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FS400 省會長家書五 (2016 年 1 月)

(天主在我們心中的愛)，愛德

親愛的青年們，使命合作夥伴，慈幼大家庭的兄弟姐妹們：

願主的平安常與你們同在！上個月，我們在主保聖人方濟各沙雷氏的指導下，反省了愛德——天主之愛，天主對我們的愛。新年第一個月（2016 年 1 月，慈幼月！），在同樣的指導下，我們將再默想愛德——天主之愛，天主在我們心中的愛——我們對祂愛的回應。我說『天主在我們心中的愛是我們對祂愛的回應』是有意的。事實上，只有通過神聖的愛，天主親自通過聖化聖寵（『聖寵』意即『無償的愛』）典植入我們的心中的愛，我們才能回應天主的愛，

聖方濟各沙雷氏有些非常精美的言論，介紹天主的愛灌輸到我們心中之後如何產生效果，使我們親切地回應祂對我們的愛。

首先，天主的愛尊重我們的自由意志，以魅力而不是強力促使我們。『我們不是被鐵鍊，而是被魅力，甜美的吸引力和神聖的驅動力拖向天主。簡言之，它是「亞當的繩索」(Hos 11:4)，順乎人性，深入人心恰到好處。為它，自由是本性使然。』為使之更簡單明瞭，聖方濟各沙雷氏運用了一個簡而有力的形象：『將一塊磁鐵丟入針叢中，立刻就會見到眾針堅決地轉向它們之所愛，並擁向它。同樣，當我們的救主，使我們感到祂在我們心中甜蜜地臨在時，我們所有的感官都將撲向祂，融入祂那無可比擬的甜蜜中。』直白地說，我們『墜入天主的愛河』。

其次，天主無償地愛著我們，我們也無償地愛著天主。天主作為無限的善和美，自然而然便吸引著我們親切地作出回應。因此，我們愛天主，只因為祂是天主。於天主相愛的靈魂在內心深處呼喊：『為我來說，天主是天主已經足夠。他美好無量，完美無限。我或生或死都不再有所謂，因為我靈所愛的那位永生永王！』

再者，我們心中為天主的這份愛，是我們自由意志所能的無上行為。『愛德自居於精神的頂峰，作為威嚴的女王，安坐於意志的寶座上，從那裡向靈魂傳達喜悅和甜蜜』眾愛之中，天主之愛的持有權杖，發號施令的權威與之形影不離，本性所然，如果權威不在，它也將隨之而去，蕩然無存』人是宇宙之完美；精神是人之完美；愛是精神之完美，愛之於愛德。因此，天主之愛是宇宙之所向，之完美，之卓絕。』

聖誕快樂！慈悲禧年快樂！慈幼月快樂！

在耶穌、瑪利亞、若瑟、聖方濟各和鮑思高神父內，

摯愛你們的省會長 斐林豐神父



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FS400 Provincial Letter 5 (January 2016)

(God's Love in Our Heart), Charity

Dear Young People, Dear Mission Partners, Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Salesian Family,

The peace of the Lord be with you always! Guided by our Patron Saint Francis de Sales, last month we reflected on Charity as God's love, especially God's love for us. In this first month of the new year (January 2016, the Salesian Month!), under the same guide, we meditate also on Charity as God's love, but as God's love in our heart as our response to his love. On purpose I have said "God's love in our heart as our response to his love". In fact, we can respond to God's love for us only through the divine love that God himself has inserted in our heart through the gift of sanctifying grace ("grace" means "gratuitous love").

St. Francis de Sales has some very beautiful things to say as he describes how God's love works, after being instilled into our hearts, so as to make us respond lovingly to God's love for us.

First of all, respecting our freedom, God's love urges us to love God not by compulsion but by attraction. "We are not drawn to God by iron chains but by enticements, sweet attractions, and holy inspirations, which, in a word, are 'the cords of Adam' (Hos 11:4), and of humanity, that is, proportionate and adapted to the human heart, to which liberty is natural" (English translation H.B. Mackey, *On the love of God*, p. 95) To bring home this point, St. Francis de Sales uses a simple but forceful image. "He who should cast a piece of loadstone amongst a number of needles would instantly see them turn all their points toward their well-beloved adamant, and join themselves to it; so when our Saviour makes His most delicious presence to be felt in the midst of our hearts, all our faculties turn their points in that direction, to be united to this incomparable sweetness" (p. 252) Literally, we "fall in love" with God.

Secondly, as God loves us gratuitously, we, too, love God gratuitously. God, being infinite goodness and beauty, attracts us to lovingly respond to him simply by being Himself. Consequently, we love God simply because He is God. The soul which has fallen in love with God is forever crying out from its secret heart, "It is enough for me that God is God, that His goodness is infinite, His perfection boundless. If I live or die it does not matter, for the beloved of my soul lives and reigns eternally" (p. 51)

In third place, such love for God in our hearts is the supreme act that can be done by our free will. "Charity makes its abode in the point and summit of the spirit, and, as a queen of majesty, is seated in the will as on her throne, whence she conveys into the soul her delights and sweetness" (p. 125) "Of all loves, that of God holds the scepter, and has the authority of commanding so inseparably united to it and proper to its nature, that if it be not master it ceases to be and perishes" (p. 29) "Man is the perfection of the universe; the spirit is the perfection of man; the perfection of the spirit is love, and that of love is charity. On this account the love of God is the object, perfection and excellence of the universe" (p. 410).

Happy Christmas! Happy Year of Mercy! Happy Salesian Month! In Jesus Mary Joseph St Francis Don Bosco, I am,

Yours affectionately, Fr. Lanfranco M. Fedrigotti, Provincial