

Together, on the path of Salesian holiness

Dearest Sisters,

As the summer *Plenary* session closes, we wish to share with you our joy and gratitude for this time of grace the Lord has granted us.

During the first half of 2026, visits to the various Provinces enabled us to gain a closer understanding of the life of the Institute and the diverse realities of the Salesian educational mission across the continents. The meetings held and activities undertaken provided an opportunity for us to listen to the educating communities, to their lives, expectations, and hopes.

Throughout the *Plenary* session, experiences shared from different parts of the world enriched our dialogue and communal discernment, strengthening our resolve to help generate new life within the Institute, in fidelity to the charism and in response to the challenges of contemporary reality.

The Spiritual Exercises experienced at Zoverallo di Verbania, were a wonderful opportunity for the human and spiritual renewal of us all. In silence, while listening to the Word and encountering Jesus, we renewed our desire to follow the Lord with hearts increasingly open and generous in responding to His every call. We express our deep gratitude to the "Holy Family" Lombard Province (ILO) for their fraternal welcome, the opportunity to visit various communities, and the meetings with Sisters and young people, occasions where we once again experienced a true sense of belonging to a family united by the beautiful Salesian charism.

A particularly significant opportunity was sharing a formative journey, held from 6 to 18 July 2026, in Castel Gandolfo, with fifteen newly appointed Provincials from four continents. Listening to their experiences, joys, struggles, and the challenges involved in their roles of animation and governance allowed us to recognize the action of the Holy Spirit guiding the Institute across diverse cultures and contexts. Together, we explored and reviewed the calls that emerged from General Chapter XXIV, as well as the preparatory process for General Chapter XXV.

It was a time of shared formation, an opportunity to let ourselves be shaped once again by the Lord, so that the service we are called to carry out might be increasingly evangelical, synodal, and animated by pastoral charity. The Gospel passage from *Luke* 5:1–11 and the theme, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets..." accompanied these days of formation.

United in the spirit of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, we experienced the beauty of communion, mutual listening, and shared discernment, rediscovering that fraternity is the foundation of all authentic service of animation and governance. We are confident that the new Provincials have returned to their Provinces with a broader vision and hearts renewed in their passion for the mission, eager to bear witness through their lives that authority exercised in the Gospel style is, above all, a concrete service of gratuitous love that generates life.

The process of reviewing the Formation Plan and *LOME*

During the *Plenary* session *Plenum*, we shared the steps taken so far in the process of revising and updating the documents, *Plan of Formation – Rooted in the Covenant* and *That They May Have Life*

and have it to the full. *Guidelines for the Educational Mission of the FMA* (LOME). We met with the two groups that, together with the Councilors for Formation and Youth Pastoral, are developing these two documents.

Regarding *LOME*, the latest suggestions received were shared, and the groundwork was laid for the subsequent stages of the text's approval and publication. For its part, the *Formation Plan* drafting group incorporated the insights gained from discussions with Mother and the General Council, using them as guiding principles for the continued drafting process.

The entire journey of drafting the two documents is characterized by a synodal and participatory working method, grounded in continuous dialogue between the drafting groups and various experts, consultation with the General Council, and constant fidelity to the Gospel, the Church's Magisterium, the Institute's charismatic heritage, and the educational and formative challenges of the present day. We are grateful for the work done so far to integrate the contributions and amendments proposed along the way, guided by recent ecclesial documents and with due regard for the challenges that formation and the educational mission present to us in the complex and diverse contexts in which we live. We hope to present the two documents during the 25th General Chapter.

Missionaries rooted in the charism

During the *Plenary Session*, we reflected on various events involving the Salesian Family as they celebrated the gift of Don Bosco's charism, a gift that remains vital and relevant today. Among these was the 6th World Congress of Salesian Cooperators, held to mark the 150th anniversary of their founding and themed "*Being Leaven to Bear Fruit*." The participation of some 400 people, Salesian Cooperators, delegates from the Salesians of Don Bosco, and delegates from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, representing 11 regions across five continents, bore witness to the truly universal reach of our Founder's dream. The event was marked by gratitude and a sense of responsibility, grounded in the awareness that the Salesian charism continues to speak to the world today through the lives of lay Salesians, who make Jesus's foreseeing love visible, especially to the most vulnerable young people.

We are drawing to the close of the second year of the three-year period preparing for the 150th anniversary of the First Missionary Departure of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to the Americas. The promotion of the Missionary Spirituality Project (PEM) has marked this period, helping educating communities to celebrate the Institute's missionary zeal with grateful hearts and to rekindle in today's world, the prophetic momentum of the charism as a gift to the Church and to humanity (cf. *Circular* 1038).

With joy and wonder, we give thanks for the presence of our Institute in 98 countries across five continents. At the same time, we sense the urgency to rekindle the missionary fire and our commitment to evangelization, beginning with the cultivation of a personal and communal encounter with the Risen Lord and a simple, joyful witness that impels us to follow Him and to "go forth" to proclaim Him, especially where hope is fading. There are Countries where only a single community of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is present, places calling for international and intergenerational communities that bear daily witness to the fact that communion is possible even in challenging political, religious, and socio-economic contexts. It is precisely in these situations that the prophetic power of the Salesian educational charism can bring hope and confidence in a better future. Faced with this reality, we cannot remain passive, indifferent, or "without fire"; rather, we are called to bring the joy and beauty of the Gospel with missionary courage.

The gift and the call to missionary holiness

The canonization of Sister Maria Troncatti is a great gift from God and, at the same time, an invitation to renew our commitment to being missionaries everywhere, allowing ourselves to be inspired by the passion for Christ and for education that burned so ardently in her heart. We entrust the upcoming

25th General Chapter to her, so that her example may continue to speak to our lives and to the lives of the many young people who can encounter her in various ways.

With the desire to make the richness of her holiness, which blossomed from an extraordinary humanity, ever more widely known, we commissioned a new biography (entrusted to alumna and writer Federica Storace) and a statue (the work of sculptor Mauro Baldessari) destined for the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. Both artists were deeply moved by the figure of Sister Maria Troncatti. By delving into her life and spirituality, they succeeded in translating the beauty of her message into their respective mediums. Their works do more than simply recount her story; they serve as a clear call to engage with her Gospel and Salesian witness. May the Holy Spirit, who dwelt within the life of Saint Maria Troncatti, continue to urge us forward along the ever-new paths of the mission He Himself entrusts to us.

On June 24th, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the canonization of St. Mary D. Mazzarello. It was an occasion to renew our awareness that the holiness to which we are called coincides with a joy that nothing and no one can take away from us, and constitutes our primary and most authentic witness. In his Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis highlights "feminine styles of holiness, which are indispensable for reflecting God's holiness in this world" (*Gaudete et exsultate*, no. 12). As we prepare for the 25th General Chapter, we renew our awareness that being holy means "rekindling the missionary passion characteristic of our charismatic identity" in order to become, "with the prophetic power of the charism, missionaries of communion together with young people."

Mother Mazzarello and the first Sisters embodied the Preventive System, entrusted by Don Bosco to the Salesian Family, in a feminine way, living it out as a path of missionary holiness. The gift of the Preventive System is a characteristic of our vocation within the Church. For this reason, it serves as both a spirituality and a method of pastoral action for us (cf. C 7).

The Preventive System, a gift for the future

We wish to thank all the Provinces for their significant contribution to the research project launched in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the "Treatise on the Preventive System" (1877), an initiative that also engaged laypeople and young people with the aim of reimagining the system as a gift for the future. Returning to the core of the charism, we feel the challenge of peace to be more urgent than ever today, in a world marked by tensions, conflicts, and polarization. The Preventive System aims to educate the mind, the heart, and the will, teaching that peace is built, first and foremost, within each of us and through the quality of our relationships. Indeed, peace is harmony with God, with oneself, with others, and with creation. It finds expression in mutual respect, trust, encounter, and the shared pursuit of the common good.

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the booklet on the Preventive System means, today, renewing the commitment to be educators and weavers of a peace that is "unarmed and disarming", capable of believing in young people, walking alongside them, and offering spaces where everyone can feel welcomed, valued, and called to give their best. This is the most authentic way to safeguard the legacy of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello and to pass it on, with hope, to new generations.

As we approach August 5th, the anniversary of our Institute's founding and, for many, the anniversary of their first Profession, we give thanks to Mary Help of Christians, who watches over us and our communities. May she make us ever more attentive to the Word of Jesus, and creative and joyful in doing what He tells us.

We send you our affectionate greetings and pray for each and every one of you.

Castel Gandolfo, 24 July 2026

Mother and the Council Sisters