**LIFE AND WORK OF CARLO GASTINI, FOUNDER OF THE PAST PUPILS OF DON BOSCO**

To the PAST PUPILS OF DON BOSCO,

past, present and future

**I. INTRODUCTION**

“So that, after having bound so many books for you, I too may be bound with you in the book of life.” One day, on one of my trips to Turin, one of those misty city days, I found this sentence written in some old documents at Valdocco, the mother house of the Salesian Congregation.

When talking about Carlo Gastini we need to start from a paradox. Practically all the Salesian past pupils have heard of the Italian who founded the Past Pupils of Don Bosco. The anecdotes of the barbershop, the silver hearts or the coffee cups have been repeated for decades in Salesian magazines. But no former pupil knows practically anything about his life, his work or his character, basically because no one has ever told him about it.

In fact, the Past Pupils of Don Bosco were until now the only group of the Salesian Family that did not have a biography of their founder, a fact that is not surprising. This important.

**2. DON BOSCO’S *YOUNG* *MINSTREL***

**2.1. Turin, year zero**

The history of Turin is an example of the upheavals that affected Europe in the 19th century, resulting from the breakdown of the hegemony of the Christian faith in Western culture after the French Revolution, the new liberal model that was to gradually replace the absolute monarchies and the socio-economic changes brought about by the industrial revolution.

In 1841, when the young John Bosco arrived in Turin, the city had doubled its population since 1800. The arrival of the mechanical power of steam had multiplied its traditional craft of steel forging, giving rise to the mechanical industry which at the end of the 19th century would see the birth of Fiat and Lancia. The walls had just come down and, in front of the elegant bourgeois centre, built in imitation of Paris, the suburbs along the two rivers were born: Valdocco along the Dora and Vanchiglia along the Po, to take advantage of the river's power.

In addition to water, this huge industry needed capital (from French banks) and labour (from the Piedmont countryside). As is the case today, the dream soon turned into a nightmare when it became clear that there was no work for everyone, that it was precarious and that life in the city meant overcrowding in the suburbs and a mutation of the values of natural society: the rural society of nature, faith and solidarity was countered by the urban reality of mercantilism, freemasonry and freedom.

When the young Don Bosco arrived in Turin in 1841 there were 7,148 children under the age of 10 employed as builders, tailors, carpenters, painters, chimney sweepers and many other trades, working up to 14 hours a day. Marginalisation in the suburbs and harsh working conditions led to alcoholism, abuse and disease, resulting in many children being orphaned. Lack of work led to crime, which had filled Turin's overcrowded prisons with young people, most of them in the correctional centre known as La Generala (1847-1944). Many of them ended up being executed in the Rondò de la Forca.

The young priest, walking the streets, visiting the prisons and accompanying Fr Cafasso in assisting the dying, was strongly impressed. He could not help but identify with those young people who, like him but for other purposes, had left the Piedmontese countryside for the Turinese capital.

**2.2. An orphan lad**

In the same context, married couple Antonio Gastini and Maria Pernigotti left Casale Moferrato to settle in Turin around 1828.

The Gastini family settled next to the parish of San Dalmazzo, on the outskirts of the city centre. Antonio Gastini had found work in the Turin municipal police force. It was during this new period in Turin that his three children were born: two boys and a girl. Marco was born first, in 1830. Carlo was born on 23 January 1833 and baptised on the 25th in the parish of San Dalmazzo.

The family's happiness was to be cut short a few years later. The father of the family died in 1847, leaving Maria in charge of his three children, two of whom had to go to work. Fourteen-year-old Carlo, known in the family as Carlino or Carluccio, found work as an apprentice in a barber's shop in the neighbourhood, near number 11 Via San Francesco d'Assisi.

**2.3. The teenager at the Oratory**

His life changed providentially during the first half of 1847. On Saturday 5, 12, 19 or 26 June of that year, the young priest John Bosco, who only a year earlier had settled in Valdocco with his mother, Margaret Occhiena, in a simple shed rented from Filippo Pinardi, entered the barber's shop. And only a month earlier, with the acceptance of a young lad from Valsesia, he had begun his mission at an Oratory. Don Bosco went every day to study moral theology with Fr Cafasso at the *Convitto* of St Francis of Assisi. One day Don Bosco went into a barber's shop in Turin to get a shave. There he met an apprentice and, as was his custom, he immediately spoke to him to persuade him to come to his festive oratory.

Carlo kept his word and on the following day he went to the Oratory. It was Sunday 6, 13, 20 or 27 June 1847. Gastini, as a pupil, boarder, worker or activist, would attend the Oratory for the next 50 years, until 1897.

In the last months of 1847 he lost his mother, Maria, after an illness. His brother Marco was doing military service, fighting with the Piedmontese army in the First War of Independence (1847-1848). Carlo and his sister were left alone in the world. Or almost.

One night that winter, on his way back to Valdocco, Don Bosco providentially found him with his sister. She was weeping by an elm tree in Viale San Massimo (now Corso Regina Margherita), near the Rondò de la Forca. Carlo explained to her that, as their mother had died and during her illness had been unable to pay the rent for the house, the landlord had evicted them and left them in the middle of the street.

While his brother continued in the army, his sister was temporarily entrusted to the orphanage in Casale Monferrato, where she later died.

Carlo went from being a day student to being the first boarder at the Oratory. He would be followed by Felice Reviglio, who would one day jump over the wall of the Oratory, and Joseph Buzzetti, whom Don Bosco met in Via della Giardiniera, all in the same year of 1847. Gastini was younger than Reviglio (1831) and Buzzetti (1832), but the same as James Bellia (1833) and older than Michael Rua (1837), John Francesia (1838) and John Cagliero (1838). They would be his great friends for life.

After morning mass and rosary, they went out to work in the city with a bread roll in their pocket; they returned for lunch and supper. Their diet, of vegetable stew and vegetables from Don Bosco's mother's garden, though meagre, was infinitely better than in their previous life. The youngsters spent the day with Don Bosco, who provided for all their daily needs.

One Sunday in 1848, the year Don Bosco was shot through a window in Valdocco, Carlo Gastini had a severe toothache, which Don Bosco cured by laying his hands on him.

Those young men were so grateful to Don Bosco that they considered him their real father. As a result of their admiration, gratitude and affection, Gastini and Reviglio wanted to make a gift to Don Bosco on 24 June 1849, when they presented him with two silver hearts that they had bought in the best jeweller's shop in the city.

**2.4. Salesian novice**

Don Bosco was already thinking of the possibility of founding a religious institute, which would later become the Salesian Congregation, in order to give more scope, freedom and continuity to his works. He did not forget the political and media persecutions of 1848, nor the desertions of some of his assistants that same year at the Oratory. For this reason, on 23 July 1849, he organised two one-week retreats to train new catechists. Among the more than 800 young people who attended the two oratories, he had chosen 71; among them was Gastini, who was finally chosen together with Buzzetti, Bellia and Reviglio.

He began to help them to reform their moral conduct, intensifying their attendance at the sacraments and teaching them Italian and Latin grammar, providing them with lodging, clothing and food. They helped Don Bosco in Valdocco and on Sundays accompanied him to Porta Nuova or Vanchiglia. On 1 November 1849, they would witness the miracle of the multiplication of the chestnuts.

Carlo was finally able to wear the cassock on 2 February 1851. It was imposed on him by Don Bosco himself, who was “radiant. It seems that the first lambs are finally becoming shepherds”. The following day, the new clerics began their philosophy classes. They also started the Salesian theatre, which Don Bosco entrusted to Gastini, as well as catechism for the day students.

But Carlo left the novitiate that same year, between 12 October and 24 November 1852. It was neither his own decision nor Don Bosco's: Carlo had a slight stammer, which under the canon law of the time made ordination or profession impossible.

2.5. Chief binder

For the next four years Carlo Gastini continued to live at the Oratory as a boarder, and from 1854 he would be assistant to the printing press. That year a cholera epidemic broke out in Turin; while Don Bosco helped the sick, Gastini stayed in Valdocco praying that none of them would become infected.

Printing and theatre were Carlo Gastini's two occupations in Valdocco during this new stage of his life, when he began to grow a beard (His previous clerical status did not allow it), accentuating his half-venerable, half-comical appearance.

**2.6. Father of a family**

Carlo Gastini's personal evolution would gradually lead him to create his new life. Although he would always be linked to Don Bosco and Valdocco, he already had a trade that allowed him to earn a living. He had just found work in a printing house in the city and in 1856 he married Giuseppa Lora, in a ceremony celebrated by Don Bosco himself. Despite his new family, his new house and his new job, Gastini continued, never missing feast days and always available to help.

Gastini, like the rest of his companions, had witnessed numerous examples of how Don Bosco had the gift of prophecy. At the beginning of May 1860, Carlo went to ask him how long he would live. “Until you are 70 years old”, he told him.

In 1861 the Oratory suffered a new series of public persecutions. Gastini left his well-paid job and returned to work in Valdocco as head bookbinder, a job he would never leave. The aim was to be as close as possible to his second father. The new printing works was launched on 31 December of that year. That same year, for his name day, Carlo brought Don Bosco some elegantly bound books with an even better dedication: “So that, after having bound so many books for you, I too may be bound with you in the book of life”. In 1863 his daughter Felisa was born, whom all Valdocco would know as Felicina, and whom Don Bosco himself baptised.

Gastini was the chief bookbinder at the Salesian Publishers and Press until his retirement. He produced more than two hundred works, which formed one of the most important Italian language catalogues of his time. From 1877 he published the *Bollettino Salesiano*, founded by Don Bosco, who was actively involved in publishing until 1887, the year before his death. As a result of that prestige, in Gastini's time, the Salesian Publishers and Press was invited to the Universal Exhibition in Barcelona (1886).

**2.7. Gastini’s death**

Carlo was still the soul of the internal celebrations in 1873. Almost 20 years had passed since his departure from Valdocco, but he was still part of the everyday life of *papà Giovanni.* It is no accident that Gastini and Buzzetti would appear in the dream *The mysterious steed* (also known as the dream of the pitchforks) that he had in 1875.

On 29 April 1876, Giuseppina died at the age of 36. Felicina would go on to be educated with the FMA and on 7 May 1893 she married her first cousin Eugenio, the youngest of Marco Gastini's five sons. In fact, it was Vicenzo Gastini who was commissioned to build the first tomb of Don Bosco, in Valsalice, paid for by the Past Pupils.

Gastini and Reviglio are almost an institution in Valdocco. In 1894 his former colleague Giuseppe Rollini painted him in the chapel of Saint Francis de Sales in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

Only a year later his granddaughter Rosa was born. Everyone was aware of Gastini's end of life and in some way tried to pay tribute to him during his lifetime. On 23 June 1898 he still took part in the internal celebration of the Oratory. But the end was near. Since the death of Don Bosco, things were no longer the same: he felt like an orphan.

In mid-January 1902 Carlo fell ill. Aware of Don Bosco's prophecy, he wanted to prepare himself for death. Numerous visitors tried to cheer him up, but one day he said to Fr Rua: “No, no! I will not get out of bed. I am seventy years old and I must die. I have nothing more to do here. I hope that Don Bosco will help me to join him in paradise” (*Bollettino Salesiano*, 1902, no. 2). And so it was. After being anointed by his good friend Michael, Carlo died on 28 January 1902. He had just turned 70, as *papà Giovanni* had predicted*.*

The Gastini family continued to live in Turin until 1973, when Rosa Gastini died on 11 January, without descendants. Today, the direct descendants of Carlo Gastini live in Alessandria, in Piedmont. They are the great-grandchildren of Rosina's brother Emanuele and his wife Rosa, among them the actress Marta Gastini, who continues the family connection with art and show business begun in 1851 by her ancestor Carlo Gastini.

**II. THE FOUNDER OF THE PAST PUPILS OF DON BOSCO**

**3.1. Maintaining the spirit of the Oratory**

Carlo Gastini's great work, apart from his family, was the foundation of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco movement. We have already seen that on 24 June 1849 Gastini and Reviglio gave him two silver hearts.

In the following years, a committee was set up to collect funds from the boarding and day students to present Don Bosco with a gift. In 1850, they gathered at the foot of his rooms to congratulate him with a small concert; afterwards, a representation from their group went up to bring him the gift, for which he thanked them from the balcony to great applause.

The following year, the music was supplemented by the reading of letters and the recitation of poems, some of them composed for the occasion as expressions of thanksgiving. This effort was undoubtedly the result of the rhetoric, Latin and Italian classes they had received at the Oratory. Don Bosco wanted his pupils to be able to behave in a dignified manner, without anyone laughing at them because of their education. Many took the opportunity to ask him for advice or to ask him questions.

From 1858 onwards, these events were held in the dining room built under the church of St Francis de Sales, until 1866, when they were moved to the third floor of the former *Casa Filippi*. From 1886 they were held in the theatre, located where the present theatre is.

**3.2. Spontaneous gathering**

On 7 March 1869 Pope Pius IX had approved the Salesian Congregation. That is why the celebration in 1870 was special. Carlo Gastini spread the word to summon the former pupils to a place in Piazza Statuto on the corner of Via San Donato. They met on 24 June in Valdocco to express their gratitude for the education they had received and to bring him a coffee set as a gift. After offering them a glass of white wine, Don Bosco concluded: “Today I cannot invite you to lunch with me, but next time we will organise it.”

Said and done. From 1871 onwards, the former pupils would meet to congratulate Don Bosco on his name day, and would do so every year.

The 1873 celebration saw the completion of the work on the top floor, where Don Bosco's room and chapel would be located, as well as the portico below, as we know it today.

That first stage was coming to an end. The tributes had gone from being something personal (1849) to something collective (1850-1870) for the current students to become something not internal but external (1870-1873) for the older students or, as it would come to be called, the old boys or former students.[[1]](#footnote-2)

**3.3. Transforming an embrace into a journey**

From 1874 until 1888, the year of his death, Don Bosco would reciprocate the homage on his name day with a fraternal lunch. This meant that a whole day was set aside to be with the Past Pupils. Let us not forget that the Salesian Congregation was founded in 1859, the Association of Mary Help of Christians was established in 1869 and the Salesian Cooperators became a reality in 1876.

The year 1875 was special because it was the year in which the first missionary expedition, in that case to Patagonia, led by John Cagliero, was sent off. That year the participants gave a golden monstrance as a gift.

In 1876, for the first time, there is a reference to Gastini as president of the Past Pupils. In a communication to Fr Rua and Fr Lazzero on 24 April, Don Bosco mentions him as “from outside, master of the bookbinders and president of the past pupils" (MB XII,198; MBe XII,175). Two days later, in another letter from the same people, he goes on to speak of “Gastini with his friends”.

In 1877, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires was present at the celebration and gave Carlo a coin, which he gave to Don Bosco. At García Zúñiga's insistence, Gastini replied with words that have gone down in history: “We all belong to Don Bosco here. Nothing is ours, everything is his.” It is particularly relevant that in the speech made by a former student priest, John Turchi, there was talk for the first time of a Commission, which we know was chaired by Gastini, “at the head of a society of former students of the Oratory that had come into being eight years earlier”, since for the first time there is talk of the Society of Former Students of the Salesian Oratory.

**3.4. Giving legal personality to a movement**

The initiative to bring together former students in 1870 had worked. Meetings were held regularly and more and more people attended. It was not until 1894 that the association became a legal entity.

The annual lunch with Don Bosco became regular. The 1878 lunch took place on 4 August, attended by 194 former pupils, under the porticoes of Valdocco. Don Bosco addressed a few words to the former pupils, encouraging them to set up a legal entity.

*What else is there left to say? Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up!!!!*

*It is enough that the spirit be maintained, that each one be, now, a missionary among his companions; then, in his own houses, or wherever he lives, giving good example, good advice and doing good to his own soul.*

*Just now I am all taken up with a project which I would like to see started this year: being of mutual assistance to each other. People talk about credit unions and mutual aid societies nowadays. We have to set one up for ourselves. So far this is just an idea, a project I have not yet investigated in detail, but I think it is a very feasible idea.*

*All of you manage to set some savings aside, some more, some less, so that you can face emergencies like illness or unemployment. I suggest that you don't benefit yourselves alone but reach out in emergencies to some fine students who graduate from the Oratory or to your former schoolmates, to everyone here present. Every year you take up a small collection for Don Bosco which I shall gladly forego and have it used to help needy youngsters.*

*Shall we meet again then—hopefully many, many times—in these family get-togethers? Shall we form one magnificent, strongly unified vast family in paradise? Shall we now pledge our word that none of us will fail to make that meeting?* (BM XIII, 582-583; MBe XIII, 643-645).

This oral and occasional address in 1878 is the real mission charter of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco. In 1869 he had founded the Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians and in 1876 he founded the Salesian Cooperators. The objective was clear: to continue the Oratory beyond the Oratory, i.e. to allow the young people to preserve the same values when they grew up. To achieve this, he established a fourfold mission: the maintenance of the values received (faith, honesty, industriousness, commitment), the witness of these same values (in the family, at work or in society), mutual solidarity among former students and the support of the Salesian works in their mission with young people. In this case, the order of the items does affect the product.

He gave this new movement a distinctly lay nature, unlike the mixed clerical-lay nature of the Salesian Cooperators, from which he seemed to detach the Past Pupils. But it also had a clearly social nature, unlike the religious nature of the Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians.

The Past Pupils were already a reality in Valdocco. This is attested to by the fact that in the July 1879 issue I mention for the first time that the Oratory's Old Boys took the lead in the celebration of Don Bosco's feast day.

It was noticeable how Don Bosco was ageing. He had just returned from Barcelona, and the intuition that the end was near can also be deduced from his almost testamentary words of 13 July: “Meanwhile, wherever you go and wherever you are, always remember that you are sons of Don Bosco, sons of the Oratory [...] Blessed are you if you never forget the truths that I tried to engrave in your hearts when you were young boys”. (MB XVII, 489; MBe XVII,421). “*You were a little flock. The flock has now* *grown, grown exceedingly, but it will grow even more. You will be a light shining forth in the world and with your example, you will teach others how to do good, to hate and flee that which is evil. I am confident that you will continue to be the joy of Don Bosco. Dearest children, may Our Lord help us with His grace so that one day we may be all of us together in Paradise”.* (BM, Vol. 17: 149).

On 16 August 1887, the Past Pupils also decided to congratulate Don Bosco on his birthday. The words he had addressed to them on a previous occasion were echoed: “But, my dear sons, one thing alone I recommend to you above all else: wherever you may be, always conduct yourselves as good Christians and upright citizens... Many of you already have a family. Give your children the same education you received from Don Bosco here at the Oratory” (BM Vol. 14: 401).

Don Bosco died on 31 January 1888. The sorrow everyone felt was immense. Priest, educator, friend, benefactor... Everyone lost something. But Carlo lost *papà Giovanni*, whom he had gone to say goodbye to on his deathbed. On the same day, President Gastini sent a letter to the Past Pupils.

The tributes soon began. On 4 June 1889, the Past Pupils went to Valsalice to pay homage to Don Bosco at his tomb. On 11 August they unveiled another plaque, but this time at his birthplace, which at the time was owned by his nephew Francesco Bosco. And in 1891 they unveiled a plaque in the church of St Francis of Assisi in Turin to commemorate Don Bosco's first mass at the altar of the Guardian Angel.

Particularly noteworthy is the outing they made to the Becchi on 20 September 1891. A plaque was unveiled on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Oratory, commemorating the trips they made to accompany Don Bosco every summer.

During his last years, Fr Rua insisted on adding the former day students to the the former boarders of Valdocco, in order to avoid everything being confined to the reduced circle of the pupils of the first Oratory, who, by the logic of age, were to meet the same fate as Don Bosco in a few years time. On 8 December 1894, under the guidance of Giovanni Garbellone, a body was founded to bring together the former day students of the Oratory, which was called the Union, perhaps to differentiate it from the boarders society. Its statutes established as its objectives to provide for their spiritual welfare with frequent meetings and also their material welfare with aid for their needs, updating the bonds of friendship between them.

In 1896 the annual meeting was held on 12 and 16 July, presided over by Fr Rua. “The Past Pupils of Don Bosco: who could count them today? They are scattered all over the world” (*Bollettino Salesiano*, 1896, no. 8). That year the collection was to try to free their companions who were prisoners in Africa, in the First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896).

On 20 January 1900, Fr Rua wrote a letter to the Salesians for the first time on the importance of the Past Pupils in the Congregation: “In some cities in Europe, America and Africa, the Association of Past Pupils is already established in imitation of what we can call the initial one founded years ago in Turin”, an association that he considered a “branch of Salesian activity”, concluding: “With these associations (we Salesians) continue to act as guardian angels for our pupils as we did for them when they were young.”

The 1900 celebration was to be the last. On 23 June, representatives from Martinetto, S. Giovanni Evangelista, Valsalice, San Benigno Canavese, Foglizzo, Ivrea, Alassio, Lanzo and Cuorgnè gathered in Valdocco. That year the gift of the *Past Pupils Society* was to erect a monument to Don Bosco in the church of San Francis de Sales in Valsalice.

After Gastini's death, a new Committee was formed and presented itself to Fr Rua on 24 June 1901.

Past pupils associations multiplied as the Salesians expanded. Lille (1893), Valdocco (1894 internal and external), Parma (1896), Nice (1896), Marseille (1896), Faenza (1897), Barcelona (1899), Liège (1899) and Buenos Aires (1901).

In 1908, the International Federation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco was born, its first objective being to organise the 1st International Congress of Past Pupils of Don Bosco in 1911.

The outbreak of the First World War postponed their activities until 1920, when the Second Congress was held, from which Italian Piero Gribaudi was elected (1919-1922), followed by his compatriot Felice Masera (1921-1938). That year, the Past Pupils inaugurated the Monument to Don Bosco, the work of Gaetano Cellini, in front of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

During the third presidency, that of Arturo Poesio (1938-1964), the International Federation became the World Confederation in 1954, whose first statutes were adopted in 1956. It was no accident that we were in the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, which, among other things, was to highlight the value of the laity. At the head of the new entity was Spaniard José María Taboada Lago (1964-1973), who would be succeeded by Mexican José González Torres (1974-1980), Swiss Giuseppe Castelli (1980-1992), Portuguese António G. Pires (1992-2004), Italian Francesco Muceo (2004-2013) and Slovakian Michal Hort (2013- ).

In 1967 they were one of the founders of the World Organisation of Former Students of Catholic Education (OMAEC) and in 1969, as a result of the reorganisation of the Dominic Savio Clubs, the groups of Young Former Students (GEX) were created.

The Italian Dominic Savio was the first past pupil to become a Saint, in 1954. Another past pupil, Timorese Carlos Ximenes Belo, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. In 2013, the Argentinian past pupil Jorge Bergoglio was elected Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church as Pope Francis.

Today the spiritual descendants of Carlo Gastini are a reality spread over 100 countries and made up of 50 million people.

**V. CONCLUSIONS**

The Salesian Constitutions, in Art. 5, state that “Don Bosco inspired the start of a vast movement of peesons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young (...) Our past pupils are also members of it by reason of the education they have received, and the bonds are closer when they commit themselves to take an active part in the Salesian mission in the world.”

This work aims to present the biography of Carlo Gastini, the founder of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, which is the only group of the Salesian Family founded by a layman and whose founder has not had a biography to date. The absence of such has two causes: the tendency towards historiographical clericalism before 1962 and the displacement of the generation of Gastini, Reviglio, Buzzetti and Bellia by that of Cagliero, Rua, Artiglia or Rocchietti.

Carlo Gastini was a man of his times, aware of the problems and opportunities, who by using the means of his time (popular entertainment and social solidarity), proposed to go as far as possible. With a long-term, far-sighted vision, he proposed a theology of the laity before the Second Vatican Council and a form of collective collaboration prior to today's forms of collaborative work, shared ownership, shared mobility and collective knowledge. He made it clear in 1877 that no one is worth more than anyone else (“We all belong to Don Bosco here”) and that everything belongs to everyone (“Nothing is ours, everything is his”).

It is clear that the Past Pupils of Don Bosco are not Salesians but neither are they Cooperators, even if they collaborate with both.

Carlo Gastini had faith in Don Bosco, worked like Don Bosco and helped like Don Bosco. His life is full of providential moments that led him towards a life of trust, joy and solidarity, sensing the role that corresponded to Salesian pupils in the post-industrial world. “*You will be a light shining forth in the world and with your example, you will teach others how to do good, to hate and flee that which is evil.*” (MBDB, Vol. 17: 149).

The life, work and charism of Carlo Gastini are an invitation to live Salesianity in the world through commitment. Today, as yesterday, he asks us a disturbing and challenging question: “What are you ready to do for others?“

1. In 1877, at the celebration, the expression has been maintained in Spanish, but not in Italian, where the expression *anticchi allievi* has been replaced by *ex allievi*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)