

Verification:

Experience of encounter that transforms

Dearest Sisters,

We are living a time of grace that God gifts us with this period of the life of the Church and of the Institute. At three years since the celebration of General Chapter XXIII, we are called to pause, personally and as local community, province and interprovincial, to reflect on the journey taken and to project toward the future with renewed missionary zeal.

The historical context in which we are inserted, with its challenges and opportunities, is for us a great call to grasp the appeals of the Holy Spirit that reach us in an ever new way. We lived a rich ecclesial experience marked by the Year of Consecrated Life, by two Synods on the Family, and by the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. In particular, the year of triennial Verications will coincide with the immediate preparation and celebration of the Synod on the Young, *faith and vocational discernment*, that will be held in October of 2018. The Church itself solicits us to evaluate and empower the quality of our mission with the young and among the young to help them to discover God's plan for their life.

During General Chapter XXIII, we wanted to build together a home open to the world, and with the young and the laity, weave a broad network of collaboration, giving more space to the young, protagonists with us in an outgoing missionary Church.

With joy and awe, we discover evident synergies between the theme of the next Synod and the content on which the Triennial Evaluation will concentrate. Thus, we will live them as a deep experience of communion with the Church that brings us to listen to what the young can teach us for a more radical witness to the Gospel.

A call and a personal responsibility

The Verification is a meaningful opportunity for each of us to let ourselves be touched by the presence of God who always accompanies us on our journey. It is also a call to place ourselves in docile listening to the Holy Spirit and in the sincere re-reading of our own life woven with encounters. Only a true encounter with Jesus transforms us from within and helps us to penetrate reality with new eyes. The resulting change becomes a power that transforms, a source of vocational and missionary fruitfulness (Cf. Acts GC XXIII, p. 35).

In order to verify the authenticity of our life, we could reflect on which experience of Emmaus we are living in daily life and ask ourselves: what is changing in me? Which peripheries do I allow to call to me? What does the call to be with the young, missionaries of hope and joy imply for me, in concrete?

As Pope Francis reminds us, every institutional renewal will be efficacious only and exclusively if it is actualized by 'renewed' people, capable of conversion and on-going purification, in a change of mentality and of life.

An experience of encounter in the local and Provincial community

We are convinced that the General Chapter will bear fruit in the measure in which it is lived in the local communities where the charism develops, enters into history, and leavens life and daily actions (Cf. Acts GC XXIII, p. 7). As a consequence, the Triennial Verification will be celebrated as a strong experience in the local and provincial communities.

The points for reflection have already been sent to the Provincials. They call us to review the changes of mentality the Chapter has aroused in us in regard to our openness to the geographical and existential peripheries; to our being with the young, communities that proclaim Jesus with a joyful face open to hope; to the acceptance of the challenges for an integral ecology.

With gratitude for the journey taken, we will verify the *three choices of pastoral conversion: Transformation through encounter; Together, with the young; Missionaries of hope and joy* (Cf. Acts GC XXIII, nos. 54-66) beginning with our own experience lived at the personal, community, and province level.

We will question ourselves on the *conditions* placed to realize these choices, on the *attitudes* that favored a changed mentality, on the *difficulties* and *resistances* met, and on the *processes to empower*.

We will individuate which prophetic gestures are in act in the Province (Cf. Acts GC XXIII, nos. 67-74) and how we express in consecrated life, the renewed assumption of the *Constitutions* and the *Regulations* of the Institute. In addition, we ask ourselves which *priority prospects for the future* can be considered for the next General Chapter XXIV.

These aspects can be the object of reflection and sharing beginning from the concrete choices that each Province and community elaborated in their Province and local Plans. Thus, we will verify the way in which we concretely actuate the post-chapter journey and how it is transforming us at the personal and community level.

It will be the motive for hope to see if, as the disciples of Emmaus, we have *allowed ourselves to be transformed by the encounter with Jesus*, reviving the joy of proclaiming the Gospel together with the Young.

It will also be enriching for everyone to share the *prophetic gestures* we have had the courage to dare in our educational environments.

Noting, that the Constitutions were reviewed by the chapter members, re-printed in the various languages, and solemnly given to each FMA, it would be wonderful to share if our Plan of life is a point of reference for personal and community choices and if they really become a journey of daily holiness, as Mother Mazzarello teaches us.

She wrote to the first missionaries: *“Be exact in the observance of the Holy Rule. You already know that this is enough to make us holy. Jesus does not ask anything more of us. If we truly love Him, let us give Him this pleasure and give joy to His Heart since He loves us so much”*. (L 27, 9).

Renewed fidelity to the Covenant of Love with God is the root of the prophetic dynamism of our life and the condition for the charismatic vitality of the educative mission that can exercise a charm and an appeal for the young, thus ‘contagioning’ them with the sequela of Jesus.

In a serious comparison with reality and in re-reading the Chapter documents, new journeys to take will open up and we will discover which prospects the Holy Spirit is directing us toward, even in view of General Chapter XXIV.

The Provincials and their Councils will indicate the most opportune journeys to actualize the Verification at the community and Province levels.

The Interprovincial Verification will be enriched by contributions from all the communities and Provinces. It will be a precious opportunity to grow in the sense of belonging and in the awareness that no one is so poor as to have nothing to give to the community and no one is so rich as to have nothing to receive in a real dynamic of reciprocity.

In the unity of the charism and the diversity of contexts, we form a great family, a “worldwide community called to give witness of communion and universality in the Church” (Cf. C 115).

We will live the Verification in a climate of listening to the Word of God, of discernment, of prayer, and of a real encounter that forms and transforms those who let themselves be questioned with sincerity and without defensiveness. From now, let us place in the hands and heart Mary Help of Christians the process of preparation and celebration of the triennial Verification. She who was docile to the Holy Spirit and pondered the Word of God in her heart, sustains the journey of conversion of the entire Institute, of every sister, and of every educating community, and revives the desire to be with Her missionaries of joy and of hope.

With renewed gratitude

This year 2017, we celebrate various graced events that offer us new opportunities of growth in fidelity to our vocation and in belonging to the Salesian Family and to the Church.

The 140th anniversary of the missionary departure of the first FMA illumines the journey of the Institute and makes us exult with gratitude for the courage and daring of those young sisters who inaugurated our missionary story. From the origins, missionary ardor never decreased, rather it became stronger and was amplified in the acceptance of new calls from God and in contact with unknown existential and geographic peripheries

The life of the first missionaries is the most eloquent witness that the *joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the life of those who encounter Jesus* (Cf. EG, n. 1) and who want to proclaim Him to the whole world. Their daring calls the Institute to renew its missionary passion and to express it today in a strongly changed context, with the creativity of love.

We affectionately unite ourselves with the Don Bosco Volunteers who mark the centenary of their foundation and we pray for the fecundity of their mission that has the potential of the Gospel leaven. Silently, it make life germinate in the fabric of the Church and of society.

At the 100 years since the apparitions of Mary at Fatima and the 300 years of the discovery of the Madonna of Aparecida in Brazil, we feel the timeliness of the message that Mary makes resound in the world with her presence as a Mother who watches over the journey of humanity.

With wise pedagogy, She entrusts her message to simple people and desires that through them, her voice will reach the world, involving everyone in prayer to obtain peace and communion among the nations.

Receiving Mary’s appeal at Fatima, we feel more than ever called to be women of peace and to involve children, young people, and families in building peace, in imploring from God this inestimable gift, and in committing ourselves to promote gestures of harmony and of communion among persons and peoples.

We greet you with affection and invoke the blessings of God and of Mary Help of Christians on each of you and on the educating communities.

Rome, 11 February 2017
Liturgical Memorial of the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes

With affection,
La Madre and the Sisters of the Council

Prospectus of the Interprovincial Triennial Verifications

Interprovincial Conference	Date - 2018	Place
<i>CIEM-CII-CIEP</i>	08-12 January	Rome
<i>CIAM</i>	16-20 January	Lusaka (Zambia)
<i>PCI</i>	24-28 January	Calcutta (India)
<i>CIAO</i>	09-13 February	Sam Phran (Thailand)
<i>SPR</i>	11-15 May	Melbourne (Australia)
<i>Houses dependent on Mother</i>	27-30 June	Rome
<i>CIB-CICSAL</i>	23-27 July	Cachoeira do Campo (Brazil)
<i>CINAB</i>	08-12 August	Quito Cumbayá (Ecuador)
<i>CIMAC-NAC</i>	16-20 August	S. José (Costa Rica)