THE RECTOR MAJOR’S MESSAGE

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**“Dear Don Bosco, I love you very much...” - The beautiful, personal, sincere and meaningful witness of one of our sisters.**

The month of October is dedicated to the rosary. While we cherish the beautiful remembrance of Mary, I write to you from Mornese, birthplace of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello, on the day when three Salesian Sisters are professing their Final Vows. On this beautiful day for the Salesian Family, focussed on our sisters, a living monument for Mary Help of Christians, as Don Bosco had intended them to be, at the end of mass, a young sister gave me a letter. She told me that it was her gift to Don Bosco, during the bicentenary of his birth, a token of gratitude for all that he meant in her life.

I read the letter in a moment of calm, and as I gradually went through it, the certainty that the Lord constantly and truly communicates with each and every one of us in our lives, even though through many mediations, became very strong.

I asked the sister the permission to anonymously publish her writing. Here it is:

“Dearest Don Bosco, it’s me, you know me! Your feast will soon be here and millions of people will show their filial love towards you. In this huge multitude, as vast as a sandy beach, I am a mere tiny grain of sand. But even so, today I want to thank you!

Thank you because by God’s grace, I have heard people speaking about you. I tried to imagine how you were while I read your life story. Then I got to know you in real life. I met you through your Salesian sons in the playground at the Youth Centre. I recognised you in that playground full of children, adolescents and young people and I saw Salesians running, playing, laughing and listening to the young. I thought it was Paradise.

You appeared in my life right when I was an adolescent, when everything annoyed me and I did not know who I really was. And then, like a seed within your charism, the Lord who is love and joy, came into my life. I remember that one day I vividly felt within me the desire to become “Salesian”. To be like you, without ever stopping to be happy. To make God known, as you did. I say as you did, because seeing a Salesian, is always seeing you. Your style and personality fitted me like a glove. Gradually, irresistibly, God conquered me and so the adventure began.

Your paternal presence always surrounded me. It was very intense during the time God called my dad to Him. God was present in the presence of each Salesian who accompanied my dear ones and myself during that difficult time.

Don Bosco, you made me taste the presence of God so much that I could not keep it all for myself, but I had to share it with others. And so this God of surprises managed to guide my feet to become a daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

Today, I once again want to tell you thank you! Thank you for the presence of your sons and daughters. When the pain in my heart was atrocious, I met somebody I could talk to. Whenever I had moments of discomfort or sadness, I met someone who gave me peace. When my sins yelled out my fragility, I met someone who was a mediation of God’s mercy. When I was in danger someone gave his life for me.

I don’t know Don Bosco, I don’t know how to tell you how great you were for me. I may not be the best child of God’s children, but I have a heart that loves you so much because you are not a saint that was born and lived two hundred years ago. You are a saint that shares God’s joy in a living charism, because God is a living God. If you only knew how much you mean to me! You have drawn me close to a God who has given meaning to my life and has shown me how beautiful it is to give one’s life for Christ.

Many happy returns for your two hundredth birthday, dear Don Bosco! I want to hug you and tell you: thank you, thank you for a million times. I love you so much.”

This is the very beautiful, personal, sincere and limpid witness of our sister. A splendid message to all our Salesian Family. It urges us and provokes us all, especially my dear brother Salesians, because all young people, especially the youth of today, need that we incarnate Don Bosco, that more than ever before we become “Don Bosco today”, living as disciples of Jesus, in the spirit of the Salesian charism of our Family.

It also makes me ponder how our God is touching the hearts of each of our “children” spread all over the world, and how his Spirit is embracing, caressing, provoking and calling, and how mediations, like that mediation that we can be for one another, is a living word of God present and efficacious to whoever wants to listen to it.

Together with all those who will read this beautiful testimony of yours, I thank you dear sister. Together with you we ask Don Bosco to intercede by the Lord so that many young people feel the desire to follow Jesus in the various vocations within our Salesian Family that, first and foremost, as Don Bosco always intended it to be, is a family at the service of all the Church, together with the Pope and the local churches.