**WHERE THE LORD LEADS US**

**“He said to me: *‘My grace is sufficient for you;***

***for power is made perfect in weakness’* ” (*2 Cor* 12:9)**

Turin, 8 September 2023

*Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Dear confreres,

As on many other occasions when I have turned to you through letters addressed to members of our Congregation, I am greeting you with deep and fraternal affection.

On this occasion, what I am writing is accompanied by a very particular feeling. In fact, this is – along with the commentary on the Strenna that I will send shortly – the last letter I will write to you as Rector Major. I am certainly not forgetting that in a few weeks time I will be sending you the convocation letter for GC29.

It is no secret – as you have already known since 9 July, with the appointment as Cardinal made by the Holy Father, Pope Francis – that my life will undergo a major change.

In my letter, sent two days after the news announced at the *Angelus* on 9 July, I shared with all of you, dear confreres, and with the Salesian Family, that on 31 July 2024, if it is the Lord’s will and if he grants me peace and health, I will submit my resignation as Rector Major to dedicate myself to what Pope Francis will ask of me to serve the Church in another field. Here lies the reason for the very particular feeling that accompanies these words of mine.

The title of this letter, inspired by a book a few years ago on religious life, is very evocative. And it is intended to be both a confession of faith and a vocational response shot through with hope.[[1]](#footnote-2)

It is with this attitude that I am addressing you, dear confreres from all over the world: aware of the present moment that we as a Congregation are experiencing and with the aim of offering a perspective which is as lucid as possible, starting from what I have lived and experienced in these almost ten years of my service as Successor of Don Bosco.

Already in 2015, on the occasion of the celebration of the Bicentenary of Don Bosco’s birth, I proposed a pathway that included “my dreams” for each Salesian. Several years later, I feel it is appropriate to return to expressing, very simply and directly, what our Congregation has become today, thanks to the good path we have travelled; and, at the same time, bearing in mind the major challenges we still face.

As mentioned, on 25 July 2015, speaking of the fruits of the Bicentenary of Don Bosco’s birth,[[2]](#footnote-3) I told you what my dreams were for each confrere and for our Congregation. I passed them on to you as I felt them in my heart and expressed them in an outline that I then developed page after page:

* I dream of a Congregation of happy Salesians;
* I dream of a Congregation with men of faith and filled with God (on a journey of faith and search for God);
* I dream of a Congregation of Salesians passionate about young people, the poorest (always seeking service, never power or money);
* I dream of a Congregation of true evangelisers and educators in the faith;
* I dream of a Congregation that is always missionary.

Eight years have passed since this *“dream”*. Each of us has had many experiences during this time; the path we have travelled as a Congregation has been long and intense. There have been many good results and some challenges remain. It is on these latter that I wish to dwell in this final letter, by way of a stocktake from a faith perspective and in the light of the experience acquired and internalised over these ten years.

And since I will refer to the lights and shadows, the achievements and challenges that still lie ahead, I would like to begin by referring to a publication by Timothy Radcliffe, who was Master General of the Dominican Order. Some time ago he wrote a book entitled *Essere cristiani nel XXI secolo* (*Being Christians in the 21st century*.) His text begins with an expression that pertains to Christian life in general, but which I read and judge to be equally valid and appropriate for consecrated religious life and, in particular, for us Salesians. He writes thus:

We must avoid two temptations: the first is enclosing ourselves in a ghetto, the other is assimilating ourselves into society and being subservient to a now secularised culture (...) We must be with the people, share their problems, stand by their side in the shadow of the teachings and doctrines of the Church, and only then will we be able to go out and discover together a word that must be shared.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Thinking about the content of this letter and what I intend to share with you, dear confreres, I am well aware that I am offering you in all honesty my point of view, my reading of what I have lived, believed, thought, prayed and formulated over these years. Many other interpretations are undoubtedly possible. I am presenting my view – very succinctly – from the knowledge of our Congregation and the Salesian Family acquired during my service.

Here are some key elements:

* I have repeated on many occasions that as a Congregation we are experiencing very tranquil years. I will say it again. Life in the provinces goes on. The difficulties of the Congregation are those that are typical of an institution comprising some 14,000 Salesians of Don Bosco divided into 92 provinces and to be found in 135 countries.

Above all, I wish to highlight and underline the atmosphere of profound communion that exists in the Congregation and which is clearly visible in the relationships between each province and the Rector Major and his Council, and between some provinces. This is about the harmony and communion that is perceived when journeying together. In a nutshell, it has been possible – and will still be possible – to carry out a true accompaniment of each province.

* I have insistently reminded and sensitised the Congregation on how vital it is for us to be and live as *consecrated* individuals who seek to belong more and more to God.[[4]](#footnote-5) From the first *Message* in 2014 to the *Action programme* presented after GC28, I have always given priority to the dimension of our consecration.
* I think I can say that even in these last few years the Congregation has come a long way, giving concrete expression to Article 2 of our Constitutions, testifying that we are “in the Church signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially the poorest of them.” (C.2)

The Congregation today has by no means neglected young people and older youth, and in particular the poorest. There has been a journey in all the provinces, marked by successes and failures, but always with a preferential option for young people, especially the poorest, because they, the young, are “our masters”.[[5]](#footnote-6)

I can tell you in all frankness, dear confreres, what I consider to be the absolute truth: in these last ten years we have not taken a single decision within the General Council regarding the Salesian mission of our presences, in which our priority towards the poorest has not been taken into account. I can state this with reference to myself and the other members of the two General Councils in the last ten years: there has not been a single province in the world during this period in which we have not made this priority explicit, and it has usually been very well received by the provincials and their councils.

I am already hinting at a great risk we might run: that of caring for the poor, of offering services to the poor, but not “being” with the poor and not “being” poor. I will come back to this point later.

* Personal accompaniment and closeness to each provincial in his service to his own province has been a priority over the years, and I think I can say with satisfaction that it has been a good choice.

In one way or another, the 157 provincials appointed over these ten years have been able to experience that they are not alone in their service; and that communion with the Rector Major and his Council has resulted in the closeness and exchange of reflections and knowledge of the reality that has helped us mutually and significantly.

* Evangelisation and the explicit proclamation of the faith have strongly characterised the Congregation’s path in recent years. We have also proposed it as a priority policy direction for the current six-year period. The enlightenment that the Youth Ministry Sector of the Congregation continues to offer is, in this sense, clear and significant, and is of great help to those who want help in meeting the challenges of education and evangelisation within our presences.

At the same time, we have neither ignored nor neglected the fact that in many parts of the world we interact with other religious faiths on a daily basis. We have tried to be attentive to this reality and specificity.

* I can also say that over these years a debt of gratitude to our Congregation has grown and and become stronger within the Church, because of the mission we carry out on behalf of the Gospel.

I recognise, in all simplicity and at the same time with all clarity, that we are a valued and respected Congregation in the Church. This is a feeling I have also picked up in my frequent meetings with the Superiors General of other Congregations within the Union of Superiors General.

* As the Salesian Family, the Family of Don Bosco, we continue to move in a good direction, in a simple but constant way, maturing more and more in the sense of family, growing also in the identity and spirit of belonging, making it visible in many ways, among which I would like to point out the frequent reference to the figure and role of the Rector Major as father and centre of unity of the Salesian Family.[[6]](#footnote-7)

I would also like to emphasise the increasingly numerous and very significant participation of the world leaders of most groups in the Salesian Family World Consultative Meeting held every year in Italy – most recently at Valdocco, Turin, in the most significant Salesian places.

No less important was the growth and development of the Salesian Spirituality Days even in COVID times. Unfortunately, this “blow”, which has hit the whole world hard, causing so much pain and damage in so many ways, has required us to be more creative in seeking solutions that have given impetus and novelty to the Spirituality Days, which are now held simultaneously in Rome and Turin and in all the regions of the Congregation (i.e. in so many provinces).

* There is no question that our greatest gift is the charism of our identity marked by the Salesian mission.

Other Congregations and various Church groups have had to reinterpret and reconvert to the charism of their institution. This has not been the case for Don Bosco’s charism and, in turn, for the recipients of our mission, who are and continue to be the young people to whom we are sent, the same as in Don Bosco’s time.

With Don Bosco, therefore, we reaffirm our preference for young people who are *poor, abandoned and at risk*; and among these are the young people in the world of work, the young people from working-class environments and those among peoples not yet evangelised.

* In recent years, and always in tune with the previous direction of the Congregation, we have taken care of “missionary work” and mission fields.

We have intervened to encourage, as far as possible, the growth and development of other provinces in all continents through the gift of missionary confreres. In this regard, I remember that there has been a constant response every year.

We have accompanied the birth of other provinces and special circumscriptions.

We have taken steps to make a significant and qualified presence in parts of the Arab and Islamic world.

* We have focused on and moved decisively towards the establishment of increasingly international communities. I know that for some confreres this represented an uncomfortable or even difficult novelty. Indeed, building unity and communion in the one mission from the diversity and variety of our origins and cultures is always challenging. And, at the same time, much more prophetic.

On the other hand, dear confreres, the future of the Congregation is and will be increasingly characterised by cultural diversity: in terms of origin, and our belonging to peoples and nations. In a word, simply more varied

In any case, in the acceptance and care of this diversity, starting with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, we always find the strength that helps and supports us in the implementation of our mission.

* The Congregation continues to tread a valuable path of solidarity in terms of human resources, both through help between the provinces and by relying on the interventions of the Rector Major and his Council. Measures that are urgently needed because of the needs of many provinces and some global or international bodies and services.

In the current six-year period I have stated that we would count on the help of all (or as many as possible) the provinces to support the various international services. In general, I note and appreciate the generosity of both the confreres and the various provinces in making Salesians available for various services and for a specific period of time. This is proving to be something very positive that we will continue to consolidate.

* The Lord is blessing us with the gift of a good number of vocations to Salesian consecrated life.

In the last ten years, the average number of novices has been 442 every year. This is a great gift. We thank the Lord because he continues to take care of Don Bosco’s Congregation, and because in this way he continues to show us how much he loves young people.

Later, of course, I will emphasise how we must care - more and better - for the vocations the Lord sends us. We are aware that the origin of these vocations is heterogeneous and varies across continents. In any case, we are very much blessed by the Lord. It is up to us to respond to this gift with absolute responsibility and foresight.

* Economic solidarity in the Congregation is another very positive reality.

About two-thirds of the provinces experience serious economic difficulties, or have a very fragile economy and one always at risk of imbalance, so we must pay close attention to these delicate phenomena. Thank God, I can say that this situation is not usually the result of mismanagement but of the priority given to the mission for the poorest.

Many provinces, because they are located in very poor countries and among the poorest, would not be able to survive without the Congregation’s assistance.

I see excellent signs and gestures of solidarity and help between some provinces. There are mission offices in various countries that have twinned with other provinces and countries. And there is the great support that the Rector Major with his Council can offer to many provinces thanks to the important contribution collected and always made available by the three major mission offices directly linked to the Successor of Don Bosco. They do excellent work and deserve to be explicitly mentioned here. They are the New Rochelle Mission Office in the United States of America; the Madrid Mission Office (Misiones Salesianas) in Spain; and the Turin Missionary Office (Missioni Don Bosco) in Italy.

* We continue to make progress in the field of social communication, with considerable development especially in a good number of provinces.

Fr Juan E. Vecchi already developed an important reflection in his letter “Communication in the Salesian Mission”.[[7]](#footnote-8) And Fr Pascual Chávez dedicated another significant letter to the same theme entitled “With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of social communication”,[[8]](#footnote-9) highlighting how social communication is one of the priority fields of the Salesian mission, already intuited by Don Bosco himself, who gave it great importance through the spread of good books – the most advanced means of communication at the time – with his circular letter of 19 March 1885 on “The spread of good books”[[9]](#footnote-10) – considered a “true manifesto of social communication for the Congregation.”[[10]](#footnote-11)

Well, I believe that especially in the life of many provinces there is significant progress being made in this field, with a sensitive connection to the communication scene today. Perhaps we have the feeling that we are always “a bit behind” or that we do not have the influence of the large communication structures – which is true. Nonetheless, we have very direct channels to reach out to those near and far, giving us a visibility that undoubtedly helps the Salesian mission in the growth of the Kingdom of God in the world.

* Another area in which we have made good progress and done good work is in the area of *shared mission:* Salesians and lay people united and actively engaged in the same mission.

First of all, I must recognise that we still have a long way to go, although we have undoubtedly made a lot of progress. There is still some resistance on the part of individuals and groups, but also strong convictions that will not allow backward steps.

There are difficulties related to culture and territories that make themselves felt. There are people and groups for whom, in fact, it seems the time has not yet come to put GC24 into practice, which pointed to living with “one spirit, one mission”: “Salesians and lay people: communion and sharing in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco”.[[11]](#footnote-12) Perhaps because somewhere there is an abundance of Salesian consecrated vocations; or perhaps because there is a fear of losing power and control.

There is no doubt that what I have just said is true. In any case, life with its demands will put everything in its place. On the contrary, the entire Congregation has been heading in the right direction for some time, and this has become more eloquent in recent years. It is not only a question of the number of vocations to consecrated life, but also of the great value of complementarity in the mission, because Don Bosco’s charism has no “owners”. It is above all a *gift of the Spirit to the Church.*

In the introduction to the Chapter document approved at CG24 that I just mentioned, we read that “It is the story of a love which is contagious and spreads, drawing many people into its light and strength, a Family, a Movement!... We Salesians, the successors of those first boys who wanted to stay with Don Bosco for ever, find ourselves in the company of many lay people, men and women of our time, who feel the same kind of call and ask to be able to work with the heart and manner of the *Father and Master of the young*. To enter that circle of light and strength is what we propose to do.”[[12]](#footnote-13)

Here I think I can say that we are continuing on a path that is worth pursuing and where we all feel more and more comfortable walking together along the path opened up by Don Bosco.

* We continue to be a Salesian Congregation and Family that lives in communion with the Church and that builds the Church, the People of God; in communion above all with the Pope and with the local churches.

Our Constitutions say that “The Salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church and puts us entirely at the service of her mission. (...) In this way we contribute to building up the Church as the Body of Christ, so that also through us she may appear to the world as the ‘universal sacrament of salvation.’” (C.6).

I think it is fair to say that during these years we have continued to strengthen our keen ecclesial sense and our communion. It is not true what we have sometimes heard some people say, that we are “doing our own thing”. And by this I do not mean that the manifestation of our ecclesiality and communion with the local Churches is always and everywhere perfect. In any case, this is certainly an element of our Congregation’s identity that is cherished and in which we continue to grow. Already the Special General Chapter stated that “our mission is not different from the mission of the Church, it is only a participation in it, a specific aspect of it, a particular ministry; it therefore receives all the authenticity and strength of its insertion in the overall mission of the Church (...). It is clear *we work for the Church.*”[[13]](#footnote-14)

To what has been said so far I would add the words of Don Bosco himself: “Any effort is little when it comes to the Church and the Papacy.”[[14]](#footnote-15)

The Special General Chapter stated that “Don Bosco lived immersed in the ecclesial reality of his time. The Salesian, aware that the Church is the sacrament of salvation, actively participates in the pastoral care of the local Church; he is open to the problems of the universal Church; he shows sincere respect to the bishops and especially to the Pope, the living sign of the unity of the Church.”[[15]](#footnote-16)

It seems to me that all this clearly expresses our position and that, certainly, these have been years of a true congregational and ecclesial journey. We must certainly continue like this in the years to come.

* As a conclusion to this review of the journey so far with so many good things, I leave you with a reference to our *coadjutor confreres, the Salesian Brothers.*

As of 31 December 2022, statistics showed that there were 1434 Salesian Brothers in our Congregation: 1216 in perpetual vows and 218 in temporary vows. They make up 10.24% of the members of our Congregation.

Visiting Salesian provinces around the world, I have sometimes been asked about the “crisis of the Salesian coadjutor” or the “crisis of the Salesian Brother’s vocation”. I have always responded clearly and decisively, stating that I know of no particular crisis in the vocation of our Brother confreres in the Congregation. In any case, if one wants to speak of a “crisis”, it is the same crisis that afflicts consecrated life and the Church – a wearisome phenomenon that I will develop in the following pages.

Having said that, I must add that the charismatic identity of the Salesian Brother’s vocation is beyond question in our Congregation. I would also add that they are a great gift and a gift of precious vocational complementarity, and that they undoubtedly reach many people and groups that would be denied to Salesian priests, as Don Bosco himself said: “There are things that neither priests nor clerics can do, and you will do them.”[[16]](#footnote-17)

On the other hand, the Brother transmits all the freshness of the consecrated lay dimension of our Congregation that Don Bosco had already intuited and expressed in the first Constitutions and in the “precious laboratory of Salesian life” that Valdocco was from the beginning. Indeed, throughout our history, the Salesian Congregation has been enriched by extraordinary Salesian Brothers on all continents. From the early days with Don Bosco until today.

The Lord has given us by grace and through the intervention of the Holy Spirit the great gift of *the holiness of Artemides Zatti.*

On 9 October 2022, the Holy Father Pope Francis canonised Saint Artemides Zatti, Salesian Brother and nurse in the lands of Patagonia. The first non-martyr Salesian saint (since we have the grace to include with him the two giants of mission and gift of self, Bishop Aloysius Versiglia and Callistus Caravaglio), after Don Bosco, our founder. A truly eloquent fact. The memories and affections that filled our hearts and minds during those days are still very fresh in these minds and hearts. I can sense the deep emotion of the 637 Salesian Brothers who came to Rome for the canonisation, and the joy at seeing one of their confreres in the Congregation, a Brother like them, already an intercessor among the saints.

All this has been a very special *grace* for our Congregation over these years.

Nothing better, then, than to make my own and echo the words of Fr Vecchi in the letter he wrote on the occasion of Artemides Zatti’s beatification:

“I prefer rather, on the extraordinary occasion of the beatification of Brother Artemide Zatti, to ask from every Province, every community and every confrere in the coming years – beginning with the present one – *a renewed, extraordinary and specific commitment for the vocation of the Salesian Brother* within our vocational pastoral work: in praying for this, in suggesting and proclaiming it, in welcoming it and following it up, in living it personally and together in the community.”[[17]](#footnote-18)

As a sign of gratitude for the many gifts received over the years, let us continue to do all we can to promote this precious Salesian vocation in the Congregation.

What has been said so far, dear confreres, speaks of a journey we are on. There are many reasons for hope and reasons to thank the Lord. How I wish that all the confreres are aware of this and, in faith, thank God’s Holy Spirit for his presence and for the guidance he has given to our Congregation!

Before sharing some of the challenges (or limitations) that slow down the Congregation’s progress, I would like to tell you about something that happened to me while writing this letter.

I had already finished it, and was doing a third revision when, visiting an internet search engine for a few minutes to delve into the aspect of our contribution to the building of ecclesial communion, the letter of convocation of GC28 unexpectedly appeared in first place, bearing the date of 24 May 2018, that is, about five years ago.

I looked at it and the paragraph entitled “Some questions we may ask ourselves”[[18]](#footnote-19) “appeared” first.

I refreshed my memory reading these lines and was struck because what I read there is like the preamble to many of the things that, five years later, I have collected here, showing the road travelled, and many of the achievements and also the shortcomings that remain as a burden hindering our desire to fly higher.

Therefore, I cannot help but add and include this page, which I feel is still relevant. More so today than then.

“This situation is not the same everywhere nor is it simple. It is for this reason that we are finding contrasting situations which are forcing us to move in the direction of a more radical approach, of greater courage, greater clarity and even greater purification in the light of the Gospel and of the fidelity of our Congregation to the charism received from the Holy Spirit in Don Bosco.

* In this complicated and diversified situation there are confreres, and they are the majority, who are living with total dedication and in tune with the young people, their world and their situation. There are others who feel that this world of youth and the young people themselves are no longer accessible to them.
* Most of the confreres live with a very clear and decisive option for the poor and needy, with a firm commitment to those who every day experience their dignity being trampled underfoot and violated; other confreres seek refuge in life situations that are easy and comfortable.
* The majority of the confreres live the ministerial priesthood like Don Bosco, who, for his boys and youngsters was a priest always and everywhere; while other confreres are greatly influenced by a strong tendency towards clericalism, which does so much damage to the Church herself and from which we are not exempt.
* Many confreres live their lives with total selflessness, sobriety, austerity and generosity in their service of others, in particular regarding those to whom we are especially sent; while there are other confreres who lose their identity and freedom as consecrated religious becoming involved in processes of power-seeking, which quite often are linked to looking for money and to other ties.
* Most confreres, with genuine passion and affection, are living lives that reflect in everyday situations what John Cagliero declared : “Monk or no monk I am never leaving Don Bosco”[5]; other confreres, however, as the consequence of a great lack of Salesian identity, ask to leave the Congregation in order to live not as consecrated religious apostles, Salesians of Don Bosco, but simply to exercise their priestly ministry in dioceses where they think they will be happy or simply be accepted.
* There are confreres who have understood and are living the shared mission with lay people seen as a great gift to the mission. On the other hand, there are many others who still show great reluctance or even refuse; they are quite happy to see lay people as our dependants but they refuse to share the mission side by side on the same level with them, and all that this implies,
* Most of the young confreres in the stages of formation dream of committing all their energies to the young people to whom they will be sent, preparing their hearts and minds and pursuing their intellectual formation with this aim in view; and on the contrary there are other confreres who dream of appointments, responsibilities that may give them authority and “a certain position”.

This situation of ours made up of contrasts, lights and shadows, is asking from us the same things that Pope Francis, with his lively and direct approach asked from the whole Salesian Family. Today I feel the words: *not to disappoint the deep aspirations of the young* are in a special way addressed to us. This is what the Pope says: “May Don Bosco help you to not disappoint the deep aspirations of the young: their need for life, openness, joy, freedom and the future; their desire to collaborate in building up a more just and fraternal world, in fostering the development of all peoples, in safeguarding nature and the living environment. Following his example you will help them to experience that only in the life of grace, that is in friendship with Christ, does one fully obtain the most authentic ideals. You will have the joy of accompanying them in their search for a synthesis of faith, culture and life at moments when they take weighty decisions or attempt to interpret a reality that is complex.”[[19]](#footnote-20)

All this leads me to say that there are aspects in us that, if they were overcome in faith and through genuine conversion – necessary always and for all – would make our Congregation a much more lively body capable of reflecting even more the light we are called to bear witness to and the good we are called to do, collaborating with the One Lord.

I would therefore like to recall a few elements that I consider of the utmost importance for the future direction of the Congregation.

1. I am concerned about a ***certain weakness or fragility in the way of living the spiritual life and relationship with God.*** This is a factor ***found very much in all consecrated life, but also in ours, as Salesians,*** and which affects our own charismatic *identity****.***

In recent years I have been very surprised to find that some confreres have presented me with doubts regarding our charismatic identity, or our Salesian identity as consecrated persons; or what should be essential and radical in our Salesian life. I am really surprised, because there should be no doubt about who we are, what we are and what our charismatic essence is.

With the help of our confrere Marco Bay, a Salesian Brother, I looked up some data from the letters of the Rectors Major, and with him I collected references and quotations from the writings of Fr Egidio Viganò, Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi, Fr Pascual Chávez, and also from my own, in which our charismatic identity as Salesians is alluded to. The end result was impressive. I can recall hundreds and hundreds of expressions – with the relevant citations of sources where to find them – in which the Rectors Major of the last 45 years have referred to our charismatic identity as Salesians, as consecrated persons, emphasising how this is the most important and essential element from which to care for, cultivate and build our spirit and our action as Salesians of Don Bosco.

It is more than evident that both I and my aforementioned predecessors considered it extremely important, that it cannot be neglected and that we must always ensure, cherish and deepen it. Put differently and from another angle: this is an “important fragility” that afflicts our Congregation and – dare I say it – all of consecrated life.

I would like to quote from the opening of GC27 which is, in my opinion, of great value. In his opening address to the Chapter, the Rector Major said to the Congregation at that time: “I would very much like to say that what concerns us is not the future of the Congregation, almost as if it were a matter of survival, but rather our prophetic capacity, meaning our charismatic **identity**, our apostolic passion which are our true social and ecclesial relevance, following the criterion which Jesus himself gave us: ‘By this will everyone know that you are my disciples, that you love one another’ (Jn 13:35).”[[20]](#footnote-21)

Consecration makes us people who are unconditionally given to God. It makes us *a living memorial of Jesus’ way of living and acting.*[[21]](#footnote-22) It is that which allows us, therefore, to be totally dedicated to our confreres and to those to whom we are sent, even if, unfortunately, so many current anthropological models – or, to put it more colloquially, so many lifestyles in today’s world – push religious life in another direction, causing it to risk losing what is most genuine in consecration and what one should witness to most through one’s life. These are drives that reduce their scope to short-term projects and actions where “doing” and “efficiency” become more important than being and witnessing by one’s life – even when it is a simple, silent witness with no noteworthy achievements.

Today, there are authors and interpreters of consecrated life who think that it can be described as a blinkered way of life whose aim is the pursuit of efficiency alone, and which ultimately leads to a sterile and infertile type of existence. What is called apostolic *Prometheism* has crept in, urging us to feel the need to do things, to do more and more, as if the end of the world were imminent! A mentality that leads us to believe that we are the only true players in this moment. As if God did not exist or count. A mindset that drives us to strive for maximum performance, even at the cost of being crushed by the weight and burden we carry on our shoulders. And it turns out that, in the end, this frenetic way of living our “apostolicity” bitterly rewards our efforts with *fruitlessness.* Because apostolic *Prometheism* is certainly not what the Lord of the Gospel asks of us.

We would be wrong if we interpreted Don Bosco’s well-known saying “we will rest in paradise” as being consumed without *pastoral heart and soul*, without being truly nourished and fed.

One discovers that this frenzy, this rhythm without God and without his Spirit – a climate in which some confreres are fatally immersed, living, deciding to live without the possibility or the will to get out of it – is *dehumanising* and, therefore, does not produce joyful lives, nor happy confreres, Salesians who convey peace, goodness, enthusiastic presence among our young people, true and profound joy for the life we live.[[22]](#footnote-23)

Along the years of our formation and studies, we certainly came across a famous text by Karl Rahner, which he considered to be his likely testament. In it we read: *“The Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic, a person who has experienced something, or he will not exist at all, because tomorrow’s religiosity will no longer be shared on the basis of a unanimous and evident public conviction.*[[23]](#footnote-24)

Rivers of ink have been spilt on this belief. In any case, the future of faith, and I would now say of personal faith itself, passes through the personal experience of God and his ineffable presence. Without a true experience of God, there will be no believers and – let me say it – even fewer consecrated men and women and even fewer Salesians of Don Bosco with a life totally spent for the young.

This evidence also emerges from the recent study we carried out with data from the last six years on why people leave the Congregation: *weakening of the spiritual life and relationship with God* emerges, in all cases, as a very strong cause. It could be said that the life of faith and the experience of God (and the experience of prayer) are part of a dimension that cannot be neglected in any way; otherwise, elements such as *routine*, superficiality, an oppressive secularism, the compulsive use of *social networks* and the fascination with their world, will profoundly affect our lives, inevitably eroding and wearing them down.

It is useful here to recall the words of Pope Francis: “If consecrated life is to maintain its prophetic mission and its appeal, continuing to be a school of faithfulness for those near and far, it must maintain its freshness and the novelty of Jesus’ centrality, the appeal of spirituality and the strength of mission, show the beauty of following Christ, and radiate hope and joy. Hope and joy.”[[24]](#footnote-25)

Allow me now to make my own the reflection we made in the study I mentioned. We can certainly agree that perhaps “there is no real circularity between faith celebrated, lived and witnessed, so it is easy to fall into a *routine* of acts (...). ) One does not intentionally and consciously enter into a true and personal relationship with God, but only into a ‘way of doing’ practices of piety (e.g. organising a vigil, preparing aids, holding celebrations, posting emotions on social media, organising everything again in a blog linked to other appointments and convocations), one may feel good, but all together it could be reduced to an educational professionalism and/or a pastoral or community professionalism.”[[25]](#footnote-26)

And in fact, what I am writing is known to everyone. Decade after decade the magisterium of the Congregation reminds us of this. There have been no lack of retreats in which we were invited to deepen our understanding of it; there have been no lack of readings. There has been no shortage of days of ongoing formation, but after all, life is not only made up of ideas to dialogue with, it is also made up of *life experiences.* And if in these life experiences we come to strongly feel and experience that it is indeed true that *“in him we live and move and have our being”* (Acts 17:28), then the solidity of our life as consecrated Salesians will be of a certain kind; otherwise it will be something else.

If we come to have the personal, deep, intimate certainty that we are not alone, that we know in Whom we rest and Who sustains us – even in our fatigue and *routine* – then our way of life as Salesians will be of a certain kind. Otherwise it will be something else.

When the Salesian experiences something like this, he no longer lives only before himself and for himself, but lives before God and for God. This is the essence of what we know as the *experience of God*. And this experience allows one to enter, in a certain way, into the Mystery of God, “*where one no longer understands, but is deeply touched; where one no longer reasons, but adores; where one no longer dominates, but is dominated.”*[[26]](#footnote-27)

And we always return to the same point, to that certainty (at least in our ideas) that our life can only rest if it has the Lord Jesus Christ at its centre. Otherwise we live in anaemia or aridity. And I fear to imagine my Salesian confreres falling prey to spiritual and evangelical anaemia. But this can happen. Indeed, “consecrated religious life today suffers from an undeniable ‘evangelical anaemia’. Personally and institutionally... To overcome this anaemia, it is necessary to recover the passion for the person of Jesus Christ, the first love that must radiate consecrated religious life.”[[27]](#footnote-28)

In conclusion, dear confreres, “let us be imitators of Don Bosco as he was of Christ (...) Contemplation of Christ embodies three inseparable elements: **knowing him more deeply, loving him more intensely, following him more radically.”**[[28]](#footnote-29)

1. In all sincerity, I must share with you another concern due to the fact that ***there are many confreres who feel the need to leave Salesian life, the Congregation, for very different reasons...*** What I am about to say is obviously in continuity with what I described and referred to earlier, although I will point out different reasons.

I think you are familiar with a line by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Father H. Kolvenbach, who said, not without astonishment: *“It is quite contradictory that the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us exhausts so many of our members.”*[[29]](#footnote-30)

It is painful to see how fidelity to the following of Jesus, the path of fidelity of our Salesian consecrated life, which surely began with that first love, can today lead some confreres to live with “little light in their lamps” and “little flavour in the salt shaker.” What has happened to the invitation of the Lord who says, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt 11:28-30)?

Pope Francis has been talking about this for a few years now, but the situation has not improved: “We can well say that fidelity is being put to the test at the moment; the statistics you have examined prove this. We are facing a ‘haemorrhage’ that weakens consecrated life and the very life of the Church.”[[30]](#footnote-31)

This is something that we Salesians have not satisfactorily overcome over these ten years. It is true that this is not just about us as a male congregation. It happens in all congregations and religious orders, male and female. We also discussed this at meetings of the Union of Superiors General, In any case, my first concern is a particular one and it is addressed to us Salesians of Don Bosco.

The reasons behind this difficulty are quite diverse:

* Not infrequently all this has to do with the real difficulty of *achieving maturity*, which entails a journey of years, effort, time and the action of grace that pushes us to abandon a superficial lifestyle that can lead us to live as distracted, decentralised religious, at the mercy of the “winds” that blow our way; or even more, dependent on and in need of the approval and recognition of others.

Sometimes the delicate situation of some confreres is affected by the fragility of the “baggage” with which they come to Salesian consecrated life. And, walking a path towards full and conscious identification with what consecration is and consolidating it well, is not always easy.

At other times, clear and lucid discernment is missing or has been lacking.

* As we know, the *affective dimension* is another area of vital importance for every individual. I would just like to point out that affections and the area of affectivity deeply mark our lives. We all have and express affections, emotions, feelings. The level of maturity of each individual affects and will affect their being and activity.

There are people with a fully developed and mature affectivity. Others experience fragilities, blockages and defensive attitudes that, sooner or later, will emerge and demand and “account”for everything that has not been resolved.

There may be difficulties in relating to others, problems with people of different or the same sex, or difficulties with people in authority.

There are confreres who experience an emotional void, which they are unable to fill in our form of life, and who, therefore, look elsewhere for what they feel or experience as lacking. Even going so far as to abandon or ask to leave the Congregation.

* Other confreres, while serene, experience a real and heavy difficulty in resolving conflicts – the conflicts that accompany the life of every person, in any kind of life and society. And even in consecrated life there are conflicts that can and must be managed serenely, with maturity.

One of the reasons most often given by those who leave the Congregation – let me say this: not always completely true, but because it is an easier reason to expound in public and one that projects responsibility onto others rather than themselves – has to do with fraternal life and the difficulties they encounter (or believe they encounter) in it. But I will refer to this in a later section.

* Finally, as I indicated at the beginning of my presentation of these vital challenges we face, we find everything that concerns the faith dimension of our lives – today so conditioned by the vital contexts in which we find ourselves and put on the back burner even before our very eyes – leads some confreres to say, “I have come this far and I can no longer take other steps because I lack the motivation to live as a consecrated person, as a Salesian.”

The truth is, as I anticipated, that in this we continue to have, as a Congregation, one of our most serious weaknesses; a real “Achilles heel” to which we will undoubtedly have to continue to give priority attention.

As I said – although this should not reassure us – this is a general situation that concerns all congregations (male and female – albeit with different nuances). And it is one of the urgent matters that has most alarmed the **Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life** in recent years.[[31]](#footnote-32)

As for us, I am confident that the new *Ratio* for the formation of Salesians of Don Bosco will be a means that will help and enlighten our path. However, we cannot naively think that the promulgation of a document alone can solve the challenges of the Congregation. Many other elements need to be brought into play.

1. I am concerned when I encounter situations of community life in which ***the community serves for what it is meant to do: it is “functional” but it is not prophetic and, therefore, not attractive to young people.***

In the light of the previously mentioned study on why people leave our Congregation, it can be said that *community life is the common denominator among the reasons for leaving.*

As I mentioned earlier, in all honesty I do not think it can be said that this is always and in all cases the only and true reason. Although there are often other hidden or even explicit and overt reasons that are not included in the letter requesting to leave the Congregation, and which show personal weaknesses, in many cases it is easier and more convenient to resort to the “myth of lack of fraternal life”. There is no doubt that if our fraternal life were more enthusiastic, less utilitarian and pragmatic, less functional, richer in healthy affection and permeated by the prophecy of the Gospel, it would attract more and we who live it directly would experience the great value of this precious “evangelical utopia” of universal fellowship.

We read in the Constitutions that we have professed, that “To live and work together is for us Salesians a fundamental requirement and a sure way of fulfilling our vocation. This is why we come together in communities, where our love for each other leads us to share all we have in a family spirit, and so create communion between person and person. The community is a reflection of the mystery of the Trinity: there we find a response to the deep aspirations of the heart, and we become signs of love and unity for the young.”(C.49)

In reality, we live – in many parts of the world – in contexts that mainly exalt *individualism.* In many societies where we are present, life is lived “in a hurry”, in atrocious activism; relationships with others are ruined and much of what we experience is determined almost exclusively by efficiency and the achievement of goals and results.

The situation is no less harsh where loneliness dominates. There is a lot of loneliness in the world. And there is also loneliness in religious communities of consecrated life, and sometimes even in Salesian communities. In short, *in our communities, we must free ourselves from the high price we pay for having communities tied to functional roles and management alone. This in itself hurts us a lot and extinguishes the vocational flame in the confreres.*

Faced with these risks, Pope Francis proposed that consecrated persons live “the mystique of the encounter”[[32]](#footnote-33), since consecrated life is called to be a visible sign of welcoming, transparent and sincere human relationships.

Consecrated life is characterised by the presence of persons whom the Pope describes as *experts and craftsmen in communion*[[33]](#footnote-34) and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA) in its document *Fraternal Life in Community* states in this regard: “Fraternal communion, as such, is already an apostolate. In other words it contributes directly to the work of evangelisation (. ...) The sign of fraternity (...) is the sign that points to the divine origin of the Christian message and has the power to open hearts to faith. For this reason, ‘the effectiveness of religious life depends on the quality of the fraternal life in common’.”[[34]](#footnote-35)

It is more than evident, even if it costs us a lot, that in the face of so much running (and chasing), so much activism, and management that dominates and reigns, we need to cultivate and cherish our interiority more and more. Only from within will we have the necessary maturity to relate in a mature and healthy way; rich first of all for ourselves, for our confreres in community and for other people. Even if the environment around us is not conducive or seems to counteract this.

As I have already said, the intercultural reality of our communities may make their construction more difficult, but its promotion is and will continue to be a very strong prophetic sign to oppose those who despise others; or who, without despising them, build and erect walls, simply because they are not “mine” or “ours”'.

We are called to be one so that the world may believe (*Jn* 17:21). That is to say, although we are different also because of our cultural roots, we are capable of creating communion and community. Indeed, “community is well understood and seen when it is nourished by communion and tends towards communion. A community without communion, with all that it entails in terms of welcome, appreciation and affection, victim support and love, is reduced to a group in which people are happy to live together, but in reality leaves them isolated.”[[35]](#footnote-36)

Furthermore, our communities must offer and witness joy in the face of haste, stress and pragmatism. In the document *Fraternal Life in Community* we read: “A joyless fraternity is one that is dying out; before long, members will be tempted to seek elsewhere what they can no longer find within their own home.”[[36]](#footnote-37) And this joy certainly has a testimonial value along with the ability to bring people together. But above all, it is able to offer the confreres fullness and quality of life.

Finally, our communities bear witness in the communion of goods to the great value of solidarity and sharing. At the same time, communities are expected to be, for the sake of our lives and in the face of devastating and inhuman consumerism in many parts of the world, places where the culture of moderation and austerity is proposed. And that, in addition to proposing such a culture, we are ourselves more moderate and austere.

1. Dear confreres, *I am not yet satisfied with the* ***attention given to the poorest children and young people.* Our hearts should be madly in love with the poorest, as was Don Bosco’s.**

I know that over these ten years there has not been a single province and a single country of the 118 visited so far in which I have not always recalled and asked for this. I have always said that, in the name of the Lord and out of loyalty to Don Bosco, we cannot lose the poorest, nor forget them or neglect them. We were born for them. They, the young people, and in particular the poorest, are our *holy place of encounter with God.*

It is true that so much good is being done. It is true that there are very many confreres with great sensitivity. But we are not all like that.

Dear confreres, let me borrow the words of one of us who wrote to me just this morning and, among the various things he shared with me, told me what I will now propose to you. These are words that touched my heart because they manifest the truth. There will be those who consider them a little harsh and those who, feeling a little uncomfortable, will think that this confrere and the Rector Major are pessimists.

I assure you that neither this confrere – who for years has demonstrated his missionary dedication and his radical option for the poor – nor the undersigned are or feel pessimistic. On the contrary, I invite everyone not to be afraid to look inside themselves and to name by name both the strengths and weaknesses that we discover in ourselves and in our beloved Congregation.

This confrere wrote to me like this: “I confess to you: I have the impression and perception that our Province has wonderful Salesian works, very valid ones and which do a lot of good... But also - on a general and institutional level – I have the impression and perception that it lacks life and enthusiasm; that it is a ‘sedentary’ satisfied, somewhat hedonistic and triumphalist Province, with little real attention to the poor [**we take care of the poor, but we are not ‘with the poor’ nor ‘are we poor’],** and with little capacity for personal and institutional testimony. And where – alongside holy Salesians – there are ‘bourgeois’ Salesians who desire more social life than missionary life, attracted by careerism and with superficial attitudes, with distractions and various comforts and - what’s worse - everything is considered normal.”

I believe, dear confreres, that what has been said is true. There are truly holy Salesians. And they are the majority: Salesians dedicated to the mission, because their heart is filled with God and love for young people; confreres who make the Congregation great and support it.

And I must painfully admit and recognise that there are also other confreres who do not live this way. And that hurts us so much. How I would like us all to live our vocation in a radical way! I assure you that the vocational response of young people would be incredible. But for this we must be more enthusiastic, and give a more authentic testimony of life.

I was struck by an expression I read some time ago: “[In religious life] we too ‘domesticate’ the charism so that it does not make us too uncomfortable and because we are benevolently accepted among the citizens of this world. Christian communities, the salt of the earth, can become extinct, and then they do not really serve to embody in history the impulse of the Spirit that gave birth to them (...) We prefer the figure of this passing world and we cling to it attracted by the vertigo of speed, without being aware in which direction we are going, [and without knowing] whether we are making the Kingdom of God visible or whether we are just hasty consumers of water that cannot quench our thirst.”[[37]](#footnote-38)

Let me conclude the simple reflection of these pages, dear confreres, with which I have tried to shed some light on this particular moment of ours, not so far from the celebration of the next General Chapter.

In faith, the certainty that the Holy Spirit guides and accompanies us always prevails. Pope Benedict XVI expressed it very well: “Dear friends, we must live according to the Spirit of unity and truth, and for this we must pray for the Spirit to enlighten us and guide us to overcome the charm of following our truths, and to welcome the truth of Christ transmitted in the Church.”[[38]](#footnote-39)

Without a doubt our Mother the Help of Christians will continue to accompany the life of our Congregation and the Salesian Family and to obtain for us many graces from her beloved Son.

And it is with such certainty that I wish to end not by saying goodbye, but with how our Father Don Bosco did so, he whom we all truly love, and who, in a very short letter written on the occasion of the arrangements for the Fourth General Chapter, wrote: “May Mary May Help of Christians continue her maternal assistance and may St Francis de Sales obtain for us the grace of being her true followers. May the Lord bless you all, and pray to him also for me who sincerely am your dear friend in J.C.”[[39]](#footnote-40)

I make these feelings of our Father my own.

May the Lord bless you, dear confreres, and continue to bless our precious Congregation.

Pray for me. I promise to do so, be in no doubt, for all of you.

With true affection,

Ángel Fernández Artime, SDB

*Rector Major*

1. Cf. F. PRADO (ED.), *Adonde el Señor nos lleve. Vida consagrada en el mundo: tendencias y perspectivas*, Publicaciones Claretianas, Madrid 2004, 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. A. FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *“That they may have life and have it to the full” (Jn. 10:10). Five fruits of the Bicentenary*, in *AGC* 421 (2015), 3-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. T. RADCLIFFE, *Essere cristiani nel XXI secolo. Una spiritualità per il nostro tempo.* Queriniana (= Spiritualità 143), Brescia, 20122, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. A. FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *Belonging more to God, more to the confreres, more to the young*, in *AGC* 419 (2014), 3-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A. FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *op. cit.,* 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Cf. *Charter of Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family of Don Bosco* in J. RAPHAEL (A CURA DI), *La Famiglia Salesiana di Don Bosco*, Editrice S.D.B., Roma 2020, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. J. E. VECCHI, *Communication in the Salesian mission. “They are astonished beyond all measure! ...He even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak”*, in *AGC* 370 (2000), 3-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. P. CHÀVEZ, *With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of Social Communication*, in *AGC* 390 (2005), 3-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. G. BOSCO, *Circolare ai Salesiani sulla diffusione dei buoni libri*, in ISTITUTO STORICO SALESIANO, *Fonti salesiane 1: Don Bosco e la sua opera. Raccolta antologica*, LAS, Roma 2014, 481-485, [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. P. CHÁVEZ, *Lettere circolari ai salesiani*, LAS, Roma 2021, 358. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Cf. GENERAL CHAPTER 24 OF THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO, “*Salesians and lay people: Communion and sharing in the spirit and in the mission of Don Bosco. Chapter Documents”*, in *AGC* 356 (1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. *Ibid.,* 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. 20T Special Salesian General Chapter, 1972, no. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. *BM* V, 383; *MB V,* 411 (quoted in C. 13) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. 20Th Special Salesian General Chapter, *op.cit.,* 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *MB* XVI, 313. *MB XVI,* 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. J. E. VECCHI, *Beatification of Brother Artemides Zatti: a sensational precedent,* in *AGC* 376 (2001), 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Cf. A. FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, *What kind of Salesians for the youth of today? convoking the 28th General Chapter*, in *AGC* 427 (2018), 7-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. FRANCIS, *Letter of the Holy Father to Rev. Father Ángel Fernández Artime*, Vatican City 24 June 2015, in AGC 427 (2018), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. 27TH GENERAL CHAPTER SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO, *“Witnesses to the radical approach of the Gospel”. Work and temperance*, in *AGC* 418 (2014), 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. *VC*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. This is what I meant when I wrote about “happy Salesians” as I dreamed in my letter published in AGC 421 in the year of the Bicentenary of Don Bosco’s birth. Cf. *AGC* 421 (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Quoted on this occasion by J. A. PAGOLA, *Testigos del misterio de Dios en la noche,* in *Sal Terrae*, nº 1.030, Tomo 88/1, Santander, gennaio 2000, 30-42. See also K. RAHNER, *Nuovi saggi*, San Paolo Edizioni, Roma 1968, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. FRANCIS, *Address to the participants in the plenary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life*, Rome 28 January 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Cf. M. BAY, *Lettura interpretativa dei casi di abbandono dal 2016 al 2022,* Digital edition for use by the General Council awaiting publication in this issue of the AGC. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. K. RANHER, *Glaube, der die Erde lieft,* quoted in J.A. PAGOLA , *op.cit.,* 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. C. PALACIOS, *Luzes e sombra da Vida Religiosa Consagrada nos días de hoje,* in *Convergencia*, September 2011, quoted by J. M. ARNAIZ, *Los grandes desafíos de la vida consagrada hoy.* Conference in September 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. P. CHÁVEZ, *“But who do you say that I am?” (Mk 8:28). Looking at Christ through the eyes of Don Bosco*, in *AGC*, 384 (2004), 40 in P. CHÁVEZ, *Lettere circolari ai salesiani*, LAS, Roma 2021, 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. G. URÍBARRI, *Contro il prometeismo apostolico,* in *Sal Terrae*, June 1999, vol. 87/6, p. 505. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. FRANCIS, *op. cit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Cf. CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *New wine, new wineskins. The Consecrated Life and its Ongoing Challenges since Vatican II. Guidelines*, LEV (= Vatican Documents 2), Vatican City 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. FRANCIS, *Apostolic Letter to all consecrated people on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*, Vatican City 2014, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. *Ibid.* See also J. E. VECCHI, *“EXPERTS, WITNESSES AND CRAFTSMEN OF COMMUNION”. The Salesian community - animating nucleus*, in *AGC* 363 (1998), 3-42. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED *LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, Fraternal life in community. “Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor”*, Vatican City 1994, 54 (henceforth FLC). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. P. CHÁVEZ, *Lettere circolari ai salesiani,* op.cit.*,* 1176*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. *FLC,* 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. J. A. GARCÍA-MONGE, *Tener, acaparar, poseer... Ecología del alma liberada*, in *Sal Terrae*, Santander, Febbraio 2000, volume 88/2, nº 1.031, p.139. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. BENEDICT XVI, *Homily of Holy Father Benedict XVI. Solemnity of Pentecost*, Rome 27 May 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. P. ALBERA, *Lettere circolari di D. Bosco e di D. Rua ed altri scritti ai Salesiani,* Tipografia Salesiana, Torino 1896, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)