

# CONCLUDING HOMILY FOR THE SALESIAN FAMILY SPIRITUALITY DAYS

*Sunday 17 January 2021  
Rome, Sacred Heart Basilica*

My dear brothers and sisters of the Don Bosco's Salesian Family

We have gathered here to celebrate the most sacred thing we have as Christians: the Eucharist, the mystery of the real presence, here and now, of the Lord Jesus Christ, a presence that is grace and blessing today for all of us and for many others throughout the world.

We are experiencing this meeting here at the "Sacred Heart" of Jesus, in this Basilica where our beloved Father Don Bosco expended what remain of his already compromised strength, almost up to the moment of his death (which took place seven months after its consecration).

The word that God gives us today is a precious gift, one that goes to and touches the very depths of our heart because it is a Word that has a lot to do with us!

John's disciples became interested in Jesus; they approached him and he asked them: "*What are you looking for?*" They replied saying they wanted to have a deeper understanding of who he was, beginning with where he lived, where it would be possible to meet up with him to speak with him and stay with him.

The Lord's response is a model of life and vocational proposal: "*Come and see*". So the two disciples went and stayed with him, initially for a day and then for the rest of their lives. Jesus gave meaning to their lives.

This is all very beautiful: Jesus gave fullness to their lives, filling their lives with meaning.

What did he tell them? What made them so enthusiastic about the person of Jesus? What did they see?

I would not be able to give the answer to this. Just the same, I believe that Jesus had satisfied their thirst, their search for meaning. And indeed, amidst so much confusion, like millions and millions of people, we too are people who are searching or who have sought (and happily, have found) a truth that gives meaning to life, that satisfies, that frees one from the dissatisfaction of small or half truths; from small or empty forms of satisfaction; above all, if we have sought and found **someone** whom we can trust, *to whom we can surrender ourselves completely*, a person who can be our point of reference in life.

## **HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KNOW HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN CALLS, and distinguish He who calls, from amidst the confusion of so many calls and echoes**

Each of us can consider ourselves fortunate – as members of the Salesian Family, as believers, as Church – for having listened today too, like Samuel in the first reading, to a voice calling him, one that wakes him and drags him away from his sleep: from the sleep of *routine*, from the tiredness that is linked to the lack of horizons or meaning in life; from the sleep that leads to being focused only on oneself and one's immediate goals, on what is comfortable, on what does not allow us to live life and dedication to others, passionately...

It is easy to confuse the voice with echoes, Antonio Machado would say, and not immediately discover who it is that is calling – as happened to young Samuel – not perceive who it is that is saying: “*Come and see*”.

It is necessary to cultivate a capacity for continuous and repeated attention. It is necessary to learn to wait attentively, to listen. It is necessary to make room for the new things that knock at the door of our lives, overcoming the tendency that makes us impervious and impenetrable to the surprise of God's coming into our lives.

### **Staying with Jesus**

Jesus continues to ask us, personally and as Don Bosco's family: “*What are you looking for?*” And he continues to offer us this response: “*Come and see*”. Because we are called to follow him. This is our Christian vocation. This is our mission as the Salesian Family. We are called to say yes to Jesus in daily life and according to our specific vocation as lay persons, married couples, fathers and mothers, consecrated persons, priests...

Finally, we are invited to focus on what truly gives fullness, on what gives meaning to our life.

This is why we listen to and meditate on the Word of God, allow ourselves to be challenged by the Lord who speaks to us through his written word which we have listened to and meditated on; in his word that passes through the mediation of everyday events. A God who speaks to us and addresses himself to each of us through the poor, the least, those who have been discarded, disinherited, those who – as the Gospel states – are *God's chosen ones: those who will go before us into the kingdom of heaven*. So let us continue on our way serenely, together with those who recognise the Lord in despondent or needy brethren, in the lonely or the sick or the hungry.

The Lord is calling us and inviting us to get to know him more, to stay with him, to follow him. Living with Jesus in our daily life, each according to our proper calling, has to be our reason for life.

We ask you, Lord, that what happened to John's disciples will be realised in us.

Today we, the Salesian Family of Don Bosco, want to be those disciples who hear you say: **“Come and see”**. And may it be said of us all the time that **“we went, we saw and we remained with Jesus”**.