

HOGARES DON BOSCO

DON BOSCO HOMES

Movement of Family Ministry SSCC of Spain

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Personal presentation

Good Evening! We are Andrés and Carmen, married couples of Pozoblanco, a town with a great Salesian tradition. Both of us have been in touch with the Salesian family since our childhood. First as oratorians, then as animators. In our engagement and in our marriage, the Salesian spirit and the love of Mary Help of Christians have always been present. And as part of the Salesian Family we feel, we want and we need to continue to grow in Christian spirituality and in our own personal formation, as a couple and as a family.

For all this, 10 years ago, we decided to become part of **Don Bosco Homes**. As married, we felt the need to form ourselves as a couple and to seek help and support in faith with other couples with similar concerns. And that's what we found in HDB

What is "Don Bosco Homes"?

Don Bosco Homes is an ecclesial movement of Salesian family pastoral care. It was founded in 1965 by the Salesian Cooperators with this motto: "Towards God with the children in the hands of Don Bosco". At present, besides Spain it is extended to Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Dominican Republic and Chile. In Spain 100 marriage groups make up the movement.

DB Homes are organized into groups of marriage couples, who freely accept their spirit, want to travel in the path of human, Christian and Salesian family growth.

We establish ourselves within the frame of the Salesian Movement. We feel in communion with all the groups of the Salesian Family, especially the Association of Salesian Cooperators, who are our animators. And we take the spiritual formation of the couple and the family growth from the charism of Don Bosco.

We adopted the name **HOMES** because of its special reference to the family, the domestic church. And **DON BOSCO** to express that our following of Christ is inspired by the evangelical spirit of the Saint.

We base ourselves on **our Ideology**, where our identity is reflected within the Salesian Family; And our goal: to form and grow as responsible Christian parents and educators of our children.

Not only do we love ourselves but we manifest the love we profess with gestures and actions, with optimism and simplicity. We want this love to be creative and to help those around us, especially our children, to achieve a full realization of themselves.

Like Don Bosco, we believe that **the reason** is the principle of communal living, both between us and our children. That is why we foster within the family, conversation, dialogue and listening.

As Don Bosco we seek to create a family environment, taking advantage of all the resources that offer us love, reason and **life of faith**. We seek above all the educational strength that arises from the ordinary situations of each day. This is for us the essence of the spirituality of the Preventive System, lived in families.

For us to belong to this movement of the Salesian Family is significant in growing as persons, as married couples and as families.

Basic processes of the life of the Movement

The monthly meeting, every month in a different home of married couples we form the group. In it, we share an issue that each couple has worked on individually. Guided by the couple who host the meeting, we share it in common and deepen it. The counselor priest always accompanies us in these meetings.

The formative process of DBH goes through three complementary stages, conceived as concentric circles that expand, deepen and complete the values of the Ideology. Each of these stages has its own objectives and specific thematic contents.

- The initiation stage. It attends to the family, human, Christian and Salesian formation of the members; It takes care of the knowledge of DBH's Ideology and promotes the incorporation into the reality of the Salesian Family. It lasts about three years.

In this first phase, the group must be forged as such. It must achieve an atmosphere of trust among its members to get to know and plan themselves in personal and group works, and to promote expression and sharing of feelings.

- The consolidation stage, with a duration of one year, mainly takes care of the transformation of the families in Salesian domestic churches and the growth of the love for God and for the neighbor. The integration of the group is encouraged so that the experiences of the consolidated groups nurture experiences and witnesses to the groups that are joining.
- The stage of commitment and dissemination is distinguished by its diffusive and apostolic nature, which is shared by those who receive it and is concerned with exercising pastoral action in favor of others. "What you get for free is given free". From here, the groups continue to mature in age, experience of coexistence and mutual help, in life of faith and love, and in witnessing.

But the group of **Homes** not only deals with issues such as the preventive system, the gift of children, the Christian family as a believing and evangelising community, fidelity to marriage, or Amoris Laetitia during the present course.

The group of **Homes** is at the same time a support in the married life. We form a group of couples of same age, with whom we share similar problems and experiences, with the support of our counselor who, in addition to spiritual guidance, brings his knowledge and vision of the church. The meetings make our group a family, our family of **Homes**.

In each meeting **the presence of the Lord** is felt. The themes make us mature in our faith and deepen our lives. The experiences are shared in an atmosphere of trust, love and prayer. We know that the one next to us speaks to us with tenderness, that gives us his whole being, that supports us and opens our heart. A caress, a hug, a handshake, a smile or a tear are common in our meetings. **Homes** help transform our families into domestic churches, and grow in love for God and our neighbor. The feeling of belonging to the group grows stronger, because other married couples become part of you.

In **Homes** we are committed to the education of our children and committed to society, forming part of the family pastoral care of the Church. Many of us

are active members of other movements of the Salesian Family or of the dioceses or our parishes.

The meetings of married couples are complemented by **other meetings** organized by the local or Provincial Commission of DBH.

They are meetings in which the feeling of belonging to the Salesian family ministry flows. Because we feel like a family; Because our children share with us and with other families experiences, friendships, devotions and transmission of traditions. Each member present is unique and contributes what he has, is given entirely for the good of the community and the family of DBH.

Homes is for us building, preserving and rehabilitating of the family and of each one of our families. Because step by step, day by day and meeting to meeting, we are feeling closer to Christ, we grow as individuals, as married couples, as FAMILY, we are acquiring a commitment to society, to make the family the main axis to evangelize.

Strong values in the experience of DBH

- **Express love day by day**, building the relationship in dialogue, trust, and growing together. The family is seen as a workshop of life, hope and resurrection
- **Fidelity to love**, return love with more love. This surrender of love, reassures us because it gathers more that which gives than that which receives.
- **The sincere communication** with which feelings are shared and grown in conjugal communion.
- **The meeting**, intimacy moment of marriage where two people who are one, meet and analyze their plan of life in common.
- **The experience of the Salesian charism**, a charism that empowers the few as in the realm of the family and in the realm of the family of families that constitutes the movement.
- **The integration of children into a wider community** in a healthy, inter-generational environment in which all (children, adults and the elderly) teach and learn, coexist and enjoy, grow and engage, and in which they are protagonists. With all these great family of **Homes** is built.
- **The domestic church experience** with well defined values that serve as a pillar to grow as individuals and as families.

- **The strength** that impresses everyone. A strength that encourages us to witness and to undertake the evangelizing mission within society, even when we find blocks and rejections.
- **The gratuitousness of relationships** based on love, forgiveness and support in our society so commodified in which it seems impossible.
- As Don Angel says, **to facilitate the deepening of the values of conjugal love**, living it as a gift of God and as an encounter of hearts that communicate, unite and love each other, in an endeavor.
- **The experience of a love that transforms with age**: it grows and matures in fidelity, surrenders and expands more and more, it is not only an emotion or a feeling but a path that leads us to God.
- **Feeling as agents of change** in favor of our children and in favor of couples and families that crisscross our lives.
- And many others ... who have made and continue to make the experience of Don Bosco Homes a particularly rich space for the hundreds of marriages that are part of them.

Looking to the future: in what directions do we move?

We have said briefly about the origin of DB Homes; about their identity; the simple elements that make up the movement; some powerful values in particular for those who live this experience ...

As a group and as a movement we also look to the future. In what horizon of ideas do we move? Basically in these five:

1. *To continue and consolidate our identity as a movement for family pastoral care in the Salesian Family*

The Christmas gift of RM for this year presents us with a great challenge: "We are Family, every home school of life and love". In **Don Bosco Homes** we are well aware of the richness that the experience of **Homes** has brought to the married couples of the movement.

Our movement feels the obligation of collecting the witnesses proposed by the Rector Major, cultivating in our homes the characteristics of the Preventive System of Don Bosco and offering our experience to the whole Salesian Family. In it we are. We thank God that we have a simple but effective organization that pushes us in this direction.

It belonged to a reference group as the group of Homes, to ensure that we re-think of these values that we have to defend daily. It reminds us that we should not get tired of loving.

*2. To Continue and consolidate our participation as **Don Bosco Homes** in the pastoral care of the family of the local Church (parishes and dioceses).*

Homes is an ecclesial movement. As such we collaborate with the parishes and with the ecclesial organizations of family ministry. We feel the duty and urgency to consolidate this collaboration, especially at a time when the Church feels the need to work "**for**" and "**with**" families as never before.

The study of "*Amoris Letizia*" that we have undertaken this year opens up a great horizon in this regard.

The fathers must be the potters in each of our families, we must be crafted as a jewel to grow in humanity as a man and as a woman. It depends on us and our approaches for our family will grow if we let marriage grow. Growing together should be our goal in the relationship between spouses.

3. To offer our society, particularly the young couples, the beauty and the sense of our way of understanding and living the family, putting God at the center of our family relationships

Homes are conscious of the challenges posed by our society, the situations that are experienced by so many families, the difficulties of young people when it comes to think of their marriage and family life.

As a movement of the Salesian Family we can not live outside this reality. Our aim is to unite our experiences and our strengths with other groups, particularly with the organizations of Youth Ministry and the Salesian Family, so that as many young people as possible can find references that help them to grow and live their vocation of marriage. For the development of the people of this society and of this Church, the pillar of the family is fundamental.

4. With regard to young people, a more concrete line of action is this: to accompany young people during the time of engagement and preparation for marriage, offering and facilitating the formation of new groups of Homes.

The spirit, values and style of **Don Bosco Homes** we believe are particularly positive so that the young couples can strengthen their marriage and family

life and experience. And particularly necessary when we find so many couples lacking in help and referrals to get it.

The preparation of formation itineraries for young couples, where a project of love taken in conscience is established, is fundamental for the perception of marriage, as a **vocation, a solid and lasting alliance that walks towards God.**

5. And yet another line of action: the accompaniment of wounded marriages, particularly in their initial stage; Or the accompaniment of broken marriages.

They are delicate situations, we all know it. But the experience of Homes and the strength of the believing witnesses of its members offer us a good perspective for this type of help.

Conclusion

With our presence here today, we seek nothing more than to offer our experiences so that the gift that the Rector Major has proposed to the whole Salesian Family finds concrete ways to become a reality.

Nothing starts from the scratch. **Don Bosco Homes** has celebrated 50 years of history, trying to respond to the needs of families. The current circumstances continue to push us. We sincerely hope that in the future the family will have the presence it deserves in the society and in the Church. This is the concern of everyone.

The Rector Major calls upon every Salesian Family to foster it. Don Bosco told us: How many souls can be attracted by a good example! From Homes we offer the good example in which we believe and in which we grow, that of **Don Bosco Homes**. What better way than helping and encouraging the formation of groups such as the DB Homes so that many marriages can be saved. May this be more and more a reality in the great Salesian Family. Count on us for it. Thank you very much.