of the Promise, whether it will be public or private.

Art. 11 Style of Action

§1. Don Bosco was a practical and enterprising man, an untiring and creative worker, animated by an uninterrupted and profound interior life. Faithful to his spirit and attentive to reality, Salesian Cooperators have a sense of the concrete. They discern the signs of the times and with a spirit of initiative push themselves to give appropriate responses to the needs of the youth in their territory and in society. They are constantly ready to verify and to re-adapt their response.

§2. They accompany their action with an attitude of contemplation, which urges them to seek and to recognize the mystery of God's presence in everyday life and the face of Christ in their brothers and sisters. Moreover, sustained by the Spirit, they confront with serenity the difficulties of life and the joys and the sufferings which accompany their apostolic work.

Art. 12 Spiritual Life

§1. Salesian Cooperators nourish their interior life through daily dialogue with the Lord, participation in the Sacraments, and with Lectio Divina.

§2. They celebrate the traditional Salesian Feast Days.

§3. If they have the possibility, they also participate in the spiritual exercises, retreats, and other initiatives proposed by the Association.

§4. They value spiritual guidance as accompaniment, exercised particularly by Salesians (both Religious – FMA and SDB – and lay).

§5. The Association is open to all. In its planning, it will facilitate the participation of its own members and of those who feel one with the Salesian charism.

from the *Original Rule of 1876* by St. John Bosco

Article VII. Religious Exercises

1. Salesian associates [Cooperators] are not bound to any [special] external practice. On the other hand, if their life is to be in some way modeled on that of religious living in community, they are encouraged to cultivate modesty in dress, frugality in eating and drinking, simplicity in household furnishings, moral restraint in speech and the exact fulfillment of the duties of their state in life. They should also see to it that their dependents observe Sundays and holy days.

2. Associates are encouraged to set aside at least a few days for a yearly spiritual retreat. On the last day of each month or on some other convenient day, they shall make their Exercise for a Happy Death, and make their confession and communion as if it was really their last.

3. Each day, they shall recite one Our Father and one Hail Mary in honor of St. Francis de Sales for the intention of the Supreme Pontiff. Priests and those who recite the canonical hours or the Office of the Blessed Virgin need not say those prayers. They should just pray the divine office for the same intention.

4. Members shall endeavor to receive the Sacraments of Confession and Communion with the greatest possible frequency.

Notice: Everyone is strongly urged to observe these rules for the many advantages that may be gained. But to remove any qualms of conscience that may arise, it should be understood that their observance is not binding under penalty of either mortal or venial sin, except when it is a question of things either prescribed or forbidden by God's commandments or by precepts of holy Mother Church.

from the *Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family*

Art. 21. Apostolic Co-responsibility

3. Through personal witness and word of mouth to spread the Salesian spirit: Salesian humanism invests in every individual, and obliges all educators to work tirelessly for its expansion, also in sometimes difficult circumstances; it is the foundation for a new civilisation of love.

4. Promoting the Salesian Movement: Don Bosco involved many people in his educational and missionary work; at all levels he tried to ensure that attention was given to his boys and to people in need. The large Salesian Movement and the links among the many forces at work within it are making a contribution from which everyone can usefully benefit.

from the *Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco*

Volume XII, p. 338. Then my guide said to me, "Look and pay close attention, even though you will not understand what I am now telling you. What you have seen is the harvest awaiting the Salesians. Do you see how immense a harvest it is? This vast field you stand on is the Salesians' field of labor.

The Salesians whom you see are already at work and you know them, but then the horizon extends as far as you can see, filled with people yet unknown to you. This means that not only in this century but also in the next and in future centuries, Salesians will labor in fields of their own. Do you know under what conditions the achievements you have seen are to be reached? I will tell you. Take heed: you must have these words engraved on your coat-of-arms as your watchword, your badge. Note them well: *Work and temperance will make the Salesian Congregation flourish.* Have these words explained repeatedly and insistently. Compile and print a handbook that will clearly explain that work and temperance are the legacy you are bequeathing to the Congregation, and will be also its glory."

"I will most willingly do so," I replied. "It is wholly in keeping with our purpose. It is what I keep insisting upon day after day and stress upon every occasion."

"Are you really quite convinced? Have you thoroughly understood me? This is the heritage you will leave them. Tell them clearly that as long as they live by it, they will have followers from the south, the north, the east and the west. Now bring the spiritual retreat to a close and send them on their way. These will set the norm; others will follow."

Volume XIV, p. 89. Don Bosco had another dream which he narrated on May 9. In it he saw the fierce battles which faced the men called to his Congregation, and he was given several valuable instructions for all his sons and sound advice for the future.

[I saw] a hard-fought, long-drawn-out battle between youngsters and a varied array of warriors who were armed with strange weapons. Survivors were few.

A second fiercer and more terrifying battle was being waged by gigantic monsters fully armed, well-trained tall men who unfurled a huge banner, the center of which bore an inscription in gold, *Maria Auxilium Christianorum.* The combat was long and bloody, but the soldiers fighting under the banner were protected against hurt and conquered a vast plain. The boys who had survived the previous battle linked forces with them, each combatant holding a crucifix in his right hand and a miniature of the banner in his left. After engaging together in several sallies over that vast plain, they split, some heading eastward, a few to the north, and many for the south. Once they all left, the same skirmishes, maneuvers and leavetskings were repeated by others.

I recognized some boys who fought in the first skirmishes, but none of the others, who nevertheless seemed to know me and asked me many questions.

Shortly afterward I witnessed a shower of flashing, fiery tongues of many colors, followed by thunder and then clear skies. Then I found myself in a charming garden. A man who looked like Saint Francis de Sales silently handed me a booklet. I asked him who he was. "Read the book," was the reply.

I opened it, but had trouble reading, managing only to make out these precise words:

"For the Novices: Obedience in all things. Through obedience they will deserve God's blessings and the good will of men. Through diligence they will fight and overcome the snares set by the enemies of their souls.

"For the Confreres: Jealously safeguard the virtue of chastity. Love your confreres' good name, promote

the honor of the Congregation.

"For the Directors: Take every care, make every effort to observe and promote observance of the rules through which everyone's life is consecrated to God.

"For the Superior" Total self-sacrifice, so as to draw himself and his charges to God."

The book said many other things, but I couldn't read any further, for the paper turned as blue as the ink.

"Who are you?" I again asked the man who serenely gazed at me. "Good people everywhere know me. I have been sent to tell you of future events."

"What are they?"

"Those you have already seen and those which you will ask about."

"How can I foster vocations?"

"The Salesians will harvest many vocations by their good example, by being endlessly kind toward their pupils, and by urging them constantly to receive Holy Communion often."

"What should we bear in mind when admitting novices?"

"Reject idlers and gluttons."

"And when admitting to vows?"

"Make sure that they are well grounded in chastity."

"How are we to maintain the right spirit in our houses?"

"Let superiors very often write, visit and welcome the confreres, dealing kindly with them."

"What of our foreign missions?"

"Send men of sound morality and recall any who give you serious reason to doubt; look for and foster native vocations."

"Is our Congregation on the right path?"

"Let those who do good keep doing good. [Rev. 22, 11] Not to go forward is to go backward. [St. Gregory the Great] The man who stands firm to the end will be saved." [Mt. 10, 22]

"Will the Congregation grow?"

"It will reach out so that no one will be able to check its growth, as long as the superiors meet their obligations."

"Will it have a long life?"

"Yes, but only as long as its members love work and temperance. Should either of these two pillars fall, your entire edifice will collapse and crush superiors, subjects and followers beneath it."

Volume XV, p. 148. *Spiritus Sancti gratia illuminet sensus et corda nostra, Amen* [May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and hearts, Amen].

Norms for the Salesian Society

On September 10 of this year 1881, the day the Church dedicates to the glorious name of Mary, the Salesians were assembled at San Benigno Canavese for their spiritual retreat.

On the night of September 10-11, while I was asleep, I dreamed that I was in a richly adorned hall. I seemed to be strolling up and down its length with the directors of our houses when a man of majestic mien—so majestic that none of us could fix our gaze on him—appeared among us. Glancing at us in utter silence, he too started to pace the hall several steps from us. He was clad in a rich mantle or cape closed at the front of the neck with a scarf from which a ribbon hung down on his chest. The scarf was inscribed in luminous letters: *Pia Salesianorum Societas anno 1881* [The Pious Salesian Society in 1881]; on the ribbon were the words; *qualis esse debet* [what it ought to be]. Ten diamonds of extraordinary size and brilliance adorning that august person kept our gaze from being fixed upon him. Three of the diamonds he wore on his chest: on one was written the word Faith, on another was written Hope, and the third over his heart bore the word Charity. The fourth diamond, affixed to his right shoulder, was inscribed Work; the fifth, on his left shoulder, read Temperance. The remaining five diamonds adorning the back of his cloak were set into a quadrangle; the largest and most brilliant sparkled in the very center, and on it was written Obedience. The diamond to its upper right read Vow of Poverty, and that below it, Reward. On the diamond to the upper left was written Vow of Chastity; its sparkle had a brilliance all its own and drew our gaze as a magnet attracts iron. Beneath it was a diamond inscribed Fasting. These four diamonds focused their dazzling rays upon the one in the center; their rays, resembling tongues of fire, flickered upward, forming various maxims.

The diamond Faith emitted rays with the words: "Take up the shield of faith that you may fight against the devil's wiles." Another ray proclaimed: "Faith without works is dead. Not the hearers but the doers of the law will possess the kingdom of God."

On the rays of Hope were the words: "Hope is in the Lord, not in men. Let your hearts rest where true joys are found."

The rays of Charity read: "Bear one another's burdens if you want to fulfill My law. Love and you shall be loved. Love your souls and the souls of your charges. Recite the Divine Office devoutly, celebrate Mass attentively, visit the Holy of Holies with great love."

On the word Work: "The remedy for concupiscence, a powerful weapon against the devil's wiles."

On Temperance: "Remove the fuel and the fire will die out. Make a pact with your eyes, with your cravings, your sleeping, lest these enemies plunder your souls. Self-gratification and chastity cannot co-exist."

On the rays of Obedience: "The foundation of the whole edifice and a précis of sanctity."

On the rays of Poverty: "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Riches are thorns. Poverty is not made of words but is in the hearts and deeds. Poverty will open the gates of heaven and enter it."

On the rays of Chastity: "All virtues come with it. The clean of heart will see God's mysteries and God Himself."

On the rays of Reward: "If the lavish rewards are delightful, do not be deterred by the many hardships. He who suffers with Me will rejoice with Me. For My friends, suffering is momentary, but heavenly happiness is everlasting."

On the rays of Fasting: "The most powerful weapon against the devil's snares. The safeguard of all virtues. By it devils of every sort are cast out."

A wide, rose-colored ribbon formed the edge of the lower hem of the cloak and on it was written: "Topic for Sermons, Morning, Noon and Night: Glean even bits of virtues and you will build a great edifice of sanctity for yourselves. Woe to you who despise small things; you shall fall little by little."

Up to this point the directors were either standing or kneeling, totally bewildered and silent. But then Father Rua, as though beside himself, exclaimed, "Let's make a note of this, lest we forget it." He sought a pen but found none. Pulling out his wallet, he rummaged through it in vain. "I will remember," Father Durando said. "I intend to write it down," Father Fagnano retorted and began writing with the stem of a rose. All were surprised and they found they could read the writing. When Father Fagnano was through, Father Costamagna dictated these words: "Charity understands all things, bears all things, overcomes all things. Let us preach this in word and deed."...

from the Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family

Art. 1. The charismatic and spiritual experience of the Founder

With humble and joyful gratitude, we acknowledge that Don Bosco, by the initiative of God and the maternal mediation of Mary, gave rise in the Church to a singular experience of evangelical life.

The Spirit shaped in him a heart filled with a great love for God and for his brothers and sisters, in particular the little ones and the poor, and in this way made him Father and Teacher of a multitude of young people as well as the Founder of a vast spiritual and apostolic Family.

Pastoral charity which found in the Good Shepherd its source and model was for Don Bosco a constant inspiration in his work as educator and evangeliser, guiding his life, his prayer and missionary zeal. In choosing the motto *Da mihi animas cetera tolle* he wanted to express his passion for God and for the young, ready for any sacrifice in order to carry out the mission he saw in his dream at nine years of age.

In order to respond to the needs of the youth and the ordinary people of his time, in 1841 he founded the Oratory which he conceived as a large family of boys and established the Pious Society of Saint Francis of Sales, which he wanted to be a vital part of the Church which recognised in the Supreme Pontiff its centre of unity.

His meeting with Mary Domenica Mazzarello in 1864 persuaded him to extend the educational frontiers to include girls; for this reason with her in 1872 he founded the Institute of the Daughters of

Mary Help of Christians, dedicated to a work of education conducted with his spirit but given a feminine interpretation by the Saint of Mornese.

Don Bosco also had contact with many Catholics, men and women, in various ways dedicated to the good of youth, to the defence and to the strengthening of the faith among the ordinary people; with them he experienced the strength and the effectiveness of working in a united manner. In this way the Association of the Salesian Cooperators (today ‘Salesians-Cooperators’) came into being, committed to carrying out in their families in the Christian communities to which they belonged, and in society, a shared apostolate for the young, the ordinary people and the missions, animated by the spirit of Valdocco.

To the founding of these three first groups Don Bosco dedicated time, energy, formative and organizational commitment. While recognizing their different fields of action, he was always convinced that the apostolic strength of the whole Family would depend on its unity of purpose, of spirit, of method and style of education. The sign and guarantee of this unity were the juridical links of the FMA and of the Cooperators with the Salesian Congregation, and in particular with its Superior, the Rector Major.

From Don Bosco also came into being the Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians (today the ‘Association of Mary Help of Christians’) to promote veneration for the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to Mary Help of Christians. Around Don Bosco the first PastPupils also began to gather.

Art. 27. The Spirituality of everyday

Don Bosco drew inspiration from Saint Francis of Sales recognizing him as the teacher of a spirituality that was simple because based on essentials, popular because open to all, attractive because full of human values, and therefore particularly suitable in the work of education. In his fundamental work (Treatise of the Love of God or Theotimus) the holy bishop of Geneva speaks about ‘ecstasy’. This word does not so much indicate extraordinary spiritual phenomena as, according to the etymology of the word, going out from oneself and being inclined towards the other; it is the experience of someone who allows himself to be attracted, convinced and conquered by God, entering ever more deeply into His mystery.

For Saint Francis of Sales there are three kinds of ecstasy: – intellectual ecstasy: this is wonder at what God is, but also amazement at the great things He has done in creation and still continues to do in the life of individuals and in the history of humanity; it is a gaze which grows clearer if we use it in meditating on the Word: it is the Word, in fact which opens our eyes so that we can see things as God sees them;

– affective ecstasy: this is having a personal experience of the love of God for us, so that the desire to correspond to it grows, and, nourished by such a love, we are ready to give our talents and our lives for his glory and the cause of the Kingdom; it pre-supposes constant vigilance, purification of the heart, the practice of prayer;

– ecstasy of action and of life: for Saint Francis of Sales, it is this which crowns the other two, because intellectual ecstasy could become pure speculation, and affective simple sentiment. Ecstasy of action, on the other hand, reveals a generosity and a selflessness that can only come from God; and it is transformed into practical and effective dedication to peoples’ good in various forms of charity.

The Salesian Family, in its reflection on Don Bosco the Founder, has translated the nature of the spirituality and the mysticism of Saint Francis of Sales into a simple and challenging formula: everyday spirituality.

Art. 30. The grace of unity

Expressions used in Salesian circles to refer to the source of this apostolic charity are: the grace of unity, apostolic interior life, the contemplative dimension of life, a vital synthesis, a single movement of love for God and for the young, the liturgy of life.

Evangelising by educating and educating by evangelising is a formula well known by now to express the interior unity of the members of the Salesian Family, since it refers not only to a method of education but also to the spirituality of individuals and of the Groups: when one allows oneself to be guided by the Spirit, life and the apostolate form a single whole, just like prayer and action, love for God and for one's neighbour, attention to oneself and dedication to others, education in human values and the proclamation of the gospel, belonging to a Group and being part of the Church. Everything leads to unity; and it is the vital synthesis which is holiness. From this comes an incredible force for action and witness, by the power of the Spirit who has taken possession of all the people to make them free and joyful instruments of his action.

Apostolic charity constitutes for everyone belonging to the Salesian Family the inner principle and force capable of unifying the many different daily activities and preoccupations. It fosters the fusion in a single inner movement of the two inseparable poles of apostolic charity: passion for God and passion for one's neighbour.

Art. 34. Work and temperance

The exercise of apostolic charity includes the need for conversion and purification, in other words the death of the old man so that the new man may be born, live and grow, who in the image of Jesus the Apostle of the Father is ready to sacrifice himself everyday in apostolic work. Giving oneself means emptying oneself and allowing oneself to be filled by God so as to give Him to others. Detachment, renunciation, sacrifice are essential elements, not because of any taste for asceticism, but simply by the logic of love. There is no apostolate without asceticism and there is no asceticism without mysticism. Whoever puts his whole self at the service of the mission has no need for extraordinary penances; the difficulties of life and the fatigue of apostolic work are sufficient if they are accepted with faith and offered with love.

The asceticism recommended by Don Bosco has various aspects: the asceticism of humility so as not to feel anything other than servants before God; the asceticism of mortification, so as to be in control of oneself, guarding one's senses and one's heart and taking care that the seeking after comfort does not cause generosity to dry up; the asceticism of courage and patience so as to be able to persevere with one's actions when coming up against hard reality; the asceticism of abandonment when events take us closer to the cross of Christ.

from A Prophecy's Journey

Please see excerpts under Compendium Article 2