

**THE COMMON IDENTITY CARD**  
**OF THE**  
**SALESIAN FAMILY OF DON BOSCO**

**Department for the Salesian Family**

**of the Salesian Congregation**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Salesian Family of Don Bosco

Let us give thanks to God who works wonders in his Saints.

To think of the Salesian Family at the present day is to recognize Don Bosco as its Founder. This is why we speak of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco. The rapport he established with certain persons and groups was quite special and privileged.

With *Pius IX* he shared the hopes and difficulties associated with the new institution, the Pious Society of St Francis de Sales, planned in the image and likeness of the human family with God as its Father, and of the ecclesial family with the Pope as its common father.

With *Mary Mazzarello* he lived a spiritual and religious experience which is noteworthy for the Lord's interventions; for the providential encounters and the light of a reciprocal intuition which rose above the prevailing apostolic contexts; for the authentic and fruitful collaboration that went into the founding of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

With *many believers*, committed to the good of the young and the strengthening of the faith of the common people, he experienced the strength and efficacious results of working together and drawing inspiration from the Gospel and the example of the Good Shepherd. This is how the Salesian Cooperators came into existence.

At just over a hundred years after his death the *salesian phenomenon* continues to cause astonishment for its geographical extension and the growth in numbers of its groups which, with their own individual characteristics, look to Don Bosco as the Father of a great spiritual family.

The harmonic unity of the foundational charism, pastoral charity and the strength of the Spirit's gift to Don Bosco, ensure the atmosphere and environment of growth and substance of a Salesian Family.

## CHAPTER 1.

### THE GRACE OF COMMUNION IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY

1. God's design in the plan of the Founder.
2. A spiritual and apostolic family in development.
3. The riches of mutual communion.
4. In the heart of the Church for the salvation of the world.

#### ART. 1

##### God's design in the plan of the Founder.

With souls full of joy and sentiments of humble gratitude, we express our certainty that, through the initiative of God and the motherly intervention of Mary, Don Bosco gave rise in the Church to an original evangelical experience.

The Spirit formed in him a heart as great as the shores of the sea, and made him the Father and Teacher of a multitude of young people and the founder of a vast spiritual family.

Pastoral charity, which finds its source and exemplar in Christ the Good Shepherd, was for Don Bosco the criterion of life and activity, the inspiration of educational work and evangelization, of prayer and missionary impulse; his *Da mihi animas coetera tolle* brings together into unity his love for God and for the young.

To meet the needs of the young and the common people of his time, Don Bosco founded the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Cooperators. Many other apostolic forces, with specifically distinct vocations but living in the same spirit and in communion with each other, continue his work of education and salvation at the present day.

In this way was born a true school of holiness which continues in our own time. From Don Bosco the Founder, subsequent founders of new groups draw inspiration and guidance, spirituality and pastoral method. The Groups live, preserve, deepen and constantly develop, in harmony with the Body of Christ in perpetual growth, the experience of the Holy Spirit which Don Bosco lived and continues to pass on to his followers.

#### ART. 2

##### A spiritual and apostolic family in development

Don Bosco, through his stature of holiness, finds a unique place among the founders of religious institutes in the Church. His life became an epic, his rule a spirit, his holiness a type and model. And we may say with hearts full of gratitude to God that the initial beginnings from

being a small stream have now become a torrent.

Don Bosco dreamt of a many-sided mission to the young and the poor and welded the efforts of as many as shared his educative and saving plan into a vast movement. The prodigious fertility of the Salesian Family, a significant phenomenon in the perennial vitality of the Church, is evidence of this.

The Salesian Family of Don Bosco is made up of three central groups (SDB, FMA, Cooperators) to whose foundation he himself gave much time, energy, and formative and organizational expertise, because they constituted the key and nucleus of his work, and of a constellation of many other groups. From him the Association of Mary Help of Christians took its rise, and the Association of his Past-pupils came into being almost as a gift on his feastday.

As in the great religious Orders, so in the initial charismatic experiences of Don Bosco there are implicit genuine indications of growth and development.

The awareness of a *spiritual kinship* and of a common apostolic responsibility has brought about fraternal relationships and exchanges between the groups and a unique presence which they have in the Church among young people and especially those particularly in need.

### **ART. 3**

#### **The riches of mutual communion**

Today the Salesian Family is made up of numerous Groups. They form a single vital organism, and this explains their convergence with each other and also the differences between them.

In the first place they intensify the efficacy of their witness to the Gospel and render its proclamation more convincing; they extend the penetration of the spirit of the beatitudes in the world, and augment educational love to those most in need. They also realize a more lively pastoral charity, helping everyone to work together in sustaining the task of educating and saving the young and the poor. Finally they deepen the understanding of the characteristics of each group and so increase identity in communion.

Our brief history as Don Bosco's Family convinces us that without communion there is a real danger of impoverishment and of infidelity to the Founder's plan. "*Without you we are no longer ourselves*" can be the compelling slogan which each group is called upon to make its own and express in its daily living.

Don Bosco seems to have been almost obsessed by the need for unity and by the expression *in unity is strength*, which reflects another equally firm idea of his religious patrimony: that of a single family in the image and likeness of the human family which has God for its Father, and of the ecclesial family with the Pope as its common father.

He never thought of any group in separation, nor did any group ever exist in such a state;

he saw them always within a unified perspective, strong and rich, so as to involve all the groups despite their distinctive characteristics.

#### **ART. 4**

#### **In the heart of the Church for the salvation of the world**

The Spirit brings charisms into being for the common utility, and inserts them in a harmonious fashion into the life of the Church. In this way there develops through the divine will a wonderful variety of religious groups which contribute to making the Church equipped for every good work and prepared for the building of Christ's Body. She is embellished by the variety of the gifts of her children, like a bride adorned for her Spouse, so that the wisdom of God may be manifested in many forms.

The Holy Spirit has raised up the Salesian Family, through Don Bosco, so that it may the better carry out the mission with which it has been entrusted.

The Salesian Family is a collection of baptized and consecrated persons which, through the unique nature of its particular gift, places itself at the service of the mission of the Church, the Body of Christ, the universal sacrament of salvation.

The Salesian Family, living in the heart of the Church, manifests in the harmony of its different gifts the importance of the mission, which gives tone and practical reality to the whole of the spiritual patrimony of the holy Educator. The reciprocal connection between 'education' and 'holiness' calls us to intimate solidarity with the world and its vicissitudes.

The planning of the mission must therefore be relevant to present-day circumstances, creative and constant, if we are to restore youthfulness to the spiritual and educative legacy entrusted to us, if we want to offer a competent support and effective contribution to the Church, which is rethinking its pastoral work for the young and the poor in the different geographical and cultural contexts.

## CHAPTER 2 PARTICIPATION IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY

5. Titles to membership.
6. Reciprocal exchange of gifts.
7. Reference to Don Bosco, Father and Teacher.
8. Inspired by the humanism of St Francis de Sales.
9. The Rector Major the centre of unity.
10. Description of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco.

### **ART. 5**

#### **Titles to membership**

The term *family* is continually used in salesian tradition to indicate in a generic manner the bonds existing between the various groups and is applied in different ways according to the nature of the relationship. This bond or relationship cannot be reduced to mere friendly rapport. It is rather the external expression of an internal and charismatic communion. It helps therefore to understand the different titles to membership of the Salesian Family.

Membership is fostered by a *common spirit*, which leads to a vast and complementary mission to the young and the common people; and by certain *specific and original characteristics* which justify official recognition, which is given through a specific title.

A first title is that of the Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and Cooperators: they are the first three central groups of which Don Bosco is the *founder* in a quite special manner. They were constituted by him as the direct heirs of his work; they are the foundation and point of reference for all the other groups in whatever concerns the spirit, the mission, and the method of pedagogical and pastoral activity.

Another title to membership is that of the various groups of consecrated life which came into existence at a later date through the creative force of the charism. They enrich the common patrimony of the Family with particular charismatic expressions.

Finally there is a third level of membership which comes under the heading *particular titles to membership*. This category is of wider extension than those of the groups previously mentioned, but is equally bound in an objective manner to the vitality and riches of the spiritual legacy of Don Bosco. The unifying energy of his charism is indispensable also at this wider level.

The juridical title to membership is indicated in the letter of the Rector Major granting official recognition in response to requests made by the various groups.

## **ART. 6**

### **Reciprocal exchange of gifts.**

The different expressions of the salesian charism are related to each other in a substantial manner, i.e. they live a deep reciprocal relationship, so that the identity of the Salesian Family cannot be defined and lived by a single group without reference to that of the others.

All of us together, as a Family, proffer at the present day the spiritual and charismatic experience of the Founder, we express the riches of God's gift to his Church, prolonging and developing through the years the originality of Don Bosco.

In a Church which is a communion, the Salesian Family lives and manifests *one heart and one soul*, realizing experiences of fraternal and apostolic communion in the service of the mission and for the mutual enrichment of groups and individuals.

It is as though the members feel themselves as entrusted to one another. Becoming a member of a group is like entering the whole Family. Communion with others means the growth of all; it means that each one is complementary to every other member.

Joined together, the members make it possible for the Family to live out the interests of its gifts and values, because in the various groups is seen emphasized the various shades of spiritual aspects which should not be absent from any salesian heart. These however are better and more characteristically seen in a particular Group; communion in the Family then makes them available to all.

Ecclesial communion, reciprocal exchange of gifts, complementary relationships and mutual enrichment represent a valuable law of life for the Family, with a consequent and significant effect on the results of the mission. For educators and evangelizers to reach the young (and especially the most needy of them) and the ordinary people, the work of a single Group of the Salesian Family is not sufficient. What is needed is different kinds of intervention linked together, different models of Christian life, different and complementary ministries.

## **ART. 7**

### **Reference to Don Bosco, Father and Teacher**

Don Bosco is a *giant of the spirit* who has bequeathed to us a rich and well defined spiritual heirloom. He is the founder of a true school of an apostolic spirituality which is new and attractive. He is the obligatory point of reference for all who, under a particular impulse of the Holy Spirit, feel themselves called today to share his mission and destiny in their various states of life, each according to its own grade and level.

Membership is built around a unifying centre, which is a person, a criterion and a style.

The person is Don Bosco. The Salesian Family draws its inspiration from the humanism of St Francis de Sales, as relived by Don Bosco in his own particular way. What binds the

different Groups and their members into a kind of *spiritual kinship* is Don Bosco, who is truly the Father of all.

The criterion of membership is pastoral charity. The apostolic thrust of Don Bosco is the spiritual energy which makes him seek souls and serve God alone. In him charity fills and directs everything. He calls together others around him; he coordinates and blends together their various functions and multiple talents, their different states and ministries; he elevates their differences into a rich organic unity. Don Bosco's apostolic charity is a force of attraction, a criterion of unity, a development of harmonious spirituality. He is truly the Teacher of everyone.

The slogan *da mihi animas coetera tolle* is the synthesis of a rich spiritual and apostolic experience. The *ecstasy of action*, which is a point of reference in St Francis de Sales, is the soul of apostolic charity in Don Bosco. Educative and pastoral love is a practical and demanding form of interior feeling. Don Bosco is truly the guide and model of the Salesian Family.

## **ART. 8**

### **Inspired by the humanism of St Francis de Sales.**

We are called the *Salesian Family of Don Bosco*, thus linking ourselves with both St Francis de Sales and St John Bosco.

The reference to St Francis de Sales is not something merely formal in the experience of Don Bosco: he chose him as his patron because he corresponded to the intimate aspirations which he was concerned also to manifest and motivate.

*The charity and gentleness of St Francis de Sales shall be my guide in everything*: this was the resolution he made at the beginning of his priestly life. With the kindness and gentleness of St Francis de Sales the Salesians will draw to Jesus Christ the populations of America: that was the apostolic recommendation he was given in his missionary dream of 1883.

We insert ourselves to the utmost as Don Bosco's Family in the salesian current of humanism, offering an original contribution to the Church in the field of both education and pastoral work. For Don Bosco *salesian humanism* means the exploitation of everything positive found rooted in the lives of individuals, in things and in history.

This salesian humanistic inspiration led him to appreciate worldly vales, especially if they were pleasing to the young, and also to get into the changing culture and human development of his own time, promoting what was good and not merely decrying evils. It led him to seek the cooperation of many people, convinced that each one had his own talents, perhaps as yet undiscovered; to believe in the value of education which animates and sustains the change and growth of youngsters towards becoming upright citizens and good Christians; to entrust himself unwaveringly to the providence of God, perceived and loved as his Father.

The humanism of St Francis de Sales helps the Salesian Family to be open to its component groups, so that each one may live out its own specific mission in the joy of the Lord.

## **ART. 9**

### **The Rector Major the centre of unity**

Membership originates from communion and becomes consolidated in a communion which becomes ever deeper. It is not just a vague kind of sentiment with weak and fleeting bonds, but an impulse of the Spirit which tends towards unity and seeks concrete and sometimes even established expressions for a practical rapport and collaboration.

Membership of the Salesian Family is of concern to many groups, each of which has its specific autonomy. There is need therefore of a vital centre which will ensure that references to the Founder, to the common spirit and to the mission itself are always up to date.

In the thought of Don Bosco the centre which guarantees unity is the Rector Major. In him all recognize a triple unifying ministry: he is the successor of Don Bosco; he is the Father of all members; he is the Centre of unity of the Family.

The Rector Major is the successor of Don Bosco; an unbroken bond links him to the Founder's person and so renders him the fit and proper person to represent him in a living manner at the present day.

He is the centre of unity of the whole family. He provides, in fact, the example and teaching which ensure fidelity to the spirit and elicits participation in the salesian charism. His function is one of animation and advancement which forges unity in the variety of the specific vocations, fidelity to the spirit and the coordination of initiatives. His is not a task of government, but rather one of vital service of animation.

The Rector Major is the father of all who collaborate in Don Bosco's mission. He extends the compass of his fatherliness which is for him, as it was for Don Bosco, an essential characteristic. Fatherliness demands kindness, a sense of responsibility with regard to the growth of each one, guidance in fidelity to the charism, and commitment to the growth of the salesian vocation in all its expressions. "Your Rector will take care of you and of your eternal salvation", wrote Don Bosco.

## **ART. 10**

### **Description of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco.**

The characteristic unity of the Salesian Family has its ultimate roots in the common nature of the spirit and of the mission in the service of the young and the poor. In this way a true community is realized in which all the members are integrated in line with their particular gifts, their specific functions and the different forms of life possible in the Church.

The exploitation and relaunching of the Salesian Family can well become for us an important contribution to the conciliar renewal.

And so we may read in a new light the story of Don Bosco's spiritual experience, linking

it again with his first intuitions and with the heart of the Work of the Oratories: the Salesian Family is a charismatic community; the Salesian Family is an ecclesial reality.

The Salesian Family is a charismatic community. It therefore appears and must be lived as a gift of the Spirit to the Church and as an organized prolongation of Don Bosco's charism at the present day. Various Groups which have been set up and recognized participate in a true spiritual kinship and apostolic consanguinity. Groups of priests and laity, celibate and married, of consecrated persons and religious, in line with the various forms of life-bearing witness to the beatitudes, form an organic and vital unity through the unifying force of the spirit and mission of Don Bosco. They feel themselves heirs and bearers of his gift.

The Salesian Family is an ecclesial reality, i.e. it expresses the communion between the various elements in the service of the people of God; it integrates the particular vocations so as to make manifest the richness of the Founder's charism. It is inserted in the pastoral work of the local Church to which it makes its own original contribution. It seeks understanding and collaboration with other groups and institutions, both ecclesiastical and civil, for the bringing about of an integral personal and social education of the young and of people in general. It accompanies them, through education to the faith and apostolic commitment, until they can make their own choice of vocation in the world and in the Church.

### CHAPTER 3. CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE SALESIAN COUNTENANCE

#### A. Some particularly significant sayings of Don Bosco

11. Da mihi animas.
12. To gain souls for God I push ahead even to the point of rashness.
13. If we are one in heart we can do ten times as much.
14. No effort should be spared when the Church and the Papacy are at stake.
15. That you are young is enough to make me love you very much.
16. Our method is founded entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness.
17. My one support has always been recourse to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Help of Christians.

#### **ART. 11**

##### **Da mihi animas**

The life of Don Bosco found its origin, form and expression in a phrase which runs like a golden thread through his experiences: *da mihi animas coetera tolle*.

These words enclose the inexhaustible energy of Don Bosco: the secret of his heart, the strength and ardour of his charity, the apostolate in its thousand and one forms and realizations. He chose it because it characterized for all groups and members of the Family the spirit which must animate them.

For us at the present day it indicates a complex of interior attitudes which guide the steps of the Salesian in the practical events of daily life. It calls, in fact, for dedication to spiritual depth and interior apostolic commitment; it points to the mystery of God's loving presence by giving rise to a *thirst for souls*, as Fr Philip Rinaldi expresses it; it stimulates the vivacity and creativity of pastoral charity.

It is the distinguishing badge of the family!

It links us with St Francis de Sales and with his new way of attaining evangelical perfection; and with Don Bosco, shepherd of souls after the example of the Lord Jesus.

To be called *children of Don Bosco* we must remodel ourselves on the lines of this first charism of ours. To all his followers Don Bosco repeats: "The most divine of all divine things is to cooperate with God for the salvation of souls; this is a sure path to the heights of holiness".

## **ART. 12**

**To gain souls for God I push ahead  
even to the point of rashness.**

The expressions arising from the priestly heart of Don Bosco are not easily placed in the framework of common behaviour. The rashness of which our Founder speaks can be interpreted in various ways: apostolic ardour, tireless zeal, limitless activity, incessant pastoral work, a genial creativity in relevant interventions, an oratorian heart.

Work is a typical salesian manifestation of pastoral charity when it is understood as work for souls. It is a mystique which builds God's kingdom and brings about happiness in the young person.

And so, like Don Bosco, the Salesian develops in himself all the virtues of a man of action and commits his own abilities and talents to the personal advancement, social progress and evangelical salvation of the young, particularly those in need.

He makes a gift of his whole life, as did Don Bosco who took no step, said no word and took up no task that was not directed to the saving of the young. Truly the only concern of his heart was for souls.

## **ART. 13**

**If we are one in heart  
we can do ten times as much.**

In all his activity as an educator, pastor and founder, Don Bosco showed a great ability for dialogue and for sharing responsibility with even the youngest of his collaborators; for harmonizing in apostolic and missionary work the talents of the most widely differing persons for the good of the whole enterprise; for finding for each individual a work suited to his character, his skills and his formation, in such a way that each one felt happy in what he was doing.

He was aware of the need for *cooperative charity* in educational and pastoral service, and knew that the Holy Spirit raises up charisms for the benefit of the whole Church and for the common good and usage. The talents of each one are there for the good of all, and the ability to find collaborators renders the work more efficacious.

In the Regulations for the Salesian Cooperators Don Bosco wrote: "At all times it has been considered that union between good people was necessary in order to help one another to do good and to keep far away from evil. If a piece of string is taken by itself it is easily broken, but when three pieces are plaited together they are more difficult to break. When weak forces are united they become strong: *Vis unita fortior, funiculus triplex difficile rumpitur.*

## **ART. 14**

### **No effort should be spared when the Church and the Papacy are at stake.**

Don Bosco's personal story, like his public, civil and religious history, reveals a typical trait of his spirit: love of the Church, the centre of unity and communion of all the forces working for the Kingdom. In the context of the Church of his time Don Bosco appears as an expert in communion and collaboration.

He cultivated the awareness and sense of Church in his spirituality and in his work with the young and people in general, facing innumerable risks and hardships in the process.

He offered continual collaboration with the Bishops and the Pope, both at an external organizational as well as at a spiritual and apostolic level.

Don Bosco expressed his ecclesiality through incessant prayer, docility to the magisterium, availability for economic aid, shared responsibility in the service of the People of God, defence in word and writing of the person of the Pope and of the apostolic college, fidelity to the Church's options, convinced acceptance of doctrinal observations and guidelines, and unconditional dedication: "No effort should be spared when the Church and the Papacy are at stake".

## **ART. 15**

### **That you are young is enough to make me love you very much.**

"It is my desire that the fruits of this commemorative year may long endure, both in this Salesian Family and in the universal Church which has recognized and continues to recognize in Don Bosco an outstanding model of an apostle for the young.

"And so I declare and proclaim Saint John Bosco *Father and Teacher of Youth*, and establish that he shall be invoked under this title, especially by those who are acknowledged as his spiritual children". Thus wrote John Paul II.

In this way Don Bosco's place in history is specified: he is the *teacher of the young*; and rightly too is expressed the manner of his task: *father of youth*.

The principal values of Don Bosco's experience find in the young their point of convergence and coherence: his kind of holiness, the choice of his field of apostolic work, his strategy of intervention, his practical plan of action, the secret of his success. With and after Christ, young people represent the other pole of Don Bosco's life and work.

The love for the young, typical of a father, teacher and friend, sustained Don Bosco in all his labours.

Youngsters represent a daily injection of youthfulness and optimism for the

reinterpretation of society, a special vocation for Don Bosco. "For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life".

## **ART. 16**

### **Our method is founded entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness**

The particular trait of Don Bosco's brilliance is linked with the educational method which he himself called the *preventive system*. The preventive system represents to some extent the quintessence of his pedagogical wisdom and constitutes the prophetic message he has left to his followers and to the whole Church.

It is a spiritual and educational experience. It is a love that gives itself freely in the practice of a charity which is able to kindle love in return. It is the choice of kindness erected into a system of which the content is the family spirit, capacity for friendship and dialogue, simplicity in associating with those most in need, joyful and optimistic amiability.

It is founded entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness.

*Reason* emphasizes the authentic vision of Christian humanism, in which joy, piety, wisdom, work, study and the sense of what is human are harmoniously blended.

*Religion* makes space for saving grace, for the desire for God, for Christ the Lord and New Man, who gives sense and response to the search for happiness.

*Loving kindness* is the substance of a psychological intuition: young people must not only be loved, but they must know that they are loved. It is the well-balanced composure of the educator who accompanies the youngster as a mature and responsible friend. It is the kind and patient evangelical charity which suffers all things and puts up with any annoyance. It is the ability to love at the youngster's level, in signs he can understand.

The preventive system is inseparable from the person of Don Bosco; it is in fact his experience of the Holy Spirit.

## **ART. 17**

### **My one support has always been recourse to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Help of Christians.**

The Christ who dominated the existence of Don Bosco was prevalently Jesus living and present in the Eucharist, *the master of the house* as he used to call him, the centre point towards which everything converged, the bread of life, the Son of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. Don Bosco lived by this presence and in it.

The Eucharist as sacrifice and sacrament, the Eucharist eaten and adored, was in Don Bosco's life strength and consolation, the source of peace and the fire of activity. For both him

and his boys holiness was unthinkable without the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the master-key for the radical conversion of the heart to the love of God.

In the salesian spirit, the centrality of Christ is lived with an extraordinary sensitivity of contemplation and of friendship towards the Eucharist.

For Don Bosco the use of the phrase "Help of Christians" does not merely emphasize a particular and original title previously unknown. Rather it is a reminder of the universal motherhood of Mary, who intervenes in the work of foundation of his Family, so that the task is carried out by both of them together. This was a profound and unchangeable conviction of Don Bosco: "She has done everything".

We can trust Mary; and so to her we have entrusted ourselves. Moreover Don Bosco has permanently bound his Marian devotion to the sense of Church, to the ministry of Peter, to the simple faith of the People of God, and to the urgent needs of youth.

### CHAPTER 3

#### CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS OF THE SALESIAN COUNTENANCE

##### B. Basic elements of the common spirit

18. Pastoral charity.
19. The grace of unity.
20. Union with God and style of prayer.
21. The mission to the young and the common people.
22. Optimism and the joy of hope.
23. The asceticism of kindness.
24. Work and temperance.
25. The spirit of initiative.
26. Rooted in the mystery of Christ and entrustment to Mary.
27. The sense of Church.
28. Alert sensitivity to the challenges of the new evangelization.

#### **ART. 18**

##### **Pastoral charity**

The centre and synthesis of the salesian spirit is the *pastoral charity* which Don Bosco lived in all its fullness among the boys of the Oratory, prompted by his priestly love and supernatural anxiety for their overall good.

Charity is the name of the love of God, and indeed of God himself. It is required of the Lord's disciples as a badge of recognition of the fact that it is God who guides their thoughts, their actions and their entire lives. It is the centre of Christian and evangelical life because it sustains and directs every form of apostolate.

In Don Bosco's style it is specified in certain characteristics:

- in apostolic enthusiasm animated by youthful ardour; we refer to it also as an oratorian heart;
- in sharing in the mission of Jesus the Good Shepherd;
- in the inspiration which finds its source in Pentecost, in the presence and action of the Holy Spirit;
- in the solicitude which finds in Mary a rich example of self-giving;
- in the exact opposite of mediocrity.

Every Salesian, in imitation of Don Bosco, humbly tries to be a sign and bearer of the love of God to the young and to everyone else he meets.

This charity is intensely pastoral, since it is practised in sincere and industrious association with the pastors of the Church, with the ministry of the Bishops and the Pope, who are primarily responsible for the flock of Christ the Shepherd.

## **ART. 19**

### **The grace of unity**

Pastoral charity is the virtue with which we imitate Christ in his self-donation and in his service. It is not only what we do but the gift of our very selves which shows the love of Christ for his flock.

Pastoral charity determines our manner of thinking and acting, and of our relationship with others.

Various terms are used in salesian experience to denote the content of pastoral charity as self-donation in apostolic service: grace of unity, interior apostolic conviction, the contemplative dimension of life, vital synthesis, single movement of charity towards God and the young, liturgy of life, etc.

For the member of the Salesian Family, pastoral charity constitutes the interior dynamic principle that is able to unify the many daily concerns and activities. The two poles of pastoral charity, God and neighbour, are mutually inseparable. It is an unconditional availability to the action of the Spirit who consecrates the human heart to God's plan, self-donation to the work of salvation even to the cost of one's own life, the seeking and building of communion as a gift and commitment of love to Christ the Lord.

Salesian contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity leads to the continual discovery that God is in love with mankind.

Attention to one's neighbour proceeds from God and continually leads back to God, because it is always permeated by his love.

## **ART. 20**

### **Union with God and style of prayer**

Don Bosco has been defined as *union with God*. It is a reality which the Salesian Family intends to study more deeply so as to fully understand the intensity of the *Da mihi animas* which is the prayer of our holy Founder.

The ultimate objective of prayer was, for St Francis de Sales and for Don Bosco, union with God in the new life so as to be able to repeat with truth those words of Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me".

In this way prayer leads into charity. It helps an individual to go out of himself to realize union with God. It is a process of being taken up into God, of ecstasy of life and activity. It is an interior attitude of charity leading of its nature to apostolic activity in which it is made concrete, becomes manifest, grows and is perfected.

Some characteristics and emphases express the simplicity attaching to the rich and deep intuition of prayer in Don Bosco.

*In its inspiration*, it is totally permeated by the breath of *Da mihi animas*. *In its style*, it is youthful and popular, joyful and creative, simple and adherent to life. *In its main forms*, it sticks to the essentials: the Word of God, Eucharist, Penance, Mary Help of Christians.

## **ART. 21**

### **The mission to the young and the common people**

Don Bosco's disciples acquire experience of God through those to whom they are sent: the young and the common people.

*The young*, in the first place: they are God's gift to the Salesian Family. They are not merely the beneficiaries of our activity; they are our vocation. The Lord showed Don Bosco that young people, and especially the poor ones among them, are the first and principal targets of his mission. Without youngsters therefore there can be no salesian presence properly so called. Being *specialists of the young* means having hearts turned continuously in their direction, towards their aspirations and desires, towards their needs and problems. "That you are young is enough to make me love you very much".

*The common people* is the ordinary and natural environment for the expression of the youth option; the human and social milieu in which to meet young people. Between the young and the common people there is, in fact, a compenetrational rapport. The commitment of Don Bosco's Family to be with them in an effort at human advancement and growth in faith is an attempt to make clear the gospel values of which the poor are bearers: the sense of life and the hope of a better future.

Don Bosco set out also, with the Association of the Clients of Mary Help of Christians, a process of education to the faith for the people, exploiting the elements of popular devotion and guiding them towards the wisdom of the Gospel which responds to the great questions about existence.

For Don Bosco the common people were the first and significant workplace for the important and efficacious application of social communication.

## **ART. 22**

### **Optimism and the joy of hope**

"Meditate as seriously as you wish and make a close analysis of this Magna Carta of our Congregation which is the preventive system, appealing to reason, religion and loving kindness; but in the last analysis you will have to agree with me that everything comes down to infusing into hearts the holy fear of God; I say infuse it, i.e. make it take root in such a way that it will remain there forever despite all the storms of passions and human vicissitudes". It is the pedagogy of grace and joy of the pure conscience.

Don Bosco *has sanctified the joy of living* and has offered young people the key to the

attainment of such happiness. The Companion of Youth, the biography of Dominic Savio, the allegory contained in the story of Valentino, all demonstrate the theoretical and practical correspondence between grace and happiness.

At the school of St Francis de Sales and of Don Bosco, the Salesian, consecrated or lay person, builds within himself/herself certain basic attitudes:

- *confidence that the good will ultimately prevail.*

"In every young person, even the most wayward, there is a point accessible to what is good; the first duty of the educator is to find this point, this sensitive heartstring, and work on it";

- *openness to human values.*

The Salesian accepts the values of the world and does not bewail the problems of his time: he keeps everything that is good, especially if it is pleasing to the young. Anyone always ready to complain does not have a true salesian spirit;

- *education to daily joys and happiness.*

"Ä patient educational effort is needed to learn or relearn to enjoy in a simple manner the many human joys which the Creator places on our path through life". Education to joy is education to hope and self-donation.

## **ART. 23**

### **The ascesis of kindness**

The loving kindness of Don Bosco is without any doubt a characteristic and original pedagogical and methodological element within the system of education. Even today, albeit in a changed cultural context and with young people of non-christian religions, this characteristic constitutes one of the many original and valid examples of Don Bosco's pedagogy. Nevertheless it is not reducible to a pedagogical principle.

Loving kindness, understood as a manifestation and expansion of theological charity to the young and people most in need, is also the expression of a spirituality. It ensures the true identity of the salesian spirit and is a perennial portrayal of its style.

One can speak quite correctly in fact, for a member of the Salesian Family, of the apostolic spirituality of *making oneself loved* in addition to simply loving. "What is this reciprocal affection based on? (...) On the desire I have to save your souls, which have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ; you love me because I am trying to lead you on the path to eternal salvation. And so it is the good of our souls that is the foundation of our affection".

The method of salesian action is not simply and solely that of loving (though this is obviously indispensable), but that of being able in a pedagogical manner to make oneself loved, because the obligatory task of education is a work of the heart.

It is not a target easy to attain. A continual and deep ascesis is needed to enable a youngster to find a place in his existence for his desire for God. Not with blows *but with gentleness and charity* were words that re-echoed in Don Bosco's mind from the time of his first prophetic dream.

Gentleness, kindness, the ascesis of making oneself loved, are the fruit of a sound balance between intelligence and the custody of the heart, between activity and self-giving.

## **ART. 24**

### **Work and temperance**

The practice of divinely inspired pastoral charity includes the need for conversion and purification, death to the old man so that the new man may be born, and that he may live and develop after the image of the Good Shepherd and be ready to give his life for the flock, to sacrifice himself daily in apostolic work. To carry on working to the end of life is the first article of the salesian code.

Austerity has a place in behaviour, in the will to make sacrifices, in detachment, but not in the tone of life. One can work, be tolerant, be in need quite cheerfully, because in these things the heart comes into play and the soul is strengthened to high ideals, and in this way disposed to do without what is not necessary while remaining perfectly at ease in spirit and activity.

There is no need to look for extraordinary penances; it is sufficient to accept serenely the daily hardships and difficulties and to remain always available for the generous service of God and neighbour.

Salesian ascesis has various aspects: there is the *ascesis of humility* in being no more than servants before God; the *ascesis of mortification* for building self-control, control of the heart and senses, and the ability to reject an easy style of life; the *ascesis of courage and of patience* to be persevering in activity; *ascesis of dedication* when circumstances and events are an invitation to draw nearer to Christ crucified. And the *final and best or gratuitous form* consists in not complaining, in concealing the fact of renunciation altogether and doing it always with joy.

## **ART. 25**

### **The spirit of initiative**

The Church which guards and preserves the deposit of the Word of God, from which are drawn the principles for moral and religious order, even though it may not always have ready the answer to every single question, wants to unify the light of Revelation to the competence of all, so as to light up the path on which humanity has recently set out. It is everyone's duty, therefore, to cultivate courageous attitudes in seeking what is good, and creativity in forms of apostolic intervention.

In a time like the present, in a society characterized by mobility, speed and haste, we must not allow the sense and spirit of pastoral initiative to be lost. By remaining firmly tied to the principle of the concrete nature of the contextual reality in which we are called upon to live, the way ahead must be guided by spiritual discernment.

Fr Philip Rinaldi is forthright in his reminder to the Salesians: "This elasticity in adaptation to all the forms of good that continually arise among humanity is the particular spirit of our Constitutions; and if the day should come when there is introduced a variation contrary to this spirit, our Society will be finished".

Don Bosco frequently recommended this spirit of initiative: "We should comply with the wishes of others to the utmost of our ability;; let us yield to modern requirements and to local customs and usages, provided we do not have to act against our conscience". It is not just a problem of adaptation; what is asked for is a continual renewal in the light of the signs of the times.

## **ART. 26**

### **Rooted in the mystery of Christ and entrustment to Mary**

The final guideline for the salesian spirit is Christian life, the formation of the believer.

The mature and well formed individual is the citizen who has faith, who places at the centre of his life the ideal of the new man proclaimed by Jesus Christ, and who witnesses courageously to his own religious convictions.

To be rooted in Christ is the deepest joy for a follower of Don Bosco. From it stems love of God's word, and the desire to live the mystery of Christ represented in the Church's liturgy; the diligent celebration of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation which educate to Christian freedom, conversion of heart, and service; participation in the Lord's Easter mystery which opens the way to a new understanding of life and its personal and communal, interior and social significance.

In the mystery of Christ the person of Mary is present in a significant manner that cannot be set aside. If we want to be Christians, we must also be Marian, i.e. we must recognize the essential, vital and providential relationship which unites Mary to Jesus and opens for us the way that leads to him.

The entire Salesian Family feels itself to be a Marian family, born through the motherly concern of the Immaculate Help of Christians, and so to her the individual Salesian entrusts himself/herself.

Entrustment is part of an ascending dynamic process: we are called upon to make the gesture of self-donation, to respond with generosity to a mission to be fulfilled, to correspond with the fullness of the charisms with which we have been enriched, to commit ourselves individually to a renewed process.

Mary, the sign of sure hope and consolation for God's pilgrim people, is the one who arouses personal commitment and apostolic thrust.

**ART. 27**  
**The sense of Church**

Don Bosco placed as the fundamental principle of his apostolic activity the filial and devoted acceptance of the authentic Magisterium, but he was at the same time a tenacious defender of his own charism in the face of pressure of ecclesiastics insufficiently informed about it.

Deep and prolonged study of the Second Vatican Council has given pride of place to the reality of the Church-mystery which, in its dimension as the people of God, presents itself particularly as the centre of unity and communion. It builds this reality by accepting the gift of the Spirit and making of itself a practical response through the convergent commitment of all the baptized. At the present day the problem of unity is more relevant than ever before.

Don Bosco's Family counts among its patrimony a rich tradition of filial fidelity to Peter's Successor, and of communion and collaboration with the local Churches. "When the Pope expresses a wish, let it be for us a command", seems to be an expression said by Don Bosco off the cuff, but in fact it represents an explicit choice in line with his religious roots.

At the present day, collaboration with the local Church implies a new rapport in education and in pastoral work, with the original charisms and contributions of the lay faithful in a particular Church.

And so in fidelity to Don Bosco's spirit we are today asked for a new dynamism to build communion with all believers.

**ART. 28**  
**Alert sensitivity to the challenges of the new evangelization**

A new perspective dominates the commitment of the contemporary Church: the new evangelization.

All Don Bosco's work was born from a *simple catechism lesson*, and the evangelization and catechesis, which represent its setting and deeper development, remain for the Salesian Family a fundamental dimension.

Today this tradition renders all Groups of the Salesian Family particularly attentive and sensitive to the personal and objective demands of the *new evangelization*. In this many documents of the Church have indicated a new Pentecostal attitude of the People of God for the courageous proclamation of the ineffable presence of the living Christ, the Lord of history, the first and greatest evangelizer who is able to respond to the present gigantic challenges of the world.

To the Salesian Family the perspective of the new evangelization asks of us:

- to point out *the new contexts* in which evangelization is called for; we are facing ecclesial, social, economic and political situations never previously experienced;
  - to accept the *innovations contained in the Church's guidelines*, which indicate the new workers in the evangelization field and the new frontiers for the proclamation of Christ;
  - to take up *the consequences* imposed by the new evangelization on salesian educative work.
- The reflection on the mutual relationship between the human maturing process and Christian growth must be considered as basic for us and indispensable in every situation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FORMATION OF AN ACTIVE FRATERNITY**

29. The primacy of life in the Spirit.
30. Knowing and appreciating the individual character of each Group.
31. Mutual relationships in the Salesian Family .
32. Planning for a more extensive "Salesian Movement".
33. Willing collaboration in the local Churches and in society.
34. Esteem for other ecclesial forces.

#### **ART. 29**

##### **The primacy of life in the Spirit**

Don Bosco's Salesian Family is firmly rooted in a unity and fraternity that is the result of its characteristic and distinctive charism: hence the continual concern for formation in evangelical love.

In seeking the Spirit of the Resurrection and Pentecost we must strive for the renewal requested by the Church for all groups and communities. Every moment of the life of a believer is marked by the sign of the Spirit.

Fraternity is the fruit of interior strength; it is an initiative of the Spirit.

When we interiorize our lives we make ourselves available to God's call and he can turn to us and work through us. God's love is revealed to us in Jesus, and as we correspond to this love we become his servants: and then it is that the barriers of division crumble. We become new creatures and walk in the Spirit with love, and the fruits of love become our standard.

From pastoral charity there flows that union and fusion that is the fruit of the power of the Holy Spirit; and the sure result of this is the vital inseparability between union with God and dedication to our neighbour, interior Gospel attachment and the active apostolate, the praying heart and toiling hands.

#### **ART. 30**

##### **Knowing and appreciating the individual character of each Group**

The growth of fellowship is also the fruit of knowing one another. We cannot love what we do not know.

Those groups which have obtained recognition of their Salesian Family membership have grown numerically in the last few years. They will be joined by others in the near future.

The Rector Major of the Salesians, as Don Bosco's successor and the father and centre of unity of the Family, presides over the progress of those groups that ask for recognition; his definitive communication involves us all, as we share in the joy of the development desired by the Spirit of the Lord. For this joy to be complete and well founded, however, there must be a definite commitment on the part of all members to achieve a better mutual and reciprocal knowledge of all the other Groups.

This knowledge must not stop at mere external features and structures: there must be an effort to fathom the specific characteristics of each group and see in the findings the rich resources of the common Founder Don Bosco. The basic documents and the Rector Major's letter of recognition of membership in the Salesian Family clearly express the importance of the charism and the affability of the salesian experience.

An earnest call is made for a more thorough knowledge regarding the Groups directly founded by Don Bosco and those present and active in local areas.

### **ART. 31**

#### **Mutual relationships in the Salesian Family**

Our intellectual knowledge must progress to the practical - which will result from fraternal sharing.

The apostolate covered by our family spirit and the interpersonal and group relationships is indeed extensive, as is evident from a few examples:

- our actual contacts, occasional and regular meetings of an informal or organized nature;
- our family, spiritual and prayer meetings that make the personal resources of each member available to all;
- the times we set aside for reflection and study regarding the various facets of the salesian charism, its spirituality, the inheritance received from Don Bosco and the challenges that the signs of the times present to the whole Family;
- the constant and established sharing of information by the groups in order to foster a continual family growth in the face of pleasant or unpleasant events, and to further the research and discernment that each group carries out in its annual schedule. Especially relevant here is the *Consulting group of the Salesian Family*, which should have the support of all the Groups;
- our sharing of mass media activities for the diffusion throughout the world of the spirit of Don Bosco: for instance, the commitment we share regarding the Salesian Bulletin;
- general recognition of the need for persons and groups to be patient and understanding with each other.

Our mutual relationships will certainly be of help in discovering the substantial correlation between all the Groups of the Salesian Family, who enjoy a reciprocal rapport and together form and prolong the charismatic experience of the Founder. The different Groups cannot make an integral reassessment of their vocation within the Church without reference to those who together with them are the bearers of the Founder's Gospel project. Hence the reason why all must seek a better unity between the Groups themselves whilst preserving the authentic distinction of each.

In the last analysis it all adds up to the fact that the various Groups collaborate with each other for fostering the vitality of the entire Salesian Family in respect of

- their vocational apostolate;
- the formation of individual members;
- pastoral research in finding adequate answers to the problems of the education and evangelization of the young and the masses;
- the fulfilment of the salesian mission in the diverse sectors and various types of work it is engaged in;
- and in the spreading of the spirit of Don Bosco.

### **ART. 32**

#### **Planning for a more extensive "Salesian Movement"**

Don Bosco's Salesian Family, being an ecclesial reality, seeks to actuate and make known the common spirit inherited from the Founder; it does not live just for itself: the sacramental mission of God's love for the young guides, conditions and specifies its nature and activities.

It sees itself as a charismatic reality, renewed in this special hour of the Spirit following the incentive received from the Second Vatican Council.

It also recognizes itself as an ecclesial movement that extends beyond the confines and possibilities of the single officially recognized Groups, because it attracts friends who, whilst not belonging to Groups organized or recognized as members of the Salesian Family, nevertheless work together with us in the salesian style and spirit.

Don Bosco's Family becomes the inspiration for an even wider salesian movement when, in addition to the characteristics proper to the various Groups, it is able to express some dynamic uniting factor which reveals the common apostolic identity.

The particularly significant words of Don Bosco and the basic elements of his common spirit, as set out in the present document, constitute a practical proposal and a suitable basis for operating as a vast movement of persons working in different ways for the salvation of the young.

### **ART. 33**

#### **Willing collaboration in the local Churches and in society**

The fostering and formation of fellowship within the Salesian Family finds a determining factor in the penetration of the spirit of Don Bosco into the local Churches and society through effective collaboration between the Groups as they strive for a more productive apostolate.

Communion and communication must lead to effective apostolic collaboration, since the Salesian Family does not exist for itself but to carry out in the Church and in the world the mission confided to it, at the service especially of the young and the poor.

This comprehensive cooperation is evidenced in two ways:

- it is a collaboration between Group and Group in order to fulfil the salesian mission in its various sectors and areas, and in its different kinds of work;
- and it is a collaboration by Groups working together in the pastoral institutions of the local Church and in local civil organizations, so as to make a salesian contribution with its rich and varied ingredients for the building of a *civilization of love*.

The achievement of a common project calls for a convergence that can often require the sacrifice of personal points of view and of certain perspectives linked with one's own Group.

#### **ART. 34**

##### **Esteem for other ecclesial forces**

The confines of charity are widened by treating with esteem and cordiality other groups working for the building up of the Church and for the manifestation of the manifold graces of the Spirit.

If we wish to erect a strong building for our common use, all antagonism and contention must be laid aside, and we must compete rather in mutual esteem, affection and collaboration, evidencing much patience, discernment, and a readiness to accept any sacrifices that may be called for.

The special graces God bestows in many different forms on the various ecclesial movements are expressed in a particular spirituality and specific apostolic character; when there is a true communion among these bodies, there is also an interchange of gifts, especially when the various groups succeed in manifesting clearly their own specific identities.

Communion does not lessen individual charisms, nor does it tend in any way to reduce all movements to a common meaningless mediocrity.

Communion demands openness to dialogue and the capacity to make a contribution of one's own particular values.

As the Salesian Family, stimulated by the example of Don Bosco, who had welcoming feelings and words for all, and knew how to share with them ideas, experiences and achievements; we are called to reconfirm the gift we have received and to walk hand in hand with all the Church.

## **CHAPTER 5 SERVICES OF COMMUNION**

35. Communion demands fidelity to one's own Group.
36. Points of reference.
37. Usefulness of adroit structures.

### **ART. 35**

#### **Communion demands fidelity to one's own Group**

The fact of belonging to the Family, so as to share among many people the same spiritual riches, in no way diminishes the values and originality of each individual Group. Fraternity does not extinguish but rather strengthens identity. And so the concrete circumstances of individuals and their ecclesial collocation are confirmed, enlivened and enriched.

Through the energy of his charism, Don Bosco brings together in unity in a single apostolic Family religious, lay people, married persons, widows and widowers, celibates and priests, all of them testifying in various ways to the spirit of the beatitudes. No one loses his or her specifically priestly, religious or lay spirituality.

Don Bosco's charism is a higher overall energy which takes up all the individual spiritualities, specifying and strengthening them.

Communion is the most mature fruit of charismatic identity, of organizational autonomy, of the expression of the originality of each Group, of the mutual and generous enrichment stemming from the values of all. Communion therefore remains the single objective of the Salesian Family for living its values with the greatest intensity.

### **ART. 36**

#### **Points of reference**

By the very fact of their charismatic fellowship, the individual Groups that make up the Salesian Family recognize in Don Bosco's successor, the Rector Major, the father and centre of unity of the Family itself.

Closely linked with his ministry, there are further points of reference that facilitate and bring about convergence, in view of a service to unity of spirit and apostolic collaboration.

Within each group there are dedicated and qualified animators whose special task is to create communion with all the Family of Don Bosco.

The Salesians of Don Bosco are the special heirs and representatives of his bounteous priestly fatherliness, and thus have the responsibility of animating the entire Family.

Hence they perform a service that has no governing authority, but provides a joyous guarantee of a true path for the faithful living of salesian holiness in all its fullness.

The seeking and acceptance of the different 'communion rituals' make evident the conviction that any person asking to be integrated into a particular Group as an active member, has the intention of belonging at the same time to a wider Family.

## **ART. 37**

### **Usefulness of adroit structures**

The Salesian Family is made up of established and well organized groups that provide a stimulus to further growth and development through a light and flexible structure that is understood and accepted by all the members.

An obvious element of unity *at the general level* is provided by the person of the Rector Major, as already explained in this document; he also has a specific institutional function in relation to several of the Groups considered individually. His function is of a specific institutional nature.

Other aspects could also be thought of as part of an organic picture.

*At regional, national, provincial and local level*, unity is sustained and promoted by councils and consulting groups.

To ensure normal vitality to the Salesian Family, it seems indispensable that this be not left only to the good will of those responsible for animation and government of the individual Groups at different levels.

It frequently happens that practical difficulties associated with apostolic work, interpersonal relationships and those between Groups, conceal the need and urgency for structurally organized fraternity.

The definition of possible structures must be the object of further shared reflection between the Groups of the Salesian Family.

## CONCLUSION

38. The memory of the saints of our Family and our recourse to them.
39. The ecclesial relevance of a Family united in life and activity.

### **ART. 38**

#### **The memory of the saints of our Family and our recourse to them**

The saints proclaim the wonders of Christ and are living witnesses to the Gospel; they strengthen the unity of the whole Church in the spirit and exercise of fraternal charity.

God has lavished his love on the Salesian Family of Don Bosco by enriching it with holy members. A wealth of inspiration is to be found in our Saints: their ranks include young and old; priests, layfolk and consecrated members; those committed to education, and evangelization; those battling to build a better society - and even heroic martyrs.

It is a source of wonder what the grace of the Holy Spirit can do in the hearts of those who accept his call and offer themselves willingly to work in his service! Filling their hearts with love, he encourages them in their quest for perfect charity and an ever-deepening union.

The most valuable asset of the communion that we aim to achieve as a Family is a constant striving for holiness.

The invocation, then, of our brothers and sisters who have pointed out to us the way of love becomes a valid help in our weakness, and an encouragement to soldier on joyfully as we wend our way heavenward.

*I shall be waiting for all of you in heaven, Don Bosco says to us.*

### **ART. 39**

#### **The ecclesial relevance of a Family united in life and activity**

Throughout the world the Church is the symbol of love and unity. Thus, according to the teaching of Jesus, communion is the most efficacious kind of apostolic witness.

In the present historical context of the Church's dedication to dialogue with all men of good will, this duty to manifest internal communion becomes all the more urgent.

Today everyone is more closely united by social, technical and cultural links and so, the Council reminds us, it is necessary that there should also be complete unity in Christ.

The spiritual families within the Church can contribute much in helping it to be well equipped for the work of uniting all people and enhancing the Body of Christ.

Don Bosco has taught us that from our love of Christ there will inevitably flow love for his Church. Pastoral charity is the root and expression of unity in our Family communion. Visible and active unity in the Salesian family is a vital means for the *new evangelization*.

## **PRAYER**

### **to Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Salesian Family**

O Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church,  
we firmly believe that yours is a special place in the history of salvation,  
and that you are the mistress and guide of our Salesian Family.

With joy we contemplate and strive to imitate  
your faith and willing availability to God and his loving designs,  
your humble acceptance of the great wonders performed by the Father,  
your apostolic charity and your fidelity at the foot of the cross.

With filial devotion we place ourselves under your loving care.

Immaculate Virgin, lead us to the fullness of self-donation;  
Help of Christians, give us courage and confidence in the service of the People of God.

Holy Virgin, we implore your loving protection,  
on each one of us,  
on each Group born of the charism of Don Bosco,  
on the entire Salesian Family  
and on the young people you entrust to our care.

Amen.

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