

**Art. 25. Particular Bonds with the Society of St. Francis de Sales and with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians**

*The Association of Salesian Cooperators has a “bond of stable and secure union”<sup>1</sup> with the Society of St. Francis de Sales and particular charismatic ties with the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.*

*Every Salesian Community (SDB and FMA), at both the Provincial and Local Levels, feels involved, as Don Bosco wished, in the task of “supporting and increasing” the Association, of contributing to the formation of its members, and of making known and promoting their Project of Apostolic Life.<sup>2</sup>*

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Core Themes**

1. Secure and Stable Bonds with the Salesians of Don Bosco
2. Charismatic Ties with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

### **Keys to Understanding**

**A.** The article reflects a precise and incontrovertible will of the Founder. This will was authoritatively interpreted by the SDB Special General Chapter (see paragraphs 732, 734, 742, & 743): “(1) We know that we are the secure and stable bond that Don Bosco expressly wished us to be – as a guarantee of unity in the same spirit, of apostolic efficacy in the common mission, of perennial vitality of the Work founded by him, and of the strength of vocational enthusiasm in re-launching a vast and organic movement for the salvation of poor or at-risk youth [...] 2) we know that we must always be more and more the motivating center of this apostolic movement of baptized men and women who, in Don Bosco’s spirit, put themselves completely at the service of the Church for the salvation of the young.”

The Salesian Society, according to the express will of the Founder, has "a specific role of responsibility" in the Family – so states Article 5 of the SDB *Constitutions* – “to maintain the unity of spirit and to stimulate dialogue and fraternal collaboration for reciprocal enrichment and for a greater apostolic fecundity.”

**B.** Faithful to the Founder’s thought, the Special General Chapter of the Salesians made its own the statement made to the Cooperators by the then Rector Major, Don Ricceri: “May you become conscientious and integral collaborators at our side and not under us; therefore, not only docile and faithful workers, but ones capable of roles of responsibility in the apostolate." This will allow us "to institute at every Level a relationship of true fraternity which constitutes from this moment forward the new style of Salesian life within educative communities and outside of them.” (*Salesian Bulletin*, April 1970)

**C.** Between the FMA and the Salesian Cooperator Association "particular charismatic ties" exist, owing to a profound and vital reciprocity. Through their Delegates, the FMA animate those Centers established

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<sup>1</sup>*Salesian Cooperators: A Practical Way...* Art. II

<sup>2</sup>Salesian Society of St. Francis de Sales. *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St. Francis de Sales. Regulations*, art. 38. Trans. (Rome: Esse Gi Esse, 1984) 154-155. Print.

near their works, in a manner which is 100% equal to that of the SDB Delegates. On the basis of this, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians enters directly into the life and the activities of many Centers and the organization of the Association at the various Levels, through the participation of their Delegates.

Since 1953, the FMA have directly animated the Salesian Cooperator Centers. The rapport between the SDB and the FMA Delegates are guided by the spirit of Salesian fraternity and, from 1970 onward, by the norms contained in the *Project of Apostolic Life*. Beginning with 1970, an accord regulated the relationship between the SDB and the FMA in relation to their animation of the Association. From 2007 on, the same Association made an agreement with the Delegates (FMA and SDB) through the Rector Major who has delegated to Mother General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians the ways they provide the service of animation within the Association.

The articles take into consideration the following topics: the task of the two Institutes to observe, as far as is their responsibility, the *Project of Apostolic Life* of the Association; the life of the Centers; their fusion or suppression; understanding and collaboration between neighboring Centers; and their belonging to their respective Province/Province groupings. As regards the Delegates: the naming of them; their mutual relationship in reference to the Centers and the Councils; the naming of the SDB and FMA Delegates to the World Council and to the SEM – on the part of the Rector Major as concerns the SDB and for the FMA, according to the indications of Mother General; and the competence of the Rector Major and of Mother General in carrying out the interpretation of the article pertaining to the Delegates.

## References

*Atti del Capitolo Generale Speciale*, 732, 734, 742, 743.

Vecchi, J. E., *Carta di Comunione*.

*Memorie Biografiche*, V 692; VII 611; X 663; XI 85.

*Progetto di Vita Apostolica* 25 § 2.

*Regolamento di Don Bosco*, II; V, 3-6; VI, 1.

*Regolamenti SDB* 38.

## from the *Regulations of the Project of Apostolic Life*

### **Article 9. Particular Bonds with the Society of St. Francis de Sales and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians**

§1. Relations with the SDB confreres and the FMA Sisters<sup>3</sup> develop in a climate of reciprocal trust. The animation of the Centers which are established at Salesian works involves the Delegates, in particular, their respective Provincial, and the Local Religious Community. These have the task of contributing in

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<sup>3</sup> Superior Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco. "Agreed Policy of the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for the Animation of the Cooperators." Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco. 37-41. Web. 30 Nov. 2013.

various ways to the formation of the members so that they might promote and give witness to the Salesian charism, above all in the lay environment.

§2. The SDB and FMA Provincials, with the collaboration of the Animators and Directors, guarantee unity in communion and in the mission. They commit themselves to promote the spiritual growth of the Centers and to involve the Religious Communities in witnessing to the values of sanctity and in the generous service of animation.

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

#### **Article II. The Salesian Congregation**

The Salesian Congregation, having been definitively approved by the Church, may provide a sure and stable bond uniting the Salesian Cooperators. Its primary purpose is to work for the good of young people, on whom society's happy or evil future of society depends. We make no claim that what are proposing is the only means to achieve that end. There are a thousand other ways, and therefore we urge everyone to freely use the means that seem most conducive to that great goal. The way we are proposing, one of the many, is the Work of the Salesian Cooperators. We are inviting good Catholics living in the world to join their efforts to those of the members of this our Congregation. True, the number of Salesians has grown considerably, but it is unequal by far to the numerous requests for help that are receiving every day from various parts of Italy and of Europe, from China, Australia and the Americas, from the Argentine Republic in particular. These insistent requests are for sacred ministers [and for Salesians] who would undertake the care of young people at risk, who would open houses and schools and who would initiate or sustain missionary activity in places where evangelical workers are greatly needed and desired. It is in order to respond to all these needs that we are looking for cooperators.

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

#### **Art. 45. Points of reference**

In force of their apostolic communion of a charismatic nature, the Groups which make up the Salesian Family recognise in the Rector Major, Successor of Don Bosco, the Father and centre of unity of the Family itself.

Then, the Salesians of Don Bosco particular heirs of his charismatic richness have the responsibility of animating the whole of the Salesian Family. They in fact have particular «responsibilities: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for mutual enrichment and greater apostolic fruitfulness».<sup>4</sup> Therefore they carry out a service which does not belong to the authority of government, but to the humble and joyful dedication of one who promotes a path of fidelity to the gift received, fostering its communication, sharing and realisation.

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<sup>4</sup> C. SDB art. 5c

## from the 2018 *Handbook of St. Philip the Apostle Province*

### **Particular Bonds with the Society of St. Francis de Sales and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians**

**Art 42.** Salesian Cooperators feel a particular affinity with these other Groups of the Salesian Family for each was founded directly by Don Bosco himself, and each is a unique lifetime Vocation within the Church, sharing charismatic, spiritual, and apostolic bonds. These three Groups, above all, are called to be the models, promoters, and guarantors of the fidelity of the other Groups of the Salesian Family to the charism of Don Bosco. The three share responsibility in a special way for the formation and efficacy of the Local Salesian Family Commissions and Province Consulta.

**Art 43.** The Salesian Priests and Brothers and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians consider the Salesian Cooperators as “other Brothers- and Sisters-in-Christ” collaborating in full title in the Vineyard of the Lord. The Cooperators regard the Salesians and the Sisters as their collaborators and animators in their spiritual life and in their fidelity to the charism and mission of St. John Bosco.

### **Ties with the Groups of the Salesian Family**

**Art 44.** Salesian Cooperators feel a particular bond of closeness with the members of ADMA, the fourth Group (though not one of a committed Vocation) founded by Don Bosco. Together with the FMA and SDB, they reach out through the Salesian Family Commission to the other Groups of the Family present in their area to come together for celebration, animation, formation, and apostolate.