



SOCIETA' DI SAN FRANCESCO DI SALES
SEDE CENTRALE SALESIANA
Via Marsala 42 - 00185 Roma *Il Consigliere per le Missioni*

Rome, 11th November 2018

Dear Confreres,

A cordial greeting to each of you, from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Rome, the residence of our dear father Don Bosco and now also of his Successor.

We have come once again to the annual remembrance of 11 November, the Salesian missionary remembrance par excellence. I want to spend a moment with you, to thank you so much, and also to offer you a thought for reflection. I repeat the words of Don Vecchi in his beautiful last letter, the one on illness and old age (2001):

"Many young people and others have an image of the Salesian in full strength as one who comes out of his room in the morning and - after prayer with the community - goes down to the playground, welcomes the young people as they come in, chats with them, joins in their game of football and, a few minutes later, gathers them in a room for a catechism class often followed by the Eucharist. This is a real situation: it happens in many parts of the world and it is authentic. The Salesian waits for the right moment to meeting with the young people and the moment of their arrival is one of the freshest when they are most open to new things.

However, there is a risk: that of isolating oneself, of emphasizing and thinking too much of pastoral results as coming from one's own strength, forgetting the gratuitous filial dimension and the self-offering that was typical of Christ, who made the cross his moment of revelation and the Eucharist his moment of communication.

*Suffering and the cross are part of life. And we must say straight away that **the period of infirmity and limitation is as fruitful as that of specific activity, if it is lived in the light of the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus**".*

How much light and serenity this thought should offer to our daily fabric of countless gestures and acts of patience and tenderness that, united to Jesus, cannot but give life - and life in abundance - to many young people, through the living body of the Society of St. Francis of Sales.

So let us carry on with courage, dear confreres!

In your frequent times of prayer and of explicit contemplation, I entrust to you three nuclei of prayer intentions this year to be kept present, in addition to the monthly Missionary Intention for the whole Congregation, which I know you follow with great zeal and attention:

- **For the new missionaries sent this year in the 149th Expedition** - twenty-five confreres, the majority of them young, who came from all continents and left for all the continents. Pray for them that they may keep the missionary lamp burning in their Salesian souls and that they may be strong in adversity.
- **For confreres who are discerning their missionary vocation *ad gentes***. On 8 December next, the Rector Major will address his third missionary appeal to the entire Congregation, convoking the 150th Missionary Expedition of September 2019. Many in the Congregation have felt challenged by these appeals and have responded positively to the Successor of Don Bosco, among them some confreres in their sixties! Pray therefore that many - from all the continents and of all ages, clerics and brothers – may have the courage to say yes to the Lord and his mission. This appeal by the Rector Major therefore urgently needs to be accompanied by your prayers!
- **For the young people of vast areas and countries that are still waiting for us**, they are waiting for Don Bosco and above all, the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am thinking especially of some countries of the former Soviet Union. On my way back from the Republic of Saha (capital: Jakutsk), I flew over the huge territories of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. In Yakutsk I met a young Muslim from Tajikistan who presented the Salesian community with some good venison for the feast to celebrate my visit. Let us pray that Divine Providence's time for these young people may be speeded up through the generosity of many sons of Don Bosco.

In his Apostolic Constitution on Women's Contemplative Life Pope Francis says: *"The Church greatly esteems your life of complete self-giving. The Church counts on your prayers and on your self-sacrifice to bring today's men and women to the good news of the Gospel. The Church needs you!"* (*Vultum Dei Quaerere*, 6). This can also be said of you, dear Confreres, who are fully Salesian missionaries, scattered throughout the various infirmaries and nursing homes of the Congregation!

Thank you! Don Bosco thanks you. The Rector Major blesses you all. And above all, may the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who solemnly presides over his Basilica in front of Termini station in Rome, fill you with his consolations.



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