

## **Heirs and witnesses of holiness**

Dearest Sisters,

We are almost at the end of the summer *Plenum* and we wish to express our gratitude to the Lord and to all of you for the prayers and messages of closeness that have accompanied us in this period. At the same time, we share with you the significant experiences and resonances of many events in the different Provinces.

The canonical visits and the animation visits are an occasion to thank the Lord for the vitality of our communities, for the good that He makes grow by transforming our frailties and increasing our resources, so that His Kingdom may be realized and spread throughout the world.

### **Traces of holiness**

Sometimes the limits and critical issues cloud our vision and risk making us fail to grasp the holiness of so many of our Sisters who, in silence and daily self-giving, bear witness to the beauty of a life lived evangelically. We too risk being seduced by the dominant culture of image, appearance, and spiritual worldliness, forgetting that the Kingdom of God is for the little ones, the humble, the simple.

We have a beautiful spiritual and charismatic heritage that from the birth of our Institute to today is fruitful in rich and incisive models of holiness.

In particular, let us pray with confidence for the successful outcome of the cause of canonization of Sister Maria Troncatti on the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her death, which took place on 25 August 1969.

On 28 April, the diocesan inquiry for the process of beatification and canonization of Sister Antonietta Böhm was closed and on 27 June the Roman phase opened.

Even when holiness is not officially recognized by the Church, it is evident in the lives of many Sisters who have generously spent their lives so that the Institute would flourish according to God's plan, overcoming the various challenges of the historical moment. One of these figures is Mother Catherine Daghero, whom we are rediscovering more and more on the occasion of the centenary of her death. At the Convention held in Nizza Monferrato last February emerged her outstanding human and spiritual qualities and her far-sighted missionary outlook that made her embrace the world.

Her ability as an educator was highlighted in the festive celebration at Cumiana, her town of birth. Her long service of the government of an educative Institute was highlighted above all in the Conference held in Rome at the Generalate on 8 June. In it, the figure of Mother Catherine was presented and deepened from the historical, charismatic, and institutional points of view. The live-streaming, is still available on YouTube and also hosts the video of a short biography made by the Social Communications Sector, in collaboration with the General Secretariat and the Studies Center on the FMA of the Pontifical Faculty of the Science of Education '*Auxilium*'.

One of the characteristics of the animation and government of Mother Catherine Daghero was her remarkable missionary impetus. We entrust to her the preparation for the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first missionary departure of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, which took place on 14 November 1877, so that it may become an opportunity to make Mother Mazzarello's exhortation a reality, "It is time to rekindle the fire!"

We invite you to animate the educating communities with enthusiasm, so that they will participate in the Contest for the creation of the Logo and the Hymn that will accompany the many local and international initiatives of the three years of preparation for the event. The Competition is a concrete opportunity for involvement and to deepen the missionary passion, characteristic of our charismatic identity.

### **Together to generate life**

For us, the Spiritual Exercises were an experience of silence, of interiority, of contemplation, favored by the splendid landscape of Saint Agnello di Sorrento (Naples, Italy). This ended with moments of fraternity and sharing among ourselves, with the Sisters, and the educating communities of the Southern Province "Our Lady of Good Counsel", gathered in Torre Annunziata (Naples) for a festivity of a vocational nature.

We thank the provincial community for the invitation, the warm welcome, and the opportunity to live well this experience that reinvigorated our energies for the resumption of the challenging work of the *Plenum*.

A strong family spirit also characterized the period of reception and formation of the 14 new Provincials, lived in the house of "St. Rosa" in Castelgandolfo (Rome). In an atmosphere of fraternity, prayer, and sharing, with an interactive, workshop, and experiential mode, we studied deeply the service of animation and government in the light of General Chapter XXIV.

In the same spirit, in August and September, we will participate in the Seminars for a *generative animation* provided for in the General Council Programming (2022-2027). The Provincial Councils and the Coordinators of the Interprovincial Conference for East Asia (CIAO) and the Province for the Pacific Region (SPR) will be present at these meetings. The other Seminars will be attended by the Inter-provincial Conference of India (PCI), the Inter-provincial Conference of Mexico, the Antilles, and Central America (CIMAC), and the North American Conference (NAC). We rejoice with the Provinces that have already lived this experience and that have given continuity to the Seminar, involving the educating communities.

### **With the Salesian Family**

Let us accompany with our prayers the next meeting of young people convoked from 11 to 16 August in Turin-Valdocco and at Colle Don Bosco for the *Salesian Youth Synod*. Young people from the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) from all over the world will participate, as well as some representatives of the FMA and SDB from the Inter-provincial Conferences and the various regions. Starting from the responses of young people and the Provincial Youth Ministry Teams to a questionnaire previously sent, we will share the dreams of young people for their own lives, for society, for the Church, and for SYM, and we will reflect on *how* the Provincial Youth Ministry Team can help young people to achieve them.

Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, who will conclude his term of office as Rector Major on 16 August, will be present at this exciting encounter. To him we express our gratitude and with our fraternal prayer, we entrust his life and his new mission to Mary Help of Christians, Mother and Teacher, sure guiding presence of the Salesian Family.

A special world event, in which Mother and the Counselor for the Salesian Family will participate, is the 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Mary Help of Christians, promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and addressed to all groups of the Salesian Family. It will take place in Fatima (Portugal) from 29 August to 1 September 2024, on the theme *'I will give you the Teacher'*. In this bicentennial year of the "dream at nine years", the Congress aims to deepen and spread devotion to Mary Help of Christians.

### **Towards August 5<sup>th</sup>**

We end with a special wish in the proximity of 5 August. May the 'yes' of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello and the first Daughters of Mary Help of Christians be renewed in each one of us, in particular, the Sisters who celebrate the jubilee of 25, 50, 60, 70, and 75 years of Profession. May their witness and their offering, together with that of the elderly Sisters who are sick or in various difficulties, sustain the fidelity of all, especially those who will begin the Novitiate, who will make their First Profession or Perpetual Profession, and the Sisters who will renew their religious vows. This communion is strengthened every day in the Eucharist and in fraternal and pastoral charity, giving us joy and apostolic passion.

May Mary Help of Christians, Mother and Teacher who walks among us, continue to bless us and sustain our mission!

With much affection.

Castelgandolfo, 24 July 2024

Mother and the Sisters of the Council