**THE MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR**

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THE SDB GOOD SAMARITAN—
A SAINT!

This is a very special Easter for us. In the Salesian Family, in the Church of Argentina, especially in the Viedma Diocese, in Italy, in the Reggio Emilia Diocese, and especially in Boretto, his birthplace, there reigns great enthusiasm: Artemides Zatti will be declared a Saint.

Dear friends of the *Salesian Bulletin* and of Don Bosco,

A luminous ray of hope breaks through the dark thoughts of these days, occasioned by the pandemic and, above all, by the many wars, in particular the one in Ukraine, for they bring death, pain, and destruction. We have great news: the Universal Church has officially recognized the sanctity of a Salesian “from the farthest reaches of the world:” Artemides Zatti.

Our dear Saint Zatti is a most beautiful figure, whose sanctity was manifested in his daily life, in simplicity, in his humble and cheerful service, in particular, to the sick. He incarnated Don Bosco’s heart and the richness of the Salesian Charism. He reflects the most human and loving aspect of the Salesian Family.

He had a gentle heart that knew suffering. He knew very well what poverty, emigration, frailty, and sickness were. He also knew doubt through the difficult decisions he had to make, including the one to “remain with Don Bosco” and live his original vocation as a Salesian Brother to the full, as Don Bosco wanted: as a witness, near to the people, and dedicated to the service of the sick and the poor.

He was the administrator of San José Hospital in Viedma, extending the circle of his patients to all the ill of the city, especially the poorest, making his rounds on his ever-present bicycle. He dealt with money but his life was of the poorest. He even had to borrow a suit, hat, and suitcase to travel to Italy for the canonization of Don Bosco.

He was loved and esteemed by the sick and by the doctors who had very great confidence in him, abandoning themselves to his influence which sprang from his sanctity: “When I am with Zatti, I can do nothing else but believe in God,” exclaimed a doctor who was a self-proclaimed atheist. To Zatti, every patient was Jesus Himself. When his superiors recommended that he not admit more than 30 patients, he was heard to mumble: “And if the 31st patient would be Jesus Himself?”

Artemides’ witness as a true Good Samaritan every day of his life, merciful as the Father, was a mission and a style that involved everyone who, in whatever way, dedicated themselves to the hospital: doctors, nurses, auxiliaries and caregivers, the Sisters, and the volunteers who gave their precious time to those who were suffering. He was attentive when listening to the patients, to their stories, sufferings, and fears. He knew that even when it would be impossible to cure the illness, one could always give care, console, and let the ill person feel one’s closeness which demonstrated concern for the one confronting his/her illness.

In everything and always he was Salesian—a Salesian Brother; i.e., not a Priest. This lay Salesian vocation is part of the physiognomy that Don Bosco wanted to give to the Salesian Congregation. To them Don Bosco said very clearly, “I need you.”

Pope Francis himself experienced the efficacious intercession of Artemides Zatti regarding the lay consecrated vocation when he was the Provincial of the Jesuits in Argentina. He wrote in a letter: “In 1976, while making the canonical visitation to the missionary Jesuits in the north of Argentina, I spent several days in the Archbishop’s house in Salta. At the end of one of the meals, amid various discussions, Archbishop Perez spoke to me of Br. Zatti. He even gave me the opportunity to read a book on his life. The fact that he was a Coadjutor Brother in every way struck me. At that moment, I felt that I had to ask the Lord, through the intercession of Br. Zatti, to send us Coadjutor vocations. I made the novenae and asked the novices to make them also.” Then he continued: “From the time we began our prayers to Br. Zatti, 23 young Brother Jesuits have persevered. I am convinced that it was due to his intercession since, taking the number into consideration, this is unusual for our Order. I repeat that I am convinced of his intercession because I know just how much we had prayed to him to be our intercessor.”

This is a splendid and authoritative encouragement also for us to ask for Artemides Zatti to intercede for us to increase the number of good and holy vocations as Salesian Coadjutor Brothers.

In this year dedicated to St. Francis de Sales, defender and promoter of the vocation of sanctity for all people, Artemides Zatti’s witness reminds us of what Vatican Council II states: “All the faithful, in every state and condition, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to a sanctity whose perfection is the same as that of the Heavenly Father.” Francis de Sales, Don Bosco, and Artemides make their daily lives an expression of the Love of God, which is received and returned. Our Saints wanted to bring relationship with God into their daily lives and daily life into relationship with God. This is the proposal of “next-door sanctity” or of “middle class sanctity,” about which Pope Francis speaks with such great affection.

The figure of Artemides Zatti is a stimulus and an inspiration for us to become signs and bearers of the Love of God for the young and the poor. As I wrote in the Strenna this year, “we, too, need to unfurl the ‘charism of the visitation’ as our heart’s desire to announce, without waiting for others to come to us, but by going into those places inhabited by so many and for whom a kind word, an encounter, and a respectful gaze can open up their horizons to a better life.” Artemides Zatti was a “man of the Visitation” who carried Jesus in his heart, recognizing Him and serving Him joyfully and generously in his ill and impoverished brothers and sisters.

St. Artemdies Zatti, intercede for us all!

**THE DECISIVE MIRACLE**

The miraculous cure of a man stricken with an “ischemic right cerebral stroke complicated by a voluminous hemorrhagic lesion.” The event under consideration took place in the Philippines in August 2016. A neurosurgical examination suggested the need for an operation, which was made impossible due to the financial situation of the family. For this reason, they decided to bring their relative home so he might live out his final days there with his family. The dying man received the Anointing of the Sick and called his family and relatives to his side so he could say his “goodbyes.” Instead, on August 24, 2016, against every expectation, the patient called his relatives to say that he was fine and wanted to take a bath and begin to eat. He had been brought home to die, and, after just a few days, he was cured!

This is thanks to the prayers of the man’s brother—a Salesian Brother—who had begun praying for a cure through the intercession of Br. Zatti during Vespers in his Community on the very day in which the patient had been brought to the hospital. But not only he—for this Salesian Brother invited his relatives to join together in prayer through the intercession of Blessed Artemides Zatti.