

During the Jubilee Year, many events of grace

Dearest Sisters,

At the end of the summer Plenary session, with a heart full of gratitude to the Lord, it is wonderful to share with all of you the resonance of what we have experienced in this period. In the Jubilee Year, in a time marked by many expectations and anxieties, hope is revealed as a precious gift and prophetic responsibility. It urges us to inhabit history with trust and evangelical daring, to welcome the uniqueness of God who continually visits us with His extraordinary graces.

As the General Council, we lived the experience of the Spiritual Exercises at "Villa Tabor" house in Cesuna (Vicenza), in "Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello" Province of Triveneta (ITV).

We thank God for this gift that He gives us every year, both personally and as the Council community, and which revitalizes us in our Salesian consecration. Everything helped us: nature, silence, the encounter with the Word of God, the hospitality.

As in previous years, after the Spiritual Exercises, we were able to visit some communities, meet Sisters, lay people, young people, children, and experience a climate of vitality and joy among the elderly Sisters. Thank you for the invitation received from the ITV Province, which granted us this valuable opportunity

Events of singular grace

In the heart of the triennium in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the first missionary departure of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (1877-2027), we are given a unique grace for the whole Institute and for the Salesian Family. In the ordinary public Consistory of the month of June, the Holy Father set the date for the Canonization of Sister Maria Troncatti, which will be celebrated on 19 October 2025, coinciding with World Mission Day. It is an event that ignites in our hearts a deep joy and renewed gratitude for the gift of this Sister, a *mother* with a welcoming heart, an ardent *missionary* among the peoples of the Amazon, and a tireless *artisan of reconciliation and peace*. Sister Maria was able to generate fraternity even in contexts marked by pain and conflict, bringing the light of the Gospel with simplicity, competence, and concrete love.

The example of the first Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, after Mary Domenica Mazzarello, reaches us in this time of renewed missionary enthusiasm and invites us to rediscover with freshness and courage the roots of our being a Church in outreach, as consecrated women for the young men and women called to generate life and hope wherever the Lord sends us.

With deep joy and gratitude, we also welcome the gift of the conclusion of the Diocesan Inquiry on the life, virtues, and fame of holiness of the Servant of God Mother Rosetta Marchese, seventh successor of Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello. The event, celebrated on 4 July 2025, represented for the whole Institute a moment of intense gratitude and lively ecclesial communion.

Mother Rosetta incarnated the Salesian charism with evangelical radicality, ardent interiority, and apostolic zeal, giving herself totally to God and to the young until the end. She lived filiality in an exemplary way, recognizing God as Father in every circumstance and entrusting herself to Him

with full confidence and *filial love*, like Mary. Her witness continues to illuminate our present, inviting us to rediscover the mystical and contemplative dimension of our vocation.

Her existence was marked by an intense experience of the real Presence of Jesus lived as continuous communion, which transformed her person into a true living tabernacle. Mother Rosetta thus presents herself as one of the holy "Eucharistic women" who, together with Mary Most Holy, have helped the Church to grow in love for the wonderful and inexhaustible Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The journey of the Institute in the Church

The time of the *plenum* was enriched by the long-awaited return of Pope Leo XIV to Castel Gandolfo. The welcome was warm and deeply shared, a sign of the affection and gratitude of all those present. The Eucharist of 13 July, in the pontifical parish of Saint Thomas of Villanova, presided by the Holy Father, was a further occasion of ecclesial communion in the person of the One who has the task of confirming believers in their faith.

The reflections shared during the *plenary* session offered us an in-depth look at the journey of the Provinces and Preprovinces. In the light of the canonical and animation visits, of the triennial verifications carried out so far, we can affirm that the broad lines outlined by General Chapter XXIV are giving a transformational and generative impulse for new life. These orientations are being concretized above all in the paths of formation, in the growth of synodality, and in missionary openness. A gradual change of mentality is emerging, albeit at different paces. On the one hand, this makes it possible to recognize the significant steps already taken in each community; on the other hand, it keeps alive the awareness of the distance that still separates us from the goal.

The triennial Verificas, already carried out in five Conferences (CIME, CIAM, PCI, CIAO, SPR) and those we are preparing to participate in August (CIMAC-NAC, CINAB, CIB-CICSAL) represent a valuable moment of synthesis, reflection, and re-launch, to support in a coherent and fruitful way the journey of the Institute. In assessing the actual impact of General Chapter XXIV on the life of the Provinces and Preprovinces, we focus on the processes under way, the obstacles encountered, the concrete changes taking place, and the future prospects, rather than a simple account of the activities carried out.

During these months, the process of updating the documents, Formation Plan "*Rooted in the Covenant*"; and *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA* (LOME) has continued. Key themes have been identified to deepen the vision of the Covenant, of the person, and of education, in the perspective of Trinitarian Christocentrism, and educational aspects in contexts of religious pluralism. Also highlighted was the importance of addressing the theme of the unitary pedagogical model, the formation model of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and adult education. Another crucial theme identified is the paradigm of care, with particular attention to the feminine and Marian approach. We have thus reached an initial stage of drafting the documents.

We continued the in-depth study of the theme for the *Protection and Prevention of the Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults*, dedicating time for reflection and listening to experts. In the meantime, the *International Commission for Protection* continues to update the guidelines that are being shared and enriched with the contribution of the participants at the triennial verifications. When they have all been carried out, the document will be socialized.

Events of particular importance

We would like to share a few resonances regarding some significant appointments for our Institute.

From 9 to 11 May 2025, at the International Center for Missionary Animation in Rome, the elective General Assembly of VIDES International was held, attended by 66 members including members, administrators, and founders, together with ten young people active in the network, and eight honorary members. The main points of the Assembly were: the presentation of the 2024 budget, the mission report, the 2026 budget and updates on formation activities, International volunteering, and the election of the Administrative Council that will remain in office for the next four years. In a complex and constantly evolving global context, VIDES continues to be a living and active network, ready to walk together with the new generations to build more just, inclusive, and supportive relationships.

Before the start of the *Plenum*, the International Congress of the FMA Past Pupils was held in Sacrofano (Rome), from 25 to 28 May 2025, on the theme: *Let us not be robbed of hope*, with 270 participants from 27 Countries. Mother and the Confederation President Maria Carmen Castellón urged everyone to educate to hope. The days, rich in activities, offered interventions on hope in the light of the Bible and the Church's magisterium and on resilience in the face of today's difficult situations. Other significant moments were: a show on the magic of hope, an afternoon in the Generalate with a penitential celebration and a sharing meeting with Mother and the General Councilors. The Congress ended with the Audience of Pope Leo XIV and a Eucharistic Celebration in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, reviving in the participants a renewed sense of community and hope. All were grateful for the beautiful atmosphere of fraternity lived and the richness of the themes shared.

From 4 to 8 June, the Salesian Family Council met at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome, attended by representatives of 27 of its 32 groups. It was a significant event, given the presence of the new Rector Major, Father Fabio Attard, enriched by the audience with Pope Leo XIV, the Eucharist presided by Cardinal Ángel Fernández Artime, and the passage through the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica. The days included reflections on the Synod and on synodality, as well as a visit to the Archives of the General Postulation of the Salesian Family.

The formation opportunities offered by the Pontifical Salesian University and the Pontifical Faculty of Education Sciences "Auxilium" were also presented. The meeting ended with the gathering of ideas for Strenna 2026, with the Eucharistic celebration on the day of Pentecost and ending with the conclusions of the Rector Major.

We thank you for your lively participation in the Marian Festival, held on 30 May last year, which brought together around the screen numerous Educating Communities from all over the world. A special thanks to those who have been able to translate with creativity the love of Mary in song and videos, demonstrating that the Marian dimension, typical of our Salesian charism, is alive in our Institute "all of Mary"!

In God's fidelity, let us renew the joy of our "yes" *for and with* young people

We are approaching 5 August, the day that reminds us of the grace of the covenant given to us by Mother Mazzarello and the first Sisters, and which we want to transmit to the young women who today say "yes" to this proposal.

While we accompany with prayer the young women who will begin their journey in the Institute as novices, those who will issue their first profession, perpetual vows or renew their religious profession, we wish to express our gratitude to all the Sisters who celebrate their jubilee of 25, 50, 60, 70, and 75 years of fidelity.

We give thanks in a special way for the totally given "yes" of our Mother, who celebrates 50 years of religious profession. Together with a group of Sisters celebrating this anniversary, from 24 to 27 July, she will have the opportunity to thank God for the great gift of being called to be a sign and expression of His foreseeing love as a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

These days are thought of as an opportunity to share, in the Jubilee Year, the vocational journey lived as "pilgrims of hope", in the light of the Word of God and the charism. Together they will experience the Jubilee pilgrimage to Saint Peter's Basilica and Saint Mary Major and visit the Novitiate of Castel Gandolfo.

While, as an Institute, we thank the Lord for the fidelity of the Sisters, we join in gratitude for the simple and joyful fidelity to the will of God of Mother Chiara. Her constant availability is manifested today in her "yes" to the Church, through her recent appointment by Pope Leo XIV as a member of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The SYM at the Youth Jubilee

In the heart of the Jubilee Year, about 5,000 young people from the Salesian Youth Movement, together with FMA and SDB, will participate in the Youth Jubilee to be held in Rome from 28 July to 3 August. In addition to the activities organized for all, such as a visit to several significant places of Rome, the penitential day at the Circus Maximus, the vigil and the Eucharist with the Holy Father at Tor Vergata, SYM pilgrims will participate in special moments. There will be catechesis by language groups, the SYM Fair (29 July), the *SYM Jubilee Festival* (30 July), the mandate of the Rector Major and the Mother General (2 August), who, with their presence, will bring to young people the heart and word of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello today.

Inserted in a journey of grace

The various events lived, and that we will live, are also opportunities to renew ourselves in the willingness to let ourselves be shaped by the grace of God, which makes us a new humanity, capable of living in peace.

The example of our Saints, especially Sister Maria Troncatti, and the daily witness expressed in the simple and generous gift of many Sisters and educators, support us on our journey to make every educating community a place where we live the commandment of love and forgiveness.

With these sentiments, we greet you and assure you of our fraternal prayer.

Castel Gandolfo, 24 July 2025

Mother and the Council Sisters